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David Ramsay

Benjamin Rush to Jacob Read, Philadelphia, 23 April 1782

Miss Boudinot has spent the winter in Philadelphia. She has already humanized our friend Dr. Ramsay. With a little more attention to his hair and the seam of his stockings, I think the Doctor might engage to carry back with him to Carolina a Jersey or Pennsylvania beauty.

William Smith: *A Dose for the Doctor* (broadside), Charleston, S.C., 25 November 1788

May not the Doctor with propriety be compared to a certain cunning animal, who when hard run, and all his windings, artifices and tricks have availed him nothing, steeps his tail in an unsavory liquor, and endeavors to whisk it into the eyes of his pursuers.

David Ramsay to John Eliot, Charleston, S.C., 26 November 1788

You speak feelingly for the poor negroes. I have long considered their situation, but such is our hard case here to the Southward that we cannot do without them. Our lands cannot be cultivated by white men. The negroes are here & in a state of slavery. Experience proves that they who have been born & grown up in slavery are incapable of the blessings of freedom. Emancipation therefore would be ruinous both to masters & slaves.

Robert R. Randall

Robert Troup to Alexander Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 12 July 1789

Randall has joined the Antifederalists with a sort of puritanical rage for liberty &c. He is an object of pity. He made a thundering, incoherent, and disgusting speech to all parties respecting the principles of the bill for the appointment of Senators urging the joint ballot system. It had no effect. He has been often found crying since & is really thought to be disordered in his mind. He is treated under this idea with great delicacy by every body but has not the weight of a feather with anybody.

Edmund Randolph

Benjamin Harrison to George Washington, Philadelphia, 23 July 1775

Edmund Randolph is here, & has the greatest Desire to be with you, he has begged of me to Say something in his favor, & that if you can you will keep one of the places now in your Gift for him. He is not able to Support himself, or he would not Ask this of you. You know him as well as I do. He is one of the cleverest young men in America, & if Mr. Reed should leave you, his place of Secretary cannot be better Supplied. He will set off for New York in a few Days, and I Beg it

as a favor of you to write a line to be left at the Post office till Called for. This deserving young Man was in high Repute in Virginia, & fears his Father's Conduct may lessen him in the Opinion of his Countrymen. He has taken this Method without the Advice of his Friends to Raise him into favor, as he is Determined on the thing. I am sure our good old Speaker will be much obliged by any favor you show him. Applications of this sort, I fear, will be too frequent. I shall avoid them as much as possible, but I could not Refuse it on this Occasion, well knowing that a most valuable young Man, & one that I love, without some Step of this sort, may from the misconduct of his Parent be lost to his Country which now stands much in need of men of his Abilities.

Virginia Delegates to Congress to George Washington, Philadelphia, 26 July 1775

This young Gentleman's abilities, natural and acquired, his extensive connections, and above all, his desire to serve his Country in this arduous struggle, are circumstances that cannot fail to gain him your countenance and protection.

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

Mr. Randolph is Governor of Virginia,—a young Gentleman in whom unite all the accomplishments of the Scholar, and the States-man. He came forward with the postulata, or first principles, on which the Convention acted, and he supported them with a force of eloquence and reasoning that did him great honor. He has a most harmonious voice, a fine person and striking manners. Mr. Randolph is about 32 years of age.

Tench Coxe to James Madison, Philadelphia, 21 October 1787

Mr. Randolph's [conduct] is viewed with pain & regret. He is a very amiable, valuable man, but I fear will suffer from the circumstance. It seems as if his declining to sign [the Constitution] has occasioned a powerful interest to seize the opportunity of overthrowing him by giving Countenance to the measures he has declined. The Country in this Case will be served, but at his expense. If his Views were pure, it is to be regretted that he should suffer—of otherwise we must rejoice that it produces, or tends to produce, public benefits.

Martin Oster to Comte de la Luzerne, Norfolk, Va., 4 February 1788

Attached, My Lord, I have the honor to transmit to you two pamphlets, against the Constitution. One is by the dissidents of Pennsylvania, and the other by the Governor of Virginia.

The Pamphlet by the dissidents is considered the best of all those that have appeared.

As for that by the Governor, no one is pleased with it. He expresses in it the greatest apprehension of the frightful misfortunes that would result from a dissolution of the Union, whether the States become 13 disconnected sovereignties, or whether they are divided into two, or three Confederations. He also fears the most fatal consequences, if this chance to establish a firm and energetic government is allowed to escape. He does not mention that any artifice or wickedness was employed in the federal Convention, and he says, that if the Constitution is adopted, it will be his duty to acquiesce in it.

It is not known here, My Lord, what to think of the indecision and the assertions of the Governor, on the new form of Government. His arguments, his principles, are too confused, and have something of sophistry; but the attentive observer, nevertheless discovers, a duplicity there that no longer allows a doubt as to the active motives of the person. They consist principally of egoism,

of the consuming desire to take the lead; and of a jealousy mingled with the most active fear of seeing the functions and prerogatives of the governors reduced to only internal regulations. According to this understanding, one judges of his Pamphlet:

1st. that he tried to become the hero of a new scene, by frightening and stirring feelings.

2nd. that he lacks that sound judgment, and that boldness of spirit that make true republicans.

3rd. that he is of a character that bends according to how his interest varies, and in addition that always follows the strongest party.

That, My Lord, is what I think I perceive in the conduct of the current Governor, relative to the new Constitution which all good citizens ardently desire, and without which it will perhaps come to pass that the dissidents will divide the continent into several Confederations that will be perpetually agitated by internal divisions and that, by their weakness, will remain languid, and will only be of short duration.

Cyrus Griffin to James Madison, New York, 14 April 1788

. . . the Governor by nature timid and undecided.

George Washington to John Jay, Mount Vernon, 8 June 1788

Upon the whole, the following inferences seem to have been drawn—that Mr. Randolph's declarations will have considerable effect with those who have hitherto been wavering.

Elbridge Gerry to James Warren, Cambridge, Mass., 28 June 1788

Patrick Henry has been brilliant in that [Virginia] convention, and very severe on —— who is reprobated for his duplicity and versatility.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Present governor, is one of the most distinguished men in America by his talents and his influence; he has, however, lost some of his standing because of his very forceful opposition to the ratification of the new Constitution. He was a member of Congress in 1780 and 1781, and to judge by all the difficulties which M. de la Luzerne met with in negotiating with him over our Consular Convention, we have come to consider him at least very indifferent toward France.

Francis Corbin to James Madison, 21 October 1788

A proposition will be brought forward in the assembly for a Second Convention of the States—and I fear it will be carried—although I have not yet been able to ascertain the Complexion of the House—this being but the 2d. Day of our meeting. This proposition it is said will be introduced not by [Patrick] Henry—but—(mirabile dictu!) by our friend Randolph. He will injure his political Reputation by his doublings and turnings. He is *too Machiavelian* and not *Machiavelian Enough*.

I wish, I sincerely wish that he could be advised and would take advice—but this, I fear, is out of the question. We Virginians are too much accustomed to Solitude and Slavery—too much puff'd up with our own foolish Pride and Vanity ever to Entertain any other Idea than that we alone are wise and all the rest of the World Fools.

George Mason to John Mason, Gunston Hall, Va., 18 December 1788

Beverly Randolph is chosen Govr. of Virginia, in the Room of young —ld [i.e., Benedict Arnold].

George Washington to James Madison, New York, c. 23 September 1789

Mr. E. Randolph for the Attorney General.*

*Mr. Randolph, in this character, I would prefer to any person I am acquainted of not superior abilities, from habit of intimacy with him.

Edmund Randolph to James Madison, 27 February 1791

The ardor of some men for the bank renders the hope of the land-law abortive: and this hope, which has for sometime past presented to me a prospect of emolument to myself, has alone restrained me from doing something on the subject of my salary.

With every frugality, almost bordering on meanness, I cannot live upon it, as it now stands. Why? I cannot make much advantage from practicing the law, you have heard from me at the beginning of the session. This is not all: I am a sort of mongrel between the states and the U.S.; called an officer of some rank under the latter, and yet thrust out to get a livelihood in the former, perhaps in a petty mayor's or county-court. I cannot say much on this head without a pain, which, could I have foreseen it, would have kept me at home to encounter my pecuniary difficulties there, rather than to add to them here.

I meditate a letter to the president; and yet I know not what he can do; but lay my letter, which will be interpreted into supplication, before congress. I am ready to be confined to the foederal service, how extensive soever; tho' by the way I do more in that way, with my own hands than one of the departments with its clerks.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Philadelphia, 11 August 1793

I can by this confidential conveyance speak more freely of R. He is the poorest Cameleon I ever saw having no color of his own, & reflecting that nearest him. When he is with me he is a whig, when with H. [Alexander Hamilton] he is a tory, when with the P. [President Washington] he is what he thinks will please him. The last is his strongest hue, though the 2nd tinges him very strongly. The first is what I think he would prefer in his heart if he were in the woods where he could see nobody, or in a society of *all whigs*. . . . it is not the less true that his opinion always makes the majority [in the Cabinet], & that the President acquiesces *always* in the majority; consequently that the government is now solely directed by him. As he is not yet openly thrown off by the whig party, it gives to the public a false security that fair play is given to the whiggism of the Pr. by an equal division of whig & tory among his counselors. I have kept on terms of strict friendship with him hitherto, that I might make some good out of him, & because he has really some good private qualities. But he is in a station infinitely too important for his understanding, his firmness, or his circumstances.

John G. Jefferson to James Monroe, Amelia, 22 March 1794

The choice of E. Randolph as Secretary of State, is the most unpopular one the President could have made. It is hard to conceive how much he is despised.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 26 September 1795

Mr. Randolph has published a *preface* which you have seen, this is the opening of a new & very extraordinary campaign—perhaps you know something of the cause of his hostility. I consider Mr. R. as perfectly desperate & malignant. He will do all the mischief in his power. His long acquaintance with our affairs—the predominating influence which he has possessed in those which concerned his own Department & his skill in misrepresentation furnish him with important advantages. Dallas is his Councillor in all his Councils, and will of course prune away many indiscretions & render a bad cause as plausible as the nature of it will admit. I rely however upon the sense & virtue of the public, & trust that the truth will prevail.

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, New York, 16 October 1795

There is another subject upon which I will hazard a few words. It is that of Mr. Randolph. I have seen the intercepted letter, which I presume led to his resignation. I read it with regret, but without much surprise for I never had confidence in Mr. Randolph, and I thought there were very suspicious appearances about him on the occasion to which the letter particularly refers.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 12 December 1795

Your old Friend real or pretended, Randolph is under a dark Cloud and his Behaviour Under it increases its blackness and thickness. I think his Business is done.

