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## Arthur St. Clair

### **John Adams to Charles Lee, Philadelphia, 17 February 1776**

Col. St Clair of the 2nd Battalion has seen much service; was in the King's army a Lieutenant, is a sensible, worthy man, much esteemed in Bedford County, where he is—and has acquired considerable property; he is also much esteemed and respected here.

### **John Hancock to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 6 April 1776**

I have now only time to beg Leave to introduce to Your Notice Coll. St. Clair of the Second Pennsa. Battalion, a Gentleman of Reputation, & a Good Officer, he served many Years a Captain in the Regular Army.

### **Samuel Chase to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 13 June 1776**

Colonel Sinclair will be of great Service. He has prudence, bravery and a Knowledge of the Country. If he would accept I believe he is the most proper person in Canada to be your adjutant General.

### **James Wilson to Jasper Yeates and John Montgomery, Philadelphia, 10 August 1776**

Colonel St. Clair was yesterday made a general Officer. His Character stands deservedly high.

### **Henry Brockholst Livingston to William Livingston, Ticonderoga, 3 July 1777**

I have the Honor of acting as Aide de Camp to General St. Clair, You know his Abilities too well to be informed of them by me. He is cool & determined—ever vigilant & unruffled by every appearance of danger.

### **Arthur St. Clair to Thomas FitzSimons, New York, 20 September 1787**

I will request the favour of you to mention it to some of our Friends, to whom also I would have written, but I am very ill able to do it, for this is the first time I have taken a penn in hand these six Weeks having been totally disabled in my right Hand by the Gout and even now write in great pain.

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

The goodness of Genl. St. Clair will take the faults of others on himself.

### **George Nicholas to James Madison, Kentucky, 1 February 1792**

I have great respect for Genl. St. Clair but his infirmities render him totally unfit for such a command which would require a man of the greatest activity both of body and mind.

**Joseph Jones to James Madison, Fredericksburg, Va., 2 March 1792**

. . . much will depend on the person to command and I fear the consequences should the same be continued, although he possesses mental powers, he wants bodily strength and activity for enterprise in that Country and I am told he is by no means a popular man among our people. If we beat the Indians it will be done by riflemen and horsemen and to induce the militia to turn out the man should at least possess their Confidence as well as the qualities of a Soldier.

**Otho H. Williams to Alexander Hamilton, Baltimore, Md., 5 April 1792**

I regret extremely the mortifications to which our friend St. Clair is exposed; but he, *unfortunately* shall I say, lives to face his accusers.

**Arthur St. Clair to John Adams, Cincinnati, Northwest Territory, 5 August 1800**

There is a difficulty that persons labour under against whom malice or intrigue has been privately at work which I feel at this moment; for the justification may be attempted where the accusation has not been made; and whenever a Man endeavours to exculpate himself before he is accused a presumption immediatly arises that he has a consciousness of having merited the reproach or the censure he is trying to obviate. Although the design of this letter, Sir, is to set myself right in your estimation, wherein, tho' I do not know that I have been formally or directly accused, I have good grounds for believing that attempts have been made to injure me, both in my public and private Character, and by a person from whom I had reason to have expected better things, for I had a very sincere regard for him, yet I have none of that consciousness, nor the painful sensations that must follow and attend on gross misconduct, and flagrant violations of Decorum; but, on the contrary, the pleasing Conviction that the duties of my Office have been performed with some degrees of advantage to the united States.—With some credit to myself; and with a more general approbation of the people immediatly under their influence, than an upright and independant conduct always meets with at the time, tho' it seldom fails of gaining it in the end.—

I have said, Sir, that I have good grounds for believing that attempts have been made to injure me in your good Opinion: Perhaps the expression is too strong. But, I have the most certain information that such attempts have been made upon many of the Members of the Senate, in order to prevent my being reappointed to this Government when the present term expires, and that they have probably reached your Ear. The Allegations against me are, that I have renderd myself so obnoxious to the people of this Country, and disgusted them so much that, should I be continued in Office, their affections would be entirely alienated from the Government of the united States; and, that I am become excessively intemperate—in short a confirmed Drunkard. If either of those allegations is true, I am, most certainly an unfit person for the Government of a very extensive and populous Colony. The boldness of assertion, Sir, sometimes gains it a credit it would otherwise miss, for it takes off the attention from the improbability with which it may be attended, and it is hardly to be conceived that any person who has a reputation to support will deliberately utter falsehoods that can be easily detected—Of coarse they pass for truth, and the meditated injury is done, and the victim fallen, often long before he knew that a stroke was aimed, or from whence the blow proceeded. But, Sir, if there is truth in those accusations, the facts on which they are founded must be of public notoriety, and can therefore be easily substantiated:—fortunately, the malice and falsehood of them can be as easily made apparent—tho' it is humiliating to be obliged to repell calumnies of such a nature, particularly the last.

I am not, Sir, a vain Man.—If I were, it might be some ground of self gratulation, that I have managed the affairs of this Country, under circumstances of no small difficulty, and with my coadjutors, in the legislative part of it, constantly dragging in opposition, for more than ten years without a complaint; and, that I have led the people, from being a mere handful until they are grown almost into a nation, with so even a hand that, while licentiousness has been repressed on one side, and every reasonable indulgence given on the other, not a symptom of discontent has appeared. But, I had a better motive, Sir, than the desire of popular applause, tho I am very far from despising it,—I have ever considered it as a duty, for the performance of which I was answerable to God and to my Country, to promote, by every means in my power the welfare and happiness of the people committed to my care; and I am bold to say that my exertions to that end have been unremitted—neither in truth have they been unsuccessful, or unrewarded; for, until very lately, with the exception of Judge Symmes, I do not believe there was one Man of any influence in the territory who was not freindly to me. Lately, the number of those who are unfreindly has been added to by a Letter of mine to the late Secretary of State having been communicated to some others, and his confidence abused—For, I cannot suppose it to have been otherwise communicated than in confidence. In that letter the probable consequences, as they appeared to me, and as they related to the Government of the united States, of such a division of the territory as would give a preponderancy to Chilicothey were detailed, and the Character of the people truly drawn. It was information, I though, might be useful, and that it was my duty to give it: But, had I expected to have the sentiments returned to me from that very place and in the express words I had used, I should have been more guarded, or forborne it altogether until the information had been required. Against the iniquitous practices of Judge Symmes, I have ever openly set my face;—of coarse he is the enemy of Mr. St. Clair, and at the same time the most obsequious servant of the Governor that the territory contains.

If, Sir, to have been the constant freind of this people, to have been open, and easy of access to them at all times;—to have received them with affability, and, when I could not comply with their desires, to have refused them without harshness,—to have listened to their complaints, and redressed their Grievances whenever it was in my power;—to have given them at all times the best advice I was capable of when it was asked, and it has been asked very often; to have been careful in the choice of persons appointed to Office, and attentive to their conduct when appointed was the way to render myself obnoxious to them, and alienate their affections from the Government of the united States, then indeed have I fallen into that very way. But, perhaps the best proof of my standing with them may be drawn from an Act of the Legislature at their last session. By that they made me a present (for such in fact it was tho' it appears as a compensation) of five hundred Dollars, entirely unsolicited and unexpected, and which I did not even hear of until the Bill was brought up for my Consent. Had I been a person so very disgustful to the people, as Mr. Harrison has been pleased to represent me, their representatives must have known it, and would not have been eager to make my situation easier by a grant of money which I did not ask for, and could not have demanded.

Some fermentation, Sir, took place amongst the Members of the Legislature, on my refusing to approve of several Bills that had passed through both Houses. Not one of them was of any consequence, except that the splitting the Country into small Counties, which was the object of most of them, must have subjected the people to very heavy charges unnecessarily. But, individual members had, in imagination, sold seats for the County Towns for large sums of money, and others had in the same way disposed of the Offices that must have followed, amongst their freinds—The rejection of the Bills destroyed those prospects, and produced some little irritation.—I have since

had the thanks of some of them for not giving way to them at that time, and the people have, very generally acquiesced in the reasons I assigned for refusing my consent. They are contained in the speech I delivered on proroguing the Assembly, a copy of which I have taken the liberty to enclose.

It may, possibly Sir, have been remarked to you (as it was to the late President) that I have been frequently absent from the territory. I replied to him that I thought the complaint both cruel and unjust.—That the Members of the Senate who made it, (for he informed me that it came from some of them) ought to have known that I was then in Philadelphia, and had been there for the greatest part of the preceding session, not of choice, or of my own mere motion, but by order of the House of Representatives—For a fruitless purpose indeed, and at a very great expense, and injury to my private affairs.—That, these times excepted, I had never been absent from the Government but on public business, or by his own order. I beg leave, Sir, to repeat those observations to you & to add, that I have never since been absent but once, when, returning to Philadelphia on the same hopeless business of the enquiry (a single paper relating to which has never been looked at by Congress to this day) I was taken sick on the way, fortunately indeed so for that it was at my own house, and lay confined to my bed for more than six months, and once since at the sales of the Land which the Law required me to attend at Pittsburgh.

On the charge of Drunkenness I will take the liberty to assert, that I have ever held that beastly vice in the utmost abhorrence, and never, at any time of my life, indulged myself in it habitually. It is not probable, Sir, that a Man who has been generally temperate thro' a long life, and who has some regard for reputation, would give himself up to low debauchery at the very time when he is raised to public view—when his conduct has consequences that reach far beyond himself; and, when his every action will be strictly marked. The falsehood of will be attested by every man in the territory! Not, Sir, that I have always been abstemious.—I pretend to no such virtue, if it be a virtue. I have loved the hours when, in good company, Wine, and Wit, and mirth went round. I should love them yet sometimes were they to be found and I could afford it. But the support of a numerous family calls for all the œconomy I can use; and, after the expenses which my station necessarily imposes upon me, my income affords them little more than mere necessaries. Besides, my declining years and encreasing infirmities forbid indulgences of that nature were I inclined to them.

I have spent, Sir, a great part, indeed the best part of my life in the public Service, not always without public usefulness, tho certainly without the least pecuniary advantages to myself, but very much the contrary. Easy in my Circumstances, little solicitous about wealth, and blessed with a sanguine temper, I resigned an Office of a clear five hundred pounds a year, and gave up all the means of accumulation I possessed, which were not a few, to accept a Regiment to which I had been appointed in the continental Army. While my sole ambition was to be useful, and that my conduct should be such as to merit the approbation of the wise and good, my promotion was rapid, and honors flowed upon me—It was none of the least that I had the happiness to acquire, and to preserve as long as he lived, the confidence and the freindship of General Washington, of which I have some testimonials that may perhaps see the light when I have left it. In that situation, I saw without a murmur, the greatest part of my fortune, the fruit of honest Industry, and the provision I fondly hoped I had made for my Children, melted down in the events of the Revolution, and swept away by iniquitous tender laws. I have since borne the sting of public Censure for the errors of others, with all the patience I could exert, in the hope that the time would come when justice would be done me, by that body from whom it ought long ago to have proceeded; and now I find myself attacked, privately attacked, and therefore not easily parried, in the place and manner in which the greatest injury can now be done to me. If those Reports, Sir, have reached You, I assert that your

Ear has been abused. The statement I have made, altho' it is but assertion, may I trust be sufficient to erase any unfavourable impressions they have made, and permit me to say that thousands, did they suppose it to be needful, would press forward to confirm its truth.—But, tho' there would be nothing dishonoring in it, to ask it is a measure I cannot well stoop to take.

**Robert Coleman to John Adams, Lancaster, Pa., 7 December 1800**

A report has prevail'd in this State that an attempt will be made to displace Govr. St. Clair from the Government of the N. Western Territory, his friends here who are all the firm Supporters of the General Government and of your Administration are exceedingly alarm'd at the fate of that good old man, who has devoted the greater part of his life to the Services of his Country—The poor Pittance of a Salary he receives is scarcely sufficient to afford him (and a number of his Relatives who are dependant on him for their support) the Necessaries of life—Calamitous indeed would be their Situation should he be deprived of the only means of their Support—An early acquaintance with Govr: St. Clair at a time when his Patriotism, Talents & General Information were excell'd but by few induces me now & I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in Soliciting your Excellency for his continuance in the appointment he now holds—Nothing but the hope of Rescuing from Misery an old and deserving man would have induced me to have presumed to have troubled your Excellency on this occasion, but were you acquainted with the Situation of this deserving but unfortunate man the goodness of your own Heart would plead my excuse—

**James Madison to Arthur St. Clair, Department of State, Washington, 22 November 1802**

The President observing in an address lately delivered to the convention held at Chilicothe, an intemperance and indecorum of language towards the Legislature of the United States, and a disorganizing spirit and tendency of very evil example, and grossly violating the rules of conduct enjoined by your public station, determines that your commission of Governor of the North Western Territory shall cease on the receipt of this notification.

**Mercy Otis Warren, History of the American Revolution, 1805**

St. Clair, an officer always unfortunate, and in no instance ever distinguished for bravery or judgment.

## Haym Salomon

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Philadelphia, 30 September 1782**

I cannot in any way make you more sensible of the importance of your kind attention to pecuniary remittances for me than by informing you that I have for some time past been a pensioner on the favor of H. S. Haym Salomon a Jew Broker. . . .

The kindness of our little friend in Front Street near the Coffee House is a fund which will preserve me from extremities, but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense. The price of money is so usurious that he thinks it ought to be extorted



from none but those who aim at profitable speculations. To a necessitous Delegate he gratuitously spares a supply out of his private stock.

## Comfort Sands

### **George Washington to Robert Morris, Newburgh, N.Y., 16 June 1782**

Mr. Sands, Sir, if I have not formed a very erroneous opinion of him is determined to make all the money he can by the Contracts. Herein I do not blame him—provided he does it honestly and with a reciprocal fulfillment of the agreement. Of a want of the first I do not accuse him but his thirst of Gain leads him in my opinion into a mistaken principle of Action. He is very tenacious of all those parts of the Contracts which point to the convenience and Emoluments of the Contractors, and till very lately was determined to be his own Judge of them but is regardless of other parts which Enjoin certain requisitions upon them. To these causes, and these only is to be ascribed I conceive the present deplorable state of the Magazines and the dangerous consequences which may flow from it. Our frequent want of daily food and the little prospect of better supplies and the inconveniences which the Army experience in the mode of issuing.

## Winthrop Sargent

### **Henry Knox to George Washington, Boston, 24 March 1785**

Winthrop Sargent has repeatedly informed me, that a certificate from you would be one of the most desirable and acceptable things to him. I at length promised him that I would request it of you. He is really clever, and was an excellent Artillery officer.

## Stephen Sayre

### **Committee of Congress to John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, New York, 23 August 1785**

We have the honor of addressing this by our worthy friend, the honorable Mr. Sayre, who was formerly Sheriff of London. The active part, which at the commencement of the revolution, he took in favor of America, is, we presume, too well known to you, to require a relation: and the loss he sustained, in consequence of his opposition to the british ministry, is not less a matter of general information. These considerations have induced his friends, in this quarter, to express a wish that he should be employed in some public office under Congress, wherein he can render service to the United States, in a manner that shall be consistent with his honor, and their interest. It so happens, at this time, that there is no appointment of that description, to which we can nominate him, but there is an office, which he will probably accept, and the right of filling it, is vested by Congress, in yourself and his Excellency Mr. Adams: we mean the department for conducting the treaty with the Emperor of Morocco, and the other Barbary Powers. Should you be disposed to employ Mr.

Sayre in this business: we think his knowledge of mankind, his polite address, his commercial and political accomplishments, and above all, his sense of honor, and integrity, cannot fail of insuring you as great a degree of success, as the qualities of any other person you can employ in that department.

## Philip Schuyler

### **Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 18 June 1775**

This Gentleman is the Soul of Albany County and though he may have foibles, he is sincere, well bred, & resolute, and I think a Valuable acquaintance.

### **John Adams to John Thomas, Philadelphia, 7 March 1776**

General Schuyler, who is an honest Man and a good Patriot, has had a Politeness about him towards Canadian and British Prisoners, which has enabled them and their ministerial Friends to impose upon him in some Instances.

### **Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll of Annapolis, Albany, N.Y., 8 April 1776**

General Schuyler has two fine girls: they are lively & sensible, & appear to be blessed with sweet tempers—The General himself is polite, and endowed with good sense: so is his lady. If all our officers were as active & as attentive to their duty as Schuyler our affairs would prosper better—the fault I believe does not lie in the General officers so much as in the subaltern.

### **Samuel Chase to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 13 June 1776**

I cannot but recommend to You the most unreserved and unlimited Confidence in General Schuyler. Be assured of his Integrity, Diligence, Abilities and Address. I know him well, and will be answerable for that Gentleman as for Myself. I know he is injured, basely traduced. If You have not a constant & friendly Intercourse with General Schuyler, You will fail in Canada. In a Word, inform him of every Doubt or Suspicion. He will show You his Conduct, evidenced by his Letters and Orders. You may show him this Letter and say it was my Request to You as his and your Friend, and as one of those in whom America reposes some Trust. Be attentive to this advice. More depends on it than I can explain in a letter.

### **Abraham Clark to Elias Dayton, Philadelphia, 7 March 1777**

You had been placed in a obscure part of the world and General Schuyler had never mentioned you as having done anything good or bad, he is always Sparing of Praise.

### **James Lovell to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 1 May 1777**

The affairs to the northeast are in a critical situation for the state of N. York in particular. Disaffection, as you see, is greatly prevalent; and those who profess well to our cause judge & say that there is but one single man who can keep their subjects united against the common enemy;

and that *he* stands on our books as commander in chief in the middle, or, as it is sometimes called, the northern department; hat his presence is absolutely necessary in his home quarters for their immediate succor & service as well as that of the united states necessarily connected; that if he returns, he is a Genl. without an army or a Military Chest; And, “why is he thus disgraced”?

**John Adams to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 2 June 1777**

The Information you received, that General Schuyler was about to be created President, and to hold his Command in the Army, was a Mistake. No Gentleman would have been willing for that, as I know. I am pretty sure at least that a vast Majority would have detested the Thought. G. Schuyler is reserved for another Fate. What that will be Time must discover.

It is, in my humble opinion, utterly improper that this Gentleman should hold a seat in Congress, and a Command in the Army, and I took the first opportunity to express my opinion of the Inconsistency and Danger of it. I think his Constituents much to blame for the late Choice of him. I shall think him much to blame if he does not immediately resign his seat. If he does not, I hope some Gentleman bring in a Motion, to destroy the Precedent, by obliging him to quit his seat or his Command. What the success of such a Motion will be, I know not, but I <will certainly discharge my Duty to myself and my Constituents and Posterity> believe such a Motion will be made.

**Henry Brockholst Livingston to William Livingston, Albany, 10 June 1777**

A few days more will determine the Choice of Governor for this State [New York]. Many will be Candidates for this Office. General Schuyler in my humble Opinion will be the Man. His Abilities & Integrity set him for the Office.

**Samuel Adams to Samuel Cooper, Philadelphia, 15 July 1777**

Before this reaches you, it is probable you will have heard of the untoward Turn our Affairs have taken at the Northward. I confess it is not more than I expected when General Schuyler was again entrusted with the Command there. But it was thought by some Gentlemen that as he had a great Interest & large Connection in that Part of the Country, he could more readily avail himself of Supplies for an Army there as well as Reinforcements if wanted upon an Emergency, than any other Man. You have the Account in the enclosed Paper, which leaves us to guess what is become of the Garrison. There is something droll enough in a General’s not knowing where to find the main Body of his Army.

**John Jay to Philip Schuyler, Kingston, N.Y., 21 July 1777**

[In response to criticism of Schuyler’s loss of Fort Ticonderoga.] It is unnecessary to observe that, like many other worthy characters, you have your enemies; and it is also true that countenance is indirectly given to the popular suspicions by persons from whom I should have expected more candour, or I may say more honesty. . . . In short, sir, that jealousy which ever prevails in civil wars, added to the disappointment and indignation which the people feel on this occasion, together with the malice of your enemies, require that the integrity and propriety of your conduct be rendered so evident, as that there may not be a hook or loop whereon to hang a doubt.

### Charles Thomson's Notes of Debates in Congress, 26 July 1777

*Henry Marchant*: This Congress depends upon the general Opinion of the people. Without attending to this we cannot support this cause. Has a great Opinion of the Judgment of the people. It is generally pure, uncorrupt and well founded. Schuyler unpopular in his State & the Neighboring states. This Opinion not lately taken upon. Strongly riveted ever since last war. Militia will not serve under him. The Enemy can only be opposed by the Eastern Militia, hence the necessity of recalling him & placing at the head of the Northern a man in whom that Militia can have confidence. . . .

*John Adams*: Gave an account of the differences in the northern department & the steps taken to heal those differences but without effect. As to his [i.e., Schuyler's] unpopularity, knows it to be great in the eastern States: thinks he is not so popular as represented even in his own state. A late instance proves, when another carried an election\* against notwithstanding all the pains Congress have taken by res. to splice his character. The evil genius of Northern Department.

\*George Clinton defeated Schuyler for election as New York's first governor.

### Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 31 July 1777

It is a long time since I had the pleasure of a Letter from you. I have not heard your opinion of the Evacuation of Ticonderoga. You are doubtless as much chagrined as I am. It is ascribed to different Causes. Congress is determined that the true Reasons shall be inquired into, & the Conduct of the General officers. Schuyler's Friends are endeavoring to clear him from all Blame, because, say they, *he was not there*. This is true. And as it was well known he had never been used to keep his own Person near his Army, perhaps it may be pertinently asked, Why *he* was pitched upon to take the Command. *Your* Delegates, I can assure you, were utterly against it. And, notwithstanding it was published in one of the Boston Newspapers, said to be warranted by a *Letter from this City*, that General Schuyler had the entire Confidence of Congress, there were five only of Eleven States present, in favor of it. The Paper I think was of the 5th of June.\* I wish I could know who gave the Letter to the Printer. In order, I suppose, to give Credit to that Letter, there was another Publication in the Papers here, informing the World, that when he set off to the Northern Department, he was accompanied by the President and other Members of Congress, which I take for granted is true. These are trifling political Maneuvers similar to those which we have formerly seen practiced in the Massachusetts Bay, when a Prop was wanted for a sinking Character. You may think them not worth your Notice; Excuse my troubling you with them. Cunning Politicians often make use of the Names of *Persons*, & sometimes of *the Persons themselves*, who have not the least Suspicion of it, to serve their own designs. When I mentioned five out of Eleven I should have explained myself. Had not the State of Rhode Island been at that Juncture accidentally unrepresented, there would have been an equal Division, and the Measure would have been prevented. The most important Events may sometimes depend upon small Circumstances. Some Gentlemen of the State of New York are exceedingly attached to General Schuyler. They represent him as *Instar Omnium* in the Northern Department. After all that has been said, I conceive of him, as I have for a long time, excellently well qualified for a Commissary or Quartermaster. The New England Delegates were to a Man against his having the Command of that Army. But of this I will write particularly in another Letter.

