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Alexander J. Dallas

William Plumer: Memorandum, 25 November 1805

He is a man eminent in his profession as a lawyer—as an advocate eloquent—his address is insinuating & his manners courtly. He has published several volumes of Reports of adjudicated cases in the Courts of the United States—which do much credit to him. His style of living is too costly & splendid for any subordinate office in the U.S. to maintain. He therefore is not seeking for office—to his professional labours he looks for support.

William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 5 January 1816

Our great danger now lies in the Treasury—Every thing is unsound, & without experience or knowledge there—How is it possible to place confidence there under its present director—We, the profane vulgar know only that he left a most lucrative practice here—that he was always a needy man from his expensive habits—hospitable & apparently generous in the extreme, his house was by far the most expensive in this City—& notwithstanding he had a numerous family & was a fond & excellent father, he could not [resist?] his inducements to expence, in order to save a part of his earnings for this family, who would have been destitute had they lost him—at least this was the general opinion. Now vanity as well as hospitality will combine to add to all his expences, & I have no doubt it will be seen that his expences far exceed any Minister who has resided in Washington, & probably those of the President himself. I judge so far from the character of the man. Now where are these expences to come from, unless it be from the want of fixity in our finances, which is the best state for enabling one behind the curtain to speculate to great & mammoth advantage, as they now are & are likely to be under proper management to this effect, and for some time to come. This income of this gentleman was here from 15 to 20,000 dollars per annum—this is abandoned by a man qui a un besoin de depense, for ostensibly 5,000 dollars per annum, which additional excitements to expense. But he is a thorough going Republican, he is a perfect democrat. This is the saving mantle for everything—This ought to inspire confidence—for sure no politician at Rome or at Paris who professed this religion, ever did it without remaining always true to the love of country, the purity of principle & an absolute “abnegation de soi-meme.” I have no doubt with this lever he will find the means of moving his party, who certainly form the majority & of course can do no wrong. It is a strange perversion which should have made Mr. M[adison] get rid of Gallatin & send him abroad, where most particularly our national pride, if not our national character should have prohibited our sending him; & thus lose his talents, after he had acquired a sufficient degree of wealth to enable him to think alone of the public good, & substitute a man of inferior talents unquestionably, & one who could not, from his circumstances, if he were so disposed, confine himself to study this good alone.

Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1829

Alexander G Dallas:—in an absence of mind used frequently in Court to mistake the names of Clients on both sides. On one occasion in which a Mr Sheepshanks was either plaintiff or defendant, he several times in referring to him called him Mr Sheepskin. The man was at length somewhat angered supposing the change of name was in derision & appealed to the Court for protection.

George Mifflin Dallas: Life and Writings of Alexander James Dallas, 1862

His personal exterior and accomplishments were fitted to attract and conciliate. To a figure at once tall and erect was united a deportment alike frank and graceful. His complexion was florid, his nose aquiline, his eyes large and blue, his forehead high and open, and his mouth formed with uncommon distinctness and delicacy. Vivacity, candor, and cordiality were blended in the general expression of his countenance. These traits, embellished by the freshness of youth, and a ready colloquial talent, could not but constitute an ample passport in ordinary intercourse.

He had a perceptible, though never an obtrusive, pride of personal appearance and movement. To this the fashions of the day and his own figure contributed. Very little, if at all, short of six feet in height, and erect without stiffness, he patiently underwent every morning the careful curling of his silvered hair, stiffened with pomatum and white powder, and hanging behind, some eight inches over his coat-collar, in a rose-knotted “club.” With such a structure upon the shoulders, though lightened by a bright blue eye, it was impossible to indulge in modern briskness and ease; quietude of bearing was alone inculcated, if not compelled. Besides, there were the drab-colored shorts, with small gold knee-buckles; the white-topped boots, leaving exposed an inch or so of the white silk stocking within; the white and ample vest, relieved by a interior flannel; and the unvarying white cravat. The close-bodied coat was a deep brown; the surtout a flowing drab. He walked lightly, but with a natural dignity, which riveted the inquiring gaze of a stranger.

Tristram Dalton

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, Mass., 15 March 1784

Another [gentleman] tells me Mr. A. has written a Letter to Mr. Speaker—he is not to be confided in, he has no discretion, he communicates the contents of his Letter to persons who are not to be trusted, he is in a certain Box without knowing it.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 18 October 1785

Mr. Dalton return'd to tea, and we spent the Evening there. His eldest Daughter, Ruth, is the fattest Person of her age I ever saw. Moderately speaking I suppose, her circumference equal to her height, and she is not short. She is but little turn'd of 18 years. Mr. Dalton has three other Daughters, one of whom is unwell. I have not for a long while seen a family, that has struck me so agreeably, as this. Mr. Dalton, was my father's classmate at College, and has been his friend ever since. He is universally affable and polite, and unites to an high degree the gentleman with the scholar. His [wife] has something in her Countenance, which would authorize any one at first sight, to pronounce, her amiable and benovelent. Of manners gentle, and affections mild.

The Children all seem to inherit, the soft, placid turn of mind which distinguishes both the parents. Who after seeing such a family, as this can relish the idle Pomp and Pageantry of a Court. He who could must have ideas of happiness, very different from mine.

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams (Nabby), Haverhill, N.H., 19 October 1785

Mr. Dalton is much of a gentleman. He has a great deal, of that easy Politeness, which serves so much to make men happy, and to keep them so. A talent, which most men cannot acquire,

whatever pains they may take, but which some possess, naturally, and will show it, in whatever station of Life they may be placed. It has been observed that Mrs. Dalton resembled your Mamma. This is a sufficient eulogium of her, and nothing, more is necessary to be said in her favour. Ruth, is a picture of Satisfaction and Content: her uncommon bulk, does not appear to give her, any anxiety, and her mind seems to be in a continual Calm: the Children, have all been brought up to do something in the Course of their Lives, and not to consider, that Idleness is the dignity of human Nature.

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

Mr. Dalton received me in the friendly manner which bespeaks a worthy and talented man and with the typical hospitality of the people of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, who are certainly more hospitable than the inhabitants of any other New England and Central states. Several people told me, however, that Salem is an exception and is known for its lack of hospitality. . . .

Mr. Dalton's family was a picture of patriarchal life and of true domestic happiness. There were four or five young ladies, pretty and modest and wearing simple silk dresses. (It was Sunday and they had just returned from meeting.) . . . Mr. Dalton was formerly speaker of the legislature of New Hampshire. He has the reputation of being a good orator and of presiding with dignity.

Francis Dana

John Winthrop to Benjamin Franklin, Cambridge, Mass., 28 March 1775

My neighbor Francis Dana Esq. is embarking for London. He was a Gentleman of the Law in this town, while there was any Law; a modest, sensible, intelligent person, and a true friend to Liberty.

John Adams to George Washington, Philadelphia, 1 April 1776

The Bearer of this Letter Francis Dana Esqr of Cambridge, is a Gentleman of Family, Fortune and Education, returned in the last Packett from London where he has been about a Year. He has ever maintained an excellent Character in his Country, and a warm Friendship for the American Cause. He returns to share with his Friends in their Dangers, and their Triumphs. I have done my self the Honour to give him this Letter, for the Sake of introducing him to your Acquaintance, as he has frequently expressed to me a Desire to embrace the first opportunity of paying his Respects to a Character, so highly esteemed, and so justly admired throughout all Europe, as well as America.

Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 20 July 1778

I find Mr. Dana an excellent Member of Congress. He is a thorough Republican, and an able Supporter of our great Cause. I am satisfied it would be for the great Benefit of our Country if you and he were to form an intimate Connection with each other. This I am the more desirous of, because I have no idea of your being long secluded from the publick Councils. He will go home shortly.

Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 9 August 1778

As Mr Dana purposes to set off early tomorrow Morning I am unwilling to omit writing a Letter to you to be delivered by him. I part with him with great Reluctance, because I esteem him a very valuable Member of Congress. It is a Consolation to me that he has a Seat in the General Assembly, where I am satisfied he will be greatly instrumental in promoting the Reputation and true Interest of our Country.

William Gordon to John Adams and Francis Dana, Jamaica Plain, Mass., 8 March 1780

Friend Dana I know to be an *able*, but I can't add a *willing* and *ready* writer. He has established his character for being very *backward* at his pen.

James Lovell to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 19 December 1780

The *little Gentleman* is commissioned *Minister* for Russia. . . . I fear he will find himself distressed on this Occasion two Ways—the Weight of the Business in itself—and the Want of the wherewith.

Arthur Lee to Francis Dana, Philadelphia, 6 July 1782

The independent spirit which markd your proceedings when you arrivd first at Petersburg,* did not please some. Upon this subject I have but one observation to make, That a foreign minister, if he attempt any thing out of the hackneyd path, must do it at his peril. Success alone can silence the mongrel spirits which will otherwise raise a cry against him, from the effects of which, if unsuccessful, he will find no shield but in the goodness of his intentions. This consideration will not prevent a firm & virtuous mind from pursuing what he thinks really for the good of his Country, because even a failure cannot deprive him of that consolation which arises from conscious patriotism.

*Dana had been appointed U.S. minister to the court of Russia, but the Russian government refused to recognize him. Congress criticized Dana for a “rash step” in presenting his credentials before he had “satisfactory assurances that he will be duly received and recognized.”

Stephen Higginson to Theophilus Parsons, Philadelphia, 7 April 1783

The advices from Mr. Dana discover a knowledge of mankind and the interests of the powers of Europe, which does him honor.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Paris, 4 September 1783

Mr. Dana will be home before me. I envy him. But he will do great good. He is a thoroughly Sensible Man, and entirely well principled. No Man knows our foreign affairs, and difficulties better than he. I have no Patience at the insidious Maneuvers by which he has been defeated.

William Ellery to Francis Dana, Philadelphia, 3 December 1783

[Foreign] Courts are schools to learn patience in; and you & Mr. Jay I think have not proved bad scholars.

