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 Thomas Jefferson to William Temple Franklin, Paris, 7 May 1786  
 James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 11 May 1786  
 Thomas Jefferson to John Trumbull, Monticello, 10 January 1787  
 James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Fredericksburg, Va., 27 July 1787  
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 Reverend James Madison to James Madison, Williamsburg, Va., 12 November 1794

John Quincy Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 11 May 1797  
John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 30 May 1797  
John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, Hamburg, 26 October 1797  
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Joseph Story to Ezekiel Bacon, Washington, 12 March 1818  
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### **Joseph Montgomery**

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### **Daniel Morgan**

Daniel Morgan to Nathanael Greene, Camp Sherrald's Ford, N.C., 24 January 1781  
George Washington: Opinion of General Officers, 9 March 1792  
Timothy Pickering to George Washington, Trenton, N.J., 13 September 1798

### **George Morgan**

Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, Philadelphia, 14 March 1779

### **John Morgan**

John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 18 October 1775  
John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 25 October 1775  
John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 28 October 1775  
Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 4 November 1775  
John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, Princeton, N.J., 17 November 1776

### **Gouverneur Morris**

Edward Rutledge to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 19 October 1776  
William Duer to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 9 July 1777  
William Duer to Francis Lightfoot Lee, Reading, Pa., 14 February 1778  
Gouverneur Morris to His Mother Sarah Morris, York, Pa., 16 April 1778

Gouverneur Morris to John Jay, York, Pa., 29 April 1778  
 Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, York, Pa., 3 May 1778  
 Josiah Bartlett to William Whipple, York, Pa., 20 June 1778  
 Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 17 August 1778  
 Gouverneur Morris to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, 20 October 1778  
 Gouverneur Morris to George Clinton, Philadelphia, 1 December 1778  
 John Adams: Diary, 22 June 1779  
 John Jay to Governor George Clinton, Philadelphia, 27 August 1779  
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 John Jay to Robert R. Livingston and Gouverneur Morris, Philadelphia, 29 September 1779  
 Lewis Morris, Jr., to Nathanael Greene, Esopus, N.Y., 1 October 1779  
 John Laurens to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 18 December 1779  
 William Churchill Houston to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 15 May 1780  
 Samuel Holten to George Partridge, Philadelphia, 16 May 1780  
 Robert R. Livingston to George Clinton, Philadelphia, 18 May 1780  
 Robert R. Livingston to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 26 May 1780  
 William Bingham to John Jay, Philadelphia, 1 July 1780  
 Robert R. Livingston to John Jay, Philadelphia, 6 July 1780  
 John Jay to Robert Morris, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 16 September 1780  
 John Jay to Robert R. Livingston, Madrid, 6 October 1780  
 Robert Morris to Gouverneur Morris, Office of Finance, 6 July 1781  
 Mary Morris to Sally Jay, Philadelphia, 12 July 1781  
 Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 19 October 1781  
 John Jay to George Clinton, Madrid, 16 November 1781  
 Nathanael Greene to Charles Pettit, 21 December 1782  
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 Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, N.J., Princeton, 30 June 1783  
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 James Monroe to St. George Tucker, Philadelphia, 24 January 1792  
 George Washington to Gouverneur Morris, Philadelphia, 28 January 1792  
 George Mason to James Monroe, Gunston Hall, Va., 30 January 1792  
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 James Kent to Elizabeth Hamilton, New York, 10 December 1832

**Lewis Morris, Jr.**

Nathanael Greene to Otho H. Williams, Headquarters near Bacon's Bridge, S.C., 6 June 1782

**Mary Morris**

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 Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 21 February 1798  
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**Richard Morris**

John Jay to Egbert Benson, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 17 September 1780  
 Alexander Hamilton to Robert Morris, Albany, N.Y., 13 August 1782

**Robert Morris**

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 Robert Morris to John Hancock, Philadelphia, 21 February 1777  
 Robert Morris to George Washington, Philadelphia, 27 February 1777  
 John Jay to Gouverneur Morris, White Plains, N.Y., 29 August 1778  
 Robert Morris to James Duane, Philadelphia, 8 September 1778  
 William Bingham to John Jay, Philadelphia, 6 June 1780  
 John Jay to Egbert Benson, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 17 September 1780  
 John Swanick to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, c. 20 February 1781  
 Joseph Jones to George Washington, Philadelphia, 21 February 1781  
 Alexander Hamilton to Robert Morris, De Peyster's Point, N.Y., 30 April 1781  
 Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 5 June 1781  
 James Madison to Philip Mazzei, Philadelphia, 7 July 1781  
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 Samuel Osgood to John Lowell, Philadelphia, 2 February 1782  
 James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Philadelphia, 4 June 1782  
 Samuel Cooper to John Adams, Boston, 22 July 1782  
 Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, August 1782  
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 Stephen Higginson to John Lowell, Philadelphia, 11[?] March 1783  
 Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 March 1783  
 Joseph Reed to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 14 March 1783  
 Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Pettus’s, Va., 15 March 1783  
 Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Richmond, Va., 22 March 1783  
 Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 8 April 1783  
 Stephen Higginson to Unknown, Philadelphia, May 1783  
 Stephen Higginson to Samuel Adams, Philadelphia, 20 May 1783  
 John Jay to Catherine W. Livingston, Passy, France, 20 July 1783  
 John Jay to Robert Morris, Passy, France, 20 July 1783  
 Arthur Lee to St. George Tucker, Philadelphia, 21 July 1783  
 Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes, Philadelphia, 26 September 1783  
 Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, Princeton, N.J., 24 October 1783  
 James Warren to John Adams, Milton, Mass., 27 October 1783  
 James Warren to Elbridge Gerry, Milton, Mass., 16 November 1783  
 Samuel Osgood to John Adams, Annapolis, Md., 7 December 1783  
 Marquis de Lafayette to Robert Morris, Paris, 26 December 1783  
 David Howell to Jabez Bowen, Annapolis, Md., 31 May 1784  
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Benjamin Rush: Sketches

- William Constable to James Chalmers, 24 February 1789  
Samuel A. Otis to Nathan Dane, New York, 28 March 1789  
Robert Morris to Mary Morris, Morrisiana, N.Y., 12 July 1789  
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John Adams to F. A. Vanderkemp, Quincy, Mass., 16 February 1809  
John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 14 November 1812

**Jedidiah Morse**

- John Adams to Jeremy Belknap, New York, 5 June 1789

**Samuel Finley Breese Morse**

- Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 February 1816

**Perez Morton**

- “Publius Valerius” (John Quincy Adams): To the Citizens of Massachusetts, *The Repertory*, 30 October 1804  
William Plumer: Memorandum, 5 June 1806

**Jonathan Moulton**

- William Plumer to John Hale, Exeter, N.H., 18 September 1786

**William Moultrie**

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

**Comte de Moustier**

- Henry Wynkoop to Reading Beatty, New York, 18 March 1789

**Peter Muhlenberg**

- Abigail Adams to John Adams, Richmond Hill, N.Y., 25 October 1789  
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Henry A. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of the Revolutionary Army* (Philadelphia, 1849), 333

**William Murray**

- Harry Innes to John Adams, Frankfurt, Ky., 30 April 1800

**William Vans Murray**

Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 15 March 1797

Abigail Adams to Joshua Johnson, Quincy, Mass., 15 March 1797

## Blair McClenachan

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

To return to Jacobinical societies. Is it not abominable to see a Crew headed by Such an ignorant blundering, thick-sculled Irishman as Blair McClenican, publishing their Manifestoes against the President and both Houses of Congress.

### Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 January 1795

The whole address [of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania] is a most impudent attack upon the President and Senate, and the House of Representatives, full of falsehood and Misrepresentation, Signd by that ignorant Blundering thick sculled Blair McClenicon as President.

## James McClurg

### James Currie to Thomas Jefferson, Richmond, Va., 17 October 1785

McClurg is a Councillor here. Indolent as a Physician, Often in at the Death on account of his being so often called when the last offices of humanity are only wanting to close the Scene, his talents are great, and in that line have met with too little patronage from his Countrymen hitherto. I hope the Scales will fall from their Eyes before old age unfits him for business—for his family's sake I sincerely wish it.

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

Mr. McClurg is a learned Physician, but having never appeared before in public life his character as a Politician is not sufficiently known. He attempted once or twice to speak, but with no great success.—It is certain that he has a foundation of learning, on which, if he pleases, he may erect a character of high renown.—The Doctor is about 38 Years of age, a Gentleman of great respectability, and of a fair and unblemished character.—

## Alexander McDougall

### John Jay to Alexander McDougall, Philadelphia, 17 October 1775

The Hint you give is by no Means pleasing—I wish your Apprehensions were without Foundation 'tho I have too good an opinion of your Discernment to entertain Hopes of your being mistaken.

**Benjamin Rush: Sketches**

Nature, and an application to books late in life, did wonders for this man. He possessed genius, knowledge and uncommon fervor of mind tempered by a solid judgment. General Lee used to say “he was the only cool headed enthusiast he had ever known in his life.” He loved liberty above all things, but he was an enemy to mob government. His person was dignified and his conversation sensible and methodical, but somewhat formal, produced by a slight stammering in his speech. He performed but few services to his country in the field, but was extremely useful to her in the cabinet. His talents were less active, than contemplative and judicial.

**Marquis de Lafayette to Henry Laurens, Valley Forge, Pa., 26 January 1778**

You have among you a man of real virtue, a man who loves truly his country the brave and prudent McDougall. This is a man entirely convenient to me—the coldness of his age will calm the ardor of my twenty years.

## William McDowell

**Harry Innes to John Adams, Frankfurt, Ky., 30 April 1800**

I have reason to believe that Mr. William Murray and Mr. William McDowell both Attornies at law will be recommended to you to fill the Office, should one be created by the passage of the Bill under consideration. It is upon the subject of this appointment, that I shall venture to obtrude some observations under a certain confidence that they will remain within your own bosom & that you will make use of the information *only* as the exigencies of the case may require. . . .

Mr. McDowell is a gentleman of easy manners possessing great sobriety, yet wants the essential requisite of a Judge—*Legal knowledge*—neither does he possess a capacity to acquire knowledge upon. With Mr. Murray I have lived for twelve years last part in habits of intimacy, and with Mr. McDowell fourteen, therefore this information will not I presume be supposed to arise from any other cause than that of the good of my country, especially when I declare that the gentleman who I am about to recommend is totally unconnected with me & to whom am more a stranger than to either of the others, having never resided nearer than twenty miles to him.

## Alexander McGillivray

**David Humphreys to George Washington, Rock Landing, Ga., 21 September 1789**

His word is a Law to the Creeks.

**David Humphreys to George Washington, Rock Landing, Ga., 26 September 1789**

I have not leisure to give you a description of the person & character of McGillivray. His countenance has nothing liberal and open in it—it has however sufficient marks of understanding. In short, he appears to have the good sense of an American, the shrewdness of a Scotchman, & the

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cunning of an Indian. I think he is so much addicted to debauchery that he will not live four years. He dresses altogether in the Indian fashion, & is rather slovenly than otherwise. His influence is probably as great as we have understood it was. And his services may certainly be very important, if he can be sincerely attached to our Interests—

**David Humphreys to George Washington, Rock Landing, Ga., 27 September 1789**

I apprehend that we can never depend upon McGillivray, for his firm attachment to the interests of the United States. And yet I believe he regards the interests of the United States just as much as he does the interests of the Creek Nation. If I mistake not his character, his own importance & pecuniary emolument are the objects, which will altogether influence his conduct.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, New York, 29 August 1790**

I have nothing new to entertain you with unless it is my Neighbours the Creek savages who visit us daily. They are lodged at an Inn at a little distance from us. They are very fond of visiting us as we entertain them kindly, and they behave with much civility. Yesterday they signed the Treaty, and last Night they had a great Bonfire dancing round it like so many spirits hooping, singing, yelling, and expressing their pleasure and satisfaction in the true savage style. These are the first savages I ever saw. Mico Maco, one of their kings dined here yesterday and after dinner he conferred a Name upon me, the meaning of which I do not know: Mammea. He took me by the Hand, bowed his Head and bent his knee, calling me Mammea, mammea. They are very fine looking Men, placid countenances & fine shape. Mr. Trumble [John Trumbull] says, they are many of them perfect models. MacGillivray dresses in our own fashion, speaks English like a Native, & I should never suspect him to be of that Nation, as he is not very dark. He is grave and solid, intelligent and much of a Gentleman, but in very bad Health. They return in a few days.