John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 13 December 1795

I have read Mr. Randolph's Statement of Faith as far as it has been printed tho no part of it is yet published. The whole appear a disposition in Some of our Countrymen to be corrupted if they could. But shall be glad if it appears that foreign Powers will neither corrupt them, nor be corrupted by them.

As a Vindication of Mr. Randolph, it must I think be a Vindication of his Resignation. If he had not resigned his Continuance in office would have needed Vindication. But how his Character and Conduct in office are vindicated, I have not been able to discern. There is such Evidence of Imbecillity and such suspicions of Something a Stretch beyond Weakness remain that I wonder he has Suffered it to be communicated to so many Persons as he has. It is a dark enigmatical Business at best. I never had any great opinion of his Genius or Talents his Penetration, Steadiness of Consistency: but I Supposed he was good natured and doubted not his Integrity. Now all is problematical.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 21 December 1795

You will soon see Fauchet's Letter and Randolph's Pamphlet. What Scenes do they open? The Duplicity of that shall Fellow has been greater than any one suspected him capable of.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 24 December 1795

I wish to read your Observations upon Randolph's what shall I call it?—I sent it by last Post. . . . Such a Character in the Cabinet and in the P[resident]'s bosom was a Serpent that might have

stung if his Invention, Cunning and Courage had been adequate. The P. is more than commonly incensed as I hear against this Man and he certainly has great Reason.

John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 31 December 1795

Alas poor Randolph! But what are We to think of the Symptoms of a Corruption which appear in various shapes in this infant Country?

Thomas Jefferson to William Branch Giles, Monticello, 31 December 1795

Though he mistakes his own political character in the aggregate, yet he gives it to you in the detail. Thus, he supposes himself a man of no party, that his opinions not containing ant systematic adherence to party, fall sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. . . . Whether his conduct is to be ascribed to a superior view of things, an adherence to right without regard to party, as he pretends, or to an anxiety to trim between both, those who know his character and capacity will decide.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 5 January 1796

Who Randolph's four mighty Men were, I know not. I am much mortified to reflect that I ever had any Opinion of that Creature's head or heart.

George Cabot to Christopher Gore, Philadelphia, 5 January 1796

The man has found *no defenders*, and not enmity enough to sink him lower than he has placed himself.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 7 January 1796

Happy is the Country to be rid of Randolph.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 January 1796

You wish to hear my observations upon Randolph's pamphlet, there does not appear to me any thing clear about it, or in it, but the Man's Duplicity, weakness, Gullability and vanity. He represents the President as in leading strings, and between ourselves, I cannot but think, that he had gained too great an assendency over the mind of the President, considering how very weak a Man he appears. . . . with respect to Mr. R——'s private Life I know nothing, but one general rule will hold good with respect to appointments to office, that a Man destitute of private virtue must want Principle, and the Man who wants principles cannot be actuated by pure Motives, nor can he possess so exalted an affection as a Rational and Disinterested Love of his Country.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Boston, 23 January 1796

[Your letter of 30 August] further unfolds the Secret Machinations of a party, who have been endeavouring to accomplish all that you have predicted. Randolph's detection has however baffled their schemes, and laid open to the people the intrigues of a party. Which had gained too much

influence even over Men of good Minds and Hearts. It was not until I read Randolph's Vindication, or as My Friend Mrs. [Elizabeth] Powel of Philadelphia calls it, crimination; that I could give up the Man. I always supposed him weak & wavering, but I did not think him Treacherous. I send you his Book of which he has obtained a copy Right. You will judge for Yourself.

James Madison to James Monroe, Philadelphia, 26 January 1796

I sent also E.R.'s Vindication, with a malignant attack on it, by a satirical but scurrilous writer. The latter has published several other pamphlets exhibiting him in the same character. [Phineas] Bond is among the putative authors. But the real author is probably some hireling to whom materials may be supplied. Randolph is resettled in Richmond & resumes the practice of the law with flattering prospects it is said. The effect of his pamphlet is not yet fully known. His greatest enemies will not easily persuade themselves that he was under a corrupt influence of France and his best friend can't save him from the self condemnation of his political career as explained by himself.

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, London, 10 February 1796

Mr. Randolph's pamphlet had arrived before Mr. Hall, but I had seen only some extracts from it which were and yet are dealt out in some of the daily papers here. I think he rolls the stone of Sisyphus with a more impetuous recoil than I ever witnessed before. I confess I should never have thought that even the deliverance of guilt could publish *such* a production, and imagine it would injure the reputation of the President, or defend that of the writer.

Benjamin Henry Latrobe: Journals, 31 May 1796

The public opinion gives the next rank [after James Innes] as an Orator to Edmund Randolph, cidevant secretary of State. He speaks slowly, smilingly, in a musical voice, a selected phraseology, a polished gentlemanly manner, and with a plentiful flow of words. But his slowness gives his hearer time to anticipate and renders him impatient for the end of his period; his smiles seem to swim only upon the surface of his countenance, the sweetness of his tones do not reconcile to a corrected turn of language, and a selection of words apparently laborious, his manner appears to have been polished in the school of dissimulation, and the Storehouse of his words seems to be his head not his heart. At the instant he labors to persuade the jury, he seems to be unconvinced himself and to be ignorant that "*artis est celare artem.*" [It belongs to art to conceal art.] The coarse praise bestowed by a country man upon honest [James] Innes will never be earned by the quondam Secretary, "he has his belly full of words, and they come pouring along like a great fresh." Perhaps he would have said, "Randolph has his head full of words, and there seems to be no end of them." Considering all the circumstances of the political history of Edmund Randolph, I cannot help thinking the perpetual political allusions in his speeches upon all sorts of law cases are [torn page] ed. . . . But the boldness of innocence if such it be, ought to be respected.

*N.B.** This opinion was written while I was prejudiced against, before I had any personal acquaintance with Mr. Randolph. It is correct as to the *general* effect of his speaking. But notwithstanding the partial view of his character which, at the time I wrote, was unavoidable, and is here exhibited, I freely acknowledge that my subsequent intimacy with him has shown him in a light infinitely amiable.

Mr. Randolph is convicted of several political inconsistencies if to change parties, be a political inconsistency; for it will always remain for discussion whether the *party* or the individual have deviated from the original sentiment. In his resignation of his Office as Secretary of State, he appears to me to have been sacrificed to the malignity of a man [Alexander Hamilton] as detestable in his private character, as Mr. Randolph is amiable. To respect, nay to love Mr. Randolph it is only necessary to see him at his fireside, the father, the husband, and the friend. In a soil which virtues, such as he there exhibits, occupy, there cannot be room for a single depraved intention. And though that suavity of disposition which renders him an object of affection may perhaps give way to the pressure of artifice in others, I should think impossible for him to act wrong, but when he has been deceived.

*The last two paragraphs were written at a later date.

William Wirt: Sketches of the Life and Character of Patrick Henry, 1817

Mr. Randolph . . . was, in person and manners, among the most elegant gentlemen in the colony, and in his profession one of the most splendid ornaments of the bar. He was a polite scholar, as well as a profound lawyer, and his eloquence also was of a high order. His voice, action, style, were stately, and uncommonly impressive.

James Madison to John Tyler, Montpelier, Va., 1833

Mr. R. was made the organ on the occasion [i.e., submitting the Virginia Plan to the Constitutional Convention in 1787], being then the Governor of the State, of distinguished talents, and in the habit of public Speaking.

John Randolph of Roanoke

Manasseh Cutler to J. Dana, Washington, 20 March 1802

Mr. Randolph rose, spoke about two hours, and closed the sitting. The inferiority of this Virginia orator extremely mortified his party. It might have been thought better at another time; but, at any time, it would have been a miserable, disconnected harangue.

From Manasseh Cutler, Washington, 10 January 1804

R—d—ph, the Bonaparte of Democracy. . . .

William Plumer: Memorandum, 5 March 1806

I have been very much entertained this day in attended to Mr. John Randolph's speech in the House of Representatives. Mr. R. displayed much eloquence. He certainly is an able speaker. His language is very appropriate & forcible. . . . It was the most bitter, severe & eloquent philippic I ever heard. I really wish I had a correct copy of it. There will appear in the newspapers the substance of it—but not its spirit & highly finished eloquence, & well turned periods—the stenographer cannot relate them.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 22 June 1806

Mr. Randolph is an unusual phenomenon. I have read all his speeches. He has formed himself on the great models of Wilkes, Junius, Cobbett, Tom Paine, and Callendar.

He has introduced their modes onto the legislature, where I should have expected it would have produced from the duelling moralists and Christians as many bullet holes through his body as there are cells in a honeycomb. . . . If his constitution endures till he has sown all his wild oats, and he begins to reason and exercise judgment, I am not without hopes he will come to something solid and useful.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 26 April 1810

I send you herewith a few of Duane's papers. The Character of J Randolph is well drawn, and I believe just. I have long considered him as a mischievous boy with a Squirt in his hands throwing its dirty contents into the eyes of every body that looked at him. A kicking or a horsewhipping would be the best reply that could be made to his vulgar parliamentary insolence. It is only because the body which he insults *is what it is*, that he has been so long tollerated. In the Congress of 1776 & 1777 he would soon have fallen & perished with his brother insects upon the floor of the house.

Philadelphia Aurora, 26 April 1810

He is turbulent, impetuous, and ambitious. He has a spirit so dogmatic and overbearing that the records of all parliamentary history afford no parallel to his career. Some men are content to advise. Mr. Randolph always dictates. Upon all occasions he usurps and exercises the authority of an arbiter.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 26 April 1810

I send you herewith a few of [William] Duane's papers. The character of J. Randolph is well drawn and I believe just. I have long considered him as a mischievous boy with a squirt in his hands, throwing its dirty contents into the eyes of everybody that looked at him. A kicking or a horsewhipping would be the best reply that could be made to his vulgar parliamentary insolence. It is only because the body which he insults *is what it is* that he has been so long tolerated. In the Congress of 1776 and 1777 he would soon have fallen and perished with his brother insects upon the floor of the house.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 14 May 1810

How can I turn my thoughts . . . to that gossamer that idles in the wanton summer air. John Randolph! The character of him in the *Aurora* is well drawn and in some respects just; but makes too much of him. You have expressed in two or three lines the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. A boy with a mischievous syringe in his hand, full of dirty water.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 8 January 1812

What Shall I Say of Mr Randolph? After a dozen Years he cannot forget the foolish Figure he made, when after insulting the whole Army by calling them Raggamuffins he thought himself

insulted by Some officers of the Army at the Theatre and instead of calling them to account according to his professed principles, complained like a Baby to me of a Breach of the Priviledges of the House. I Sent the Complaint to the House whose sole Right it was to vindicate its Priviledges and got the Laugh of the Universe upon him. This, Such a Soul as his can never forgive. Pray tell me what is the Republicanism of this Mr Randolph? has he any one Principle of Legislation or Government or of foreign Relations? I Say his Republicanism, is any Thing, *every Thing* and Nothing. I do not flap this Bug, and many others, not because I fear their Stings, but because I know, that when crushed their odour is more nauseous than their Stings can be painful.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 10 July 1812

John Randolph appears to be so tormented by his conscience in recollecting his own conduct in the 18th century that he is nearly fit for your chair.