James Warren to Elbridge Gerry, Milton, Mass., 25 February 1784

The General Court has set for some Weeks without my being able to Inform you what they have done of a public and Important Nature. Except the Choice of Mr. Dana in the room of Judge S[ul-liva]n as a delegate to Congress. Good Providence takes care of us and this is an Instance of it. A more fortunate Event than the resignation could not have taken place and a more Judicious Choice could not have been made to fill the Vacancy. Mr. Dana dined with me lately and will soon be with you unless prevented by an Adjournment of Congress. When he stands upon your floor as Independent Member, his Abilities and rectitude may give honest Men pleasure while they detect the Malice and Corruption and Excite the Shame of the servile, if there should be any such among you.

Elbridge Gerry to Francis Dana, Annapolis, Md., 26 April 1784

Your Measures at the Court of Russia, so far as You have communicated them to Congress; have done you great Honor. Your opponents, who consist of only a few disguised partisans of the Aristocratic Circle, acknowledge this to be a Fact; indeed the Denial would injure their Reputation, & not yours.

Arthur Lee to John Adams, New York, 12 August 1784

Mr. Dana, came to Congress some time before we adjourned, & remains there, as one of the Committee of the States. Congress being adjourned to meet at Trenton the 29th of Octr. I concur entirely with you in opinion of Mr. Dana's worth & knowledge. He was in nomination for Secretary of foreign Affairs. But his conduct abroad had interposed a bar, & the french, franklin & morrisonian interests are inexorable against any one who has been active in promoting the independence of America agst. Gallic opposition.

Jacob Read to Charles Thomson, Annapolis, Md., 13 August 1784

Frank is of Low Stature and Small limbs, Stoops and is a good deal round Shouldered, Wears a Wig in imitation of Natural hair. Has a down look and very Weak Optics Supposed to have arisen from his looking at too much Snow in a more Northerly Situation. He is the most artful and designing of the Two [and Jonathan Blanchard] and is Supposed to have inveigled away poor Simple Jonathan of whom he intends to make a Cats paw.

John Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, Auteuil near Paris, 6 May 1785

I am anxious to know if Mr. Dana is to be again in public at home or abroad. I hope he will not be suffered to retire too. Our Country has not such Characters to spare from her most important Employments.

William Gordon to John Adams, Jamaica Plain, Mass., 4 October 1785

Our friend Dana, you will have heard before now, is one of the judges of the superiour court. The promotion was made by Mr. Hancock—not out of *love* to Dana—but some of the lawyers out of *love* to themselves, urged the promotion, that so he might not return again to the bar. Upon the same principle, should the aforementioned gentleman [Hancock] go to Congress, for the ensuing

year commencing at Novr, he would use all his interest in *favour* of you to keep you abroad, should he have hopes of getting again into the chair [i.e., being governor of Massachusetts], unless you should return.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 10 March–1 November 1787

[10 March] Soon after prayers I heard with equal grief and surprize, that Judge Dana was seized with an apoplectic, and paraletic fit, on thursday in the forenoon: that his life was for sometime despaired of, and that he is still in a very dangerous situation. To me, he has been a second father, and his instructions, though too much neglected at the Time when he gave them, have since been more attended to; and have at least check'd some of my failings, and were calculated to reform them entirely. I have therefore reason to revere him in a peculiar manner: but a man of his Talents and virtues, filling one of the most important offices in the State, is precious to the whole Commonwealth; and should his disease prove fatal, his loss will not be easily repaired.

[11 March] Mr. Dana, had a second attack last night; but not so violent as the first: they have some hopes, and many fears with respect to his recovery.

[22 March] I went down this evening to Mr. Dana's: I saw him for the first Time since his illness. They say he is much better, and recovering fast; but I was shock'd at seeing him; pale, emaciated and feeble, he scarcely looks like the same man he was three weeks ago.

[23 March] Charles [Adams] went down to Mr. Dana's this evening; the judge is mending but quite slowly.

[6 May] Dined with my brothers at Judge Dana's. He looks much better, than I have seen him at any time since he has been sick.

[3 June] Attended meeting in the forenoon. Sacrament day: I went to dine at Judge Dana's: soon after I got there, he was taken ill, and thought it was with his old disorder. He sent immediately to Boston, for Doctor [James] Lloyd, and Dr. [Samuel] Danforth; and for Dr. Jennison at College. We rubb'd him with a flesh brush, and with blankets, for two hours without intermission: he recover'd and the Physicians supposed this attack was only the consequence of a cold which he has caught. It rain'd hard all the afternoon, and evening. I remain'd at Mr. Dana's and lodg'd there.

[15 June] Yesterday Mr. Dana set off for Newport where he proposes tarrying till after Commencement.

[1 November] I attended in the morning, and in the afternoon at the setting of the supreme Court. Judge Dana, took his seat, for the first time since his illness; from which he has not yet, and I fear never will entirely recover.

Jeremy Belknap: Notes of Debates in the Massachusetts Convention, 18 January 1788

Dana made an excellent Speech—spoke like an honest Patriot & a Man of firmness—

Massachusetts Centinel, 26 January 1788

We came in [the Massachusetts ratifying convention] while the Hon. Judge *Dana* was speaking on it; but, captivated by the fire—the pathos—and the superior eloquence of his speech—we forgot we came to take minutes—and thought to hear alone was our duty.

Mercy Otis Warren to Elbridge Gerry, Plymouth, Mass., 24 March 1791

Did Dana do any thing in Russia either great or honorable to himself or Country? Was he a man of address, penetration, knowledge of Courts or of the human heart sufficient for an envoy to so great a power? From the irritability of his nerves I should judge his mind was too often disturbed by little passions and prejudices to command and retain the respect of great Statesmen and politicians, or even of the common observers of human Character. He is undoubtedly a man of understanding and professional knowledge.

John Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Philadelphia, 2 June 1797

I have selected Two Characters as respectable as I could find, and as impartial as any in the Union, and United them with Mr. Pinkney to make one trial more at accomodation with France, which I heartily desire; whether they will be received or not, time must discover; If they are not the French will never have another overture in my time. There are no abler men, than Dana and Marshall.

Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 3 June 1797

Judge Dana is known to be a decided Character, but not a party Man, nor any other than a true American.

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 20 June 1797

Knowing as I did Mr Dana's aversion to the Sea, [Adams did not nominate him as an envoy to France].

Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 4 December 1799

I learn from some of the Essex leaders that Judge Dana is to be set up for Governor. He will make a very able one. The Bench will also lose a learned Judge. I Question however whether Judge Dana is sufficiently popular for that place. He wants the amiable & conciliating manners of Sumner. Alas I know not where, is to be found all the qualities which he possessed, concentered in any person who will be held up as a candidate.

John Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, Quincy, Mass., 8 August 1807

He was appointed Secretary of Legation to my first Commissions to negotiate Peace and Commerce, with great Britain. His Birth his Education, his Connections, his Information, his Talents his Services as a Member of Congress, were Such, and the Friendship which had Subsisted for many Years between me and his Father and his Unckle Judge Trowbridge, and himself had been Such that I thought myself honoured by his appointment and Connection with me. An uninterrupted Harmony and Friendship was maintained between Us, during the whole time We were together in France and in Holland and after We were Separated by Congress and he was Sent to Russia.

John Adams to the *Boston Patriot*, Quincy, Mass., 23 June 1809

On the 17th day of November, 1779, I embarked for Europe, with the hon. Francis Dana, Esq. and Mr. John Thaxter. The former was appointed by Congress, secretary of legation to my two commissions.—There could not have been found in the United States a gentleman in whose education, connections, talents, integrity and personal friendship, I had more entire confidence. The latter I had taken from my own office and family as my private secretary. I was therefore perfectly happy, and knew myself perfectly safe in my own travelling family.

Abigail Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 April 1811

Tomorrow Your Father has the Melancholy office of pall holder to the Remains of his much esteemed Friend and companion through many trials, Judge Dana. he was Seizd Suddenly with a paralitick Stroke about a week Since, which in a few days terminated his Life.

I know my dear Son will mourn the Death of his Friend and Preceptor with whom he first trod the Russian territory, near thirty years ago, and with whom he was intimately connected, and for whose memory he will always preserve a high respect and Esteem.

Abigail Adams to Hannah Cushing, Quincy, Mass., 22 May 1811

Judge dana is removed, and no man appeareth to lay it to Heart. If my absent Son had been in America, the Grave would not thus Silently have closed over him.

A Man who Sustained Several public offices and for Several years held that of chief Justice of the State, which all who knew him, acknowledge he discharged with fidelity and integrity, ably Supporting the character of a bound judge Suddenly taken out of the world—not a solitary Line to characterizes his worth, his very funeral unattended but by Relatives, and pall holders, with a few Scattering exceptions. can we fail to call to mind upon this occasion the funeral obsequies of a Man cutt off in a duel, and the mock Heroicks of *party* exhibited upon the occasion by, o Shame *Clergy* as well as *Laiety*—

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 May 1811

Judge Dana died, and his funeral is attended by his relatives—his pall Holders—and a few individuals, not a word of notice taken of a Man who had Sustained various important offices, and who for many years was chief Justice of the State, who discharged the Duties of his office as an upright, and learned Judge, who was a Religious Man, as Husband, and Parent, fond affectionate and tender, as a public Man, without a Stain, yet not one Solitary paragraph in a newspaper, to Say more, than upon such a day he died! this would not have been, if you had been here—it has really hurt me for his family, but he was not a party Man. he had not popular talents, nor what Lord Chesterfield calls Suavity of Manners, which attract more forcibly, than Sound Sense, and Learning.