**John Adams to William Smith Shaw, Montezillo (Quincy), Mass., 21 June 1821**

Dr Jarvis in his seventh page has I observed that “the Indians can not communication in relation to their religion.” I have made the same observation. I have seen a strong and marked aversion to converse or say any thing upon the subject. Many great Opportunities have presented themselves, in the old congress and while I was vice president, and in the very numerous deputations from indian nations in all parts of the continent: and I always had a desire to learn something of their religion. But they discovered such repugnance, their interpreters appeared so inexpert in their own language as well as in the indian, that I was discouraged. And my mind was so oppressed with a thousand disquietudes which came nearer home to my business and bosom, that I gave up the pursuit. In 1789 there occurred an Occasion which gave me great hopes. A large deputation of Kings Warriors and Sachems from the Creek Nations came to New York with McGillivray at their head, to treat with the government. They were lodged near my house on Richmond-hill. They frequently visited me and some of them dined with me, but I could learn nothing from them. McGillivray was the son of a Scotchman by an indian queen. His father had given him a good education and he spoke and wrote very well in English. From him I was confident much information: but he was as close as a miser. I asked him many questions concerning the religion of the indians but he manifested strong tokens of impatience and distaste. But when I [. . .] pressed him pretty closely for some time he said with an arch smile “Why We used to say that our customs most resembled the [. . .].” When I urged him with questions concerning their belief in a future

state he still ba[ . . . ] great reluctance and would be silent. When I asked him whether they had any ideas of an existence after death? He answered with a malignant scornful kind of smile, “Why, I believe very little. I have heard them say that men are like trees, when a tree dies it rots.” This was all could obtain from him.

Upon the whole I concluded that his father was one of those wondering Scottish epicurian philosophers who had taught him to seek for pleasure here and not to disquiet himself with fears of an hereafter. Accordingly he soon fell a sacrifice to his intemperate pleasures.

## James McHenry

### James McHenry to Benjamin Rush, New York, 21 November 1776

I have not as yet reflected so deeply on the fate of a prisoner\* as to make me unhappy. And perhaps I shall not. For I am no admirer of that philosophy which is constantly in tears or beating itself to pieces against the impassable bars of its prison. Methinks I feel something within me like that kindly resignation which when duly attended to never fails to befriend the unfortunate . . . Altho’ I am resigned with regard to my fate, yet it were to be wished that an exchange of prisoners could be brought about as soon as possible.

\*McHenry was captured by the British at Fort Washington on Manhattan Island.

### Henry Laurens to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 29 July 1779

In addition to the lines which I troubled you with the day before yesterday by Colonel, or should I say, Dr. McHenry, he is an honest Man, with either, or without any Title. . . .

### Alexander Hamilton to James Duane, Preakness, N.J., 22 July 1780

I take the liberty my Dear Sir to request your interest for a friend of mine and a member of the [Washington military] family, Dr. McHenry. He wishes to quit a Station which among foreigners is not viewed in a very reputable light and to get into one more military. He will go into the Marquis’s family as an aide. He has been in the army since the commencement of the War—first in the medical line, since the 15th of May 78, as a *Secretary* to the Commander in Chief. You know him to be a man of Sense and merit. A more intimate acquaintance with him makes me hold him as such in an eminent degree. He has now no military existence properly speaking—no rank. I believe he is not immoderate. For my own part were I to decide for him considering his length of services, his merit, the relation in which he has stood, I would give him a Majority [i.e., a rank of major]. I have no doubt my Dear Sir, you will be glad to serve Mr. McHenry from motives of justice, of friendship to him and (shall I not add) of friendship to me.

### Nathanael Greene to Samuel Huntington, Philadelphia, 30 October 1780

It is my earnest wish to have Dr. James McHenry with me as an Aide de Camp upon the Southern command. He is a young Gentleman of ability; and perfectly acquainted with the nature of the business from his having been long in the family of the Commander in Chief.

Nothing but a Majority [i.e., a rank of Major] will engage him in this service. He will be so useful and necessary to me on the command, from the nature of the business which I shall have to transact, that I shall be made exceedingly happy if Congress would be kind enough to honor him with that rank.

I am sensible that there are objections which may be urged against it; but I flatter myself the occasion, as well as the merit and claim of the Gentleman from his having been in the Army from the beginning of the war, will be considered sufficient reasons to remove them.

**James McHenry to Alexander Hamilton, Baltimore, Md., 11 August 1782**

If you are not in the humor to read a long letter do, prithee, give this to the child to play with and go on with your amusement of racking the cradle. To be serious, my dear Hamilton, I have been thinking of late upon my own situation, and this had led me as often to think of yours. Some men, I observe, are so born and tempered that it is not till after long bustling and battling it in the world (and some scarcely then) that they come to learn a little prudence. Much I begin to suspect that you and I want a great deal of this quality to bring us on a level with our neighbors and to carry us cheerfully through life. Have we not both of us continued long enough in the service of the public? Should not I exercise my profession or some profitable business, and should not you, putting off the politician, exert yourself *only* to acquire a profession? I find that to be dependent on a father is irksome, because I feel that it is in my power to be independent by my own endeavors. I see that the good things of this world are all to be purchased with money, and that the man who has money may be whatever he pleases.

**George Washington to James Madison, Newburgh, N.Y., 22 April 1783**

Major McHenry, formerly an Assistant Secretary to me, & afterwards Aid de Camp to the Marquis de la Fayette, informs me, that, Congress are about to appoint official Secretaries for their Ministers abroad; & expresses a wish to go in that character to the Court of Versailles—or London.

Justice, if I could divest myself of the inclination to serve this Gentleman, would compel me to represent him as a Man of Letters & abilities,—of great integrity, sobriety & prudence. In a word, a Man of strict Honor; possessing all those good qualities (without a bad one that I am acquainted with) necessary to fit him for such an office. He would, I am persuaded, render the Minister with whom he might be connected, very happy in the appointment, as he is of an amiable & obliging temper. His property too lies in this Country.

**James Madison to George Washington, Philadelphia, 29 April 1783**

I have been honored with Your Excellency's favor of the 22nd inst: bearing testimony to the merits & talents of Mr. McHenry. The character which I had preconceived of this Gentleman was precisely that which your representation has confirmed.

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

Mr. McHenry was bred a physician, but he afterwards turned Soldier and acted as Aid to Genl. Washington and the Marquis de la Fayette. He is a Man of specious talents, with nothing of genius to improve them. As a politician there is nothing remarkable in him, nor has he any of the graces of the Orator. He is however, a very respectable young Gentleman, and deserves the honor which his Country has bestowed on him. Mr. McHenry us about 32 years of age.

**James McHenry to Alexander Hamilton, Near Baltimore, Md., 17 February 1795**

I have built houses, I have cultivated fields, I have planned gardens, I have planted trees, I have written little essays, I have made poetry once a year to please my wife, at times got children and at all times thought myself happy. Why cannot you do the same, for after all if a man is only to acquire fame or distinctions by continued privations and abuse I would incline to prefer a life of privacy and little pleasures.

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

McHenry you know he would give no strength to the administration but he would not disgrace the Office—his views are good—perhaps his health &c. would prevent his accepting.

**Hugh Williamson to James McHenry, Philadelphia, 27 January 1796**

You will probably learn from another Hand by this day's Post that you are nominated and appointed Secy at War. Your friends and many Persons who know you only by Character hope that you may serve in this Office although it is known that you have generally been adverse from public Employment. Nothing is so fervently desired by Eastern men & by Southern Men who take the trouble of thinking as that in our War Department, . . . we may have a prudent, firm, frugal Officer who in private Life having shown that he knows the Value of money and may be expected to be equally attentive to the National Property.

**Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., New York, 15 June 1796**

After turning the thing over and Over in my mind I know of nothing better that you have in your power than to send McHenry [on a diplomatic mission to France]. He is not yet obnoxious to the French and has been understood formerly to have had some kindness towards their Revolution. His present Office [Secretary of War] would give a sort of importance to the mission. If he should incline to an absolute relinquishment his mission might be temporary & Col. Pickering could carry on his Office in his absence. He is at hand & might depart immediately & I believe he would explain very well & do no foolish thing.

**Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *Travels through America*, 15 April 1798**

Mr. Wolcot, secretary of the Treasury Department, is a very proper officer for this position. The same can not be said of Mr. M'k Henri, secretary of the War Department. Perhaps he lacks neither good will nor integrity, but he does lack the necessary knowledge for his position. The erection of forts, the building of the navy, the distribution of military forces, the maintenance of discipline among the soldiers, all are in his province; however he is not, as it is said, either a geographer or a soldier, or sailor.

**Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 29 July 1798**

But, My Dear Sir. There is a matter of far greater moment than all this which I must do violence to my friendship by stating to you; but of which it is essential you should be apprised. It is that my friend, McHenry, is wholly insufficient for his place [as Secretary of War], with the additional misfortune of not having himself the least suspicion of the fact! This generally will not surprise

you, when you take into view the large scale upon which he is now to act. But you perhaps may not be aware of the whole extent of the insufficiency. It is so great as to leave no probability that the business of the War Department can make any tolerable progress in his hands. This has been long observed; and has been more than once mentioned to the President by members of Congress. He is not insensible, I believe, that the execution of the department does not produce the expected results; but the case is of course delicate and embarrassing.

My real friendship for McHenry concurring with my zeal for the service predisposed me to aid him in all that he could properly throw upon me. And I thought that he would have been glad in the organization of the army and in the conduct of the recruiting service, to make me useful to him. With this view I came to this City & I previously opened the way, as far as I could with the least decency. But the idea has been thus far very partially embraced and tomorrow or the next day I shall return to New York without much fruit of my journey. I mention this purely to apprise you of the course of things and the probable results. It is to be regretted that the supposition of cooperation between the Secretary at War and the principal military officers will unavoidably throw upon the latter a part of the blame which the ill success of the operations of the war department may be expected to produce. Thus you perceive, Sir, your perplexities are begun.

**Philip Schuyler to Alexander Hamilton, Albany, N.Y., 6 August 1798**

I am not surprised My Dear Sir that you found much had not been done in the execution of the important Objects for I have some time since perceived that Mr. McHenry had not a mind sufficiently extensive & energetic to embrace & execute all the Objects incident to the war department, and I foresee that you will be under the necessity to direct the principal operations of that department, to avoid those embarrassments which must otherwise inevitably result from incompetency in the Officer, indeed I see no alternative, for I doubt much If a man of adequate abilities can be found properly to discharge the duties of an Office, on which so much depends, even should the present incumbent resign.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 9 August 1798**

You must my friend come on with the expectation of being *Secretary of War in fact*. Mr. McH's good sense, industry & virtues, are of no avail, without a certain address & skill in business which he has not & cannot acquire.

**George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, Mount Vernon, 9 August 1798**

Your opinion respecting the unfitness of a certain Gentleman for the Office he holds, accords with mine, and it is to be regretted, *sorely*, at this time, that these opinions are so well founded. I early discovered, after he entered upon the Duties of his Office, that his talents were unequal to great exertions, or deep resources. In truth they were not expected; for the fact is, it was a Hobson's choice. But such is the case, and what is to be done?

**Rufus King to Alexander Hamilton, London, 19 December 1798**

McHenry is an infant in *detail*.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 1 April 1799**

We have no President here, & the appearance of languor & indecision are discouraging to the friends of government. Mr. McH—— does the best in his power—yet his operations are such as to confirm more and more a belief of utter unfitness for the situation. The President has been informed of the disorders in that Department yet there appears no disposition to apply any correction.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Fisher Ames, Philadelphia, 29 December 1799**

I do not know whether you are acquainted with Mr. McHenry; he is a man of honor and entirely trustworthy; he is also a man of sense, and delivers correct opinions when required, but he is not skilled in the details of Executive business, and he is at the head of a difficult and unpopular department. The diffidence which he feels, exposes his business to delays, and he sometimes commits mistakes which his enemies employ to impair his influence.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to James McHenry, Washington, 26 August 1800**

The President said that he considered you a gentleman of agreeable manners, of extensive information, and great industry; that he verily believed your hands were pure, meaning thereby, as I understood him, that he reposed entire confidence in your integrity; that he was happy in understanding that your circumstances were affluent, and that the loss of your late office would not distress your family; and that if any suitable office should become vacant, he should with pleasure confer it on you.

