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George Cabot

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I am much gratified that Mr. Cabbot answered my expectation and that you found him the sensible, liberal, agreeable Gentleman, I said him to be—you were fortunate in having such a companion for so long a journey.

Stephen Higginson to Alexander Hamilton, Boston, 20 May 1790

I gave Mr. Geo: Cabot a line to you. He is one of our first men in point of influence & intelligence. I knew he would be gratified by an interview with you, & I think you will be pleased with him.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 30 December 1794

Another Gentleman Yesterday let me read in his Heart without suspecting it—Mr. Cabot told me, he thought he should not come again to senate—Mrs. Cabot was averse to coming this time. He had Difficulty to persuade her—He thought she would not come again and if she declined he would not come without her. You know my Opinion of the Motive of his removal to Brooklyne. His Resignation will be in pursuance of the Same Views. But I cannot help thinking he will be disappointed. I know of no Man who would make a better Governor, at least among all those who are likely to obtain the Place—But his services have not been known enough to the People to sink into their hearts. His fortune is not Splendid enough to *dazzle*: and he is not at the head of any interested Bank or Company whose Exertions can bring him in.—I pity these ambitious Men! By joining with [Moses] Gill he might be chosen Lt. Govr. for what I know.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 2 January 1796

The Festival season of Christmas and the new Year, is enjoyed in Perfection by all, for what I know, but poor Cabot and me. He is as solitary and disconsolate as a loose Goose. He strives to keep up his Spirits and preserve his usual Gaiety but one plainly perceives it is all Exertion.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 14 January 1797

Tell Mr. Cabot . . . , if you see him—His Countrymen will soon believe him to be a Giant in a Cave and will go in a Body and dig him out. [i.e., call him out of retirement]. I wish, but don't tell Cabot so.

George Cabot to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Brookline, Mass., 26 March 1798

I live perfectly recluse scarcely going beyond the limits of my farm once in a month; I do not pretend, however, to be uninterested in what passes in the world; on the contrary, I partake in all the anxieties of those who foresee and tremble at the destiny of our country; but while I am so selfish as to applaud myself for shunning all responsibility which might belong to official character, I have omitted no opportunity to inculcate just sentiments upon those who hear me prate, or

read what I write; for I have often been tempted to write, by the belief that public opinion depended much on the newspapers, and that I could say much that would be useful.

George Cabot to Alexander Hamilton, Brookline, Mass., 11 October 1800

Although I am not “*an influential man*” & wish I was not thought to be, I expect at least one & if printed several copies of your *justificatory letter* [i.e., Hamilton’s public letter attacking President John Adams].

George Cabot to Rufus King, 28 December 1800

You know my disposition to see things in a gloomy light, but I rather indulge this disposition when evils are before us than after they arrive.

John Lowell to Timothy Pickering, Boston, 3 December 1814

Mr. Cabot is undoubtedly the wisest man in our State, or among the wisest. He has the best stored mind of any man I ever saw, except Hamilton. he is a very practical man, well acquainted with every thing which concerns the best interests of a nation; but Mr. Cabot has been always a desponding man as to our public affairs, and their downward course has confirmed his opinions.

S. S. Goodrich: Recollections of a Lifetime, II, 36

The most imposing man among them [i.e., the delegates to the Hartford Convention in 1814] was George Cabot, the president. He was over six feet in height, broad-shouldered, and of a manly step. His hair was white,—for he was past sixty,—his eyes blue, his complexion slightly florid. He seemed to me like Washington,—as if the great man, as painted by Stuart, had walked out of the canvas, and lived and breathed among us. He was, in fact, Washingtonian in his whole air and bearing, as was proper for one who was Washington’s friend, and who had drunk deep at the same fountain—that of the Revolution—of the spirit of truth, honor, and patriotism. In aspect and appearance he was strikingly dignified; and such was the effect of his presence that in a crowded room, and amid other men of mark, when you once became conscious he was there, you could hardly forget it. You seemed always to see him,—as the traveller in Switzerland sees Mount Blanc towering above other mountains around him wherever he may be. And yet he was easy and gracious in his manners, his countenance wearing a calm but radiant cheerfulness, especially when he spoke. He was celebrated for his conversational powers; and I often remarked that, when he began to converse, all eyes and ears turned toward him, as if eager to catch the music of his voice and the light of his mind.

William Sullivan, Familiar Letters

Mr. Cabot was a tall man, well formed, of courteous and elegant manners, and refined aspect; his complexion light, his eyes blue, his mode of speaking in colloquial intercourse serious and earnest, but not vehement. The dress of his thoughts was clear, strong, and appropriate, and every sentence apparently incapable of amendment.

James A. Hamilton: Reminiscences

Cabot I remember well. He was one of the best talkers of the day, and one of the most intelligent, upright, amiable, and excellent of men.

John Cadwalader**Executive Committee of Congress to John Hancock, Philadelphia, 28 December 1776**

You'll observe sir that Mr. Cadwallader is now a Brigadier General made so by our Council of Safety & you cannot conceive what general Satisfaction it gives. He is a Gentleman of amiable private Character, fine Fortune, Numerous Connections, has a martial Spirit & has taken infinite pains to qualify himself for Command. He is beloved by his Troops & gains their confidence wherever he goes. General Washington in a letter to Congress sometime past recommended their appointing this Gentleman a Brigadier General in the Continental service. His having recommended him for that purpose & our knowledge of his merits and a Conviction that it would be vastly pleasing to all the associators of this State, prompts us to recommend to Congress to do it immediately. He now commands the Continental Colonels & they cannot complain that he is put over their heads. He is now leading on a valuable band of men in your service & the appointment will give Spirit & Vigor to their operations.

James Callender?**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 25 June 1807**

I will close the Catalogue for the present, with an Example of a Man who I believe has justly acquired the honourable Distinction of being the greatest Lyar of the Age. I am convinced he has written and printed more Lies than any Man in America at least. For Eighteen or Nineteen years this Man, hardened in impudence, has distinguished me with a course of his Calumnies. But what has been his reward? I really know not a Single Man of good Character who does not hold him in Abhorrence, And many if not all the most Sensible Men of his own Party, cannot conceal their Contempt of him. He has received every Insult, in the Streets, and his unconquerable Propensity to Slander, and his impudent refusal to give reasonable Satisfaction, got him posted as a Lyar and a Coward. Not having spirit to resent this himself, he is said to have encouraged his son to attack Selfridge on Change who shot him upon the Spot. It gives me pain to write this. But it ought to be considered by the Slanderer as a terrible Rebuke and Chastisement of his long continued and aggravated Guilt.

John Adams to Joseph Ward, Quincy, Mass., 8 January 1810

Callender and Sally will be remembered as long as Jefferson as Blotts in his Character. The story of the latter, is a natural and almost unavoidable Consequence of that foul contagion in the human Character Negro Slavery.

James T. Callender

Thomas Boylston Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 14 July 1802

There is that J T Callender, who wrote “the prospect before us,” so much praised and extolled by the Jacobins, and who disagreeing with his employers about the wages of his Sins, now comes out, with his “secrets worth knowing,” which for your amusement I herewith enclose. This unprincipled Scoundrel, who was actually caressed by Jefferson, until he became importunate for his recompense, may be believed when he testifies against himself, however unworthy of credit on other Subjects, and when he confesses his own venality, we must suppose that he knew to whom he was indebted for the bribe.

Abigail Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 October 1802

What a Scene does Callender unfold, if still a Lyar, he has the art of wearing the plain unvarnishd tale of truth when writing against the former administrations, he call'd not upon his adversaries to deny his assertions. he dared not challenge them to the contest. He skulked in the dark, and scatterd his poison only amongst those whom he knew it would opperate upon—I have not a worse, nor so bad an opinion of him, as of his baselow mean employer [i.e., Thomas Jefferson]; out upon him, let him be accursed amongst men and his name a reproach. I have removed every vestage of him out of sight.

Alexander Campbell

John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 9 February 1796

I have attended today in the Supream Court an argument by Mr. [John] Marshall and Mr. Campbell, of a great Question concerning the British debts which were paid into the Treasury of the state of Virginia before the Peace.* These are able Lawyers and good Speakers.

*Ware v. Hylton.

Mathew Carey

Brissot de Warville: *New Travels in the United States of America*, 1788

Among the printers and booksellers of Philadelphia I took particular note of Mr. Carey, an Irish printer who was persecuted and forced to flee to America for having published in his *Volunteer's Journal* an article which hurt some important people, among them a Mr. Forster. Having no money, he was in great difficulty until M. Lafayette came to his assistance and enabled him to establish a press, on the condition that this act of generosity would remain a secret. Mr. Carey kept his word until two years later when, in a public quarrel with another newspaper publisher, Mr. [Eleazer]

Oswald, who quarrels with everybody and who raised doubts about the sources of Carey's money, he was forced to reveal the secret.

Mr. Carey, who combines great industry with much knowledge, publishes the *American Museum*, a monthly magazine which is equal to the best periodicals of Europe. It contains information on America's most important achievements in the arts and sciences and in politics; the part which deals with agricultural developments is given the greatest attention.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1789

Imprudence in Business:—The follies of which I was guilty in the management of my business were so glaring & so numerous that my escape from bankruptcy was almost miraculous. I shall here mention one.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1829

My lameness which through my life, was in some way or other a daily disadvantage to me, was contracted during my infancy through the carelessness of my nurse.

My mother found it physically impossible to suckle her children, and parted with them with great regret. I was nursed in the country about 20 miles from Dublin.

My lameness was originally slight and might have been easily remedied while the ankle joint was tender, by steady compression to place it on its proper position. No effort of this kind was made. My parents, who according to the fashion of the times, were very superstitious, placed more reliance on the efficacy of holy wells, of which there were then a number in Ireland, and many a dip I underwent in those Sanitary waters regardless of my wailings. Whatever might have been the effect on others, they had none on me. And the evil was increased by the encumbrance of a heavy boot with thin plates of Iron to the mid leg in order to support the joint. The weakness of the ankle caused the foot to bend over, & I have constantly walked on its side whereby a callus grows on it, which has frequently created great pain every Step I take.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1829

Drawing near to the close of my career I think a few hours spent for the use of my descendents, sketches of some of the most important events of my life, cannot be ill employed. They may serve to encourage them in the attempt to be useful to Society by some details of what has been effected by a man of moderate endowments—very indifferent address—manners which though never rude, unless grievously provoked were never very attractive or conciliating without any talent as a speaker—unsupported by family or party influence—and merely by zeal, industry, perseverance, disregard of personal sacrifices of time business & money and disinterested devotion to the public welfare.

Should there be any doubt as to the justice of my claims to those qualities, I may freely & unhesitatingly appeal to the community in which I have lived for above 44 years, and which from the conspicuous figure I made and the zealous part I took in most public business of a benevolent, charitable or useful character, I must have been as thoroughly known and as correctly appreciated as if I had been in one of the most conspicuous public stations in the city.

Allowing as I freely do, my mental deficiencies, to an extreme scarcely credible—and allowing with equal freedom, the unfortunate irritability of my temper which produced great inconvenience

occasionally, I may surely be allowed to speak with equal freedom of those features of my physical and moral character, which operate as a set off, & in some degree atone for the blemishes.

I have always considered that my talents are greatly overrated. My knowledge as in the most limited degree.—There is not a single science, however simple, with which I was thoroughly acquainted. Perhaps there never was a man who had read so much, who knew so little.

Caetera de sunt

I am now advanced some months in my 69th year—and it may not be improper to commit to paper my views and the state of my mind as to futurity.

I am prepared to die without a sigh, whenever the moment arrives. But I freely confess, I am desirous to live as long as my mental and bodily faculties remain tolerably perfect as they do at present. My memory is considerably impaired. But my reasoning faculty appears rather improved than otherwise. I am far more prompt at reply than I used to be. I write with as much ease and I believe with as much cogency as I have ever done. On any subject which I understand sufficiently I can write at the rate of about a printed page of 1200 ems per hour. I have little to wish for as regards fortune, except so far as an increase of it might, increase my power of usefulness.

William Carmichael

Arthur Lee to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, 11 June 1777

A Mr. Carmichael obtained from me a letter to you under a pretence of his going immediately to America. I have since found him to be a very unworthy person, whom I can by no means recommend to your patronage.

James Lovell to John Adams, York, Pa., 10 February 1778

The week after Mr. C—— was appointed secretary, I saw the P.S. of a letter to Mr. S. A.* in which he is said to be a very unworthy person, but he had so good a Character in the estimation of Congress and from Maryland Gentlemen, that I did not think proper to move for a power of Suspension to be given to the Commissioners, as I find it is the opinion of some here that the secretary should be independent.

*Arthur Lee to Samuel Adams, July 31, 1777.

Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Laurens, Valley Forge, Pa., 12 June 1778

I am very glad Mr. *Carmichael* is arrived. He is a sensible, amiable, virtuous, and charming gentleman on every Respect. He wants I believe to be in the army and I hope he will be employed there to his own agreement, as I am sure it will turn to the good of the service.

Samuel Adams to John Adams, Philadelphia, 21 June 1778

Mr Carmichael comes strongly recommend[ed] by Dr Franklin & Mr Silas Dean; but Dr Lee in his Letter gives Reasons why he cannot place a Confidence in him. From a long Correspondence with Dr Lee, I conceive so great an Opinion of his Candor as well as inflexible Integrity & Attachment to our Country, that I cannot entertain a Doubt that he would suffer partial Considerations to

operate in his Mind to the Prejudice of any Man. Such a Difference of Sentiments concerning a Gentleman who I imagine must be of some Consequence, could not take Place without at least apparently good grounds; and it may produce such Effects on this Side of the Water as may prove uncomfortable to us if not injurious to our Cause. Would it not then be doing some Service, to exercise your Prudence in endeavoring to investigate the real grounds of it, in doing which possibly some things may open to View of Importance and at present not thought of.

Arthur Lee to Silas Deane, Paris, 19 September 1779

There is no man more dangerous or desperately wicked than C. Subtle, insinuating, false, persevering, and ambitious, he will assume any character and perpetrate any villainy to accomplish his purpose. . . . He appears to me to be one of those extraordinary characters, whose minds teem with incessant mischiefs to which their treachery gives a plausible cloathing, and in whose smiles there is most danger.

Arthur Lee to John Adams, L'Orient, 15 March 1780

Since my arrival here I received a packet from Congress, which came by the *Confederacy*. In that is a copy of one of the most false and wicked papers I have read upon the subject given into Congress by Mr. Carmichael. . . . I can not determine whether Mr. Deane or Mr. Carmichael is the most contemptible liar. And I confess to you, sir, that it astonishes me that such contemptible and manifestly malignant performances should have had the smallest influence on any man of common sense or common honesty in or out of Congress.

John Jay to the President of Congress, Madrid, 26 May 1780

P.S.—Congress may think it extraordinary that Mr. Carmichael's handwriting does not appear in this letter. He is, with my approbation, now at Aranjuez, and I must do him the justice to say that he is always ready and willing to do his duty as secretary.

John Jay to Gouverneur Morris, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 28 September 1781

I will tell you plainly that Your Secretary is the most deceitful, insidious Man I ever met with in all my Life, and I have met with many. This I think is being confidential as well as particular. The Time may come when I shall give you more Facts than you will be pleased with that this same man is in my judgment, the most faithless and dangerous one, that I have ever met with, in all my life. This is strong language, but twenty-two months constant experience assures me it is just. If I could have trusted my ciphers when at Martinique I would from thence have written to you of this Subject given you a hint of his shameful duplicity and unkind conduct. To do him harm is not my wish, revenge never has nor ever shall, actuate me, but happy shall I be to see the day when I shall cease to and to have any Thing to do with him. No more be plagued with his tricks.

John Jay to Silas Deane, Madrid, 5 December 1781

If you had given me the character of Carmichael when at Congress, he never would have been with me. In all circumstances considered, it appears to me a little extraordinary that you who knew Carmichael should, notwithstanding, have been silent about his tricks; the facts, I imagine was,

that you was taken in by his fair but delusive appearances. For my part I was greatly mistaken about the man.

John Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, Cadiz, Spain, 13 December 1781

But while asking for new favors let me not forget to return my most grateful thanks for those already received amongst which I do not reckon it the least the being brought acquainted with your amiable & worthy Disciple Mr. Carmichael who possesses the happy talent of making friends of all who know him.

Sarah Jay to Catherine W. Livingston, Passy, France, 16 July 1783

My dear Sister: . . . I am sorry you was afflicted by what that gentleman told you. I should have thought that his known insensibility & insincerity had by this time blunted the edge of his ill nature. The idea of a return to Spain was so disagreeable to me as it could have been to you, but heaven be prais'd! my apprehensions on that score are at present dispel'd—indeed I think Mr. Carmichael who is already there the only *American* who is capable of enjoying himself there—for all my countrymen I know not his equal for duplicity of soul, or one who can so readily smile upon & court the man he hates or despises, or fawn upon the man who treats him with contempt. The pleasure he rec[eives] from making himself the subject of conversation has sometimes led him to relations of actions & sentiments below the dignity of a man & much more so below the more elevated sentiments of an American, however I am rejoiced at the prospect of his continuance in Europe as I've not the least desire of ever meeting him again in America. I think it fortunate for the tranquility of America that the artful & interested will now aim at appointments in Europe as they can here indulge any of their propensities unobserv'd by their more virtuous Country-men; for sh[oul]d they remain at home their restless ambition would only lead them to excite factions & defame true patriots.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Auteuil near Paris, 13 April 1785

I Suppose it is a question with you whether you shall Send a Minister to Spain; I really hope you will. It is a question too no doubt, who to send.—There will be some perhaps many, perhaps all for Mr. Charmichael. I know not this Gentn. personally. He is active and intelligent, by all, I have learnt. He has made himself Friends among the Spanyards, and among the foreign Ministers, and at the French Court, and at Passy. I see that the Comte de Vergennes, the Duc de la Vauguion who is gone to Spain, and Dr. Franklin, have an affection for him, and are laboring to Support him. These Circumstances are much in favour of his Happiness, and if he has that pure and inflexible Virtue, that thorough Penetration into the Hearts of Men and the Systems of Affairs, and that unchangeable Attachment to our Country that you require in a public Man you will honour him with your Support. You know him from his Correspondence with Congress whether he is this Man. I know nothing to the Contrary. But I confess to you, that the ardent Friendship of Courtiers and Diplomattick Characters, to any American Ministers is to me, a Cause of Suspicion. I know it to be impossible for any Man to do his Duty to his Country, and preserve it, all he can hope for is to be esteemed and respected, it is well if he is not hated and despied.