Thomas Jefferson to Henry Dearborn, Monticello, 17 May 1818

Randolph is federal by nature & by his passions.

Peyton Randolph

John Adams: Diary, 2 September 1774

After Coffee We went to the Tavern, where we were introduced to Peyton Randolph Esqr., . . . Randolph is a large, well looking Man.

Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 10 September 1774

Mr. Randolph our worthy President may be rising of Sixty, of noble appearance, & presides with dignity.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 23 October 1775

I have only Time to acquaint you that Yesterday, that eminent American, and most worthy Man The Honorable Peyton Randolph Esqr, our first venerable President, departed this Life in an Apoplectic Fit. He was seized at Table having but a few Moments before set down with a good deal of Company to dinner. He died in the Evening without ever recovering his senses after the first stroke.

As this Gentleman Sustained very deservedly ONE of the first American Characters, as he was the first President of the united Colonies, and as he was universally esteemed for his great Virtues and shining Abilities, the Congress have determined to show his Memory and Remains all possible Demonstrations of Respect. The whole Body is to attend the Funeral, in as much Mourning as our Laws will admit. The Funeral is to be tomorrow. I am the more pleased with this Respect on account of an Impropriety, which you know was unfelt.

This venerable Sage, I assure you, since he has stood upon the same Floor with the rest of Us has rose in the Esteem of all. He was attentive, judicious, and his Knowledge, Eloquence, and classical Correctness showed Us the able and experienced Statesman and senator, whereas his former station had in a great Measure concealed these and showed Us chiefly the upright and

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impartial Moderator of Debate. You would have wondered more at the Want of sensibility which you remarked if you had [been] here and seen, the Difference.

Mr. Randolph was as firm, stable and consistent a Patriot as any here. The loss must be very great to Virginia in Particular and the Continent in general.

Thomas Jefferson to Peyton Randolph (nephew of P.R.), Monticello, 26 July 1816

He was indeed a most excellent man; and none was ever more beloved and respected by his friends: somewhat cold and coy towards strangers, but of the sweetest affability when ripened into acquaintance. Of Attic pleasantry in conversation, always good-humored and conciliatory. With a sound and logical head, he was well-read in the law; and his opinions, when consulted, were highly regarded, presenting always a learned and sound view of the subject, but generally too a listlessness to go into its thoro development: for being heavy and inert in body, he was rather too indolent and careless for business, which occasioned him to get a smaller proportion of it at the bar than his abilities would otherwise have commanded. Indeed, after his appointment as Attorney General, he did not seem to court, nor scarcely to welcome business. In that office he considered himself equally charged with the rights of the colony, as with those of the crown; and in criminal prosecutions, exaggerating nothing, he aimed at a candid and just state of the transaction, believing it more a duty to save an innocent than to convict a guilty man. Altho not eloquent, his matter was so substantial that no man commanded more attention; which, joined with a sense of his great worth, gave him a weight in the House of Burgesses which few ever attained. He was liberal in his expences, but correct also; so as not to be involved in pecuniary embarrassments. And, with a heart always open to the amiable sensibilities of our nature, he did as many good acts as could have been done with his fortune, without injuriously impairing his means of continuing them. He left no issue; and gave his fortune to his widow and nephew, the late Edmund Randolph.

George Read

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A shrewd lawyer, of gentle manners, and of considerable talents and knowledge. He was firm, without violence, in all his purpose, and was much respected by all his acquaintances.

George Read to Gertrude Read, Philadelphia, 18 May 1775

You too justly hint at my inattention to this kind of Correspondence, but the life I lead here in some measure will Account for it. I prepare in the Morning for the Meeting at 9 O'Clock and often do not return to my lodgings 'till that time at Night. We sit in Congress generally to half past 3 O'Clock, and once 'till after 5 O'Clock & then dine at the City Tavern where a few of us have established a table for each day in the Week save Saturday when there is a general dinner. Our daily table is formed by the following persons at present, to wit Messrs. Randolph, Lee, Washington, and Harrison of Virginia, Alsop of New York, Chase of Maryland, and Rodney & Read. A dinner is ordered for the number 8 and whatever is deficient of that number is to be paid for at 2/6 A head and each that attends pays only the Expense of the day. I have dined there thrice in this Way as I find it very disagreeable to keep a table covered for me to these late Hours at my brother's.

Elias Boudinot to George Read, Philadelphia, 6 December 1782

Your established character as a Gentleman, Lawyer and man of integrity leaves me no room to doubt but this appointment [as a judge of the court of appeals in all cases of capture] will do honor to Congress, produce the happiest consequences to the good Citizens of these States, and, I hope, real satisfaction to yourself, from the consciousness of serving your Country with fidelity.

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

Mr. Read is a Lawyer and a Judge,—his legal abilities are said to be very great, but his powers of Oratory are fatiguing and tiresome to the last degree,—his voice is feeble, and his articulation so bad that few can have patience to attend to him. He is a very good Man, and bears an amiable character with those who know him. Mr. Read is about 50, of a low stature, and a weak constitution.

William Maclay: Journal, 9 July 1789

Mr. Read a Man of Obstructed Elocution was excessively tedious.

William Maclay: Journal, 16 July 1789

Mr. Read rose, and was swinging on his legs for an Hour. He had to talk a great deal before he could bring himself, to declare against the Motion.

William Maclay: Journal, 12 July 1790

The flexible Reed was bent for this purpose some time ago.

William Maclay: Journal, 25 February 1791

As to Reed I have heretofore known him to have been shaken by something else beside the Wind.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A shrewd lawyer, of gentle manners, and of considerable talents and knowledge. He was firm, without violence, in all his purpose, and was much respected by all his acquaintances.

William Plumer: Memorandum, 14 February 1805

George Reed is the District attorney of Delaware. He Discovered much formality—he studied his Deposition & had as fully committed it to memory as ever a Presbyterian clergyman did his sermon—or an Episcopalian his prayer. His testimony was verbatim with his deposition taken last year.*

*Read was among the group of Senators in charge of handling the impeachment proceedings against Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase.

Jacob Read

Pierce Butler to Edward Rutledge, New York, 17 August 1790

If I did not know Jacob Reid and his capability of acting unlike a Gentleman I should express my surprise at his conduct.

Pierce Butler to Roger Saunders, New York, 2 September 1790

I wrote fully to You a day or two ago, to which I refer You. Since then I received a letter from [Alexander] Gillon informing me that by this time Jacob Reid will have entered up Judgement against me for £30,000 on Acct. of a debt of John McQueen's to Mr Phillips. This hurts my feelings exceedingly. Had it been any other Lawyer but Reid he wou'd (now the tender Law is expired in Georgia) have sued McQueen first; but indeed gentility in him wou'd have surprised me more than the reverse.

Pierce Butler to Peter Freneau, Philadelphia, 22 November 1792

You ask me if any benefit wou'd result if Mr. Reid [Jacob Read] shou'd succeed in His proposed opposition to Mr. Willm Smith. I am of opinion that nothing wou'd be gained by the Change. You know both the Characters as well as I do.

Vanity & ostentation appear to me to rule & direct every action of Mr. Reid. Love of Wealth & power, personal ease, distinction & accommodation, as far as I have observed, influence every publick as well as private Act & sentiment of the other. Take then your choice, & determine what will be gained by the Electors & the State.

Joseph Reed

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 11 September 1774

This Mr. Reed is a very sensible and accomplished Lawyer of an amiable Disposition—soft, tender, friendly, &c. He is a friend to his Country and to Liberty.

Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 23 September 1774

We dined with Mr. Read, a Gentleman of the Law, very polite, & sensible, he married the Boston Mr. Debert's Daughter in London, and though small is of a most elegant figure, & countenance. She is a Daughter of Liberty zealously affected in a good Cause.

John Adams to William Tudor, Philadelphia, 24 June 1776

It is reported here that Colonel Read is intended for the Governor of New Jersey. I wish with all my Heart, he may. That Province is a Spirited, a brave and patriotic People. They want nothing, but a Man of sense, and Principle at their Head. Such an one is Read. His only fault is that he has

not quite Fire enough. But this may be an Advantage to him as Governor. His Coolness, and Candor, and goodness of Heart, with his abilities will make that People very happy.

John Jay to George Clinton, Philadelphia, 19 February 1779

This State is immersed in politics and Perplexity, the opposition to the Constitution is respectable and formidable. The President's want of Temper and Prudence has injured him.

Charles Pettit to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 20 March 1779

He is a Man of Wisdom and a good deal of Knowledge of Mankind and of the Affairs of Government; but he is not entirely exempted from the Passions and Prejudices which designate the Frailty of Man. He means to do right, and I believe aims at it in all his public Conduct, and of course has not a favorable Opinion of any thing that opposes him.

Marquis de Lafayette to the Chevalier de La Luzerne, Camp Ramapo, N.J., 30 June 1780

President Reed is fearful of losing his popularity by adopting stringent measures and would use his powers energetically if we could make him see that his laxity will make the people irritated with him and prevent his being chosen at the next election. He has, moreover, a great vanity. The hope of being well known in France and the assurance that not only the efforts of America but those of each state will have a particular claim on the gratitude of the French might perhaps bring him to act.

Joseph Reed to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 14 March 1783

The strange Turn that Affairs took here about 2 Years ago, & which has in a good Degree continued ever since, made me more a Misanthrope than I thought was in my Nature, & sometimes put me out of Concert with the World, my Friends & even myself. . . .

For my own Part I am to all Intents & Purposes a private Gentleman having made a serious Resolution which I hope to have Grace enough to keep never more to be tempted out of the Line of private Life wherein I find Profit enough to gratify moderate Desires, & a luxurious Ease & Independence of Mind. If you come & see us, as I hope you will, I shall be found very poor, with a great many Enemies, chiefly political, but much happier than I have been for many Years, & if I am a competent Judge a much cleverer Fellow than when President of Pennsylvania with numerous Worshipers.

Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, Philadelphia, 23 November 1783

Governor Reed will probably deliver You this, & my Confidence in him will induce me to be explicit—

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

Reed was an ambitious man with the soul of a Cromwell. He made a show of being an ardent republican because he hoped some day to seize power.

Henry Remsen

John Jay to Charles Thomson, Philadelphia, 9 August 1784

As Mr. Henry Remsen the bearer of this has obtained leave to visit his father and friends in New York, I could not suffer him to pass without a line to you. In April last Congress appointed him under Secretary in the Office of foreign Affairs that he might open & take charge of the papers which had till that time remained sealed up from Mr. Livingston's quitting the Office. Before that appointment he had been several years employed in my Office and by his fidelity, prudence and assiduity proved himself worthy of Confidence and merited my esteem; I can therefore safely recommend him to your Notice and friendship.

Matthew Ridley

Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Benjamin Franklin, Annapolis, Md., 7 May 1781

I have known Mr. Ridley from a boy, and his character & conduct have been always such as to entitle him to the esteem & regard of all well acquainted with him.

Matthew Ridley to John Adams, Paris, 20 September 1782

I assure you my good Sir, I have yet to learn the Art of lying.

David Rittenhouse

John Adams: Diary, 28 September 1775

Rittenhouse is a Mechanic, a Mathematician, a Philosopher and an Astronomer. . . . Rittenhouse is a tall, slender Man, plain, soft, modest, no remarkable Depth, or thoughtfulness in his Face—yet cool, attentive, and clear.

Oliver Wolcott to Laura Wolcott, Philadelphia, 8 March 1776

There are Many Things here which discover great Ingenuity and Design, but Nothing Struck my Mind in any Degree like the Amazing Orrery of Mr. Rittenhouse. As I am but little acquainted with astronomy or Mechanism I could only View it with the strange Wonder of a Barbarian for such I could only consider myself when compared to such a Matchless Genius. The whole Solar System is here represented, the comparative Distances and Magnitude of every Planet and their Satellites, and all their true Motions made by turning a small crank in the manner a Man turns a Grind stone, each turn Makes a day. The outer Circle of this Work on which the Signs are marked which make a retrograde Rotation once in Twenty five Thousand years, moves so inconceivably Slow as to require Nine Million one hundred Twenty five Thousand Turns to bring this Circle once

round. This Work which has a Vast Number of Wheels and an Infinity of Indentations and Teeth is capable of representing the Exact Position of every Moon and Planet at any Period for eighteen hundred years forward. How Such a Complicated thought could ever enter into, or be retained by a human Soul, and if retained how Such an Amazing Design could ever be executed, infinitely exceeds all my Comprehension. I Viewed an Eclipse of the Sun which will be total if I remember right a little South of this City the Tenth of June 1776 and what to me was Very wonderful when I first Viewed the Moon through the Glass it appeared quite luminous but as it drew more into a Line with the Sun it grew gradually darker till it became quite so when it covered the Sun's face but this was owing to Reflection. This Work is calculated to Make an ordinary Genius humble while it leads to adore that fountain of Wisdom which has darted such a bright Ray of himself upon any human Soul. I saw Mr. Rittenhouse and Viewed him with great Curiosity, but I saw no other Mark of Genius Stamped upon him than what is discoverable in an ordinary man. He appeared extremely Modest and rather what We call Shamefaced—but he has erected a Monument which will be admired while learning lasts, or Man is capable of adoring the Creator.

Thomas Jefferson to David Rittenhouse, Monticello, 19 July 1778

Writing to a philosopher, I may hope to be pardoned for intruding some thoughts of my own though they relate to him personally. Your time for two years past has, I believe, been principally employed in the civil government of your country. . . . I doubt not there are in your country many persons equal to the task of conducting government: but you should consider that the world has but one Rittenhouse, & that it never had one before. The amazing mechanical representation of the solar system which you conceived & executed, has never been surpassed by any but the work of which it is a copy. Are those powers then, which being intended for the erudition of the world are, like air and light, the world's common property, to be taken from their proper pursuit to do the commonplace drudgery of governing a single state, a work which may be executed by men of an ordinary stature, such as are always & everywhere to be found?

Thomas Jefferson: *Notes on Virginia*, 1782

We have supposed Mr. Rittenhouse second to no astronomer living: that in genius he must be the first, because he is self-taught. As an artist he has exhibited as great a proof of mechanical genius as the world has ever produced. He has not indeed made a world; but he has by imitation approached nearer its Maker than any man who has lived from creation to this day.

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Treasury Department, Philadelphia, 31 January 1795

I cannot help thinking that with due exertion the business of the Mint might have been far more matured, and its present powers of Action far greater than they are: And I am led to fear that as long as it continues under its present management the public expectation will be disappointed. The Director, though a most respectable & excellent man, can hardly be expected on several accounts to give that close and undivided attention to it which in its first stages is indispensable.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 18 December 1796

I went Yesterday at 12 O'Clock to the Presbyterian Meeting House in Market Street to hear Dr. Rush pronounce an elegant and pathetic* Elogium on Mr. Rittenhouse the late President of the

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[American] Philosophical society. He made him out to be a good Man and a great Astronomer & Philosopher.** This I agree and if he had not betrayed Jacobinical Weaknesses I should have liked him very well.

*Moving, eloquent.

**Scientist.

Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 27 June 1796

This morning died aged about 64, David Rittenhouse, a man of immense genius, universal in its objects, modest, amiable, just, a friend to liberty, a true republican, beloved and admired by all who knew him.

Benjamin Rush to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 4 January 1797

I enclose you a humble tribute to the memory of our great republican and philosophical friend Mr. Rittenhouse. It is a feeble expression of respect for his character compared with yours in your defense of the genius of the Americans. Few such men have ever lived or died in any country.

John Jay to Benjamin Rush, Albany, N.Y., 22 March 1797

I have received and read with pleasure your elegant eulogium on the late Mr. Rittenhouse. Such attentions to worthy characters cherish and encourage modest merit. As a man and a philosopher, his title to esteem and praise is, I believe, universally acknowledged

Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 24 January 1814

Supposing that the late publication of the life of our good and really great Rittenhouse may not have reached you, I send a copy for your acceptance. . . . Rittenhouse, as an astronomer, would stand on a line with any of his time, and as a mathematician he certainly has not been equalled. In this view he was truly great; but, placed along side of Newton, every human character must appear diminutive, and none would have shrunk more feelingly from the painful parallel than the modest and amiable Rittenhouse, whose genius and merit are not the less for this exaggerated comparison of his over zealous biographer.

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 3 March 1814

Writtenhouse was a virtuous and amiable Man; an exquisite Mechanician; Master of the Astronomy known in his time; an expert Mathematician, a patient calculator of Numbers. But We have had a Winthrop, an Andrew Oliver, a Willard, a Webber, his equals and We have a Bowditch his Superior in all these particulars, except the Mechanism. But you know, Philadelphia is the Heart, the Censorium, the Penal Gland of U.S. In Politicks, Writtenhouse was a good, simple ignorant well meaning Franklin Democrat, totally ignorant of the World, as an Anachorite, an honest Dupe of the French Revolution; a mere Instrument of Jonathan Dickinson Sargent, Dr. Hutchinson, Genet and Mifflin.

Daniel Roberdeau

John Hancock to William Palfrey, Philadelphia, 4 June 1776

Col. Roberdeau of this City . . . a Gentleman distinguished for his Benevolence towards all Men . . . a zealous American, and a Friend of mine.

Caesar Rodney

John Adams: Diary, 3 September 1774

Caesar Rodney is the oddest looking Man in the World. He is tall—thin and slender as a reed—pale—his Face is not bigger than a large Apple. Yet there is Sense and Fire, Spirit, Wit and Humour in his Countenance.

Jesse Root

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

Mr. Root—of Jersey is a Man that Seems to be Without passions and therefore has a Capacity to Conceal the Most artful designs under the Most Specious Show of Candor, and plausible Arguments yet his language is So Weak & innervate that he Seldom Succeeds in Making Much impression on the Audience—in Short his Talents Seem better Suited to Some under office of Some European Court than to a republican Assembly.

George Ross

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

Ross has I think acted unexceptionably. Now and then He takes a whimsical turn, perhaps a wrong one, but to do him Justice he does not persist in it. He is too much of a *Character* not to be eccentric. He is a sincere friend to the Cause & I think is independent in his Notions.

John Ross

John Adams: Diary, 28 September 1775

Ross is a Lawyer, of great Eloquence, and heretofore of extensive Practice. A great Tory, they say, but now begins to be converted. He said the Americans were making the noblest and firmest Resistance to Tyranny that ever was made by any People. The Acts were founded in Wrong, Injustice and Oppression. The great Town of Boston had been remarkably punished without being heard.

Robert Morris to Silas Deane, Philadelphia, 31 January 1777

I have by this Conveyance wrote to my Friend Mr. John Ross of this place now in Europe (I expect in France) . . . Mr. Ross unluckily is a Scotch Man, but he is a Staunch American or I am much deceived. He was many years my Neighbor. We have done a great deal of business together and I know him to be a capable steady merchant, regular and punctual, therefore I most cheerfully commit my own affairs to his guidance & the Public will benefit by any direction he may have in theirs. I recommend this Gentleman to your Friendship but as to Politics, you'll use your own discretion in trusting him or not as he is from North of Tweed, but I am confident he is a fast Friend to the interest of this Country, indeed it is his own interest to be so.

Arthur Lee to James Warren, In Congress, 12 December 1782

Mr. Morris, Mr. Bingham, Mr. Ross, and others, who have made large fortunes during this war, employ their wealth in a manner not very consistent with that unostentatious virtue which ought to animate our Infant republic. Extravagance, ostentation and dissipation distinguish what are called the Ladies of the first rank. There are however exceptions, there being prudent, amiable and worthy persons of both Sexes. But the generality seem to be intoxicated with a sudden change of manners and unexpected elevation.

Daniel Runnels

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

The colonel is a man of little property, is intemperate, illiterate, and fond of low groveling company.

Benjamin Rush

John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 11 September 1774

Dr. Rush lives upon Water Street and has from the Windows of his back Room and Chamber, a fine Prospect of Delaware River, and of New Jersey beyond it.