## Lachlan McIntosh

**George Walton to Lachlan McIntosh, Philadelphia, 18 April 1777**

I freely confess to you my dear General that some pains have been taken to shake my friendship for your virtues & to lessen the good opinion of the Continent—but be assured that they never obtained credit with either. I have been privately interrogated as to the firmness of your principles in this great cause, in which I know you always to have been an enthusiast, and to have seen deeper, earlier and farther into it than any other man. That ample Justice has been done you upon all such occasions I hope you will not doubt. However a man's reputation may be obscured by the puffs & smoke of a rotten hearted designing enemy, his virtues will soon shine out with their wonted Luster and acquire fresh brilliancy from the outrage intended. In Congress your name has never been mentioned but as their Officer in general terms with others. Your enemies have not dared to impeach you before that August Assembly yet; and I believe never will. They meant to ruin you indirectly. In my judgment it was intended to tease you into a resignation as they have done your brother.

**George Walton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 5 August 1777**

He is a man of sense and judgment, with a great experience of the world; and, in point of bravery, he is fit to fight under the banners of General Washington.

**Archibald Steel to Nathanael Greene, Pittsburgh, Pa., 20 February 1779**

I received your's of the 20th of January last and Observe the Contents. It is beyond a doubt I have fallen under general McIntosh's Displeasure, but I flatter myself have Maintained a Good Character with my Countrymen in General. I am sorry I differ in this point with the Gentleman whom I have the honour to represent here. I mean with respect to our Opinions of the General. It is true I have for Some time past Suffered in Character and Person proceeding from premeditated, Groundless, and Low Artifice to screen himself from the Censors of his Country. I shall ever Des-pise a Person of his turn.

The Charges ran high as you Justly remark, but the Court has Acquitted me of the whole. Had my resentment not run so high I should have perhaps been by this time on a Good footing with the General. I am Conscious it is my duty to Cultivate harmony with my Commanding Officer, but this is impossible for any Generous soul to do with Genl. McIntosh when Acting under him. I cannot suffer any Ungenerous Insults from any man and Let them pass with Impunity. I have my failings, at the same time I have my resentments.

**Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, Philadelphia, 14 March 1779**

You will excuse in me the Liberty I have taken in requesting Colo. Morgan to call on you. That Gentleman can give you much and important Information relative to the State of our Western Frontiers. From the first View of the Commander in that Department at York Town he struck me as one of those who excell in the Regularity of Still Life from the Possession of an indolent Uni-formity of Soul. The little Eagerness he shewed to go thence when every Thing almost depended on Vivacity gave no good Omen of his Success. I observed in Silence & untill this Moment no one hath known any Reflections I then made and perhaps I am even at this Moment much very much deceived. When I heard of some Proceedings in the Department I ventured to say aloud that no Good would follow from the Exertions of the Army under his Command. Unfortunately I have not been mistaken. I have Realbeleive that his Recall hath become necessary from a Variety of Causes.

**Lachlan McIntosh to George Washington, Savannah, Ga., 14 February 1789**

From circumstances which made me Sufficiently easy and Independent I am reduced, by the fortune of the late War, to Apply the first time in my Life, and much against my grain, for some public Office, which a Man past Sixty two years of Age, as I am, can execute for the support of myself and the helpless part of my Family during the short remainder of my Life.

It is unnecessary to trouble you my dear General with the particulars of the Loss of my Active Property, which I readily foresaw from the beginning was Unavoidable, as I was the Southern frontier Settler in the United States who stood forth early for our present happy Revolution, amongst a great Majority of different Sentiments and Principles. I will only mention that I have little else now left, than some Lands I held before the War, which I am not able to improve and the Tax upon them is far beyond my Ability to pay, and must Shallow the whole up in a short time being. I conceive much Overated, as the predicament we stand in, with the Spaniards, and our imprudent Quarrel with the Indians, both of whom bound us on the South & West, have rendered Lands in these Quarters of our State of Little Value, and altogether Unsalable for my present relief.

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

Is old and inactive; supposed to be honest and brave. Not much known in the Union, and therefore would not obtain much confidence, or command much respect; either in the Community or the Army.

## Thomas McKean

**Thomas McKean to George Read, Philadelphia, 19 January 1776**

I shall refer you to Colonel Gadsden for all tlews, as I dont like to communicate bad news.

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

Mr. McKean of Delaware, now Chief Justice of Pennsylvania—has been in Congress from the first—is a Man of Talents—of great Vanity, extremely fond of power & entirely governed by passions, ever pursuing the Object present With Warm enthusiastic Zeal Without Much reflection or forecast.

**John Hanson to Thomas McKean, Philadelphia, 10 November 1781**

When I reflect upon the great abilities, the exemplary patience and unequalled skill and punctuality, which you so eminently displayed in executing the important duties of a President, it must unavoidably be productive of great apprehensions in the one who has the honor of being your Successor.\* But the Choice of Congress obliges me for a moment to be silent on the subject of my own inability: And altho' I cannot equal the bright example that is recently set me, yet it shall be my unremitting study to imitate it as far as possible; and in doing this the reflection is pleasing that I shall invariably pursue the sacred path of Virtue, which alone ought to preserve me free from censure.

\*Hanson had been chosen to succeed McKean as president of Congress.

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

Chief Justice Thomas M'Kean of the Supreme Court, a man of considerable accomplishments in his profession, but he is of a deceitful character and not very good heart!

**Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788**

Chief Justice of the state. Former President of Congress, honest man, well-intentioned, a little cold.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 26 April 1796**

My old Friend C[hief] J[ustice] McKean has had the Weakness to be taken in with the Flattery of Dollars.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 27 December 1796**

The Rumours of Peculation and Want of Probity as well as want of Fidelity to Trusts are alarming & afflicting. My Old Friends Mifflin, McKean, Ewing, exhibit despicable and detestible Phenomena for Governors, Judges & Heads of Colledges, as their Conduct is represented daily in public Companies. I know nothing more.—McKean indeed is only charged with a little too much Madeira and Infidelity to Friendship and political Principle.

**Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Hartford, Conn., 18 November 1799**

McKean is a better governor than Mifflin. He won't corrupt society more, if so much, and the work he does will be more open. McKean can't do much. He will disoblige friends and enemies.

**Thomas Boylston Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 18 January 1803**

If I can procure you a print of *another eminent personage* here, with whom you have been long acquainted, I will send it as a curiosity merely. It is taken from a portrait of our Governor Thomas McKean, painted by [Gilbert] Stewart, and in addition to its being a correct likeness, it is so profusely decorated with the symbols of nobility and the badges of Royalty, that I think every genuine Democrat in the Country should take it as a model for his own resemblance. There is the enameled *Eagle* pendent at the button-hole, which rivals any Star at the breast of a King, and at the foot of the print is an Escutcheon designating family arms whether of the McKean's or not I am unable to say. The motto is "Mens sana in corpore sano."\* How apt the interpretation of this motto may be, I leave others to judge, having long since made up my own opinion respecting its non application to the Governor of Pennsylvania. The Crest presents the figures of a Dove & a Serpent, emblematic of *harmlessness* and *wisdom*, I presume; a *Crescent* in the middle of two Stars, on *Cross, crosslets*, but what this can mean I must confess is beyond my depth in Heraldry. Whether the interpretation would be best effected, "Militiæ aut domi,"\*\* I need not enquire.

\*A sound mind in a sound body.

\*\*At war or at home.

**John Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass., 28 January 1803**

Thank you for the Print of Dr. Smith, and should not dislike to have one of my old Friend McKean. Whatever may be said of that Gentleman's Consistency of Conduct, his Uniformity of Principle and System, his Fidelity to his Friends, his conjugal Felicity, his Constancy in his opinions, his Modesty, his Humility, his Meekness or his Temperance; thus much must be confessed that he Understands the Management of the People of Pensilvania, better than any of the Federalists. I have known so many Men, of far Superiour Knowledge and Talents, to his in whom there has been as little Stability, that I find it is in vain to rail at them or clamour about them. My Advice to you is to treat them all with Civility and do them all Justice. Mr McKean is as far from being an enthusiast for Democracy as I am: Parade, Ceremony, Pomposity and Finery are ten times more in his head and heart too than in mine. . . . Monarchy, and hereditary Presidents and Senates have been ten times more approved by him than by me.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 7 July 1805**

There is something in my Composition, which restrains me from Rancor against any man with whom I have once lived in friendship. Mr McKean, is one among many of my old friends, who have been separated from me, by political causes. I cannot rejoice at the Embarrassment he is in, or the humiliation that Seems to be preparing for him. He is one of the last Men in the United States who could consistently with his Principles or disposition, throw himself into the Arms of a democratic faction.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 25 November 1805**

Thomas McKean is re-elected for three years more as Governor of Pennsylvania by a majority of more than 5000. His manners & disposition are rough & unaccommodating. He was formerly a very violent democrat, but like most of that class, by nature a tyrant. He turned deserving federal characters from office, & appointed violent partisans in their place. But within a few years men more violent, & more zealous to introduce revolutionary principles & practices into the government, have complained of his moderation.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 2 March 1806**

McKean is a hasty imprudent man.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 22 December 1806**

Although McKean has been Somewhat of a Whiffler and a Shuffler, I should be sorry to hear that he was Subjected to an impeachment of which you seem to think him in danger. I think him an honest Man in the main, although Sometimes misled by his Vanity and Ambition as so many others of our revolutionary Patriots have been and are.

**Thomas McKean to John Adams, Philadelphia, 20 August 1813**

My paper is drawing to a close, so is my life; I am now in my eightieth year, therefore more than a year older than you. Had you not noticed the *quiveration* (an expressive word, tho' newly used) of your hand, I should not have discovered it—mine quivers very much, when feverish or agitated by severe exercise; my eyes grow dimmer, my hearing duller, and I have other symptoms of age: but why repeat grievances, that cannot be redressed?

**Henry Colman to John Adams, Philadelphia, 5 October 1813**

I have seen Governour McKean and am to see him again. He seemed very cheerful, though his faculties are somewhat decayed, and with the air of a young man, said that he was now quite a man of leisure and offered to wait upon me in person to all the publick places in the city; an offer, which, though apparently, made with perfect sincerity, you are sensible, Sir, I could not think of accepting.

**John Adams to James Lloyd, Quincy, Mass., 14 February 1815**

All these interests and parties [in Pennsylvania] were headed by Mr. McKean, an upright Chief Justice, an enlightened lawyer, a sagacious politician, and the most experienced statesman in the nation.

**Richard Peters to Thomas Jefferson, Belmont, Pa., 28 June 1817**

We have lost our old Governor & Chief Justice, McKean; who lived to a good old Age. With all his Failings, he was respectable in our public Affairs: & “has done the State some Service.” Yet his Faults will be remembered by many, who will either forget, or want the Candour to acknowledge, his good Deeds. Such is the Fate of too many who have appeared on the public Stage; not only in this our Day, but in past times. And there is little Difference in human Nature, be the Form of Government under which Men live, what it may.

## Archibald McMurphey

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

A. McMurphey Esq. was not so much connected with the mob. He is an arbitrary, conceited man. He has read a few volumes of history, and can repeat the title pages of some others. Of this information he is very profuse in his speeches in Court. He will sacrifice every sentiment of honor and honesty to the applause of the rabble. His head is better than his heart. He has, however, more of cunning than wisdom. He is becoming intemperate in the use of inebriating liquors.

## Hector McNeil

**Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 27 July 1778**

Capt Manly has obliged me with your favor of the 5th. He and McNeil are here with different Views. The one to obtain another Ship, and the other to get the Sentence of a Court Martial reversed. Perhaps both may be disappointed. I have received a Number of Letters by both. To yours I shall pay a particular Regard, because I am well satisfied you never suffer Prejudices to divert your Attention from the great Object—the publick good. . . . “McNeil’s Address is insinuating—His Assurance great—He will tell you fine Storys” &c. I should think he had taken his lessons out of Hutchinson’s political Book, if I had not Reason to believe that he used to despise him most heartily. When I advert to a Letter from another of my Friends, I find him “open & sincere” “His Temper naturally warm, which he has sometimes indulgd in speaking his Mind freely of Persons in office.” This you know has always been deemd an unpardonable, and I am affraid it always will be. To be sure it always will be so deemd by that Kind of Men in office, who meet with none to hinder them from persisting in the most egregious and expensive Blunders, but the open, sincere & warm Friends of the Country. We all know, says my Correspondent, his Zeal & Sufferings for our glori-

ous Cause.” Such a Character, I must confess, commands my Friendship; but it has no Consideration in the present Appeal. Has he had a fair Trial? I pay a proper regard to the Decisions of Courts Martial, and shall not give my Voice for altering them, but when Error, Partiality or Injustice shall appear plainly to my own Satisfaction.

