Victor Marie DuPont to Pierre Samuel DuPont de Nemours New York, 1–4 July 1788 (excerpt)

My Dear Papa

. . . Since I have no other means of drawing closer to you than writing to you, I shall commence, and I shall turn to it many times from this point until the departure of this Packet, of which there is as yet no sign. I shall divide my letter by order of topics, take one sheet for each subject, and I shall subjoin thereto something each time I shall apprehend that I have encountered something new, or indeed each time that the aversion to living with these people makes me the more sensible of my good fortune in having parents and friends in France and of my wish to converse with you.

Politics.

We are strong at present, we other Federalists. We have nine states that have accepted our new constitution. Georgia and New Hampshire have both been added since the last letter that you received from me. The issue is therefore decided. It is expected that the news from Virginia [and] North Carolina will doubtless follow any day now, and there is no longer hope of establishing two separate confederations. Rhode Island and New York would be the only inflexible ones, and we trouble ourselves little about them. The New York convention has assembled, and is discussing or, better said, is disputing now in Pokeppsee village 30 [80] miles from here. The city and the county of New York are federalist, and have for representatives for the constitution the best heads and the best orators in America, among others Chancellor Livingston and Colonel Hamilton. Every day they make speeches in the assembly full of the force of eloquence and of truth, *But is it margaritas anté porcos*,[1] all the representatives from counties from the back and the interior of the country are from the more substantial ranks of the peasants who understand nothing and who [are] creatures or friends of the governor. [They] are all devoted to him and will be of the same opinion as he. At the same time, they are promised to him without knowing why, and it seems certain that they will reject, totally without pretext, that which threatens their rights to their *liberty*, a big word that they all have on their lips and which no one understands.

We are going to have a great procession[2] here in honor of the adoption by nine states. The entire company of tradesmen will march. Several orators will speak &c. &c. It appears decided that when the governor returns, and above all a certain Mr. Smith, the distinguished friend of the governor and the chief of the antifederalists, who grossly insulted the chancellor at the convention,[3] they will be seized by the populace, then tarred and feathered; and it is said that the governor, to avenge himself, will call out the militia, that it is well understood that those from the county of New York will not march, that those from counties devoted to him will have

to come, and that thereby civil war will break out. But here is what will be done or set in motion against the militia from the country's interior counties: some troops from Jersey and from Connecticut who will come to join those from New York will kill or frighten off all the governor's people, who in fact are all Dutch scoundrels who have become Americans. I need say no more. I know them. We are going to journey there. Afterwards, if the state persists in refusing to fall in with the new constitution, it should be told: pay us at once your part of the debt, for it is not to you but to you in congress that the King of France and others will address themselves. They cannot pay, and the chances are even that they will reunite. There you have the conjectures of our most famous politicians, but from here to the departure of this letter you will have an account of a part of all that:

I am not rich, but I would gladly give something, insofar as it concerns me, to have the pleasure of seeing a governor feathered, and now that I am no longer concerned, I would be very glad for us to be free of each other, and I would be still more glad to see to what excess a *free* government and people may be disposed, and at one point a perfect democracy, so beautiful in your books, Sirs, is impossible and unsustainable in execution. I am here to inform myself, and thus I do so.

3 July

We have just received the news of the adoption by Virginia. The majority was 10, 89 for and 79 against. It is hoped that this will have some effect on the New York convention. Bells are ringing, and the federalists cry *hurrah*.

4 July is the day of the anniversary of Independence and the fete of the Cincinnati. The militia will gather and parade in the city at 1 o'clock. Col. Duer[4] gave a speech in St. Paul's Church on this subject. The assembly there was very brilliant, and upon exiting, all the Cincinnati went in procession to the President's house, where the entire diplomatic corps and the principal figures of the city thus made their ceremonial visits. In the afternoon, the President's wife held a fine assembly and reception. . . .

1. Latin: pearls before swine. See Matthew 7:6. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

2. This procession took place on 23 July.

3. The reference is to an exchange between Robert R. Livingston and Melancton Smith that took place on 20 June. Smith admitted that he and Livingston "have come in contact several times—but he has ceased hostilities."

4. William Duer had been made an honorary member of the New York Society of the Cincinnati in 1786. Since Duer was not an officer in the Continental Army, he was not eligible for a regular membership. The text of his speech has not been located.

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