But Mr. Jay is Master of the Character in question. I have heard with Pleasure that Mr. Charmichael in their last Interview Settled Things to the satisfaction of Mr. Jay, and cleared up some Things which Mr. Jay had not been Satisfied in. You may know the Truth from him, and know of

him, at least so far as to wish for his Continuance in service provided you don't see Symptoms of his Endeavours to Support his Character upon foreign Interests, at the Expence of those of our Country. But there is too marked a Love for him for my Taste, in Characters in whose Friendship for America I have no Confidence. The greatest Danger to our foreign affairs has ever arisen from this, and ever will from an Endeavour to obtain a Reputation in America, by gaining the Friendship of Courtiers and obtaining their Recommendations in their private Letters for themselves and their Connections. These favours are never obtained but by Sacrifices.

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Paris, 27 January 1786

With him I am unacquainted personally; but he stands on advantageous ground in the opinion of Europe, and most especially in Spain. Every person whom I see from there speaks of him with great esteem. I mention this for your private satisfaction, as he seemed to be little known to Congress. Mr. Jay however knows him well, and, notwithstanding their little brouillerie [i.e., disagreement], his candor will do him justice.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris, 30 January 1787

Mr. Carmichael is I think very little known in America. I never saw him & while I was in Congress I formed rather a disadvantageous idea of him. His letters, received then, showed him vain & more attentive to ceremony & etiquette than we suppose men of sense should be. I have now a constant correspondence with him, & find him a little hypochondriac and discontented. He possesses very good understanding tho' not of the first order. I have had great opportunities of searching into his character & have availed myself of it. Many persons different nations coming from Madrid to Paris all speak of him as in high esteem & I think it certain that he has more of the Count de Florid.B's [Foreign Minister Conde de Floridablanca] friendship than any diplomatic character at that court. As long as this minister is in office Carmichael can do more than any other person who could be sent there.

William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Paris, 3 October 1790

[Suggesting possible diplomatic appointments for himself.] I do not speak of Madrid because certainly Carmichael can be more useful there than any person that could be sent.

David Humphreys to Thomas Jefferson, Madrid, 3 January 1791

Mr. Carmichael, being on terms of intimacy with the first characters here, is certainly capable of effecting more at this court than any other American.

David Humphreys to George Washington, Lisbon, Portugal, 23 July 1792

Lord St. Helens [Alleyne Fitzherbert, Baron St. Helens], the British Ambassador at Madrid, having been here a few days ago on his way to England, I was induced to make enquiries of him respecting the actual situation of Mr. Carmichael's health & spirits. He informed me with frankness, yet in a delicate manner, that he considered Mr. Carmichael on many accounts as an amiable & valuable Man; but that his health is ruined, & that (what is worse) he has addicted himself entirely to hard drinking. Lord St. Helens added these words, "His breath smells as strong, even in a morning of Spiritous Liquor as any Sailor's I ever met with." Disagreeable as the task is, a selfe

of duty obliges me to mention the circumstance precisely as it came to my knowledge: because it seemed necessary for the public good that you should know it. I never saw the Person in question intoxicated in my life. It is true he suffered miserably from depression of spirits. I was however in hopes the return of health, business, & amusement, would give new energy to those talents which appeared to be very capable of rendering service to the U.S. in the field where they are employed: but which seemed to have languished a long time merely for want of notice, & having something to do.

John Jay: Note, post-9 February 1795

Care should be taken of these Papers. They include Letters to and from Wm. Carmichael—a man who mistook cunning for wisdom; and who in pursuing his Purposes, preferred the Guidance of artifice and Simulation, to that of Truth and Rectitude. He finally yielded to Intemperance, and died a Bankrupt.

Dabney Carr

Thomas Jefferson to Dabney Carr, Jr., Monticello, 19 January 1816

I well remember the pleasure expressed in the countenance & conversation of [the] members generally on this debut of Mr. Carr, & the hopes they conceived as well from the talents as the patriotism it manifested. But he died within two months after; & in him we lost a powerful fellow laborer. His character was of a high order. A spotless integrity, sound judgment, handsome imagination, enriched by education & reading, quick & clear in his conceptions, of correct & ready elocution, impressing every hearer with the sincerity of the heart from which it flowed. His firmness was inflexible in whatever he thought was right: but when no moral principle stood in the way, never had man more of the milk of human kindness, of indulgence, of softness, of pleasantry in conversation & conduct. The number of his friends, & the warmth of their affection were proofs of his worth, & of their estimate of it. To give to those now living an idea of the affliction produced by his death in the minds of all who knew him, I liken it to that lately felt by themselves, on the death of his eldest son, Peter Carr, so like him in all his endowments and moral qualities, and whose recollections can never recur without a deep-drawn sigh from the bosom of anyone who knew him.

Edward Carrington

Bennett Goode to Thomas Jefferson, Mecklenberg, 15 December 1780

The three months the last Guard had to serve at the Magazine at Taylor's Ferry is Expired. With difficulty we have furnished a temporary guard to serve until Your Excellency Order in what manner a standing guard be furnished. The difficulty of furnishing a guard arises from abuses committed on the soldiers by Continental Officers when at that Station; Col. Edward Carrington caned a sergeant and Ordered two of the soldiers stripped and whipped which was Executed without the

formality of a trial. If such abuses is suffered to pass with impunity it will not be in the power of Your Officers to furnish a guard at that place.

Nathanael Greene to Benjamin Lincoln, Ashley Hill, S.C., 2 October 1782

. . . as Lt. Col. Carrington retires the first of January and wishes to retire earlier, I should be glad of your instructions on the business as early as possible as from a restrictive resolution of Congress last winter I don't think myself at liberty to appoint a successor [as quartermaster general of the Southern Army] nor do I know where to find one. Col. Carrington's judgment & integrity as well as activity and resolution is scarcely to be equaled. A man of an easy temper without a comprehensive mind will involve the whole business of the Army in confusion as well as multiply endless expense.

. . . I do not speak of Carrington from a bland partiality but from my having seen and felt the benefit of his talents and from knowing him to be a man of strict integrity and attentive to what concerns the public interest. Nor do I mean to mention his merit to have him continued in the department. All that I instance him for is to convince you that public economy depends greatly upon the Men you appoint; and that the saving in the Articles of wages is a contemptible consideration in a trust of such magnitude.

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Paris, 11 August 1786

I look forward with anxiety to the approaching moment of your departure from Congress. Besides the interest of the Confederacy and of the State I have a personal interest in it. I know not to whom I may venture confidential communications after you are gone. [Richard Henry] Lee I scarcely know, [William] Grayson is lazy, Carrington is industrious but not always as discreet as well meaning yet on the whole I believe he would be the best. If you find him disposed to the correspondence engage him to begin it.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Former colonel in Virginia, without talent but esteemed for his character which is frank. Loving pleasures without however neglecting his affairs.

Edward Carrington to Alexander Hamilton, Richmond, Va., 7 February 1795

By the last Mail I had the Honor to receive yours of the 29th. Ult. communicating the President's offer of the place of Comptroller of the Treasury. Calls to public Office from that source can never be received by me but with emotions of the highest reverence and gratification, dictated as they uniformly are by motives of public good, they constitute the most flattering evidences of merit, that can possibly be obtained. Under these impressions, it is with difficulty indeed, that I decline the offer. I am however under the irrevocable necessity of doing so. There have been periods in the History of our Country when private emolument, could not be placed in competition with public service—these trials are, I trust, now passed, and I find it absolutely necessary to attend, with diligence, to the improvement of the very moderate property I possess, as the only permanent resource for the future support of my family—removed at a distance, these improvements must be neglected, and a public employment scarcely yielding my Current expenses, could not but daily render my prospects worse.

Robert G. Harper to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 27 April 1798

Genl. Pinckney & Carrington of Virginia have been thought of among our friends [as Secretary of War], if you cannot be got: but the first is absent, & the 2d. however able, wants the weight of Character requisite at this time. Besides he may be more fit for the marine, where also will be wanted a man of authority & detail.

George Washington to Secretary of War James McHenry, Mount Vernon, 22 July 1798

But what have you done respecting the Quarter Master General? I hope, and trust, it is not intended to Overlook the character I recommended in *pointed terms*; than whom, I will confidently add, one more adequate is not to be found in the U. States, let the Operations of the Army be in what quarter it will; nor so fit, if they be in the States South of Maryland; as he knows and is known by, every one in those Regions, being the Deputy Quarter Master General, under General Greene, in all his active movements; and as much esteemed as he is extensively known. In a word, if this appointment does not take place after my explanations, (which I was careful to have well understood, respecting this Officer); and after it was given *especially*, in charge to you, to consult me thereon, I shall feel very much hurt, on the *general ground* I took; and more so, by confiding with certainty that that Officer, for the reasons I assigned, would be made agreeable to me, I wrote to Colo. Carrington & received the answer herewith enclosed; which may be returned after the proper use is made of it.

I desire it may be understood that my predilection for this Gentleman proceeds from no other cause than a *full* conviction of his fitness to fill the Office to which he was assigned, in my mind; for being separated from the main army he is infinitely better known to me by character, than from personal acquaintance (which in fact is slight)—and from the steady & firm support he has given to the Government ever since. Such a character, with his Military knowledge, intelligence and experience in the duties of Quarter Master, would render him an acquisition to any army; and the *only* fear I had, was, that he would decline accepting it.

Alexander Spotswood to George Washington, Newport, Va., 16 September 1798

[Speaking about Colonels Edward Carrington and William Heth]—these are Sensible, genteel men—and who acted in their Stations last war with great Credit—and would be in my opinion an ornament, as well as a great acquisition to the Army—these gentlemen have families—and held very lucrative posts under government—the former Supervisor, the latter Collector at Bermuda Hundred—and as I have reason to believe, their other property is not great—particularly that of the latter—it is doubtful whether they would Relinquish their present profitable Situations, for a post in the Army.

Theodore Sedgwick to Alexander Hamilton, February 1799

This shows that we are afflicted with an evil for which certainly no complete remedy can be applied, but it might be palliated perhaps by bringing into the administration a man of talents and of that peculiar kind which gives as ascendancy without its being perceived. This never was in any country more important. Nor if the right character could be found is it an object unattainable. With all his good qualities, however, our friend C——n is not the man. In official details and execution he has, perhaps, no superior, but in the other and more essential characteristic to my mind he is wholly deficient.

Charles Carroll of Annapolis

John Adams: Diary, 23 February 1777

At the Point [Ferry Branch] you have a full view of the elegant, splendid Seat of Mr. Carroll Barrister. It is a large and elegant House. It stands fronting looking down the River, into the Harbour. It is one Mile from the Water. There is a most beautiful Walk from the House down to the Water. There is a descent, not far from the House. You have a fine Garden—then you descend a few Steps and have another fine Garden—you go down a few more and have another. It is now the dead of Winter, no Verdure, or Bloom to be seen, but in the Spring, Summer, and fall this Scaene must be very pretty.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer to Charles Carroll of Annapolis, 28 March 1773

Your Son is a most flaming Patriot, and a red hot Politician: He and I have frequent skirmishes in the Field of Politics, each retiring Victor, and of consequence always ready to renew the Attack.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll of Annapolis, Philadelphia, 7 September 1774

In a civil war there is, & ought to be, no neutrality—indeed were I permitted to remain neuter I would disdain the offer—I will either endeavor to defend the liberties of my country, or die with them: this I am convinced is the sentiment of every true & generous American.

John Adams: Diary, 14 September 1774

This Day Mr. Chase introduced to us, a Mr. Carrell of Annapolis, a very sensible Gentleman, a Roman catholic, and of the first Fortune in America. His Income is Ten thousand Pounds sterling a Year, now, will be fourteen in two or 3 years, they say, besides his father has a vast Estate, which will be his, after his father.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 18 February 1776

Dr. Franklin, Mr. Chase, and Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton in Maryland, are chosen a Committee to go into Canada. The Characters of the two first you know. The last is not a Member of Congress, but a Gentleman of independent Fortune, perhaps the largest in America, 150 or 200, thousand Pounds sterling, educated in some University in France, tho a Native of America, of great Abilities and Learning, compleat Master of French Language and a Professor of the Roman catholic Religion, yet a warm, a firm, a zealous Supporter of the Rights of America, in whose Cause he has hazarded his all.

John Adams to James Warren, 18 February 1776

Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Chase of Maryland, and Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, are chosen a Committee to go to Canada. I must confess I have very great Confidence, in the Abilities and Integrity, the Political Principles and good Disposition of this Committee. . . .

Carroll's Name and Character are equally unknown to you. I was introduced to him, about Eighteen Months ago in this City, and was much pleased with his Conversation. He has a Fortune, as I am well informed, which is computed to be worth Two hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling. He is a Native of Maryland, and his Father is still living. He had a liberal Education in France, and is well acquainted with the French Nation. He Speaks their Language as easily as ours—and what is perhaps of more Consequence than all the rest, he was educated in the Roman Catholic Religion, and still continues to worship his Maker according to the Rites of that Church. In the Cause of American Liberty, his Zeal, Fortitude and Perseverance have been so conspicuous that he is Said to be marked out for peculiar Vengeance by the Friends of Administration. But he continues to hazard his all: his immense Fortune, the largest in America, and his Life. This Gentleman's Character, if I foresee aright, will hereafter make a greater Figure in America. His Abilities are very good, his Knowledge and Learning extensive. I have Seen Writings of his which would convince you of this.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr., Philadelphia, 29 July 1776

As to myself, if they can find a better Representative, they have my free consent to choose him. I shall never court popular favor but always endeavor to deserve it.

James Duane to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 28 June 1777

Mr. Carroll . . . I believe you know to be an amiable Gentleman & with whom we are very Sociable.

Charles Carroll of Annapolis to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 14 November 1777

Are You not too fond of Popularity & has not that Fondness biassed Your Judgment? . . .

I assure you I am not fond of popularity, because I am convinced it is often gained by the unworthy: I would wish to deserve the good opinion of the good & discerning; now I am sure the bulk of mankind are neither good, nor discerning, and 'tis for this very reason I wish you to avoid all publications relative to the tender bill. They will answer no good purpose, and may subject us both to very disagreeable consequences, particularly if written in the same intemperate style of your letter to Chase. Your reasoning however just will not be understood or listened to by the People. It is too much against their interest to believe what you say. If they should believe they will pretend not to believe, & impute your invectives against the injustice of the Act to your particular interest. I am never for showing my teeth till I can bite.

François Barbé de Marbois to Joseph-Matthais Gérard de Rayneval, Philadelphia, 15 August 1784

The Catholics, always directed by the Jesuits in this country, have been ill-disposed to the Revolution; they are not much better disposed toward us. But several persons of consideration have not the same prejudices. One of them, Mr. Carroll, the largest capitalist and the richest landholder

in Maryland, has even spoken to me of the desire of the whole congregation to be directed by a bishop or apostolic vicar. He is a pious, wise, and prudent man, who feels the necessity of uniting under one chief the individuals of our religion scattered through Maryland and Pennsylvania; but he foresees great difficulties on account of their dispersion, and because there has never been a particular and regular correspondence between the Catholics of the two states.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

The richest man on the continent. He gets £10,000 Sterling in income. Catholic and devout; loves his retirement and his studies. His parsimony sometimes degenerates to avarice. He is a good patriot and a friend of France.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

An inflexible patriot, and an honest independent friend to his country. He had been educated at St. Omer's,* and possessed considerable learning. He seldom spoke, but his speeches were sensible and correct, and delivered in an oratorical manner.

*The College of the English Jesuits at St. Omer, France. Carroll also studied at Rheims, Paris, Bourges and London.

Paine Wingate to Jeremy Belknap, New York, 12 May 1789

We have one Roman Catholic Senator from Maryland who is a very worthy sensible man. He is said to be the richest man in America, worth half a million sterling, but is as plain in his dress & manners & as easy of access as any man whatever.

William Smith of Maryland to Otho H. Williams, New York, 21 June 1789

Our little C. C. is I think very candid & Sincere in his professions, and what you will hardly believe, is almost an enthusiast in favor of trade & Navigation.

Charles Carroll to George Washington, Annapolis, Md., 28 January 1793

[In response to a request that Carroll serve as a commissioner to meet with the Indians at the Lower Sandusky in the Northwest Territory.] I have seriously weighed the reasons urged to induce me to accept the trust; I feel their force, and am sensible, that the number of citizens, from which characters in every respect proper for the intended negotiation can be selected, is unfortunately too circumscribed. No one more ardently wishes, than I do, for peace with the hostile Tribes, upon terms not dishonorable to our country. My time I would Cheerfully give, and I would endeavor to exert what talents I may possess, and should be extremely happy in being instrumental in accomplishing an object of such importance to the United States. But the length and unavoidable difficulties of the journey deter me from undertaking it. The infirmities of age are coming fast upon me; I do not think I could endure the fatigue of so long a journey, part of it thro' the wilderness, without imminent danger to my health. I am very liable to take cold in changing of my lodgings, and I never get cold without it affecting my breast, and leaving a troublesome cough, which I seldom shake off for a month or two afterwards: the anxiety too of mind I should experience from the responsibility of the station, & dread of not answering yours and the public expectation & wishes would also greatly contribute to derange my health, & really might disqualify me for the

business. I hope these reasons which I have candidly assigned, will justify me, my dear Sir, in your opinion for decling the commission with which you wish to honor me.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Alexander Hamilton, Brooklandwood near Baltimore, Md., 27 August 1800

It is the character of age to be timid & suspicious; and this infirmity so natural to men of my time of life, has no doubt its influence on my mind.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to James McHenry, Washington, 15 November 1800

Mr. C.'s opinions are such as were to have been expected from a wise, virtuous, firm, and experienced man. I have long considered this gentleman as one of the most distinguished props of society in our country. How greatly must we regret that our affairs have not been under the direction of such a character.