## Archibald Maclaine

### **Pierce Butler to Archibald Maclaine, New York, 3 March 1790**

I sincerely wish that your own private Interest could be benefited as much by Your coming to Congress as Your Country’s wou’d, for indeed the Southern Interest calls loudly for some such Men as you here.

### **Pierce Butler to George Hooper, Philadelphia, 23 January 1791**

I was favored with Your Letter of the 17th. Ult. last week. I am very much concerned to find by it that our good and worthy friend Mr. McLain is so dangerously indisposed. I very sincerely hope that the Winter will brace and restore Him. Neither You nor North Carolina can well spare him.

## William Maclay

### **Benjamin Rush to John Montgomery, 1 October 1788**

[As a candidate for the U.S. Senate] Maclay’s age and steadiness of character were used against his youth and inexperience in public business.

### **Benjamin Rush to Jeremy Belknap, Philadelphia, 7 October 1788**

Mr. Maclay possesses great talents for government. He was bred a lawyer but has spent the last twenty years of his life in a succession of public employments. He is alike independent in fortune and spirit. In his manners he is a perfect republican.

### **Tench Coxe to James Madison, Philadelphia, 22 October 1788**

You will have great satisfaction in hearing that Mr. Maclay, our agricultural Senator is a decided Federalist, of a neat clean landed property, with a law education, a very straight head, of much more reading than the country gentlemen in the Middle States usually are, a man of fair character and great assiduity in business. My own opinion is that he is the properest character for the agricultural member in the state and he was elected by 66 votes out of 67—all the opposition concurring in him, and all our friends but one. I consider this election of Mr. Maclay by all the opposition as of great importance, as a sort of acceptance of the government.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 22 January 1789**

Our senators are Mr. Morris and Mr. Maclay. The latter is one of my early and most intimate friends. He is a scholar, a philosopher, and a statesman. Few men unite such great speculative with such accurate practical talents. He was educated a lawyer but for many years past had left the bar in order to improve a large and clear estate in one of our new counties.

**Samuel Chase to Richard Henry Lee, 16 May 1789**

I am informed that Mr. Maclay is a Gentleman of great Diffidence and Modesty.

**William Maclay to Benjamin Rush, New York, 18 May 1789**

You know how much I wished to be well with him [John Adams]. Yet a Sense of duty has placed me amiss out in opposition to him, as to Sundry points. It is natural to think I have incurred his displeasure. And I have obtained the Character of being No Courtier, or to speak positively that of being an indiscreet Man. But be it so. I am all easy within, and enjoy the Plaudits of an approving Conscience. This is trye consolation. But I have others too good Men take me by the hand. And I am convinced my firmness has not lost me a single Friend that deserved the name, more especially was it attended with success.

**William Maclay: Journal, 12 June 1790**

. . . & now Billy What say you of Yourself. Not over burthened either with Knowledge or Experience, but disposed to make the best Use of Your tools.

# John Macpherson

**John Adams: Diary, 18 September 1775**

This Morning John McPherson Esq. came to my Lodging, and requested to speak with me in Private. He is the Owner of a very handsome Country Seat, about five Miles out of this City: is the Father of Mr. McPherson, an Aid de Camp to General Schuyler. He has been a Captain of a Privateer, and made a Fortune in that Way the last War. Is reputed to be well skilled in naval Affairs. He proposes great Things. Is sanguine, confident, positive, that he can take or burn every Man of War, in America.\* It is a Secret he says. But he will communicate it to any one Member of Congress upon Condition, that it be not divulged during his Life at all, nor after his Death but for the Service of this Country. He says it is as certain as that he shall die, that he can burn any Ship.

\*A Philadelphia privateer-merchant, Macpherson was one of several persons to propose plans for using an explosive torpedo to destroy ships at anchor. Congress endorsed Macpherson's scheme on 19 October 1775, and he subsequently went to Boston to implement it.

**John Adams: Diary, 25 September 1775**

Rode out of Town and dined with Mr. Macpherson. He has the most elegant Seat in Pensilvania, a clever Scotch Wife and two pretty daughters. His Seat is on the Banks of Schuylkil. He has been

Nine Times wounded in Battle. An old Sea Commander, made a Fortune by Privateering. An Arm twice shot off, shot thro the Leg. &c. He renews his Proposals of taking or burning Ships.

**John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 20 October 1775**

The Bearer of this is John McPherson Esq. He is a Genius—an old Sea Warriour, Nine or ten Times wounded in Sea Fights. He has a son in the Service—Aid de Camp to Schuyler—a very sensible Man.

Of Mr McPhersons Errand to the Camp ask no Questions and I will tell you no false News. It will make a Noise, in Time—but for the present for God's sake let not a Word be said.

I hope all our Friends who have opportunity will shew him Respect.

## Dolley Madison

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 27 February 1796**

I dined Yesterday with Mr. Madison. Mrs. Madison is a fine Woman and her two sisters are equally so. . . . These Ladies, whose Names were Pain [i.e., Payne], are of a Quaker Family once of North Carolina.

## James Madison

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

I Take notice of a Mr. Madison of Virginia, Who with some little reading in the Law is Just from the College, and possesses all the Self conceit that is Common To youth and inexperience in like cases—but it is unattended with that gracefulness & ease which Sometimes Makes even the impertinence of youth and inexperience agreeable or at least not offensive.

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

Mr. Madison a gloomy, stiff creature, they say is clever in Congress, but out of it he has nothing engaging or even bearable in his Manners—the most unsociable creature in Existence.

**Eliza House Trist to Thomas Jefferson, 13 April 1784**

He has a Soul replete with gentleness humanity and every social virtue and yet I am certain that some wretch or other will write against him [if he becomes governor of Virginia]. You I am sure wou'd not advise him to it. I have no Idea that men are to live only for the Publick. They owe something to themselves. Mr. Madison is too amiable in his disposition to bear up against a torrent of abuse. It will hurt his feelings and injure his health, take my word.

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Richmond, Va., 15 May 1784**

The Assembly have not yet proceeded to active Business. They have formed great Hopes of Mr. Madison, and those who know him best think he will not disappoint their most sanguine Expectations.

**Marquis de Lafayette to James Madison, New York, 15 December 1784**

Before I leave this Continent, give me leave once more to bid you adieu, and to assure you with the sincerity of my heart, that one of the most pleasing circumstances, not only of my voyage, but also of my life, has been to obtain as an intimate friend the man who before this last time, was only to me a valuable and agreeable acquaintance. Hitherto you had been my friend as the world calls it—but now I hope you are my friend as my heart reckons but few men—and once for all, I wanted to tell you that I know you, esteem you, and love you with all the warmth of my regard and affection.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Paris, 18 March 1785**

Late letters tell us you are nominated for the court of Spain. . . . I need not tell you how much I shall be pleased with such an event. Yet it has its displeasing sides also. I want you in the Virginia Assembly and also in Congress yet we cannot have you everywhere. We must therefore be contented to have you where you choose.

**James Madison to the Marquis de Lafayette, Orange, Va., 20 March 1785**

I have nothing to say of myself but that I have exchanged Richmond for Orange as you will have seen by the above date; that I enjoy a satisfactory share of health; that I spend the chief of my time in reading, & the chief of my reading on Law.

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Orange, Va., 26 July 1785**

I keep up my attention as far as I can command my time, to the course of reading which I have of late pursued & shall continue to do so. I am however far from being determined ever to make a professional use of it. My wish is if possible to provide a decent & independent subsistence, without encountering the difficulties which I foresee in that line. Another of my wishes is to depend as little as possible on the labour of slaves. The difficulty of reconciling these views, has brought into my thoughts several projects from which advantage seemed attainable. I have in concert with a friend here, one at present on the Anvil which we think cannot fail to yield a decent reward for our trouble.

**Philip Mazzei to John Adams, Paris, 27 September 1785**

One of the most noble, most sensible, & virtuous men on the Globe, Col. James Madison. . . .

**David Stuart to George Washington, Richmond, Va., 25 December 1786**

I have no doubt Mr. Maddison's virtues and abilities make it necessary that he should be in Congress; but from what I already foresee, I shall dread the consequences of another Assembly without him.

Founders on the Founders

**Luigi Castiglioni: Sketches of American Statesmen, 1787**

He is a man of about 30 years of age, of likable manners and unaffected modesty.

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

Mr. Maddison is a character who has long been in public life; and what is very remarkable every Person seems to acknowledge his greatness. He blends together the profound politician, with the Scholar. In the management of every great question he evidently took the lead in the Convention, and tho' he cannot be called an Orator, he is a most agreeable, eloquent, and convincing Speaker. From a spirit of industry and application which he possesses in a most eminent degree, he always comes forward the best informed Man of any point in debate. The affairs of the United States, he perhaps, has the most correct knowledge of, of any Man in the Union. He has been twice a Member of Congress, and was always thought one of the ablest Members that ever sat in that Council. Mr. Maddison is about 37 years of age, a Gentleman of great modesty,—with a remarkable sweet temper. He is easy and unreserved among his acquaintances, and has a most agreeable style of conversation.

**James Madison to George Washington, New York, 20 February 1788**

I have given notice to my friends in Orange that the County may command my services in the Convention if it pleases. I can say with great truth however that in this overture I sacrifice every private inclination to considerations not of a selfish nature. I foresee that the undertaking will involve me in very laborious and irksome discussions, that public opposition to several very respectable characters whose esteem and friendship I greatly prize may unintentionally endanger the subsisting connection; and that disagreeable misconstructions, of which samples have been already given, may be the fruit of those exertions which fidelity will impose. But I have made up my determination on the subject; and if I am informed that my presence at the election in the County be indispensable, shall submit to that condition also; though it is my particular wish to decline it, as well to avoid apparent solicitude on the occasion; as a journey of such length at a very unpleasant season.

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

We all rejoice greatly at your election; indeed, my dear sir, we consider you as the main pillar of the business on the right side; but from the elections hitherto sent to us there is certainly a majority against the system, but the western members will preponderate the scale.

**Bushrod Washington to George Washington, Richmond, Va., 7 June 1788**

[In the Virginia ratifying Convention.] Mr. Madison followed, and with such force of reasoning, and a display of such irresistible truths, that opposition seemed to have quitted the field. However, I am not so sanguine as to trust appearances, or even to flatter myself that he made many converts. A few I have been confidently informed he did influence, who were decidedly in the opposition.

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

The name of Madison, famous in America, is also well known in Europe through the amply deserved tributes given him by his fellow countryman and friend, Mr. Jefferson. Although still young, he has rendered important services to Virginia, to the American confederation, and in general to the cause of liberty and humanity. He has contributed much, together with Mr. [Alexander] White, to the reform of the civil and criminal codes of his state, and he distinguished himself particularly at the time that the conventions met to vote on the new Federal Constitution. For a long time Virginia hesitated to join the Union, but by his logic and his eloquence Mr. Madison persuaded the convention to favor acceptance.

This republican seems to be no more than thirty-three years old. When I saw him, he looked tired, perhaps as a result of the immense labors to which he had devoted himself recently. His expression was that of a stern censor; his conversation disclosed a man of learning; and his countenance was that of a person conscious of his talents and of his duties. . . . Mr. Madison [had] the thoughtful look of a wise statesman.

**John Page to James Madison, Williamsburg, Va., 6 August 1788**

Yours of the 27th. Ulto. enclosing the New York Papers, with the joyful News of the Ratification of the Plan of the federal Constitution has just come to Hand. I return you many Thanks for communicating to me so early, an Authentic Account of that important & glorious Event. I heartily congratulate you on the brightening Prospect of our Affairs, & the Success of your Wishes & patriotic Labors—they are crowned with Success, & to your immortal Honor; for it is to you, we are indebted for the Part Virginia took in this great Affair & we see her Influence in the other States. I confess I have always attributed to you the Glory of laying the Foundation of this great Fabric of government; of supporting the Plan of it in Convention & of animating all the States to cooperate in the great Work.

**Arthur Lee to John Adams, 10 August 1788**

Mr. Madison is the Atlas of their cause, which is much to be lamented. It has been matter of equal sorrow & surprise to me, that a man of his character & talents, should have been uniformly influenced by such men as Morris & Marbois—men certainly not of doubtful designs, nor of depth to escape the penetration of discernment above the common level.

**Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788**

Educated, wise, moderate, docile, studious; can be more profound than Mr. Hamilton, but less brilliant; intimate friend of Mr. Jefferson and sincerely attached to France. He has been in Congress since a youth and he seems to be especially dedicated to public affairs. He could one day be governor of his state, if his modesty would allow him to accept this position. In the past he has refused the office of president of Congress. This is a man who must be studied for a long time to form a just opinion of him.

**Alexander White to Mary Wood, Richmond, Va., 5 November 1788**

Next Saturday is appointed for choosing Senators, there is a strong Party against Mr. Madison, and it is a doubt notwithstanding his great abilities, his virtue, and his respectful polite behaviour to all men of all Parties whether he will be elected as one.

**Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Richmond, Va., 10 November 1788**

On Thursday last the candidates for the senate were nominated; and Mr. Henry, after expatiating largely in favor of Mr. [Richard Henry] and Mr. [William] Grayson, concluded that yourself, whose talents and integrity he admitted, were unseasonable upon this occasion, in which your federal politics were so adverse to the opinions of many members. Your friends Page, Corbin, Carrington and White were zealous; but the last gentleman, having in the connection of his ideas something about instructions, acknowledged, that it was doubtful, whether you would obey instructions, which should direct you to vote against direct taxation. “There gentlemen, rejoined Mr. Henry, the secret is out: it is doubted whether Mr. Madison will obey instructions.”

**Henry Lee to James Madison, Alexandria, Va., 19 November 1788**

You have heard of the election of senators for this state—the friends to the government exerted themselves in your behalf & although you was not chosen, yet you received strong testimonial of the unbounded attachment of one party, & of the excessive jealousy of the other party. Mr. Henry on the floor exclaimed against your political character & pronounced you unworthy of the confidence of the people in the station of Senator. That your election would terminate in producing rivulets of blood throughout the land.

**James Madison to James Madison, Sr., Alexandria, Va., 18 December 1788**

[Writing to his father requesting a carriage to carry him home to Orange County because his hemorrhoids would not allow him to ride a horse.] It will be necessary for me to have the use of the Chair, as well on account of my baggage which consists of a Portmanteau Trunk and a Portmanteau, as on account of some remains of the piles which for some weeks past have been very troublesome.

**“A Marylander,” Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 26 December 1788**

In Virginia, and only there as yet, two decided antifederal characters are put into the senate, and what ia an aggravation of the misfortune, Mr. Maddison was excluded, who was allowed to be the *greatest man* in the general convention, though only little more than thirty years of age; his abilities are transcendently great, his integrity unimpeached, and he had the honor of first moving for the appointment of a general convention, but the antifederals, not content with excluding from the senate so valuable a man, have also endeavoured to deprive us of his services, by laying off the state in districts, each one to send only a member, and he to reside in the district, and taking great pains to put him in one, where all the counties are antifederal, so as to render it impossible for him to be elected. The antifederals *here* are very apt to complain of the illiberality of excluding from public stations their friends, when able men—What excuse can they give for their friends in Virginia, in excluding both from the senate and the house of representatives the *ablest man in the whole union*, merely because it is in their power to do it—Is such conduct either patriotic or liberal?

**Fredericksburgh *Virginia Herald*, 15 January 1789**

It is not every age, nor every country, which can furnish a man of equal endowments and virtues with the one you have it in your power to chuse. Virginia cannot boast his equal. What then must be the anguish of mind, which the lovers of virtue, morality, and religious freedom, through the state, will suffer, if you disappoint them in a man whom they revere as the fairest pattern of the former, and the firmest bulwark of the latter? I will not harbour such a sentiment—human nature is not capable of such ingratitude.

**The Reverend James Madison to James Madison, Williamsburg, Va., 1 March 1789**

I rejoice that you are in a Situation, which enables you to be extensively useful, & that, we who are to receive the Law may at least be assured, one Voice will always utter what Wisdom & Virtue shall dictate.

**Henry Wynkoop to Reading Beatty, New York, 18 March 1789**

Was much pleased on Saturday morning, on seeing Mr. Ames of Massachusetts, and Mr. Madison of Virginia introduced to each other—two young but shining political characters, who cannot fail distinguishing themselves in the Federal legislature.

**“A Virginian,” *Maryland Journal*, 31 March 1789**

[Prefatory statement in submitting Madison’s letter to George Thompson, 29 January 1789 to be printed.] I wish to see in print, as it may serve to elucidate a subject, that even at this late period is not generally understood; and, as a sample of that clear head, and sound heart, for which the writer is so justly celebrated.

**Ralph Izard to Thomas Jefferson, Charleston, S.C., 3 April 1789**

I am very glad to find that Mr. Madison is elected a Member of the House of Representatives: I think highly of his abilities and expect considerable advantages will be derived from them.

**Cyrus Griffin to James Madison, New York, 14 April 1789**

We all rejoice greatly at your election [to the U.S. House of Representatives]; indeed, my dear sir, we consider you as the main pillar of the business on the right side.

**Fisher Ames to George R. Minot, New York, 3 May 1789**

Madison is a man of sense, reading, address, and integrity, as ’tis allowed. Very much Frenchified in his politics. He speaks low, his person is little and ordinary. He speaks decently, as to manner, and no more. His language is very pure, perspicuous, and to the point. Pardon me, if I add, that I think him a little too much of a book politician, and too timid in his politics, for prudence and caution are opposites of timidity. He is not a little of a Virginian, and thinks that state the land of promise, but is afraid of their state politics, and of his popularity there, more than I think he should be. . . . He is our first man.

**Tristram Lowther to James Iredell, New York, 9 May 1789**

As for Madison, of whom I had formed the highest expectations, I have had very little opportunity of forming an opinion, for whenever he has spoke, while I have been attending, it has been in so low a tone of voice, that I could not well distinguish what he said; his voice appears too defective for so large a man; however, I shall be better able to judge, when he brings forward his motion for considering the article of the Constitution respecting amendments, which he intends on the 4th Monday of this month.

**Fisher Ames to George R. Minot, New York, 18 May 1789**

Madison is cool, and has an air of reflection, which is not very distant from gravity and self-sufficiency. In speaking, he never relaxes into pleasantry, and discovers little of that warmth of heart, which gives efficacy to George Cabot's reasoning, and to Lowell's. His printed speeches are more faithful than any other person's, because he speaks very slow, and his discourse is strongly marked. He states a principle and deduces consequences, with clearness and simplicity. Sometimes declamation is mingled with argument, and he appears very anxious to carry a point by other means than addressing their understandings. He appeals to popular topics, and to the pride of the House, such as that they have voted before, and will be inconsistent. I think him a good man and an able man, but he has rather too much theory, and wants that discretion which men of business commonly have. He is also very timid, and seems evidently to want manly firmness and energy of character.

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Braintree, Mass., 26 May 1789**

I read the debates of the House and I have watched a certain character much celebrated and from the whole I have drawn up this conclusion "that he either does not possess so great talents as he has been said to, or he is aiming at popularity, at the expense of his judgment and understanding." Honestus, pronounces Mr. Madison the wisest and best man in the house but time will unveil characters. I do not like his politicks nor the narrow jealousy he has discovered.

**Fisher Ames to George Richards Minot, New York, 29 May 1789**

But did I express any contempt for Madison? Upon my word, I do not recollect a word of it, and there is not in my heart a symptom of its having ever been there. Before I came [to Congress], I was cautioned against pinning my faith on any man's sleeve. I was afraid of it, for I think I am not apt to resist the influence of those whom I esteem. But I see in Madison, with his great knowledge and merit, so much error, and some of it so very unaccountable, and tending to so much mischief, that my impatience may have tintured my letter with more gall than I remember. . . .

He is very much devoted to the French, it is said, and his reasonings were not very logical [on the bill to discriminate against British imports], nor much to the credit of his political character. That you may be less liable to misunderstand my idea of him in future, take this explication of it. He is probably deficient in that fervor and vigor of character which you will expect in a great man. He is not likely to risk bold measures, like Charles Fox, nor even to persevere in any measures against a firm opposition, like the first Pitt. He derives from nature an excellent understanding, however, but I think he excels in the quality of judgment. He is possessed of a sound judgment, which perceives truth with great clearness, and can trace it through the mazes of debate, without losing it. He is admirable for this inestimable talent. As a reasoner, he is remarkably perspicuous

and methodical. He is a studious man, devoted to public business, and a thorough master of almost every public question that can arise, or he will spare no pains to become so, if he happens to be in want of information. What a man understands clearly, and has viewed in every different point of light, he will explain to the admiration of others, who have not thought of it at all, or but little, and who will pay in praise for the pains he saves them. His clear perception of an argument makes him impressive, and persuasive sometimes. It is not his *forte*, however. Upon the whole, he is an useful, respectable, worthy man, in a degree so eminent, that his character will not sink. He will continue to be a very influential man in our country. Let me add, without meaning to detract, that he is too much attached to his theories, for a politician. He is well versed in public life, was bred to it, and has no other profession. Yet, may I say it, it is rather a science, than a business, with him. He adopts his maxims as he finds them in books, and with too little regard to the actual state of things.

**Comte de Moustier to Comte de Montmorin, New York, 9 June 1789**

. . . Mr. Madison, the Representative most renowned for his knowledge, his activity, and his integrity. It is said that General Washington grants him great confidence and he is a personal friend and compatriot of Mr. Jefferson. It was he in large part who got Virginia to ratify the Constitution, which still has formidable opponents in that State.

**Richard Bland Lee to Leven Powell, New York, 27 June 1789**

Mr. Madison shone with superior lustre on this occasion [in debates over power of President to remove executive officers].

**Fisher Ames to George R. Minot, New York, 2 July 1789**

. . . the people of Virginia (whose murmurs, if louder than a whisper, make Mr. Madison's heart quake). . . .

**John Fenno to Joseph Ward, 5 July 1789**

I think this business of amendments a very unpropitious affair, just at this juncture—Mr. M—— is universally acknowledged a man of the first rate abilities; but there appears to be a mixture of timidity in his disposition, which, as he is so influential a character, I some times fear will be productive of effects, not salutary, to say the least—every movement of this kind, unhinges the public mind, gives an opening to the artful, unprincipled, & disaffected—who are waiting with burning impatience for an opportunity to embroil & embarrass public affairs.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Benjamin Lincoln, New York, 19 July 1789**

Mr. Madison's talents, respectable as they are will for some time be lost to the public, from his timidity. He is constantly haunted with the ghost of Patrick Henry. No man, in my opinion, in this country has more fair and honorable intentions, or more ardently wishes the prosperity of the public, but unfortunately he has not that strength of nerves which will enable him to set at defiance popular and factious clamors.

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

Madison is a federalist but so timid that he is more frequently opposed to good men & measures than I expected.

**William Constable to Gouverneur Morris, 29 July 1789**

Many wish you were in the House of Representatives to lead; Madison is too meek to govern.

**William L. Smith to Edward Rutledge, New York, 9 August 1789**

Mr. Madison is a great friend to a strong government—his great abilities will always give him much weight with the administration—I believe he now is much in the confidence of the President & he will hereafter stand a chance of being President himself; in the meantime, he will be a leading man in the Cabinet Council. His mildness of character & a certain timidity which accompanies his political conduct render him unfriendly to a republican government.

**William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 24 August 1789**

Pacificus has animadverted pretty severely on Mr. Madison. What the real sentiments of the latter are with respect to amendments I don't know; but he is certainly very sensible; a good federalist, and I don't doubt an honest man.

**Robert Morris to Richard Peters, New York, 24 August 1789**

Poor Madison took one wrong step in Virginia by publishing a letter respecting *Amendments* and you, who know every thing, must know what a Cursed thing it is to write *a Book*. He in consequence has been obliged to bring on the proposition for making Amendments; The Waste of precious time is what has vexed me the most, for as to the Nonsense they call Amendments I never expect that any part of it will go through the various Trials which it must pass before it can become a part of the Constitution.

**Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, New York, 1 September 1789**

Mr. Madison is a very amiable character, a man of virtue & probity.

**Richard Bland Lee to Charles Lee, New York, 16 September 1789**

I am sorry to hear that Mr. Madison's influence is decreasing, as his conduct has in my opinion been governed by the best motives and in most instances by an enlightened policy. And I hope when he becomes more acquainted with the interest of the Potomack that he will be as popular there as he deserves to be Every where.