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, St. Petersburg, Russia, 29 July 1811

The Death of my worthy and respected friends Judge Dana & Mr. Emmerson has given me great concern, and state of health in which my brother's own letters and your's represent him, occasion deep anxiety.—Mr. Dana had a harshness of temper arising from a constitutional nervous irritability, and the perpetual terrors of that disease, which finally proved fatal him, and had hung

over him nearly five and twenty years—I saw him, under the operation of his first paralytic attack and then watched one night with him at his bed side—It was in the spring of 1787. while I was a student at College—I had then no expectation that he would ever recover from it, nor had he himself, nor his family nor his physician—He never did recover from it entirely; for although he retained for thirty years afterward; the powers of his mind to a surprizing and I believe after such an attack, to an unexampled degree, yet his nervous system was so shattered and his fears of a relapse so incessant, that it embittered all the remnant of his days.—This state of habitual distemper, sharpened the natural asperities of his disposition, narrowed the means of his intercourse with Society, and confirmed him in a great measure to his family relations—He was always very highly respected as a Judge, and untill the last moment when he held that station, I believe his learning and his judgement remained unimpaired—His integrity was never questioned—He had been a distinguished patriot of our Revolution an enlightened and upright Judge, a virtuous Citizen, and excellent father of a family; but of all the men whom I ever knew moving in so enlarged a sphere, he had the fewest *friends*.—I was therefore not surprized to learn with how little public notice his decease had been attended—Had I been at Boston, assuredly the ordinary tribute usual to the memory of the obscurest citizens, should not have been denied to him.—But I have had intimations for several years, that he was engaged in a manner which will leave a durable memorial of himself—Mrs. Warren’s *Aspasian* remarks upon his Mission to Russia, which the good woman borrowed from the political adonises of our revolutionary age, and which she never asked herself whether they were fit for the chastity of a female historian to retail, had affected the feelings of Judge Dana as it was natural they should; and I have some reason to believe that he was preparing for publication, either memoirs of his own life, or some historical work, relative to the American Revolution, in which he meant to hear that *blushless* and *ridiculous* comment of his person as it deserved.

Nathan Dane

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 16 July 1786

Two of these men [delegates from Massachusetts] whose names are Dane and King are elected for the next year. . . . The former is I believe honest but the principles of the latter I doubt.

Otto’s Biographies, Fall 1788

Cold and reflective; entirely devoted to [John] Adams’s party and to Mr. Bowdoin; great worker and brings together a knowledge of the affairs of his country and the politics and commerce of Europe. In Congress he has always made common cause with Mr. Gerry. Dane has more talent and less duplicity than Mr. Gerry.

William Bentley, Diary, Beverly, Mass., 3 April 1790

Mr. Dane is considered as a *sett Man*. He is not talkative, but fixed in maintaining an opinion, which he has advanced.

John Lowell to Timothy Pickering, Boston, 3 December 1814

Mr. Dane you know. He is a man of great firmness, approaching to obstinacy, singular, impracticable, and of course it must be uncertain what course he will take. Honestly, however, inclined.

William R. Davie**Nathanael Greene to William R. Davie, Camp at Charlotte, N.C., 11 December 1780**

[On the appointment of Davie as N.C. Commissary General] Your character and standing in this Country lead me to believe you are the most suitable person to succeed him [Colonel Thomas Polk]. It is a place of great consequence to the Army, and all our future operations depend upon it. As you are a single man, and have health, education, and activity to manage the business, it is my wish you should accept the appointment; especially as you have an extensive influence among the Inhabitants, and are upon a good footing and much respected in the Army.

Nathanael Greene to the North Carolina Board of War, Camp at Charlotte, N.C., 18 December 1780

[On the appointment of Davie as N.C. Commissary General] The King of Prussia speaking upon this Subject says "It is necessary to be very circumspect in the Service of Commissaries for if these Gentlemen happen to be Rascals, the State will suffer considerably. You must therefore endeavor to find a superintendant of known Probity who will frequently and minutely examine their Proceedings and direct Operations." Such a Person is essentially necessary for this Army, and as a Commissary Genl. or Superintendant must always be made acquainted with the Genl's Intention sometime before ever a movement is made, his Principles, Secresy and discretion should be unquestionable. Colo Davie is recommended to me as such a Person and if the Board are of the same Opinion, I wish them to give him the Appoin't. He will not engage unless his Powers are ample for he is not willing to hazard his Reputation without a fair Prospect of succeeding. His Ambition, Popularity, and good Sense and Activity give great Reason to hope he will execute the Business to your Satisfaction so far as the Poverty of the Public and the wretched State of our Finance shall put it in his Power.

James Iredell to Hannah Iredell, Halifax, N.C., 25 August 1781

You will probably receive this by the Governor and *Colo. Davie*. I wish you and your Sister would be as attentive as possible to them. The worth of the latter rises every day in my estimation. He appears to me to possess uncommon abilities, and much goodness as well as greatness of soul.

Hugh Williamson to James Iredell, Philadelphia, 8 July 1787

I fear that Davie will be obliged to leave us before our business is finished, which will be a heavy stroke to the delegation. We have occasion for his judgment.

Hugh Williamson to N.C. Governor Richard Caswell, Philadelphia, 20 August 1787

On Monday last Col. Davie set out from this place. I regret his departure very much as his conduct here has induced me to think highly of his abilities and political principles.

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

Mr. Davey is a Lawyer of some eminence in his State. He is said to have a good classical education, and is a Gentleman of considerable literary talents. He was silent in the Convention, but his opinion was always respected.—Mr. Davey is about 30 years of age.—

William Porter: Speech in North Carolina Ratifying Convention, 26 July 1788

I expect that very learned arguments, and powerful oratory will be displayed on this occasion. I expect that the great cannon from Halifax (meaning Mr. Davie) will discharge fire balls among us, but large batteries are often taken by small arms.

Recommendations submitted to Thomas Jefferson for Federal Offices in North Carolina, pre-7 June 1790

District Judge.

Colo. Davie is recommended by [John] Steele.
[Benjamin] Hawkins sais he is their first law character.
Brown sais the same.

Thomas Dawes, Jr.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Boston, 21 September 1790

Mr. Dawes, in addition to a similar indolence of disposition [as William Tudor], labors under the disadvantage of ill health; he is supported by a very considerable weight of paternal influence, but his exertion has been blunted by the expectation of a large patrimonial property—he married too young.

John Dawson

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Richmond, Va., 3 July 1790

I observe a bill has passed for settling the claims of Individual States with the U.S. & that under it 2 commissioners are to be appointed. Virginia will surely have a member at that board, if so Mr. Dawson of the Council would be happy in obtaining it. I have known him for sometime past and really think him well qualified for it. He is a young man of sound judgment, parts & attentive to business, & am persuaded in the discharge of that trust, would merit the approbation of the government. An impression perhaps took place some years since, on his first commencement, that he

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was somewhat dissipated. If this was even at that time well founded, yet be assured it has been since done away. He has been lately appointed to Congress & the Council & in my opinion possessed of the publick confidence. As I think him fit for the station & really wish him well, & on that account, as well as from a desire to avail the publick of his services, am anxious for his promotion. For this purpose I have taken the liberty to mention him to you, that so far as you concur with me in an opinion of his merit, he may be availed of your aid.

Daniel Webster to Edward Cutts, Jr., Washington, 26 May 1813

Dawson is as insipid an animal as one would wish to see.

Elias Dayton

William Livingston to Philip Schuyler, 2 May 1776

Give me leave to introduce to your Acquaintance Colonel Dayton of the third Jersey Battalion as a Gentleman of an excellent Character, affluent Circumstances, & the Reputation of considerable military Accomplishments.

Jonathan Dayton

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

Capt. Dayton is a young Gentleman of talents, with ambition to exert them. He possesses a good education and some reading; he speaks well, and seems desirous of improving himself in Oratory. There is an impetuosity in his temper that is injurious to him; but there is an honest rectitude about him that makes him a valuable Member of Society, and secures to him the esteem of all good Men. He is about 30 years old, served with me as a Brother Aid[e de camp] to General Sullivan in the Western expedition of '79.

Louis-Guillaume Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Little known; no other merit than being the son of an old patriot and the benefactor of M. d'Anteroches, which makes one presume that he likes the French.

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *Travels through America*, 29 September 1797

The old general of this name has five sons, of whom four are married and each in turn has his own family. The oldest, who is today the *Speaker* of the House of Representatives in Congress, is the most important personage in the family. More than 6 feet tall, with a Roman nose and features, he has an imposing gravity in his carriage. Successful in his speculations he has made a very large fortune. He is in trade. He owns a big store in New York.

John Adams to George Washington, Quincy, Mass., 9 October 1798

I have been for some time prepared in my own Mind to nominate Mr. Dayton to be Adjutant General, in Case of the Refusal of Mr. [William] North. Several others have occurred and been Suggested to me, but none who in point of science or Literature, political and military Merit or Energy of Character, appear to be equal to him.

Henry Dearborn

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 30 April 1796

Mass. Has 3 of the worst [U.S. Representatives]—two of whom are moral Characters, of a Levity altogether inconsistent with the Principles Practices Habits and Wishes of their Constituents. I mean Lyman & Dearborne. Dissipation is their prevailing Virtue and all they have to boast. I wish their Constituents would institute an Inquiry into their Conduct. Varnum is an Obstinate fool.

Mr. Delamotte

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Monticello, 16 January 1816

LaMotte has now returned and wishes the office.* What I know of him is that he is a very honest man, of great worth, very much respected there & very diligent. I knew him well while I was in France, & esteemed him highly. Who are the competitors I know not; but you will judge of their comparative merit.

*Delamotte wanted to be and was appointed U.S. vice-consul to L'Havre.

Robert Denny

Otho H. Williams to Alexander Hamilton, Ceresville, Md., 6 July 1793

If it is not too late to mention a successor to the Collector of Annapolis, I would name Robert Denny, formerly an Officer in the Maryland line, and who served me four or five years as deputy in the Office which I held in the Customs under the State Government. It was called the Naval Office but comprehended all the duties, and all the powers which are, under the general government, distributed among Collectors, Naval Officers, and surveyors. He is perfectly qualified; is ready at business, correct, and constant in his application; and he is respectable.

Henry W. De Saussure

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, New York, 5 November 1795

Desaussure, I believe, has considerable talents, is of gentlemanlike manners, good views, and only wants sufficient standing to put him upon a footing with any attainable man.

Charles DeWitt

Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 22 September 1778

[Suggesting other New York appointments to Congress.] If there is any Man of the lower Order whom you can trust, A Dewit for Instance, I think it would be advisable to be open mouthed and loud for him. Such a Man would be of infinite Service if appointed by Us.

Simeon DeWitt

George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, Mount Vernon, 3 March 1784

Has not Congress received a Memorial from Mr. De Witt, now, or lately Geographer to the Northern Army? . . . with respect to himself, I can assure you that he is a Modest, sensible, sober, and deserving young Man, Esteemed a very good Mathematician, and well worthy encouragement.

John S. Dexter

Jabez Bowen to George Washington, Providence, R.I., 19 June 1790

I would also Name John S. Dexter as a very proper Person for Marshall to this District. He is well known to your Excellency, and certainly would give good satisfaction to every good man.