\*The Boston *Independent Chronicle*, June 12, 1777, reported that "General Schuyler will return to the Northern Department, possessed of the full Confidence of Congress, his Conduct has been fully inquired into, and the Congress have given very honorable Proofs of their good opinion of him."

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

I have been always a very partial Judge of General Schuyler's Conduct, and Vindicated it frequently from the Charges brought against it, but I am at last forced to suppose him Inadequate to the Important Command with which he has been Entrusted. There seems to be a want of firmness in all his Actions, and this last Instance in my Opinion is too unequivocal to be doubted. The Reason assigned for his last retreat is the panic among the army, which he seems to say is beyond any thing that ever was known, and Mentions an Instance of 300 Men running away from about 50 Indians. . . . Under the best, Leaders may be seized with a sudden panic that may precipitate them into the most cowardly behavior for the Moment, but a settled durable panic is generally a Reflection upon the Leader.

**Philip Schuyler to John Jay, Saratoga, N.Y., 6 November 1777**

As I shall shortly be altogether out of public life, I am earnestly engaged in building me a house at this place, that I may be as far out of the noise and bustle of the great world as possible. I am confident (provided we repel the enemy), that I shall enjoy more true felicity in my retreat, than ever was experienced by any man engaged in public life. My hobby-horse has long been a country life; I dismounted with reluctance, and now saddle him again with a very considerable share of satisfaction (for the injurious world has not been able to deprive me of the best source of happiness, the approbation of my own heart), and hope to canter him gently on to the end of the journey of life. . . . the new house, which I began upon on the 1st instant, and which will be under cover, and have two rooms finished by the 15th instant, unless the weather should prove remarkably wet: but observe that it is only frame house, sixty feet long, twenty-one broad, and two stories high, filled in with brick.

**Francis Dana to Elbridge Gerry, Moor-Hall, Pa., 29 January 1778**

We [i.e., Congress' Committee at Camp at Valley Forge] yesterday forwarded to Congress our recommendation of Genl. Schuyler for Quartermaster General. Genl. Fulsome was vehemently against it. We cou'd not make him *say Schuyler* unless to curse him. The Committee were convinced of the absolute necessity of filling that office with a person who thoroughly understands the duties of it, and cou'd not find one equal by any means to Schuyler. they were nevertheless persuaded of the weight of certain objections against him, which they leave for the consideration of Congress. Some of us execrate him as a General tho we think him well qualified for a Quartermaster.

**Jonathan Bayard Smith to Joseph Reed, York, Pa., 25 February 1778**

I wish the idea of employing Genl. Schuyler in the department\* referred to could have met the approbation of Congress. Besides the objections arising from his present situation which founded the *declared* impediment. I found on conversing with gentlemen privately that they feared the ill effects of an intriguing mind; a temper unfriendly to the dispositions of officers in the army & its peace; & that out of the sphere of his particular influence & knowledge of the country he would not be able to conduct the great business. This last objection I own was counter to every idea I had formed of the man.

\*As quartermaster general.

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

If Schuyler and Duane should spend the Winter here with me I am convinced the most beneficial Effects would flow from it. Schuyler I believe would be made President and certainly the best President Congress ever had. His Wife Would be worth the Gold of Ophir Yea the purest Gold. She would out intrigue Adams.

**John Jay to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 8 December 1778**

Permit me to hint that in my opinion the army is your proper field—my Reasons for thinking so will occur to You. But should military operations cease during the winter, & your absence become not improper, Your Friends will be happy to see you here. Much ought not to be committed to paper—it is sufficient to say it will be in your Power to render essential Services to your Country in this House. By no means think of Resignation. I won't enlarge.

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

Is it your Opinion that Genl. Schuyler ought to continue in the Army, or to accept of the Presidency of Congress, which is intended for him? Will not the former be more advantageous to the publick & to our State in particular. Is it not more for his own Honour to be second in the Command of our Army, than to take the Chair for a year on Condition that he resigns his Military Employment? I am clear for his Continuing in the Army. He is now honourably acquitted from every Imputation & Suspicion, & his Enemies put to Shame or at least to silence. He can do as much real Service as any Individual especially preventing the misapplication of our Forces, & retrenching the publick Expenses. He stands high with the Army & the Commander in Chief. His advice with respect to the Defense of our State will from his Intimate Knowledge of the Country be decisive.

**James Duane to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 3 January 1779**

I had not long been here before Mr. Lawrence [Laurens] resigned the Chair. It was offered to New York. We proposed you & it met with Approbation. Mr. Jay in the mean time agreeing to be your *locum tenens*. I had no objection to this parade in your favour; but was firmly resolved that you should not if I could help it quit your high Station in the Army where you may be long and so eminently serviceable to the united States & to your own in particular, for the Sake of presiding in Congress for a single Year. It would be a bad Exchange both in a publick Way and a private View; with respect to your own State which wants your utmost Attention it would be in the highest Degree pernicious. You are popular in the Southern Army at least; you are greatly respected by the Commander in Chief; your advice will have great Weight in Congress. In short Every Measure you recommend for the protection & Safety of your Native State will have its full weight while you are in the Army. In the chair of Congress your Lips will be sealed; and your Knowledge and abilities in a great Measure lost to your Country. I am therefore clear in my Opinion, which I flatter myself will not be slighted. If it is rejected I look for good Reasons.

**James Duane to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 20 March 1779**

Congress have declined accepting your Resignation. It would be too great a Gratification to malevolence & too great a sacrifice of the Interest of the publick & the Security of your own State. We are not yet out of the woods tho' we begin to see our Way. Men of publick Spirit & great

Abilities cannot be spared. The Operations of the War will lead where you have most Experience. But the Reason which ought to satisfy you is that the Commander in Chief expressed the Strongest Aversion to your leaving the Service, giving you high Commendation & urging your Genius & your Experience & that he greatly relied on them.

I know your Infirmary of Body and am sorry for it: but it is not my Intention that your Health should be exposed to hardship it cannot sustain. Your advice when you cannot move and your Superintendence under the authority of your Command, will be the highest Importance. Consider besides who may be your successor, & how much your State has to hope & to fear. Consider All these Circumstances & then tell me whether as a Man of Honour I could see you driven out of the Army by illiberal Treatment; or as a Patriot submit to the Loss? The Delegates from New York were unanimous in their Resolution that they would not Vote to accept your Resignation. As our State extends from Lake Nipissin to the Source of the Mississippi, or at least along the 45 d. of N. Latitude from Connecticut River to the Mississippi; how necessary will it be for us that your Military Knowledge should be kept alive & your Authority undiminished. I hope you will cheerfully submit to what is done, & drop the Correspondence, at least with Congress, on the Subject. If more must be said let it pass thro' your Friends: and whenever you Resign let it be after the Impressions so cruelly attempted to be inculcated are effaced. At least let it not be said that you was obliged to give way to those who persecuted you without a Cause.

#### **John Jay to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 21 March 1779**

What is now to be done? You best can answer this Question—were I in your Situation I should not hesitate a Moment to continue in the Service. I have the best Authority to assure you that the Commander in Chief wishes you to retain your Commission. The Propriety of your Resignation is now out of Question. Those Laws of Honor which might have required it are satisfied—are you certain they do not demand a contrary Conduct. You have Talents to render you conspicuous in the Field, and Address to conciliate the affections of those who may now wish you ill. Both these Circumstances are of worth to your Family & independent of public Considerations argue forcibly for your joining the army. Gather Laurels for the Sake of your Country & your Children. You can leave them a sufficient Share of Property—leave them also the Reputation of being descended from an incontestably great Man—A Man who uninfluenced by the Ingratitude of his Country was unremitting in his Exertions to promote her Happiness. You have hitherto been no Stranger to these Sentiments, & therefore I forbear to enlarge. Would it not do you Honor to inform Congress that while in their opinion your Services ought not to be withheld from your Country, neither the Derangement of your private affairs, the Severities you have experienced, or Regard to your Health already impaired in their Service, shall restrain you from devoting yourself to the Execution of their Commands. But that whenever the Situation of public Affairs may cease to call you to the Field, you hope they will permit you to retire and attend to the Duties you owe your Family.

#### **George Clinton to James Duane, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 15 May 1779**

It afforded me great Pleasure to learn that General Schuyler was to continue in the Military Line, as his Country might expect important Advantages from his Services especially in the intended Operations against the hostile Savage Tribes, for exclusive of his Abilities and Experience, his general Knowledge of the western Country and of the Manners of those People, would have given him great Advantages in the Command of such an Expedition: But by a Letter I lately had the honor of receiving from the General I am informed that his Resignation is since accepted.

**George Washington to Joseph Jones, Morris Town, N.J., 14 May 1780**

It appears to me of the greatest importance, and even of absolute necessity that a *small* Committee should be immediately appointed to reside near head Quarters vested with all the powers which Congress have so far as respects the purpose of a full co-operation with the French fleet and Army on the *Continent*. Their authority should be Plenipotentiary to draw out men and supplies of every kind and give their sanction to any operations which the Commander in chief may not think himself at liberty to undertake without it as well beyond, as within the limit of these States.

. . . There is no man who can be more useful as a member of the Committee than General Schuyler. His perfect knowledge of the resources of the Country, the activity of his temper, His fruitfulness of expedients and his sound Military sense make me wish above all things he may be appointed.

**Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Hamilton, Light Camp, N.Y., 16 August 1781**

I have received my beloved Betsey your letter informing me of the happy escape of your father. He showed an admirable presence of mind, and has given his friends a double pleasure arising from the manner of saving himself and his safety. Upon the whole I am glad this unsuccessful attempt [to kidnap him] has been made. It will prevent his hazarding himself hereafter as he has been accustomed to do. He is a character too valuable to be trifled with, and owes it to his country and to his family to be upon his guard.

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

He is himself about fifty, but already gouty and infirm. His fortune is very considerable, and it will become still more so, for he possesses an immense extent of territory, but derives more credit from his talents and information than from his wealth. . . . His marriage with Miss Rensselaer, the rich heiress of a family which has given its name to a district, or rather a whole province, still added to his credit and his influence. . . . He is pretty communicative, and is well entitled to be so; his conversation is easy and agreeable; he knows well what he says, and expresses himself well on every thing he knows.

**Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Olainville near Paris, 19 April 1783**

Doctor Franklin has applied for his recall. Who is to replace him I do not know, but in case, as I am told General Schuyler takes that career, he is of all men the properest I know of for an embassy to France. Hamilton should come out as his secretary, and the more I think of it, the more I wish Schuyler may be induced to accept of the employment. I do not like to meddle with the foreign choices of Congress, but I think you will serve the public by improving the hint I take the liberty to give confidentially to you.

**Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, Princeton, N.J., 21 October 1783**

Among these commissioners [to treat with the Indians] are Genl. Schuyler and Mr. Douy [Volckert P. Douw] of the state of New York. These gentlemen being Newyorkers are obnoxious to the Eastern states.



**Samuel Osgood to John Adams, Annapolis, Md., 7 December 1783**

It was fortunate for the United States, that the Secretary at War, was a true Republican, and totally oppos'd to Intrigue & aristocratical Measures—had Genl. Schuyler, who nearly carried the Choice, been plac'd in that Office, It is a great Question in my Mind, whether it would have been practicable for Congress, to have disbanded their Army. The Financier only wanted a person in that Office who would go any Lengths with him: a Number of Officers as well as Citizens were ripe for the Measure. It had undoubtedly been deliberately digested—And the Finance Office was probably the Center of Motion. I am well informed that an Attempt was made to draw in the late Secretary at War—But he checked it with a Firmness, that will always do him Honor. Such a Triumvirate, would have been too powerful for the United States; and Heaven only knows what Kind of a Form our federal Government would have assum'd. The present, by that Party, is held in the utmost Detestation, & they will persevere inflexibly in their Attempts for any Alteration, by Intrigue, & by open Force, when Matters are matured, & promise more Success, than at present.

**George Clinton to Christopher Tappen, New York, 26 January 1787**

Gen'l. Schuyler arrived last Night & now I suppose the Senate Room will ring with incoherent Rhapsody and feigned Patriotism, hitherto it has been blessed with singular Harmony—So much for Politics. This is in special Confidence.

**Melancton Smith to John Smith, New York, 10 January 1789**

You seem to apprehend, that because D—— [James Duane] prays and S—— swears, they apply for assistance to two opposite powers in the invisible world—You need not be apprehensive of this, for I believe it might be proved that the swearing of the one has as much efficacy in engaging heaven on their side as the praying of the other, and that both are equally acceptable to the prince of the power of the air.

**Philip Schuyler to Alexander Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 20 May 1789**

I sincerely wish better health and believe that a relaxation from business would tend to restore It and wish you If possible to find time to come up with my Eliza I wish here as many of my Children together as possible. It is a natural wish at any time of life, and when one is in perfect health but is increased by other motives In such a valetudinarian as I am, I am not yet rid of Gouty swellings and rigidity in the Joints but I suffer most from the Gravel which is so severe as to Occasion frequent discharges of blood by urine, and constantly by Stools.

**Philip Schuyler to Catherine Schuyler, New York, 9 August 1789**

My health is mended; my joints are much less rigid and the obstruction on my water is great lessened.

**Philip Schuyler to Catherine Schuyler, New York, 12 May 1790**

I was violently attacked by the Gout on Sunday, attended with a high fever—but my friendly Medicine, plenty of way [whey?] and keeping my bed until Yesterday afternoon has perfectly restored me.

**William Maclay: Journal, 23 February 1791**

Schuyler is the supple Jack of his Son in law Hamilton.

**Philip Schuyler to Alexander Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 15 May 1791**

I have hardly enjoyed a day without pain since I left you, the Gout continues to torment me in feet & wrists. I impute much of It to the very rainy weather we have hitherto experienced.

**Philip Schuyler to Alexander Hamilton, New York, 29 January 1792**

As no good could possibly result from evincing any resentment to Mr. Burr for the part he took last winter, I have on every Occasion behaved towards him as If he had never been the principal in the business.\*

\*Through the coalition-building of Governor George Clinton, Burr defeated Schuyler for the U.S. Senate in 1791.

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Orange, Va., 29 June 1792**

It is curious enough to see Schuyler who is supposed to have made millions by jobbing in paper, under his own measures, accusing & abusing [George] Clinton in the face of the world for jobbing in land under the same aggravation.

**Philip Schuyler to Alexander Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 31 August 1795**

I continue so exceedingly weak that I can but barely walk across my room once or twice in a day. It is to be imputed to a profuse and constant perspiration, which has hitherto yielded little to medicine.

**Alexander Hamilton to Elizabeth Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 26 October 1796**

Your father is really better and as I hope in no present danger. His breathing out looks less & less like mortification & his appetite, strength & spirits are good. A fit of the gout will probably relieve him from the breaking out.

**John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, Berlin, 28 December 1797**

General Baron de Riedesel . . . made many enquiries about America, and in particular after General Schuyler, of whose treatment to him at the time when he was taken with Burgoyne at Saratoga, he spoke with much gratitude and satisfaction.

**Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *Travels through America*, 10 August 1798**

I went to dinner at old General Schuyler's, father of Mrs. [Angelica] Church. The house is half a mile beyond the town [Albany]—large, handsome and comfortable. Evil tongues insist that this place was built by General Bradstreet and given as a gift to Madame General Schuyler to cheer her during the long absence of her husband who, at that time, lived in England. Schuyler is today more than 60 years old, spare, tall, with a physiognomy full of expression. When he is laid low by gout, and is carried in a chair, he reminds one extraordinarily of the portrait of the elder Lord

Chatham. Rich, with an extensive estate, he is one of the most important *matadors* not of the Federalists, but unfortunately of the true aristocrats.

### **John Adams to Samuel B. Malcom, Quincy, Mass., 22 July 1803**

General Schuyler is a Sagacious Man, with much greater qualification for the Character of a Man of Science, than most Men in this Country who are more trumpeted, if not more known.

### **John Adams: Autobiography, 8 March 1805**

I had never in my Life any personal Prejudice or dislike against General Schuyler: on the contrary I knew him to be industrious, studious and intelligent: But the New England Officers, Soldiers and Inhabitants, knew Gates in the Camp at Cambridge. Schuyler was not known to many and the few who had heard of him were prejudiced against him from the former French War. The New England Soldiers would not enlist to serve under him and the Militia would not turn out. I was therefore under a Necessity of supporting Gates [in May 1776]. Mr. Duane, Mr. Jay, Colonel Harrison &c. supported Schuyler. There is no difficulty therefore in Accounting for Hamilton's ancient any more than his modern Malice against me.

### **Elkanah Watson: Memoirs**

General Schuyler possessed the highest order of talents, but without varied scholastic attainments. He was a profound mathematician, and held a powerful pen; his industry was unexampled; his business habits were accurate and systematic, acquired under the discipline of General Bradstreet of the British Army, who was a distinguished friend of his family. Having extensively travelled, and mingled with the highest circles of society, he was eminently refined in his sentiments, and elegant in his address.

Had Providence blessed Philip Schuyler with the same equanimity of mind and self-control which distinguished Washington, he would have been his equal in all the elevated moral and military attributes of his character. America owed to Schuyler a vast debt of gratitude for his distinguished services both in the cabinet and in the field. It was said, and probably with good reason, that he was of material assistance to the great Hamilton (who was his son-in-law) in framing that magnificent financial system, by which the loose floating paper currency of the government was funded; thus educing order and system from chaos, and forming, by the magic of genius, an active capital out of the onerous and apparently crushing debt of our Independence.

To the consummate strategic skill, and the wise Fabian policy of Schuyler, we were indebted for the conquest of Burgoyne. At the moment in which he was about to reap the fruition of his sacrifices and labors, he was superseded. When the laurels he had so well earned were almost within his grasp, they were cruelly wrested from him. He was sacrificed by a spirit of intrigue and insubordination in his army, cherished, probably, by the mutual animosity which existed between himself and the men of New-England. The idea generally prevailed in those States, that Schuyler fostered a hereditary prejudice against them, while the stern and arbitrary measures which at times marked his military career, and had probably been imbibed in the discipline of the British Army, revolted their sentiments of equality and independence. Philip Schuyler was a pure and devoted patriot, and a great man; and although my enemy in his closing years, I freely record my homage of admiration and gratitude. His influence and abilities enforced the passage of the Canal Act of '92.

## Charles Scott

### **George Washington: Opinion of General Officers, 9 March 1792**

Brave and means well; but is an officer of inadequate abilities for extensive command; and, by report, is addicted to drinking.

## John Morin Scott

### **John Adams: Diary, 20 August 1774**

We went to the Coffee House, which was full of Gentlemen, read the News Papers, &c. Here were introduced to Us Mr. Morine Scott and a Mr. Littlefield, who invited us to Hull's Tavern, where we went and stayed till 11 o'clock. We supped together, and had much Conversation. Mr. Scott is a Lawyer, of about 50 years of Age, a sensible Man, but not very polite. He is said to be one of the readiest Speakers upon the Continent. . . .

Mr. Scott is an eminent Lawyer. He drew the Answer of the Council to Governor Colden's reasons in favour of an Appeal in the Case of Forsey vs. Cunningham [1763].

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

Scott is a Character very much like that of old Mr. [Robert] Auchmuty. Set up all Night at his Bottle. Yet argue to Admiration next Day. An admirable Speaker according to him.

### **Committee of Safety to County Committees, Kingston, N.Y., 2 June 1777**

[In making nominations for governor and lieutenant governor, the committee reported that] Interest is making for others; But we hope Care will be taken to frustrate the Ambitious Views of those who have neither Stability, uniformity or Sobriety to recommend them.

### **James Duane to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 19 June 1777**

We have therefore Reason to be satisfied with the Success of our Endeavors to promote the Honor & Interest of our state. Sorry we are to hear that it is like to be disgraced by internal Dissension. Alas is it worth while to grieve for the Loaves and Fishes while they are surrounded with burning flames? I hear Mr. Scott is the Author of [these unreasonable Contentions] Unhappy Gentleman will he never cease to fill his Country with Discord for the Gratification of his ambition!

### **James Duane to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 19 June 1777**

I feel with you for the weakness of my Country in falling into a party at this time. Scott I hear is much to blame. Unhappy Gentleman how often has he proved the Occasion of civil discord! I am informed he charges the Loss of his promotion in the Judicial Line upon Mr. Livingston, Duer & myself in Concert with the Chancellor, Chief Justice & Mr. Morris—whom he describes as a

faction & tools to a Family Interest. You know Sir how totally contrary this is to Truth; how entirely I disapproved of these Appointments knowing the Envy & discontent they must incite; & how ardently I wished the instituting the Government might be deferred until the End of the Campaign.

**Charles Pettit to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 5 & 6 March 1780**

I have not the highest opinion of the N. York member you mention; but he has abilities and I would much rather have him for a friend than an Enemy. I shall therefore endeavour to cultivate him in the former line. What degree of acquaintance or confidential society we may attain to will depend on the notions we may form of each other's opinions. The acquaintance I have heretofore had with him was before the present political line was marked out. I cannot say I like the N. York Politicians I have in general met with among their members in Congress, especially of those who affected that superiority of understanding which has characterized some of them. But this Gentleman in former times was opposed to them, and I should not like him the less for being so now. . . .

[March 6] In the Evening of yesterday I met with Genl. Scot and had an hour's conversation with him. By what I could gather of his sentiments they were not only friendly to the [Quartermaster's] department but just in my apprehensions as to public affairs in general. I therefore became less reserved to him. He invited me to free communication with assurances of prudence and confidence on his part, and I expect to converse farther with him on the subject.

**Robert R. Livingston to Ezra L'Hommedieu, Philadelphia, 11 June 1780**

Our friend the General has not been able with all his attention to regimen & diet to keep himself entirely free from his much dreaded enemy the ague which has shaken him for some days past. However he escaped his fit yesterday by dint of a regular application of the bark.

**Ezekiel Cornell to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 21 July 1780**

As for Livingston, Scott, & Duane, they were for Curtailing every salary, fixed in the Quarter Master's System. They have something in view, what I am not certain. They make me think of the snake in the grass.

**John Morin Scott to Richard Varick, Philadelphia, 5 March 1782**

Tho' I have too much spirit to beg for an office; yet that same spirit will ever be mortified when I am slighted in the disposition of an office. I am the eldest in the profession; and yet the Office of Chancellor was heretofore given to another. I hope that in the next disposal of it, I shall not be treated with the same affrontive neglect. Should it be offered to Me, I should have no Objection to accept of it; provided the Secretaryship could be secured to my son. This provision for both would in my humble Opinion be no more than an Act of Justice to one who has done and suffered so much in the Cause as I have.