**George Beckwith: Notes of a conversation with Alexander Hamilton, New York, October 1789**

George Beckwith: As you have done me the honor of mentioning to me the turn of party, during Your late Sessions, I cannot avoid saying that I was much surprised to find amongst the gentlemen,

who were so decidedly hostile to us in their public conduct, the name of a Man, from whose Character for good sense, and other qualifications, I should have been led to Expect a very different conduct.

Alexander Hamilton: You mean Mr. Maddison from Virginia. I confess I was likewise rather surprised at it, as well as that the only opposition to General Washington was from thence. The truth is, that although this gentleman is a clever man, he is very little Acquainted with the world. That he is Uncorrupted and incorruptible I have not a doubt; he has the same End in view that I have. And so have those gentlemen, who Act with him, but their mode of attaining it is very different.

### **Fisher Ames to Theodore Sedgwick, Springfield, Mass., 6 October 1789**

The debate about the style of writs was ridiculous beyond conception. Madison cannot recover my confidence speedily in that regard. He was silent but voted with the champions of liberty who are not willing to do anything but talk for it, who foretell events that never happen, and who see invisible things. Such are the southern blusterers.

### **William Samuel Johnson: Conversation with George Beckwith, New York, 1789**

Mr. Maddison, a Delegate from Virginia took a very active and leading part [in the congressional debates]. He is an Elve of Mr. Jefferson's, who is still our Minister at Paris, and may be esteemed as not exempt from a French bias. . . . and [Madison] being a man of genius and talents, his exertions had a considerable influence.

### **Edmund Randolph: History of Virginia**

even then, attracted great notice. Until the meeting of this convention [in 1776] he was unknown at the metropolis. He was educated at Princeton College in New Jersey and had been laborious in his studies, which ranged beyond strict academic limits but were of that elementary cast, subservient in their general principle to any science which he might choose to cultivate in detail. As a classical scholar, he was mature; as a student of belles letters, his fancy animated his judgment, and his judgment, without damping his fancy, excluded by the soundness of criticism every propensity to tinsel and glitter. It still glowed, but it glowed without glare. His diffidence went hand in hand with his morals, which repelled vice, howsoever fashionable. In convention debate his lips were never unsealed, except to some member who happened to sit near him; and he who had once partaken of the rich banquet of his remarks did not fail to wish daily to be within the reach of his conversation. It could not be otherwise, for although his age and the deference which in private circles had been paid to him were apt to tincture him with pedantry, he delivered himself without affectation upon Grecian, Roman, and English history from a well-digested fund, a sure presage of eminence. A very sensible foreigner observed of him that he never uttered anything which was not appropriate and not connected with some general principle of importance. Even when he commented upon the dignity with which Pendleton filled the chair, it was in that philosophic spirit which looks for personal dignity in officers of a republic as well as of monarchy. While he thrilled with the ecstasies of Henry's eloquence and extolled his skill in commanding the audience, he detected what might be faulty in his reasoning. Madison was enviable in being among the few young men who were not inflated by early flattery and could content themselves with throwing

out in social discourse jewels which the artifice of a barren mind would have treasured up for gaudy occasions.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Pamela Sedgwick, 4 March 1790**

Mr. Madison who is the leader of the opposition is an apostate from all his former principles. Whether he is really a convert to anti-federalism—whether he is actuated by the mean and base motives of acquiring popularity in his own state that he may fill the place of Senator which will probably soon be vacated by the death of Grayson, or whether he means to put himself at the head of the discontented in America time will discover. The last, however, I do not suspect, because I have ever considered him as a very timid man. Deprived of his aid the party would soon be weak and inefficient.

**Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, New York, 7 March 1790**

Mr. M——n is not acting a much better part here, only a more artful and covered one.

**Benjamin Goodhue to Samuel Phillips, 14 March 1790**

Madison would be an excellent politician if he was not so much warped by local considerations, and popular influences, but with those about him he is a dangerous foe, to those measures which soar above trifling objects, and have national advantages for their basis.

**Thomas Hartley to Jasper Yeates, New York, 14 March 1790**

He is certainly an extraordinary Man—and when he comes to have a sufficient Knowledge of practical Life—there will be few beyond him.

**Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 17 March 1790**

[Thomas Jefferson on Madison:] He said Mr. Madison “was the greatest man in the world”; that Dr. Witherspoon, his master, had said of him “that he never knew him do or say an improper thing” when at School.

**John Trumbull to John Adams, Hartford, Conn., 30 March 1790**

I doubt with You, whether any Man but Washington could at present support the Constitution [as President of the United States]—But were he dead, I am sure none who has been thought of as your Rival, could support it while You were living & neglected. . . . We have an high opinion of Maddison’s abilities, tho’ it has lately been lessened by his advocating an impossible scheme of discrimination among the public Creditors—To suppose he did not perceive this impossibility would detract from our esteem of his talents—If he did perceive it, we can only ascribe his conduct to the desire of increasing his popularity in his own State, or to motives of envy against the Secretary\*—But we have never thought of him for V.P.—

\*Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton.

**George Beckwith: Notes on Conversation with Alexander Hamilton, April 1790**

Mr. Maddison who is in great favor with the President, is still more partial to a French interest [than Thomas Jefferson].

**Thomas Lee Shippen to William Shippen, 12 April 1790**

I am already charmed with Madison. Both before & at dinner yesterday I had a great deal of conversation with him, and I really begin to think that he deserves all his reputation.

**Letter from Boston, *Gazette of the United States*, 17 April 1790**

The friends of good government—the friends of science; the friends of virtue and honor, mourn exceedingly that Mr. M—— [Madison] has departed so essentially from his federal principles, and that the lustre of his character declines. It is impossible for me to conjecture what can be the occasion he has taken a part so derogatory to his former dignity, and so repugnant to the important interests of his country. I once thought him a very great, and a very good man. I will think so again, when his conduct is more open, public spirited, and accommodating. For the present, I suspend my opinion of him.

**Thomas Lee Shippen to William Shippen, New York, 22 April 1790**

Madison is charming.

**John Adams to John Trumbull, New York, 25 April 1790**

Mr. Maddison is a studious scholar, but his reputation as a man of abilities is a creature of French puffs. Some of the worst measures, some of the most stupid motions stand on Record to his infamy. I mean that for compelling American ministers at the Peace to communicate every thing to the French ministers, and do nothing without their consent. You hint at suspicions of motives of envy against the Secretary [Alexander Hamilton]. I would rather hope it is defference to constituents. This is defalcation enough from a character, but not so much as the other. The jealousies and envies of emulation are however the Devil.

**Arthur Lee to Thomas Lee Shippen, Alexandria, Va., 25 April 1790**

I shall by no means deem you enthusiastic in what you say of Mr. Madison's agreeableness in conversation. I have heard others say the same & as far as I have had experience think with you. It is his political conduct which I condemn. That without being a public knave himself, he has always been the supporter of public knaves, & never, in any one instance has concurred to check, censure, or controul them—That he has had such vanity as to suppose himself superior to all other persons, conducting measures without consulting them & intolerant of all advice or contradiction—That in consequence he has been duped by the artful management of the rapacious Morris & the intriguing Marbois. It is possible he may have thought himself right in all this, but in acquitting his intention we hazard the credit of his understanding.

**“Brutus,” *Connecticut Courant*, 26 April 1790**

When the great principles of the constitution were agitated, we saw a Maddison, an Ames, a Boudinot, a Benson and other able and eloquent men boldly come forward, and with the manliness of Roman Senators, contend for the establishment of a vigorous Executive, without which our whole government would have been a nerveless body. New-England read the debates, and every mouth was filled with the praises of Congress. Madison’s name was never mentioned but with admiration.

But at the close of the session, what a change! When the question respecting the Residence of Congress came before the house of Representatives, a question that did not materially affect the Union, because at present it is of not one shilling’s consequence to the great body politic, where Congress reside, and of still less consequence is it still less consequence is it to resolve *now* where they *will* reside hereafter, this trifling question called forth all the narrow selfish passions of the members, it was debated with more warmth of temper than any preceding question had been, however interesting to the United States. Even the cool, modest, temperate M—— was thrown off his guard, and rendered ridiculous by passion.

**Fisher Ames to John Lowell, New York, 2 May 1790**

You are acquainted with Mr. Madison, and of course you know that he possesses a most ingenious mind, and extensive learning. He has long been deemed a champion for the Constitution—

**Gouverneur Morris to Robert Morris, London, 3 May 1790**

I am very sorry indeed to learn that our friend Madison has adopted such singular Ideas respecting the public Debt. This Thing will prove injurious to him because it will give a Handle to those who may wish to call his Judgment in Question and the World is so formed that Objections on that Ground are frequently more fatal than upon that of Morals. I think that on this Occasion he has been induced to adopt the Opinions of others for I cannot believe that his own Mind would so much have misled him. I am very very sorry for it because I think he is one of those Men whose Character is valuable to America.

**Nathaniel Barrell to George Thatcher, York, Maine, 4 May 1790**

I am sorry to find by yours such an opposition to the assumption of the state debts, as I know it must proceed from injustice in the opposers—it is said Maddison has lost himself in the opinion of many great and vertuous men, & has done more injury by his chicane, & cunning, than he can ever repair.

**Andrew Craigie to Daniel Parker, New York, 5 May 1790**

Mr. Madison [whose] politicks this session have disgusted many of his best friends.

**Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, 30 May 1790**

Madison leads the Virginians like a flock of sheep.

**John Trumbull to John Adams, 5 June 1790**

Maddison's character is certainly not rising in the public estimation. He now acts on a conspicuous stage and does not equal expectation. He becomes more and more a Southern Partisan and loses his assumed candor and moderation. Indeed no man seems to have gained much reputation in the present session of Congress.

**Richard Peters to Thomas Jefferson, Belmont, Pa., 20 June 1790**

I am sorry that Madison, who is a good corrigible Boy a little spoiled by bad Play Mates, should continue to play truant from us [in Congress]. Let me convey my affectionate Regards to him through a Minister of State which he will then receive not for the Value if them but the Channel through which they pass; as if a Man must drink Water, taking it out of a silver Mug at least gives a luxurious Show to the homely Tipple.

**George Mason to Thomas Jefferson, Gunston Hall, Va., 10 January 1791**

I beg the Favour of you to present my best Respects to our Friend Madison. He is one of the few Men, whom from a pretty thorough Acquaintance, I really esteem; tho' I have been apprehensive some late Difference (and it has only been a late one) on political Questions had caused a Coolness between Us.

**John Trumbull to John Adams, Hartford, Conn., 5 February 1791**

Maddison in his constant opposition to every plan of the Secretary of the Treasury, seems dwindled from the Great Politician we once supposed him, to the insignificant leader of an impotent Minority—No man ever more mistook his real Interest, or the line of Policy he ought to have pursued. He has lost all his popularity in this quarter.

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 1 July 1791**

I have been somewhat indisposed for several days with a fever attended with pretty decided symptoms of bile. It has confined me to the House tho' not to my room. I find myself better today, particularly in being relieved from a nausea and irritation in the stomach which were the more disagreeable as they threatened a more serious attack. I now hope though I have still a slight fever and loss of appetite that the cause is a fugitive one, and that the effects are going off.

**Alexander Hamilton to Edward Carrington, Philadelphia, 26 May 1792**

Mr. Madison cooperating with Mr. Jefferson . . . have a womanish attachment to France and a womanish resentment against Great Britain.

**John Beckley to James Madison, Philadelphia, 2 September 1792**

Mr. H[amilton] unequivocally declares, that you are his *personal & political enemy*.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Philadelphia, 7 July 1793**

You will see in these Colo. H's [Alexander Hamilton's] 2d & 3d Pacificus. Nobody answers him, & his doctrine will therefore be taken for confessed. For god's sake, my dear Sir, take up your pen, select the most striking heresies, and cut him to pieces in the face of the public. There is nobody else who can & will enter the lists with him.

**William Lyman to Samuel Henshaw, 17 January 1794**

[On Madison's speech of 14 January responding to William Loughton Smith's speech] On this Occasion Smith Spoke about two hours very unset and handsomely Although not with the degree of Elegance Accuracy Method and extensive Information with which Maddison Engaged our Attention for two hours and a half during which time in a full House and thronged with Spectators there was perfect Silence that you might almost have heard a Pin Fall. In Short Eloquence which baffles every thing I had ever heard and almost description.

**James Callender, *Philadelphia Gazette*, 31 May 1794**

To do justice to the speeches of this gentleman, it would be requisite to print every word exactly as it is spoken, since it is impossible to abridge, without injuring it, the stile of a speaker who is, on every question alike remarkable for the most correct elegance, and the most comprehensive brevity.