John Adams: Diary, 24 September 1775

Dr. Rush came in. He is an elegant, ingenious Body. Sprightly, pretty fehov. He is a Republican. He has been much in London. Acquainted with Sawbridge, McCaulay, Burgh, and others of that Stamp. Dilly sends him Books and Pamphletts, and Sawbridge and McCaulay correspond with him. He complains of D[ickinson]. . . . But Rush I think, is too much of a Talker to be a deep Thinker. Elegant not great.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 23 July 1776

This Morning I inclosed a Letter from Dr. Rush to me, containing Directions for managing Patients under Inoculation for the small pox. Rush has as much success as any without Exception. . . . I dont know how I can better entertain you, than by giving you some Idea of the Character of this Dr. Rush. He is a Native of this Place, a Gentleman of an ingenious Turn of Mind, and of elegant Accomplishments. He has travelled in England, where he was acquainted with Mrs. Maccaulay, with whom he corresponded while there, and since his Return. He wrote an elegant, flowing Letter to her, while he was in England, concerning a Plan of a Republic which she wrote and addressed to Pascal Paoli. He afterwards travelled in France, and contracted a Friendship there with M. Dubourg, with whom he has corresponded ever since. He has published several Things upon Philosophy, Medicine, and Politicks, in this City. He is a Lecturer in the Colledge here, in some Branch of Physick or surgery, and is a Member of the American Philosophical Society. He has been sometime a Member of the City Committee and was last Week appointed a Delegate in Congress for this Place, in the Room of one, who was left out. He married last Winter, a young Lady, daughter of Mr. Stockton of New Jersey, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of that Government, and lately appointed a delegate in this Congress. This Gentleman is said to be a staunch American, I suppose, truly.

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 24 July 1776

The plentiful Use of Mercury is a Discouragement to many: But you will see by a Letter from Dr Rush which I lately inclosed to my Partner, that Mercury is by him wholly laid aside. He practices with as much success and Reputation as any Man.

Benjamin Rush to John King, Philadelphia, 2 April 1783

In some of their letters and conversations I am considered as a fool and a madman. In others I am considered as a sly, persevering, and dangerous kind of fellow. Almost every epithet of ridicule and resentment in our language has been exhausted upon me in public newspapers and in private cabals since the humble part I have acted in endeavoring to found a college at Carlisle.

Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, Philadelphia, 4 January 1785

Mr. Hall will send you some newspapers and a new pamphlet written by that turbulent spirit Dr. Rush, who I hope will never be quiet while there is ignorance, slavery, or misery in Pennsylvania.

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 22 April 1788

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Charleston, South-Carolina, to his friend in this city, dated Feb. 9, 1788

. . . You have a *Doctor* among you, who is expert at fabricating letters on political subjects, commonly called the *political magpie*.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Doctor and politician. Knowledgeable, eloquent, active but vain and bombastic in debates. He affects too much enthusiasm for France to be believed sincere.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 12 February 1790

Such is my apathy *now* to public Affairs that I often pass whole weeks without reading our newspapers.—I have never Once been within the doors of our convention, nor have I broken bread with a single member of the body who compose it. Heaven has been profuse in its gifts of family blessings to me. My dear Mrs Rush is every thing to me that a friend—a companion & a wife should be to any man. Our children are affectionate—& dutiful,—& promising as to their capacities for acquiring knowledge.—Nineteen out of twenty of my evenings are spent in their Society.

I see many ~~of my friends who began their political Service with~~ men high in power or affluent in office, who in the year 1776 considered me as One of the firebrands of independance. I feel the effects in a debilitated Constitution of the midnight Studies which I devoted for 16 years to my Country—I see nothing before me during the remainder of my life, but labor and Selfdenial in my profession—and yet I am happy. I envy no man—and blame no man. O! Virtue—Virtue—who would not follow thee blindfold!—I want nothing but a heart sufficiently grateful to heaven for the happiness of my family & my Country.

Benjamin Rush: *Commonplace Book*, 1794

I have been accused of poligamy in my studies. But unlike a plurality of wives, my studies all agree, and are handmaids to each other.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 26 January 1794

I drank Tea last Evening with Dr. Rush. He seems worn and weakened by his great Exertions and fatigues and sickness altogether: but is still agreeable and cheerful. He enquired after your health and sends his respects &c. He had an Awful summer of last.

Benjamin Rush to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 26 December 1795

The word *Republican* is still music in my ears. I still abhor the substance and shadows of monarchy. I still love the common people with all their weaknesses and vices, both of which in our

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country I ascribe in part to the errors and corruptions of our government. . . . In one thing more I am unchanged. I still love and esteem my old friend General Gates. He was always dear to me. Do come and pass a few weeks in our city. Bring Mrs. Gates along with you. Let us feast once more, before we are parted by the grave, upon the republican principles and maxims with which our bosoms glowed in the years 1774, 1775, and 1776. We will fancy Richard Henry Lee and Samuel Adams are part of our company.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 1 January 1797

Last Night I had a Visit from Dr. Rush, whose Tongue ran for an hour.—So many Compliments, so many old Anecdotes. To be Sure, My Election he Said, he had vast pleasure in assuring me Since it had been made certain had given vast Satisfaction in this City and State. . . .

The Dr. then ran on with his Compliments to me and Sarcasms upon W.—This Country would rise in the Estimation of the World and of all Europe, from the 4th day of March next &c &c &c

It hurt me to hear this—But his old Grievs and Prejudices Still hang about him. He got disaffected to Washington during the War. . . .

With regard to my Election he had taken no Part. He had been neutral—But he had made it a Rule, whenever either Jefferson or myself had been traduced in his Company to vindicate Us both.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to John Adams, Gray's near Philadelphia, 26 September 1797

Doctor Rush's pretensions [to be director of the U.S. Mint], founded on public service and celebrity of character, are certainly superior to any of the candidates who have been named. I do not know that he has any other fault, than being somewhat addicted to the modern philosophy. Being, however, of a disposition naturally benevolent, and not apt to be long tenacious of any particular system, his error, if it be one, will probably yield to topical remedies. But to be serious, my opinion is, that though Doctor Rush's mind is not exactly of the right cast, no better selection can be made among the candidates.

William Stephens Smith to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Lisbon, 25 February 1798

I see the old dispute revived with great violence for bleeding for fever and ague, and that Dr. Rush is charged with bleeding many hundreds to death. I was not very much surprised of this charge, but I confess I was surprised to see him appointed treasurer of the mint. I hope he won't bleed that to death also. . . . I always considered the Doctor a wrong-headed politician. I know for a fact he was, at the election of President, very much in favor of the Vice President [i.e., Thomas Jefferson].

Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 5 March 1798

Upon making inquiries of my intelligenser, Dr. Rush, who knows everybody and their connections. . . .

Benjamin Rush: Sketches, c. 1800

He aimed well.

Benjamin Rush to James McHenry, Philadelphia, 12 August 1800

Permit me to congratulate you upon your recovering your freedom and independence by retiring to private life. Public measures and public men appear very differently to persons who see them at a distance from what they appear to persons who are actors in or under them. If your feelings are like mine in their relation to politics, you would not give up your present abstraction from them to be President of the United States. While children dispute and fight about their gingerbread and nuts, and party men about posts of honor, the pleasure of one evening's successful investigation of a moral or physical truth, or an hour spent in literary or philosophical society, will more than outweigh all that Ambition ever conferred upon her votaries.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 19 February 1805

I live like a Stranger in my native state. My patients are my only acquaintances,—my books my only companions, and the members of my family, nearly my only friends. The odious opinions I have propagated representing the domestic origin of our American pestilence, have placed me *permanently* in the same situation in Philadelphia, that your political opinions placed you for a while in the year 1775.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 26 March 1806

You, my friend, I see, are a greater proficient in this philosophy Than I am. You are grown as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove.

Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 8 September 1810

Mr Denny is the principal writer in the portfolio. He is precluded from introducing politicks into it by its proprietor Mr Sam Bradford, but—not from traducing the works of Whig, and American Authors. One of his Coajutors is a Dr Chapman a former pupil of mine and who owes me many—very many Obligations. He is the son of a Virginia Tory. After failing in getting into business, and suspecting probably that his former Connection with me was a bar to his success with that Class of people in our city who possess patronage in every thing but power, he began to calumniate me. For this he has been cherished by all our physicians who are opposed to my system of medicine, for “parties, as genl: Gates used to say, like armies, receive all able bodied men.” He has publicly renounced my medical principles, and said “all that I have ever written is fit only to rot upon a dunghill.” I am not moved by this instance of ingratitude, for I am accustomed to much greater, nor can I think so lowly of my writings as he now does, when I look around me and see every practitioner of medicine in Philada even my most implacable enemies among them, obsequiously adopting my modes of practice, nor am disposed to renounce my principles in medicine by the censure the Edinr: Reviewers have uttered against them. My son James who passed last winter in Edinr: treats the lectures given there with great contempt, as do all the young men who have studied there after studying in Philadelphia. They all, I should suppose from what I have heard from them, believe “there would be no great diminution of medical knowledge if that University were annihilated.” I have sometimes amused myself by enumerating the different kinds of hatred that operate in the world. They are the “odium theologicum,” the “odium politicum,” the “odium philologicum” & the “odium medicum.” It has been my lot,—I will not call it my misfortune,—to be exposed to them all. The divines hate me for holding tenets that they say lead to materialism, and that are opposed to the rigid doctrines of Calvin.—The politicians hate me for

being neither a Democrat nor a monarchist, neither a frenchman, nor an Englishman,—the philologists hate me for writing against the dead languages;—and the physicians, for teaching a system of medicine that has robbed them by its simplicity of cargoes of technical lumber by which they imposed upon the credulity of the world. The last I believe is the most deadly hatred of them all. Cobbett acknowledged when he left Philada: that he was not my enemy,—he even spoke well of me, and said that all he had written against me was dictated to him by three physicians. The publications thus dictated against me in the year 1797 were compared by a Clergyman in the Delaware State to the “mouth of hell being opened against me.”

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 14 August 1811

I know your prudence, your reserve, your caution, your wisdom.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 25 December 1811

[In speaking of Jefferson and Benjamin Rush.] I believe you both to mean well to mankind and your country. I might suspect you both to sacrifice a little to the infernal gods, and perhaps unconsciously to suffer your judgments to be a little swayed by a love of popularity and possibly by a little spice of ambition.

John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Braintree, Mass., 8 January 1812

In my opinion there is not in Philadelphia a single citizen more universally esteemed and beloved by his fellow citizens than Dr. Benjamin Rush. There is not a man in Pennsylvania more esteemed by the whole state. I know not a man in America more esteemed by the nation. There is not a citizen of this Union more esteemed throughout the literary, scientific, and moral world in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

[Adams had heard it reported that Washington had said] He had been a good deal in the world and seen many bad Men, but Dr. Rush was the most black hearted scoundrel he had ever known.