Samuel Dexter

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, New York, 5 November 1795

An Attorney General I believe may easily be fixed upon by a satisfactory choice. Either Mr. *Dexter* or Mr. *Gore* would answer. They are both men of undoubted probity. Mr. Dexter has most *natural* talent & is strong in his particular profession. Mr. Gore is I believe equally considered in his profession & has more various information. No good man doubts Mr. Gore's purity but he has

made money by agencies for British Houses in the recovery of debts, etc. and by operations in the funds which a certain party object to him. I believe Mr. Dexter is free from every thing of this kind. Mr. King thinks *Gore* on the whole preferable. I hesitate between them. Either will I think be a good appointment.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 20 May 1816

I have already written to you by the Galen, my Letter was anterior to the calamity which the inclosed papers will full soon, inform you of.—what can we Say? but Lord thou destroyest the hopes of man. I know not how to describe the Gloom which has overspread the public mind—To departed worth, the tear of Friendship flow's. Party Spirit is Silent, and drops her veil, and bows acknowledging those Superiour Talents, which can no longer excite Envy, but are hallowed as a Sacred deposit, to the State which gave birth to so great a man, to the Nation which he has Served, in Numerous offices and capacities, and from which he is taken, in the Plentitude of his power, and in the height of his influence, and usefullness. taken and left neither Rival, or equal of his Years, to compensate for his loss.

In the supreme Court of the united States this last winter, where he received his bane, he shone beyond his usual Lusture, and has gone out, in a blaize of Glory; he was engaged in Many Causes in which the united States, was a party. the accounts which reachd us from thence, were full of admiration at the display of his wonderfull powers—

I inclose to you, Some of the Tributes offerd to his Memory—

Abigail Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 20 May 1816

I have not yet replied to your kind letter from Philadelphia—I designed it Sooner, but overwhelmed as we have been, by the unexpected Stroke of providence, in the premature (as to us weak Mortals) it appears, in the death of the Greatest Man our State could boast, and one of the best, what could I say? but be dumb and silent, for thou O Lord hast done it.—A Nations Tears flow upon this occasion—and the Sympathy of all honest Hearts who knew him, unite in one general Lamentation—Even Envy drops her shafts pointless to the Ground.

I have lost the Greatest Man in my kingdom Said Louis the 14th, on the death of the great Conde, and this may be repeated with equal Truth, by the State which gave Birth to *Dexter*—To you who lately witnessd the full Blaze of his talents, no Eulogyum is requisite, you will mourn with others, a National loss, Not a local calamity—it was he who still'd the tumult of the people, and Saved his Native State from a disgrace; which Blood could not have washed out.

His Ancient Friend, heavily feels his death, he knew his Worth, and when in power, availd himself of his talents in various departments of the National Government, in all of which he was at home, and discharged them with honour to himself and country.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 6 June 1816

Mr Dexter is no more here. The History and Character of my Administration, which he intended to have written is entombed with him at Athens. As no other Man could or would have written it, there it will remain till the Judgment of the great day, and then I fear it will be found little better, than a boule de Savon.

Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Story. Monticello, 19 June 1816

I thank you, dear Sir, for the eulogy of Mr. Dexter, which you have been so kind as to send me; and I subscribe with sincerity to the testimonies it bears of his merits. No one rendered more justice to his virtues & talents than myself; and if, in political matters we entertained some differences of opinion, they were on both sides the result of honest conviction, and held by both as inoffensive as differences of feature. His loss was a real affliction to the friends of our Union; & especially at a crisis when a successor was in question to the important magistracy for which he was proposed [i.e., governor of Massachusetts].

John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, Ealing, England, 4 November 1816

Since I last wrote to you, I have received your kind Letters of 27. August, and of 10. June, which I mention in the order, not of their dates, but of their reception. That of June enclosed a printed Copy of Judge Story's biographical eulogium of our late excellent friend Dexter, whose loss is a calamity to our Country, and especially to our Native State, which with all her errors and follies I do most faithfully love. Coll. Aspinwall had already received and obligingly sent me Judge Story's Sketch, which is very good; but which would have been much better, had the judge not been manacled and fettered by his situation. He is thereby precluded from paying the deserved tribute to that which was precisely the brightest part of Dexter's character—His political firmness, independence, and intrepidity. His contempt of the shackles of Party politics, and the vigour of mind which enabled him to break from them as easily as Sampson in his strength broke from the Cords of the Philistines—Now a Panegyric upon Dexter which slurs over this his first and most glorious characteristic, is like a life of Columbus, which should skip over his Discovery of America—I readily admit the Judge's apology that these are hot ashes, over which it would have been dangerous for him to tread; but then it must in return be admitted that neither the time, the place nor the Speaker *could* do Justice to the highest merits of Mr Dexter I am nevertheless very glad that this tribute was paid to him, and trust his memory will in due time be honoured by an estimate in which no sacrifice will be necessary to the Passions and Prejudices of a discordant auditory.

John Dickinson

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 31 August 1774

Made a Visit to Governor Ward of Rhode Island at his Lodgings. there We were introduced to several gentlemen.

Mr. Dickinson the Farmer of Pennsylvania, came to Mr. Ward's Lodgings to see us, in his Coach and four beautiful Horses. He was introduced to Us, and very politely said he was exceedingly glad to have the Pleasure of seeing these Gentlemen, made some Enquiry after the Health of his Brother and Sister, who are now in Boston. Gave us some Account of his late ill Health and his present Gout. This was the first Time of his getting out.

Mr. Dickinson has been Subject to Hectic Complaints. He is a Shadow—tall, but slender as a Reed—pale as ashes. One would think at first Sight that he could not live a Month. Yet upon a more attentive Inspection, he looks as if the Springs of Life were strong enough to last many Years.

Robert Treat Paine: Diary, Philadelphia, 12 September 1774

We returned & dined at Mr. John Dickinson's, the Celebrated Farmer, whose Seat is 2 1/2 miles from the City, & is a convenient, decent, elegant, Philosopher's Rural Retreat.

John Adams: Diary, 21 September 1774

In the Evening Mr. Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant of Prince Town, made a Visit to the Sec[retary, i.e., Samuel Adams] and me. He says he is no Idolator of his Namesake. That he was disappointed when he first saw him. Fame had given him an exalted Idea: but he came to N. Jersey upon a particular Cause, and made such a flimsy, effeminate, Piece of Work of it, that he sunk at once in his Opinion. . . . D., he says, stinks here in the public opinion. That many Gentlemen chime in with a spirited Publication in the Paper of Wednesday, which blames the conduct of several Gentlemen of Fortune, D., Cad[walader], R[hoades] and J. Allen.

John Adams: Diary, 24 October 1774

Mr. Dickinson is very modest, delicate, and timid.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 24 July 1775

A certain great Fortune and piddling Genius whose Fame has been trumpeted so loudly, has given a silly Cast to our whole Doings. We are between Hawk and Buzzard.

John Adams: Diary, 24 September 1775

Dr. Rush came in. . . . He complains of D[ickinson]. Says the Committee of Safety are not the Representatives of the People, and therefore not their Legislators; yet they have been making Laws, a whole Code for a Navy. This Committee was chosen by the House, but half of them are not Members and therefore not the Choice of the People. All this is just. He mentions many Particular Instances, in which Dickenson has blundered. He thinks him warped by the Quaker Interest and the Church Interest too. Thinks his Reputation past the Meridian, and that Avarice is growing upon him. Says that Henry and Mifflin both complained to him very much about him. But Rush I think, is too much of a Talker to be a deep Thinker. Elegant not great.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 13 February 1776

Mr. Dickinson, being the first Colonel, and Commander of the first Battalion too, claimed it, as his Right to march upon this Occasion. Mr. Reed, formerly Gen. Washington's Secretary goes [as] his Lt. Colonel. Mr. Dickinson's Alacrity and Spirit upon this occasion, which certainly becomes his Character and sets a fine Example, is much talked of and applauded. This afternoon, the four Battalions of the Militia were together, and Mr. Dickinson mounted the Rostrum to harangue them, which he did with great Vehemence and Pathos, as it is reported.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 20 May 1776

What do you think must be my sensations, when I see the Congress now daily passing Resolutions, which I most earnestly pressed for against the Wind and Tide, Twelve Months ago? and which I have not omitted to labor for, a Month together from that Time to this? What do you think

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must be my Reflections when I see the Farmer himself, now confessing the Falsehood of all his Prophecies and the Truth of mine, and confessing himself, now for instituting Governments, forming a Continental Constitution, making alliances with foreigners, opening Ports and all that—and confessing that the Defence of the Colonies, and Preparations for defence have been neglected, in Consequence of fond delusive hopes and deceitful Expectations?

Robert Whitehill to various friends, Philadelphia, 10 June 1776

Dickinson, Wilson, and the others, have Rendered themselves obnoxious to Every Whig in town, and Every Day of their Existence are losing the Confidence of the people.

Edward Rutledge to John Jay, Philadelphia, 29 June 1776

I have been much engaged lately upon a plan of a Confederation which Dickenson has drawn. It has the Vice of all his Productions to a considerable Degree; I mean the Vice of Refining too much. Unless it is greatly curtailed it never can pass, as it is to be submitted to Men in the respective Provinces who will not be led or rather driven into Measures which may lay the Foundation of their Ruin.

John Adams to Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, Philadelphia, 21 July 1776

What is the Cause, that Mr. Dickinson never can maintain his Popularity for more than two or three years together, as they tell me has ever been the Case! He may have a good Heart, and certainly is very ready with his Pen, and has a great deal of Learning, but his Head is not very long, nor clear.

Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 December 1776

Non Resistance is the professed Principle of Quakers, but the Religion of many of them is to get money & sleep as the vulgar Phrase is, in a whole Skin. The Interest of the Proprietor is at Antipodes with that of America, at least I suppose he thinks so—and though he is apparently inactive, there are many Engines which he can secretly set to work. These are no doubt partly the Causes of the Evil. Besides there are many Tories here who have been for months past exciting a violent Contest among the well affected about their new form of Government on purpose to embitter their Spirits & divert their Attention from the great Cause. But the foundation of all was laid Months ago through the Folly, I will not say a harsher word of that excellent, superlatively wise and great Patriot D., who from the 10th of September 1774 to the 4th of July 1776 has been urging every Individual & Body of Men over whom he had any influence, the Necessity of making Terms of Accommodation with Great Britain. With this he has poisoned the Minds of the People, the Effect of which is a total Stagnation of the Power of Resentment, the utter Loss of every manly Sentiment of Liberty & Virtue. I give up this City & State for lost until recovered by other Americans.