**Catherine Coles to Dolley Payne Todd, Philadelphia, 1 June 1794**

. . . now for M—— he told me I might say what I pleas'd to you about him to begin, he thinks so much of you in the day that he has Lost his Tongue, at Night he Dreams of you & Starts in his Sleep a Calling on you to relieve his Flame for he Burns to such an excess that he will be shortly consumed & he hopes that your Heart will be callous to every other swain but himself he has Consented to every thing that I have wrote about him with Sparkling Eyes.

**William W. Wilkins to Dolley Payne Todd, Philadelphia, 22 August 1794**

Mr. M——n is a Man whom I admire. I knew his Attachment to you and did not therefore content myself with taking his Character from the Breath of popular Applause—but consulted those who knew him intimately in private Life. His personal Character therefore I have every reason to believe is good and amiable. He unites to the great Talents which have secured him public Approbation those engaging Qualities that contribute so highly to domestic Felicity. To such a Man therefore I do most freely consent that my beloved Sister be united and happy.

**Dolley Payne Todd to Eliza Collins Lee, Harewood, Va., 16 September 1794**

In the course of this day I give my Hand to the Man who of all other's I most admire. You will not be at a loss to know who this is as I have been long ago gratify'd in having your approbation. In this Union I have every thing that is soothing and greatful in prospect—& my little Payne will have a generous & tender protector.

**Edward Livingston to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 24 December 1795**

His great fault as a politician appears to me a want of decision and a disposition to magnify his adversaries strength. [He has] a habit of considering the objections to his own plans so long and so frequently that they acquire a real weight & influence his conduct. . . . He never determines to act until he is absolutely forced by the pressure of affairs & then regrets that he has neglected some better opportunity. . . . He is a very amiable very well informed, and I believe one of the most honest & upright men this country possesses.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 16 April 1796**

A few Outlandish Men in the H[ouse] have taken the lead and Madison, Giles and Baldwin are humble followers.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 28 April 1796**

Mr. Madison looks worried to death. Pale, withered, haggard.

**Philadelphia *Porcupine's Political Censor* (William Cobbett), May 1796**

Citizen Madison was formerly reckoned as a sort of chief, but he has so sunk out of sight this campaign that we can look upon him, at least, no more than an aide-de-camp . . . without even the hope of repairing his reputation. As a politician he is no more; he is absolutely deceased, cold, stiff and buried in oblivion for ever and ever.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 14 January 1797**

Mr. Madison is to retire. It Seems, the Mode of becoming great is to retire. Madison I Suppose after a Retirement of a few Years is to be President or V.P. . . . It is marvelous how political Plants grow in the shade. Continual Day light and sun shine, Show our Faults and record them. Our Persons, Voices, Clothes, Gate, Air, Sentiments, &c. all become familiar to every Eye and Ear and Understanding and they diminish in Proportion, upon the same Principle that no Man is an Hero to his Wife or Valet de Chamber.

**Abigail Adams to John Adams, Quincy, Mass., 29 January 1797**

The news paper announces Mr. Madison appointed Ambassador extraordinary to France. If true I rejoice in the appointment. I have confidence in the honour and integrity of Mr. Madison, that he would not betray a trust thus reposed or Prostrate the Dignity & independence of his Country to any foreign Nation, even tho that Nation be France. Besides his instructions I trust would be positive, not Discretionary.

**Thomas Jefferson to Peregrine Fitzhugh, Monticello, 9 April 1797**

As no man weighs more maturely than Mr. Madison before he takes a side on any question, I do not expect he has changed either his opinion on that subject, or the expressions of it, and therefore I presume the allegation founded in some misconception or misinformation.

**John Taylor to James Madison, Caroline, Va., 4 March 1799**

The public sentiment of Virginia is at a crisis—at the next assembly it will take a permanent form, which will fix the fate of America. There will be no member present capable of counterpoising Mr. [Patrick] Henry, unless you will come; and if you do, his defeat at this crisis will certainly happen, and will suddenly invigorate the efforts of republicanism throughout the union, at an all important juncture.

**Fisher Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Dedham, Mass., 2 January 1800**

The extreme sensibility of the good men in Virginia to silly principles and silly people, has ever been characteristic. Madison crept into the first Congress by some declarations in print, which made some persons say then, there was not room for him to crawl through with his principles, and therefore he was forced to crawl without them.

**Charles Pinckney to James Madison, Charleston, S.C., 26 October 1800**

I have had your Portrait sent me for my Drawing room—it is a Most exact likeness in the face—But makes you about the Body much fatter than when I saw you. If it is so I suppose you have thriven upon Matrimony & find it a good thing.

**Gouverneur Morris: Diary, 15 January 1801**

Mrs. Madison, who takes Mrs. Robert Morris and her companions to this tea-party, has good dispositions, which, from the shrivelled condition of the Secretary, are the less to be wondered at.

**Margaret Bayard Smith to Susan B. Smith, Washington, 26 May 1801**

I admire the simplicity and mildness of Mr. M's manners, and his smile has so much benevolence in it, that it cannot fail of inspiring good will and esteem.

**Fisher Ames to Rufus King, Boston, 27 October 1801**

Madison certainly knows better [than “the extremes of Democratic principles are wise principles”] and yet there ever was a strange vein of absurdity in his head.

**Benjamin Rush to His Son James Rush, Philadelphia, 25 May 1802**

I was much pleased to find that you begin to appreciate *time*. . . . The last King of Prussia but one used to say, “A soldier should have no idle time.” The same thing may be said of all school-boys. Their common plays and amusements I believe, instead of relaxing, often enervate their minds and give them a distaste to study. I do not advise you against such exercises as are necessary to health, but simply to avoid sharing in what are commonly called “plays.” The celebrated Mr. Madison when a student at the Jersey College [Princeton] never took any part in them. His only relaxation from study consisted in walking and conversation. Such was the character he acquired while at college, that Dr. Witherspoon said of him to Mr. Jefferson (from whom I received the anecdote) that during the whole time he was under his tuition he never knew him to do nor to say an improper thing.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 23 August 1805**

When I first took the chair, I was extremely desirous of availing myself of Mr. Madison's abilities, experience, reputation, and amiable qualities. But the violent party spirit of Hamilton's friends, jealous of every man who possessed qualifications to eclipse him, prevented it.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 16 March 1806**

It seems that Mr. Jefferson & his friends wish that Mr. Madison should succeed to the presidency. John Randolph is against Madison—& the avowed advocate of James Monroe.

Mr. Madison has some talents—but he wants nerve—timid & inefficient—in short he is not a practical man.—And that is a declaration that he is not qualified for the office.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 19 March 1806**

Mr. [John] Randolph most explicitly declared that most of the evils which the United States now suffered proceeded from the measures of the Executive—& from the weak feeble and pusillanimous spirit of the keeper of the Cabinet—the Secretary of State.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 8 April 1806**

But said [John] Adair, the President wants nerve—he has not even confidence in himself—For more than a year he has been in the habit of trusting almost implicitly in Mr. Madison. Madison has acquired a complete ascendancy over him. I observed that I considered Mr. M. as an honest man—but that he was too cautious—too fearful & timid to direct the affairs of this nation. He replied that is my opinion of the man.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 11 April 1806**

Mr. [Nicholas] Gilman told me that he believed the President was an honest man—but he wanted firmness—That Mr. Madison was much more timid—& yet he governed the President—That he consulted the other heads of department but little.

**John Beckley to James Monroe, 13 July 1806**

Madison is deemed by many, too timid and indecisive a statesman, and too liable to a conduct of forbearance to the Federal party, which may endanger our harmony and political safety.

**Joseph Story to Samuel P. P. Fay, Washington, 30 May 1807**

Madison is a most agreeable, modest, and unaffected man, of a short stature, and of a mild countenance. He converses with ease, and seems very well versed in diplomacy. The character of his mind seems to be formed by that of Jefferson, and the pupil is not an unfinished likeness of the master. He has the reputation of a well-read scholar, and without doubt would always sustain a considerable rank in the counsels of a free government.

**Gouverneur Morris, Unpublished sheets, entitled: To Those Members of Congress Who Have the Sense to Perceive and the Spirit to Pursue the True Interests of Their Country, no date**

We consider Mr. Maddison as a man of considerable genius, though somewhat slow, and of great industry. We approved of his appointment. We knew indeed that he was a man of feeble mind; and had seen with concern that he gave himself up to Mr. Jefferson, without reserving the use of his own judgment. When we first knew him, he was a youth of ingenuous temper, whose ignorance of the world exposed him to become the prey of any sharper (of either sex) by whom he might be assailed. From a defect of education, he was not in the habit of recurring always to fixed principles for a decision on conduct and opinions. So long, however, as he hung on the arm of Washington, his course was steady, and gained him honour. But the instant he let go that hold, he fell into a ricketty condition, from which he never recovered; and is now in a deep decline of character, for which we fear there is no remedy. The first violent symptom was a panegyric on the French constitution: the more extraordinary, as that instrument, in all its prominent features, was opposite to the constitution he had assisted in making, and labored earnestly and successfully in persuading us to adopt. It would be painful to mark the steps by which this gentleman has descended to his present condition, the mere instrument of Mr. Jefferson. We believe him still honest and well disposed. We think he would make an excellent first clerk in the Secretary of State's office, and sincerely regret the want of qualities and talents for the place he occupies.

**Washington, D.C. *National Intelligencer*, 25 January 1808**

[Selecting the best Republican candidate to stand for President.] He, who is best fitted to guide us through the impending storm, without sacrificing these principles, ought to be the man of our choice. Such, we believe, to be James Madison. Whether we contemplate his irreproachable morals, or solid talents, we are supplied with the strongest reasons for approbation. While in private life he has invariably sustained the unassuming character of modest merit, his discharge of public duty has been no less distinguished by intelligence, fidelity and zeal. And above all, we consider him best fitted for the highest honors in the gift of his country, because amidst the various public scenes in which he has been engaged, and in the exercise of the high functions devolved upon him, he has invariably displayed a dignity and moderation, which are at once the best evidence and the surest preservative of republican principles.

**Albert Gallatin to Joseph Nicholson, 26 December 1808**

Mr. Madison is, as I always knew him, slow in taking his ground, but firm when the storm rises.

**Thomas Jefferson to Henry Guest, Washington, 4 January 1809**

I have the comfort too of knowing that the person whom the public choice has designated to receive the charge from me, is eminently qualified as a safe depository by the endowments of integrity, understanding, and experience.

**Frances Few: *Diary*, 3 March 1809**

Mr. Madison the President-elect is a small man quite devoid of dignity in his appearance—he bows very low and never looks at the person to whom he is bowing but keeps his eyes on the

ground. His skin looks like parchment—at first I thought this appearance was occasioned by the small-pox but upon a nearer approach, I found this was not the case—a few moments in his company and you lose sight of these defects and will see nothing but what pleases you—his eyes are penetrating and expressive—his smile charming—his manners affable—his conversation lively and interesting.

**John Quincy Adams to Louisa Catherine Adams, Washington, 5 March 1809**

The Oath of office was yesterday administered to the new President in the chamber of the Representatives—He delivered a short speech, which you will without doubt see in the newspapers before you can receive this letter; it is in very general terms, and was spoken in a tone of voice so low, that scarcely any part of it was heard by three fourths of the Audience.

**Margaret Bayard Smith to J. Henley Smith, Washington, 12 March 1809**

[Relating a conversation between Henry Clay and Samuel Harrison Smith]

Mr. Clay preferred Madison, and pronounced him after Washington our greatest statesman, and first political writer—He thought Jefferson had most genius—Madison most judgment and common sense—Jefferson a visionary and theorist, often betrayed by his enthusiasm into rash and imprudent and impracticable measures. Madison cool, dispassionate, practical, safe. Your father, would not yield Jefferson's superiority and said he possessed a power and energy, which carried our country through difficulties and dangers, far beyond the power of Madison's less energetic character. "Prudence and caution—would have produced the same result," insisted Mr. Clay. After drawing a parallel between these great men, and taking an historic survey of their political lives, they both met on the same point, viz. that both were great and good, and tho' different,—yet equal.

**Benjamin Rush to Granville Sharp, Philadelphia, 20 June 1809**

Our new President Mr. Madison is very popular. Both the two great parties that have so long divided our country, have united in him. He possesses with uncommon talents, extensive knowledge, much of the prudence, and common sense of General Washington.

