

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

To THE BURGESSES AND THE CITIZENS OF HARRISBURG

October 4, 1794.

Gentlemen: In declaring to you the genuine satisfaction I derive from your very cordial address, I will not mingle any expression of the painful sensations which I experience from the occasion that has drawn me hither. You will be at no loss to do justice to my feelings. But relying on that kindness of providence towards our country which every adverse appearance hitherto has served to manifest and counting upon the tried good sense and patriotism of the great body of our fellow Citizens I do not hesitate to indulge with you the expectation of such an issue as will serve to confirm the blessings we enjoy under a constitution that well deserves the confidence, attachment and support of virtuous and enlightened men; to class the inhabitants of Harrisburgh among this number is only to bear testimony to the zealous and efficient exertions which they have made towards the defence of the laws.²²

22. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE INHABITANTS OF THE BOROUGH OF CARLISLE

[October 6, 1794.]

Gentlemen: I thank you sincerely for your affectionate address. I feel as I ought what is personal to me; and I cannot but be particularly pleased with the enlightened and patriotic attachment which is manifested towards our happy constitution and the laws.

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When we look round and behold the universally acknowledged prosperity, which blesses every part of the U States, facts no less unequivocal than those which are the lamented occasion of our present meeting were necessary to persuade us that any portion of our

fellow citizens could be so deficient in discernment or virtue as to attempt to disturb a situation, which instead of murmurs and tumults calls for our warmest gratitude to heaven and our earnest endeavours to preserve and prolong so favoured a lot.

Let us hope that the delusion cannot be lasting, that reason will speedily regain her empire, and the laws their just authority where they have lost it. Let the wise and the virtuous unite their efforts to reclaim the misguided and to detect and defeat the acts of the factious. The union of good men is a basis on which the security of our internal peace and the stability of our government may safely rest. It will always prove an adequate rampart against the vicious and disorderly.

In any case in which it may be indispensable to raise the sword of Justice against obstinate offenders, I shall deprecate the necessity of deviating from a favourite aim, to establish the authority of the laws in the affections of all rather than in the fears of any.

[Accept a reciprocation of good wishes for yourselves and your fellow Citizens.]²³

23. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The original is in the University of Pittsburgh Library, and differs from this "Letter Book" copy in punctuation and capitalization. It also lacks the words inclosed in brackets.

To GOVERNOR HENRY LEE⁸

Bedford, October 20, 1794.

Sir: Being about to return to the seat of government, I cannot take my departure without conveying through you to the Army under your command the very high sense I entertain

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of the enlightened and patriotic zeal for the constitution and the laws which has led them cheerfully to quit their families and homes and the comforts of private life to undertake and thus far to perform a long and fatiguing march and to encounter and endure the hardships and privations of a Military life. Their conduct hitherto affords a full assurance that their perseverance will be equal to their zeal and that they will continue to perform with alacrity whatever the full accomplishment of the object of their march shall render necessary.

No citizens of the U. States can ever be engaged in a service more important to the Country. It is nothing less than to consolidate and to preserve the blessings of that Revolution which at much expense of blood and treasure constituted us a free and independent Nation. It is to give the world an illustrious example, of the utmost consequence to the cause of mankind. I experience a heart-felt satisfaction in the conviction that the Conduct of the troops throughout will be in every respect answerable to the goodness of the cause

8. Also the commander in chief of the militia army marching against the insurrectionists in western Pennsylvania.

and the magnitude of the stake.

There is but one point on which I think it proper to add a special recommendation. It is this, that every officer and soldier will constantly bear in mind that he comes to support the laws and that it would be peculiarly unbecoming in him to be in any way the infractor of them; that the essential principles of a free government confine the provinces of the Military to these two objects: 1st: to combat and subdue all who may be found in arms in opposition to the National will and authority; 2dly to aid and support the civil Magistrate in bringing offenders to justice. The dispensation of this justice belongs to the civil Magistrate and let it ever be our pride and our glory to leave the sacred deposit there unviolated. Convey to my fellow citizens in arms my warm acknowledgments for the readiness with which they have seconded me in the most delicate and momentous duty the chief Magistrate of a free

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people can have to perform and add my affectionate wishes for their health comfort and success. Could my further presence with them have been necessary or compatible with my civil duties at a period when the approaching commencement of a session of Congress particularly urges me to return to the seat of Government, it would not have been withheld. In leaving them I have the less regret, as I know I commit them to an able and faithful director; and that this director will be ably and faithfully seconded by all.⁹

9. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The entire letter was published in General Lee's orders of Oct. 21, 1794.

To THE BOSTON SELECTMEN⁶³

[United States, July 28, 1795.]

Gentlemen: In every act of my administration, I have sought the happiness of my fellow-citizens. My system for the attainment of this object has uniformly been to overlook all personal, local and partial considerations: to contemplate the United States, as one great whole: to confide, that sudden impressions, when erroneous, would yield to candid reflection: and to consult only the substantial and permanent interests of our country.

Nor have I departed from this line of conduct, on the occasion, which has produced the resolutions, contained in your letter of the 13 [instt.]

Without a predilection for my own judgment, I have weighed with attention every argument, which has at any time been brought into view. But the constitution is the guide, which I never will⁶⁴ abandon. It has assigned to the President the power of making treaties, with the advice and consent of the senate. It was doubtless supposed that these two branches of government would combine, without passion, [and with the best means of information], those facts and principles upon which the success of our foreign relations will always depend: that they ought not to substitute for their own conviction the opinions of others; or to scorn expect⁶⁵ truth thro' any channel but

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63. Ezekiel Price, Thomas Walley, William Bordman, Ebenezer Seaver, Thomas Crafts, Thomas Edwards, William Little, William Scollay, and Jesse Putnam.