James McHenry to Alexander Hamilton, Baltimore, Md., 19 November 1800

. . . one of the wisest, most prudent and best men in the United States.

Thomas Jefferson to Robert R. Livingston, Washington, 4 November 1803

Mr. Patterson is the President of the Bank of Baltimore, the wealthiest man in Maryland, perhaps in the United States, except Mr. Carroll; a man of great virtue and respectability.

Daniel Carroll

Daniel Carroll to Michael O'Brien, 25 May 1787

I request the favor of you to look out for a convenient & economical situation, where I can board a Small family, somewhere near my former temporary residence, near German Town. I would prefer this Situation from its being high, healthy, & at a suitable distance. . . . I have a Servant & two Horses. . . . As this appointment [to the Constitutional Convention] was neither wish'd for, or expected by me, & I have been detained from home all last winter, & 6 weeks this Spring, it will be some time before I can enter on the execution of this Trust. I dare not think of residing in Phila. during the Summer months. My health, thank God, is much better than it has been for several years past. Moderate (but constant dayly) exercise, temperance and attention, have in a great measure conquer'd my nervous complaints, without the aid of medicine.

William Pierce: Sketches of Delegates to the Constitutional Convention, c. September 1787

Mr. Carrol is a Man of large fortune, and influence in his State.—He possesses plain good sense, and is in the full confidence of his Country-men.—This Gentleman is about ___ years of age.

“An Inhabitant,” *Maryland Journal*, 26 December 1788

He has served his country with ability and assiduity, and his integrity and candour are unimpeached.

John Carter

David Howell to Thomas Jefferson, Providence, R.I., 6 July 1790

Having been informed that a Printer is to be Selected in each of the States, for promulgating the laws of the United States, the immediate object of this letter is to recommend for that Employment John Carter, Esq; who has for 20 years past kept the Post Office here. His Printing-Office was the first established in this town. He is the Senior Printer of our State, and circulates a much greater number of Papers than any other Typographer Therein.

Mr. Carter was taught “the Art which preserves all other Arts” under the late Dr. Franklin, is uncontrovertibly the most accurate Printer in the State, and is himself a *good Writer* also. He has many Claims to the Notice of the Public, has a numerous Family to provide for, is a worthy Citizen, and a Friend to good Government.

Stephen Chambers

John Armstrong, Jr., to Robert McPherson, Manor of Livingston, 26 November 1788

Chambers has natural capacity but wants the other requisites.

George Champlain

Henry Marchant to John Adams, Newport, R.I., 1 January 1793

With Col. Champlain I waded thro’ our political troubles from 1784 till *our* adoption of the present Constitution, and He still continues a most industrious patriotick member of our Genl. Assembly, a Merchant of established Character,—No Man more independent and disinterested, And On We mean sooner or later to persuade to Congress.

William Channing

Jabez Bowen to George Washington, Providence, R.I., post-14 June 1790

William Channing Esqr.—Was Attorney Genl. of the State previous to the paper money system when he was let out on acct. of his opposition to their measures—has been a member of the Genl. Assembly of New York—is a good Lawyer & much esteemed—

Jeremiah Townley Chase

Edmund Randolph to George Washington, Philadelphia, 18 February 1793

Mr. J. Chase has the reputation of being upright, laborious, of a sound judgment, but of indifferent elocution. His acquired knowledge in law, or other walks of literature, scarcely places him on the roll of real fame.

Samuel Chase

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 10 October 1774

Chase speaks warmly.

John Adams: Diary, 15 September 1775

Upon recollecting the Debates of this Day in Congress, there appears to me a remarkable Want of Judgment in some of our Members. Chase is violent and boisterous, asking his Pardon. He is tedious upon frivolous Points.

John Adams: Diary, 18 September 1775

In the afternoon Mr. S.A. [Samuel Adams] and I made visit at Mrs. Bedford's to the Maryland Gentlemen. We found Paca and Chase and a polite Reception from them. Chase is ever social and talkative. He seems in better Humor, than he was before the Adjournment. His Colony have acted with Spirit in Support of the Cause. They have formed themselves into a System and enjoined an Association, if that is not an Absurdity.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 11 February 1776

Chace is a Man of common sense.

John Adams to James Warren, 18 February 1776

Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Chase of Maryland, and Mr. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, are chosen a Committee to go to Canada. I must confess I have very great Confidence, in the Abilities and Integrity, the Political Principles and good Disposition of this Committee. . . .

Chase is in younger Life, under forty; But deeply impressed with a sense of the Importance of securing Canada, very active, eloquent, spirited, and capable.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr., Philadelphia, 29 July 1776

I hope Mr. [Thomas] Johnson is secure of a seat [in Congress]. Chase I know is—& I know these two men have the will & power to be useful.

John Adams to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 13 August 1776

I showed your last Letter to Mr. Chase, who begged it to write you an answer. I have exactly the same Idea of him, which you express. He had the good of the Service at Heart, but was too Sanguine, and had too little Experience in such Scenes, and too little Penetration into the Characters of Men.

William Williams to Ezekiel Williams, Philadelphia, 23 August 1776

Mr Chase one of the late Comissioners [to Canada] there, a most bold, voluble & overbearing man, who went strongly prejudiced [against General Worster] & came back his violent & bitter Enemy, for no Cause that I can possibly find out.

William Hooper to Joseph Hewes, 30 November 1776

There are some long faces here, & the Hero from M——d who disavowed his Allegiance to Great Britain 6 months ago & frightened poor Parson Zubly home shakes in his shoes, now talks of accommodation, Conciliation, reconciliation, Peace on honorable terms. This man had the impudence to call those tories who talked thus when the Scheme was practicable & when I thought & when I still think that if America could have had her terms, it was the best bargain she could have made. I hate such puffing. Such as these if America falls have ruined her by giving vain hopes, & lying without Compunction or restraint.

Mayor and Alderman of Annapolis: Denounce Chase during Revolutionary movement

[Chase was a] busy, restless incendiary, a Ringleader of Mobs—a foul-mouth'd and inflaming son of Discord and Faction—a common Disturber of the public Tranquility, and a Promoter of the lawless excesses of the multitude.

William Williams to Ezekiel Williams, Philadelphia, 23 August 1776

. . . a most bold, voluble & overbearing man. . . .

Samuel Chase to John Sullivan, 24 December 1776

I hope America will never submit to the Tyrant of Britain. I declare as an Individual I would rather become a Subject of France, but I am afraid all my Countrymen are not of my stubborn Temper. The sullen unrelenting Monarch of Britain should never lord it over me.—I despise, I hate, and wish to destroy him, and all such Tyrants.

Charles Carroll of Annapolis to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, 7 November 1777

I wrote to Chase with reflection and Cool deliberation. I do & must continue to look upon Him as a Rogue unworthy the Society of Honest Men unless He acknowledges His fault & endeavors Sincerely to Atone for it. I have not a better Opinion of those You Allude to, I never will, if I can avoid it, be in their Company. But I think there is a wide difference between those who promoted & Voted for the Law & a Person who condemned it & declared (as He told me) that if it depended on Him, it should not be a Law notwithstanding He did not publicly as he ought oppose it.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll of Annapolis, 25 November 1777

Chase is too impetuous & gives his adversaries by this a great advantage over him.

“Extract of a letter from Baltimore,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 30 April 1788

Mr. Chase is antifederal, both from ambition, because he cannot expect to be so powerful in the general government as he is in the state, and because his shattered circumstances render him interested in discord and a civil war.

Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 20 May 1788

For instance I should be very glad to see Mr. *Chase* in the [Maryland] house of delegates, and very sorry indeed to see him in the senate, for the reasons above recited; but had he even been uniformly an advocate for the adoption of the new government, notwithstanding his transcendent abilities and political experience, his warmest advocates will readily admit his talents to be much better adapted to a *popular*, than a *select*, branch of legislation—I *have ever thought him* a worthy political character on the whole, though in particular instances too apt to be hurried away by an enthusiastic warmth of temper, and too great a confidence of success.

“Veracitas,” Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 9 September 1788

Mr. Chase has been reared in a political school. To know the rights of the people has been his study, and to defend them is a habit with him. It is his pride to be our servant, and in popular assemblies he has an understanding to contrive, abilities to execute, and a soul to command—His assiduity for the public good is unsurpassed, and his zeal of the noblest kind. I have often been an eye-witness of his conduct, and speak this as the real sentiments of my heart. When he advocated the bill for the removal of the penalties and disabilities on non-jurors, I remember that a late representative, of this town, exclaimed with warmth and seeming sincerity—“What a great man that is!

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Elder member of Congress. Man of superior talents, as much for jurisprudence as for legislation, but whose moral character has often been attacked, without his excuses ever fully justifying himself.

Matthew Ridley to John Jay, Susquehanna, Md., 7 September 1789

I forgot when with you to mention Mr. Samuel Chase—I wish if it should lay in your Power to save him that you would—He has a large Family—has met with many hard Rubs, and I believe at this Time feels heavily the weight of his Family from the difficulty of making such a provision for them as he might heretofore have reasonably expected—He has on many Occasions been a useful Man in our public Affairs—I have never had any Conversation with him but am led to believe he would willingly accept the appointment of one of the Supreme Judges—He gets rather too much advanced in Life for the drudgery of the Law—If a Judge should be taken out of this State I know no Man more proper—His Abilities as a Lawyer, or Integrity in the profession I have never heard questioned—His uprightness as a Judge in this state (of the Criminal Court) has been much approved—Added to this I am informed that Mr. Harrison, who would in all probability be the Person preferred to any other in this state, is satisfied with his present Office of Judge of our General Court—

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

This man's life and character were a good deal checkered. He rendered great services to his country by awakening and directing the public spirit of his native State in the first years of the Revolution. He possessed more learning than knowledge, and more of both than judgment. His person and attitude in speaking were graceful, and his elocution commanding, but his speeches were more oratorical than logical. He always voted with the friends to Independence. In the year 1778 he made his public station subservient to his private views, and exhibited marks of a mind tainted with that spirit of speculation which at that time pervaded nearly all ranks of citizens of the United States.

Alexander Contee Hanson: Description of Chase

I am constrained by candour to declare, that vile as Chase has been held by most of the better kind of his fellow Citizens, he has been the mover of almost every thing, this State has to boast of. Strange inconsistent man! Without him, how very seldom would any thing good have passed the Legislature, and yet could he *always* have prevailed, how soon would he have defeated every thing good which has been done! . . . I have viewed him with admiration and with horror, with kindness and with detestation. In the main I always liked tho' never would I trust him for more than a single turn.

George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 29 October 1795

Mr. Chase of Maryland is, unquestionably, a man of abilities; and it is supposed by some, that he would accept the appointment of Attorney General. Though opposed to the adoption of the Constitution, it is said he has been a steady friend to the general government since it has been in

operation. But he is violently opposed in his own State by a party, and is besides, or to speak more correctly has been; accused of some impurity in his conduct.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, 6 February 1796

Mr. Chase is a new Judge, but although a good 1774 Man his Character has a Mist about it of suspicion and Impurity which gives occasion to the Enemy to censure. He has been a warm Party Man, and has made many Ennemies. His Corpulency . . . is against his riding Circuit very long.

Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Litchfield, Conn., 15 February 1796

I knew Samuel Chase, and to you I will say, that I have but an unworthy opinion of him.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 21 February 1796

I am very sorry that Judge Cushing has refused his appointment [as Chief Justice]. Chase is not a Man from all I have heard, who will make Mr. Jay's place good. "How can a judge enforce that Law against some poor elf Which conscience tells him, he hath broke himself?" The fountain of Justice should be as Virgin innocence. The Laws can neither be administered or respected, if the minister of them is not unspotted.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 5 March 1796

The Nomination of Mr. Chase had given Occasion to uncharitable Reflections

Bushrod Washington to James Iredell, Alexandria, Va., 20 August 1799

I went from and returned to Baltimore with our Brother Chace, whose excellent flow of spirits & good sense rendered pleasant a Journey which would otherwise have been fatiguing & disagreeable.

Stevens Thomson Mason to James Madison, Philadelphia, 23 April 1800

Thos. Cooper of Northumberland was tried and convicted on Saturday last for a libel on the President. A more oppressive and disgusting proceeding I never saw. Chase in his charge to the Jury (in a speech of an hour) showed all the zeal of a well fee'd Lawyer and the rancour of a vindictive and implacable enemy.

Philadelphia *Auroa*, 20 June 1800

Judge Chase [was] An Unprincipled tyrant, totally unfit to be intrusted with any power over the lives or liberties of *the free citizens of America*.

John Adams to John Marshall, Quincy, Mass., 7 August 1800

The Merit of Judge Chase, of which I have been a Witness at times for Six and twenty years are very great in my estimation: and if his son's [Thomas Chase] are as well qualified as others, it is quite consistent with my Principles to consider the sacrifices and services of a Father, in weighing the Pretensions of a Son. The Old Gentleman will not probably last very long, and it can hardly

Founders on the Founders

be called accumulating offices in a Family, to appoint the son of a Judge of the United States, Marshall of a particular state.

John G. Jackson to James Madison, Clarksburg, Va., 25 September 1800

But stop! I must not forget that a Sedition Law and a modern Jeffreys* (alias Chase) are in existence.

*George Jeffreys, an 17th century English judge who despotically ruled from the bench and disregarded constitutional forms.

Wilmington, Del., *Mirror of the Times*, 15 November 1800

Naturally proud, imperious, & overbearing—positive in his dogmas—supercilious in his manners—prejudiced in his decisions—and headstrong in his opinions. . . .

William Charles Cole Claiborne to Andrew Jackson, Near Natchez, Mississippi Territory, 20 March 1802

. . . the impeachment and conviction of the American Jeffries (Samuel Chase) will I flatter myself, all be announced, in a few weeks.

Manasseh Cutler to F. Poole, Washington, 13 February 1804

Judge Chase (one of the largest men I ever saw) is as remarkable for the largeness as Johnny [John Randolph of Roanoke] for the smallness of his size.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 2 March 1805

The removal of Judge Chase was deemed an imprudent measure—public opinion so far as it could be collected was decidedly opposed to the measure. In this case a great point is gained in favor of the Constitution. A prosecution commenced with the rage of party has been arrested—& to the honor of the Accused his political foes his enemies have acquitted him.

Joseph Story to Matthew Bramble, Philadelphia, 10 June 1807

Accompanied by Mr. Harper, I paid a visit to Judge Chase, who is a rough, but very sensible man. He has counted nearly seventy winters, and yet possesses considerable vigor and vivacity; but the flashes are irregular and sometimes ill-directed. In his person, he is tall, and not unlike Parsons. I suspect he is the American Thurlow,—bold, impetuous, overbearing, and decisive. He received us very kindly and with all his plainness of manners, I confess that he impressed me with respect.

Joseph Story to Samuel P. P. Fay, Washington, 25 February 1808

Of Chase I have formerly written. On a nearer view, I am satisfied that the elements of his mind are of the very first excellence; age and infirmity have in some degree impaired them. His manners are coarse, and in appearance harsh; but in reality he abounds with good humor. He loves to croak

and grumble, and in the very same breath he amuses you extremely by his anecdotes and pleasantries. His first approach is formidable, but all difficulty vanishes when you once understand him. In person, in manners, in unwieldy strength, in severity of reproof, in real tenderness of heart; and above all in intellect, he is the living, I had almost said the exact image of Samuel Johnson. To use a provincial expression, I like him hugely.

John Adams: To the *Boston Patriot*, Quincy, Mass., 10 April 1809

I appeal to Judge Chase, who made the first motion in Congress for entering into foreign relations. This motion was made in concert with me, and was seconded by me. If I am incorrect in any circumstance, that gentleman can set me right. And here I feel a pride in acknowledging that perhaps no two Members of Congress were at that time upon more intimate terms. We flickered, disputed, and wrangled in public and private, but always with a species of good humor that never was suffered to diminish the confidence, esteem, or affection of either in the other. I have long wished for a fair opportunity of transmitting to posterity my humble testimony to the virtues and talents of that able and upright magistrate and statesman.

William Johnson to Thomas Jefferson, Charleston, S.C., 10 December 1822

Chase could not be got to think or write [while serving on the U.S. Supreme Court].

John Chester

Jonathan Trumbull to George Washington, Lebanon, Conn., 20 June 1788

A General [James] Wadsworth, who was the Champion of Opposition in our Convention, lost his place as an Assistant, by great Odds—his Seat at the Council Board, was filled by Colo. Chester, late Speaker of our House of Assembly—a Gentleman of independent, liberal Sentiments, & a firm friend to general Government.

Francis Child

John Jay to Benjamin Franklin, Madrid, 19 November 1780

I have lately received a letter from Francis Child, a lad whom I had taken by the hand after his father's death, and put apprentice to Mr. Dunlap, your printer. He complains that Dunlap refuses to give him the clothes stipulated in the indentures, and requests that I will save him from nakedness. You will oblige me by giving him twenty-five hard dollars, or the amount of it in paper. If you can conveniently discover how he behaves and is likely to turn out, I beg you will inform me; for, as his father had a warm and steady attachment to me, I feel myself interested in the welfare of the son, who it seems was his favorite.