John Adams to Elkanah Watson, Quincy, Mass., 11 August 1812

Dr. Rush says nothing but copious phlebotomy can cure the yellow fever, and almost all the physicians are now converts to his opinion.

James Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 21 April 1813

My father and your friend, from the best health that his years would admit, was on Wednesday evening last seized with a fever attended for a day or two by a pain in the side—his system soon sunk into that typhus state that now so generally marks the diseases of our Country—and on Monday afternoon at 5 O clock he expired—At his death he was free from all suffering he foresaw his end, but from a drowsiness which attended his illness he spoke little of it or any thing else, That Mind which you so well knew, he retained unimpaired to the last moment—

John Adams to Julia Rush, Quincy, Mass., 24 April 1813

Yesterday morning hoping to receive a letter from your Husband, the messenger brought me a letter from Dr Waterhouse, with the melancholy the afflicting, account of his death; There is not a

man out of my own family remaining in the world in whom I had so much confidence, for whom I had so tender an affection, and whose Friendship was so essential to my happiness. My loss and my sensibility of it can bear no proportion however to yours, my dear Madam. Most sincerely do I sympathize with you and your family under this severe dispensation of Providence. The worth of this dear departed friend, his talents, his virtues, his services to his Country and to mankind are far beyond my powers to describe. They are fortunately recorded in his imperishable works.

Abigail Adams to Julia Rush, Quincy, Mass., 24 April 1813

[On the death of Benjamin Rush] O my Friend, my Friend, my ancient, my constant, my unshaken Friend, My Brother, art thou gone, gone forever?

Who can estimate thy worth, who can appreciate thy loss? to thy Country, to thy Family to thy Friends to Science to Literature to the World at large? to a Character which in every relation of Life shone resplendent?

John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Quincy, Mass., 26 April 1813

As a man of Science, Letters, Taste, Sense, Philosophy, Patriotism, Religion, Morality, Merit, Usefulness, taken all-together Rush has not left his equal in America, nor that I know in the World. In him is taken away, and in a manner most sudden and totally unexpected a main Prop of my Life. "Why Should I grieve when grieving I must bear."

Abigail Adams to Abigail Adams Smith, Quincy, Mass., 27 April 1813

You will, I know, share with your father and me, in lamenting the death of our ancient friend, our physician, the constant correspondent and endearing companion; the benevolent, learned, and ever to be regretted Rush. It is indeed a heavy stroke; an unexpected one to your father: one for which we were unprepared, having a weekly correspondence with him for a long time. On Saturday last we sent, as usual, to the post-office for letters, expecting to receive a very interesting one from him. Instead of a letter from him, the post brought one from a friend announcing his death. On the Wednesday previous to his death, from his usual health he was seized with a pain in his side: bleeding and blistering were applied; he soon had symptoms of a typhus fever, which upon the fifth day, put a period to his life, to the unspeakable grief of his family; and the whole city (it is said in our letters,) were in tears as for a common father. He has left lasting memorials of his skill and industry: to the poor he was in his profession unbounded in his charity, kindness, and benevolence; when the eye saw him it blessed him. The loss to his family, his friends, his country, and to the world at large, is not easily estimated. Although arrived at seventy, he was still vigorous and active, constantly employing his pen for the benefit of society.

A friend of so many years ripening, whom no changes had warped, but constant and steady, "unrotten at the core," who had passed together with him through many political conflicts, in the most perilous times, is a loss not to be repaired; a breach not to be healed; and as such does it weigh down your father. Death, in taking Rush, has taken from him one of his greatest pleasures, in the constant correspondence with him.

"What is the worse of woes that wait on age?
What stamps the wrinkles deeper on the brow?"

To view each loved one blotted from life's page,
And be alone on earth.”*

*Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (1811), Canto II, stanza 98.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 3 May 1813

The vessel which carries you this Letter will convey to you the account of the Death of a dear and valued Friend, the Friend of his Country, the Friend of Mankind, and the confidential Friend & constant correspondent of your Father, the Sincerely lamented Rush

Upon the 10 of April your Father received a Letter from him, as he had done for more than a year almost every week. To instead of a Letter from him, came the sad tidings of his death—he lay only 5 days—and then terminated a Life, if not full of years, full of usefulness—the Stroke was So Sudden, So unexpected that it has fallen with redoubled force upon us—your Father feels it like a string Separated from his Heart. no Man now living has so intimate so long and So correct a knowledge of your Father and his public transactions as Dr Rush—and no Man had he Survived him would have done more justice to his Character. but it has pleased heaven to take him hence—at a time of Life—when his death is universally regretted, and when to all appearance his usefulness in his profession was unimpaired—

You who know him as a Physician a Scholor a man of Science and Literature—and as a Man of universal Benevolence need not any Eulogiums to heighten your regret for his loss—or respect for his memory. there is a great Similarity of character between his own & that drawn by him of Sydenham, and I may apply the Lines to him which he calls upon Physicians to deposit upon the Tomb of Sydenham

“with every healing plant, his grave adorn,
Saviour of many millions, yet unborn.”*

*On the title page of John Swan's edition of *The Entire Works of Thomas Sydenham* (London, 1769).

John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 5 May 1813

There are none than can express my Sympathy with you and your Family, or my own personal Feelings on the loss of your excellent father. There is not another Person, out of my own Family, who can die, in whom my personal Happiness can be so deeply affected. The World would pronounce me extravagant and no Man would apologize for me if I should say that in the Estimation of unprejudiced Philosophy, he has done more good in this World than Franklin or Washington.

Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 27 May 1813

Another of our friends of 76 is gone, my dear Sir, another of the Co-signers of the independence of our country. And a better man, than Rush, could not have left us, more benevolent, more learned, of finer genius, or more honest.

Thomas Jefferson to Richard Rush, Monticello, 31 May 1813

No one has taken a more sincere part than myself in the affliction which has lately befallen your family, by the loss of your inestimable and ever to be lamented father. His virtues rendered him dear to all who knew him, and his benevolence led him to do all men every good in his power. Much he was able to do, and much therefore will be missed. My acquaintance with him began in

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1776. It soon became intimate, and from that time a warm friendship has been maintained by a correspondence of unreserved confidence. [Jefferson asks for the return of several letters he wrote to Benjamin Rush that contained personal information, such as Jefferson's thoughts on religion.]

John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 11 June 1813

I received yesterday your favour of May 27th. I lament with you the loss of Rush. I know of no Character living or dead, who has done more real good in America.

John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 18 June 1813

I cannot forget the loss I have sustained in the death of Dr Rush. Since your departure his correspondence has been a kind of substitute to your conversation. Had I your pen, your tongue or your fingers, I would have pronounced his Eulogium before the Academy, rejoice always in all events be thankful always for all things: is a hand precept for human nature: though in my philosophy and in my religion a perfect duty.

Julia Rush to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 23 June 1813

A request from you dear Madam will ever with me have the force of a command, I will therefore at this time pass over that part of your letter in which with so much feeling you refer to my afflicting bereavement, and proceede to give you the particulars of the closing scene of our much loved friend.

A cough was constitutional with him on the slightest cold, he got his feet wet in November from attending the funeral of one of his patients, a cough ensued which was never cured, tho it gave him but little trouble during the day, except after some unusual exposure to cold or damp, He was frequently during the winter disturbed by it at night, and always had a bad coughing spell after he got into bed and upon rising in the morning—he always took a drink of warm molasses and water made pleasant by a little brandy or lime juice at going to bed—sometimes 10 drops of ladunum if he had coughd in the evening, by these little attentions he pass'd the winter comfortably and often express'd his gratitude to god that with a heavy cough he had not been confined a single day, and his health otherwise was remarkably good—He had been in the habit of drinking from one to two glasses of good madeira wine every day, but after the cough became troublesome he abstained from wine intirey, and for two months before his sickness he even deny'd himself the use of small table beer of which he was fond, and always used at his dinner. I remonstrated against this plan and said that I thought his labors and his advancing years required more generous living—He said it agreed with him, that altho he drank nothing but water at his meals, that he took meat every day (I thought but sparingly) drank a good portion of tea and coffee, and ate plentifully of buttered toast and the cakes that are in use with us during the winter, he added that he got up from his dinner and sat down to his studies with as much alacrity as he did when he was thirty years of age owing he thought to his light meals—I reminded him but a few days before he was sick, that his dieting plan was more likely to injure him now than when he was thirty years of age, and I urged him to try a little wine again, he said he had yielded to my entreaties *several* times lately and it had always set him to coughing—I thought he looked pale and reduced—I have been thus particular as I cannot but believe that this reduced state of his body previous to his illness, had no small effect in the sinking of his system so soon under so little apparent disease. He pass the day of the 14 of April in his usual health, was engaged in active business till seven oclock in evening, when after taking