64. The "Letter Book" copy has "can."

65. The draft is doubtful at this point. In addition to the words "scorn" and "expect," the word "follow" is crossed off, though underscored in pencil, apparently by the Attorney General. The "Letter Book" copy has the word "seek."

that of a temperate and well-informed investigation.

Under this persuasion, I have resolved on the manner of executing the duty now before me. To the high responsibility, attached to it, I freely submit; and you, gentlemen, are at liberty to make these sentiments known, as the grounds of my procedure. While I feel the most lively gratitude for the many instances of approbation from my country; I can no otherwise deserve it, than by obeying the dictates of my conscience. With due respect,
&c.66

66. The draft is in the writing of Edmund Randolph. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington. W. Bradford and Oliver Wolcott have approved this draft; Bradford in pencil. T. Pickering has approved; but offered a substitute at one point.

Addresses of disapprobation of Jay's Treaty, urging that it be not ratified, poured in upon the President from cities, towns, and counties in nearly every State. The earliest being that from the Selectmen of Boston, dated July 13, and the last coming from the citizens of Lexington, Ky., in their meeting of September 8 (forwarded September 10). To most of these addresses the same answer was returned as that to the Boston Selectman, July 28. The text of the addresses, with the President's answers, are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

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On the “Letter Book” copy of the resolutions of the citizens of Petersburg, Va., August 1, Washington has noted: “Tenor indecent No answer returned.”

On the “Letter Book” copy of the resolutions of the inhabitants of Bordentown, Crosswicks, Black Horse, and Reckless Town, N. J., Washington has noted: “No answer given. The Address too rude to merit one.” The copyist's note to resolutions of the citizens of Laurens County, S. C., is “The foregoing Resolutions &ca. were sent under a blank cover, by (it is supposed) Jno. Matthews Esqr. No notice has been taken of them.”

On the “Letter Book” copy of the remonstrance and petition of the citizens of Scott County, Ky., August 25, Washington has noted: “The Ignorance and indecency of these proceedings forbad an answr.”

On the “Letter Book” copy of the address from the citizens of Lexington, Ky., Washington has noted: “It would now [be] out of time to answr this address when reed Novr. Indecent besides.”

The proceedings of the citizens of Richmond County, Ga., September 1, were sent to Edmund Randolph, Secretary of State, September 4, and answered by Timothy Pickering, September 30. These proceedings and the answer thereto are entered in the “Letter Book” in the *Washington Papers*.

In the *Washington Papers*, under date of Aug. 12, 1795, is the draft of the general answer, returned to most of these protests against the ratification of the treaty. It is in the writing of Edmund Randolph and reads: “I have received your letter of the covering resolutions of a meeting in New York. As the answer, which I have given on a similar occasion to the selectmen of Boston is applicable to those resolutions, I think it proper to transmit a copy thereof to you. To Philadelphia instead of *resolutions* say ‘the address.’ Instead of *New-York* say ‘Philadelphia’ Instead of *those resolutionssay* ‘that address.’” In Washington's writing is added:

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“Answers have been sent to The Selectmen of Boston

Doctr. Shippen, Chairman of the Meeting in Phila. dated 12th. Augt. Colo Wm. S. Smith Do Do N. York 12th. Aug. Mr. Alexr Dunscomb. Mayor Richmond Do. Do. David McMechen and others Baltimore Do. Do. Jonathan Warner Portsmouth, N. H. Do. Do. Colo M. Furman Trenton 14. Augt. Jno. Dickinson Esqr. and others Wilmington, Del. 14 Augt. Honble. Jno Mathews Charleston, S. C. 14. Augt. Do.”

To COMFORT SANDS⁶

United States, August 20, 1795.

Sir: A little before my departure from Mount Vernon for Philadelphia, I received your letter of the 22d. of last month, covering the Resolutions of the New

6. President of the New York City Chamber of Commerce.

York Chamber of Commerce, relative to the Treaty lately negociated between the United States and Great Britain. My journey, and the urgent business in which I have since been engaged, have prevented an earlier acknowledgment.

While I regret the diversity of opinion which has been manifested on this subject, it is a satisfaction to learn, that the commercial part of my fellow citizens, whose interests are thought to be most directly affected, so generally consider the treaty as calculated, on the whole, to promote important advantages to our country. With due respect I am etc.⁷

7. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To NOBLE WYMBERLEY JONES

United States, August 31, 1795.

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Sir: I have recd. your Letter of the 1st. instant with the proceedings of the meeting at Savannah relative to the Treaty lately negotiated between the United States and Great Britain.

My determination on this important subject and the general principles upon which it has been formed have been already promulgated to the public: next to the consciousness of having discharged my duty according to my best judgment, nothing could have afforded me a greater pleasure than to have found my decision consistent with the wishes of all my fellow Citizens.

On this occasion I have however been directed by the Great principle which has governed all my public conduct; a sincere desire to promote and secure the true Interests of my Country. [With due respect] I am etc.³³

33. The draft is in the writing of Oliver Wolcott, jr. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

To THE COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNS OF EASTHAMPTON, SOUTHAMPTON, SOUTHOLD, RIVERHEAD, BROOKHAVEN, AND SMITHTOWN, SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK⁴⁴

United States, September 7, 1795.