Thomas Nelson to Thomas Jefferson, Baltimore, Md., 2 January 1777

Your friends John, Andrew and William Allen are with General Howe; and Dickinson is they know not where, but it is imagined that he is on board the *Roebuck*. This Gentleman, after giving his Vote repeatedly in Congress, for the emission of Continental Money, wrote to his Brother not

to receive any of it in payment for his Debts, and his Letter was intercepted by the Council of Safety. What does he deserve?

Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 12 January 1777

Dickinson & A. Allen have given mortal stabs to their own Characters & pity it is the wounds should penetrate any further, but they were men of property, Men of fair private Characters & what they have done, seems to pierce through their sides into the Vitals of those who have similar pretensions to Fortune & good Character. The defection of these men is supposed to originate in a desire to preserve their Estates & consequently glances a suspicion on all that have Estates to lose. I pity them both exceedingly. Dickinson's Nerves gave way & his fears dictated a letter to his Brother advising him not to receive Continental money. His Judgment & his virtue should have prevented this act of Folly, I call it such because I believe his Heart to be good & regret much that his exalted Character should be degraded, by what could hardly be called a crime at the time he did it, but he thought the Game was up.

William Hooper to Robert Morris, Baltimore, Md., 1 February 1777

I am much pleased with our Success against the foraging party, & the more so from General [Philemon] Dickinson having had the Command. He has laid up a kind of Reputation as a patriot & an officer which will be sufficient not only for himself for life but upon which his Brother the Farmer may make drafts to repair that loss of Credit into which a constitutional weakness of nerves has betrayed him & in which I sincerely believe his heart had no share.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, 8 April 1777

The F [the Pennsylvania farmer] turns out to be the Man, that I have seen him to be, these two Years. He is in total Neglect and Disgrace here. I am sorry for it, because of the forward Part he took, in the Beginning of the Controversy. But there is certainly such a Thing as falling away, in Politicks, if there is none in Grace.

John Adams: Diary, 20 June 1779

He [Chevalier de la Luzerne] enquired after Mr. Dickinson, and the Reason why he disappeared. I explained, as well as I could in French, the Inconsistency of the Farmers Letters and his Perseverance in that Inconsistency in Congress. Mr. Dickinson's Opposition to the declaration of Independency, I ventured as modestly as I could to let him know that I had the Honour to be the Principal Disputant in Congress against Mr. Dickinson upon that great Question. That Mr. Dickinson had the Eloquence, the Learning and the Ingenuity on his Side of the Question, but that I had the Hearts of the Americans on mine, and therefore my Side of the Question prevailed. That Mr. Dickinson had a good Heart, and an amiable Character. But that his Opposition to Independency, had lost him the Confidence of the People, who suspected him of Timidity and Avarice, and that his Opposition sprung from those Passions: But that he had since turned out with the Militia, against the B[ritish] troops and I doubted not might in Time regain the Confidence of the People.

Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, Philadelphia, 5 November 1782

There can be little doubt of Mr. Dickinson being president [of Pennsylvania]. Shame will compel some to vote for him whom inclination would not. He is everything that his friends would wish him to be. His enemies (who are enemies of virtue and public justice) sicken and tremble at his name.

Edmund Pendleton to James Madison, Virginia, 14 July 1783

[Speaking of President of the Supreme Executive Council John Dickinson's failure to call out the state militia to suppress a mutiny of Pennsylvania troops that surrounded the State House where both Congress and the Pennsylvania Assembly were meeting.] The Supine neglect of the Executive to interpose the force of the State on this Occasion, probably had its source in the t——d [timid] Spirit of the C——f M——j——e [Chief Magistrate], whose nerves are too weak for any exertions, but those of Oratory or the pen.

Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, Princeton, N.J., 26 July 1783

You know how open a certain person [John Dickinson] is to flattery & who, though he has shining parts, is not remarkable for solidity of judgment. His passions are too ungovernable and he is apt to suffer himself when under their influence to be the dupe of those who will flatter his vanity. And yet he has many good qualities. I am much afraid that a young, sly & crafty politician, of whose principles & conduct I have not the best Opinion, has found out his foible, and has had too much influence in the late transactions.

Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, Philadelphia, 10 December 1784

The professorship of divinity [at Dickinson College] which Mr. D. promised to endow must for a while fall to the ground. . . . Our poor friend Mr. D. is alas! steady in nothing but in his *instability*. This is the only fixed trait in his character.

Thomas Jefferson: Answers to François Soulés's Queries, 13–18 September 1786

Mr. Dickinson, a lawyer of more ingenuity than sound judgment, and still more timid than ingenious. . . .

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

Mr. Dickinson has been famed through all America, for his farmers Letters; he is a Scholar, and said to be a Man of very extensive information. When I saw him in the Convention I was induced to pay the greatest attention to him whenever he spoke. I had often heard that he was a great Orator, but I found him an indifferent Speaker. With an affected air of wisdom he labors to produce a trifle,—his language is irregular and incorrect,—his flourishes (for he sometimes attempts them), are like expiring flames, they just show themselves and go out;—no traces of them are left on the mind to clear or animate it. He is, however, a good writer and will ever be considered one of the most important characters in the United States. He is about 55 years old, and was bred a Quaker.

Benjamin Rush to John Dickinson, Philadelphia, 15 July 1788

The Success of the new government in restoring Order to our country, will depend very much upon the talents & principles of the Gentlemen who are to compose the federal legislature.—Your friends in Philadelphia have destined you to be one of the members of the Senate from the Delaware state. I know how perfectly your present tranquil mode of life, accords with the present happy frame of your Mind. But remember my Dear friend—that “none liveth to himself.” Even our Old Age is not our own property. All its fruits of Wisdom, & experience belong to the public. “To do good” is the business of *life*. “To enjoy *rest*” is the happiness of heaven. We pluck premature, or forbidden fruit when we grasp at *rest* on this Side the grave. I know too, your present infirm state of body, but an active interest in the great Objects & business of the new legislature for a few years, by giving tone to your mind, will invigorate your body.—Should you only assist with your advice for one or two years ’till all the wheels of the great machine are set in motion, your Country will forgive your resignation of your Seat in the Senate afterwards.—

Otto’s Biographies, Fall 1788

Author of the *Letters of a Pennsylvania Farmer*. Very rich man, was of the anti-English party at the beginning of the Revolution, without however favoring independence, which he actually voted against publicly. He is old, feeble, and without influence.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 13 April 1790
(recalling a conversation with John Adams in October 1776)**

Upon my asking Mr. J. Adams what he thought of sending Mr. Dickinson to Europe as a minister, he said, “Mr. D. is the most unfit man in the world to be sent abroad. He is such a friend to monarchy that he would prostrate himself at the feet of every throne he saw. I would prefer Dr. Witherspoon to him.”

Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Bringham, Washington, 24 February 1808

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 16th. It gave me the first information of the death of our distinguished fellow citizen, John Dickinson. A more estimable man, or truer patriot, could not have left us. Among the first of the advocates for the rights of his country when assailed by Great Britain, he continued to the last the orthodox advocate of the true principles of our new government, and his name will be consecrated in history as one of the great worthies of the Revolution. We ought to be grateful for having been permitted to retain the benefit of his counsel to so good an old age; still the moment of losing it, whenever it arises, must be a moment of deep-felt regret. For himself, perhaps, a longer period of life was less important, alloyed as the feeble enjoyments of that age are with so much pain. But to his country every addition to his moments was interesting. A junior companion of his labors in the early part of our Revolution, it has been a great comfort to me to have retained his friendship to the last moment of his life.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

Few men wrote, spoke and acted more for their country from the years 1764 to the establishment of the federal government than Mr. Dickinson. He was alike eloquent at the bar, in a popular assembly, and in convention. Count [Thomas Cajetan] Wengierski, a Polish nobleman who travelled

thro' the United States soon after the peace, said he was the most learned man he had met with in America. He possessed the air of a camp and the ease of the court in his manners. He was opposed to the Declaration of Independence at the time it took place, but concurred in supporting it. During the war and for some years after it, he admired and preferred the British constitution. Towards the close of his life he became a decided and zealous Republican.

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 12 November 1813

There was a little Aristocracy, among Us, of Talents and Letters. Mr. Dickinson was primus inter pares; the Bell Weather; the leader of the Aristocratical flock. Billy, alias Governor Livingston, and his Son in law Mr. Jay were of this privileged order.

Moses Dow

William Plumer to John Hale, Londonderry, N.H., 6 October 1786

Moses Dow Esq. is a brigadier general, a lawyer, a member of the House of Representatives and a Councillor. He is a man of moderate abilities, more specious than solid; he skims the surface. As a lawyer he is not respected. Avarice is his God, and popularity the idol he worships. I heard him say that he “wished success to the mob, and that they were pursuing out of doors what he had ineffectually sought for in the House.” He is civil in his carriage, and always appears to have an entire command of his passion. At the Bar, and in debate in the Legislature, he never discovers any animation, but his hearers are doomed to hear the same dull, monotonous sound. He has several times been elected as a Delegate to Congress, but never took his seat there.

William Henry Drayton

Josiah Bartlett to William Whipple, York, Pa., 20 June 1778

Mr Drayton, the Chief Judge of So Carolina is a sensible judicious man, a good speaker, firmly attached to Independance and not given to the chicane common to lawyers.

Arthur Lee to Francis Lightfoot Lee, December 1778

I expected W.H.D. would take precisely the part he has. His character is too much of the Cati-linarian cast, for him to remain long among honorable men. Turbidus, inquietus, atrox—he should be always dealt with as one, who, tho your friend to day, may betray you tomorrow. But I am mistaken if his state dont put a mark upon him (Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh), 2:146–47)

*Quoted in a letter from Richard Henry Lee to Henry Laurens, 5 September.