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

Mr. Scot you also know. He has his little objects and his little party. Nature gave him genius; but *habit* has impaired it. He never had judgment; he now has scarcely plausibility; his influence is just extensive enough to embarrass measures he does not like; and his only aim seems to be by

violent professions of popular principles to acquire a popularity which has hitherto coyly eluded his pursuit. His views as a statesman are warped; his principles as a man are said to be not the purest.

## Thomas Scott

### **Thomas FitzSimons to Benjamin Rush, New York, 20 June 1789**

Our Colleague Scot Who possesses some of the Strong powers of Popular Oratory made some Remarks Shrewd & diverting for the honor of Pensyla.

### **William Maclay: Journal, 21 February 1790**

I went with these Resolutions to Mr. Scott's lodgings. But shame to tell it he, a Man in Years and burdened with complaints and infirmities, had lodged out & was not come home Yet. The Manner in which my inquiries for him were answered, sufficiently explained the Objects of his Absence. Such Occultations are common with him. Pity that a good head should be led astray, by the inordinate lust of its concomitant Members.

### **William Maclay: Journal, 14 March 1790**

To say all of him in One Word, he has thrown himself into Fitzsimons's Wake more from the Principles of Indolence than anything else. He will not give himself the Trouble of acting independently.

## Winfield Scott

### **John Adams to Charles Francis Adams, Quincy, Mass., 17 November 1815**

General Scott, whom I know, is so well bred a gentleman, and so gallant a Hero, that I am very glad, you have seen him. No wonder he would not talk about the battles of Chippewa, & Bridge-water. He had gathered too many laurels there, to give you an account of them without an appearance of vain glory.

## Nathaniel Scudder

### **William Livingston to John Fell, Princeton, N.J., 14 December 1778**

I need not inform you how much I was pleased at your being appointed a Delegate to represent this state in Congress. . . . I think you cannot attach yourself to a worthier man of our Delegates than Dr. Scudder. You know him well, but as I have seen more of his political maneuvers than you

I may without vanity say that I know him still better. If there is an honest disinterested patriot in the world, I think he deserves the Character, & I have not frequently erred in my opinion of men. If he fails in any thing necessary to Constitute a great politician, it is in his forming too favourable an Idea of people by their outward zeal for Liberty & the cause of America & in judging of other men by the goodness of his own heart. In this your longer experience of the deceitfulness & duplicity of the human mind; & your more extensive acquaintance with the world will enable you to correct him.

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

If you my dear friend are deficient in any kind of knowledge requisite to form the consummate Statesman (take notice that this is said under the guarantee of our late *Treaty of Amity & correspondence*) it is occasioned by that unsuspecting heart of yours which is too apt to judge of men by their ardent protestations & to prompt you (incapable of disguise yourself, & thinking too favourably of human nature in general) to give the right hand of fellow-ship to warm professors of public virtue & patriotism before their inward man hath been duly investigated, or the apparent character competently realized by a sufficient series of actions (when it has, then fix for ever) or by several obliquities it is discovered by the vigilant eye that the heart & the tongue are really at variance, & the fair-rinded fruit is rotten at the core; & then (I will quote Homer once in my life) *abhor him as the gates of hell*. But amidst all the hypocrisy & tergiversation of the Species I would wish you to believe that there is at least one sincere man in the world besides yourself & that he is most sincerely your affectionate Friend & humble Servant.

## James Seagrove

**J. G. Noel to William Paterson, Augusta, Ga., 29 March 1789**

Be pleased to pardon a Liberty I am going to take in mentioning to you that a very worthy friend of mine, Mr. Jas. Seagrove, is a Candidate for Collector of the Port of Savannah. It is in compliance as well with my own wishes as his request, that I take the Liberty of mentioning this Subject to you. It is known in New York that he is long & well-versed in mercantile Business. His Character as a Citizen is well known there. As a Whig & one who has served his country in times of Trouble, he is well known in Phila. In this country, I do assure you he is respected & beloved by all who know him. His failure in commercial pursuits, render an appointment of this sort a very great object, & I am warranted in believing he stands as high in merit as any other who may offer for that Place. If it be not inconsistent with any Engagement you may have made, let me beg your consideration of the merit of this good man. For my own Part I am very highly indebted to his singularly active friendship.

# Theodore Sedgwick

**“Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Berkshire County, dated 2 December 1787,” *Massachusetts Centinel*, 15 December 1787**

Our friend Sedgwick has done wonders—he has convinced the people of Stockbridge of their erroneous ideas entertained of the federal Constitution.—Among the proselytes, is Mr. Bacon, who has long been “blowing the trumpet” against the new system.—Sedgwick kept them up at the town meeting, in which the plan was discussed, until 10 o’clock, at night—and by his honest, forcible, just and nervous reasonings, brought tears into the eyes of a great number present. In short he so amply explained to them the excellencies of the proposed Constitution—its genuine republican principles—the security it gives for life, liberty and property, and the prospects it holds out, if adopted, of promoting our national happiness, dignity and wealth; that he was elected by a great majority to represent that town in the State Convention—that the good effects of his knowledge on the subject, may be extended as far as possible.

**“A Friend to All Parties,” Northampton, Mass., *Hampshire Gazette*, 3 December 1788**

In this gentleman may be found whatever enters into the composition of a wise magistrate, an useful citizen, and an honest man. In his political capacity, he has ever been eminent for an ability to suspend the scale of judgment with a delicate and impartial hand; and with this ability his counsels are equally distant from the crude and hasty decisions of a partial enquirer, and the doubtful vibrations of an undetermined statesman. Whatever talents are necessary to reconcile the interests of contending parties, to soften the edge of animosity, and to subdue the obstinacy of prejudice, without violating the feelings of humanity by a prideful conquest, are possessed by this gentleman in a very high degree.

**“An Observer,” *Boston Independent Chronicle*, 22 January 1789**

Theodore Sedgwick, Esq., whose fidelity and abilities have rendered him respectable, while his principles are equally removed from tyranny on one hand, and from licentiousness on the other.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Benjamin Lincoln, Stockbridge, Mass., 6 February 1789**

Nothing could have been more injudicious than the manner provided for the election of [U.S.] Representatives. In this district no election will, I presume, this time be made.\* Never at any time hath the rancor of party been more virulent. With regard to myself there is no character which is odious and detestable that has not been given me, excepting that it has not been said that I am a whoremaster. Mean, servile, and fawning to great men (pray have you observed it?); proud, haughty, and imperious to those in lower stations; a public peculator and a private usurer; and above all things opposed to any amendments. These are some of the few things which are proclaimed of your friend in every Antifederal meeting through the district. It is added by way of completing my character that in all my public conduct I have betrayed the landed interest and have basely attempted to sacrifice its most important interests to commercial advantages. It would have given me pleasure would my friends have permitted me to retire from the public theater. The natural warmth and the habitual independence of my temper render me totally unfit to be a principal



actor in such a scene. It is impracticable to disguise my feelings, and it is impossible for me to give the smile of approbation to the wretch whom my judgment has determined to be a rascal.

\*The Massachusetts election law provided that a majority of votes was needed to elect a representative. The Hampshire-Berkshire district needed five elections before Sedgwick was elected with a majority of the vote.

**“The People,” Northampton, Mass., *Hampshire Gazette*, 6 May 1789**

We vote for Mr. Sedgwick; we are not ashamed of it. We are acquainted with him. He is no stranger to our interests. His real estate lies in this government. He is interested in our welfare. We think him a very sensible, candid gentleman—a statesman of deep experience, versed in the school of public business. Above all we think him a downright plain, honest man.

**Northampton, Mass., *Hampshire Gazette*, 6 May 1789**

[Opposing Sedgwick for U.S. Representative] I have heard a great deal about Mr. Sedgwick being a grand speaker, and what a figure he makes; but for my part I own I never could see anything very extraordinary in him besides a great fat belly, and a great loud voice; or as we say, “*all talk and no cider.*”

**Fisher Ames to Nathaniel Bishop, New York, post-17 May 1789**

I most sincerely wish the aid of our friend [Sedgwick]. With so good an head and heart, and such a Spirit of perseverance and decision, I should think him inestimable. The love of ease prevents most men from doing so much, or resisting so long as they would wish, and are in fact able to do. I look round our house almost daily, and calculate the impression his abilities and determined character would make in it.

**Samuel Phillips, Jr., to Benjamin Goodhue, Andover, Mass., 5 May 1790**

[After the Assumption bill was defeated in the U.S. House of Representatives] Our Friend Sedgwick, in my humble opinion, was sudden, warm & imprudent.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Pamela Sedgwick, 13 May 1790**

I am since I got into town very well, excepting that I am troubled with my common complaint, want of Sleep. This is more or less the case as I have frequently told you when I am from home.

**Fisher Ames to Thomas Dwight, New York, 11 June 1790**

Mr. Sedgwick is a perfect slave to the business

***Boston Independent Chronicle*, 28 December 1795**

The old womanish whining and sniveling of Sedgwick is become proverbial; he is laughed at, even by his friends.

**John Adams to Theodore Sedgwick, 11 March 1796**

From my heart I thank you, I will not flatter. I never flatter, you least of all men, for I know you would despise it, but your speech for matter, style and delivery exceeds anything I ever heard, and I have heard much good speaking.

**Robert Morris: Speech at a public dinner in Philadelphia, 1796**

There have been a great deal of good speaking in all the House on the present subject, but I think that all the speakers ought to join in cursing our friend, for he has so distanced every one that their speeches compared with his appear mere trash. It was precisely such as he [i.e., Morris] himself would have delivered if he could speak as he wished,—it was absolutely perfect.

**Christopher Gore to Rufus King, Boston, 26 March 1806**

Sedgwick, as usual, swearing he will resign; possibly He declared this so frequently and so publicly that he will be compelled to do it, contrary to his more mature judgment.

**John Adams to James Lloyd, Quincy, Mass., January 1815**

Mr. Sedgwick, without dignity, never able to win the complacency, or command the attention of his hearers in either house, but ever ready to meet in private caucuses and secret intrigues to oppose me.

## Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant

**John Adams: Diary, 28 August 1774**

We sent a card to Mr. Sergeant a Lawyer. He dined, drank Coffee and spent the Evening with Us. He is a young Gentleman of about 25 perhaps. Very sociable. He gave us much Light concerning the Characters of the Delegates from N. York, Philadelphia, Virginia &c. and concerning the Characters of the Principal Lawyers, in all these Provinces.

## John Sevier

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

By what circuitous route did you come at, *Severe*, in the Wilderness? He may be an estimable character for ought I know, but from the Impression I have of him, he is better qualified to *cut off Indians*, than to discipline an Army and lead Brigades to the mouths of Cannon. But as I may have mistaken his character, I shall halt here, in my strictures on it.

**George Washington to Timothy Pickering, Mount Vernon, 9 September 1798**

What in the name of Military Prudence could have induced the appointments of White & Severe as Brigadiers? The latter never was celebrated for any thing (that ever came to my knowledge) except the murder of Indians. . . . As to Sever, as he is little known, little is said about him yet.

**George Washington to James McHenry, Mount Vernon, 14 September 1798**

As to Severe, the only exploit I ever heard of his performance, was the *murder* of Indians.

**James McHenry to George Washington, Trenton, N.J., 19 September 1798**

Mr. Pickering now mentioned Governor Sevier for a Provisional army Brigadier. I considered him an unprincipled man; but as it was only an appointment which might always remain nominal, and as giving it to him, might have a good effect in Tennessee, I waved my objections, and it was acceded to.

## Jonathan Sewall

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 13 April 1790**

[Referring to a conversation with Adams in 1776, Adams] said “that *public & private* integrity did not always go together, and illustrated the position in the character of Mr. Sewall of Boston who in private life, was strictly just—but in public life, wholly unprincipled.”

## Daniel Shays

**Samuel Osgood to John Adams, New York, 14 November 1786**

The leader of the Insurgents in Massachusetts is entitled to the Ribbon & Eagle—He left the Army in the Fall of 1780 being then a Captain of good Reputation; his Name is Shays.—A Man without Education—But not without Abilities.—He is privately involved—which may be the Reason why he has adopted such violent Measures—It is generally supposed that he cannot Retreat.

**George Washington to Henry Knox, Mount Vernon, 25 February 1787**

Surely Shays must be either a weak man—the dupe of some characters who are yet behind the curtain—or has been deceived by his followers. Or which may yet be more likely, he did not conceive that there was energy enough in the Government to bring matters to the crisis to which they have been pushed.

## James Sheafe

**William Gardner to Nicholas Gilman, Portsmouth, N.H., 14 June 1788**

The latter is a Gentleman of education & a friend to commerce—

## Henry Sherburne

**Nathanael Greene to Governor of R.I. William Greene, West Point, N.Y., 19 October 1780**

This will be handed you by Col. Sherburne who is on his return home: his Regiment having been reduced sometime since? A better Officer the service don't afford; and perhaps few persons possess an equal share of good qualities to render domestic life agreeable, or to adorn a public station with more dignity.

## Roger Sherman

**John Adams: Diary, 15 September & 10 October 1775**

Sherman's Air is the Reverse of Grace. There cannot be a more striking Contrast to beautiful Action, than the Motions of his Hands. Generally, he stands upright with his Hands before him. The fingers of his left Hand clenched into a Fist, and the Wrist of it, grasped with his right. But he has a clear Head and sound Judgment. But when he moves a Hand, in any thing like Action, Hogarths Genius could not have invented a Motion more opposite to grace. It is Stiffness, and Awkwardness itself. Rigid as Starched Linen or Buckram. Awkward as a junior Bachelor, or a Sophomore. . . . Dyer and Sherman speak often and long, but very heavily and clumsily.

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 21 January 1776**

I have not sat in Congress since last Tuesday when with pleasure, I gave place to my Successor of whom as Our Neighbor says, *I say Nothing*. But of my Old Colleague, Sh—n suffice it to say, that if the order of Jesuits is extinct, their practices are not out of fashion, even among *modern New Light Saints*, or some of them, for I will never particularize any Sect.

**William Williams to Jabez Huntington, Philadelphia, 30 September 1776**

If our Assembly rechoose their Delegates, I hope They will be guided by Wisdom & Prudence. I must say that Mr. Sherman from his early acquaintance, his good sense, Judgment, Steadiness & inflexible Integrity, has acquired much Respect & is an exceeding valuable Member, & so is Mr. [Samuel] Huntington & truly judicious, upright & worthy the Trust in Spite of that awful Contempt of Religion & Goodness too visible &c. Integrity & Virtue does & will Command Respect.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 16 March 1777**

Mr. Adams has removed to Mrs. Cheeseman's [boarding house], in fourth Street near the Corner of Market Street, where he has a curious Group of Company consisting of Characters as opposite, as North and South. Ingersol, the Stamp man and Judge of Admiralty, Sherman, an old Puritan, as honest as an Angel and as staunch as a blood Hound firm as a Rock in the Cause of American Independence, as Mount Atlas, and Coll. Thornton, as droll and funny as Tristram Shandy. Between the Fun of Thornton, the Gravity of Sherman, and the formal Toryism of Ingersol, Adams will have a curious Life of it.

**Nathaniel Greene to Samuel Blachley Webb, Camp, Precknees near Paramus, 4 July 1780**

The Congress are dreaming as usual; your very good friend Sir Roger is playing his old game of little tricks, and pursuing his former scale of penny happen politics; and unfortunately for America, he finds enough of his kidney to join him, to form a majority in the House.

**Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Camp Tappan, N.Y., 14 August 1780**

Roger Sherman is doing all the mischief he can in Congress, he is at the head of this affair. It appears to be his intention to get our public affairs in as bad a train as possible at the time he leaves Congress; that the confusion and disorder that will follow, may appear to be owing to his having left the house. I am of opinion that he is one of the most wicked and ignorant politicians that ever disgraced an Assembly or that had such an extensive influence.

**Joseph Webb to Nathanael Greene, Wethersfield, Conn., 16 September 1780**

[Webb refers to those members of Congress led by Sherman who advocated reduced salaries for officers in the Quartermaster Department as] Messrs. Penny Halfpenny Shermanites.

**William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Annapolis, Md., 3 April 1784**

Your description of the attendants upon the Lady Mayoress, the day Old Roger was chosen Lord Mayor of the City of New Haven, and the design of their visits diverted me hugely. I believe the election was not disagreeable to our old friend. He sucked his tooth, threw his thighs across each other when he heard the news, looked foolish, and was persuaded to sprinkle his commission with wine. The company, consisting of delegates from N. Hampshire, R. Island, Connecticut and N. Jersey, who all board together, indulged a merry vein on the occasion. When a person gives a treat with us, upon his being elected to a new office, we call it cutting or docking the colt's tail. This was mentioned, and naturally and punnily bro't up a *mare's* tail, and a *Mayor's* tail, and that produced this anecdote from friend Roger. When his little son was told that his father was made a *mayor*, what says the boy and are they agoing to *ride* him? We made Yankey Hall roar with laughter, for so we call our dining room.

**Benjamin Rush: Sketches, 1787**

A plain man of slender education. He taught himself mathematicks, and afterwards acquired some property and a good deal of reputation by making almanacks. He was so regular in business, and so democratic in his principles that he was called by one of his friends "a republican machine."

Patrick Henry asked him in 1774 why the people of Connecticut were more zealous in the cause of liberty than the people of other States; he answered “because we have more to lose than any of them.” “What is that,” said Mr. Henry. “Our beloved charter” replied Mr. Sherman. He was not less distinguished for his piety than his patriotism. He once objected to a motion for Congress sitting on a Sunday upon an occasion which he thought did not require it, and gave as a reason for his objection, a regard of the commands of his Maker. Upon hearing of the defeat of the American army on Long Island, where they were entrenched and fortified by a chain of hills, he said to me in coming out of Congress “Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains” (Jeremiah 12:23).

### **Jeremiah Wadsworth to Rufus King, Hartford, Conn., 3 June 1787**

I am satisfied with the appointment [to the Constitutional Convention]—except Sherman, who, I am told, is disposed to patch up the old scheme of Government. This was not my opinion of him, when we chose him: he is as cunning as the Devil, and if you attack him, you ought to know him well; he is not easily managed, but if he suspects you are trying to take him in, you may as well catch an Eel by the tail.

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

Mr. Sherman exhibits the oddest shaped character I ever remember to have met with. He is awkward, un-meaning, and unaccountably strange in his manner. But in his train of thinking there is something regular, deep and comprehensive; yet the oddity of his address, the vulgarisms that accompany his public speaking, and that strange New England cant which runs through his public as well as his private speaking make everything that is connected with him grotesque and laughable,—and yet he deserves infinite praise,—no Man has a better Heart or a clearer Head. If he cannot embellish he can furnish thoughts that are wise and useful. He is an able politician, and extremely artful in accomplishing any particular object,—it is remarked that he seldom fails. I am told he sits on the Bench in Connecticut, and is very correct in the discharge of his Judicial functions. In the early part of his life he was a Shoe-maker,—but despising the lowness of his condition, he turned Almanack maker, and so progressed upwards to a Judge. He has been several years a Member of Congress, and discharged the duties of his Office with honor and credit to himself, and advantage to the State he represented. He is about 60.

### **Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, New York, 15 August 1789**

Among the many striking instances that daily occur, take the following, communicated to me by an honorable Member of the H[ouse] of R[epresentatives] here. You well know our former respected, republican friend, old Mr. Rog[e]r Sh[erma]n of Con., whose person, manners, and every sentiment appeared formerly to be perfectly republican. This very gentleman, our old Republican friend opposed a motion for introducing into a bill of rights, an idea that the Military should be subordinate to the Civil power—His reason, as stated, was “*that it would make the people insolent!*”

### **William Maclay to Benjamin Rush, New York, 24 April 1790**

Sherman of Connecticut was pushed forward with some artful propositions. His innocent Aspect and infantine Manner, but ill concealed the poison contained in his Proposals.

**John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Montizello (Quincy), Mass., 24 September 1821**

As Brother [William] Floyd has gone I am now the oldest of the little Congressional group that remain. I may therefore rationally hope to be the first to depart; and as you are the youngest and the most energetic in mind and body, you may therefore rationally hope to be the last to take your flight and to rake up the fire as father Sherman who always staid to the last and commonly two days afterwards used to say. "That it was his office to sit up and rake the ashes over the coals" and much satisfaction may you have in your office.

**John Adams to Robert Waln, Montezillo (Quincy), Mass., 19 November 1822**

I have received your obliging favour of the 15th Instant. It relates to a Subject, dear to my memory and my heart. The Honble Roger Sherman was one of the most cordial friends which I ever had in my life. Destitute of all literary and scientifick education but such as he acquired by his own exertions, he was one of the most sensible men in the World. The clearest head and the steadiest heart. It is praise enough to say, that the late Chief Justice Ellsworth told me, that he had made Mr. Sherman his model in his youth. Indeed I never knew two Men more alike, except that the Chief Justice had the advantage of a liberal education and somewhat more extensive reading—

Mr. Sherman was born in the State of Massachusetts and in the Town of Dedham, and was one of the soundest and strongest pillars of the Revolution.

## William Shippen, Jr.

**Robert Morris to Richard Peters, Manheim, 25 January 1778**

I have had an opportunity of observing his Conduct in office for some time at this place, it wou'd be injustice not to give my opinion of the occasion. I have been accustomed, as probably you have too to Consider the Doctor as too great a devotee to Conviviality for a Man of business (this probably is giving myself a Slap in the Face too) but I see him exceedingly attentive and find an anxiety in him to support his Credit & Character in the Management of the Hospitals far beyond any expectation I had, before these things came under my own observation & I account for it by perceiving that the Station is grateful to his ambition & pleasing to Vanity. Therefore I do believe he has done & will do every thing in his power to preserve the Sick & Wounded Soldiery for his own Sake.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 23 December 1794**

I dined Yesterday with Thomas Lee Shippen, and his pretty little Puppet of a Wife—The poor fellow is as pale and lean as a ghost.—They have two little Boys.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 13 July 1808**

The papers will inform You of the death of my brother Professor and old enemy Dr Shippen.—He sent for me in his last illness, and discovered After he was unable to speak, that he carried no hostility out of the world against me. This was a great triumph of truth, or of Religion in his mind, for he was unfriendly to me ever since my Settlement in Philada in 1769.—Marriage and death it

is said Opens every body's mouth.—The Doctor's death has produced a hundred Speeches, and Anecdotes respecting his Character,—But Alas!—they all relate chiefly to events that can do him no good in the world to which he is gone. Peace and joy to his departed Spirit!—He was visited by a pious Clergyman on the day of his death, to whom he made Signs in Answer to questions that were proposed to him, that he had hopes beyond the grave, and that those hopes were founded in the mercy of God manifested to the world by the death of his son.

## William Short

### **Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 30 September 1781**

I beg leave to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer Mr. Short who comes to Philadelphia in hopes of being able to prosecute in greater quiet there than he can here the studies in which he is engaged; and I cheerfully add to what you may already have heard of him my testimony of his genius, learning and merit.