I have received your Letter of August 6th expressing your sentiments on the Treaty lately negotiated between the United States and Great Britain.

It is now generally known that the Treaty has

44. David Hedges, Benjamin Huntting, Abraham Miller, Jared Landon, Benjamin Horton, jr., Josiah Reeve, David Warner, Nicoll Floyd, and John Howard.

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received my assent on the condition proposed by the Senate: this was not given until after the most mature deliberation: Notwithstanding the diversity of opinion which has been manifested, is much to be regretted I cannot but hope, that experience will shew, that the public Interest required the course which has been pursued. With due respect I am etc.45

45. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To THOMAS RUSSEL10

United States, August 22, 1795.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 13th. instant, covering a copy of the dissent of a number of the Citizens of Boston, expressing their disapprobation of the votes adopted at a late meeting of that town relative to the treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation between

10. Representing the merchants of Boston.

the United States and Great Britain and also a copy of the proceedings of the Boston Chamber of Commerce on the same subject.

While I regret the diversity of opinion which has been manifested on this occasion it is a satisfaction to learn that the Commercial part of my fellow Citizens, whose interests are thought to be most directly affected, so generally consider the treaty as calculated, on the whole, to procure important advantages. This sentiment I trust will be extended in proportion as the provisions of the treaty become well understood. With due respect etc.11

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JOHN EDIE

United States, Philadelphia, August 31, 1795.

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Sir: I received your letter dated the 18th. instant covering certain resolutions of the Inhabitants of the Borough of York²⁸ and its vicinity relative to the Treaty lately negotiated between the United States and Great Britain.

That I have assented to the Treaty pursuant to the advise and consent of the Senate is now publickly known; and you have done no more than justice to my intentions in believing that I should on this important subject, consult what appeared to me to be the welfare of my Country. With due respect I am etc.

28. Pennsylvania.

To THE CITIZENS OF PHILADELPHIA

August 20, 1795.

Gentlemen: I Receive, with great sensibility, your address on the subject of the Treaty lately negotiated between the United State and Great Britain, expressing your confidence in the constituted authorities, and the concurrence of your opinions with their determinations, on this highly important subject. Such sentiments, deliberately formed, and proceeding from men whose interests are more immediately concerned than those of any other classes of my fellow Citizens, cannot fail to strengthen that just confidence in the rectitude of public measures, which is essential to the general welfare.⁴

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To WILLIAM FALKENER⁴⁸

United States, September 14, 1795.

Sir: I received your letter of the 22d. of August, covering an address from the Inhabitants of Warren County⁴⁹ who assembled to consider of the treaty lately negotiated with Great

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Britain; and, expressing their disapprobation of it, desired that it might not receive my sanction.

Previous to that meeting the treaty had received my assent. The principles which governed

48. Chairman of a meeting of citizens at Warrenton, N. C.

49. North Carolina.

my determination have been made public. While I regret a difference of opinion on this subject, with perfect sincerity I assure my fellow Citizens "that my attachment to the Constitution is unalterable, and my zeal to promote the happiness and welfare of my Constituents diminished." With due respect etc.⁵⁰

50. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

On September 14 Washington wrote a similar reply to William Harvey, chairman of the meeting of citizens at Fredericksburg, Va. This letter and the address from Fredericksburg are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On this same day (September 14) Washington also replied to Samuel Hopkins, jr., chairman of a meeting of "Deputies of the District of Brunswick," Virginia; to Thomas Taylor, chairman of the meeting of the Camden and Orangeburg districts, South Carolina; to Thomas Tristram, chairman of the meeting of the Cheraw district, South Carolina; and also to George Heriot, chairman of a meeting of the inhabitants of Georgetown, S.C. Copies of these answers and the addresses are in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To JESSE SANDERS⁷²

Mount Vernon, September 30, 1795.

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Sir: Your letter of the 29 ultimo covering resolutions of a number of the Citizens of Columbia County, expressing of their disapprobation of the treaty lately negotiated between the United States and Great Britain has been received.

The treaty has received my sanction, after the most mature deliberation, and consultation of the interests and happiness of my fellow Citizens of the United States and a conviction that thereby they would both be promoted. I regret exceedingly that there should have been any difference of opinion on so important a subject; but I trust my fellow Citizens will believe that the advancement of their prosperity and welfare, which I have always in view, has produced the decision I have

72. Chairman of a meeting of the citizens of Columbia County, Ga.

made in the present case. With due respect I am etc.73

73. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*. The resolutions are also entered in the "Letter Book."

To JOSEPH PIERCE⁸⁵

October 9, 1795.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 29th. Ultimo covering Resolutions of a meeting of the inhabitants of the County of Westmoreland, relatively to the Treaty with Great Britain.

The approbation therein given of this measure, and the assurances of supporting the constituted authorities of our country cannot but be pleasing to all who know the value of regular government.

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No wish, while I fill the office I now have the honor to hold, can be more ardent, than that the acts of my administration should give satisfaction to my constituents. The contrary will always give me pain. I know but one sure method to merit the

85. Chairman of the meeting of the inhabitants of Westmoreland County, Va.

first, or to avoid the latter, and that is, to pursue steadily such measures (of an Executive nature) as appears to be most conducive to their interest and happiness. This, to the best of my judgment, has been my invariable endeavour, and I cannot but hope, that the ratification of the Treaty (agreeably to the advice and consent of the Senate) will be viewed in this light when it is better understood than it seems to be at present.