Solomon Drowne

Theodore Foster to John Adams, Foster, R.I., 1 October 1811

I expect this Letter will be delivered to you, by my worthy and respectable Friend and next Door Neighbour, Doctor Solomon Drown of this Town, who has had a liberal Education—has travelled in Europe, and is a Fellow and Professor of Brown University in this State.—He is about to travel with his Lady through the Town of Braintree, on a Visit to some of her Relations, being herself related to the Russell Family formerly of Boston; and Dr Drown being desirous of making his personal Respects to you I have therefore taken the Liberty of introducing him to you which I hope you will be agreeable on account of his Learning and the Amiableness and Excellence of his Character. He is universally esteemed and respected by his numerous Acquaintance and has always entertained an high Respect for yourself, repeatedly expressed by him, in Oration delivered on Public occasion while sometime resident in the western Country.

James Duane

John Adams: Diary, 22 August 1774

Mr. Duane has a sly, surveying Eye, a little squint Eyed—between 40 and 45 I should guess—very sensible I think and very artful.

Described by Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant in John Adams: Diary, 28 August 1774

Duane is a plodding Body, but has a very effeminate, feeble Voice.

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 10 October 1774

Galloway, Duane, and Johnson, are sensible and learned but cold Speakers.

John Adams: Diary, 25 October 1775

Duane says, he has no Curiosity at all—not the least Inclination to see a City or a Building, &c. That his Memory fails, is very averse to be burthened. That in his Youth he could remember any Thing. Nothing but what he could learn, but it is very different now.

Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 4 February 1777

I hate to pay Compliments and would avoid the appearance of doing it but I cannot refrain from saying I love Duane, admire Mr. Livingston & have an Epithet for you if I had been writing to another.

John Jay to Governor George Clinton, Philadelphia, 27 August 1779

I think it my duty also upon this occasion to assure you that Mr. Duane's industry and attention to business as well as his invariable attachment to the welfare of those who sent him [to Congress], deserve their commendation.

John Jay to Governor George Clinton, Philadelphia, 29 September 1779

I sincerely wish that the Chancellor [Robert R. Livingston] and Mr. [John Sloss] Hobart may be sent here [to Congress], as you know their Characters you will be at no Loss to perceive my Reasons for it. Mr. Duane will be a useful Man, but in my Opinion his Attention should be continued to general Objects, and ought by no means to interfere respecting the Vermont & New England Business, further than as a private, out of Door Counsellor.

Thomas Rodney's Characters of Some Members of Congress, post-8 March 1781

Mr. Duane of New York has been in Congress from the first—Is of good & even Temper, Attentive to business, of a low soft Voice, not Eloquent, nor designing, but upon the Whole a good republican, desirous of promoting the general Weal and particularly attached to the Interests of his Own State.

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

He is of a gay and open character, has no objection to talk, and drinks without repugnance.

Philip Schuyler to John Jay, New York, 18 February 1784

Among those claimants and scramblers you will not include some whose zeal for the common cause, from the first stage of the contest to the close, are justly entitled to the attention of government—such as Mr. Duane, who has the mayoralty of this city.

St. George Tucker: Diary of in New York, July–August 1786

Mr. Duane appears to be a most agreeable hospitable man.

New York *Daily Advertiser*, 20 February 1788

[Nominated for state ratifying convention] Being the chief magistrate of the metropolis of the State, and of unquestionable abilities.

“A Citizen, and real Friend to Order and good Government,” New York *Daily Advertiser*, 21 March 1788

Though Mr. Duane was foremost on the list of preferment under the British Government, in the late Province of New York, before the war, and at the same time perfectly sensible that he would secure a very large landed property, worth at least £100,000 or the value thereof, by adhering to that government, which by taking a different part he must inevitably have lost; yet he took a decided part in favor of his country, and has by the revolution lost all that great property. He has been indefatigable in the service of his country as a member of Congress during almost the whole of the

war. Mr. Duane's legal knowledge is universally acknowledged. As a judge he gives general satisfaction to the public, and is much esteemed and respected by the gentlemen of the bar; his manners are easy and his private character irreproachable. Mr. Duane is a good politician; he reasons closely and with perspicuity and judgment, possessing the powers of persuasion in no small degree; his arguments are well calculated both to conciliate and enforce conviction; and as a man of business, he is excelled by none in this country.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Mayor of New York, several times a member of Congress. A good, sensible magistrate.

William Duane

Thomas Boylston Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 8 June 1801

I must not forget to mention, that Duane, the Aurora Editor is now in Jail, under sentence of the Circuit Court of the U.S. for a contempt committed by him, in the course of a trial depending before that Court, wherein he was defendant, & wherein after solemn trial & argument he was convicted, by a jury, of being a *british subject*.

In consequence of this verdict, it was ascertained, that this Court could take cognizance of the suit, and a trial upon the merits will be had, next term. This result was so unlooked for by Duane & his party, that he became outrageous & finally he vented his spleen in a torrent of virulence, reproach & abuse, against the judges, the Clerk who summoned the jury, (being a special one), against the jury, the plff, and lastly against Mr: Adams's judiciary law. He was sentenced to be confined thirty days, and has already served more than half his time.

Thomas Boylston Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 28 May 1802

I send you herewith the Aurora of the day, just as a specimen of his baseness and impudence. I do hope it will fall to this villain's lot to be hanged.

Thomas Boylston Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 30 June 1803

The Saucy & insolent Style, which Duane's Aurora employs of late against Dennie; and the great abundance of personal and vulgar abuse, bestowed upon him will be Serviceable to him at a distance. Duane thought he could make Dennie commit himself, by Some libellous replication, and the best way to beguile him into Such a trap was to begin by libelling him. Since the reply, Duane has charged Dennie with being in the *vocative*. Of this he may be induced to doubt. The dread of this Ruffian among all ranks of people here, is So great, that he may be properly denominated a second Abaelino, the great Bandit. Half the federalists Subscribe to the Aurora, as a sort of peace offering to screen themselves from the depredations of this giant of Slander.

Thomas Jefferson to William Wirt, Monticello, 3 May 1811

I believe Duane to be a very honest man and sincerely republican; but his passions are stronger than his prudence, and his personal as well as general antipathies render him very intolerant.

Founders on the Founders

William Duer

Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Laurens, Valley Forge, Pa., 27 January 1777

When I was writing this your letter and this of Mr. Duer fell into my hands, and I see with the greatest concern that the two greatest enemies and most insolent calumniators of my friends are directed to follow me, Conway as second commandant, and Duer as volunteer. The first you know my way of thinking for—the second has the reputation in the country to be a tory, and you'll know by several instances that he is a rascal. I tell you, Sir, freely not as to the president of Congress but to my friend that if it is not altered at least for the first I am obliged to decline the appointment. If they go there I am sure they will prevent my succeeding. If my endeavourings to do well are attended with such impossible obstacles, my hating cabals and cabaleurs will send me back to France.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 19 April 1777

There is a new Hand [in Congress], a Mr. Duer, who is a very fine fellow—a Man of sense, Spirit and Activity, and is exceeded by no Man in Zeal.

William Duer to Francis Lightfoot Lee, 14 February 1778

[Duer indicated that he was waiting for a letter to arrive from York, Pa., where Congress was meeting,] the Substance of which, is (I am told) a very Extraordinary Conversation betwist the Marquis de la Fayette, and Genl. Conway, of which I had the Honor of being the Topic. In the Course of a Discussion betwist these Officers of the Expedition against Canada, the Marquis Exprest his Astonishment, that *I* should be trusted to go on it, as he had been informed that my political Character was that of a *Tory*. *Risum teneatis, Amici?* [Could you help laughing, my friends?] . . . I think it is no difficult Matter to guess at the Quarter, whence this Insinuation comes, or the Purpose for which it is designed. I am happy, however, to learn it in Time, for, however I despise the Insinuation it will furnish me with this Useful Lesson not to risque my own Reputation, and Ease of Mind by troubling the Young *Telemachus** with the Presence of a Person, whom he cannot consider as a *Mentor*. Before I was informed of this Matter my Imagination suggested to me that the Pleasure, which the Marquis Exprest of my going with him as a Volunteer appeared more the Result of French *Politesse* than of Inclination; yet, as I was of Opinion my Presence might be useful to the Public, I was willing to sacrifice my own feelings to a more important Consideration. To persist in this Resolution at present would be a Breach of Self Duty, as I must in such Case sacrifice my own Ease, and (possibly) my Reputation, without the Hope of possessing with the Marquis that Influence, which might be necessary for Effecting Purposes beneficial to the public Weal. I have thought it my Duty to communicate this Matter to you in order that you may mention it to the Board of War and to Congress, who probably depend on my going into Canada, and may thereby be prevented from taking such Measures with respect to that Expedition, as Policy may suggest. I think a Committee of Congress ought without Delay to be sent into Canada should our Troops oblige the Enemy to retire to Quebec; and though, I owe too much to my own Feelings to Volunteer it, where I am looked upon in a Suspicious Point of View, I will, if Congress think proper, act as one of such a Committee.

*The son of Odysseus and Penelope who, after searching for his long-missing father, helped to slay his mother's suitors.

Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, Valley Forge, Pa., 10 March 1778

A Set of Scoundrels at the Head of whom are Gates and Mifflin are very busy in an Attempt to ruin the General of America. I will not promise them Success, but what will surprise you is that they have made a tool of Duer.

Robert Morris to James Duane, Philadelphia, 8 September 1778

Many important Scenes have occurred since we parted, often have I wished for opportunities of Consulting *you* on whose judgment & Friendship I could safely rest myself. Duer in many instances supplied your place and a Worthy honest fellow he is, that Man deserves the Esteem Confidence of his Constituents in the highest degree, for his only fault is an over zeal & anxiety in their affairs. They have an able advocate in my Namesake [Gouverneur Morris] & really the Representation in Congress from N. York does honor to the State.

James Duane to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 3 January 1779

Duer . . . is detained here having taken up the Pen for Mr. Deane against Common Sense [Thomas Paine], & to settle a Mercantile Connection which promises much advantage. You may be assured that his Abilities & Perseverance in Congress have done Honour to our state and great Service to the Publick Cause: particularly at the close of last Winter. From the Delegates of one of the States he has had the Compliments of requesting his Picture as a distinguished Patriot. He is hurt at the Coldness of our Legislature who have paid him not the least Compliment on his Resignation but seemed to accept as a matter of Indifference Convinced of the Truth of the Maxim that a Prophet has no Honour in his own Country, he must be contented with his Continental Character which notwithstanding he has some Enemies is very respectable.