Nathaniel Chipman

Henry Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwick, Bennington, Vt., 25 January 1791

Judge Chipman the bearer is one of the Commissioners from Vermont to announce the adoption of the Constitution—He is a man of weight and influence—permit me therefore to recommend him to your favorable attention.

Thomas Chittenden

Egbert Benson to John Jay, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 27 August 1779

[On Vermont's effort to gain its independence from New York.] Governor Chittenden *himself* is determined at all events not to reunite with us, for we may undoubtedly suppose such his determination, when with apparent Sincerity he says that his *religious* rights and privileges would be in danger from a Union with a Government [New York], by the fundamental law of which all Religions are tolerated and all Establishments expressly excluded.

Richard Claiborne

Alexander Spotswood to Thomas Jefferson, 26 November 1780

This will be handed you by Major Richard Claiborne, a Gentleman of uncommon merit.

At the commencement of this War, anxious to serve his Country, he entered as a private in the 2d. Virginia Regiment. His diligence soon preferred him to the Rank of a sergeant, in which character he acted with such propriety, that he drew my attention towards him, and as soon as I had it in my power, appointed him Adjutant to the Regiment. Here his conduct drew the attention of his Brigadier, who appointed him Major of Brigade, in which post he acted until his Brigadier quitted the army, when General Greene appointed him deputy Quarter Master General, which post he held when General Greene resigned his Office as Quarter Master General. He is a Gentleman of good Family and morals. He wishes for a Majority in the new raised troops in which character I am certain he will shine and do honor to his State.

Thomas Jefferson to Timothy Pickering, Richmond, Va., 4 March 1781

Major Claiborne being at first utterly unknown to me I was afraid to do more in my former Letter to you than to hand to you what was said of him by others. The Duties of his Office [i.e., Commissary General of Purchase for the Southern Army] giving me daily occasion to judge from my own Observation, I think he is exceedingly attentive, discreet, with Talents not inferior to the office, and upon the whole that he will give you Satisfaction.

Abraham Clark

William Livingston to Nathaniel Scudder, Trenton, N.J., 24 November 1778

I can assure you that I have not the least objection against being upon good Terms with Mr. Clarke. I believe him to be a real friend to his Country, & both able & willing to serve it. A man who will never turn his private Animositities to the public Detriment; nor prosecute his personal resentments to the embarrassment of the State.

William Livingston to Nathaniel Scudder, Princeton, N.J., 14 December 1778

The Assembly adjourned last Saturday evening to the 19th of May. . . . We have however passed many valuable & spirited Laws, & dispatched more business than usual, which is principally to be ascribed to Mr. Clarke who has indeed great talents for Legislation, & is a Man of indefatigable Industry.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A sensible but cynical man. He was uncommonly quick sighted in seeing the weakness and defects of public men and measures. He was attentive to business and excelled in drawing up reports and resolutions. He was said to study more to please the people than to promote their real and permanent interests. With this and perhaps other faults he was warmly attached to the liberties and independence of his country.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Member of Congress for the third time; man of the people having a great deal of influence in his state and enjoying pretty nearly the same role as Mr. Yates; preferring his popularity to the public good; despised by *gentlemen* and returning the sentiment to them with interest.

Elias Boudinot to James Kinsey, Trenton, N.J., 20 November 1788

Matters at Princeton go tolerably well; the great object is carried—I mean the general Election—as to Senators I am easy about, provided C—— is kept out—This altogether depends on West Jersey—We have placed the Game entirely in their hands & they can do as they please—

Jedidiah Morse to Samuel Breese, Elizabethtown, N.J., 27 December 1788

I have conversed with Mr. Boudinot respecting the ensuing Election [for the U.S. House of Representatives]—He has consented to have his name put up—& I hope there is no doubt of his carrying the Election in opposition to Mr. Clark, who, though a good man in other respects, is, I conceive wrong in politics.

George Rogers Clark

John Hurt to George Washington, near Lexington, Ky., 1 January 1792

Genl. Clark is a Sott to all intents & purposes.

Matthew Clarkson

John Jay to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 22 December 1790

[Recommending him for Inspector of Revenue] he deserves well of Governmt.—as his principles & character are pure—as he enjoys as well as merits the Esteem & Confidence of his fellow Citizens—and as I really think he would as an Inspector be vigilant and decided, I wish to see him brought forward.

John Jay to George Washington, New York, 13 March 1791

[Recommending him as U.S. marshal] I take the Liberty of communicating my Sentiments respecting a Gentleman who too delicate to display his own merit, possesses more than falls to the Share of many—I mean General Matthew Clarkson. I think him one of the most pure & virtuous Men I know—When at Boston General Lincoln (whose aid he was) spoke to me of him in Terms not only of approbation but affection—During the war he was a firm & active Whig, and since the Peace a constant Friend to National and good Government. Few men here of his Standing enjoy or deserve a greater Degree of the Esteem & good will of the Citizens than he does, and in my opinion he would discharge the Duties of that or any office for which he may be qualified with Propriety and Honor—

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 14 June 1794

Mr. Clarkson has several things in favor [of his appointment as supervisor of Pennsylvania], perhaps rather more ability than most of the other persons. But he wants bodily activity, which may be a point of consequence & he is said to be much embarrassed in his circumstances.

Joseph Clay

Nathanael Greene to Robert Morris, Ashley Hill, S.C., 3 December 1782

He has been pay Master to the Southern Army for a long time and bears the reputation of an honest good Man correct in business and punctual in all his dealings.

Cornelia Clinton

Abigail Adams Smith to Abigail Adams, New York, 15 June 1788

Mrs. Clinton is not a showy, but a kind, friendly woman. She has five daughters, and one son.

DeWitt Clinton

John Adams to William Stephens Smith, Quincy, Mass., 6 September 1812

Is De Witt, a Friend to Commerce and determined to promote a Naval Power for its Protection? That he is not so learned in Books nor so deep in Meditation and Contemplation as Madison is most certain, that he is more honest Religious or Sincere than Madison I have no Reason to believe. Tell me whether he will have the Votes of New York New Jersey, Pensilvania or Maryland for President? In my Opinion it is of no importance who is President if he cannot conciliate the Northern States to this War.

John Adams to William Plumer, Quincy, Mass., 10 January 1813

I can Say little of Mr Clinton, for I know nothing but by hearsay, having never Seen him. Of his Ambition, his Avarice, his Intrigues and those of his Unkle George, I have heard enough, but know very little. But one thing I know. The State of New York, has become a great State: and De Witt Clinton a great Man, good, bad, or indifferent. The Clintons are a Phenomenon in this Nation. No Governor, but George ever was Supported 25 years. Was this Talent? Was this Virtue? Was this, Policy? . . . It was a Union of Interests, that was neither formed or cemented by him, any more than his formation in his Mothers Womb was his Work. A coincidence of Irish, Scotch, Dutch, and Presbyterian Parties which he, himself never understood, Supported him in spite of the clumsy Ambition and gross Avarice, with which he is charged. . . . De Witt, then is founded on a Rock.

Henry Dearborn to Thomas Jefferson, Boston, 22 April 1818

D. Clinton, who I have long considered as on par, in point of ambition and want of honesty integrity, with A. Bur.

George Clinton

Edward Rutledge to John Jay, Philadelphia, 29 June 1776

[In the Second Continental Congress] Clinton has Abilities but is silent in general and wants (when he does speak) that Influence to which he is entitled.

Philip Schuyler to John Jay, Albany, N.Y., 30 June 1777

General Clinton I am informed has a majority of votes for the Chair [i.e., governor of New York]. If so he has played his cards better than was expected.

Philip Schuyler to John Jay, Fort Edward, N.Y., 14 July 1777

I hope Gen. Clinton's having the chair of Government will not cause any divisions amongst the friends of America. Altho' his family and connections do not entitle him to so distinguished a predominance; yet he is virtuous and loves his country, has abilities and is brave, and hope he will experience from every patriot what I am resolved he shall have from me, support, countenance and comfort.

Alexander Hamilton to Israel Putnam, Coryell's Ferry, N.J., 30 July 1777

General Clinton informs His Excellency, that he is called to attend at Kingston and take the oath of office conformable to his appointment as Governor of the State of New York. It is to be regretted that so useful an officer is obliged to leave the posts under his superintendency at a time like this.

George Washington to the New York Council of Safety, Philadelphia, 4 August 1777

The appointment of General Clinton to the government of your state is an event that in itself gives me great pleasure, and very much abates the regret I should otherwise feel for the loss of his services in the Military line. That Gentleman's character is such as will make him peculiarly useful at the head of your state in a situation so alarming and interesting as it at present experiences.

Alexander Hamilton to Robert R. Livingston, Headquarters near Germantown, Pa., 7 August 1777

In a Conversation I lately had with Mr. Jay he mentioned sending Governor Clinton with all the New York Militia of the upper part of your State to assist in opposing Mr. Burgoyne. I wish you may do this of all things. General Clinton is an excellent officer, the people have Confidence in him, will once act with zeal and Serve with Spirit & perseverance under him; his being wanted in the Civil line should be no Objection. It imports you more to take measures for preserving your State than for Governing what you may not long have to Govern. Governor Clinton I am persuaded can render you the most Essential Services in the way proposed.

George Washington to Israel Putnam, Bucks County, Pa., 11 August 1777

I am glad to hear that Govr. Clinton has determined to resume the command of Fort Montgomery, for there cannot be a properer Man upon every Account.

Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette, York, Pa., 12 October 1777

He is a brave Officer in the field, cautious & timid only upon paper, therefore I am not diffident of his success.

Alexander Hamilton to Susanna Livingston, Middlebrook, N.J., 18 March 1779

I shall therefore only tell you, that whether the governor & the general are more honest, or more perverse, than other people, they have a very odd knack of thinking alike; and it happens in the present case, that they both equally disapprove the intercourse [of people back and forth into British-held territory].

Nathanael Greene to Udney Hay, Fish Kill, N.Y., 9 November 1779

I have wrote the Governor on the subject [of the workers' demand for higher pay], who I know has great influence over the minds of every Class of people in this State, and whose good will towards the [Quartermaster's] Department I have had many proofs of.

Udney Hay to Nathanael Greene, Morristown, N.J., 14 December 1779

I agree with you, in opinion, respecting the influence of the Governor that it is great; but the people are not so patriotic or so warmly attached to the Governor as to sacrifice their property, to comply with an unreasonable request from him. I am sensible the Inhabitants (that is) certain classes of them, will do everything that is reasonable for you to ask, or them to comply with; but it cannot be expected that they will beggar themselves, for the National benefit upon a principle of private obligation.

Marquis de Lafayette: Memoir of 1779

He found George Clinton, the governor of the state of New York, resolute, enlightened, and cooperative.

John Morin Scott to Ezra L'Hommedieu, Philadelphia, 6 June 1780

I think the Governor's presence in the upper part of the Country is highly necessary; and flatter myself that his good Sense & military active Spirit will have salutary Effects.

Benjamin Tallmadge to Samuel Blachley Webb, Crompond, 6 July 1780

Since the arrival of Sir Harry from Carolina, and the alarm which spread through the country in consequence thereof, on account of your fortresses on the North River I am happy to assure you that our affairs at the garrison wear a promising aspect. Much credit is due to the State of Connecticut for their exertions in forwarding supplies, and I believe more to Governor Clinton for the seasonable reinforcement which he sent to the fort. From a government so modelled, and a Governor so zealously engaged in our cause, everything within the reach of human exertions may be expected. Did you not know the spirit of the Constitution of this State, and particularly the powers of the Governor in military matters.

Alexander Hamilton to Robert Morris, Albany, N.Y., 13 August 1782

There is no man in the government [of the state of New York] who has a decided influence in it. The present governor has declined in popularity, partly from a defect of qualifications for his station and partly from causes that do him honor—the vigorous execution of some necessary laws that bore hard upon the people, and severity of discipline among the militia. He is, I believe, a man

of integrity and passes with his particular friends for a statesman; it is certain that without being destitute of understanding, his passions are much warmer, than his judgment is enlightened. The preservation of his place is an object to his private fortune as well as to his ambition; and we are not to be surprised, if instead of taking a lead in measures that contradict a prevailing prejudice, however he may be convinced of their utility, he either flatters it or temporises; especially when a new election approaches.

Marquis de Chastellux: Travels in North-America, in the Years 1780, 1781, and 1782

I only regretted not having seen Governor Clinton, for whom I had letters of recommendation. He is a man who governs with the utmost vigour and firmness, and is inexorable to the tories, whom he makes tremble, though they are very numerous: he has had the address to maintain in its duty this province, one extremity of which borders on Canada, the other on the city of New York.

George Washington to George Clinton, Mount Vernon, 25 November 1784

A few days ago I had the pleasure to receive your favor of the 12th Instant. Altho' I felt pain from your Silence, I should have imputed it to any cause rather than a diminution of friendship. The warmth of which I feel too sensibly *for* you, to harbour a suspicion of the want of it *in* you, without being conscious of having given for the change—having ever flattered myself that our regards were reciprocal.

Philip Schuyler to John Jay, Albany, N.Y., 30 May 1785

. . . it is conceived now that the business of a reform in a government cannot be accomplished unless Mr. Clinton is ousted, and it is therefore determined to attempt a change and almost every character of respectability and indeed a great majority of all ranks will support the attempt. But who is to be the person? It is agreed that none have a chance of succeeding but you, the Chancellor or myself. The second on account of the prejudices against his family name, it is believed would fail. With respect to me, altho' I should carry a majority of at least fifteen hundred voices in this and Montgomery County and some in Washington, yet I am so little known in the Southern part of this state that I should fail there. Besides this reason, which suffices with my friends here as well as myself, there is another arising from my great and many bodily infirmities which render me incapable of that attention which the office requires. I therefore could not accept of it even if unanimously offered. Hence the wishes of me and my friends are directed to you, and we have not only sanguine but well founded hopes, that you will obtain a great majority. [Clinton ran unopposed for a fourth consecutive three-year term as governor in 1786.]

David Humphreys to Thomas Jefferson, Hartford, Conn., 5 June 1786

Governor Clinton is said to have become an Antifederalist. He was not in N. York when I was there. Certain it is the issue of a paper currency in that State depended upon him.

Luigi Castiglioni: Sketches of American Soldiers, 1787

Some charge him with being very unsociable, with not spending in vain pomp, with failure to pay court to strangers. But if he occupies the time that he might give to conversation in attending to business, if he gives in charity to the poor the money that he would otherwise throw away in

costly dinners and luxury, the nation must venerate this supposed defect as a virtue, and enlightened foreigners will be glad to see him sacrifice his time for the benefit of the state. In fact, the people do render him justice and speak of this man with great esteem. I did not have the fortune to meet him since he flees presentation to strangers, because they would distract him from his methodical manner of living; but persons who know him intimately assure me that he really deserves the praise given him, and that beyond the already mentioned fields of knowledge he possesses an extensive background in the sciences, which he cultivates in his hours of leisure.

Governor Clinton is about 50 years of age—or more. Both he and his wife are always simply dressed, and his office inspires in him no haughtiness or sense superiority.

Alexander Hamilton, *New York Daily Advertiser*, 15 September 1787

There is no danger that the rights of a man, at the head of the Government (possessing all the influence to be derived from long continuance in office, the disposition of lucrative places, and *consummate talents* for popularity) can be injured by the voice of a private individual.

“Examiner” II, *New York Journal*, 14 December 1787

Cato [George Clinton] has cast a net, which I believe will catch very few fish. He affects the appearance of a true son of liberty, but he is an hypocrite, and may be compared to a carved image with a double-head one within the other; the inner head cohering with the trunk or body, and the outer being moveable about the inner, and painted in front the color of an human face, not unlike the wooden heads exposed to view in a barber’s shop.

Samuel Blachley Webb to Joseph Barrell, New York, 13 January 1788

This City are very unanimous [in favor of the new Constitution]—but we have as you have before heard four or five characters violently opposed, none however whose influence is to be feared but Govr. Clinton’s. His has been astonishingly great in the back country’s, but is undoubtedly daily lessening.

St. John de Crevecoeur to William Short, New York, 20 February 1788

I flatter myself that the State at large is more strongly Federalists than the Members of both Houses [of the legislature]; if the Tide turns here in favor of the new Constitution down goes the Idol of the People, that tool of Popularity of which you have often heard me speak, our Governor I mean.

***New York Daily Advertiser*, 26 April 1788**

The Antifederal Party in this city, despairing of success by open and fair exertions, at the ensuing Election, are industriously employed in procuring the suffrages of some of the citizens, by insidious personal applications. They pretend that they will not oppose the Federal Ticket, in order to lull into security the friends of order and good government. They hope by such unmanly conduct, to foist into the Convention, as the representation of New-York, the following list, or at least the *pendulum* of Antifederalism, the great Goliath of their party, his Ex——y G——r C——n.

Alexander Hamilton to James Madison, New York, 19 May 1788

As Clinton is truly the leader of his party, and is inflexibly obstinate I count little on overcoming opposition [to the Constitution] by reason.

Alexander Hamilton to Gouverneur Morris, New York, 19 May 1788

In this state, as far as we can judge, the elections [for the state ratifying convention] have gone wrong. The event however will not certainly be known till the end of the month. Violence rather than moderation is to be looked for from the opposite party. Obstinacy seems the prevailing trait in the character of its leader. The language is, that if all the other states adopt, this is to persist in refusing the Constitution. It is reduced to a certainty that Clinton has in several conversations declared the UNION unnecessary; though I have the information through channels which do not permit a public use to be made of it.