For the expression of personal confidence in me, I feel very sensibly. I am etc.⁸⁶

86. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*, where the address of the inhabitants is also entered.

On October 9 Washington wrote to Bartholomew Dandridge, requesting him to forward letters for John Jay and Dr. Priestly, "but not by Post, for this would be expensive for Pamphlets, wch. I believe they are...I expect to leave this for Phila. on Monday...Make enquiry for good footmen...Let Colo. Pickering know that I was not able to write to him by the Post of this day." This letter is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

To THE CITIZENS OF FREDERICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA⁶⁵

Philadelphia, December 16, 1795.

Gentlemen: I received with great satisfaction your obliging and letter dated the 2d instant at Winchester, inclosing a resolution of the citizens of Frederic county, who met the preceding day at the County Court-House, expressing their entire approbation of my

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conduct, in ratifying the treaty lately negotiated between the United States and Great Britain.

Next to the approbation of my own mind, arising from a consciousness of having uniformly, diligently and sincerely aimed, by doing my duty,

65. Addressed to Gen. Daniel Morgan, Charles M. Thornton [Thruston], Robert White, jr., Charles Magill, and Joseph Caldwell, the committee which forwarded the resolution.

to promote the true interests of my country, the approbation of my fellow citizens is dear to my heart. In a free country, such approbation *should* be a citizen's best reward; and so it *would* be, if Truth and Candour were always to estimate the conduct of public men. But the reverse is so often the case, that he who, wishing to serve his country, is not influenced by higher motives, runs the risk of being miserably disappointed. Under such discouragements, the good citizen will look beyond the applauses and reproaches of men, and persevering in his duty, stand firm in conscious rectitude, and in the hope of [an] approving Heaven.⁶⁶

66. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering.

On December 18 Rev. Hezekiah Balch, then in Philadelphia, wrote the President that his congregation "was poor, but we always have been, and I hope always shall be, firm, and unshaken friends to the president, and the federal constitution. It was my congregation, and their neighbours, who under providence, defeated Forgueson, at Kings mountain. But if our children are to be brot, up in ignorance, we cannot expect that they will understand the nature of true liberty. I mean to wait on the members of Congress with our Subscription; The presidents name, at the head of our Subscription, would be of unbounded Service." Dandridge had noted on this letter "The President gave 100 Dollars."

To THE SELECTMEN OF CHARLESTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS³⁸

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[United States, August 31, 1795.]

Gentlemen: I recd. your Letter of the 22d. of July containing the Votes of the Inhabitants of the Town of Charlestown, who were convened to take into consideration the Treaty pending between the U. S. and G. B.

My assent to the Treaty as advised and consented to, by the Senate and the principles which governed my determination are now publickly known. In this as in every other exercise of the powers committed to me by the Constitution I have aimed to promote the public good and to merit those sentiments of personal confidence which are expressed in your communication. [With due respt. etc.]³⁹

38. Richard Devins, David Goodwin, Joseph Adams, Richard Frothingham, John Carter, and Eliphalet Newell.

39. The draft is in the writing of Oliver Wolcott, jr. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

To THOMAS NEWTON, JUNIOR

[United States, Philadelphia, August 31, 1795.]

Sir: I have recd. your Letter of the 6th. instant inclosing the proceedings of the meeting at Norfolk³¹ on the 5th. relative to the Treaty lately negociated between the United States and Great Britain.

On subjects of so complex *and relative* a nature as those embraced by the Treaty a diversity of opinion was to have been expected. My determination [which] is known to have been in affirmance of the Treaty as advised and consented to by the Senate, was formed after the most mature deliberation and with a sincere regard to the public good.

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Though it cannot be uninteresting to me to know that the wishes of a part of my fellow Citizens have been contravened by this decision, yet if the purity of my intentions ever entitle me to their approbation, it has not been forfeited on the present important occasion. [With due respt. etc.]³²

31. Virginia.

32. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering. The words in brackets are in the writing of Washington.

To THE PHILADELPHIA EMIGRATION SOCIETY

[February 22, 1796.]

Gentlemen: The principles of benevolence on which the Society you represent is founded, and which regulate its proceedings, entitle it to the approbation of all your fellow Citizens. The congratulations of such a Society I receive with particular pleasure: and the satisfaction resulting from my constant exertions to promote the Welfare of my Country will be increased, if my public services shall at the same time have contributed to render it a grateful residence to persons emigrating from foreign Countries. Your kind wishes, Gentlemen, for the continuance of my health and happiness claim and receive my cordial thanks.³⁸

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*, where the address from the Emigration Society and also the constitution of that society is entered.

On February 22 Representative William Loughton Smith of South Carolina moved that the House of Representatives adjourn for half an hour to enable the members to pay their respects to the President. After debate the motion was voted down 50 to 38.

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From the *Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer* (Philadelphia: 1893) is the following: "February 22. At noon Speaker Hare, of the Senate, and Speaker Latimer, of the House, [of the Pennsylvania Legislature] with their members, called on President Washington to congratulate him on his birthday. He stood in the center of the back room, where he bowed to each member as he passed into the front room, where cake and wine were served. At night the ladies and gentlemen had a dance at Rickett's riding place, southwest corner Sixth and Chestnut Streets."

To JOSEPH LEECH

United States, May 5, 1796.