coffee and eating heartily of buckwheat cakes, he sat down to his writing desk, he was preparing one of the tracts he mentioned in his last letter to Mr Adams. I was in and out of his room several times after tea and found him busy, at nine o'clock I found him sitting close to the fire and he said he feared he was getting a chilly fit—I advised him to go to bed to which he consented—While the room and water for his feet were preparig I warm'd his great coat and put it on him and gave him some warm drink—the chamber maid soon came in and said all was ready—I carried the candle before him and he went up the stairs, alas he never came down till he was borne to his grave—providence was kind in putting all these things into my mind, and in inducing him to yield so soon to all these little remedies, for tho they were unavailing, yet it has been a comfort to me to know that without any particular anxiety as to the indisposition then on him—that nothing was omitted in the beginning which could have been done if I had know the fatal event that was to take place—not more than twenty minutes had pass'd before he was in a warmed bed from his first complaining, He took a diluting warm draught after he got into bed—his chilliness for it did not amount a chilly fit soon went of, and a fever succeeded, he complained of pains in his limbs and after midnight of a pain in his right side—soon after this he said he must be bled—I told him not to think of that remedy so soon, that he had lived winter and was too pale and thin to bleed upon every little fit of pain that occured—he slept after this but towards daylight was very urgent for me to get up and send for the bleeder, I felt I do not know why—but I did feel a great reluctance to bleeding him—and with great difficulty persuaded him to wait till morning—at seven I got up and sent of the bleeder who took twelve [ounces] of blood, it gave him releif and a perspiration came on and carried of his fever—one of our Sons was affected with an external complaint which required a Surgeon, Dr Dorsey call'd occasionally—and happened to call that morning thursday, when I heard he was in the house, I requested that he would see Dr Rush—he did not ask for it nor should I have thought it necessary to send for one if he had not happened in the house—it was my son James who was the patient and his complaint confined him to his room therefore he had not seen his father—Dr Dorsey felt his pulse and heard how he was taken and what had been done, He said the bleeding was right, but the pulse was subdued, and he did not think more would be necessary, prescribed a blister to the side if the pain continued or returned, and desired me to make some generous wine whey, and let him drink plentifully through the day—it pass'd away without any thing to alarm and I hoped and believed he would be down stairs the next day—He complained a little of the pain in the side in the evening and a blister was appl'y'd which never rose—he frequently said the pain was not actute and he should not regard it but for the cough he had so long laboured under. he feared congestion might take place, on friday the only unfavorable symptom was a constant disposition to sleep—upon my expressing uneasiness, he quieted my fears by reminding me that he had taken an opiate the night before—and that his habits were so active—that he could not but sleep lying as he did in a comfortable bed without pain and with but little fever—towards evening his fever rose and he pass'd a restless evening and night, and complained again of an acute pain in his side and call'd *earnestly* for another bleeding a little before daylight. I entreated him to wait till his physician saw him, indeed told him that I could not consent to his loosing blood again after hearing that his pulse was low—that if he should sink under bleeding I could never forgive myself, when Dr Dorsey came he objected to bleeding him but told me he wish'd Dr Physick to be call'd, as he did not as a young man feel himself at liberty to oppose Dr Rush inclination to be bled and that he thought it improper in the then state of his pulse, Dr Physick soon came and also decided against the operation, he however consented to cupping on the side by which he took four ounces of blood, and obtained releif—and complained but little more of his side afterwards, he was a good deal exhausted by the pain and operations of the morning, and he

had a good deal of fever—but towards dinner time he got into a comfortable sleep, and in the evening his fever abated and at bed time he seem'd free from any complaints except weakness—he had a most comfortable night, I beleive he would have slept soundly if he had not been frequently wakened to take nourishment which he did in the form of porter and wine whey. On sunday morning when the Doctors came they congratulated me on his being in safe way—he said he had no pain, fever, nor uneasiness, indeed he said he was quite well—when the children came in he kiss'd the girls and shook hands with his sons, and said he hoped to be down among them in a few days—he told me he could think again, that he had been in so lethargick a state for two days that he could not collect his Ideas together, that he had been very ill, but that he hoped the crisis of his disease was pass'd and that he had nothing but weakness to contend with, he conversed pleasantly with me all day on Sunday when awake, tho he was still sleepy, but said he awoke refresh'd from every little nap—he took porter, wine, whey, and beef tea, all of which agreed with his stomach—Bishop White paid him a visit after the afternoon service, he talk'd as usual with him for about 15 minutes and said he would thank him for a short prayer—. adding “I am much better but still weak and low, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” this was made, and the Bishop has since told me that when he left him he considered him safe—soon after this visit came the Doctors again, they said not a word to alarm me, only to my daughters in the parlour they said they did not think him quite so well as in the morning, they desired me to give him as much of his drinks as he would take, and that they should see him again at nine o'clock—I was informed after his death that they found his pulse very low, it would have been very important for me to have know his real state, he did not appear to beleive himself worse at that time—I knew his fever had risen from his flush'd face and from his thirst—but he said he was quite easy, and talk'd as usual about indifferent things—during the day in speaking of his recovery he said he should be thankful to be spared yet a little longer to his dear family, but if god had done with him here, he was perfectly resigned to his will and ready to go and thankful that he had been spared so long. At nine oclock on Sunday evening the physicians came again, and I soon awoke to the horrors that I afterwards experienced—Dr Physick told me his pulse had sunk astonishingly since five oclock, and that strong stimulants must be poured down and used externally—brandy was given, cloths were wrung out of spirits of turpentine and applyd to his body, blisters mixed with turpentine to his legs, blisters of the common kind had been put to his wrists on saturday night, and they rose tolerably well, he took but little brandy it was too powerful for him, it made him cough and affected his breast to a distressing degree, he said he should strangle if he took another dose and absolutely refused after the third—but he took all the other mentioned articles to the last hour, and said they were pleasant, cooling and refreshing—He then was sensible of his immediate danger, but meek, resigned, and collected. He call'd his Son James to him and gave him some directions relative to his papers, and committed his Mother and Sisters to his attention and kindness, I then returned to him, he took my hand and look'd at me and said “My excellent wife I shall leave you, but your Son will take care of you I have charged him to do so—He then raised his eyes to heaven and repeated these words from the Litany of the Epscopal church, “By the Mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumsision; by thy baptism fasting and temptation, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, by thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and assension, and by the coming of the holy ghost, blessed Jesus wash me from the defilements of sin and receive me into thy everlasting arms,” This was in the night of sunday—or the morning of monday, he said no more to me particularly nor indeed to any one else, except to answer in the kindest and most polite manner to evey question that was put to him—Dr Mease who gave him the last tumbler of porter diluted with a little cold water about half an hour before

he left us, ask'd him if it continued to be pleasant to him, he said yes Sir [——] agreeable and cooling—He laid the whole of Monday in this tranquil and happy state, either sleeping or raising his hands in silent ejaculation, frequently wiping the cold sweat from his face with an handkerchief which he would not let go from his hands, till seven minutes after five in the evening when without a struggle or a groan he took his flight to an happier region—I humbly trust to dwell with the spirits of just men made perfect and in the presence of god. A more quick happy death no mortal was ever favord with, perfectly rational till the last moment—he put the seal to the piety and usefulness of his life by his composure and resignation in death—but oh my dear Madam what an aching heart is left to me, the world appears a dreary waste, where I have but little to do and less to interest me.

I have given you a plain unvarnished statements of the circumstances as they occurred—my hand has trembled I fear too much to make what I have written legible and my tears have flown too fast to enable me to study the language I have used—but to a friend who was so much interested as to ask such a detail I am sure it is not necessary to appologize for the manner of its execution I cannot tell you how much I am gratified by the request.

Henry Colman to John Adams, Philadelphia, 5 October 1813

To Mrs. Adams, I beg you to make my grateful acknowledgements for putting me in the way of meeting with her intelligent and interesting friend Mrs. Rush and of hearing so much as I have of your venerable friend the late Dr. R. His memory, wherever I have been, is precious. He is remembered in a way, which to every good man's feelings must I think be peculiarly grateful, as a man of sincere piety and as a most distinguished benefactor of the poor. At the Hospital they speak of him with great affection. As an instance of his most exemplary assiduity, the Keeper told me, that for twenty seven years he had constantly attended there and, in the course of them, had never been known to fail but twice of being at the hospital within five minutes of a fixed time.

Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, Monticello, 7 October 1814

Perhaps I should concur with you also in excluding the *Theory* (not the *Practice*) of medicine. This is the Charlatanerie of the body, as the other is of the mind. For Classical learning I have ever been a zealous advocate: and in this, as in his theory of bleeding, and mercury, I was ever opposed to my friend Rush, whom I greatly loved; but who has done much harm, in the sincerest persuasion that he was preserving life and happiness to all around him.

William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 28 October 1814

I have always known Monroe to be dilatory, always behind his business, always hurried & of course unable to attend to any but those calls which are most imperious & force his mind.

Benjamin Russell

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 12 March 1797

Russell the Printer is an abominable Blunderer, he is not fit to publish state papers, no less than three blunders has he made in publishing the address to the senate & in the reply to their answer as you will see by reading it.

Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 29 May 1798

Russell's paper is pretty much like what Peter [Porcupine] says the N[ew] York papers have been of late, "not worth a curse."

Thomas Russell

James Warren to Elbridge Gerry, Plymouth, Mass., 23 August 1789

I suppose Russell's influence with [Robert] Morris in favor of this new Constitution has carried it. If a vacant Head with a total want of Ability to connect a very few scattered Ideas to form a Judgment with a Badness of Heart equal to the weakness of the head joined to an insuperable Indolence can form a revenue officer they certainly can add no respectability to Government.

Edward Rutledge

John Adams: Diary, 3 September 1774

Young Rutledge told me, he studied 3 Years at the Temple. He thinks this is a great Distinction. . . . This Rutledge is young—sprightly but not deep. He has the most indistinct, inarticulate Way of Speaking. Speaks through his nose—a wretched Speaker in Conversation. How he will shine in public I don't yet know. He seems good natured, though conceited. His Lady is with him in bad Health.

John Adams: Diary, 10 October 1774

Young Edward Rutledge is young, and zealous—a little unsteady, and injudicious, but very unnatural and affected as a Speaker.

John Adams: Diary, 24 October 1774

Young Ned Rutledge is a perfect Bob o' Lincoln—a Swallow—a Sparrow—a Peacock—excessively vain, excessively weak, and excessively variable and unsteady—jejune, inane, and pu-erile.

John Adams: Diary, 15 September 1775

Upon recollecting the Debates of this Day in Congress, there appears to me a remarkable Want of Judgment in some of our Members. Chase is violent and boisterous, asking his Pardon. He is tedious upon frivolous Points. So is E. Rutledge. Much precious Time is indiscreetly expended. Points of little Consequence are started, and debated with warmth. Rutledge is a very uncouth, and ungraceful Speaker. He shrugs his Shoulders, distorts his Body, nods and wriggles with his Head, and looks about with his Eyes, from side to side, and Speaks through his Nose, as the Yankees Sing.

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. If the Plan now proposed should be adopted nothing less than Ruin to some Colonies will be the Consequence of it. The Idea of destroying all Provincial Distinctions and making everything of the most minute kind bend to what they call the good of the whole, is in other Terms to say that these Colonies must be subject to the Government of the Eastern Provinces. The Force of their Arms I hold exceeding Cheap, but I confess I dread their over-ruling Influence in Council. I dread their low Cunning, and those levelling Principles which Men without Character and without Fortune in general Possess, which are so captivating to the lower Class of Mankind, and which will occasion such a fluctuation of Property as to introduce the greatest disorder. I am resolved to vest the Congress with no more Power than what is absolutely necessary, and to use a familiar Expression to keep the Staff in our own Hands, for I am confident if surrendered into the Hands of others a most pernicious use will be made of it.

Benjamin Rush: Sketches

A sensible young lawyer, of great volubility in speaking, and very useful in the business of Congress.

George Washington to James McHenry, Mount Vernon, 15 October 1798

Mr. Edward Rutledge of Charleston, S.C. commands the Artillery Corps of that State, and is a man of Spirit and abilities.