Abigail Adams Smith to Abigail Adams, New York, 15 June 1788

We are treated, here, with great politeness, civility, and friendship. We were invited to dine with the Governor, which was a *very particular* favour. He nor his family either visit, or are visited by, any families, either in public or private life, of this place. . . . That he is a man of no decided character, no one who sees him will say. To me he appears one whose conduct and motives of action are not to be seen through upon a slight examination. The part he has taken upon the subject of the new Constitution is much condemned. What are his motives, I do not pretend to judge; but I do believe that he acts or thinks without some *important* motives.

Alexander Hamilton to James Madison, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 2 July 1788

[On the debates in the New York ratifying convention.] Our arguments confound, but do not convince. Some of the leaders however appear to me to be convinced *by circumstances* and to be desirous of a retreat. This does not apply to the Chief, who wishes to establish *Clintonism* on the basis of *Antifederalism*.

Samuel Blachley Webb to Catherine Hogeboom, New York, 13 July 1788

The Southern District are determined on a Separation to join the union, and I do not believe the life of the Governor & his party would be safe in this place.

Nicholas Gilman to John Langdon, New York, 17 July 1788

This is merely to accompany the paper of the day, by which you will discover the temper of the Poughkeepsie Convention. They are still in session and the heart of their Pharaoh is still unrelenting.

Samuel A. Otis to George Thatcher, New York, 17 July 1788

Clinton is popular, has a majority at command [in the state ratifying convention], and is very violent [against the Constitution].

Samuel Blachley Webb to Catherine Hogeboom, New York, 20 July 1788

The Governor has rendered himself extremely obnoxious to the Inhabitants of this City, so much so, that they have lost all respect for him. However I shall be cautious not to render myself the personal enemy of him or any other Character;—God mend his ways.

Henry Knox to George Washington, New York, 28 July 1788

Governor Clinton has most perseveringly opposed the Constitution, and from being in the majority during Almost the whole time he has found himself so much deserted as to be in the minority. A precise history of his conduct is difficult to be written and must be left to time to explain.

Brissot de Warville: New Travels in the United States of America, August 1788

Governor Clinton, who is anything but a man of learning.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

All the wealthy in the state of New York and all those who favor the new Constitution, cry loudly against Governor Clinton, a man of the people, who was governor during the war and who distinguished himself militarily. It is possible that to support his family [i.e., his party], Mr. Clinton flatters the people a little too much, that he speculates in public money, and that he works secretly against the establishment of the new Constitution. It is not less true that, of all his enemies, none is more truly attached to France and none has rendered us more essential services. I will even add that, with the exception of [Robert R.] Livingston, most of the *Federalists* of this state are attached to England or at least are very cool toward France. Mr. Clinton having been elected President of the New York Convention, he has fervently combated the efforts of the Federalists, and the amendments proposed by this state are much more prejudiced against the system of consolidation than those of the other states. Mr. Clinton's opinion is that Americans should be satisfied with tilling their fields without wanting to play a role in the world.

Robert R. Livingston to St. John de Crevecoeur, Clermont, N.Y., December 1788

The Governor has as you observe been long soured—He finds himself lessened in the esteem of the publick & tho' (which I think very probable) the strength of the antifederal party & the want of concert in the opposition may serve to continue him in office with all its emoluments loses many of its charms when it is not attended with the respect & favor of the people—

Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 20 December 1788

It becomes us . . . to oppose George Clinton as Vice President of the United States. His talents are as contemptible as his principles. He possesses neither dignity nor understanding fit for that important station.

St. John de Crevecoeur to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 5 January 1789

Our Governor who Sees That nothing can Stop the Federal Tide is very much Chagrined—he Loses daily Some degree of popularity among his Warmest Partisans who perceiving that, Spite of the Idea, they had of his abilities as well as of the righteousness of their Cause every thing goes

Founders on the Founders

against them begin to think him less Infallible & the New System less obnoxious. . . . our Governor is not a man of sufficient abilities to become the head of a Party.

John Lamb to John Smith, New York, 7 January 1789

The Federalists in Philadelphia, have got the horrors from an apprehension that Governor Clinton, will be elected Vice-President—This alarm (on their part) I believe must arise from some intelligence which it is probable they have received of the intentions of the Electors in the Southern States.—God grant, that their fears may be well grounded.

Joshua Atherton to John Lamb, Amherst, N.H., 23 February 1789

To have rendered any service to so distinguished a patriot and ornament of his country as Governor Clinton, to have put it more in the power of his great abilities to secure to the United States freedom and happiness, to have placed him as one of the principal directors of the scene in so interesting a period would indeed have been rendering a service highly honorable to myself, and of the utmost importance to our tottering country.

To the Independent Electors of the State of New-York, March 1789

But it is alleged, that he is parsimonious, and lives beneath the dignity of his station. Passion and prejudice are apt to put a false coloring on things. By these, frugality will be represented as parsimony, and temperance and regularity of living as meanness. It becomes the chief magistrate, in a republican government, to set an example of temperance, frugality, and simplicity of manners; such examples are eminently proper at this time in our country, and are really essential to its prosperity. Would it be agreeable to the citizens of this state to see the principal magistrate constantly engaged in a scene of dissipation and luxury? To see him employed in making feasts, or attending them; seldom, if ever, at leisure to pursue the important concerns of the state, and so difficult of access, as never to be seen, but in the company of those, whose rioting and intemperance in the excesses of the table are their only recommendation? This, we presume, can never be the wish of those citizens who feel themselves interested in preserving the morals of the people, and the welfare of the state. If the Governor errs, it is on the side of prudence and propriety, and we ought to think ourselves happy in this respect, that instead of having the first officer in the state, taking the lead in extravagance and dissipation, he is an example of decent frugality and orderly living.

“Cassius,” Poughkeepsie *Country Journal*, 3 March 1789

Every scheme and artifice which can be devised are now using, and will be used to oust our present Governor at the next election, for no other reason but because he is a whig, a republican, a friend to the liberties of the common people, and a professed enemy to aristocracy; which he and all writers and thinkers upon the subject, justly esteem to be the most oppressive kind of government on earth. They can justly find no fault with his character, none with his public administration; and I believe that no one who is acquainted with the history of his life, will dare to accuse me of partiality, when I say I believe him to be one of the best public characters on the continent. From his (legal) infancy he has been in our assembly an able and steady asserter of the rights of the people, until the commencement of the late war, through which, amidst innumerable difficulties, he has defended them with equal activity, abilities and firmness in the field. Nor was his merit less

conspicuous, in the peace and good order which immediately took place upon our taking possession of the southern district of this State, between the jarring elements which came together upon that occasion. When resentments ran so high as to threaten the destruction of part of the community, the peace was preserved, the dignity of government kept up, and the authority of the laws prevailed.—And what is now peculiar to his character, and distinguishes it from most of the shining ones of the time, is, that he does not ask, he does not wish, as a reward for his services, a surrender of those rights into his own hands, but still remains the same steady and sincere friend to the liberties of his country, and the same determined opposer of tyranny, whether it comes in the shape of a royal Prerogative, an act of Parliament, or in one less alarming, and consequently more dangerous.

Killian K. Van Renssalaer to Samuel Blachley Webb, Claverack, N.Y., 14 March 1789

I believe old Clinton the *sinner* will get *ousted* [as governor].

Samuel Blachley Webb to Catherine Hogeboom, New York, 22 March 1789

I am fully persuaded that we can have no Peace nor political happiness, until Mr. Clinton retires from the Administration.—If he ever had any Claims on his Country he is amply paid.

Samuel Blachley Webb to Killian K. Van Renssalaer, New York, 22 March 1789

I am favored with your letter of the 14th Instant, it gives me great pleasure to find the great people of Columbia [County] are in opinion with us, respecting a change in the Administration, and I haven't a doubt if the Northern Counties exert themselves we shall have the pleasure of hearing Judge [Robert] Yates announced our Governor.—it adds much to my satisfaction to hear that our friend Col. Hogeboom has thrown his influence into the scale, but wishes alone will not answer, you well know the art and cunning of Clinton and his party, and that they are using every possible exertion for his reelection. We must work double tides to defeat them. In this quarter we have nothing to fear. He is most heartily despised except by a few Sycophants whom he has put in office and their dependents “whose price of office has been obedience to their chief.”

Samuel A. Otis to Nathan Dane, New York, 28 March 1789

They are trying to kill Clinton politically but won't succeed.

Federalist Committee of New York City (Alexander Hamilton): To the Independent and Patriotic Electors of the State of New York, New York, 7 April 1789

But when the Governor is objected to, as the head of a party, we presume, it is not on account of the side he took in the question concerning the new constitution. It is true, indeed, that the friends of that constitution are of opinion, that circumstances have attended the Governor's conduct in relation to it, before it appeared, after it appeared, and before its adoption, and even since its adoption, which savor of prejudice and intemperance, and subject him to suspicions derogatory to his prudence and patriotism. But the objection to him as the head of a party, reaches much further back than the new constitution. Discerning men, soon after the peace, perceived, that he had formed a close connection with a particular set of characters, in whose public and private views he was continually embarked.

It is asked, what could have been his object in thus devoting himself to a party? The answer is plain Massachusetts to keep himself in place—to perpetuate himself in the enjoyment of the power and profit of the office he holds.

But it is asked again, why, if that was his wish, did he not connect himself with the wealthy and the great? These, it is pretended, would have been better instruments of a scheme of personal aggrandizement.

Such a suggestion has scarcely the merit of plausibility. It is well known, that large property is an object of jealousy in republics, and that those who possess it, seldom enjoy extensive popularity. The Governor was aware that he would have risked the loss, rather than have promoted the continuance of that which he possessed, by connecting himself with men of that class; and that his purpose could be better answered by an opposite course. Besides, from men who would suppose their pretensions not inferior to his, he would be more likely to experience competition and contradiction. The history of republics affords more examples of individuals arriving at dangerous pre-eminence, by a policy similar to that which seems to have been pursued by the Governor, than in any other mode.

William Grayson to Patrick Henry, New York, 12 June 1789

There has been a most severe attack upon Governor Clinton. He has been slandered and abused in all the public newspapers for these five months by men of the first weight and abilities in the state. Almost all the gentlemen, as well as all the merchants & mechanics, combined together to turn him out of his office: he has had nothing to depend on but his own integrity & the integrity of an honest yeomanry, who supported him against all his enemies. . . . As this gentleman is the great palladium of republicanism in this state, you may guess at the situation of anti-ism here, as he did not carry the election by more than 5 or 600.

George Bryan to Robert Whitehill, Philadelphia, July 1789

Ever since the peace the government of N York has been most thoroughly democratic, tho' formerly quite the reverse. Governor Clinton has helped the people much. When he strove to get the new Constitution amended before it should be adopted & failed, the aristocrats seized on this moment as favourable to get him out. The Election is by the freeholders generally for 3 years. It came on last april. Every manoevre was used to supercede him. [Robert] *Yates* his friend, was seduced to set up against him. Freeholders, in numbers, were made for the purpose & the ballot Election was abused by frauds & false votes. Still all was insufficient against this man of the people. Upon counting the ballots (about 12000 in all the Counties,) Clinton had above 1100 majority, but if allowance be made for abuses his Election, is still more decided. Such dependence did his opposers place in their plan & tricks, that till the last, they were confident of success. . . . The particular notice, which Genl W[ashington] takes of Mr Clinton is highly resented. But the Genl. highly valued C. in the army.

George Lux to George Read, Baltimore, Md., 28 July 1789

I am also happy to learn, that Governour Clinton has abandoned his virulent opposition to the New Government & become moderate & dispassionate.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 21 June 1792

[Speaking of Clinton's narrow contested victory over John Jay for governor in spring 1792.] It does not seem possible to defend Clinton as a just or disinterested man if he does not decline the Office [i.e., governor] of which there is no symptom; and I really apprehend that the cause of republicanism will suffer and its votaries be thrown into schism by embarking it in support of this man [for Vice President], and for what? to draw over the antifederalists who are not numerous enough to be worth drawing over.

Alexander Hamilton to Rufus King, Philadelphia, 28 June 1792

I have not, as you will imagine, been inattentive to your political squabble. I believe you are right (though I have not accurately examined) but I am not without apprehension that a ferment may be raised which may not be allayed when you wish it. Tis not to be forgotten that the opposers of Clinton are the real friends to order & good Government; and that it will ill become them to give an example of the contrary.

Rufus King to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 10 July 1792

But Mr. Clinton is in fact Governor, and though he may not be free from anxieties & Doubts [over the disputed gubernatorial election of 1792], he will not willingly relinquish the Office—the majority, and a very great one are against him—should he persist, and the sword be drawn, he must go to the wall—but this my dear Sir, is a dreadful alternative, and what & whom it may affect is altogether uncertain. If this case will justify a recurrence to first Principles, what are we not to expect from the disputes, which must & will arise in the Succession of the Presidency? and how are we able to place confidence in the security of our Government?

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Williamsburg, Va., 17 July 1792

I was favored at Richmond with yours giving a statement of the votes & eventual decision upon the New York election. The declaration in favor of Clinton on the part of the convention was perhaps right, tho' it requires more accurate information of their election & sheriff laws to determine it than I possess. How far he might with propriety have declined the appointment, without an imputation upon the rectitude of the canvassers, seems doubtful—or what would have been the intermediate condition of the government, who have discharged the Executive functions, whether the legislature must have been convened to relieve them from the dilemma, are circumstances which merited attention & no doubt had weight in the decision. The terms however upon which he has accepted his re-election, are not flattering to him and cast an air upon the whole proceeding, which how fair soever it may have been, will give the adversary party an advantage they will not fail to avail themselves of. Certain it is with respect to this gentleman, that altho' as a center of union to the republican party in that State it may be necessary to support him, yet there are traits in his character and particularly that of extreme parsimony, which are highly exceptionable. No one would point to him as a model for imitation; but comparatively with others in that quarter, & especially his late competitor & confrere [Aaron Burr], I have no hesitation which to prefer. If an unequivocal fact is known & principles understood, altho' in some respects vicious, yet in any given situation you can determine his course and as the effect of the alloy may be ascertained, it may be guarded against.

Alexander Hamilton to John Adams, Philadelphia, 16 August 1792

[In speaking about Clinton's parsimoniousness.] You forgot that Mr. Clinton could feast upon what would starve another.

From Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 21 September 1792

Mr. Clinton's success [in winning the vice presidency] I should think very unfortunate. I am not for trusting the Government too much in the hands of its enemies. But still Mr. C—— is a man of property, and, in private life, as far as I know of probity.

Alexander Hamilton to John Steele, Philadelphia, 15 October 1792

As to Mr. Clinton he is a man of narrow and perverse politics, and as well under the former as under the present Government, he has been steadily since the termination of the war with Great Britain opposed to national principles.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, New York, 2 December 1792

Governor Clinton is to be V. P. of U.S. and Govr. of N.Y. too, at least this is the sanguine Stile both of his Friends and Enemies, Some of both I mean.

Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Middletown, Conn., 5 December 1792

I am here, and have attended, with all the other electors of the state, the election of President and Vice President of the United States, and am happy to be able to inform you that upon counting their votes, they were united in their choice of President Washington and Vice President Adams. In this election, they were very cordial, and impressed with the deepest conviction of the propriety of continuing those officers in their present stations. The efforts which have been made to affect the election of the Vice President, I sincerely wish and trust, may be found effectual. I am certain that no choice could be more improper than that of George Clinton. I have a vile opinion of the man, and believe nothing but the grossest ignorance, or the most nefarious designs, could have proposed such a candidate. The enemies of Mr. Adams are mistaken if they conceive that George Clinton can ever engage a vote in this state. His friends in New York wish to give him an honorable retreat from the resentment of the majority of the people of the state; those who think unworthily of him, wish to remove him from the state government. It is melancholy to think that a government which has been found so beneficial in its operations, should be so soon attacked by a set of ambitious, partial and selfish men.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 2 January 1793

Amidst all that has been written upon the occasion [i.e., the Vice Presidential election], no one has ventured to State the comparative merits, and Services of the Candidates, but have contented themselves with saying that they would not bear a comparison that Clinton's were lighter than a feather when weighed against Yours.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 2 December 1794

If Fame says true Clinton cares little for Popularity: for The Miser has made himself immensely rich, and all his Friends and Tools besides.

Charles Adams to John Adams, New York, 30 December 1794

People reason in this state in this way. Gov. Clinton when he came to the Chair was worth nothing. He now owns lands in every part of the State. How does it happen?

John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 31 January 1795

If C. as you Say in yours of the 29th must provide for his Family, I suppose it will be easy for him to do it: because being not only a Republican but a Democrat by Profession, no doubt he is possessed of the most essential Ingredient in that Character, which is a *Love of Poverty and equality*. Two Acres of Land is more than an Equality, and as much as Cincinnatus owned, who was an Aristocrat. One Acre then I should Suppose would Satisfy this great and eminent Professor of deep Democraticallity.

. . . It is a great Misfortune to the U.S. that New York by the intrigues of your Citizen Egalité, has been made a southern State.