Sir: I have received from you the address and resolutions of the inhabitants of the town of Newbern,⁴⁶ passed at their meeting on the 19th of April, noticing the call of the House of Representatives for the papers relating to the negociation of the treaty with Great-Britain, and my answer to that call.

A sacred regard to the constitution, and to the best interests of the United States as involved in its preservation, having governed my conduct on that occasion, the consciousness thereof would at all times have furnished me with strong ground of satisfaction: but it gives me real pleasure to find that conduct approved by my fellow-citizens; and the kind and affectionate terms in which the approbation of the inhabitants of

46. North Carolina.

Newbern has been conveyed to me, are peculiarly grateful, and demand my cordial acknowledgments. These I beg you to express to them, with my sincere thanks for their earnest wishes for my welfare.⁴⁷

47. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering. The date line is in the writing of Washington.

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To WILLIAM DARKE

Mount Vernon, October 14, 1796.

Dear Sir: Through you I beg leave to transmit the enclosed answer to the Address which came under your cover to me, yesterday.²

As the printed copy announces it to be from "The Inhabitants of Berkeley County" without noticing, particularly, the Officers of Militia, I was at a loss in what manner to make my response; for if the printed part only should be published, it would be difficult to account for my introducing *them* in the Answer; and if the writing at the foot of the Address should appear, the omission of them would be as hard to account for. I have, therefore, sent two draughts; One to suit each case. The other to be destroyed.

2. The address to Washington, from the inhabitants of Berkeley County, Va., is a printed broadside, dated Sept. 30, 1796, and bears the following manuscript note, signed "Wm. Darke," at its foot'. "By the Unanimous Consent of all the Officers of the 55th. and 67th Regiment of the Berkeley Militia: ordered that General William Darke do sign the above address, for and in their behalf, and that he transmit the same to the *President* of the United States." This broadside is in the *Washington Papers*.

With great esteem etc. 3

To THE OFFICERS OF MILITIA AND OTHER INHABITANTS OF THE COUNTY OF BERKELEY

United States, October 14, 1796.

Gentlemen: With a grateful heart I received your friendly and affectionate Address of the 30th Ultimo.

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No Satisfaction in my retirement can exceed that, of meeting the esteem and affection of good men and lovers of our Country, in return for my endeavours to serve it.

The approbation of my fellow-Citizens, is the only reward I ever sought, for any services I could render. Next to the continued prosperity, and happiness of these United States, it would be the highest gratification my mind is susceptible of; and if I have obtained yours, it will be a source of pleasing reflection while I remain among you.

For the benevolent Sentiments you have been pleased to express for me, I offer you my sincere thanks; and pray you to accept my best wishes for your welfare. 4

3. In the writing of George Washington Craik.

4. In the writing of George Washington Craik.

To THE INHABITANTS OF SHEPHERDS TOWN⁹⁹ AND ITS VICINITY

United States, October 12, 1796.

Gentlemen: With great sensibility I receive

⁹⁹. Now in West Virginia.

your polite and affectionate Address of the 6th. instant.

That Beneficent Providence, which, hitherto, has preserved us in Peace, and increased our prosperity, will not, I trust, withdraw its protecting hand; while we, on our part, endeavour to merit a continuance of its favors.

Equally persuaded am I, that no inconvenience will result from my retreat to the walks of private life. The good sense of my Countrymen will always discern, and can never be at

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a loss to choose, a fit character to administer the Executive Government of these United States.

If it has been my good fortune, through the course of my Civil and Military employment, to have met the approbation of my Countrymen, my wishes will be consummated; and I shall have found the only reward I ever had in view.

For the favorable sentiments you have expressed for me, and for your kind wishes, I sincerely thank you, and reciprocate with great cordiality my vows for your welfare. 1

1. In the writing of George Washington Craik.

On October 12 Washington inclosed this reply to the Inhabitants of Sheperds Town in a brief letter to John Kearsley and Joseph Swearingen, the committee, who forwarded the address. The copy of this letter, also in the writing of Craik, is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JOHN SMITH, WILLIAM McGUIRE, CHARLES THRUSTON, ROBERT WHITE, JUNIOR, AND HUGH HOLMES⁴⁷**

United States, November 28, 1796.

Gentlemen: The approbation of my public conduct, which you have been so good as to express in behalf of the People of your country, has not failed to excite the most agreeable Sensations, and you have made it the dearer, by the terms of personal affection with which it is accompanied.⁴⁸

47. The committee of Frederick County, Va.

48. The letter of the committee, dated November 12, is in the *Washington Papers*.

At all times it has been my endeavour to discern and promote the welfare of our country to the utmost of my abilities; and if in critical situations events have been finally propitious,

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the success is to be attributed to the unceasing support of my fellow citizens, who have known how to maintain a Government made by, and for themselves.

In the retirement, so much desired, when I shall once more return to the occupations of private life, it will be a never failing source of my happiness to recollect, the various instances in which my honest exertions to discharge the duties of public office have been more than rewarded by the benevolence of my fellow-citizens.

To you Gentlemen, and the people of Frederick county, I most gratefully acknowledge this evidence of attachment:⁴⁹ and long, under the blessings of a benign Providence, may we all live to see our common country which we equally love, happy in the enjoyment of its present tranquillity, liberty and Independence.

49. The Frederick County address was in the form of a printed broadside and dated Sept. 30, 1796. Five of them are in the *Washington Papers*, each bearing many manuscript signatures of the various inhabitants. Its copy in the "Letter Book" bears the notation "Signed by upwards of three hundred persons."

