

Benjamin H. Latrobe, Surveyor of the Public Buildings to Thomas Jefferson, September 1, 1807, Partial Transcription Available, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

Latrobe to Jefferson

Washington, September 1, 1807.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Dear Sir:

The greatest inconvenience we suffer is from the most troublesome multitudes of visitors, who crowd the house at all times, and who do infinite mischief to the plastering and the stone work, and the lower classes who carry off whatever they can lay their hands on. The building was for some time the regular play place for all the boys in the city, and nothing but great exertion has kept them in better order. It appears to me absolutely necessary, whenever the furniture shall be brought into the house, and much of it is already there, that access should be denied to everyone without exception, otherwise great offense will be given by a partial restriction, and indeed the visits of the more respectable would be very inconvenient. It has, therefore, occurred to me that after the 15th of September admittance will be prohibited, and also to put up the notice at the Capitol. In favor of strangers passing through I might make what exceptions appeared proper. It would give additional sanction and weight to this notice could I plead the direction of the President of the United States, but if you do not think it of sufficient importance to use so mighty a sanction, I have no reluctance to take upon me all the obloquy which I know it will occasion.

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[B. H. Latrobe]

[THE JOURNAL OF LATROBE, pp. 144–45.]