Thomas Boylston Adams to Joseph Pitcairn, Philadelphia, 18 June 1801

Your old friend Clinton has again got into the saddle upon the back of NewYork. The good beast called the Sovereign, had always a propensity to be ridden by this jockey, and only threw him out of his Seat, by stumbling over Jay.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 16 July 1805

For the first time George Clinton the Vice President took his seat in the Senate. He is an old feeble man—he appears altogether unacquainted with our rules—his voice is very weak & feeble—I cannot hear the one-half of what he says—he has a clumsy awkward way of putting a question—Preserves little or no order—What a vast difference between him & Aaron Burr! On would think that the office was made for Clinton, & not he for the office. This however being his first day it is to be hoped he will in time do better—though he is too old to make improvements.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 12 December 1805

I am very confident the old gentleman will make a sorry figure as president of the Senate. Tho' he complained to me that the office was too inactive for him, yet, I fear, he will find it too laborious for his advanced age.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 15 March 1806

Early this morning I called upon Mr. Clinton the Vice President & conversed with him in private for the space of two hours. I owe it to him—I owe it to myself—to say that the more I see & know of this man the more highly he rises in my estimation. He is an old man—time has impaired his mental faculties as much as it has the powers of his body. He is too old for the office he now holds; little as are its duties—he is from age rendered incapable of discharging them. He cannot preserve

order—He frequently forgets the state of business before the Senate—he reads deliberately but his voice is too feeble to be distinctly heard. And he assured me that the sitting three hours in the Chair at a time was extremely fatiguing to him. But there is something venerable in his appearance—There is that pleasing cheerfulness—that easy access—that flow of good humour—& docile manners, that are so seldom found in men of his age—& which renders him, to me, a very interesting companion. He appears honest.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 1 March 1807

Mr. Clinton, always comes to the city in his own carriage, accompanied by one of his daughters, & a servant. He is immensely rich—but lives out at board like a common member—keeps no table—or invites anybody to dine. A style of living unworthy of the 2d officer in our government.

He is old, feeble & altogether incapable of the duty of presiding in the Senate. He has no mind—no intellect—no memory—He forgets the question—mistakes it—& not infrequently declares a vote before it's taken—& often forgets to do it after it is taken—Takes up new business while a question is depending.

Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, Poplar Forest, Va., 17 August 1811

It is wonderful to me that old men should not be sensible that their minds keep pace with their bodies in the progress of decay. Our old revolutionary friend Clinton, for example, who was a hero, but never a man of mind, is wonderfully jealous on this head. He tells eternally the stories of his younger days to prove his memory, as if memory and reason were the same faculty. Nothing betrays imbecility so much as the being insensible of it.

John Adams to the Printers of the *Boston Patriot*, June 1812

George Clinton has been one of the most important Characters, in the Nation. With a Strong Mind, a brave intrepid heart, with understanding and information enough to satisfy his Party, he has been supported by it with more Uniformity, Constancy and Perseverance than any Man in America. Hancock, Bowdoin, Sam Adams, Jay, Livingstons, Lees, Henry, Rutledges, Gadsdens, Pinckneys, Washington himself; no Man has ever been supported in North America like George Clinton. Washington himself with all his real Merit, all his Advantages of Person, Manners and Fortune, and all his millions of Puffers, all his Statues, Mausoleums and Benevolent Societies, nay with his ten thousand officers of his Army all sworn to trumpet him to the Skies; nay with all his funding systems and banking systems by which he chained all the avarice of the Nation to his Carr; Washington, himself has never been supported with the Steadiness that George Clinton, has uniformly held up.

John Adams to William Plumer, Quincy, Mass., 10 January 1813

The Clintons are a Phenomenon in this Nation. No Governor, but George ever was Supported 25 years. Was this Talent? Was this Virtue? Was this, Policy? . . . It was a Union of Interests, that was neither formed or cemented by him, any more than his formation in his Mother's Womb was his Work. A coincidence of Irish, Scotch, Dutch, and Presbyterian Parties which he, himself never understood, Supported him in spite of the clumsy Ambition and gross Avarice, with which he is charged. . . . De Witt, then is founded on a Rock.

James Kent to Elizabeth Hamilton, New York, 10 December 1832

Though I felt strong political prejudices against Governor Clinton, as the leader of the Anti-Federal party, yet during the course of that Convention [that ratified the Constitution in 1788], I became very favorably struck with the dignity with which he presided, and with his unassuming and modest pretensions as a speaker. It was impossible not to feel respect for such a man, and for a young person not to be somewhat over-awed in his presence, when it was apparent in all his actions and deportment that he possessed great decision of character and a stern inflexibility of purpose.

James Clinton

Philip Schuyler to George Washington, Albany, N.Y., 15 February 1777

Entre nous—I wish Brigadier James Clinton to remain where he is—I am personally acquainted with him, and have a high Respect for him, as a Friend and a Citizen; and althou' I believe him to be a brave Officer, yet he is amazingly slow and I believe no Disciplinarian.

Alexander Hamilton to Israel Putnam, Coryell's Ferry, N.J., 30 July 1777

As some person must be found to succeed [George Clinton in command of the forts at the Highlands of the Hudson], He desires me to mention to you General James Clinton, who is, in his present situation, in a manner lost to the service. This Gentleman having been formerly stationed at those posts, is to be supposed well acquainted with them; and he has the character of being a brave man, but it is to be apprehended he may want activity which will be a very essential quality.

George Clymer

William Williams to Joseph Trumbull, Philadelphia, 26 September 1776

I think Mr. Clymer is a very good sort of a Man.

William Pierce: Sketches of Delegates to the Constitutional Convention, c. September 1787

Mr Clymer is a Lawyer of some abilities;—he is a respectable Man, and much esteemed.—Mr Clymer is about 40 Years old.—

Thomas Hartley to Tench Coxe, York, Pa., 3 March 1788

You speak of Mr. George Clymer as one of the Senate. it is only to know him—to agree to the Choice, amongst a virtuous People.

So far as my Knowledge goes and I have been acquainted with his Character several Years, he is a Man of Virtue, Understanding and Firmness fit to take a Part in this or any other Government that is founded on Liberty or Justice—among the Circle of my Acquaintance he stands high.

John Armstrong, Jr., to Robert McPherson, Manor of Livingston, 26 November 1788

Clymer is supposed deep because he refuses to be fathomed. But were his talents and knowledge better and more unequivocal than they are, they would go for nothing, obscured and embarrassed by his monkish shyness off the floor, and his most wretched of all contemptible figures upon it. I predict and you may see it verified that he will but pass for an nought in the political arithmetic of our national Commons.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 22 January 1789

Mr. Clymer is judicious and perfectly upright.

William Maclay: Journal, 26 April 1789

Mr. Clymer in the exceptionables, or pevish and fretting at every thing.

William Maclay: Journal, 2 April 1790

I . . . am not quite certain whether his Wish of Popularity has Yet been able to Subdue his pride & Obstinancy.

William Maclay: Journal, 12 April 1790

Clymer's color always pale now verged to a deadly White. His lips quavered, and his neither Jaw shook with convulsive Motions. His head, neck & Breast consented to Gesticulations resembling those of a Turkey or Goose, nearly strangled in the Act of deglutition.

George Clymer to Samuel Meredith, 23 September 1790

[In standing for re-election to the House of Representatives] I am as prepared and resigned as a good Christian ought to be, but I suppose were I now to say I had much rather be out than in, it would be thought affective and the truth was not in me.

George Clymer to George Clymer, Jr., 6 July [1800?]

The body and the mind are in such close sympathy that if the former be without occupation that latter will without energy—and it is literally. I am so much a prey to listlessness and ennui, nothing but your brother's journey to town could produce a single line from me today. Forced here into a situation that gives me no bodily employ I have read books over 'till I hate the sight of them, while my thoughts are little else but a tiresome renewal of the same reflexions. If there is some subject that relieves me more than another, it is the contemplation of a home in town, where I may collect all of you together, and meet with all variety of conversation. This I ought to bind myself to as much as a shattered and harassed mind is capable of, but defeat or disappointment seems to be attached to your father's fortune in his declining age.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A cool, firm, consistent Republican who loved liberty and government with an equal affection. Under the appearance of manners that were cold and indolent, he concealed a mind that was always

warm and active towards the interests of his country. He was well informed in history ancient and modern, and frequently displayed flashes of wit and humor in conversation. His style in writing was simple, correct, and sometimes eloquent. "The mould in which this man's mind was cast (to use the words of Lord Petersborough when Wm. Law) was seldom used."

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 22 September 1808

Mr. Clymer is almost the only citizen of Philadelphia with whom I converse upon political subjects. His mind retains the texture which the Revolution gave it. He is neither a Frenchman nor an Englishman and laments that Americans partake too much of the principles of both. He is no advocate for Mr. Jefferson, but he boldly defends the Embargo and acquits him of partiality to the French nation.

George Clymer to Samuel Meredith, 23 November [1812?]

If you ask about my health, I can say of it, that it is not the best possible condition. My Stomach for the first time, is bilious, sour and indigestive. I may be told that all this is casual temporary, and so on, but I rather take them as notices, that my motion, as with all here that are not celestial, is not to be perpetual.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 8 January 1813

Our excellent Revolutionary friend Mr. Clymer is, I fear, in the last stage of a disease which too generally in old people resists the power of medicine. A great mass of genius, knowledge, and patriotism, without the least portion of party spirit, will descend with him to the grave. He is one of those few citizens of the United States who admits the outrages and dreads the power of *both* France and Britain.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 26 January 1813

Our excellent friend Mr Clymer is no more. Few more disinterested patriots ever lived or died. He was moreover an enlightened politician, and free of all prejudice except against ignorance, Vice and folly in the conduct of parties. I shall long deplore the loss of his friendship & of his delightful conversation, at all times instructing & pleasing, from the originality of his ideas, or the new dress he gave to such as were common. In One of my interviews with him about two months ago, he remarked that all the nations in the World now at War professed to be Christians, and added that while they were sending missionaries among the pagans to convert them to Christianity, he wished the pagans would in return send missionaries to the Christian nations to convert them to the laws and practice of the Arts of peace.

Joseph Hopkinson's Eulogy of George Clymer, April 1813

Although his modest unassuming spirit never sought public displays of his merit, but rather withdrew him from the praise that was his due; yet he could not conceal from his friends nor his friends from the world the extraordinary improvement of his mind. Retired, studious, contemplative, he was ever adding something to his knowledge, and endeavouring to make that knowledge useful. His predominate passion was to promote every scheme for the improvement of his country, whether in science, agriculture, polite education, the useful or fine arts. . . . Capable of teaching he

seems only anxious to learn . . . it was only by frequent intercourse, we discovered how much he knew of each. . . . Sufficiently fixed in his own opinions, he gave a liberal toleration to others, assuming no offense or unreasonable control over the conduct of those with whom he was associated.

James Kent: Journal to His Son, 30 April 1833

[Egbert Benson in 1833 said that] *George Clymer* was a man of sterling candor & integrity.

Isaac Coles

George Nicholas to John Brown, Kentucky, 2 November 1789

Tell Isaac Coles I thought him a little out of his head when he joined Cousin Patrick [Henry] in his opposition to the government, but that if he marries a young wife I will apply for a statute of lunacy against him. It would divert me—to see him take up the lady’s fan before a large room full of company, or follow her carrying her muff. If he is not yet married I will answer for it if he will sleep with one of the willing fair ones of the city a few nights that he never will engage a young woman.

John Collins

Henry Laurens to Nicholas Cooke, York, Pa., 26 April 1778

Times & circumstances restrain us in public & private capacities from doing all we would wish with respect to a Gentleman of Mr. Collins’s distinction as a Patriot & a Man of honor.

Nathanael Greene to James Mitchell Varnum, Middlebrook, N.J., 12 April 1779

I am told Capt. Collins is to be opposed in his election for a Delegate. I have taken some pains to inquire respecting his general conduct in Congress; and find the Delegates speak very handsomely of him particularly with regard to his integrity and uprightness. His education and abilities are not the most shining. But I have often remarked that ingenious heads sometimes perplex more than promote public business. When such Characters are governed by proper Motives and the head and the heart go hand in hand they render important services to the public; but where they act a contrary part they have it in their power to perplex and embarrass exceedingly.

John Collins to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 7 September 1779

The attack made on me last May I am fully Convinced originated from that quarter, and went from Congress to the State, for I stood much in the way of what they called the New England interest, and I make no doubt but Mr. S. A. & Mr. W. E. [Samuel Adams and William Ellery] will use all their influence to damn me with the People, but they may be Damned themselves for what

I Care for them or their party. I will Act my part as I think best for the publick good, and Suffer no junto or party to influence me or lead me from what I think best for the good of the whole, it is well known I am not a bigot to any party, religious or Civil, but have Endeavored to Support the Character of an honest independent man.

Nathanael Greene to John Collins, West Point, N.Y., 17 September 1779

It gives me great pleasure to find you of an independent spirit, determined to act agreeable to the dictates, of your own conscience. I wish more were of your disposition. I question whether there would be so much art and intrigue carried on. The parties which have been formed under the idea of the New England interest (but in fact to promote the party views of individuals) has been very prejudicial to the true interest of America.

Great pains has been taken to ruin the reputation and injure the influence of those who have not subscribed to the creed of this junto. I think you have been a great eye sore to them, but I flatter myself, your foundation, by the help of your friends will remain immovable. Nothing shall be wanting on my part to render you every service that the uprightness of your conduct may fairly claim at my hands. . . .

You say that one of your Colleagues is not your Friend. Are you sure that either is? Trust not to appearances. Actions are the true criterion to determine Friends from Enemies. He that serves me is a friend, and he that injures me an Enemy. These are short and plain rules, but will hold good through life.

John Collins to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 29 September 1779

Your Caution with Regard to my Colleague I receive kindly. But I knew both the men before I Came to Congress, the one I have despised Ever since the Newport association for the Support of Government, the other I —— Confided in as a friend.

Woodorf Journal of a Trip, American Philosophical Society, 2 August 1787

The present Governor whose Name is John Collins is at the Head of the Paper Money Party—he was formerly an Apprenticeship to a Blacksmith—broke his Indres run away & went to Sea & in a few Years became Captain of a small trading Vessel—was very active during the War & about two Years ago was elected Governor—he is looked upon as an honest well meaning Man—but he has been led away by a set of designing People who have made him their Tool—his Salary as Governor is no more than 100 Dollars which is paid in Paper—but the Place of Naval Officer is generally given to the Governor as a Sinecure—the present Governor enjoys that Place & it is supposed to be worth about 150£ Curry P Annum—

Alexander Hamilton to Jeremiah Olney, New York, 6 October 1788

. . . as to Your Present Governor, the opinion I have hitherto entertained of his honesty will not permit me to suppose he will not afford his influence with the party to bring about the desirable event [i.e., the calling of a state ratifying convention].

William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 8 September 1789

Our impost officers, and intendants of trade are distinct establishments. The former are the miserable creatures of a vile administration, and the latter are the creatures of a silly, whiffling governor.

“Extract of a letter from Rhode Island, dated the 6th instant,” Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 16 October 1789*

He is a poor, conceited, ignorant old man!

*Reprinted in the *State Gazette of North Carolina*, 19 November 1789.

Henry Marchant to John Adams, Newport, R.I., 7 March 1790

The Deputy Governor Owens, President of the [Rhode Island] Convention, did not hesitate to say out of Doors, that an Adjournment of the Convention was necessary to insure their Election—He is proposed for Governor [John] Collins having been their weak Tool long enough—Owen is a Man of more Subtlety, a profound Hypocrite—at the General Assembly after the vote for calling a Convention; He took me by the Hand, and although He had voted against it, He declared I could not more rejoice than He did.

Stephen Collins

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 4 July 1775

This Letter is to go by my worthy Friend Mr. Stephen Collins of this City. This Gentleman is of Figure and Eminence as well as Fortune in this Place. He is of the Persuasion of the Friends, but not stiff nor rigid. He is a Native of Lynn in New England, a Brother of Ezra Collins in Boston, a Nephew of Friend Collins the Apothecary in Boston. I have been treated by him in this City, both in the former Congress and the present, with unbounded Civility, and Friendship. His House is open to every New Englandman. I never knew a more agreeable Instance of Hospitality.

I beg, my dear, that he may be treated with every Expression of Gratitude, Affection and Esteem.

John Adams to Joseph Palmer, Philadelphia, 5 July 1775

The bearers of this letter, Mr. Stephen Collins and Mr. John Kaighn, are of the peaceable society called Quakers or Friends, yet they are possessed of liberal sentiments, and are very far from being enemies to American principles or practices. They are warm, zealous friends of America, and hearty well wishers to her councils and arms, and have contributed much to promote both in this province.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 6 July 1775

This Letter will go by two fighting Quakers, Mr. Stephen Collins [and John] Kaign. The first is the most hospitable benevolent [man] alive. He is a Native of Lynn—Brother of Ezra Collins of Boston, &—is rich, and useful here.

Thomas Conway

Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Laurens, Camp, 26 January 1778

How can I support the society of a man who has spoken of my friend [Washington] in the most insolent and abusive terms, who has done, and does every day all in his power to ruin him, who tries to spend the fire in every part of the army and the country.

Henry Laurens to Marquis de Lafayette, 24 March 1778

I have been more than a little astonished by the freedom of Speech in treating upon that Gentleman's Character—severe & harsh sentiments have not only been whispered but loudly sounded in my hearing, & even one Gentleman in whom I know he had reposed the greatest confidence gave him up by a mild declaration that he was afraid General Conway was too indiscreet a Man to be trusted with a Command. Thus are Men deceived in this Rascally World. Poor Conway beleives quite a different Creed. I have not the least doubt but that he has wrapped himself secure in the friendship of some, who by fair & soft personal addresses have tempted him to a confidence, while he is shy of others from whom he has experienced only Candor & plain dealing. God knows what he is, I have not yet fully heard all sides nor have I very deeply considered what I have heard. But this I will venture to say to you Dear Marquis, according to the Maxim of an ancient Lawyer “whatsoever a Man sowith that shall he reap,” if he is deceitful, he is paid in his own Coin. I protest humanity shrinks at hearing Men traduce the Character whom they have taught to place a confidence in them—to hear ferocity, sheer Courage, eminent qualities in the Brute Creation, acknowledged to be the only virtues in the mind of a favorite. Is it possible for Men to speak of a friend as they do of a Mastiff? Then steps in another Set, who attempt to strip him even of that specious Virtue. In a word the General once honoured me by asking for my advice, I gave it honestly, he literally pursued, but indirectly, most effectually contravened it. I have therefore no great encouragement to become a volunteer Councillor, but should my sentiments be again demanded, I would find room for inserting, “be advised by me General & return to France where there is a greater Croud.”