### **Thomas Jefferson to Thomas McKean, Monticello, 30 September 1781**

The bearer Mr. William Short . . . a gentleman of very uncommon genius, erudition and merit.

### **Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Tuckahoe, Va., 7 May 1783**

Mr. Short has desired me to suggest his name as that of a person willing to become a legatine secretary should these offices be continued. I have apprised him of the possibility that they may not. You know my high opinion of his abilities and merit. I will therefore only add that a peculiar talent for prying into facts seems to mark his character as proper for such a business. He is young & little experienced in business tho well prepared for it. These defects will lessen daily. Should persons be proposed less proper on the whole, you would on motives of public good, knowing his willingness to serve give him a nomination & do justice to his character.

### **Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 20 February 1784**

I wish in the next election of delegates for Congress, Short could be sent. His talents are great & his weight in our state must ere long become principal. I see the best effects produced by sending our young statesmen here. They see the affairs of the Confederacy from a high ground; they learn the importance of the Union & befriend federal measures when they return. Those who never come here, see our affairs insulated, pursue a system of jealousy & self interest, and distract the Union as much as they can.

### **Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Cranch, Auteuil near Paris, 3 December 1784**

Mr. Short is a younger Man, he is but just arrived from Virginia, appears to be modest and Soft in his Manners.



**John Quincy Adams: Diary, 21 April 1785**

In the morning Coll. Humphreys, and Mr. Williams, called upon me, and I went out with them as far as *St. Germain en Laye* where James the 2d. held his Court after he was driven away from England; and where Mr. Short, has been these 6 weeks learning the french Language. We went through the Bois de Boulogne, and over the *Pont de Neuilli*. The distance from Paris to St. Germain is about 12 miles. We go along by the side of the Seine, almost all the way: the Lands are either cultivated in wheat, or in Vines for the most Part. The road is very good. St. Germain, is situated, on the top of a hill, which is not very steep, but which I suppose to be a mile long. I should imagine it contains about 10,000 inhabitants but may be much mistaken, as I guess only from the apparent extent of the town: a great number of them are the descendents from those british families that follow'd the fortunes of James the 2d. The Castle which he inhabited belongs as I was told, to the King, and has a charming terrass before it. We descended at the *Prince de Galles* tavern, and went immediately to Mr. Short's lodgings but found he was out: we then walk'd about the place, which is very agreeably situated. From the terrass you may see *Mont Calvaire*, *Montmartre*, and the Church of the Invalids. In a clear day I suppose part of Paris may be also seen from thence. Mr. Short came to us, and dined with us. . . . Mr. Short is vastly pleased with St. Germain, and thinks it a very excellent place for learning the Language. If we may judge from him it is certainly so: for he has made a wonderful proficiency in the short space of time he has been there.

**Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Paris, 25 May 1788**

He [Thomas Jefferson] Has a Young Gentleman with Him, Mr. Short, a Virginian, who is a very able, Engaging, and Honest Man.

**Thomas Jefferson to John Trumbull, Paris, 1 June 1789**

Mr. Short and myself came here with an idea of staying but two years, because my commission was limited to that. Dr. Franklin's departure produced another commission to me to remain here indefinitely. Though I do not propose to be very long in any office, yet as long as I remain in any, I believe I shall prefer the present one. This will be for some years if it depends on myself. But I am going out of life, Mr. Short is coming in. He has never viewed his present situation but as temporary. He has never considered it as one in which he should continue. His views are justly directed to something permanent, independent, in his own country, and which may admit him to marry. His talents, his virtues, and his connections ensure him any thing he may desire. Perhaps he has already let pass the most favorable opportunity of putting himself in the way of preferment. But these opportunities will recur. His letters to me during his absence showed to me that he thought it time to return to his own country, and some expressions in conversation make me suppose he means to do it on my return. I have not asked his decision, lest he might mistake my wishes. He put himself under my guidance at 19 or 20 years of age. He is to me therefore as an adoptive son, and nothing is more interesting to me than that he should do what is best for himself. It is on this principle alone that I shall acquiesce under his leaving me; because I am persuaded he will obtain better positions.

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Jagouville near L'Havre, 6 August 1798**

I for a long time indulged myself with the pleasing idea of human perfectibility—& I know not how my prejudices in favor of my own country got so far the better of me; but I really believed

that a state of perfection in morals & government existed there—For some years past I have scarcely seen a countryman who has not contributed to wipe off the illusion—for whilst each exalts his own party he assures me that for vile & base intrigue—avidity & corruption, the opposite party far surpass any thing I can form an idea of from what I have seen in the old countries of Europe.— & as I have seen my country men of all parties, I should if I believed them all, suppose there was no virtue or patriotism left in a country, where for a long time I supposed there was nothing else—but I receive all this with great caution, knowing that where party spirit takes possession of the mind it sees nothing but through that medium—What I think every American had a right to count on, is that no party spirit should make any of us desirous of seeing our country entangled in European politics—but this I fear is not the case, as I see real danger of our being embroiled, where I am sure it might have been avoided—& which I fear will sow the seeds that will hereafter produce some voracious plant, that may perhaps devour us all—If true liberty, & by this I mean not the mere word but the substance contained in the security of persons & things, be lost in America, I shall give up all hopes of its ever existing permanently in this world.

### **Thomas Jefferson to Madam de Tesse, 8 December 1813**

Our friend Mr. Short is well. He makes Philadelphia his winter quarters, and New York, or the country, those of the summer. In his fortune he is perfectly independent and at ease, and does not trouble himself with the party politics of our country.

### **William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 28 October 1814**

I have certainly none of those party prejudices against our leaders which are felt by so many—If there be a man in the country who is impartial & who allows his mind coolly & dispassionately to examine the measures of government I think I may say I am that man—I have nothing to hope or fear from so as to have my judgment biassed—I try indeed to hope for the best—I have need of that kind of consolation—but the effects of their measures or their madness (for I do them the justice to believe they wish well to their country) have been staring me too full in the face to admit of my being blind to them notwithstanding my real desire to be so—“*Delirant reges plecuntur Achivi*”<sup>\*</sup>—I have had too many occasions to see that a nation’s sufferings may come from other leaders as well as Kings, & may be carried as far—

I have been more than once astonished to find myself on the verge of taking up my pen to address the public—I have never yet appeared in that character & nothing but indignation could make me assume it—I have been checked perhaps as much as by any thing else, by the want of some channel—for the newspapers are all so completely of one tone & is considered as belonging to one or other of the sides of party spirit, & of course would be received or rejected according to the passion of the reader & could answer no good purpose—Although it would be indignation which would make me write, yet it would be with the hope or the view of being useful.

<sup>\*</sup>“Whatever folly the kings commit, the Achaeans pay the penalty.”

### **William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 5 January 1816**

I was extremely anxious, as you may have perceived, as to the state of things in this country during the war. According to my view still, we were on a precipice, or rather near a rock which was the more dangerous to the vessel of State, that the Pilots, ignorant in most respects of the kind of navigation, were absolutely blind as to this particular danger. I own that my indignation as to

their ignorance & stupidity was often raised to a degree that was very near making me break my resolution long ago made of never entering the public papers as an anonymous author—Things have now passed over—I should probably have done no good & should have vexed & mortified myself to no purpose—I can now say, & have no doubt I shall be able to say at the day of my death, that I have never inserted or contributed in any way to an anonymous article in the vile & dirty nuisances of public newspapers.

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 21 October 1819**

There is no circumstance in which I feel the effects of advancing age so much as in my faculties of locomotion—From habitual indulgence I have come to consider repose as the *summum bonum*,\* so that when driven out of this heated brick kiln in the summer, my first aim is to reach that place of repose which can be the soonest & the easiest attained—this is of course Ballston as it requires only fifty miles of land carriage, the rest being performed in steamboats, & a great part of it during sleep. This growing indolence (which I know I am wrong to indulge & yet continue to do so—“*video meliora, pejora sequor*”)\*\* has made me give up by degrees my daily exercise on horseback—I have so far adopted the principles of Epicurus, (who, after all I am inclined to believe was the wisest of all the ancient Philosophers, as he is certainly the least understood & the most calumniated among them) as to consult my ease towards the attainment of happiness in this poor world, poor even in making the best of it.

\*The highest good.

\*\*Paraphrase from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 7, 20–21: I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse.

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 25 October 1820**

I regret now very much having not passed the last summer or the present season in this excursion [visiting Monticello]—the summer & fall are the only parts of the year in which it is agreeable to travel—Indeed as to myself I find travelling disagreeable here in all seasons. I have increased in bulk & still more in indolence.

## James Simmons

**Pierce Butler to President George Washington, Philadelphia, 28 January 1793**

I have just learned by letter from Charleston that Mr [Edward] Weyman the Naval Officer is no more. It becomes my duty to recommend to You Mr J. Simmons, a Gentleman well qualified & deserving the Office. He served during the war in the army with great credit to himself and at the Cowpens and Eutaws distinguished himself as a brave and good Officer. He writes a fair good hand & is perfectly acquainted with accts having lived some years in a Counting House. Indeed I know no Gentleman better qualified for such a station.

## John Sitgreaves

### **Recommendations Made to Thomas Jefferson for Offices in North Carolina, 7 June 1790**

U.S. District Attorney.

[Benjamin] Hawkins sais he lives in Newbern where the courts are held, he is a gentlemanly man, & as good a lawyer as any there.

[Samuel] Ashe sais that Sitgreaves is not so brilliant in abilities, but of great rectitude of mind.

[Timothy] Bloodworth sais that Sitgreaves is a gentleman of character & represented the state in Congress in 1785.

### **Benjamin Hawkins to George Washington, Warren, N.C., 4 November 1790**

Colo. John Sitgreaves who resides at New-Bern and is the attorney for this district is a native of this State has always supported a fair and honorable character, has been in the practice of the law for ten or a dozen years was a member of the old Congress and appointed in the year 1786 a judge of the federal court between Massachusetts and New-York, He is married in one of the most respectable families in this country, and would I am this day informed feel himself honoured by the appointment [as the federal judge for the district of North Carolina].

### **Hugh Williamson to George Washington, Edenton, N.C., 6 November 1790**

We have two or three very able Lawyers with excellent Characters but they will not agree to serve [as a federal district judge] at the present Salary. Mr. John Sitgreaves the present Attorney seems on the whole to be the most eligible for a Judge of any that I have heard named. Married to the Daughter of Genl. [Allen] Jones his Connections are respectable. He has been member of Congress and Speaker of our House of Assembly, has respectable Abilities as a Lawyer and has the most fair Character for Honour and Integrity.

## William Smallwood

### **Sarah Wister: Journal, 19 October 1777**

The General is tall portly well made a truly martial air the behavior and manner of a gentleman, a good understanding & great humanity of disposition constitute the character of Smallwood.

### **George Lux to Nathanael Greene, Baltimore, Md., 26 May 1778**

Our Division still complains bitterly of Genl. S——d. I am told he has at last absolutely issued out in orders that no Officer, on any pretence whatever, shall presume to intrude upon him but between the Hours of 2 and 6 in the Afternoon. Were he to be attacked in the Morning what would be the consequences? He is certainly very dilatory in his motions, avaricious, implacable in his Resentments, warm in his Friendships, and haughty and stately in his Demeanor, and keeps his Field Officers at a more obsequious Distance than His Excy does even the Ensigns of the Army. I know him extremely well, having served under him 2 Months as a Soldier in our Independent

Founders on the Founders

Company, in which time he quarrelled with every Man in it but myself. I was a particular Favourite with him as I made a point of being strictly obedient to him while under his command.

**Nathanael Greene to Alexander Hamilton, Camp on the Pedee River, 10 January 1781**

I think him a brave and good officer; but too slow to effect any thing great in a department [i.e., the Southern Department] like this, where embarrassments are without number, and where nothing can be effected without the greatest promptitude and decision.

## John Smilie

**Mathew Carey: Memoirs, June 1829**

Jno Smilee:—This gentleman was a tolerably fluent speaker, and his arguments were generally strong and ad rem. But he was wholly unskilled in the important art of putting his thoughts on paper. He was among the leaders of the constitutional ([illegible word] the democratic) party, the republican (or federal party) were always on the watch to embarrass him—and whenever he offered a resolution, they called on him in compliance with the ordinary rules of the house to submit it in writing with which he was forced to comply—and I have seen him take as long time to pen a resolution of ten lines as some men of inferior intellect would require to write a page or two.

During the debates on the Penal Code, I lent him a copy of Beccaria on Crimes and punishments uncut—and after the debate was over, he returned it to me uncut as it was when re received it!

## Abigail Adams Smith

**Abigail Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass., 16 August 1796**

Your sister and Family were well when I last heard from them; the col. Had sufferd in his affairs by the villany of a St. Hillair who married Peggy. It has however had a happy effect, so far, that he has come to a settlement with all with whom he was concernd: and tho it has obliged him to dispose of some of his Lands to less advantage, than he would otherways and stoped him in perhaps too rapid a career; he has a handsome property remaining, as I am assured. He has stoped building a Much too large Country House; and I hope will curtail all unnecessary expence, and live a more quiet and retired Life which I am sure will be more for his happiness, and the benifit of his Family. It is the wish of your sister, who you know has ever been averse to all kinds of extravagance and dissipation.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, East Chester, N.Y., 5 May 1797**

I found Mrs. Smith and her Children in good Health. Mrs. Smith grows very fleshy as much so I think, as before she first went abroad, tho being older and more moulded into the form of woman, she does not look so burdend.

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 14 July 1797**

I heard from your sister last week. She is at East Chester, and has been ever since last winter. The Col[onel] has been gone up with his Brothers to their new Lands for some time. I can say, She is a truly deserving woman whose lot is cast, not with the most fortunate of her sex—

**Mary Cranch to Abigail Adams, Quincy, Mass., 23 February 1798**

Mrs. Smith dear creature what She must have Suffer'd. I know her Silent manner of receiving both good & evil. I hope She will yet see happier days than She has enjoy[ed] Since she was married. for she must have known to what Such a stile of living tended. it was not what she had been us'd to nor what she approv'd. her Boys are doing well. Willm. is studious but John must play a few years to spend his spirits before he can fix himself to any thing—I hope their Fathers pride will not take them away.

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 16 January 1807**

I have many unhappy hours upon Mrs Smith's account. I fear her Situation is more necessitous than She makes me acquainted with. I know her prudence and her desire to Economize, that She will make a little go far, but still She must have some means: when you return I should wish you to inform yourself as fully as you can without wounding her feelings any more than such an inquiry necessarily must—

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 12 September 1811**

[Mrs. Smith] is forty six. She has possessed as steady Firmness of Mind and Body through her whole Life as any Woman I ever knew. She is every Way worthy of her Mother. Adversity of which she has had a large share has never moved her more than Prosperity. But she is now threatened with a Misfortune the prospect of which casts a Melancholly gloom over my whole Family and all her Friends.

**Abigail Adams Smith to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 12 September 1811**

You will I hope pardon the Liberty I have taken to address myself to you Sir upon a Subject which has become very interesting to myself. since I have been on a visit to my Parents, I have met with a volume of your Medical inquiries, in which are containd some observations upon the use of Arsenic in the cure of Cancers and schirrous complaints—

About May 1810 I first perceived a hardness in my right Breast just above the nipple which occasioned me an uneasy sensation, like a burning sometimes an itching & at time a deep darting pain through the Breast, but without any discolouration at all. it has continued to Contract and the Breast has become much smaller than it was. the tumor appears now about the size of a Cap and does not appear to adhere but to be loose—I applied to a Physician and he recommended me to apply a Plaister of the cicuta which I did and kept it on several weeks but did not find any good affect from it it appeard to me to increase the uneasiness I therefore took it off. I have also taken a considerable of cicuta in Pills, but I thought they produced a heaviness in my head & have for some time discontinued them since I have been here I have consulted several Physicians upon the Subject they have all advised me not to make any outward application to it—and as it has not affected the State of my health they do not recommend me to use any medicine—Still I am uneasy

upon the Subject—for I think I observe it becoming harder and a little redness at times on the skin Dr Warren who has seen it told me that in its present state he would not advise me to do anything for it but if it should enflame I had better apply for surgical aid—this is a remedy that I dont know in any Event I could consent to submit to—certainly I should wish to try every other possible expedient first. and if in the course of your researches you should have discovered any thing that you find of use in this state of it, you would confer a great obligation upon me by communicating it.

### **Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 20 September 1811**

I shall begin my letter by replying to your daughters. I prefer giving my Opinion & Advice in her Case in this way. You and Mrs Adams may communicate it gradually and in such a manner as will be least apt to distress and alarm her.

After the experience of more than 50 years in cases similar to hers, I must protest agst: all local applications, and internal medicines for her relief. They now and then cure, but in 19 Cases Out of 20 in tumors in the *breast*, they do harm, or suspend the disease Until it passes beyond that time in which the only radical remedy is ineffectual. This remedy is the knife. From her account of the *Moving* state of the tumor it is now in a proper Situation for the Operation. Should She wait 'till it suppurates, or even inflames much, it may be too late. The pain of the Operation is much less than her fears represent it to be. I write this from experience having about two Years ago had a tumor of perhaps a larger Size cut out by Dr Physick from my Neck. I was surprized when the Doctor's assistant told me the operation was finished, and could not help saying After Cæsar when he had finished his conquests—"and is this All."—I repeat again—let there be no delay in flying to the knife. Her time of life—calls for expedition in this business, for tumors such as hers tend much more rapidly to cancers after 45, than in more early life. I sincerely sympathize with her, and with you and your dear Mrs Adams in this family Affliction, but it will be but for a few minutes if She submits to have it extirpated, & if not, it will probably be a Source of distress and pain to you all for years to come. It shocks me to think of the Consequences of procrastination in her case.

### **John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 13 October 1811**

Sobrius esto! Recollect your own Non Nobis!

Your Letter of the 20th. of September I communicated to Mrs Adams as you advised. Mrs Adams to her Daughter, After a reasonable Time for Deliberation and Reflections the Heroine determined. The Mother and the Daughter went to Boston and consulted Dr Warren Junior, Dr Welsh, Dr Warren Junior having previously consulted Dr Tufts and Dr Holbrook. The Physicians and Surgeons all unanimously pronounced Dr Rush's opinion and Advice, to be exactly and perfectly in all Points agreeable to their own, and the Plan was laid and the Catastrophy resolved.

On Tuesday the Eighth of October, a day memorable in my little Annals, the operation was performed in Presence of the two Dr Warrens, Dr Welsh and Dr Holbrook, by Dr Warren Senior. The operation was twenty five Minutes in performing, and the dressing an hour longer.

The Surgeons all agree that in no Instance did they ever witness a Patient of more Intrepidity than she exhibited through the whole Transaction.

They all affirm that the morbid substance is totally eradicated and nothing left but Flesh perfectly sound

They all Agree that the Probability of compleatt and ultimate success is as great as in any Instance that has fallen under their Experience.

Yesterday October 12 The Surgeons met again and dressed the Wound and unanimously declare it in as good a State as they could expect.

Had not your Letter overcome all her Scruples and Timidity, I believe she would have returned before now to Smith's Valley, which would have been to her The Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Oh! that a vaccine Inoculation could be discovered for this opprobrium of Philosophy and Medicine, The Cancer, This Physical disgrace of human Nature!

Neither you nor I have much Superstition in our Natures or our Creeds. But neither of Us can refuse to acknowledge a Providence in this Instance. She accidentally as the world says read your Book wrote you a Letter, received your answer altered her Plan, postponed her Journey home, and as I sincerely hope and devoutly pray saved her Life.

I rejoice however still with trembling. I know the Uncertainty that still remains: and that our only ultimate Resource is Resignation.

### **Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Shaw Peabody, Quincy, Mass., 22 October 1811**

Col Smith arrived here upon Sunday morning, and was [—] relieved to find Mrs Smith had gone through the dreaded operation and to find her also so well She walks from one chamber to an other, and Sits up the chief of the day. the wound has closed and healed. her arm She is forbidden to use, keeps it in a Sling, and is not allowd to lift it up—She is weak but not more so than might be expected.

### **Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, Quincy, Mass., 20 June 1813**

Mrs Smith, through her whole Life has enjoyd good health, untill the painfull operation She endured the last Summer, after which her nerves were much affected.

Soon after her return to the valley She wrote me word, that She had been Severely attacked with the Rheumatism in her Back. it left her Back and Seizd upon her left hip, from which She Sufferd great pain. She was easiest in Bed in this way it continued through the winter. She obtaind Some releif from Blisters. as the Spring approachd it put on an inflamitory form and attackd her Side like a plurisy—She was then Bled, and Blisterd again, in consequence of which she is much Weakned and debilitated. about three weeks Since, She was voilently attackd in her Stomack which greatly allarnd Caroline, and the rest of her Friends—the more So for the col's [i.e., Colonel William Stephens Smith] being absent in Congress.

it was at this time that both Caroline and her Aunt Nancy Smith were So anxious, and wrote to us in Such a manner as excited our poignant distress—

it appeard impossible for me to undertake, a journey of Such a distance, Sick as I have been for more than a Month, confined to my chamber with a fever—

Mrs Smith knew this, and did not Send for me, but Still hopes that She may So recover, as to make herself a journey here when the col. returns—it was my desire that She Should have been with us, when the Coll, first went on to Congress, but She was too Sick to undertake it—I still flatter myself that She will be able to, if no Severe attack again prevents it, but I fear She will never again enjoy health—

### **Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 1 July 1813**

of your dear and only Sister, I can only Say that She has been, and Still is a patient Sufferer under Severe and afflicting pain, So much reduced that She cannot either write, or walk. my last



account to the 21 of June, was that She was gaining Strength. She was Seizd early in the winter, with a voilent fit of Rheumatism from which She has never recoverd—I fear her constitution was essentially injurd by the operation She past through, and which to my inexpressible grief has not freed her from a Similar complaint upon the other Side. Heaven only knows to what Sufferings She may yet be reserved. my Heart bleads—I cannot get to her, nor She to me I am too infirm myself to undertake Such a journey—

### **Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren, Quincy, Mass., 8 August 1813**

I cannot let my Son visit Plimouth without bearing a few lines to my old Friend who has always taken a kind interest in the welfare of my dear Daughter Smith, who reached here a fortnight Since with her Sister Son and daughter, but So helpless in her Limbs as not to be able to walk across the Room, obliged to be carried in a chair from the Chamber to the Carriage—If this was all the melancholy circumstance attending her case, hope might be left to comfort and flatter her Friends—I had flatterd myself that her disorder was a Rheumatic affection—but that hope is extinct. all the Physicians who have been consulted agree in opinion that it proceeds from a Schirrous Cancer Seated in the Breast and extending itself over the Stomack contracting the mussels both of that, and the Bowels so as frequently to create Spasms over the whole Surface, like being as She expresses it cased up in Armour. it has not yet burst out, but there are appearnces which indicate it—

She is perfectly Sensible of her Situation and resignd to it—as She expresses herself—She gets a temporary relief from the use of opiates. how in her helpless debilitated State, She had the courage to attempt a journey of three hundred miles, I can Scarcly realize.