John Rutledge

John Adams: Diary, 1 September 1774

Mr. Rutledge the Elder, was there [at the First Continental Congress], but his Appearance is not very promising. There is no Keeness in his Eye. No Depth in his Countenance. Nothing of the profound, sagacious, brilliant, or sparkling in his first Appearance.

Joseph Galloway to William Franklin, Philadelphia, 3 September 1774

The elder Rutledge of Carolina, whose sentiments and mine differ in no one Particular so far as I explained myself—and I was reserved in no Point save that of a *Representative in Parliament*. He is a Gentleman of an amiable Character—has looked into the Arguments on both Sides more fully than any I have met with, and seems to be aware of all the Consequences which may attend rash and imprudent Measures. His younger brother is rather warm.

John Adams: Diary, 3 September 1774

His [Edward Rutledge] Brother still maintains the Air of Reserve, Design and Cunning.

Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 7 September 1774

With him [Thomas Lynch] Are Two Brothers Mr. Rutledge senr., & junr. of independent Fortune, ingenious, but impetuous in the Cause they are engaged in; the Eldest I judge, of my Age, his Lady, & a Son of Jesse's age, is with him. . . . The Younger Brother, is a tolerable speaker, equally zealous.

John Adams: Diary, 10 October 1774

John Rutledge don't exceed in Learning or oratory, though he is a rapid Speaker.

John Adams: Diary, 15 September 1775

His Brother John dodges his Head too, rather disagreeably, and both of them Spout out their Language.

John Mathews to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 10 February 1781

I am very happy to find, you are not disappointed in the character I gave you of Mr. Rutledge, and I am convinced, the more you know of him, the greater reasons you will have, for admiring his many amiable qualities, & extensive abilities. Both his heart, & his head are sound, & you will find him one of those characters, who improve on acquaintance.

Eliphalet Dyer to William Williams, Philadelphia, 10 January 1783

. . . the late Governor Rutledge a Gentleman of skill, ability & Integrity. . . .

Francisco de Miranda: *Travels in the United States*, 1783–1784

The first [Rutledge] possesses an average knowledge of the law and brilliant, facile exposition, together with a very pleasant manner and a commendable person.

John Adams to Tristram Dalton, Auteuil near Paris, 26 April 1785

By the last Letters from N. York there is a probability that Mr. Rutledge may be sent to London, or some other Gentleman. I hope he will succeed for he is a very good man, and bring the English to more rational Conduct.

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

Mr. Rutledge is one of those characters who was highly mounted at the commencement of the late revolution,—his reputation in the first Congress gave him a distinguished rank among American Worthies. He was bred to the Law, and now acts as one of the Chancellors of South Carolina. This Gentleman is much famed in his own State as an Orator, but in my opinion he is too rapid in his public speaking to be denominated an agreeable Orator. He is undoubtedly a man of abilities, and a Gentleman of distinction and fortune. Mr. Rutledge was once Governor of South Carolina. He is about 48 years of age.

Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788

Governor during the war, member of Congress, of the Convention and in general employed on all great occasions. The most eloquent but the proudest and most imperious man in the United States. He uses his great influence and his knowledge as a lawyer to his advantage by avoiding his debts which greatly exceed his fortune. His son is travelling in France for his education.

James Iredell to Hannah Iredell, Charleston, S.C., 23 May 1790

I arrived here last night in company with Mr. Rutledge, from whom I have received the greatest and kindest civilities, and at whose house I now have the pleasure of staying. He is one of the most agreeable men I was ever acquainted with; and his wife seems a truly respectable and amiable woman, who has received me in the most obliging manner.

Edmund Randolph to George Washington, Philadelphia, 25 July 1795

The proposed nomination of Mr. Rutledge, though mentioned without reserve, is not known to have excited much, if any sensation, among his colleagues. But it is very seriously whispered, that within these two months he is believed in Charleston to be deranged in his mind. The report comes from a letter, which Mr. Desaussure has received from a practicing lawyer, of some eminence there.

Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 30 July 1795

A driveller & fool appointed Chief Justice—

From William Bradford to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 4 August 1795

The crazy speech of Mr. Rutledge joined to certain information that he is daily sinking into debility of mind & body, will probably prevent him to receiving the appointment I mentioned to you [i.e., Chief Justice of the United States]. But should he come to Philadelphia for that purpose, as he has been invited to do—& especially if he should resign his present Office [i.e., Chief Justice of South Carolina]—the embarrassment of the President [George Washington] will be extreme—but if he is disordered in mind in the manner that I am informed he is, there can be but one course of procedure.

Edmund Randolph to George Washington, Philadelphia, 5 August 1795

No answer has been received from Mr. Rutledge; but the reports of his attachment to his bottle, his puerility, and extravagances, together with a variety of indecorums and imprudencies multiply daily.

Ralph Izard to Jacob Read, Charleston, S.C., 17 November 1795

By the accounts from the Northward I find that the enemies of the Government are making every possible exertion to do mischief. They are in hopes that the Senate will not confirm the appointment of Mr. Rutledge as Chief Justice; & if so, will immediately raise a clamor, & endeavor to ascribe the rejection to party. I most sincerely hope that the Senate will agree to the nomination, & that the Anarchists may be disappointed. No man could be more afflicted than I was at the part Mr. Rutledge took in opposition to the Treaty. I am sure he is now very sorry for it himself. After the death of his Wife, his mind was frequently so much deranged, as to be in a great measure deprived of his senses; & I am persuaded he was in that situation when the Treaty was under consideration. I have frequently been in company with him since his return, & find him totally altered. I am of opinion that no Man in the United States would execute the Office of Chief Justice with more ability, & integrity than he would. I hope therefore you will make every possible exertion on the subject with our Friends in the Senate.

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 29 November 1795

It thought the Senate will have some difficult discussions before them, there Judas may not pass uncensured, and the Chief Justice may possibly receive a Negative, the Appointment was extraordinary; some person asked General Knox how the p——t came to make such an appointment. Left of God, replied Knox. For the first Time, the circumstances which took place afterward, were not foreseen by the p—— and I mist suppose that he was ignorant of the present Character of the man, I am sure the p—— never adopted the Sentiment, of a Southern writer, who in aiming to defend his Character, asserted that a man's moral Character, had no connection with his political Character: a Judge like the wife of Caesar, ought not to be suspected.

Alexander Hamilton to Rufus King, New York, 14 December 1795

An extraordinary press of occupation has delayed an answer to your letter on the subject of *Mr. R.* Though it may come too late, I comply with your request as soon as I can.

The subject is truly a perplexing one; my mind has several times fluctuated. If there was nothing in the case but his imprudent sally upon a certain occasion. I should think the reasons for letting him pass would outweigh those for opposing his passage. But if it be really true—that he is sottish or that his mind is otherwise deranged, or that he has exposed himself by improper conduct in pecuniary transactions, the bias of my judgment would be to negative. And as to the facts I would satisfy myself by careful inquiry of persons of character who may have had an opportunity of knowing.

It is now, and in certain probable events will still more be, of infinite consequence that our Judiciary should be well composed. Reflection upon this in its various aspects weighs heavily in my mind against Mr. R., upon the accounts I have received of him, and balances very weighty consideration the other way.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 17 December 1795

. . . The Negative put by the Senate on the Nomination of Mr. Rutledge [for Chief Justice] gave me pain for an old Friend, though I could not but think he deserved it. C. Justices must not go to illegal Meetings and become popular orators in favour of Sedition, nor inflame the popular discontents which are all founded, nor propagate Disunion, Division, Contention and delusion among the People. I never thought him the greatest Man in the World, nor had any fixed Confidence in his Penetration or his Constancy or Consistency. I have also had Reason to suspect that the French had too much Influence with him to leave him perfectly neutral or impartial. The Disarrangement of his affairs, the Reports of his Eccentricities &c had not made so much Impression upon me. But all Things considered, the Senate were very decided that such an Example ought to be made.

John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 21 December 1795

. . . My old Acquaintance Mr. Walton, who served in Congress, with me in 1776 and 1777 is returned a Senator from Georgia in the room of General Jackson who has resigned. He is or has lately been Chief Justice. As old acquaintances are easily sociable We soon fell into Conversation about affairs old and new. I asked him whether the Negative of Mr. Rutledge would have any ill Effect at the southward. He says No by no means—on the Contrary he is sure it will have a very good Effect. He adds he was rejoiced when he heard upon his arrival that it was done, because it saved him & his Colleagues from the Necessity of giving a disagreeable Vote: but that they both came to Town with a determination to vote against the appointment. He says that a Disarrangement of Intellect certainly exists and has been more decisive lately than formerly. That he has not been able to attend the Circuit Court in Georgia nor in North Carolina. That he attempted to attend in N. Carolina but was so bad that he could not. That he even attempted to make way with himself. He was himself at the House and made himself fully acquainted with the Facts. He adds that Mr. R's Conduct, as Chief Justice of the state of S. Carolina has been lately so unsatisfactory that several Grand Juries have presented him for what they thought Misconduct or at least Negligence of his Duty. The Embarrassment of his private affairs has lately pressed harder upon him than ever and produced or at least accelerated and increased the Disorder of his Mind. These Things being so we shall hear of no very sharp Rebukes upon the Senate, for the Vote they have passed and the President will have avoided giving any Offense to particular Friends. This is all in Confidence between you and me as I know you will have some anxiety upon this subject, as I have had a great deal. I have felt for an old Friend and his Friends. He is a Brother of your Friend Mrs. Smith whom you knew in London and has been a worthy Man. But the Man who plunges into Debt will soon get out of his Depth. You must mention these Things with great discretion and only in Confidence.

William Vans Murray to James McHenry, Philadelphia, 24 December 1795

. . . Yes—Rutledge was rejected—It is said openly that he is in an unhappy *state of mind*—& often deranged—by gentlemen immediately from his own country.

Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 January 1796

. . . one general rule will hold good with respect to appointments to office, that a Man destitute of private virtue must want Principle, and the Man who wants principles cannot be actuated by pure Motives, nor can he possess so exalted an affection as a Rational and Disinterested Love of his Country. This has so recently exemplified in the late Chief Justice, that no other instance need

be quoted. The publick papers have mentioned almost every circumstance You related, and his insanity will sheild the Senate from, even Jacobinical censure. for his Friends I am sorry. It is a pitty that he was made so conspicuous in his Fall.

James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 7 February 1796

There is some reason to think that Jno. Rutledge is not right in his mind.

William Smith to Rufus King, Charleston, S.C., 23 July 1796

Mr. Rutledge, the late Chief Justice, lives quite retired & avoids being seen; his health is said to be mended.