Samuel Cooper

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 November 1796

As to Cooper it is not very likely that he will ever rise higher than a Representative of the Town of Boston

John Singleton Copley

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 21 August 1776

He [Charles Willson Peale] has a Variety of Portraits—very well done. But not so well as Copeleys Portraits. Copeley is the greatest Master, that ever was in America. His Portraits far exceed Wests.

John Adams to John Singleton Copley, Philadelphia, 27 January 1793

The Copy [of the painting “The Death of the Earl of Chatham”] intended for me, I shall preserve with great care, both as a Token of your Friendship as a finished Monument of the Fine Arts from one of the greatest Masters and as an indubitable Proof of American Genius.

Francis Corbin

George Mason to George Washington, Richmond, Va., 27 November 1787

. . . a Bill has been brought in, in Consequence of the said Resolve, once read, & committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Friday next; some of the most respectable Characters in the House were nominated a Committee to prepare the Bill; but Mr. C——n with the Vanity so natural to a Young Man, took upon himself to draw it without the other Gentlemen having time to consider it, and has drawn it so very injudiciously, that in its present Shape, it wou’d infallibly be thrown out on the third Reading—however we will take care to regenerate it in Committee; & I make no Doubt of its passing the House of Delegates; there will be a strong, but I trust a fruitless Opposition in the Senate.

James Madison to Edmund Pendleton, Philadelphia, 23 February 1793

Your district has been said to abound more than any other in candidates [for the U.S. House of Representatives]. Mr. C. I presume is most distinguished for parliamentary talents and activity, and on that score claims a favorable wish.

Francis Corbin to James Madison, Blandfield, Essex, Va., 15 January 1797

The dislike I have had, all my life, to Slavery increases as I advance in years. Indeed now I have become a *married* man,* and am obliged to be more conversant with it than I ever was before, I find it to be intolerable. Reluctant as I shall be to leave the *old Dominion*—yet my aversions to Slavery will conquer all my native predilections & cause me to Emigrate Eastward—if the Result of my Enquiries should meet my Wishes. But I mention this to you *in Confidence*.

*In December 1795, Corbin married Ann Mumford Beverley, daughter of Robert Beverley from whom she inherited twenty-eight slaves in 1790.

James Lewis, Jr., to Thomas Jefferson, Fredericksburgh, Va., 4 May 1798

. . . Francis Corbin, a man of some conspicuity in our state.

James Madison to Langdon Cheves, Montpelier, Va., 20 December 1819

A very long & personal acquaintance with Mr. C. and the opinion of him to which he has led, do not permit me to withhold my testimony, to his qualifications for such trusts.* He is a gentleman of an excellent understanding, educated on the best scale, & improved by the cultivation of general literature. He has been a good deal exercised in public affairs; and, is understood to have managed his own which involves both landed and pecuniary interests, with great judgment, exactness & success. Nor ought it to be omitted that whilst he is interested in the Stock of the Bank, he is a known & strenuous adversary of every species of abuse to which the administration of such establishments may be exposed.

*Corbin was recommended as a director of the Richmond branch of the Second Bank of the United States.

James Madison to Robert B. Corbin, Montpelier, Va., 4 June 1821 (enclosure)

Departed this life on ——— at his seat “The Reeds” Francis Corbin Esqr. at the age of sixty two years. His death was occasioned by an attack of the gout to which he had been occasionally subject.

Mr. Corbin was the youngest son of Col. Richard Corbin, a gentleman of a highly cultivated mind, and who held a distinguished Rank in the Government of Virginia in its Colonial State.

The son was sent to England at an early age, for his education; which was commenced at Canterbury School, and finished at the University of Cambridge. He afterwards read law at the Temple in London.

Immediately after the peace in 1783, he returned to his native State; bringing with him a mind well stored with classical studies; and what was far more meritorious, an ardent love of Country, and principles of Liberty congenial with its new rank as an Independent Nation, and with its new form as a Republican Government.

His superior talents and engaging manners attracted at once the notice & confidence of his fellow Citizens, whose suffrages gave him a seat in the Legislature of the State. As a member of this Body, tho’ young and under the disadvantage of his long absence, he was able to bear an important part in the Legislative business. In debate, he gave constant proof of his enlarged information, of his reasoning powers, and of an elocution uncommonly graceful & persuasive.

He continued a representative of his Country, untill the great crisis, which ended in the change of the Original Confederation of the States into the present Govt. of the U.S. Mr. C. was among the first to espouse & promote the efforts for bringing about the appointment of the General Convention which had that for its object; and he was not overlooked in the choice of worthies for the Convention of Virginia, when the plan proposed by the General Convention was submitted to the several States for their sanction.

In this select assembly, Mr. C.’s name is on the list of those who bore a conspicuous part in the discussions. His Speeches in the published proceedings show that his mind embraced the whole subject in its true principles, and various aspects; and that he was able to give to his arguments all the advantages depending on a suavity of manner, and a polish of language.

After the new Constitution had been organized & put into operation he was annually re-elected for a number of years as a delegate to the Legislature of the State, where he always sustained the reputation which his talents had acquired.

For some years previous to his death, he had withdrawn himself from public life, and devoted much of his time to the indulgence of his taste for literature & philosophy, & to the guidance of the education of children, of whom as a parent he had every reason to be proud. The other portions of his time were given to the care of his ample estate, and to the Society of his numerous friends, who could no where enjoy more of the sweets of hospitality, and the repast of elegant & interesting conversation, than under his roof nor could any one enjoy more fully those social senses, than Mr. C. himself. But, alas! Death, with his unsparing hand, has translated him for ever from all sublunary enjoyments; leaving in sorrow the friends who admired him; and in tears an amiable family; in the bitterest of them, her who was bound to him by the most tender of the ties that have been severed.

This hasty tribute to his memory is offered by one who having partaken largely of his friendly sentiments while living, wished to lay on his tomb some token of what was felt in return.

Ezekiel Cornell

Nathanael Greene to Robert R. Livingston, Morristown, N.J., 29 May 1780

This will be handed you by General Cornell one of the Delegates [to Congress] for the State of Rhode Island. I beg you will not imbibe hasty prejudices to his disadvantage from first appearances.

An agreeable Air and a happy Address often give a man more consequence with the World altho he possesses but an indifferent capacity than a man of much more solid parts without them.

The General has not many of the graces dancing round him; but is a man of good understanding and guided by the best intentions upon a liberal and just scale of National policy.

Tench Coxe

“Civis,” Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 21 November 1788

There never was a period more important to the interests of Pennsylvania than the present, when an election is approaching, which will determine the strength of the opposing parties of *Federalists* and *Antifederalists*.

An uncommon share of prudence and circumspection should be used to prevent all causes of clamor and complaint, which might detach a number of zealous friends from the support of the characters who are named as candidates for the Federal ticket.

A recent appointment to the delegations in Congress* will doubtless have that tendency; and many strong advocates, for the Republican and Federal party, most sincerely regret this ill judged, inconsiderate appointment: but their endeavors will be continued to avert its consequences.

I have been a whig the whole period of the war, but rather of a moderate cast of character and wish such political measures to be pursued, as will support such a system.

I am a friend to the natural as well as social rights of man, and am willing to extend all the franchises of citizenship to every class of inhabitants who have taken the oaths of allegiance. I

should even wish to see many of those who were inactive during the Revolution, come forward and take part in our political councils.

But there are exceptions—there are characters whose conduct during the war has designated them as objects of peculiar and pointed detestation. Such is the person who has been nominated to a seat in Congress for the ensuing four months.

This man enlisted in the armies of his country; and at the hour of danger and distress basely abandoned it. He did not choose the peaceful shades of retirement, and in silence lament (what he conjectured would be) its approaching fate; but, like a PARRICIDE, joined the councils of the enemy whose object was to precipitate its downfall. If heaven had not averted the fatal stroke, the best blood in America would have been spilled on a scaffold, and this prudent detester of his country's cause, would have been now basking in the sunshine of *British* favor.

Whilst the commerce of this country was almost annihilated by the superior armaments of the enemy, and reduced to the extreme of distress, he was trading successfully under their protecting care, and enriching himself with the spoils of his fellow citizens.

Did he not accompany their hostile arms in their expedition to Philadelphia, and join in the general exultation at the capture of that devoted city?

Let me ask every candid man, how many years of political probation and penance such a character should pass through, before he can be restored to the good opinions of his country?

How many additional years before such a deserter from so glorious a cause as America was engaged in, can command their confidence?

And let me ask, and let every soldier and patriot answer with his hand on his breast, how long before it would be prudent to raise such a character to the first honors and emoluments of a government, built on the foundation of our independence, which he wickedly wished to overthrow.

*Coxe had recently been appointed a delegate for the last four months of the Confederation Congress.

Samuel Hodgdon to Timothy Pickering, Philadelphia, 1 January 1789

Mr. Coxe goes for York on Monday he is full of Land schemes and I expect much from his knowledge address and caution—who knows but that we may at last be made *rich* Men, by dabbling in Lands—

Benjamin Rush to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 5 January 1789

The bearer of this letter Mr. Tench Coxe is a moving common place book of knowledge with respect to the politicks of Pennsylvania. His appoint [to the Confederation Congress] has subjected him to some newspaper attacks. They came from men who have in vain attempted to supplant him in the esteem of his fellow-citizens. The antifederalists have subscribed to his promotion, for in all his publications, he has treated them with moderation & liberality. From a long & intimate knowledge of him I can affirm that his integrity, as far as I have Observed, is equal to his talents as a politician. We have too few such men in Pennsylvania.

John Jay to Benjamin Rush, New York, 23 January 1789

It will I assure you give me pleasure to cultivate an acquaintance with your amiable friend Mr. Coxe. His manners are pleasing, and his Talents & Information will be useful.

Benjamin Rush to Tench Coxe, Philadelphia, 31 January 1789

Mr. Jay has answered my letter to him in very polite terms. He speaks of your “manners”—“talents” & “information” in a style that does you great honor.

Benjamin Rush to Tench Coxe, Philadelphia, 26 February 1789

This letter will probably close our Correspondence during your residence at New York. I rejoice in the prospects of your return. We want *you* every where.—Never was there so great a party, as the Federalists in Pennsya: so deficient in industry—ingenuity, and general knowledge.—The great Questions *now* before our Assembly require a *Vis a tergo**—but our great men are idle—and do not see the importance of improving the present *lucid interval* of a once insane state. Mr: Jer: Wynkoop—Mr Maclay—Mr Wilson & Mr Fitzsimons spent Monday evening with me. We did *some* business—but it cannot be executed without *you*. . . .

I am this day about to employ my leisure from business in pushing a Sunday school. It is *still* necessary & practicable. Make haste home.—I want your head—& heart & hand in this business.

*A force acting from behind.

Tench Coxe to James Madison, Philadelphia, 5 April 1789

[I response to encouragement to seek public office] as there is often an uncertainty about the dispositions of professional men to leave private life, I have thought it not improper under the above to communicate to you what has happened and my not being averse to the Ideas suggested to me. My private property and expectations from my wife’s family & my own will from I trust (and this naturally is in entire confidence) about £30,000, chiefly in landed Estate in New York, Pennsylvania, Jersey & Delaware. The improvement of this from its own income would be a profit quite equal to my desire if the exertions of my best Abilities in the public line were to produce a compensation that would maintain my family in the way you have seen me live—

With respect to my qualifications I can say Nothing of them—Your Knowledge of me renders it quite unnecessary for be they small or otherwise they must be very well known to you—From 1776 when I came of Age to the present time I have been engaged in private business, in commerce and the purchases & improvements of landed property. During that period I have held four employments under the state of Pennsylvania, and in many private associations for purposes of policy or profit in which bodies of my fellow Citizens have been engaged.

Benjamin Rush to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 4 May 1790

The bearer Mr. Tench Coxe who has been called upon to share in the toils of our new Government, has solicited the honor of an introduction to you. He has acquired great reputation and many friends by his singular zeal, and industry in promoting the Adoption of the federal Government. His valuable publications discover genius, taste and extensive information. The two enclosed essays in the newspapers have been ascribed to him. They contain many facts highly interesting to Europeans.

Alexander Hamilton to Timothy Pickering, New York, 13 May 1790

I can with truth assure you, that you were one of a very small number who held a competition in my judgment and that had personal considerations alone influenced me, I could with difficulty

Founders on the Founders

have preferred another. Reasons of a peculiar nature, however, have determined my choice towards Mr. Tench Coxe, who to great industry and very good talents adds an extensive theoretical and practical knowledge of Trade.

Thomas Fitzsimons to Benjamin Rush, New York, 4 July 1790

when I last Spoke to Mr. Coxe upon this Subject he Appeared to be Very well disposed but of late our Avocations have prevented our being Much together. he is going on to Philada. where You will no doubt see him Upon the Subject of Residence you will find him the Echo of the Secy. [Hamilton] and I Caution you Against saying *all* you think respecting that Gent' Conduct in the business least on some Occasion it might escape this friend whose situation leaves him open to the Address of the other—tho he is naturally Cautious—

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 2 February 1795

His [Coxe's] statement respecting the Report of a Committee, the discussions in the two houses of Congress & in regard to the provisions of the Act making alterations in the Treasury and War Departments weighs little in my mind. My memory does not serve me to establish or reject the particulars he suggests. I remember however that some points in the report of the Committee, which Mr. Coxe did not like, were introduced without my concurrence, and that I told him so at the time; that his intrigues which have been incessant, in an incessant struggle for preeminence over Mr. Wolcott, had marshalled some personal friends of his with the usual opposers of the department to embarrass the progress of the Bill and give it a complexion favorable to his ambition—that there was a diversity of opinions & that finally the Bill was shaped in conformity with suggestions from me to Individuals.

But I have always viewed Mr. Coxe's pretensions to make the opinions of his friends the standard for the execution of the law as neither modest nor correct.

In fine, I should have thought what Mr. Coxe would have deemed most consistent with the principles of the Department very wrong. I considered him as having already more business confided to him than his talents for execution were equal to a large part of which has since been withdrawn from him at his own pressing request. I considered him as an inferior officer in the department to Mr. Wolcott and after the disposition he had shown I should have regarded it as treating Mr. Wolcott ill to have invested him even with a temporary superiority. In the last place I had much greater confidence in the proper and efficient execution of the business of Mr. Wolcott than by him.

Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., New York, 5 August 1795

I do not wonder at what you tell me of the author of a certain piece. That man is too cunning to be wise. I have been so much in the habit of seeing him mistaken that I hold his opinion cheap.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 27 December 1796

Swan came to visit me, as well as Tenche Coxe. What a Puppy this last? He left his Card.

George Cabot to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Brookline, Mass., 19 January 1798

I rejoice to hear that you have finally expelled a traitor from the treasury, who never deserved to have been trusted. The toleration of such a fellow in office after his duplicity was known, indicates truly a weakness in the government, and I have never yet believed that this kind of policy was wise.

Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 1–5 February 1798

You ask me, What has Cox done that he is dismissed. I answer a Man of his Character ought not to have been employed where he was. At the Time the British were in this State, Mr. Cox, then a young man, went from this city and joined them, and as a Guide led them into this city with a chaplet of evergreens round his Head. When this Government was about to be established, he turned about, and possessing some talents became a warm advocate for the Federal Government. He possesses specious talents. He got Col. Hamilton to appoint him first Clerk in His office whilst he was Secretary of the treasury. In this office he continued till it is said Hamilton found him very troublesome to him, and not wanting to have him an Enemy, he contrived to get the office of Commissioner of the Revenue created, and Cox appointed to it. When Hamilton resigned, Cox expected to be appointed in his Room but finding Mr. Wolcot preferred before him, he was much mortified. And at the late Election for President, he became a writer in the papers and in pamphlets against the administration of Washington and a Partisan for Jefferson. But no sooner was the Election determined, than Sycophant like he was, worshiping the rising Sun outwardly, whilst secretly he was opposing and thwarting every measure recommended by the President for the defense of the Country. But this was not all. He was constantly opposing and obstructing the Secretary of the Treasury in his department. A Man of no sincerity of views or conduct, a Changling as the Wind blow, & a Jacobin in Heart.

Tench Coxe to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 11 November 1820

I abandoned my profession in the year 1790, because I deemed it improper in me and unfavorable to our young reformed government that as a public officer, possessed of political information & secrets & with many opportunities of influence, should be engaged in commerce. I am therefore without a profession, and entirely out of office, with a family of eight unmarried children all above 20.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 18 October 1823

I return you mr. Coxe's letter which has cost me much time at two or three attempts to decypher it. Had I such a correspondent I should certainly admonish him that if he would not so far respect my time as to write to me legibly, I should so far respect it myself as not to waste it in decomposing and recomposing his hieroglyphics.

James Kent: Journal to His Son, 30 April 1833

He [Egbert Benson in 1833] spoke most contemptibly of *Tench Coxe* who was in Jefferson's department at Philadelphia & a Member of the Annapolis Convention in 1786. He said he was hypocritical, & profligate.

Richard Cranch

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 1 April 1797

Our Worthy Brother Cranch is laid up for this fortnight with his old Lung complaint, which will some Day prove too hard for him. I hope he is getting better.

Abigail Adams to Hannah Storer Green, Quincy, Mass., 1809

Judge Cranch now arrived to the Age of 83 is really a wonderfull Man—he writes as correctly as ever he did and tho deaf, appears to enjoy Life in better health than in former days—

Abigail Adams to Hannah Storer Green, Quincy, Mass., 20 February 1810

Judge Cranch now arrived to his 83d year, is a wonderfull man for his Age. he reads much writes as correctly as ever he did, and with as steady a hand, takes much family care and labour upon him, is the attentive and polite Gentleman through all periods—what a blessing such a gran Old Age: no petulence. no murmuring but willing to live, and not afraid to dye.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 2 November 1811

In June my Sister Cranch, in her Seventieth year, oppressed with Grief for the loss of her Daughter and with Anxiety Care and Exertion for her orphan Children fell Sick of a Fever, and lingered under the Consequences of it for four Months.