John Jay to Robert Morris, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 16 September 1780

I am glad you told me what had become of Duer. He is an honest Man and I esteem him—the more perhaps, as the older I grow the more Reason I have to think them scarce. I have never known him [to] do a mean thing or say a false one.

John Jay to Egbert Benson, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 17 September 1780

In my opinion Duer should not be forgotten; he is capable of serving the State, and it would be bad policy to let any useful man leave it who can be retained with advantage in it.

New York *Daily Advertiser*, 5 July 1788

. . . At one o'clock the Society [of the Cincinnati] moved in procession from the City Hall to St. Paul's Church, where an innumerable concourse of citizens were assembled to be auditors of a most excellent ORATION, which was delivered by WILLIAM DUER, Esq. a member of the Society, in that pleasing, graceful, and energetic manner, for which this gentleman is so eminently distinguished. . . .

Poughkeepsie, N.Y., *Country Journal*, 8 July 1788

[Celebrating Independence Day in New York City.] . . . As the Declaration of American Independence was the glorious event to be commemorated on this occasion, no one will doubt, but that the *abilities*, the acquired *rhetorical proficiency*, and the *oratorical ingenuity* of Col. DUER, were sufficient amply to *grace the theme*.

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

I cannot finish this letter without mentioning another American whose financial skill is well known here, namely Colonel Duer, Secretary of the Treasury [Board]. It would be difficult to find a man who better combines a good head for figures, broad vision, and quick penetration in dealing with the most complicated problems. To these qualities, add goodness of heart. It is to his kindness and efforts that I am indebted for much valuable information on this country's finances, which I shall report in a subsequent letter.

James Tillary to Alexander Hamilton, New York, January 1791

We have scarcely any sensible Independent Man in the Legislature who dare seize an occasion to rouse the reflection of the people, & not a Man in the City who has ventured to give such a sketch of the present Maneuvers as would set the Citizens a thinking. We want a Head, to repress & keep down the machinations of our restless Demagogue, but alas where is he to be found? Duer never can prop the *good old cause* here. He is unfit as a Leader, & unpopular as a man, besides with all his address, he is duped by some Characters without ever suspecting it. . . .

Long may you successfully fend off the Maddisons of the South & the Clintons of the North.

William Playfair to Alexander Hamilton, Paris, 30 March 1791

I have on all sides heard the Best character of Mr. Duer & I am informed that he Runs a great Risk of Being Burned by the advances he has made.

William Duer to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 16 August 1791

Mr. King delivered me your Letter on the Subject of the Sudden Rise of Scrip, which I observe has occasioned in your mind a great Alarm. Those who impute to my Artifices the Rise of this Species of Stock in the Market, beyond its true Point of Value do me infinite Injustice. The Fact is that as far as my Opinion public or Private could have an Effect I have mentioned to the Dealers, in Stocks, particularly Scrip that were Straining it beyond its true Point of Value. . . .

During the whole Time I have been Engaged in Operations of the Public Debt, I can with Truth Aver that I have Scrupulously adhered to the most rigid Principles of Candor, and fair Dealing. Instead of Entering into Combinations to Entrap the Unwary I have Endeavored to make any Knowledge I possessed on this Subject, a Common Stock. By my advice & Example, Numbers in this City have by Embarking in the Funds, supported the Public Credit, and advanced their own Fortunes. If the Price of Stock in the New-York market has had a powerful Influence in other Parts, I can with Truth say that its Effects (if beneficial) are in no small Degree imputable to me. Feeling therefore in this Instance(as I have in the whole of my Life) that the Public Good has been a primary Object of my Pursuit, I despise the malicious aspersions of those who Aim to destroy my character in your, and the public Esteem. The Citizens amongst whom I live have I am persuaded

too good an opinion of my heart and head to think me so Weak, and Wicked to pursue that Line of Conduct, which your Letter Intimates. I feel a Consciousness, that it cannot have made an Impression (even for a moment) on your Mind; and if it has you will I trust do me the Justice not only to Efface Every Trace of such an opinion, in your Breast—but in that of Every other Person within the Circle of your Friends, whose Esteem is Worthy of Preservation.

Robert Troup to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 12 September 1791

The basis of his conduct as a speculator is frankness & I have not heard him even suspected here of any dishonorable combination or of any stratagem to deceive—so that he really Stands amongst us upon better ground in point of character than ever. There is between him & me an amnesty of all past bickerings & I mean to do everything in my power to promote his election [to the directorship of the Bank of New York].

Robert Troup to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 19 March 1792

Our friend Duer's [financial] failure. This poor man is in a state of almost complete insanity; and his situation is a source of inexpressible grief to all his friends. On Saturday night his friends met at his house & stayed with him till near 12 o'Clock when we broke up in confusion without being able to agree upon a single measure.

Jeremiah Smith to Josiah Bartlett, Philadelphia, 23 March 1792

The funding & banking systems & the consequent Speculations gives great uneasiness to our Brethren at the southward who are not much interested in the funds. Stock jobbing & speculating Patriots do not bode well to the Government. I fear the public will withdraw their Confidence—Our Governmt. can proceed but a little way with out it. Duer the famous Speculator at New York has lately failed and I understand for a very large sum. It is altogether likely that many innocent people will suffer by him.

Robert Troup to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 24 March 1792

Indeed my dear friend I am frantic with the pangs I feel for the public welfare and for the honor & happiness of our friend. I hope for a favorable change but at present shadows clouds & darkness rest upon the prospect of it. No Man's affairs could be more complex & deranged—& few men's more extensive. I have no connection with him but what is dictated by friendship & benevolence.

James Madison to Edmund Pendleton, Philadelphia, 25 March 1792

The gambling system which has been pushed to such a excess, is beginning to exhibit its explosions. Duer of New York, the Prince of the tribe of Speculators, has just become a victim to his enterprises, and involves an unknown number to an unknown amount in his fate. It is said by some that his operations have extended to several millions of dollars, that they have been carried on by usurious loans from 3 to 6 percent per month, and that every description & gradation of persons from the Church to the Stews are among the dupes of his dexterity and the partners of his distress.

Thomas Jefferson to David Humphreys, Philadelphia, 9 April 1792

The stockjobbing speculations have occupied some of our countrymen to such a degree as to give sincere uneasiness to those who would rather see their capital employed in commerce, manufactures, buildings and agriculture. The failure of Mr. Duer, the chief of that description of people, has already produced some other bankruptcies, and more are apprehended. He had obtained money from great numbers of small tradesmen and farmers, tempting them by usurious interest, which has made the distress very extensive.

Alexander Hamilton to Walter Livingston?, 1796

Poor Duer has now had a long & severe confinement—Such as would be adequate for no trifling crime. I am well aware of all the blame to which he is liable and do not mean to be his apologist—though I believe he has been as much the dupe of his own imagination as others have been the victims of his projects. But what then? He is a man—he is a man, who with a great deal of good zeal has in critical times rendered valuable services to the Country. He is a husband, who has a most worthy & amiable wife perishing with chagrin at his situation—Your relation by blood—mine by marriage. He is a father who has a number of fine children destitute of the means of education & support every way in need of his future exertions

These are titles to sympathy, which I shall be mistaken if you do not feel. You are his creditor. Your example may influence others. He wants permission, through a letter of license to breathe the air for *five* years. Your signature to the enclosed draft of One will give me much pleasure.

William Duer to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 17 January 1799

My days are sad beyond Description—My Nights Miserable. I am again attacked with a Complaint which soon after the Peace had nearly put an End to my Existence, a Suppression of Urine—attended with acute Pain like those Arising from the Stones or Gravel. Unless I can be relieved by the Use of Warm Baths, and of such Medical Aid as can only be applied under my own Roof, I foresee that in the Course of this Year I shall probably terminate a Wretched Existence. On my own Account, I could meet my Fate not only with Resignation but with Complacency. But when I reflect on the probable Consequence of leaving to a merciless World, those who are dearer to me than my Life, the Thought drives me to Distraction—and the Agony of my Mind Increases that which is incident to my Unhappy Complaint.

C.W.F. Dumas

John Adams to Robert R. Livingston, The Hague, 16 May 1782

There is one subject more which I beg leave to submit a few hints to Congress. It is that of M. Dumas, whose character is so well known to Congress that I need say nothing of it. He is a man of letters, and of good character, but he is not rich, and his allowance is too small at present for him to live with decency. He has been so long known here to have been in American affairs, although in no public character that I know of that but that of an agent or correspondent appointed by Dr. Franklin, or perhaps by a committee of Congress, that, now our character is acknowledged, it will have an ill effect if M. Dumas remains in the situation he has been in. To prevent it in some

measure I have taken him and his family into this house; but I think it is the interest and duty of America to send him a commission as secretary to this legation and chargé des affaires, with a salary of five hundred a year sterling, while a minister is here, and at the rate of a thousand a year while there is none.

Benjamin Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, Passy, France, 25 June 1782

I enclose several letters from that ancient and worthy friend of our country. He is now employed as secretary to Mr. Adams; and I must, from a long experience of his zeal and usefulness, beg leave to recommend him warmly to the consideration of Congress, with regard to his appointments, which have never been equal to his merit.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Paris, 14 May 1783

The Advantage you have in Mr. Dumas's Attention to you is a very precious one.* He is himself a Walking Library, and so great a Master of Languages ancient and modern is very rarely Seen.

*After returning from his trip to Russia, John Quincy Adams stayed at The Hague and studied with Dumas, John Adams's friend and U.S. diplomatic agent to The Hague.

John Thaxter to John Quincy Adams, Paris, 28 May 1783

You will not take it amiss, that I have still so much of the *Pedagogue* about me, as to recommend very seriously to You a strict Attention to the Latin and Greek Languages, while You remain at the Hague, and You will suffer me also to press You to avail yourself of the classical Knowledge and good Disposition of Mr. Dumas as much as possible. He is an excellent Linguist, and I am too well convinced of your turn for Study, to doubt a Moment of a steady Application to this important Branch of Education. You will receive the above as the Hints of a Friend, and not as the officious Intermedlings of one who loves to interfere in every Body's Business.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Paris, 29 May 1783

It gives me great Pleasure to find, that your Situation is agreeable to you. An abler Instructor than Mr. Dumas is not to be found. Is not an 100 Verses at a Time too long a Lesson?