I Should think it a hazard to take her for the great desire She had to reach the Habitation of her parents and to be with them, gave her courage and Strength—to have her with me was my most earnest desire. to mitigate Sooth and releive her distress as much as human aid can, will be a Solace to me amidst the anguish I am call'd to Sustain in my advanced Age—it is the will of Heaven and I desire to Submit without a murmur—however dark the ways of Heaven appear, to us in the dispensations of Providence, they are undoubtedly designd for our moral improvement.

### **Abigail Adams Smith: Obituary, 15 August 1813**

In Quincy, on the Sunday morning, Mrs Abigail Smith, consort of the Hon' William S. Smith, of New york, and only Daughter of his Excellency John Adams, aged 48. Funeral will be this afternoon at 3 oclock, from her Fathers House, when the connection and Friends of the United Families, are respectfully requested to attend the solemnity.

Mrs Smith possessed a mind firm, cultivated and delicate, a temper gentle and sweet; a spirit composed, in difficulty; patient, in suffering; humble, in prosperity; cheerful, in adversity; a demeanor chastened and regulated by clear perceptions of duty and high standards of propriety. As a Child, exemplary of filial reverence; as a Wife, for conjugal tenderness: as a Mother, for parental affection.—Forgetful of herself and situations only of the happiness of others, it was the effort of her being to please and to support; comfort and to bless.—Her death, in unison with such a life, was full of resignation and hope. She departed, expressing her strong confidence of a Blessed immortality through the merits of her Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and her gratitude, that she had been permitted to close her days in the mansion of her Father, surrounded by her venerable parents, her husband, Children, and dearest relatives.

There are no consolations for the death of such a person, but those which religion proffers. And religion forbids us to lament, except on account of the bereavement of friends, the transition of a spirit so elevated and pure to the places, prepared for its eternal felicity and reward.

“Heaven lifts its everlasting portals high,  
And bids the pure in heart behold their God.”\*

\*Epitaph on the tomb of Mrs. Mason in Bristol, England.

## Mr. Smith

### **Eliza House Trist to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, c. 8 December 1783**

Mr. Harrison and Lady (he is a banished tory from N. York) and Old Smith who is grown intolerable are all that at present encircle our board.\* I really am obliged to be silent and bite my tongue [for] fear of Quarreling. I would rather live among Hornets than be obliged to live with Mr. Smith. His manners are very disagreeable to me. It reminds us of our former happiness. They must be exceeding clever who can be considered tolerable after those Gentlemen that we have been accustomed to live with.

\*Mary Trist, Eliza’s mother, ran a boarding house where several members of Congress had lived before Congress left Philadelphia.

### **Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 11 December 1783**

We hear some circumstances of rudeness in Mr. S. inconsistent with the inoffensiveness of character we had given him credit for.

## Melancton Smith

### **“Cassius,” Poughkeepsie *Country Journal*, 18 March 1788**

Mr. Smith has considerable property in Dutchess county, he has resided for a long time in it, and always acted the part of a patriot, republican, and worthy citizen; he has filled with eclat and credit, the offices of Sheriff and Judge:—Since his removal to New York [City], the Legislature have repeatedly chosen him in Congress—a station which has given him an opportunity of prying into the designs, and seeing through the schemes of the advocates of despotism. He is a man of unquestionable integrity, and great abilities and information; notwithstanding the high honors he enjoyed, he has always persevered in his attachment to liberty—and consequently he is a strenuous, a formidable enemy to the infamous scheme of tyranny [i.e., the proposed Constitution].

### **Robert R. Livingston: Speech in the New York Convention, 23 June 1788**

[Referring to Smith facetiously] So sensible am I of that gentleman’s talents, integrity and virtue, that we might at once hail him the first of the nobles, the very prince of the senate. [Smith

calls this a “polite reprimand” for mistrusting the wealthy and virtuous as aristocrats. 23 June speech.]

**“Extract of a letter from a Gentleman at Poughkeepsie,” *New York Daily Advertiser*,  
28 June 1788**

[Chancellor Robert R. Livingston] compared him, as a politician, to an airy phantom who had only a local habitation.

**James Kent: Memoirs**

Melancthon Smith was equally the most prominent and the most responsible speaker on the Anti-Federal side in the [N.Y.] Convention. There was no person to be compared to him in his powers of acute and logical discussion. He was Mr. Hamilton’s most persevering and formidable antagonist.

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

The style and manner of Smith’s speaking was dry, plain, and syllogistic, and it behooved his adversary to examine well the ground on which they started, and not to concede too much at the beginning, or he would find it somewhat embarrassing to extricate himself from a subtle web of sophistry, unless indeed he happened to possess the giant strength of Hamilton, which nothing could withstand. Mr. Smith was a man of remarkable simplicity, and of the most gentle, liberal, and amiable disposition.

## Meriwether Smith

**James Lovell to John Adams, Philadelphia, 28 September 1779**

. . . the *Oddity* of Virginia.

**Martha Dangerfield Bland (Mrs. Theodorick Bland, Jr.) to Frances Bland Tucker (Mrs. St. George Tucker), 30 March 1781**

Your Cousin M. Smith with all the Grimace of a Baboon, and exactly like one in figure.

**Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Richmond, Va., 11 April 1787**

It is said, that our friend Meriwether Smith is in the bounds for a debt, due to Mr. Wm. Lee and that he has made over the whole of his property for a British debt. Although I cannot affirm this fact of my own knowledge, I believe it to be true, on the respectability of my informer.

**George Washington to James Madison, Mount Vernon, 10 January 1788**

[On Richard Henry Lee abandoning his Antifederalism.] (Though he may retain his sentiments) has with-drawn, or means to withdraw his opposition; because, as he has expressed himself, or as others have done it for him, he finds himself in bad Company; such as with M——r. Sm——th's

## William Smith of Baltimore

**John Adams: Diary, 23 February 1777**

This Mr. Smith is a grave, solid Gentleman, a Presbyterian by Profession—a very different Man from the most of those We have heretofore had from Maryland.

**James McHenry to Alexander Hamilton, Baltimore, Md., 3 May 1791**

I then called on Mr. Wm. Smith who with less show of talents [than General Otto H. Williams] will make a much better auditor. He will have as little to learn as the General; is as systematic, a more correct and perfect accountant, of great respectability and of longer standing in society. I found also here that the comptrollership was a more darling object. My first conversation was yesterday, and it was not till about half an hour ago I got him to consent to use my discretion, so you may use yours. I was obliged to intimate, that from the opinion you had of him, I could entertain no doubt but his appointment would be certain unless the President got entangled to the Southward.

## William Smith of Philadelphia

**John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 29 August 1774**

A Gentleman [Benjamin Rush] who returned into Town with Mr. Paine and me in our Coach, undertook to caution us against two Gentlemen particularly. One was Dr. Smith the Provost of the College, who is looking up to Government for an American Episcopate and a Pair of lawn Sleeves. Soft, polite, insinuating, adulating, sensible, learned, industrious, indefatigable, he has had Art enough and Refinement upon Art to make Impressions even on Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Reed.

**John Adams: Diary, Philadelphia, 1 September 1774**

This Day, We breakfasted at Mr. Mifflin's, Mr. C[harles] Thompson came in, and soon after Dr. Smith. The famous Dr. Smith, the Provost of the College. He appears a plain Man—tall, and rather Awkward—there is an Appearance of Art.

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 4 September 1774**

We met with Doctr. Smith again who You will begin by this Time to think is every where, and indeed I think him a most extraordinary compound.

**John Adams to Joseph Palmer, Philadelphia, 5 July 1775**

The provost of the college . . . is supposed to be distracted between a strong passion for lawn sleeves and a stronger passion for popularity, which is very necessary to support the reputation of his Episcopal college.

## William Loughton Smith

**Charles Pinckney to James Madison, Charleston, S.C., 28 March 1789**

Mr. Smith will deliver you this. He goes tomorrow to New York as one of the members for this state in the house of Representatives. He is a near relation of mine. But it is not only on this account that I recommend him to your particular notice & attention. You will find him a valuable acquaintance, with a mind highly cultivated and accomplished and an attention to public business which when he comes to be acquainted with the affairs of the Union will render him an useful member of your house.

**Alexander Hamilton to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Philadelphia, 10 October 1792**

Some valuable characters are about to be lost to the House of Representatives of their own choice. I feared once that this would be the case with Mr. Smith of your state; but I believe his present intention is rather to continue to serve. I trust there can be no doubt of his success and I wish means to be used to determine his acquiescence. He is truly an excellent member—a ready clear speaker of a sound analytic head and the justest views—I know no man whose loss from the House would be more severely felt by the good cause.

**Pierce Butler to John McPherson, Philadelphia, 6 November 1792**

How the new elections will go in Carolina I know not. I trust no other than republican characters will be elected, tho' I fear that may not be the case for Charleston district; for if Mr Wm Smith is a republican, I don't know what republicanism is—& yet I believe he will be elected. Ever since I have known Charleston I have observed in it a strong bias to aristocracy in a great part of the citizens; of course an aristocratick member may always be expected from there while the present tendency exists.

**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.

**George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 29 October 1795**

Mr. Smith of South Carolina would, sometime ago, have had no objection to filling a respectable office under the General government; but what his views might lead to, or his abilities particularly fit him for, I am incompetent judge: and besides, on the ground of popularity, his pretensions would, I fear, be small.

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

But for a Secretary of State I know not what to say. *Smith* though not of full size is very respectable for talent & has pretty various information. I think he has more real talent than the last incumbent of the Office [Edmund Randolph]. But there are strong objections to his appointment. I fear he is of an uncomfortable temper. He is popular with no description of men from a certain *hardness* of character and he more than most other men is considered as tinctured with prejudices towards the British. In this particular his ground is somewhat peculiar. It may suit party views to say much of other men but more in this respect is *believed* with regard to Smith. I speak merely as to *bias* and *prejudice*. There are things, & important things for which I would recommend Smith; thinking well of his abilities, information & integrity—but at the present juncture I believe his appointment to the office in question would be unadvisable.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 28 June 1796**

Wm. Smith would go, his talents, integrity, knowledge of the affairs of the U.S. & acquaintance with the French language (a thing important) imminently fit him for the Station—perhaps he would be unpopular in France; if so, this would be an objection. The French however are not a weak people, they know Mr. Smith to be a man of ability & respected character, & his declarations would have weight on these accounts. Will you inform me in confidence whether this appointment would in your opinion be a suitable measure under all circumstances.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, East Chester, N.Y., 3 November 1797**

I did not consider the Mission to Portugal as useless: if I had I should certainly not have appointed one of the most respectable Representatives for your Successor, as Mr. Smith undoubtedly was.

**Abigail Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, East Chester, N.Y., 7 November 1797**

The successor in Lisbon is a very honorable Man. Mr. Smith having Served his Country 8 Years in the Legislature, was entitled to an advancement, and he wished it abroad. I do not know where his place can be supplied take him in all respects.

# William Stephens Smith

## Abigail Adams to John Thaxter, 29 April 1783

Mr. Smith has been waiting to know whether I should go or not, as he has been kind enough to offer me his protection. Common Fame gave him to me for a son this last winter, who then so proper to conduct the Mother and daughter abroad in the absence of the Father. Tis true he was politely attentive to Emelia this winter, gave her a ticket to the assembly and attended her there through the Season; which you know is sufficient for the world to unite them for life. Mr. Smith is a gentleman of a fair and amiable character and I sincerely wish him happily connected altho his attempts have never yet been successful, by no means equal to his merit.

## Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, Mass., 30 June 1783

Mr. Smith will be the Bearer of this; I need not ask your particular attention to him. He is most worthy and Good, Benevolent and kind, Generous to his Friends and connections who stand in need of his assistance; he has been industrious and successful in Business, and is untainted by the vices of the age. Yet with all these virtues and accomplishments he has not found Success among the Fair. Why? Because he has not address. I know not any other reason.

## Abigail Adams to John Thaxter, Braintree, Mass., 1 July 1783

Few young Gentlemen have gone from hence with a worthier character than Mr. Smith possesses, and he will do honour to his Country, where ever he resides. If he has not all those Brilliant accomplishments which distinguish some who are favorites of the Fair, he has all those virtues of the Heart which endear him to his Friends, and will render him respectable among the worthy of every Country.

## Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, New York, 5 March 1785

Since my last, informing You of the Circumstances of your Appointment to the Court of London, Congress have elected Colo Smith of this State, Secretary to the Legation. Several Candidates were presented to Congress, & my Friend & Colleague Mr [Rufus] King of Newbury port (whom I shall hereafter speak of, & whom I wish to introduce to your Confidence & Friendship) was of Opinion with myself, that it was indispensibly necessary to support such a person only, as might be relied on for supporting the Dignity & preserving (by an Attachment to & Respect for the principal) the Tranquility of the Embassy. We therefore previous to the Appointment, conferred with Colo Smith on the Subject, & candidly informed him, that confiding in his Integrity & Honor, & on his prudence in avoiding every Thing that might savour of Intrigue against the Minister of the Legation, as well as on his firm Determination to discharge his Trust in fulfilling the reasonable Desires & supporting the Dignity of his superior in office, We should use our Endeavours to promote the Appointment mentioned; and should likewise continue our Endeavrs. to Support the Secretary, whilst he continued to evince the good Disposition We expected—And We further informed him, We should certainly be firmly opposed to him, should he ever contrary to our present Expectations evince a different Disposition. Colo Smith was so far from being displeased at this frank Conduct, that he appeared to be much satisfied with it, & gave such Assurances as from a Man of Honor are to be relied on, And as leave Us no Apprehensions of the Want of Your highest

Approbation of his Appointmt. The military Character of Colo Smith stands high, inasmuch that no Officer of his Rank in the American Army stood fairer I beleive with the General, than this Gentleman. He has had a liberal Education, is a sensible Man & a polite one, & I cannot doubt that You will find him a Man of Honor, a good Companion, & one that merits your fullest Confidence.

**George Clinton to John Adams, New York, April 1785**

Permit me Sir at the same Time to recommend to your Countenance and Protection my Friend Colonel William Smith, who is appointed Secretary to your present Legation, and will have the Honor of delivering you this Letter. He is a Native of this City, and Connected with some of its most reputable Inhabitants, and I have every Reason to believe Possesses the strictest Principles of Honoir and Integrity. By his merrit in a Military Capacity he acquired the Esteem of all who knew him, and was particularly Honored by the Confidence of the Commander in Chief in whose Family he served towards the Close of the War, and who on retiring from the Field recommended him to my notice in the strongest and most Affectionate Terms. It gives me pleasure to add that he is not less distinguished as a virtuous Citizen, and I flatter myself you will not find him deficient in point of Abilities.—

**President of Congress Richard Henry Lee to John Adams, New York, 14 April 1785**

Colo. Smith can give you so accurate a state of things here that it seems not necessary for me to enlarge on them—but with respect to this Gentleman, and his appointment, permit me to observe, that his established reputation is that of a Man of honor, of sense, and of very tried attachments to the success of our Union. His appointment (I mean the Office) Seems, as far as I have been able to investigate it, from a wish to shew respect to the Court of London, by an exact observance of all forms in such cases practised—

**John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Auteuil near Paris, 28 April 1785**

Our Friend the Marquis, whom I love, altho I fear he has, been instrumental of introducing bad Fashions among Us, informs me that Mr. Smith is appointed Secretary of Legation to London. This Gentleman is to me a total Stranger. An Aid de Camp and a Knight of Cincinnatus, a Correspondent of the Marquis and his brother Humphreys, I see the Necessity of his being a prudent Man, and of my being so too. But he shall be treated by me with all the Kindness and Attention, that becomes the Relation between Us.

**John Adams to the Marquis de Lafayette, Bath Hotel, England, 3 June 1785**

I have found this Gentleman possessed of all the good Qualities which you and Colo. Humphreys, who knew him best, ascribed to him. He seems to be much respected here by the British officers, who knew him in America, and by all others. Congress have made in him if one may Judge from a short acquaintance, a wise Choice, and I am very happy to have such a Co-adjutor. The Mission is more respectable, for having an official secretary, and it takes a great Burthen off, from me.



**Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson, London, 6 June 1785**

Mr. Smith appears to be a modest worthy man, if I may judge from so short an acquaintance. I think we shall have much pleasure in our connection with him.

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, London, 26 June 1785**

Col. Smith from the acquaintance I have had with him fully answers the kind things the Marquis [de Lafayette] said of him. He appears to be a man of an independent spirit, high and strict sentiments of honour. Much the Gentleman in his manners and address, no *cincinnatus* [Society of the Cincinnati] advocate the badge of which he has never worn and I have every reason to think from conversation with him that he wishes the order totally annihilated.

**Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, London, 18 August 1785**

Col. Smith has taken a tour to Berlin to see the Grand Review which commences the 21 of the month, he appears a Gentleman solid sedate tho warm and active when occasion requires. He is sensible and judicious, dignified sentiments of his own Country and a high sense of honour appear to govern his actions. Mr. A is very happy in him.

**John Adams to Richard Henry Lee, Grosvenor Square, London, 26 August 1785**

Colonel Smith has been very active & attentive to business, & is much respected. He has as much honor & spirit as any man I ever knew. I suspect, howr., that a dull diplomatic life, especially in a department so subordinate, will not long fulfill all the wishes of his generous heart—His principles are those of his Country, & his abilities are worthy of them. He has not the poetical genius of Humphreys; but has much superior talents & a more independant temper, as a Politician. In short, you could not have given me a man more to my taste.

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, London, 6 September 1785 (quoting John Adams to Richard Henry Lee, London, 26 August 1785)**

The Col. has been gone a month, we have received two Letters from him and may I think look for his return daily. He does not live with us, he has apartments in Leiscester Fields, he always dines with us. I like him much, but I do not rely wholly upon my own opinion. I will quote your pappa's words writing to the President of Congress. "Col. Smith has been very active and attentive to Business, and is much respected. He has as much honour and spirit as any Man I ever knew. [I suspect, however, that a dull diplomatic life, especially in a department so subordinate, will not long fulfill all the wishes of his generous heart.] His principles are those of his Country, and his abilities are worthy of them. He has not the poetical Genius of Humphries, but he has much superior talents, and a more independent temper as a politician. In short you could not have given me a Man more to my taste." I may further add that he is sedate, not too much given to amusement, and a mind above every little mean thought or action. He appears formed for a Military Life, and will figure at the Head of an Army should we have occasion for him.

**Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, Paris, 20 November 1785**

I congratulate you on the return of Colo. Smith. I congratulate you still more however on the extreme worth of his character, which was so interesting an object in a person connected in office so nearly with your family. I had never before had an opportunity of being acquainted with him. Your knowledge of him will enable you to judge of the advantageous impressions which his head, his heart, and his manners will have made on me.

**Richard Henry Lee to John Adams, Chantilly, Westmoreland County, Va., 12 December 1785**

It gives me pleasure to know that Colo. Smith is so agreeable a secretary to you, indeed I had expect'd so from his Politeness, his good sense, and his Spirit.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, London, 1786**

Your niece is engaged to a gentleman worthy of her; one, whom you will be proud to take by the hand, and own as a nephew. I cannot pass a higher encomium upon him than to say, that there is something to his manners, which often reminds me of my dear brother Cranch. With regard to his person, he is tall, slender, and a good figure, a complexion naturally dark, but made still more so by seven years' service in the field, where he reaped laurels more durable than the tincture of a skin.

He appears a gentleman in every thought, word, and action; domestic in his attachments, fond in his affections, quick as lightning in his feelings, but softened in an instant; his character is that of a dutiful son, and most affectionate brother. He trod the uncultivated wilds through the Indian country, and commanded a regiment under General Sullivan. As an officer, his character is highly meritorious; as a citizen, he appears all that a man ought to be, who loves his country, and is willing to devote his talents to the service of it.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris, 30 January 1787**

I learn that Mr. Adams desires to be recalled, and that Smith should be appointed Charge des Affairs there. It is not for me to decide whether any diplomatic character should be kept at a court which keeps none with us. You can judge of Smith's abilities by his letters. They are not of the first order but they are good. For his honesty he is like our friend Monro. Turn his soul wrong side outwards & there is not a speck on it. He has one foible, an excessive inflammability of temper but he feels it when it comes on, & has resolution enough to suppress it, and to remain silent till it passes over.

**Thomas Jefferson to William Carmichael, Bourdeaux, France, 26 May 1787**

Being thus far on my tour through the seaports, I find here a letter from Colo. Smith, informing me of his having passed this place on his way to Madrid. As I believe you are not acquainted with each other, give me leave to recommend him to your attentions, not as a matter of formality but with all the warmth which his uncommon merit deserves. His good sense you will immediately perceive, but the virtues of the heart require time and trial. I have had occasion to see them in him, and can assure you that his candor and honor may be relied on under every possible circumstance should there be occasion for confidential communications between you.

**John Adams to George Washington, New York, 20 June 1789**

Among the Candidates for the Honor of public Employment, under the New government there is one whose connection in my family, and public relation to me, in the late legation to St. James's would render me total silence on his account, liable to mis interpretation, as proceeding, either from a want of esteem, confidence, or affection for him on the one hand, or to a failure of respect to The President on the other.

The Gentleman I mean is Colonel Smith whose original education and Services, during the late War are all better known to you, Sir, than to me. He was indeed so much a stranger to me, that, to my recollection I never heard his name, 'till he was announced as the secretary of my Legation to Great Britain During the three Years that he resided with me in England, his Conduct was to my satisfaction—and his Character was much esteemed in England, France, Spain, Portugal through all which Countries he had occasion to travel.

As his Qualifications, are well known to you, sir, as to me, and the situations that require to be filled, and the merits of other Candidates, much better: it is not my intention to solicit any particular place for him. His inclination, as well as mine, would no doubt prefer something at home, but if the public service require a minister to go abroad, and he should be thought a proper person, I presume he would have no objection.

**Pierce Butler to Thomas Rakes, Philadelphia, 20 February 1792**

Will You pardon the liberty I take, for my too small acvquaintance with You will scarce warrant it, of introducing to You the Gentleman who will have the honor of delivering this letter—Colonel Wm Smith. I know You will find Him a man of strict honor—A Gentleman, & a well informed one. Coll Smith goes to England for the purpose of passing a few Months as a private Gentleman. If You shall find it convenient to shew Him any attention I shall feel the obligation conferred on me.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 21 January 1794**

Col. Smith spent about a fortnight here and is now returned. He is tormented by his Ambition but has taken very unsagacious measures to remove his pains. I know not what he is in Pursuit of.