***To JAMES LINN, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL, AND J. H. IMLAY, SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF NEW JERSEY**

United States, November 21, 1796.

Gentlemen: I am truly sensible of the honor done me by the concurrent and unanimous resolutions of the Council and House of Assembly of the State of New Jersey, passed the 15th. and 16th. instant, approving my conduct in the Administration of the Government of the United States, and regret[ing]³⁸ my determination to retire [from public life].³⁸ They have also been pleased to express their

38. The words in brackets are in the writing of George Washington Craik.

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acknowledgments for the sentiments contained in my late Address to my fellow citizens, which affection, respect, and solicitude for their lasting welfare prompted me to lay before them.

Such testimonies, while they manifest the kindness of the Council and Assembly, persuade me to believe that my services have been useful to my country; a consideration which will render their recollection dear to me, to the latest period of my life.

To SENATORS ELIJAH PAINE AND ISAAC TICHENOR⁷⁴

United States, December 12, 1796.

Gentlemen: With particular pleasure I receive the unanimous address of the Council and General Assembly of the State of Vermont. Altho' but lately admitted into the Union, yet the importance of your State, its love of liberty and its energy, were manifested in the earliest period of the revolution which established our independence. Unconnected in name only, but in reality united with the Confederated States, these felt and acknowledged the benefits of your cooperation. Their mutual safety and advantage duly appreciated, will never permit this union to be dissolved.

I enjoy great happiness in the testimony you have presented and in the other proofs exhibited from various parts of our country, that the operations of the general government have justified the hopes of our citizens at its formation, which is recognised as the era of national prosperity. The voluntary acknowledgments of my fellow citizens persuade me to believe, that my agency has contributed to produce this effect. This belief will be to me a source of permanent satisfaction, and those acknowledgments a rich reward.

My sincere thanks are due, and I beg you, Gentlemen, to make them acceptable, to the Council and General Assembly of the State of Vermont, for the very obliging and affectionate terms in which they notice me and my public services. To such confidence and support as I have experienced from Councils, Legislative Assemblies, and the great

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body of American Citizens I owed the best exertions of every faculty I possessed, happy now in the reflection that our joint labours have been crowned with success. When withdrawn to the shade of private life, I shall view with increasing pleasure the growing prosperity of the United States: in the perfect protection of their government I trust to enjoy my retirement in tranquillity: and then, while indulging, a favourite wish of my heart, in agricultural pursuits, I may hope to make even my private business and amusement of some use to my country. 75

74. From Vermont.

75. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering. The date line is in the writing of Washington.

***To GOVERNOR JOHN HAWKINS STONE**

Philadelphia, December 23, 1796.

Dear Sir: Yesterday I received your letter of the 16th. instant, covering the resolutions of the Senate and House of Delegates of the State of Maryland, passed on the 13th and 14th.⁸² The very obliging and friendly terms in which you have made this communication, merit my sincere thanks.

The manner in which the two branches of the legislature of Maryland have expressed their sense of my services, is too honourable, and too affectionate ever to be forgotten. Without assigning to my exertions the extensive influence they are pleased to ascribe to them, I may with great truth say that, the exercise of every faculty I possessed was joined to the efforts of the virtue, talents and valour of my fellow-citizens to effect our Independence: and I concur with the Legislature in repeating, with pride and joy, what will be an everlasting honor to our country, that our revolution was so distinguished for moderation virtue and humanity, as to merit the eulogium they have pronounced of being unsullied with a crime.

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With the same entire devotion to my country, every act of my civil Administration has been aimed to secure to it those advantages which result from a stable and free government; and with gratitude to Heaven, I unite with the Legislature of Maryland in the pleasing reflections, that our country has continued to feel the blessings of peace, liberty and prosperity, whilst Europe and the Indies have been convulsed with the horrors of a dreadful and desolating war. My ardent prayers are offered that those afflicted regions may now speedily see their calamities terminated, and also feel the blessings of returning peace.

82. The resolves of the Maryland House of Delegates, Dec. 13, 1796, were printed in broadside form, and are in the *Washington Papers*. Referring to the Farewell Address, they decree, unanimously, "That to perpetuate this valuable present in the most striking view to posterity, it be printed and published with the laws of this session, as an evidence of our approbation of its political axioms, and a small testimony of the affection we bear to the precepts of Him, to whom, under Divine Providence, we are principally indebted for our greatest political blessings." The Maryland Senate concurred in these resolves, December 14. Governor Stone's letter of transmittal, dated December 16, is in the *Washington Papers*.

I cannot omit my acknowledgements to the Senate and House of Delegates for the manner in which they have noticed my late Address to my fellow citizens. This notice, with similar acts in other States,⁸³ leads me to hope that, the advice which therein I took the liberty to offer as the result of much experience and reflection, may produce some good.

Their kind wishes for my domestic happiness, in my contemplated retirement, are entitled to my cordial thanks.

If it shall please God to prolong a life already far advanced into the vale of years, no attending felicity can equal that which I shall feel in seeing the administration of our

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government operating to preserve the Independence, prosperity and welfare of the American People. With great respect etc.

83. All except three of the State legislatures took similar action, and their addresses, or resolves, together with Washington's replies, are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. A large number of unofficial addresses from citizen committees were also sent to the President. These, together with Washington's replies, fill 84 consecutive pages in the "Letter Book."

***To THE SPEAKER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 9**

United States, January 24, 1797.