Mr Cranch my Guide Philosopher and Friend for Sixty years, at the Age of Eighty five, borne down by the Loss of his daughter and Sickness of his Wife fell at last very Suddenly on the 16. Oct. and his Wife expired the next day. both were buried together in my Tomb.

John Adams to Benjamin Waterhouse, Quincy, Mass., 3 December 1811

Weep with me, over the Tomb of my Brother and Sister Cranch in whom I have lost one of the greatest Comforts of my Life. I visited their habitation almost every day; and there I was always happy.

William Cranch

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 19 March 1787

William Cranch of Braintree, was 17 the 17th. of last July. The ties of blood, strengthened by those of the sincerest friendship, unite me to him, in the nearest manner. Our sentiments upon most subjects are so perfectly similar, that I could not praise his, without being conscious of expressing a tacit applause of my own. His manners I can however pronounce amiable; his spirit, nobly independent: his judgment sound, and his imagination lively. His thirst for useful knowledge, and his fondness for study is not surpassed by that of any individual in the Class: happy were it for me; if

with a perfect coincidence with his opinions in general, I could unite, the same talents, and the same accomplishments.

Elizabeth Smith Shaw to John Quincy Adams, Haverhill, N.H., 9 June 1794

William Cranch of whom you ever speak with so much Love, & affection, has not yet become a Votary at the Shrine of Hymen—He pines—he languishes for the sweets of domestick Life; & as heaven has formed him with a Mind peculiarly suited for that State, I am grieved that Fortune has not blessed him with sufficient Property—As she is a fickle Dame I hope she will soon shew herself more kind—for if rectitude of Heart, & sweetness of Temper can entitle any One to her Favours W.C. has an undoubted Claim—

John Adams to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Philadelphia, 10 December 1794

The Bearer of this Letter William Cranch is a Nephew of mine, and to me very much like one of my sons, and I should therefore think my self, in a sort, wanting in parental affection if I suffered him to go to Anapolis, without a Letter of introduction to you. He is destined to settle at least for some years in the Federal City, to the Prosperity of which, his Education, Talents Application and Virtues, may make him very Useful. Permit me to solicit your Patronage in his favour in proportion to his merits.

Elizabeth Shaw Peabody to Abigail Adams, Atkinson, N.H., 3 July 1797

He has good abilities, & an excellent education, & is capable of rising, & making an handsome figure in his profession.

Abigail Adams to William Cranch, Philadelphia, 3 December 1797

I had the pleasure of receiving from you a very excellent Letter last week, which fully proves that neither your Patriotism, or abilities have sufferd any elimination by your engagements in the ploding business of an accomptant, tho a course of years might have blunted the Edge of literary pursuits, which are much better suited to your Education, taste and usefulness in Life. I rejoice therefore in your return to the Bar, and in the assurance that you derive new pleasure in the pursuit. Providence has kindly orderd that every step of improvement whether moral or Mental, should be attended with complacency, and that industry in laudible pursuits should be a never failing source of satisfaction. I most sincerely wish you a success, proportionate to your Merits, and ample as Your wishes—

John Adams to William Cranch, Washington, 3 March 1801

Know ye, That reposing special Trust and Confidence in the Wisdom, Uprightness and Learning of WILLIAM CRANCH of the District of Columbia, I have nominated, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate do appoint him one of the assistant Judges of the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Columbia

St. Jean de Crevecoeur

William Short to James Madison, Paris, 7 May 1787

You may well suppose Sir that my pride would not permit me to let M. de Crevecoeur or any body here believe that I was not well enough acquainted with you to give a letter of introduction. If you have read the Article *Etats-Unis* in the new Encyclopedia, you will not be surprised either at Mr. Crevecoeur's earnestness to cultivate your acquaintance or my unwillingness not to contribute to it. There is no body whom I would introduce to you more readily Sir than M. de Crevecoeur, because there is no body more capable of explaining to you the present ideas of France with respect to America—because there is no body who understands more perfectly the interests of the two countries as they relate to each other, & none more zealous to promote them mutually, as he has uniformly manifested during his late residence in Paris. You will find him an indefatigable searcher after useful knowledge, & an enthusiast for improvements in the useful arts & well acquainted with all which have taken place in this part of Europe during his stay here. Such a man cannot fail being agreeable & useful to you Sir, at New York, whether considered as a member of the federal head or as a private philosopher. This I hope Sir will induce you to excuse the liberty I have taken, & to which I confess I have been impelled by a mixture of vanity with desire to oblige M. de Crevecoeur.

James Madison to George Washington, New York, 5 November 1788

He is a very worthy man & entitled by his philanthropy and zealous patronage of whatever he deems useful, to much esteem and regard.

Nathan Cushing

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Newburyport, Mass., 19 March 1790

The internal politics of the State are in a state of tranquility, very unusual at this season. The opposers of the Governor [John Hancock], discouraged I presume by the ill success which they have always experienced, seem determined to leave him in quiet possession. He has been confined as usual all winter with the gout, and his judicial appointments have been the only public circumstances which have for some time past been the subject of animadversion. The appointment of [Robert Treat] Paine was rather popular. That of Mr. Cushing was far otherwise. The friends of the Governor only insist upon the disinterested magnanimity of nominating a man who it is said has been invariably opposed to his measures, while his enemies are so far from acknowledging his disinterestedness, that they censure him very highly for nominating to one of the most important offices in the State, a man totally unqualified to sustain it, merely to be freed from his troublesome opposition as a councillor.

The late Chief Justice, revered as his character universally is, does not altogether escape censure for recommending so earnestly his cousin [Nathan Cushing] to an employment, to which he is almost universally said to be very inadequate.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Newburyport, Mass., 5 April 1790

The appointment of N. Cushing upon the bench of our Supreme Court has certainly tended to increase the confidence of the people in that important branch of the government. The appointment was very unpopular; and what perhaps in a political view rendered the measure the most injudicious is, that it is not his integrity but his abilities that are called in question. But personal animosity against the characters who would have added dignity to that station, the apprehension of giving offense to the late Chief Justice, who it is said recommended his cousin too strongly, and the pleasure of removing a troublesome councillor, concurring together, were too powerful even for *antifederal* principles, and produced we are told a nomination, which could be accounted for upon no other motives.

Thomas Cushing

John Adams: Diary, 22 December 1765

Cushing is steady and constant, and busy in the Interest of Liberty and the Opposition, is famed for Secrecy, and his Talent at procuring Intelligence.

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, Cambridge, Mass., 30 December 1786

The insurrections [Shays's Rebellion] are not immediately dangerous, but our government has not sufficient vigor and energy to suppress them at once. There has appeared in the councils a degree of timidity and irresolution, which does no honor to the executive power of a commonwealth. It is said to have arisen chiefly from the second citizen in the State, who is now distinguished by the ludicrous nick-name of the *Old Lady*.

William Cushing

John Adams to William Cushing, Philadelphia, 9 June 1776

You do me great Honor, Sir, in expressing a Pleasure at my appointment to the Bench [i.e., the Massachusetts Superior Court of Judicature]; but be assured that no Circumstance relating to that Appointment has given me so much concern, as my being placed at the Head of it, in Preference to another [i.e., Cushing], who in my opinion was so much better qualified for it, and entitled to it. I did all in my Power to have it otherwise but was told that our Sovereign Lords the People must have it so.

John Adams to John Avery, Philadelphia, 21 March 1777

The Vacancy must be filled up after all with some other Gentleman. The Resignation* you saw was the Result of long and anxious Deliberations, was founded in Reasons that will not alter, and therefore there will be no Change in my Determination. The Difficulty you insinuate of finding a proper Person, is merely imaginary. There is not a more suitable Person in the State nor belonging

to it, than the very worthy Gentleman who now presides in that Court, and other Gentlemen enough may be found to fill the Place which will be left open, by the Removal of him and his Honble Brothers, much more suitable to sit in that Seat than I am.

*A reference to John Adams's resignation as the chief justice of Massachusetts.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 30 August 1785

This day the Supreme Judicial Court met, and I went and heard the chief justice, Mr. Cushing deliver the charge to the grand Jury. He spoke with much dignity, and animadverted peculiarly upon the neglect, which many of the towns in the Commonwealth, have shown of late with respect to public schools.

Fisher Ames to John Lowell, New York, 28 July 1789

It is certain that Chief Justice Cushing has been recommended to the Prest. But by whom, or by what influence the nomination will be supported I am not able to discover. I am sure that the Senators, and I believe all the Reps. of our state would not wish his appointment. I would not affect reserve upon this subject—because I am sure that you cannot be a stranger to my wishes nor will I claim any merit with you by declaring what they are. Judge Cushing's merit is not to be disputed, nor parted with from the bench where he presides at present. I am informed that the prest. asks information in regard to his intended appointments—and I am very positive, that the Masstts. delegation will express their wishes and reasons in favour of another appointment than that which has been proposed to him. Those reasons have such intrinsic authority, and will be so maintained as to create a strong probability of their prevailing with the excellent prest. who regards nothing else.

Christopher Gore to Rufus King, Boston, 6 August 1789

The appointments to the Judicial seats will soon be made. We flatter ourselves in Massachusetts that one of the Supreme Court will be taken from this State. The general expectation is, that our friend Lowell will be appointed as associate judge; and no doubt was ever entertained of this event, till we heard that our Chief Justice was in nomination. Should the Chief Justice be appointed, we shall lose an excellent man, whose talents are peculiarly fitted for the place he fills, without rendering any great service to the United States; and a very good man will be extremely mortified.

The Chief Justice, now 56 years of age, cannot long be an active member of the court, and he has new habits and new modes of legal decision to acquire. On these grounds I much doubt if he would be an acquisition to the Union, or at least so great an acquisition to the Government as Lowell.

James Bowdoin to John Adams, Boston, 10 August 1789

We have a perfect Confidence, and are therefore happy, in the Gentlemen, who now constitute our Supreme judicial Court: but it is the wish of some intriguing Individuals to get themselves Seated upon that Bench: and for this purpose, it is their design, that the chief Justice, Mr. Cushing; who is a most worthy character, should be appointed to the federal Bench. In that case they expect, and have reason to expect, his place will be supplied by a man totally disagreeable to all the other Justices; and whose appointment will probably, or rather certainly, occasion the resignation of most or all of them: in which case they have little room to doubt of their own appointment.

Stephen Higginson to John Adams, Boston, 10 August 1789

I never yet have had occasion to solicit an appointment either for myself or my friends, nor do I love to interest myself in matters of the kind; but, when there is an appearance of danger from any proposed appointment, it seems to me to be the duty of every good Citizen, to give such information as appears to be material. upon this ground only I shall now take the liberty of stating to you, some of the Evils which are here thought inevitable, should Mr. Cushing, Our present chief Justice, be removed to the federal Bench; a measure, which several Letters by the last post inform us, would probably be taken. you know, & every One acknowledges, his Abilities & many good qualities; which render him a proper person for the Office referred to, & which make him of the highest importance to this commonwealth in his present Station. Our present Bench are very respectable, they harmonize to an unusual degree, they love & respect each other, & they are all federal. by means of these qualities Sentiments & union, they act with dignity & decission; & they form the greatest Barrier we have, by much, against popular frenzy, & the influence of popular Demagogues. Should that Bench be broken up, or much changed, it would probably give rise to more mischief, & would certainly give more pain to the good Citizens, to the friends of government than any thing that can happen. It is an Event which his Brethren, the Bar, & the best of Our Citizens would deprecate exceedingly—for the certain consequence would be, the appointment of a man, with whom some, if not all the others would refuse to sit—at least such is the Opinion of all that I am acquainted with.—It is indeed an Event, which the popular party here would much rejoice at, & which they have been labouring to bring about. they certainly wish much to derange that Bench, & to place on it some men of very opposite Characters; & they sometime since intimated that it would happen ere long.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Newburyport, Mass., 19 March 1790

The late Chief Justice, revered as his character universally is, does not altogether escape censure for recommending so earnestly his cousin [Nathan Cushing] to an employment, to which he is almost universally said to be very inadequate.

Jeremiah Smith to William Plumer, Philadelphia, 7 February 1795

The Supreme Court commenced their session on Monday.—Much of the dignity of the Court is lost by the absence of the Chief Justice—Judge Cushing has not attended every day—He is under the Care of a Physician for a Cancer on his Lip—

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 9 February 1795

The Judges are now here. Judge Cushing is under the Hands of Dr. Tate who is said to have wrought many Cures of Cancers and particularly one for the President. The Judge appears to be under serious apprehensions for something in his Lip which he thinks is a Cancer but his hopes from Tate's Prescriptions seems to be lively

Jeremiah Smith to William Plumer, Philadelphia, 24 February 1795

I shall attend the Supreme Court today—I am told that the Judges will this day deliver their opinions *seriatim* in the McClary Cause—This indicates that a difference in opinion exists on the

Bench—They miss the chief-Justice—He was the ornament of the Bench—between ourselves Cushing is superannuated & contemptible—

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 15 January 1796

I pray you would give Judge Cushing a Hint, for in the minds of some of the southern Gentry, his Wig will be a greater objection to his preferment, than all the Madness and folly, to say no worse, of a Rutledge.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 2 February 1796

Judge Cushing declines the Place of Chief Justice on Account of his Age and declining Health.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 6 February 1796

Judge Cushing has been wavering. Sometimes he would and Some times he would not be C. J.

Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Litchfield, Conn., 15 February 1796

Mr. Cushing, I understand, has declined his preferment [as Chief Justice of the United States]; he is a good and respectable character.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 10 January 1799

Judge Cushing dined with me yesterday. . . . I have not seen the Judge look better.

Abigail Adams to Hannah Cushing, Quincy, Mass., 1801

I need not put up the petition of Pope's "teach me to feel another's woe"* for I have most sincerely entered into your affliction during your long residence at Washington, and thank heaven for your cause of rejoicing—I dared not write to you and feared the arrival of every mail might bring me the melancholy tidings we all so much dreaded, but through the interposition of a bountifull providence, and next to that the watchfull care, and unwearied attention of the best of Nurses your best Friend is again restored to health & I hope to his former Strength & vigor of mind. may his valuable Life Still be preserved a blessing to his Country to which he has for many years administered justice with integrity, and impartiality. blessed are the Mercifull, for they Shall find mercy.

*Alexander Pope's *The Universal Prayer*, written around 1716 but first published in 1738.

Hannah Cushing to Abigail Adams, Washington, 25 April 1807

If my hands could have obeyed the dictates of my heart I should have written to you long before this. But I have been constantly nursing my poor sick Husband, who has been confined to his room for 82 days. I never knew him enjoy better health than he did from July to the last of Jany. He attended Court Feby. 2nd., called on the President, & that night was taken with a Remitent Fever, & sore throat. He had been gaining some days before 26th., when he was finely in the morg, & looked over some Court papers; But at night went to bed with chills, which were followed with a high fever, and continued unabated some days, which proved to be a slow Nervous fever, & it is

not more than a week since the thick coat has been wholly off of his tongue. For 70 days he eat no meat, and not a bit of bread for 44 days. Heaven be praised, he has been gaining surprisingly for a fortnight. It does my heart good to see him eat a small piece of beef steak, "It is delicious very delicious," indeed every thing he takes now is so.

Abigail Adams to Hannah Cushing, Quincy, Mass., 15 September 1810

The stroke which has severed these bonds, must sink deeper into your Bosom, and calls forth the sympathizing tears of your Friend. whilst I can rejoice that your Dear Husband, who had lived, as a just Man, and an upright judge—is released from those increasing infirmities which years were accumulating upon him and the period was fast approaching.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 16 September 1810

Yesterday were committed to the Tomb the Remains of William Cushing a Judge of the National Surpream Court. Fifty Nine years, has he been known to me and esteemed and beloved as an invariable Friend. A Judge for Forty years of unblemished Character.

Abigail Adams to Catherine Nuth Johnson, Quincy, Mass., 19 September 1810

My old Friend judge Cushing is dead. he is happily released from infirmities which were increasing upon him, and which had deprived him of his public usefulness and personal comfort. he leaves behind him a fair and honorable Character—as an upright Man, a candid just and impartial judge unbiased by party animosity—always Steadfast to the interest and honour of his Country. those who knew him best, respected him most—so much, so intirely was mrs. Cushing devoted to him, that his death will be most sensibly felt by her—

John Quincy Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, St. Petersburg, Russia, 10 April 1811

[On hearing of the death of Judge William Cushing and President Webber of Harvard.] They were both good and respectable men, and the judge had been an able man in his profession.

William Johnson to Thomas Jefferson, Charleston, S.C., 10 December 1822

Cushing was incompetent [while serving on the U.S. Supreme Court].

Manaseh Cutler

Samuel H. Parsons to John Adams, c. May–August 1789

Mr. Cutler of Ipswich is a Gentleman of good Judgment, of liberal Education, and in some Branches of Science particularly in botanical Knowledge, is exceeded by few, if any, in this Country.

John Brown Cutting

William Stephens Smith to Thomas Jefferson, London, September 1787

In the first place I must introduce my very particular friend Mr. J. B. Cutting as a Gentleman of genius and merit. There may [be] one or two lines show themselves, which at first will be rather apt to prejudice against him, at least I was sensible of it, and have not been able to obliterate them from his Countenance and motion, but they are really only superficials. I know you will put them aside. You will find him a Gentleman remarkably well informed, of an inquisitive mind and possessing very good sentiments on the subjects which interest our Country. He passes only a few days in Paris to wonder and Gap (as he says) and returns here to embark for America.