**Charles Adams to John Adams, New York, 5 March 1794**

Col. Smith was taken by his foible vanity.

**John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 31 January 1795**

The happy Event in Col. Smith's family gives me much Joy—I hope the Increase of his family will teach him Moderation and Frugality.—If he has it in his Power to make a comfortable Provision for his Family he will be unpardonable to waste his means upon hounds and Horses. I don't wish him C[linton]n's *love of Poverty*, but I wish him some of his Frugality. The Lands he is daily eating, would make handsome Portions for his sons and Daughters Thirty or Forty Years hence.

**Charles Adams to Abigail Adams, New York, 11 September 1796**

I can give you no certain information respecting Col. Smith's affairs. He has a vast property in his hands but is very much embarrassed for want of money to make his regular payments as they become due. Whether on the winding up he will have anything left is what I believe neither he or anyone else knows. He acted on a very large scale and whatever he may think you and I know he is not a Robert Morris.

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 January 1797**

The Col[onel] is a Man wholly devoid of judgment & has deceived himself with visionary Schemes, and run risks which he ought not to have Done, and led his Family into a stile of living which I fear his means would not bear him out in.

**Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Albany, N.Y., 22 April 1797**

[Considering a nominee for position of Collector of the Port of New York] I should have mentioned Col. Smith among the most prominent but for the late unfortunate circumstances which attend him and which would render his appointment ineligible to such an Office at this time.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 6 February 1798**

The Colonel returned last week and has notified his Creditors to meet him in order to adjust with them his affairs. I cannot suppose that he has it in his power to satisfy the demands they have, but if he can settle so as to be able to do any business in future it will be a great relief to my mind as well as to hers [Mrs. Smith's]. But I am afraid of visions, of Ideal Scheme, &c. At any rate I am glad he has returned.

**William Stephens Smith to John Adams, East Chester, N.Y., 23 February 1798**

The report that on my visit to Detroit, I gave out, that I was sent by The President, for ends of Government of some sort or other—*is utterly and totally false*—and I defy the person or persons, who made this infamous communication, to face the question, or to point out during the excursion, that I ever mentioned, The President unless when his health was drank at table—

I am at a loss to account, from any action of my, life, how it was possible that The President should for a moment allow himself to believe me capable of so base and dishonourable a colouring.

**William Stephens Smith to Abigail Adams, East Chester, N.Y., 21 March 1798**

It would be singular indeed, were I to permit your friendly note of March 9th to pass unanswered, and not to thank you for forwarding the letter from the west-ward, which accompanied it. I should not have taken the liberty of desiring my correspondents to have addressed letters to me, to the care of the Presidents secretary, had I not experienced the basest treatment thro' the line of the Post offices; for every Letter I addressed to Mrs. Smith from May to the 3d of November, have been intercepted and never reached their address, to the amount of eleven in Number—& I find upon this ground, resentments have been cultivated, and by some, it has been considered, as an intentional Slight from me to my Wife—tho' I rank myself amongst the last, who should receive

this censure, and tho' I am confident no man in justice, was less exposed to such calculations, still I find in the minds of some, this, with other *high* and *flagrant* crimes, have been laid at my door, circulated with avidity, and credited with apparent pleasure—as your letter contains the only expression of regard that I have received from the family, since my return, except of my thanks for it; and to gratify my own feelings, I shall always retain the impression it makes—It will appear singular even to you, who have many interesting lines of sensibility in your composition, that from my Wifes friends, I have not received one complimentary one on the subject of my return, and I am not acquainted with any congratulations, that she may have received, indeed I doubt whether any have been made—this you will readily conceive, touches, my sensibility, and perplexes my mind—particularly, when I can look back with an unoffending heart, and review my conduct to my Wife and family for nearly 12 happy years, and no circumstance crosses my recollection wherein I failed in any of the important Duties, either of a Husband, a father, a son or a Brother—to what then must I attribute the Horrid state that I find myself in? but I do not mean to address myself to you my dear madam, in the line of complaint, or censure, it is only in the line of lamentation, “that such things are,” perhaps, the fault lays entirely with me, and I have not wisdom to deserve, or candour enough to acknowledge my faults—

With respect to my private, and pecuniary affairs, I am embarrassed, because, I have relied too much on the integrity of others, and never supposed that my own, could be called in question, but I find, I have relied too far, upon a conscious integrity, and upon the justice of those, who called themselves my friends—I find myself wounded in my honor, by the false statements of wicked, and designing men, under the garb of friendship—of course I must vindicate that honor. I have insults and injuries, to revenge, and a station to recover from which, I have been cruelly and unjustly crowded—under these circumstances, I feel no diffidence in appealing to those, who have been acquainted with the springs of my actions, and the principles which have regulated my conduct, to my Companions in arms, thro' the whole course of the last War,—to officers in the Enemies service—to my fellow Citizens, in my native City & thro' the Continent, whether, under any circumstance, or in any of the various stations of public or private Life, either in a civil or a military Capacity, I ever dealt by them unjustly, or ever acted a dishonourable or an uncandid part?—

By some, who considered themselves above me in wealth or station. I know I have been considered as proud & haughty, and have sometimes been made acquainted with their complaints on that score—such complaints however, could have only effected me, had they been made, by my inferiors in station or purse, to them I also appeal, if ever I neglected their suit, or denied them my bread—confident and bouyant in the appeals I make, judge of my sensations, when I noticed the avidity with which the world took hold of the first charge ever made against my honor and my Conduct—be not therefore astonished that I wrap myself in my Mantle and retire in disgust from the World—Caesar himself had not firmness enough to resist the stroke, when he saw the dagger of the assassins in the hands of his friends.

You may readily suppose this treatment has surprised, it shall also be a lesson to me hereafter—and at the same time, I may safely say with Bolingbroke, that I am far from being conquered by the storms of misfortune, I bear up against it with firmness enough—but it is true—the burst of the cloud had gone nigh to overwhelm me, from our enemies [we] expect evil treatment of every sort, we are prepared for it—we are animated by it—and we sometimes triumph in it but when our friends, abandon us, when they wound us, and when they take to do this, an occasion where we stand the most in need of their support—and have the best title to it the firmest mind finds it hard to resist—Your goodness will excuse the freedom of this letter—and your own mind will tell you that I do not complain of, but to you—

I would detail to you the prospect I have of rising superior to the attack made upon me, were I not satisfied, that I had better leave the circumstances to unfold themselves, least my projects should be thought visionary and delusive, however I really flatter myself, I shall readily overcome them and be free once more, to move in the storm that overshadows my Country Should it burst—and as I did before, acquire a degree of honest fame, and have hitherto been the founder of my own fortunes. I think I can with equal success, after I have rendered pecuniary justice to all; rub off the unmerited blot on my coat, with my Sword—

#### **Timothy Pickering to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 18 July 1798**

Then follow the names of old officers from whom to select brigadiers &c. and unfortunately, among those for brigadiers, was that of William S. Smith, the President's son-in-law. It was concluded yesterday to nominate Mr. Dayton (the Speaker of the House) Adjutant General, with the rank of Brigadier General. But I believe the President has changed his mind, and will appoint Dayton 3d brigadier, & Smith 4th with the office of Adjutant General. . . . I deprecate the appointment of Smith, which will injure the President in two ways. 1st because he is the President's son-in-law—for this will be contrasted with General Washington's caution to steer clear of his relations. 2d. because Smith is a bankrupt, and if I am rightly informed, *with a ruined reputation*.

#### **Timothy Pickering to George Washington, Trenton, N.J., 1 September 1798**

The Senate were, to their honor, nearly unanimous in negating Colo. Wm. S. Smith [as Adjutant General]—he had but two votes in his favour. The President did not know that he was a bankrupt in fame as well as fortune. He has effectually concealed his swindling transactions from his father-in-law, who believes him sound in morals and a great military character. The two opinions are alike incorrect.

#### **John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Washington, 28 November 1806**

I consider William Smith, as having a very sorry prospect before him for his future life—Bred to nothing—possess'd of nothing—Having Nothing to expect—This quixotic adventure at the outset of life, is just calculated to make him fit for nothing upon this Earth—The Coll: with manifest efforts keeps up an appearance of Spirits—My Sister feels the difficulties of her situation and struggles against them with fortitude—But her prospects are dark, and threaten to be still more so—I hope she will go on with me in the Spring—The Coll: seems still to flatter himself with the hopes of an appointment—I know not why—

#### **John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Washington, 17 December 1806**

I know not where the report could have arisen that Coll: Smith was gone to the westward, unless from his intimacy with Burr—I was myself very glad to find that he had no knowledge whatever of Burr's projects—which he very explicitly declared to me he had not—What Burr's real projects are appear still to be very little known—The Reports hitherto circulated on the subject are as unsupported by any substantial Evidence as they are multifarious.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 21 August 1812**

I have Often regretted that your son in law has been overlooked in the late military Appointments. He has courage and talents, but Alas! you say he is still his own enemy.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 4 September 1812**

You misunderstood me. I did not Say that Col Smith is Still his own Enemy. Far otherwise. In total Retirement, in Agricultural Labour and incessant reading, his time is Spent. His Heart bleeds for his Country, and burns to Serve it. To you I will Say in Secret What is Hull, what is Eustis, what is Armstrong, what is Dearborne as Soldiers or as Officers, to him? He is as Sensible of the Justice and Necessity of this War as you and I are, and I fear more Sensible of the improvident unskillfull Conduct of it; because he understands the Subject better than We do. I have no hope that he will be employed: but it is to be regretted that Such Talents, Such Tacticks, Such discipline and Such Experience Should perish and be lost. But So it must be and I must be Silent. He was not a Sagacious Politician. He has been led astray into Error, by Chancellor Livingston, by Burr, and by Miranda. But who has not? He absolutely refused to have any concert in Burrs Washita Project, and protested against it.

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

I have here written to you in the Stile of a Father, as I have a right to do. I think at the Same time, it is a Misfortune to this Nation that your Talents Qualities and Experience and Military Science Should be lost to the Nation. If you answer this Letter, you shall hear more from your Affectionate / Father in Law.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 1 July 1813**

Smith is in Congress, as cool as a Cucumber. He has hitherto predicted like Daniel and John. He is in a kind of Centre, Surrounded by green heads, and grey heads.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 25 June 1816**

The Valley has enhumated three Brothers in three months. The last of the Three was the widowed Husband of my only Daughter. To his Virtues ever kind: to his faults a little blind. The World will never know all the good, or all the Evil he has done.

**Abigail Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 June 1816**

he was Sensible of his danger and willing to leave a world, in which he has never appeared to take pleasure, since the loss of his beloved Partner. he was much broken down in his constitution, and for two years past very Lame, from a wound he received in his Leg, in the revolutionary war. He was a Brave officer, but through Life an unfortunate Man, with a Noble and generous Spirit, a tender heart, and kind affections, meaning no ill and not Suspecting it in others; he too often became the prey, of the artfull and the designing.

**John Adams to John Adams Smith, Quincy, Mass., 25 August 1816**

I must conclude with a more tender subject; your Father is no more. I am too seriously and deeply affect with this melancholly event to write upon it, more than this, that you ought to study his Biography, to imitate the goodness of his heart, his Gentlemanly manners: but to avoid his Errors.

## Richard Dobbs Spaight

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 25 April 1784**

. . . he [John Francis Mercer] intrigued with a young fool from North Carolina [Spaight]. . . . [Mercer] in conjunction with [Jacob] Read and Spaight obstruct business inconceivably. The last is of North Carolina & no otherwise of consequence than as by his vote he can divide his state.

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

Mr. Spaight is a worthy Man, of some abilities, and fortune. Without possessing a Genius to render him brilliant, he is able to discharge any public trust that his Country may repose in him. He is about 31 years of age.

## Joseph Spencer

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 20 July 1775**

General Washington writes, that Spencer left his post without so much as waiting on him, or sending him a Single Word of his Intentions. You can be at no Loss to infer what Opinion is formed of him from this Conduct indoors & out, suffice it to say the Voice here is that he acted a part, inconsistent, with the Character, either of a Soldier, a Patriot, or even of a Common Gentleman to desert his post in an hour of Danger, to sacrifice his Country, which he certainly did as farr as was in his power, and to turn his back sullenly on his General, a General too of such exalted worth, and Character, will I can assure you, unless he take the most Speedy & effectual Measures to atone, draw down upon him the Resentment of the whole Continent.

## James Sproat

**John Adams: Diary, 17 September 1775**

Heard Sprout, on 3 Tit. 5. Not by Works of Righteousness, which We have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, through the Washing of Regeneration and the Renewing of the holy Ghost. There is a great deal of Simplicity and Innocence in this worthy Man, but very little Elegance or Ingenuity. In Prayer, he hangs his Head in an Angle of 45° over his right Shoulder. In

Founders on the Founders



Sermon, which is delivered without Notes, he throws himself into a Variety of indecent Postures. Bends his Body, Points his Fingers, and throws about his Arms, without any Rule or Meaning at all. He is totally destitute of the Genius and Eloquence of Duffil [Duffield], has no Imagination, No Passions, no Wit, no Taste and very little Learning, but a great deal of Goodness of Heart.

## Joseph Stanton, Jr.

### **William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 12 June 1790**

Our Senators are Joseph Stanton of Charlestown, and Theodore Foster of Providence.—The first is a violent paper-money man, and was an obstinate Anti to the last, the other is a Fed and a modest, ingenious man.

### **Henry Marchant to John Adams, Newport, R.I., 12 June 1790**

Joseph Stanton is the other Senator—Antie up to the Brain—without one Quality to balance it—

## Bolling Starke

### **Thomas Jefferson to William Wirt, Monticello, 4 September 1816**

Starke . . . was nobody; a mere loungee at the bar, without business, without knowledge, and without principle.

## John Stark

### **John Adams to John Sullivan, Philadelphia, 3 June 1777**

I regret with you the Loss of Colonel Stark, of whose Experience and Bravery, I have often heard the best accounts. I knew not the Man but some Gentlemen represented him as unequal in Abilities to the high command of a General officer.

### **John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 21 August 1777**

10 o Clock at Night Just come in from Congress. We have within this Hour, received Letters of G[enerals] Schuyler and Lincoln, giving an Account of the Battle of Bennington, wherein Gen. Starks has acquired great Glory, and so has his Militia. The Particulars are to be out in an Hand Bill, tomorrow Morning. I will inclose you one.

**John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Montezillo (Quincy), Mass., 11 June 1822**

Poor Starke remembered nothing, and talked of nothing, but the Battle of Bennington—

## John Steele

**Edmund Randolph to George Washington, Philadelphia, 28 February 1793**

Mr. Madison, who knows the other gentleman [i.e., John Steele] well, describes him, as of moderate parts, questionable character liable to be caught by an address to his vanity, and easily moved to extreme measures by a passionateness of temper. Nor can I by any inquiry discover him to possess those qualities which attract public confidence.

## Adam Stephen

**Marquis de Lafayette: Memoirs of 1776**

General Stephen was always drunk.

**Benjamin Rush to Richard Henry Lee, Near Bristol, 21 December 1776**

A distrust has crept in among the troops of the abilities of some of our general officers high in command. They expect nothing now from heaven-taught and book-taught generals. I hope in our next promotions we shall disregard seniority. Stevens must be made a major general; he has genius as well as knowledge.

**Charles Carroll of Carrollton to George Washington, Lancaster, Pa., 27 September 1777**

I am sorry to observe that two officers in high command in our army are said to be much addicted to liquor: what trust, what confidence can be reposed in such men? They may disconcert the wisest & best laid plans: such men ought to be removed from their command & the army, for their example, besides the mischief which may be occasioned by a clouded & muddled brain, will have a pernicious influence on others: but how are they to be removed from their command? I could wish to know your Excellency's Sentiments on this Subject. The interest of the best & most glorious cause ought not to be sacrificed to a false delicacy: these are not times to put into competition the interests of a few with those of a great community.\*

\*Stephen was dismissed from the service, for drunkenness and unofficerlike conduct at the battle of Germantown, on 20 November 1777.

**Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr., York, Pa., 12 October 1777**

We hear that several officers in General Steven's division have lodged complaints against him. I believe them to be well founded for Stevens (entre nous) drinks.

**Report of a Court of Enquiry, Camp Whitpain, Pa., 1 November 1777**

The Court of enquiry having fully examined into the Charges exhibited against Major Genl Stephens, for Unofficer like behavior on the town; Also for drunkenness. Beg leave to report the substance of the Evidence, as follows:

To the first charge there are several unquestionable Evidences of their being great confusion upon the march from the Clove to the Delaware, that General Stephens frequently contradicted by verbal orders his own written ones. He issued in orders that the first Brigade which got ready to march in the morning should march in front, this produced some altercation and great confusion. On this March the Genl was often seen intoxicated, which was generally supposed the cause of the confusion and disorder which prevailed. At Howell's Ferry the General was seen in open view of all the soldiers very drunk taking snuff out of the Boxes of strumpets.

**Elbridge Gerry to Joseph Trumbull, York, Pa., 27 November 1777**

General Stevens is broke for Drunkenness.

**James Lovell to Joseph Trumbull, York, Pa., 28 November 1777**

General Stevens is dismissed with several inferior Officers by sentence of Court martial *approved* by General Washington, which looks a little like firmness and rising Discipline. Cowardice, Theft & Drunkenness must take warning.

## Samuel Sterett

**"T.G.," *Maryland Journal*, 2 January 1789**

I am happy to find that Mr. Samuel Sterett offers himself a Candidate to represent this State in Congress. His political Abilities and Experience, His Honour, Integrity, and Assiduity in Business, promise us every Advantage of a good Representation.

## Baron Fredrich Wilhelm von Steuben

**Robert Morris to Henry Laurens, Manheim, 4 February 1778**

Doctor Franklin writes in very strong terms of this Gentleman's military experience & Talents to Mr. Bache now here & at whose desire I mention it; having served so long as twenty years under so great a Master as the King of Prussia one cannot but entertain expectations that the Baron must be capable of rendering important Services to this country, otherways the Art Military is not acquirable by opportunity & experience alone.

**Elbridge Gerry to Samuel Adams, York, Pa., 7 February 1778**

The Baron de Steuben is in Town, & is much esteemed as a great Officer & accomplished Gentleman. His proposals will be complied with by Congress.

**Henry Laurens to James Duane, York, Pa., 7 April 1778**

Baron Stuben has condescended to Act the Drill Master as well as the Inspector in Camp, he has hit the taste of the Officers, gives universal satisfaction & I am assured has made an amazing improvement in discipline. A Young correspondent of mine who is a very honest Man & not very ignorant & who had always regretted the deficiency of discipline, tells me if I were present I should be enchanted by the change suddenly made in the grand Camp.

**Alexander Scammell to John Sullivan, 8 April 1778**

The Baron Steuben set us a truly noble example—He has undertaken the Discipline of the army & shows himself to be a perfect Master of it, not only in the grand maneuvers but in every Minutia—to see a Gentleman dismissed with a Lt. General's Commission from the great Prussian Monarch, condescend with a grace peculiar to himself, to take under his direction, a Squad, of ten or twelve men in Capacity of a Drill Serjt. induce the Officers & men to admire him—and improve exceeding fast under his Instructions—

**Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Laurens, Camp at Valley Forge, Pa., 14 April 1778**

I have seen the Prussian Baron who seems a sensible, good, disinterested man, and takes good deal of trouble to teach the soldiers some of our European maneuvers and regulations.

**Henry Laurens to John Laurens, York, Pa., 11 May 1778**

The great improvements in the discipline of your Army marked in your favor of the 7th must afford a Gentleman of good taste in the Military Science all that Satisfaction which you have expressed & probably a little more than can be described upon paper. I, who love order & etiquette & particularly love your General, participate your pleasure; go on improve till that which was impudently said & sarcastically intended shall be verified, Washington in War shall be equal to Frederic—in many respects he is far superior. The public is indebted to Baron Stuben, their minds I hope will in due time be impressed with a Sense of his Merits & that proper effects will be produced.

**George Washington to Gouverneur Morris, White Plains, N.Y., 24 July 1778**

Baron Steuben, I now find, is also wanting to quit his inspectorship for a command in the line. This will be productive for much discontent to the brigadiers. In a word, although I think the Baron an excellent officer, I do most devoutly wish, that we had not a single foreigner among us, except the Marquis de Lafayette, who acts upon very different principles from those which govern the rest.

**William Whipple to John Langdon, Philadelphia, 4 January 1779**

The Baron is in very high estimation in the army, has done very essential Services and is very particularly attended to by the Commander in Chief.

**Nathanael Greene to Baron Steuben, Camp Kershaws Ferry, S.C., 7 January 1781**

Colonel [Henry] Lee tells me that you are upon exceeding good terms with the Governor and Legislators of Virginia; and that they respect and venerate you in the highest degree. I fear when you leave it nothing will be done. The state is lifeless and inactive, unless they are often electrified. To your address and industry I consider myself principally indebted for what is coming on.

**Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, Richmond, Va., 10 January 1781**

In the meanwhile Baron Steuben a zealous friend has descended from the dignity of his proper command to direct our smallest movements. His vigilance has in a great measure supplied the want of force in preventing the enemy from crossing the river, which might have been very fatal. He has been assiduously employed in preparing equipment for the Militia as they should assemble pointing them to a proper object and other offices of a good commander. Should they loiter a little longer and he be able to have a sufficient force I shall flatter myself they will not escape with total impunity.

**William North to Nathanael Greene, Moors Ordinary Prince Edward County, Va., 23 February 1781**

The Baron wishes to be with you. He had rather Obey in an Army, than Command in Virginia.

**George Washington to Baron Steuben, New Windsor, N.Y., 21 March 1781**

I am sensible, My Dear Baron, your zeal, activity and ability have been conspicuous on every occasion, but in no instance have you displayed a greater share of each, than in organizing the Troops, arranging the Military affairs of Virginia, forwarding the succors to Genl. Greene, and making the necessary preparations with so much celerity and judgment, for cooperating in an attack of the Post of Portsmouth.

**Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Allen's Creek, 22 miles from Richmond, Va., 18 June 1781**

The conduct of the Baron, my dear general, is to me unintelligible. Every man, woman and child in Virginia is roused against him. They dispute even on his courage but I cannot believe their assertions. I must however confess that he had 500 and odds new levies and some militia, that he was on the other side of a river which the freshet rendered very difficult to be crossed particularly by people that had no boats, that the greatest part of the accounts make Simcoe 400 strong half of them dragoons, that our stores on the south side were destroyed by about 30 or 40 men, that the Baron went to Staunton River about 70 miles from the Point of Fork, that the militia abandoned him and I am informed the new levies deserted from him, because they did not like his maneuver.

General Lawson and every officer and soldier both in the regulars and militia are so much exasperated against the Baron and cover him with so many ridicules that after I have obtained a junction with him I do not know where to employ him without giving offense.