Sir: I acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favour of the 20th of the last month, covering the Resolutions of the House of Representatives of the State of South Carolina of the preceeding day.

The sense the House have been pleased to express of my public services, the declaration of their affectionate attachment, and their kind wishes for

9. Robert Barnwell.

On January 24 Washington wrote a similar, but shorter, letter to David Ramsay, president of the Senate of South Carolina, acknowledging their unanimous resolve of January 19. A press copy of this is in the *Washington Papers*. The resolutions of both the Senate and the House of South Carolina are entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

On January 25 Washington also wrote to Gov. Samuel Ashe, of North Carolina, acknowledging in similar terms an address of the General Assembly. A press copy of this is in the *Washington Papers*.

my happiness, are for those services the most grateful reward.

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While I enjoy the personal satisfaction which the general sentiment of approbation expressed by my country cannot fail to produce, I derive from it, as a citizen of the United States, the greatest pleasure; as it authorises the conclusion that the important measures of their Government have been calculated to promote their true and permanent interests, which are inseparately connected with rectitude of principle and impartial justice to other Nations.

You will have the goodness to communicate to the House of Representatives these sentiments, with my sincere acknowledgments for the marks of attention with which they have honoured me. Your individual and affectionate Solitude for my happiness is entitled to my cordial thanks.

***To THE DELAWARE SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES**

United States, February 2, 1797.

Gentlemen: I receive with great satisfaction the Addresses of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Delaware, which you have now presented to me, on the occasion of my contemplated retirement from the Presidency of the United States.

These evidences of their affection, and testimonies that my public Services have been useful to my country, will ever be dear to me.

If yielding to the calls of my fellow-citizens, I have renounced the ease and enjoyments of private life, to encounter the dangers and difficulties of the first and

most arduous employments, it was because the sacrifices, on my part, were by them deemed interesting to their safety and welfare. Animated by such motives, and supported by the general spirit and patriotism of my countrymen, when the objects of my public agency were attained, nought remained to me but to seek again the private station which their partiality and confidence required me for a time to relinquish. In this chosen

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retirement, the approving voice of my country will ever be a subject of grateful recollection; while I behold its increasing prosperity, under the influence of the same public spirit, energy, justice and moderation, in which its independence, character and credit have been founded. That such may be the fruit of our labours, and such the happy progress of our Republic, is, and ever will be, the object of my ardent wishes.

These sentiments, gentlemen, with my grateful acknowledgments to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Delaware, I pray you to communicate to them in such manner as you shall deem proper.¹³

13. A note from the Delaware delegation in Congress requesting an appointment with the President, for the purpose of presenting the address of the Delaware Legislature, is in the *Washington Papers*, under date of Feb. 1, 1797.

To THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 17, 1797.

Gentlemen: The kindness of my fellow Citizens has given me frequent occasion to make my acknowledgments for their expressions of confidence, attachment and affection; and for their honourable testimonies that my public cares and labours have been useful to my Country.

With great satisfaction I receive your additional testimonies, that as a public man I have not lived in vain.

Though now seeking that repose which retirement and the tranquil pursuit of rural affairs are calculated to afford, and which my time of life requires, the love of my Country will indeed suffer no abatement: its safety and prosperity will be essential to the enjoyment of my remaining years. And I confide in the discernment and patriotism of my fellow Citizens for the choice of wise and virtuous men who will successively administer every branch

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of the Government in such manner, as under divine providence, to enforce the general happiness.

For your affectionate wishes for my present and future happiness, accept, Gentlemen, my cordial thanks.¹⁹

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The original address from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives is dated February 17 and is in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE MASSACHUSETTS SENATORS

[February 24, 1797.]

Gentlemen: The sentiments expressed in the address you have delivered to me from the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, sentiments as honorable to them as to me, have excited the most grateful emotions. Whatever services I have rendered to my country, in its general approbation I have received an ample reward. Having nothing in view but to vindicate its rights, secure its liberty, and promote its happiness, I might expect the most efficient aid and support in the exertions of able and upright men, and in the general spirit of my fellow citizens. All this I have experienced; and our united efforts have resulted in our independence, peace and prosperity. And I entertain the pleasing hope, that the intelligence and superior information of my fellow citizens, enabling them to discern their true interests, will lead them to the successive choice of wise and virtuous men to watch over, protect and promote them, who while they pursue those maxims of moderation, equity and prudence, which will entitle our country to perpetual peace, will cultivate that fortitude and dignity of sentiment

which are essential to the maintenance of our Liberty and independence.

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Should it please God, according to the prayers of your constituents, to grant me health and long life, my greatest enjoyment will be to behold the prosperity of my country; and the affection and attachment of my fellow citizens, through the whole period of my public employments, will be the subject of my most agreeable recollections: while the belief, which the affecting sentiments of the people of Massachusetts, expressed by their Senate and House of Representatives, with those of my fellow citizens in general, have inspired, that I have been the happy instrument of much good to my country and to mankind, will be a source of unceasing gratitude to Heaven.²⁴

24. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering. The address from the Massachusetts Legislature is dated February 13, and is in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE RECTOR, CHURCH WARDENS, AND VESTRYMEN OF THE UNITED EPISCOPAL CHURCHES OF CHRIST CHURCH AND ST. PETER'S⁴⁰

[March 2, 1797.]

Gentlemen: To this public testimony of your approbation of my conduct and affection for my person I am not insensible, and your prayers for my present and future happiness merit my warmest acknowledgments. It is with peculiar satisfaction I can say, that, prompted by a high sense of duty in my attendance on public worship, I have been gratified, during my residence among you, by the liberal and interesting discourses which have been delivered in your Churches.