John Adams to the President of Congress, The Hague, 13 May 1784

. . . if I Should reside here regularly, . . . I therefore wish to know in what Light I am to consider this Gentleman, and what Relation he is to Stand in to me. I wish if for the Government of my own Conduct, and still more from Respect to him, whom I esteem as a very worthy Man, and one who has for a Course of Years, been indefatigable in the service of the United States, and who is not adequately rewarded or Supported by the Pittance which is allowed him. But what is more disagreeable, he has never had any Character or Commission from Congress, and one knows not what to call him whether Secretary or Agent,—I cannot ask him to act as my private secretary which is really much beneath him, although he is ever ready to assist me, in all Things.

John Adams to the President of Congress, Auteuil near Paris, 3 November 1784

Inclosed are Copies of Papers received from Mr. Dumas with my Answers. I cannot forbear recommending this Gentleman to Congress upon this occasion, as the critical Circumstances in the low Countries at this Time, will render his Intelligence very interesting, and his Services at the Hague perhaps indispensably necessary.

John Adams to Francis Dana, Auteuil near Paris, 4 November 1784

Shall I say a word for Dumas? The good old man will die if you drop him, and he will be useful, I think, if you continue him. If there should be war, his intelligence will be wanted; indeed, there should be a *chargé d'affaires* there, and he will do as well as any body you could send there, at a moderate expense.

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Paris, 27 January 1786

Dumas is a great favorite both of Holland and France. You will be sensible of this from the application which is communicated to Mr. Jay from the Comte de Vergennes.

Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, Paris, 22 May 1786

[Rhinegrave de Salm] . . . took occasion to speak with me today on the subject of Mr. Dumas. After saying much in his favor, he assured me that Congress could not so much oblige the patriotic party as by naming Mr. Dumas to their diplomatic appointment at the Hague; and further, that should they have any thing interesting to do there, there was no other man who could do it so effectually as Mr. Dumas. I wished to avoid flattering his expectations and therefore mentioned to him the resolution of Congress confining their diplomatic appointments to citizens of the United States. He seemed to admit they could not expect him to be made Minister plenipotentiary, but asked if it would not be possible to give him the character of resident. I told him we were in the usage of appointing only one character inferior to that of Minister plenipotentiary, which was that of Chargé des affaires; that I was far from presuming to say that could be obtained in the present case; but that one other difficulty occurred to me in that moment. I observed that they had a Minister plenipotentiary with Congress, and that Congress naming for their court only a Chargé des affaires. might perhaps be considered as disrespectful, and might occasion the recall of their minister. He assured me it would not; nay, that it should not.

Thomas Boylston Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 2 November 1794

Yesterday my Brother took me with him to see the old Gentleman, we found him, in comfortable lodgings, but no family about him; it seems he has for some time lived separate from Madam his wife—We passed nearly two hours with him, and he appeared much rejoiced to see my Brother. I was in some degree acquainted with the character of this Gentleman, before I saw him, and was happy to find so cheerful & active a man in one of his years. His enquiries after you & the rest of our family, appeared to be the dictate of a sincere regard, and his civilities to us evinced that he will not cease to oblige.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 3 December 1794

I enclose herewith a letter from Mr: Dumas, which he requested me to transmit. The old Gentleman's health appears to be very good, and he looks not older than he did when you saw him last. But oppression has had its *proverbial* effect upon him, and he can write think nor talk about any thing but representative democracy and Joel Barlow.

John Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass., 9 June 1796

I rejoice with Mr. Dumas with all my Heart in his Tryumph. His Learning, Experience and Readiness in Languages may be Useful to you on m any Occasions. But you will of Course be upon your Guard against his Prejudices. His Attachments to France and His Hatred to the Stadt-holder and his friends are too ardent, to be always implicitly confided in by American Ministers.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 21 July 1796

On this occasion I think it necessary to mention *to you* that our old friend D appears to be retained in the service of the French Republic as he was in that of the Monarchy. He is as much devoted, if not as useful, to the Citizen Noel, as he ever was to the Duke of Vauguyon, or to the Marquis de Verac. The old man is extremely miserable, and thinks he has no wish left but to die. But his passions and his prejudices are as strong and his prejudices are as strong as they could have been in the flower of youth, and the little judgment that he ever had to control them has abandoned his old age. He is acting a part between the French Minister and me which he would find it difficult to justify, either as a pensioner of the United States, or as an old personal friend of yours and of myself. He imagines I am not aware of it, and I must so far do his heart the justice to believe that he is not altogether aware of it himself. I shall take care to let it do no harm, and indeed I believe I have put an end to it

Thomas Boylston Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 6 August 1796

It will not surprize you to hear of the decease of your aged friend Mr. Dumas, which has taken place since I began this letter. It is an event which was anxiously hoped for by himself, long before it arrived. He had lost every relish of life, and looked upon death as the only welcome summons he could receive.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 30 July 1807

Mr Dumas never lived in Amsterdam. Mr Dumas never was a Merchant. Mr Dumas never had any Mercantile Interest. If Mr Dumas had any Commercial Knowledge, it was merely Theoretical and Such as every Man of Reading and Reflexion and Knowledge of the World possesses. Mr. Dumas was a Man of the World, and well acquainted with Manners. Mr Dumas was so much of a Man of Letters that he was one of the most accomplished classical Schollars that I have been acquainted with, and had taken as general a Survey of ancient and modern Science and Litterature, as most of the Professors of the Universities of Europe and America. He was indeed much attached to the Americans, but from better motives and more Knowledge than "the general Predilection of Dutch Men in favour of Republicanism." Such was Mr Dumas. He always lived at the Hague, at least from my first Knowledge of his Name till his Death at upwards of fourscore. He had been in England before our Revolution and Dr Franklin had been in Holland, in both of which Countries

Dr Franklin and Mr Dumas had been Acquainted and attached in Friendship to each other. When Dr Franklin was a Member of the Secret Committee of Correspondence appointed by Congress, he advised them to write to Mr Dumas. When Dr Franklin Arrived in Paris a Correspondence took place at once between him Mr Deane Mr Lee and Mr Dumas. When I arrived in Paris the Correspondence was continued, and some Letters passed between me and Mr Dumas. Mr Dumas corresponded also with Congress and he was allowed three hundred Pounds Sterling a year for his Services.

John Adams to the Boston Patriot, Quincy, Mass., 17 July 1811

Although all the communications to me were in Dutch, a language in which I was not sufficiently skilled to depend upon my own knowledge, Mr. Dumas was ever at hand to interpret to me, every thing in French, by which means I was always able to give my answers without loss of time.

Betsey Duncan of Haverhill

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 5 October 1785

Miss B. Duncan, Mr. Thaxter's reputed flame, she is in my opinion the greatest beauty in Haverhill: at least of the Ladies I have seen. Her hair alone is sufficient to justify the admiration of the ancients for golden locks. Her face is very pretty, and her eye sparkles with Vivacity, and good nature, without that wildness which indicates want of thought. She is as Fielding says, too tall for a pretty woman, and too short for a fine Woman: that is no one can wish her an inch taller or an inch lower. Her shape, is inferior to none I ever saw, and her taste in dress is elegant, with the utmost simplicity. If her mind is equal to her Person, I hope she is destined, to complete the happiness of a Person for whom I have the greatest Esteem and Affection.

John Quincy Adams: Diary, 7 October 1785

I went down and spent an hour with Mr. Thaxter at his Office; He told me he thought B. Duncan, the girl of the most Reason, and good Sense in Haverhill: this was enough for a friend but not sufficient for a Lover. He spoke of several other girls in this Place, but not with the most favourable partiality.

William Mayne Duncanson

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 15 August 1816

I do not know whether you were acquainted with the late Major Duncanson of Washington. . . . He was one of the earliest adventurers to the city of Washington. He had made a princely fortune in the E. Indies, the whole of which he employed in the establishments of that city and finally sunk. His political merits were a most persevering republicanism in the worst of times, having been one

of the four only republicans in Washington & George town in the time of Mr. Adams. When I first went there, a stranger, I found him often useful for information as to characters, and I always believed him an honest & honorable man, altho' the warmth of his temper made him many enemies.

John Dunlap

James Lovell to Samuel Adams. York, Pa., 18 April 1778

I hope we shall go on very briskly with the Journals as Mr. Dunlap has put up a press here. He is a very active man.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 28 November 1812

This evening died in his chair reading the newspapers John Dunlap, aged between 60 and 70. From small beginnings as a printer he acquired by his business but chiefly by speculation an estate of perhaps 3 or 400,000 Dollars. So humble was his beginning in life that he slept upon a blanket under his counter, and ate pepper pot only bought in the market from his inability to purchase a bed or any other food. He was a staunch revolutionary Whig, and active as a dragoon in the most perilous stages of the war. In the parties which divided his country he was always moderate, candid, and just to both sides. To public institutions he was liberal, to the poor charitable, and to his friends kind and affectionate. In his family he was less amiable and respectable than in society. Towards the close of his life he became intemperate, so as to fall in the streets. He was early and uniformly my friend.

Peter S. Du Ponceau

Thomas Cooper to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 12 July 1820

You know Mr. Pet. DuPonceau; certainly the first jurist among us; and one of the most learned men this country can boast of: rich, regular, respectable, in his situation, his character, his public deportment, and his private manners.

Eliphalet Dyer

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 10 October 1774

Dyer and Sherman speak often and long, but very heavily and clumsily.

John Adams: Diary, 15 September 1775

Dyer is long winded and roundabout—obscure and cloudy. Very talkative and very tedious, yet an honest, worthy Man, means and judges well.

John Adams: Diary, 10 October 1775

Dyer and Sherman speak often and long, but very heavily and clumsily.

Silas Deane to Thomas Mumford, Philadelphia, 15 October 1775

[On Connecticut settlers' claims to land in Pennsylvania.] . . . for give me leave, in confidence to Tell you, That the indiscreet zeal of Col. Dyer did the Cause no service, and had, as I could plainly perceive, much hurt himself among the people of influence, interested in those Lands. The Colonel meant well, but disputing on the Connecticut claim in all Companies, by means of artful & designing men, served to increase, & inflame the Apprehensions of the people.