**Marquis de Lafayette to Nathanael Greene, Col. Dandrige's, 23 miles from Richmond, Va., 20 June 1781**

All Virginia was in an uproar against him. The enemy laughed at him. And I cannot describe to you what my surprise has been—but I did not choose to be too severe in my public letter and request this may be private to yourself.

**Marquis de Lafayette to George Washington, Malvan Hill, Va., 20 July 1781**

It appears an embarkation is taking place, probably destined to New York. The war in this state would then become a plundering one, and great maneuvers be out of the question. A prudent officer would do our business here, and the Baron is prudent to the utmost.

**Ebenezer Denny: Journal, 15 September 1781**

[At Yorktown.] The presence of so many general officers, and the arrival of new corps, seem to give additional life to everything; discipline the order of the day. In all directions troops seen exercising and maneuvering. Baron Steuben, our great military oracle.

**Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, New York, 7 December 1784**

The Baron, if he remains in this Country will continue a citizen of New York. It seems to me, circumstanced as we are, it is not a contemptible object to give inducements to stay among us to a man whose military experience would be of singular advantage, in forming those establishments to which we may be driven.

**Benjamin Walker to George Washington, New York, 20 December 1784**

Generals Knox—Greene—Gates—the Baron & Colonel Pickering are all mentioned for Secretary at War—my friend the Baron lives about five miles from this City. Keeps very little company but lives retired I fear his situation is rather desponding.

**John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams (Nabby), New York, 9 August 1785**

There was a very sumptuous entertainment today at Genl. Knox's. Near thirty persons present. I there saw the Baron de Steuben for the first time: he lives at a Country seat near the City, which he calls his *Louvre*. *What a name, for a Republican! Such a trifling incident sometimes discovers the real sentiments of a man, more than important actions.* However we must never form an opinion rashly upon any subject.

**Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, New York, 25 November 1785**

The Poor *Baron* is still soliciting Congress, and has every prospect of Indigence before him. He has his imprudencies; but upon the whole he has rendered valuable services; and his merits and

the reputation of the Country alike demand that he should not be left to suffer want. If there could be any mode by which Your influence could be employed in his favor; by writing to Your friends in Congress or otherwise, The Baron and his friends would be under great obligations to you.

**Don Diego de Gardoqui to Conde de Floridablanca, New York, 6 December 1787\***

Baron Steuben of whom I spoke to Your Excellency some time ago perplexes me immensely.

I have avoided him as much as possible until I received Your Excellency's orders and finally he sought me out on the first of last month, earnestly urging me officially to write to Your Excellency requesting you to present him at the feet of His Majesty as an honorary official, who, having fulfilled the obligations for which he came, finds himself free of the United States which *he said* had treated him despicably and vilely (those were his words).

\*Translated from Spanish.

**Alexander Hamilton to William Livingston, 29 August 1788**

The Baron De Steuben informs me that he expects to set out this day on a visit to your legislature to endeavor to procure some arrangement respecting the place at Hackensack some time since granted to him by your state upon certain conditions. My anxiety for the Baron's situation induces me to take the liberty of asking your friendship to him as far as may consist with considerations of propriety. It is needless to say to you that he has been a most useful servant of the public. I imagine it is as little necessary to observe, that he is a man, the qualities of whose heart entitle him to the Sympathy and good will of good men. I shall only add that he is in a condition, for a man of his temper and habits, deplorable. He is as nearly as much in debts as all the property he has *would sell for*, and he is at the same time moneyless. Congress are now discussing his last application on the footing of a contract; but there are some circumstances which involve the transaction in obscurity; and there are individuals not disposed to overcome difficulties. I fear little is to be looked for. The question, however is—Shall we permit a man, who has effectually served the American cause, either to starve or to go abroad begging?

**Alexander Hamilton to Angelica Church, New York, 8 November 1789**

The good Baron has more than ever riveted himself in my affection: to observe his unaffected solicitude and see his old eyes brimful of sympathy had something in it that won my whole soul and filled me with more than usual complacency for human nature.

**Alexander Hamilton to James Duane, New York, 7 May 1790**

The form of the bill [to compensate von Steuben] has been changed today. He is to be paid 7000 Dollars & an annuity for life but the blank is not filled up. Nobody talks of less than 1500 Dollars. The Baron says his contract or nothing; but you & all his friends must join me in telling him that to act upon this would be to act like a boy. This must be done before you leave town.

**George Washington: Opinion of General Officers, 9 March 1792**

Sensible, Sober and brave; well acquainted with Tactics and with the arrangement and discipline of an Army. High in his ideas of Subordination impetuous in his temper; ambitious, and a foreigner.

**Charles Adams to Abigail Adams, New York, 22 September 1794**

On the fourteenth of October I shall set out for Albany. The earnest solitations of the Baron have drawn a promise from me to spend a few days with him at his solitude after I have passed my Counsellor's examination. I have always lamented that you have so little acquaintance with this excellent man. I never have known a more noble character and his affection for me calls forth every sentiment of gratitude which can exist in my breast.

**John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 6 December 1794**

I condole with you, under the mournful News of the Baron's Palsy. I have long wondered that a Military Character so habituated to exercise should have neglected it so imprudently for so many Years.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 7 December 1794**

I am afraid Charles will loose his Friend Steuben. He writes me that the Baron has been Stricken with a Palsy, a Catastrophy naturally to be expected from his total neglect of Exercise. It is unaccountable that a Military Man, who must have used so much Exercise in some parts of his Life and have felt the Pleasure as well as the Salubrity of it, should be become so indolent in his old Age. But Men in solitude are apt to become inactive in proportion as they increase their gormandizing

**Charles Adams to Abigail Adams, New York, 11 December 1794**

Since I left the Baron which was about three weeks ago I have had the melancholy account of his being attacked with the numb palsey. I never expect to see him again. His total neglect of exercise has rendered it almost impossible he should ever recover. Thus strikes the hand of disease—and we are no more. To me he has been a friend indeed and I may never expect “to look upon his like again.”

## Walter Stewart

**John Hancock to Ebenezer Hancock, Baltimore, Md., 2 January 1777**

This will be handed you by Colonel Stewart, a Friend of Mine, & a Gentleman of an Amiable Character, & Spirited officer.



## Ezra Stiles

### John Quincy Adams: *Diary*, 19 August 1785

. . . went with me, to Dr. Stiles the President of the College; who is a curious character. Mr. Jefferson once told, me, he thought him an uncommon instance of the deepest learning without a spark of genius. He was very polite to me, and shew me, the Library, and the apparatus of the College: he has a few natural curiosities; but nothing very extraordinary.

## Samuel Stillman

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

Samuel Stillman, pastor of the Baptists in this city [Boston], has fluency, much vivacity, and gesticulation, but not much of the accomplished orator.

## Michael Jenifer Stone

### Michael Jenifer Stone to Walter Stone, New York, 27 April 1790

I am Still in very poor Health—Tho' I believe I am getting better—I have been joked here about my Complaints and they have been said to be the effects of *Love*. But I give you my word that the Sex has not been the Cause—and that I have Stated them truly—I only mention this that you may be authorized to contradict any report—I find so much said about me in my own Country that are not true that I am Cautious.

## Thomas Stone

### Robert Morris to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, 7 October 1782

I have already informed our mutual Friend Thomas Stone Esqr. that the Appointment of the Collectors of 5 per Cent Impost remains in Congress and that I apprehend your Delegates will be called upon to Nominate. It will always afford me pleasure to render Service to Gentlemen of such worthy Character as Colo. Stone.

### Daniel Carroll to Thomas Sim Lee, Philadelphia, 8 October 1782

Col. Stone's merit is well known to several members of Congress, & when the business of the 5 per Cent is taken up will I have no doubt be attended to if he shou'd Continue [in the] same mind after what I have wrote to him.

**James Monroe to James Madison, Philadelphia, 12 September 1786**

Mr. Stone is my friend and a very upright sensible Man.

## Joseph Story

**John Quincy Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Washington, 17 February 1806**

I am glad to find that your lawyers of both parties are agreed in supporting the plan for an improvement in the Judiciary—The opinion of young Mr: Story is in my mind of peculiar weight—I should recommend to you to cultivate an acquaintance with this Gentleman, who is certainly possess'd of considerable talents, and will I hope make a valuable public character—His *popular* propensities must be regarded with indulgence; because it is the sin which most easily besets all young men of aspiring genius, and strong minds—When they have radical principle at the heart, their overweening democratic passions wear away as they advance in years, and rise in the world—Many of our most distinguished men have begun their career with the same enthusiasm of popularity as Mr: Story has manifested—And he has already given ample proofs of various kinds that he is not to be ranked with the vulgar herd of demagogues—

## Caleb Strong

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Boston, 18 June 1787**

I am happy you are pleased with the character of Mr. Strong. He is indeed a very able, sensible, good man.

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

Mr. Strong is a Lawyer of some eminence,—he has received a liberal education, and has good connections to recommend him. As a Speaker he is feeble, and without confidence. This Gentleman is about thirty five years of age, and greatly in the esteem of his Colleagues.

**William Maclay: Journal, 16 May 1789**

Strong, who is but a poor Speaker shewed ill nature.

**William Maclay: Journal, 20 August 1789**

I cannot help writing that Senatorial Honor dwells not east of the Hudson. Strong was most uncandid & selfish, and often up [to speak].

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 10 December 1792**

Tell my Brother that; Mr. Strong may be reelected. He is an excellent head and heart. They cannot do better.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Stockbridge, Mass., 26 September 1800**

Our old friend Strong will, I hope, make us a pretty good governor—We are not, indeed, to suppose that opposition will be deterred by imposing frowns—nor are we to expect that much of dignity will be added to Government by a commanding ascendancy of character, but every thing that a pleasing suavity of manners, pure morals, integrity and a spirit of conciliation can effect may be relied on. Firmness, in cases where expedients can not be resorted to, will not be wanting, but that is a resource which never will be resorted to but in cases of necessity; nor will he ever assume unnecessary responsibility.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 5 June 1806**

Caleb Strong is a fair & amiable man & is supported by the federalists [for Massachusetts governor] the personal popularity of Strong gave him the majority over the unpopular [James] Sullivan.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 8 June 1815**

I cannot Send you Mr Strong's Speech. It makes me Sick. Such a model of Monkish Evasion Equivocation, wrong headedness, and Malignity, well as I thought I knew the Man, I did not expect.

## David Stuart

**Thomas Jefferson to Martin Van Buren, Monticello, 29 June 1824**

With Doctor Stuart I had not much acquaintance. I supposed him to be an honest man, knew him to be a very weak one, and, like Mr. Pickering, very prone to antipathies, boiling with party passions, and under the dominion of these readily welcoming fancies for facts.

## Gilbert Stuart

**Louisa Catherine Adams: Journal, 27 September 1821**

The morning was engaged in preparations for our great party—George went into Town and Mr. Shaw and Mr. Stewart the Painter came out to take a sitting of the old Gentleman for a Picture. He looked remarkably well and was in fine spirits—Mr. S. dined with us and contrary to expectation was a perfect lump from whom it was impossible to extract any thing unless the Snuff he was continually scattering about in the very eyes of the company may be counted as an agreement. In

this case he must be superlative for he certainly was an Emblem of abundance—He is so noted for brilliancy that it could only be accounted for by supposing that he was so intent on procuring a good likeness his thoughts could not be called from his subject—The personal appearance of this man is if possible more than disgusting—he is literally one of those Person's that one would select to point out to youth the dangers of dissipation.

## James Sullivan

### Stephen Higginson to Unknown, 21 July 1783

Massachusetts appears to be in a great fermentation. Parties run very high there, and violent measures are pursuing. The French Interest is united with the *Governor*. *Judge Sullivan* is their Leader, and 'tis well known to You that he will be stopp'd by no principle or consideration.

### Harrison Gray Otis to Elbridge Gerry, Boston, 25 July 1789

I hardly know how to apologize for addressing you upon a subject concerning which my information may not be correct and my opinion cannot be important—The respect and friendship which I entertain towards Judge Sullivan are my principal inducements, and if in the instance which I have in view, I can be in the least degree serviceable to him I am sure the benefit to the community will be in the same proportion—It has been suggested to me that this Gentleman is in nomination for Judge of the District of Massachusetts, and would probably be elected were it not for intimations secretly propagated that his election would be displeasing to the people—It would prove in my opinion a most unfortunate circumstance, should his election miscarry in consequence of a report so injurious and untrue—That this event would be disgusting to some few persons, who think they have an exclusive right to form and to represent the opinions of the people, will not admit of doubt, and it is equally certain that he has been stigmatized and abused for not feigning those raptures in favor of every sentence of the new constitution, which few men of sound judgment and information really felt—It is moreover true that his character is traduced by the veteran Tories who resent his early exertions in the cause of freedom—But I cannot believe that circumstances of this nature which must be well known to you Sir, have had the least tendency to disqualify him in your view for an important national trust; and nothing can be more false than an idea that his election would be generally unpopular—Few persons possess a more extensive influence than this Gentleman in the Counties of Middlesex, Worcester and throughout the Eastern Country [Maine]—His opinion is revered and his integrity approved by all his Employers, and his professional eminence and abilities do not require a comment—He is also the eldest Barrister in the Commonwealth, except Mr. Lowell who has (I hear) declined the appointment, and Mr. [Robert Treat] Paine who could not accept it—It has been hinted that Mr. Nathan Cushing may probably obtain the office in the event of Judge Sullivan's being omitted—I believe him to be a worthy man—but if I may venture an opinion upon the subject, the appointment of a man destitute of legal erudition, will enfeeble the dignity of the federal court, compel Suitors in all practicable cases to resort to the appellate jurisdiction at an enormous expense, and disgust the people with the image of an inefficient tribunal analogous to the Common Pleas so long the object of detestation among them—I should not Sir presume to write with this freedom did I not know that Mr. Sullivan has ever been attached to your character, and an Advocate for your measures and conduct, and also,

that among his professional Brethren, he will not find many warmly disposed to support him—It is natural for some who are nearly upon a footing with him, to regard with a degree of jealousy a man who unassisted by a regular education, and aided merely by the vigor of his mind has attained to the highest grade of professional reputation, and it is also natural for younger men to form their opinions & prejudices in the same mould with their Preceptors—Should the report which I allude to be found actually in circulation I flatter myself you will be induced to counteract it.

**James Sullivan to Elbridge Gerry, Boston, 25 July 1789**

My Soul abhors the man who when called upon by Duty will not boldly Speak his opinion.

**Elbridge Gerry to Samuel Adams, New York, 7 August 1789**

Mr. Sullivan's politics at this time, accord with the sentiments, as I conceive of the people, & his conduct as a Judge has, as I have always understood been unexceptionable.

**Christopher Gore to Rufus King, Boston, 22 August 1789**

Whom to recommend as district judge I do not know. Sullivan is well qualified, in point of capacity—but the world says that his heart is not true.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, 13 September 1790**

There is a savage whom you should avoid like the plague, but at the same time to not withhold the respect which his age and rank at the bar entitle him to. A more false and faithless character than Sullivan is scarcely to be found. His pretended friendship and secret enmity to me both of which I have sufficient evidence I equally despise. But he cannot hurt me; to you he can do damage.

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

There are not in the profession many gentlemen inhabiting this town whose characters are remarkably formidable from their respectability. Mr. Sullivan does more business I suppose than any four others put together. I shall carefully remember the cautions in one of your letters respecting him; whatever other qualities he may possess, he may safely be taken as a model for industry and activity. "I believe," said Parson Clarke to me the other day, "that man has not a particle of indolence in his nature." He treats me civilly, and it is all I wish. I have derived even some instruction from his private conversation as well as from his arguments at the bar, and the other day he gave me a caution, which made a singular impression upon my mind. I was sitting next to him within the bar at Concord. He took from his finger a ring, and pointed to me the motto engraved within the rim. It was "Weigh the Consequences." *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*. Perhaps the benefit of the admonition may not be lost in its influence upon my conduct towards the man himself. I have no desire to render my self personally obnoxious to him, and I trust I shall always disdain to court his favor.

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 1 February 1793**

I was at the Assembly, and received many polite attentions. Mr. S——n and his Lady were civil beyond my conception. Such kind inquiries after the health of the V. P. and such solicitude to accommodate me.

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 12 January 1794**

Columbus finished in his 5th Number, and I mean to hint to Barneveldt to close as soon as possible. Americanus is by no means a match for him, but he is a false, fibbing contemptible antagonist, and will with a Brasen front; affirm that white is black, & black white, and tho the publick may be benefitted by shewing the Man in his true light and Character, there is no touching pitch without being defiled, and in order to confute him, he must be followed through his windings, and his inconsistencies. These two writers may be compared to the Eagle and the Snake. “The Side way and oblique motion with which the Snake goes on, points out the deceit he proceeds with. His Breast fix’d to the Earth, shews his adherence to self interest; the various inflexions and foldings of his Body are descriptive of his crooked Soul; and his conceald venom denotes the evil intention he hides. The generous Eagle aspires to mount through the pure Air, by an honest flight, with his own Native strength, and the shafts which may be thrown at him, will recoil and wound the pursuers.”

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 12 January 1794**

I read Barneveldt in Monday’s paper. It may be necessary to defend himself, but I look upon his opponent in a contemptible light, and that no honour or reputation is to be obtained in a contest with him. I therefore wish to see Barneveldt close.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 14 January 1794**

I have not seen Americanus [Sullivan] nor Barneveldt [John Quincy Adams]. But in the former the latter has to deal with a Man who is the least of a Gentleman of any one in Boston. I hope the latter will not forget that he is one.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 18 January 1794**

Americanus has received just such a Flagellation as he has deserved these twenty Years. His Blunders, his Ignorance, his Dullness, his Duplicity and Insincerity has been detected and exposed. And if the Blockhead had always been treated with the Same Freedom & Spirit he would have been held in total Contempt before this day and would have been quite harmless. I hope however that Barneveld [i.e., John Quincy Adams] will not make himself cheap by meddling much with Such Fools and Knaves.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 8 March 1794**

S. is as Slippery as an Eel: He is not worth quarrelling with: but certainly is not to be trusted:— His Treaty with Spain is a great Curiosity. I am really at a loss to guess, whether it was Ignorance or Impudence. He has so much of both, and at the Same time so much Imagination and Volubility, as to make a Character quite original. As John [Quincy Adams] has whipped him at the Whipping

Post, with at least thirty-nine lashes, well laid on, and can lash him again or set him in the Pillory whenever he deserves it, it is not worth his while to break with him in any other Way. There are no moral Feelings in him which John can ever confide in or attach himself to. Honour, Fidelity, Sincerity, Friendship, Gratitude, Candour, are not, locked up in that Casket.

**John Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 13 March 1794**

Proteus will never merit your Friendship and is not worth your Enmity. Do him Justice but court neither his ill Will or Good Will. You have made him feel your Superiority to him, and it may not be amiss, and you will have Opportunities enough for it, to put him now and then in mind of it, by making him see his own Ignorance and Absurdity.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 5 June 1806**

I am convinced that the dominant party will bring in James Sullivan as governor. His character is bad.

**Josiah Quincy to Theophilus Parsons, Jr., Boston, 23 April 1857**

James Sullivan was a man of uncommon intellectual powers, and his influence over the mind of Hancock was well understood.

## John Sullivan

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, Mass., 10 December 1775**

I drank coffee one day with General Sullivan upon Winter Hill. He appears to be a Man of Sense and Spirit. His countenance denotes him of a warm constitution, not to be very suddenly moved, but when once roused, not very easily Lulled. Easy and sociable, well calculated for a Military Station, as he seems to be possessed of those popular qualifications necessary to attach Men to him.

**Marquis de Lafayette: Memoirs of 1776**

Major General Sullivan (was very vain, but did not lack talent. He had made a good beginning, but had not succeeded in a surprise attack on Staten Island.

**John Sullivan to Philip Schuyler, Sorell, Quebec, 12 June 1776**

I now think only of a glorious Death or a victory obtained against Superior numbers.

**George Washington to John Hancock, New York, 17 June 1776**

[Compares a letter from John Sullivan to one from Benedict Arnold.]

That the former is aiming at the Command in Canada, is obvious—whether he merits it or not is a matter to be considered; and that it may be considered with propriety I think it my duty to

observe—as of my own knowledge—that he is active, spirited, and zealously attached to the Cause; that he does not want Abilities, many Members of Congress, as well as myself, can testify—But he has his wants; and he has his foibles—The latter are manifested in a little tincture of vanity, and in an over desire of being popular, which now and then leads him into some embarrassments. His wants are common to us all; the want of experience to move upon a large Scale; for the limited, and contracted knowledge which any of us have in Military Matters stands in very little stead; & is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, and some knowledge of Men and Books; especially when accompanied by an enterprising genius, which I must do Genl. Sullivan the justice to say, I think he possesses; but as the Security of Canada is of the last Importance to the well being of these Colonies I should like to know the Sentiments of Congress respecting the Nomination of any Officer to that Command. The Character I have drawn of Genl. Sullivan is just, according to my Ideas of him—Congress will be pleased therefore to determine upon the propriety of continuing him in Canada, or sending another, as they shall see fit.

**George Washington to John Sullivan, Morris Town, N.J., 15 March 1777**

Do not my dear General Sullivan, torment yourself any longer with imaginary slights, and involve others in the perplexities you feel on that score—No other officer of rank, in the whole army has so often conceived himself neglected—slighted, and ill-treated, as you have done—and none I am sure has had less cause than Yourself to entertain such ideas—mere accidents—things which have occurred in the common course of service have been considered by you as designed affronts. But pray Sir in what respect did General Greene’s late command at Fort Lee, differ from his present command at Baskenridge? or from yours at Chatham? And what kind of separate command had General Putnam at New York? I never heard of any except his commanding there ten days before my arrival from Boston, and one day after I had left it for Harlem heights, as senior officer. In like manner at Philadelphia, how did his command there differ from the one he has at Princeton, and wherein does either vary from Yours at Chatham? Are there any peculiar emoluments or honors to be reaped in the one case and not in the other? No, why then these unreasonable, these unjustifiable suspicions? Suspicions which can answer no other end, than to poison your own happiness, and add vexation to that of others. . . .

But I have not time to dwell upon subjects of this kind: in quitting it, I shall do it with an earnest exhortation, that you will not suffer yourself to be Seized with evils, that only exist in the imagination, and with slights that have no existence at all; keeping in mind at the same time, that if distinct armies are to be formed there are several Gentlemen before you in point of rank, who have a right to claim a preference.