Believing that that Government alone can be approved by Heaven, which promotes peace and secures protection to its Citizens in every thing that is dear and interesting to them, it has been the great object of my administration to insure those invaluable ends; and when, to a consciousness of the purity of intentions, is added the approbation of my fellow Citizens, I shall experience in my retirement that heartfelt satisfaction which can only be exceeded by the hope of future happiness. 41

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40. Of Philadelphia, Pa.

41. The draft is in the writing of Timothy Pickering.

To THE CLERGY OF DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS RESIDING IN AND NEAR THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

[March 3, 1797.]

Gentlemen: Not to acknowledge with gratitude and sensibility the affectionate addresses and benevolent wishes of my fellow Citizens on my retiring from public life, would prove that I have been unworthy of the Confidence which they have been pleased to repose in me.

And, among those public testimonies of attachment and approbation, none can be more grateful than that of so respectable a body as yours.

Believing, as I do, that *Religion* and *Morality* are the essential pillars of Civil society, I view, with unspeakable pleasure, that harmony and brotherly love which characterizes the Clergy of different denominations, as well in this, as in other parts of the United States; exhibiting to the world a new and interesting spectacle, at once the pride of our Country and the surest basis of universal Harmony.

That your labours for the good of Mankind may be crowned with success; that your temporal enjoyments may be commensurate with your merits; and that the future reward of good and faithful Servants may be your's, I shall not cease to supplicate the Divine Author of life and felicity.⁴⁸

48. The draft is in the writing of George Washington Craik.

On March 3 Washington signed a pardon for 10 persons convicted of high treason in connection with the Whiskey Insurrection; and also granted a remittance of a fine inflicted

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on a smuggler. These were, probably, Washington's last official acts as President of the United States. These documents were sold at auction, Feb. 26, 1925.

On March 3 Washington also wrote to M. von Steuben, in Pomerania, who had inquired about the estate of the late Baron Steuben: "To supercede any further inquiries of the kind, perhaps I ought to add, that although the pay and emoluments of the Baron from the United States were liberal, and supported him several years after the close of the American war, yet possessed of a generous heart and accustomed to an expensive mode of living, he felt some embarrassments, until in the year 1790 Congress granted him a pension of 2500 Dollars a year. From this he could make no saving; and whatever Estate he left behind him resulted from the bounty of particular States in grateful acknowledgment for the services he had rendered to the United States during the American war." A press copy of this letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THE CITIZENS OF ALEXANDRIA AND ITS NEIGHBORHOOD**

[March 23, 1797.]

Gentlemen: In the character of a private citizen, I have the honor to receive your Address, and I do it with all the sensibility that gratitude, friendship and affection can excite.⁵²

Having obeyed the calls of my country, and spent the prime of my life in rendering it the best services of which my abilities were capable; and finding that the infirmities of age were creeping upon me, it became as necessary, as it was congenial to my feelings, to seek, in the shades of retirement, the repose I had always contemplated.

To have finished my public career to the satisfaction of my fallow-citizens, will, to my latest moments, be matter of pleasing reflection; and to find an evidence of this approbation among my neighbours and friends (some of whom have been the companions of my Juvenile years) will contribute not a little to highten the enjoyment.

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No [wish in my retirement can exceed that of seeing our Country happy; and I can entertain no doubt of its being so, if all of us act the part of good Citizens; contributing our best endeavours to maintain the Constitution, support the laws, and guard our Independence against all assaults from whatsoever quarter they may come. clouds may and doubtless often will in the vicissitudes of events, hover over our political concerns, but a steady adherence to these principles will not only dispel them but render our prospects the brighter by such temporary obscurities.

52. This address was presented to Washington at the public dinner given to him by the citizens of Alexandria at Gadsby's Tavern, at 2 p.m., Thursday, March 23.

For the affectionate, and flattering manner in which you have been pleased to express your regrets on the occasion of my relinquishing public employment, and for your congratulations on my return to my long forsaken residence at Mr. Vernon, I pray you to accept my warmest acknowledgments, and the assurances of the additional pleasure I shall derive from the prospect of spending the remainder of my days in ease and tranquility among you; employed in rural pursuits, and in the exercise of Domestic and other duties.

For the prosperity of the Town and neighbourhood, and for your individual happiness, I offer my best vows.]53

53. From a partial facsimile in a sales catalogue, 1912. The portion in brackets is from the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

In the "Letter Book" and noted as having been received March 15, the day "Washington arrived at Mount Vernon, is copied an address to Washington from the president and professors of Georgetown College, but no copy or draft of a reply is now found in the *Washington Papers*.

To THE BROTHERS OF ANCIENT YORK MASONS OF LODGE NO. 22 57

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[April 1, 1797.]

While my heart acknowledges with Brotherly Love, your affectionate congratulations on my retirement from the arduous toils of past years, my gratitude is no less excited by your kind wishes for my future happiness.

If it has pleased the Supreme Architect of the Universe to make me an humble instrument to promote the welfare and happiness of my fellow men, my exertions have been abundantly recompensed by the kind partiality with which they have been received; and the assurance you give me of your belief that I have acted upon the Square in my public Capacity, will be among my principle enjoyments in this Terrestrial Lodge.⁵⁸

57. Alexandria, Va.

58. The draft is in the writing of Tobias Lear.