**Thomas Burke to Richard Caswell, Philadelphia, 17 September 1777**

This unfortunate General has ever been the Marplot of our army, and his Miscarriages are I am persuaded owing to a total want of Military Genius, and to One of that sort of understandings which is unable to take a full comprehensive view of an object, but employs its Activity in Subtle Senseless refinement. Thus persuaded, I thought it my Duty to Endeavor to have him removed from his Command, and I succeeded so far as to have a resolution passed for recalling him. But general Washington remonstrated against it at so critical a time and the Execution is now left to his discretion.



**Alexander Hamilton and John Laurens to John Sullivan, 21 September 1777**

. . . we can cheerfully testify in justice to your Reputation, that when we had an opportunity of seeing you, it was in circumstances which did you Honor.—This was from the time you rode up, and joined General Weedon's Brigade 'till your Horse was wounded.—You were employed in animating and encouraging the Men, to their duty, both by your Words and example; and in every Respect behaved, with becoming bravery, and Activity.

**John Hancock to Dorothy Hancock, York, Pa., 8 October 1777**

Genl Washington writes that General Sullivan behaved most gallantly & has acquir'd great honour. This the General mentions from his own observation, as he was under his Eye the whole time. One or two Battles more will entirely Ruin Mr Howe's Army.

**Eliphalet Dyer to John Sullivan, York, Pa., 11 October 1777**

I had the pleasure of hearing your letter read in Congress yesterday. I was pleased with your manly Justification and Appeal but as I had often rise in Congress for your Vindication against the Unjust & Malign Calumny of your Enemies (which every good brave, spirited & Virtuous man will have) I could not bare after you had often braved & defied every danger from the Enemies of your Country, You should prove a Coward when Attacked by your personal ones of your own Country, Sink under Unjust reproach, and Submit to the servile humiliating Terms of your Cruel foes, who have Attacked you with the poisonous darts of Calumny in order to effect the Very purpose of your quitting the Army which in the Close of your letter you tamely Yield to them.

Sir, you that have braved every danger for the sake of your Country: are you afraid of the reproach of your dastardly foes who by & by if you boldly attack them & maintain your ground which you are well able to do must servilely hide themselves behind the Curtain & sink under your Superior Merit. Sir you are not alone, you have friends enough in Congress & among your Countrymen who dare, & will Support you Against all their Malice & Envy which has already recoiled in a great measure on their heads & must soon Terminate I dare say in their own Confusion. If you will only maintain your ground & boldly disdain to leave the field to the Triumph of your Enemies, all their Attacks will only tend to Illustrate your Character And make your Virtues displayed in the Cause of your Country more & more Conspicuous. If I had time & it was proper in the way of a letter I could give you a Satisfactory Account how your Enemies prevailed to Induce Congress to come into those hasty resolves which touch you so sensibly. I know you must feel them & you ought to, some of your friends I think Yielded too much & believe they thought for the publick good. Sch[uy]ler & St. C[lai]r were Continually brought on the Stage, and no one but a N E[n]gland man could satisfy their resentments, & to have taken one of a low Character would not Answer their purpose. Therefore as they were to be brought to a Court of Enquiry so must you, as they must be recalled till an Enquery could be had, so must you, or our Conduct must be deemed partial. This had an unhappy effect on some unwary & incautious, the bait took, it Caught in an unlucky hour, or I may say moment, & was as soon repented of by some. They were brought to their senses before the Generals letters come but that put it in their power to reverse the sudden decree. A Court of Enquiry I dare say will Terminate much more to your honor than if your friends could have continue & persevere in Virtue & the glorious cause in which your Engaged will give you a Complete Victory over both—or if you must die boldly die a Martyr & not with the reproach of a suicide.

**Thomas Burke to John Sullivan, York, Pa., 12 October 1777**

I heard officers in the field lamenting in the bitterest terms that they were cursed with such a commander; and I overheard numbers during the retreat complain of you as an officer whose evil conduct was forever productive of misfortunes to the army. From these facts I concluded that your duty as a General was not well performed. . . .

I also concluded that the troops under your command had no confidence in your conduct, and from the many accounts I had officially received of your miscarriages I conceived and am still possessed of an opinion that you have not sufficient talents for your rank and office, tho' I believe you have strong dispositions to discharge your duty well.

I consider it as one essential part of my duty to attend to the appointments of the army and where I perceive that any person so unqualified as I deem you to be, has got into a command where incompetence may be productive of disasters and disgrace, it is my duty to endeavour at removing him. In discharge of this I gave to Congress all the information I was able, carefully distinguishing what I saw, what I heard, and from whom as far as I was acquainted with persons. I urged your recall with all the force I could, and thought it and still do think it necessary for the public good; because in all your enterprises and in every part of your conduct, even as represented by yourself, you seem to be void of judgment and foresight in concerting, of deliberate vigour in executing, and of presence of mind under accidents and emergencies; and from these defects seem to me to arise your repeated ill success. These seem to me to form the great essentials of a military character. Nor do I think you the only officer in our army who is deficient in them. Nor were my endeavours to free the army from insufficient officers intended to be confined to you. I scarcely know your person, and was not conscious of any injury from you. For a particular reason I should have had great pleasure in justly forming a better opinion of you; but no reason can induce me to overlook the defects of officers on whom so much depends. Nor will any thing deter me from pursuing the measures suggested by my own judgment. I have related every thing which I acted, with relation to you in Congress, together with my motives. I have set down every intelligence, and the opinion I gave concerning you. What hills you struggled for, what fires you sustained, I neither saw or heard of. Your personal courage I meddled not with. I had no knowledge of it and I was cautious to say nothing unjust or unnecessary. My objection to you is, want of sufficient talents, and I consider it as your misfortune, nit fault. It is my duty as far as I can, to prevent its being the misfortune of my country.

**Eliphalet Dyer to John Sullivan, York, Pa., 23 October 1777**

We have not any blame cast upon any particular officers from any quarters as yet, tho the General [Washington] as far as I can recollect distinguished some & particularly your self for Good Conduct & Bravery in that Action [i.e., the Battle of Germantown]. I hope your Jealousies may prove without foundation, the General whenever Occasion has offered, has mentioned your Merits with particular pleasure and Appeared to Wish for no one's services in the Army more than yours, and I do not recollect that in any letter to Congress he ever Mentioned General G——n [Greene] to have began that Action, or even to have Acted at all in it. His conduct in Camp or at Head quarters you can best Judge of, but in his letters abroad you Appear as much his favorite as any officer I know.

**John Sullivan to George Washington, Camp, 24 October 1777**

Dear General, My ill state of health prevents my waiting upon your Excellency in Person. I am sending something to give you Trouble but Doubt not of your Excellency's Readiness to do Justice to Every Person under your Command. I have been most Scandalously accused before Congress & before the world & nothing can Totally Destroy the Effects of this Calumny but a Declaration of Your Excellency in favor of my Conduct in an affair which may be made as public and Extensive as the Calumny has been—If my Conduct has met your Excellency's approbation, there can be no Difficulty, if not I Cannot Expect it. The Representations made against me are

That I was Several Days posted with the Command on the Right wing of the Army at Brandywine. That I was ordered to watch the motions on the Right & was furnished with Light Troops for the purpose. That I Suffered the Enemy to come by a Route & at a time I did not Expect till they had gained our Right Flank.

That I conveyed Intelligence to your Excellency which prevented you from making a proper Disposition to Receive the Enemy which occasioned the Loss of the Battle.

That I have not Discovered Sufficient Talent for my Rank & office. That I am void of Judgment & foresight in Concerting & of Deliberate vigor in Executing & of presence of Mind under Accidents & Emergencies & that from these Defects have Arisen my Repeated ill Success.

**Richard Henry Lee to John Page, York, Pa., 25 November 1777**

The Maryland troops behaved ill that day [at Brandywine], and their advocate, Mr. Chase, with some other noisy members, attributed the cause to the insufficiency of Generals Sullivan and De Borre. Many aspersions was thrown on the characters of both these officers, and they were both ordered before a Court of Inquiry. The former passed through his trial, and has been acquitted with much honor.

**Nathanael Greene to William Smallwood, Camp Valley Forge, Pa., 16 March 1778**

General Sullivan is appointed to the command of the troops at Rhode Island, he is now a happy man. [—?] subordinate command is not agreeable to his taste.

**Henry Laurens to John Rutledge, York, Pa., 19 May 1778**

From the enterprising genius of Major General Sullivan we mat expect an effectual Stroke by & by upon Rhode Island, but nothing of that sort is at present in motion.

**Nathanael Greene to Governor William Greene, Camp Valley Forge, Pa., 25 May 1778**

Pray, how does General Sullivan agree with you? He is a good officer, but loves flattery. That is his weak side, if you only take him by his leading [—?], you may govern him as you please.

**George Lux to Nathanael Greene, Baltimore, Md., 26 May 1778**

I imagine Genl. Sullivan will render the Enemy [—?] Rhode Island, as Activity and Alertness are his Characteristics.

**Abigail Adams to John Thaxter, Braintree, Mass., 26 August 1778**

I never had all the confidence in the World in the abilities of the ——. Courage I believe he has a sufficient portion of. But an unfortunate General is always supposed to be a culpable one, though the censure may some times be unjust.

**Joseph Reed to Esther Reed, White Plains, N.Y., 26 August 1778**

Sullivan's Evil Genius I fear will follow him, & some Circumstances daily transpire which countenance my Apprehensions.

**Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke, Philadelphia, 27 August 1778**

Indeed the General seems to promise himself success at all events and is by his Letter to Congress, in high Spirits. He has heretofore been unlucky; who knows but Fortune, who is a fickle Jade, may favour him at last. I hope she will.

**James Lovell to William Whipple, Philadelphia, 28 August 1778**

Mr. John Langdon will inform you fully of affairs at Newport upon which my chagrin is founded. I will never bet upon Sullivan's luck while I live—Heaven will blast such vanity.

**Nathanael Greene to John Brown, 6 September 1778**

You cannot suppose that General Sullivan wants spirit or ambition to attempt any thing that reason or common sense can justify. It is the business of every general officer, desirous of distinguishing himself, to court all opportunities to engage with the enemy, when the situation and condition of his own forces and that of theirs will admit of; but the safety of our country is a greater object, with every man of principle, than present glory.

Before a general officer engages in any hazardous enterprise, he should well consider the consequences of success and failure—whether the circumstances of the community will not render one infinitely more prejudicial than the other can be beneficial. The strength and quality of the troops to be attacked should be considered; how they can best be approached, and by what means a retreat be secured. He has also to take into consideration the number and quality of his own troops, how they are found, what temper they are of, whether they are regular or irregular, and how they are officered. Even the wind and weather are necessary considerations, and not to be neglected. . . .

I have seen as much service, almost, as any man in the American army, and have been in as many or more actions than any one; I know the character of all our general officers, as well as any one; and, if I am any judge, the expedition has been prudently and well conducted; and I am confident there is not a general officer, from the Commander-in-chief to the youngest in the field, that would have gone greater lengths, to have given success to the expedition than General Sullivan. He is sensible, active, ambitious, brave, and preserving in his temper.

**Henry Marchant to John Sullivan, Philadelphia, 12 September 1778**

I did myself the Honour of bringing into Congress such Resolutions upon that Occasion as I thought were due from the Publick, to Your Zeal, Bravery and good Conduct, and that Display of

fortitude and Spirit which animated the Officers and Troops. Those Resolutions with some small alterations were passed, they are contained in the Papers enclosed.

**Count d'Estaing to Nathanael Greene, Boston Road [in the harbor], 1 October 1778**

With respect to the conduct, more or less moderate, that General Sullivan seems to have adopted in his literary commerce with me, as a zeal and devotion for the common cause, which I glory in, had engaged me to style him my General, he avails himself of the privileges which this title gives, beginning as you saw in his letter, by scolding me unjustly, and finishing by telling me in confidence that he has rivals whom he supposes his enemies. This mixture of chagrin and confidence being confined personally to me, did not offend me. There is another important article, and which I am not at liberty to pass in silence. I mean the obstinacy which General Sullivan exhibits in national imputations; and the abuse of his place in filling incessantly the public papers which are under his direction with things which might at length create ill blood between the individuals of two nations who are and ought to be united. It is wounding their interests in a capital manner to dare by indiscretion or passion to foment what ought to be extinguished if it exists. I have been obliged lately to entreat General Sullivan to reflect on this subject, In doing it I observed all the deference that was due to him; but my quality as a public person and that of his well wisher, equally imposed this law on me.

**Samuel Adams to John Adams, Philadelphia, 25 October 1778**

We have made another Expedition against Rhode Island. Our Arms were not disgraced, though we did not succeed to our Wishes. Genl. S. behaved as usual with Bravery; but some will have it that there is a Mixture of Imprudence in every thing he does. He promised himself to share with Gates in the Glory of Victory, and as an officer of Spirit, no doubt he felt vexed with the Disappointment.

**Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed, Fredericksburg, N.Y., 26 October 1778**

General Sullivan is the most unlucky man in the World. I thought it almost impossible for him to fail in the object of the expedition [to Rhode Island]. Indeed I was dreaming of whole Hosts of men and Cargoes of Generals to grace our triumph. But all at once the prospect fled like a shadow.

**Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed, Philadelphia, 5 November 1778**

I have no idea that Gen. Sullivan will ever shine as a military officer.

**Elkanah Watson: Memoirs, 1778**

Sullivan was an intrepid, although unfortunate officer.

**Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Middlebrook, N.J., 25 March 1779**

General Sullivan I find has turned Lawyer again [in a court of inquiry against a deputy quartermaster]. I wonder what fee he had. Methinks he has gave a fine opening for some satirical pen. Suppose the Enemy had surprised his post while he was playing the Cicero in Connecticut.

I am sorry he interests himself so deeply in that affair, and still more so that he gives his tongue a latitude of reflection.

**Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Middlebrook, N.J., 14 April 1779**

He is to have the command of the Indian expedition. I wish he may succeed better than heretofore. For altho he has never met with any signal disgrace, he has not been remarkably fortunate in success.

**Nathanael Greene to Robert L. Hooper, Jr., New Windsor, N.Y., 10 July 1779**

[Anticipating Sullivan's attack on the Indians in western New York.] It will be a great misfortune should general Sullivan get his Army too unwieldy for the nature of the service he is going upon. This cannot fail to bring disgrace upon himself and reproach upon the army as well as injury to the cause. He likes to have things in abundance. He is the friend of a Soldier altho it may be a tax upon the Citizen.

**Nathanael Greene to Charles Pettit, West Point, N.Y., 29 July 1779**

If the Duke de Sully don't push his affairs, but suffers our frontiers to be ravaged with a handful of Indians when he has a force of between 4 to 5,000 men with him, it will make him less than little, and confirm Governor Read's observation, that he was a child of disappointment and never could succeed in any thing he undertook. He maledicts the Staff Departments in a long Letter to the General, particularly the Commisarys. He and Wadsworth will have another dispute.

**Nathanael Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, West Point, N.Y., 19 August 1779**

I have your favor of yesterday with the extracts from general Sullivan's letters. He is as usual surrounded with difficulties and perplexed with mazes. If he gets through all the swamps, hedges, and ditches, and performs any thing great and glorious I shall freely forgive him, all he has said; but if he returns without doing any thing, with his Mouthful of complaints, I shall take the liberty to abuse him, in a genteel way.

**George Weedon to Nathanael Greene, Fredericksburg, Va., 20 September 1779**

I long much to see some official Accounts from Genl. Sullivan. He is truly a Child of misfortune. However there is one thing in his favour in this Expedition, that is, he has no Brackish Water to Cross, or I should dread the consequence.

**Nathanael Greene to Daniel Brodhead, Morristown, N.J., 18 December 1779**

General Sullivan has returned victorious almost without seeing an Enemy. . . . Since General Sullivan's return he has resigned and left the Army.

**John Sullivan to George Washington, Philadelphia, 6 March 1781**

The Choice of a Minister of war is postponed to the first of October. This was a Maneuver of Saml. Adams & others from the North, fearing that as I was in nomination, the Choice would fall

on me who having apostatized from the True New England Faith by Sometimes voting with the Southern States am not Eligible. They were not however acquainted with all the Circumstances. I was nominated against my will & if Chosen Should not have Accepted.

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

General Sullivan, of Newhampshire has been in the Army from the beginning of the War, has a good Idea of Publick affairs—is of Honest Political Sentiments, desirous of Supporting the credit of the States, and doing Justice to their Servants—he is generally cool & firm with an appearance of diffidence in debate, generally keeps to the point in question, but does not possess any great political abilities; Such as are necessary to Take into view Such an Extensive Systematical arrangement of things as is Necessary in So extensive a government.

### **James M. Varnum to George Washington, Philadelphia, 20 August 1781**

The Time draws near for appointing a Secretary at War. There will be a great Difficulty respecting the Candidates. I recollect a Question in one of your Excellency's former Letters to General Sullivan. Be pleased to receive from me the real Answer. That Gentleman was in Nomination. And to get rid of the Embarrassment, Congress postponed the Election.

### **William Plumer to John Hale, Londonderry, N.H., 22 October 1786**

John Sullivan, Esqr. now President of the State is  
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallow'd what came,  
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame.  
Goldsmith

I never knew so greedy of flattery; he swallows the grossest. Like his brother James of Boston, he wants [i.e., lacks] what really renders man estimable, *integrity*. From my acquaintance with him I am confident his knowledge as a lawyer, and his talents as a man, are raised too high. His bold, unqualified declarations often supplies the want of knowledge.

### **New Hampshire Spy, 23 August 1788**

Whilst the new Constitution is advancing shortly to be put into action, and these states are soon to be called to the election of the important officers, who are to guide our public affairs; every man must exult in the opportunity of giving his vote, that shall testify his zeal for the public good, as well as his gratitude to those worthy citizens, whose tried abilities and steady patriotism entitle them to a place in the public confidence. Whilst a Washington and a Hancock are selected by many, New Hampshire must be proud also that she has a Sullivan, whose patriotism, heroism, and virtuous struggles in her civil, military, commercial, agricultural, and manufacturing concerns have been unremitted for her best good, and making her honored and respected in the world.

### **Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788**

This opposition [between the factions in New Hampshire supporting John Langdon and John Sullivan] is only personal and means nothing in political matters. These two antagonists are equally attached to their country, to the Revolution, and to France; but Sullivan is the man of the people

and Langdon the protégé of gentlemen. One has the gentlemen of the country for him, the other the merchants. Whatever may be the success of their intrigue, the commonwealth can never destroy it and the principles of government will rest with them. In Society, Mr. Langdon far outweighs his adversary. But it is necessary to see Sullivan as a lawyer and as the head of the militia.

Mr. Sullivan likes us very much and if he returns to Congress we can be sure to learn all that happens from him. He is only a little indiscreet and he likes to see that men have confidence in him.

### **New Hampshire Spy, 6 June 1789**

In the choice of a Representative for Congress, a correspondent observes, that the public interest would be greatly served by the choice of that tried patriot and friend to our liberties, General Sullivan. No man can be more safely intrusted with the administration of a government than him who has risked his life to establish it. His principles are known to be truly republican and friendly to the interests of the people. And in point of eloquence (a talent so necessary to give weight and importance in a popular assembly, and the want of which is objected to in other candidates) he is acknowledged to excel. He would meet the Southern members on equal ground in this field, from which New Hampshire seems to be excluded. He would not only be able silently to judge for himself but to convey his sentiments to others—a talent, without which, a man and the state he represents, in such an assembly, would be cipherized. Many in his day doubtless possessed equal judgment and abilities with Cicero, but it was by his eloquence that the conspiracy of Catiline was defeated, and the commonwealth preserved from ruin. The same observations will apply to more modern times. Had Pitt been dumb, the English would never have reached such a pitch of eminence. Had the advocates for the new Constitution, in our Convention, been silent, it certainly never would have been adopted.

From the debates of Congress it appears the Southern States have elected distinguished orators; let us show that New Hampshire is not without her speakers, and elect Sullivan for our Representative.

### **John Adams: Autobiography, 5 October 1802**

[In Congress, May–June 1775] When I sat down, Mr. John Sullivan arise, and began to argue in the same side with me, in a strain of Wit, Reasoning and fluency which although he was always fluent, exceeding every Thing I had ever heard from him before.

## **Increase Sumner**

### **Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 4 December 1799**

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



## Thomas Sumter

### **Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter, Camp on the Pedee, S.C., 8 January 1781**

When I was with you, your soul was full of enterprise.

### **Nathanael Greene to Daniel Morgan, Camp on Pedee, S.C., 19 January 1781**

Write him [Sumter] frequently and consult with him freely. He is a man of great pride and considerable merit, and should not be neglected.

### **Thomas Sumter to Nathanael Greene, Mr. Price's, N.C., 29 January 1781**

When I had the Honour of a conference with you, If I displayed any injudicious thirst for enterprise, private gain, or personal Glory, I am sorry for it, and shall be doubly Mortified to find that my endeavours, together with the Good people of South Carolina, have not tended the least Degree to promote the Publick Good; I lament that private Gain is the primary Object with too many, and as much lament that the desire of Fame is not more sought after. As to the Former the world I think will acquit me, but the latter reason & Conscience convinces I have not been arrogant & designing but always meant to conduct & demean myself, so as to tend most to the Publick Good, & the satisfaction of my superior officers.

### **Nathanael Greene to Thomas Sumter, Light Infantry Camp at the Shallow Ford, N.C., 3 February 1781**

When I had the pleasure of an interview with you I discovered nothing mercenary or illiberal in your disposition. On the contrary I was charmed with the spirit of enterprise which I flattered myself would be no less beneficial to your Country than honorable to your self. I Still entertain the same sentiments; and I can assure you I shall be equally happy in an opportunity to do justice to your merit as to Genl. [Daniel] Morgan's. In what respect General Morgan's command embarrassed you I am at a loss to Imagine; but I dare say I could explain it to your perfect satisfaction in a few minutes, could I have the happiness to see you. I consider you both as valuable men, as well as brave and good Officers; and I hope the merit of one don't in the least detract from the other.

## John Cleves Symmes

### **James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Baltimore, Md., 22 March 1793**

This will be presented you by Judge Symes of the western territory, with whom I served in the former Congress & whom I deem a sensible & honest man. He was of service in repelling the attack upon the Mississippi in 1785 by Gardoqui & company as he is well acquainted with the affairs of that country I have thought it might be useful for you to know him.

**Israel Shreve to George Washington, Washington Bottoms, Fayette County, Pa.,  
30 July 1797**

I am no Speculator or Land Jobber, I held Lands at the Miami Settlement but Judge Symmes being a man not by any means to be depended upon, I have made but Little by them, there has been Considerable improvements made upon the Land here Since I Bought it.

## **William Symmes, Jr.**

**John Quincy Adams: Diary, 19 October 1785**

Mr. Symmes dined with us, a young Gentleman, whose manners are very easy and agreeable.

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

We dined at Mr. Dalton's, in Company with Mr. Symmes, a young Gentleman, who is studying law, very agreeable, and pleasing in his manners.