**John Adams Draft of a Letter to the *Boston Patriot*, [1809?]**

[Adams describes Fisher Ames's recommendation of Madison as an envoy to France.] Mr. Madison in particular, appeared to him to be a Man of Talent, of irreproachable Morals, of agreeable manners, of a decent deportment and handsome Address.

**Thomas Jefferson to Tadeusz Kosciuszko, Monticello, 26 February 1810**

[Speaking about security measures] But these measures will, I hope be completed by my successor, who to the purest principles of republican patriotism, adds a wisdom and foresight second to no man on earth.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 27 January 1812**

I am quite of The Controulers Mind, that there is no doubt of Mr. Madisons ReElection. Who can stand in Competition? Gen. Pinkney, Gen. Armstrong, Vice President Clinton? Oh No. Respectable worthy Men, but far inferiour in Talents, Industry and especially Popularity. No Man in the Union, can compete with The Locum Tenens,\* at present.

\*Hold the place of.

**John Adams to Benjamin Waterhouse, Quincy, Mass., 11 March 1812**

If I had a vote I Should give it for Mr Madison at the next Election; because I know of no Man who would do better. At present the general Government are approaching nearer and nearer to my System.

**John C. Calhoun to James McBride, 4 April 1812**

Our President tho a man of amiable manners and great talents, has not I fear those commanding talents, which are necessary to control those about him. He permits division in his cabinet. He reluctantly gives up the system of peace.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 14 May 1812**

My confidence in the integrity of Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, in their love of their country and the sincerity of their desires to serve its interests and promote its prosperity, is till entire. Of their genius, talents, learning, industry I am fully convinced, as all the rest of the world is. But either they are shallow statesmen or I am a natural fool. There is no other alternative or dilemma. Mr. Madison has more correct ideas; but as he has been borne up under the wing of Mr. Jefferson, he has been always shackled with Mr. Jefferson's visions and prejudices.

**Mathew Carey to James Madison, Philadelphia, 11 August 1812**

Had Mr. Jefferson been a Nero, & you a Caligula, you could not be more completely abhorred & detested than you are in such parts of New England as are under the influence of the Boston Gazette & the Repertopry.

**Rufus King to Christopher Gore, Jamaica, N.Y., 9 September 1812**

The imbecility of Madison is daily more manifest, still his friends and party in general adhere to him.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, 27 December 1812**

Madison was his [Jefferson's] pupil, held the tail of the noble animal too long, and I fear has not yet entirely let go his hold.

**Henry Clay to Caesar Rodney, 29 December 1812**

Mr. Madison is wholly unfit for the storms of War. Nature has cast him in too benevolent a mould. Admirably adapted to the tranquil scenes of peace—blending all the mild amiable virtues, he is not fit for the rough and rude blasts which the conflicts of nature generate.

**Gouverneur Morris to James Parish, 6 March 1813**

When I read Mr. Madison's message [i.e., his second inaugural address] I supposed him to be out of his senses, and have since been told that he never goes sober to bed. Whether intoxicated by opium or wine was not said, but I learned last winter that pains in his teeth had driven him to use the former too freely.

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

I went yesterday to make my bow to the President. I did not like his looks, any better than I like his Administration.

**John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 15 July 1813**

The Talents, the Scollarship, the Genius, the Learning of Jefferson and Madison are not disputed; but their total Incapacity for practical Government or War, is unblushingly asserted, and I must Say not much disputed by any Party or Individual here.

In this unhappy State of affairs, it appears to me, that the Health of the President is of great importance. I wish to know his real Situation. His Tryals are enough to destroy a Stronger Frame than his. I believe my Constitution to be Stronger by nature than his: but public Exertions Anxieties and perplexities have more than once, brought me to the brink of the Tomb; in Spight of all the resources of Air, exercise, Diet and medicine than I could obtain.

**Richard Rush to John Adams, Washington, 2 August 1813**

Mr Madison rides out, and attends to business again. His long sickness has pulled him down a good deal, but I hope he is permanently recovered from this attack.

**John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 11 August 1813**

I am anxious for Mr Madison's Health, because, much depends upon it. In his Intensions Zeal and Industry I have much confidence: But in Truth I know not on whom much depends. Time and Nature, i.e Providence must and will determine. A disgraceful Peace will ruin the Men who make it, and last but a very little while.

**John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 6 September 1813**

I rejoice that Mr. Madison's Health continues to improve, especially as it confutes an afflicting Report, that he lives by laudanum and could not hold out four months. His Life is of great Importance. The malicious report is contradicted and now understood by the Public, to be false.

**Francis Jeffrey: Journal, 15 November 1813**

We conversed pleasantly enough for ten minutes when the President himself entered—a little mean looking yellow cunning, sour awkward personage—attired in proper black with a profusion of powder on his lank scanty locks and the wrinkles of his orange colored forehead. He had altogether the air of a country schoolmaster in mourning for one of his pupils whom he had whipped to death. He made a very low and very awkward bow and then held out his sovereign hand—not to be kissed—but to be shaken by an alien enemy. He spoke with more reserve and awkwardness than his wife—but very civilly—apologised for the bad roads—told me I should take a view of the Western states as the most interesting, and characteristic of their people—explained the prospect from his windows—and pointed out to us a most base and paltry *glass ship* about a foot long—such a thing as one sees on the mantle piece of our alehouses in England—which was placed on a stand in one of the corners of this imperial cabinet. *Wine* and *liqueurs* were handed round with some stale and mouldy cake, and we retired with three long and laborious bows from this arch-enemy.

**John Adams to Richard Rush, Quincy, Mass., 12 December 1813**

I have read the Message of the President which flew from Washington to Quincy on the Wings of the wind. It is written with his masterly Pen and his deliberate mind. A candid statement, in chaste and elegant style. It is not in that mortal, more than this, to command success, but as far as I can see he has deserved it.

**Daniel Webster to Ezekiel Webster, Washington, 21 November 1814**

There is an utter want of confidence in Madison, & his advisers, on all sides.

**George Ticknor: Dinner at the President's House, Washington, 21 January 1815**

As in the drawing-room before dinner, no one was bold enough to venture conversation. The President did not apparently know the guest on his right, nor the one opposite to him. . . . I found the President more free and open than I expected, starting subjects of conversation and making remarks that sometimes savored of humor and levity. He sometimes laughed, and I was glad to hear it; but his face was always grave. He talked of religious sects and parties, and was curious to know how the cause of liberal Christianity stood with us, and if the Athanasian creed was well received by our Episcopalians. He pretty distinctly intimated to me his own regard for the Unitarian doctrines. The conversation, however, was not confined to religion; he talked of education and its prospects, of the progress of improvement among us, and once or twice he gave it a political aspect, though with great caution.

**John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 24 August 1815**

Mr. Madison's Notes of the Convention of 1787 or 1788 are consistent with his indefatigable character. I shall never see them, but I hope posterity will.

**George Logan to Thomas Jefferson, Stenton, Pa., 21 October 1815**

History is the school of statesmen; it is their duty to inform themselves of the errors of past ages, in order to shun them. I do not accuse the President of a want of this highly important knowledge—But I apprehend he has too frequently given up his correct judgment to parasites and clamorous demagogues. He and not them will be accountable for his official conduct.

**Elijah H. Mills to His Wife Harriet Blake Mills, Washington, 30 December 1815**

I have today, for the first time, paid my respects to the President. I went in company with Mr. [John W.] Hulbert, who had visited him last winter. I was agreeably disappointed in his appearance and manners,—not that I thought there could be nothing pleasant or agreeable about a man of his political principles, but you know we generally form an opinion of the deportment and address of a great man from what little we may have heard respecting him, and that opinion is very often erroneous. We found him alone, and he was not only very gentlemanly and polite, but exceedingly affable and pleasant. He is a small man (*about my height*, but not so *portly* as I am), with a mixture of ease and dignity in his manners and conversation,—altogether very pleasant. He has much more the appearance of what I have imagined a Roman Catholic Cardinal to be, than the civil and military head of a *great* and *enlightened* nation, as you know this is.

**Richard Rush to Charles Jared Ingersoll, Washington, 9 October 1816**

I have never seen Mr. Madison so well fixed any where as on his estate in Virginia, not even before he was burnt out here. His house would be esteemed a good one for any of our country seats near Philadelphia, and is much larger than most of them. The situation is among mountains, and very beautiful. A fine estate surrounds him, at the head of which he appears to eminent advantage, as well in his great as in his estimable qualities. He has the reputation of being an excellent manager, and is a model of kindness to his slaves. He lives with profuse hospitality, and in a way to strike the eye far more agreeably, than while keeping tavern here, on the fourth of July I was told ninety persons dined with him. To be sure it was a special occasion; but not a week, scarcely a day, passes that he is not doing hospitality in a large way. He was never developed to me under so many interesting lights; as during the delightful week I spent under his roof. Perhaps I should add, that French cookery, and Madeira that he purchased in Philadelphia in '96 made a part of every day's fare!

**John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 2 February 1817**

I pity our good Brother Madison. You and I have had Children and Grand Children and great grand Children. Though they have cost us Grief, Anxiety, often Vexation, and some times humiliation; yet it has been cheering to have them hovering about Us; and I verily believe they have contributed largely to keep Us alive. Books cannot always expell Ennui. I therefore pity Brother Madison and especially his Lady. I pity him the more, because, notwithstanding a thousand Faults and blunders, his Administration has acquired more glory, and established more Union, than all his three Predecessors, Washington Adams and Jefferson, put together.

***Boston Patriot, 17 February 1817\****

Destined for the Bar, the youth of Madison was consecrated to the laborious studies of that vocation. At the age of twenty two years he commenced his career of public life, always occupying with superior talents, and fidelity, the most conspicuous places in the gift of his fellow citizens. When a member of Congress, the vigor of his mind, the wisdom of his views, and the force and facility of his elocution, gave him for many years a great ascendancy in that Sanctuary of Freedom. His style is chaste, his logic concise, cogent and impressive. He argues without acrimony, replies without anger, exhibiting firmness without obstinacy, moderation without weakness, and justice without severity.

Raised to the dignity of Secretary of State by the sagacious Jefferson he reconciled all parties, by his prudent and enlightened patriotism. Called by a discerning and admiring people to the Presidency, he so highly justified their honorable choice that at the stated period, they eagerly renewed their suffrages in his favor. Nothing can be more wise, more righteous than his administration. His policy is as frank and faithful as his character, disdaining and shunning all State craft, all the subtleties and wiles of diplomacy. At once cautious and sincere, he does not feel obliged to say all he thinks, though he would scorn to utter what he does not think; nor is his language ambiguous. A stranger to intrigue, he knows nothing of deceit and artifice, but to guard against them. His views are great, his promises sacred, his intentions pure, and the inflexible integrity of his mind, is equalled only by the noble virtues of his heart. Such is the public man.

In the intercourse of private life, his native candor, warm and generous feelings, liberal and elevated sentiments, captivate and secure the affection and veneration of all who are so fortunate as to approach and know him. Laborious and indefatigable, simple in his manners, in his taste and in his dress, he may be said to resemble, in these, and many other particulars, the sages of antiquity.

He has now reached his fifty seventh year; but wearied by habitual vigilance, the lineaments of his face have contracted a cast of reflection and severity, which gives him the appearance of a more advanced age. It is only in those moments of relaxation, when by an effort he disengages himself from the arduous duties of his exalted station, that his stern brow dilates, his physiognomy becomes animated, and the estimable traits of his social character beam upon us, invigorating and enlivening us to such a degree, by the variety of his knowledge, the lustre of his wit, and point of his anecdote, that we are astonished to find this great statesman and wise administrator endowed with as much affability and vivacity in private circles as dignity and serenity in public life.

This is our Sachem, an illustrious successor of the immortal Washington. The glorious events of his administration will form a distinguished epoch in the page of American history, from his completing and consolidating with his firm and powerful hand, the edifice raised by his predecessors. It is not with such a Chief that Fredonia is to lose that independence she obtained by conquest with another.

\*Also printed in the *Niles' Weekly Register* on 17 February 1816, and reprinted in the *Hartford American Mercury*, 20 February 1816, and the *Vermont Rutland Herald*, 6 March 1816.

**Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 5 May 1817**

I do not entertain your apprehensions for the happiness of our brother Madison in a state of retirement. Such a mind as his, fraught with information, and with matter for reflection, can never know ennui. Besides, there will always be work enough cut out for him to continue his active usefulness to his country.

**Albert Gallatin to James Madison, Paris, 17 July 1817**

Few indeed have the good fortune, after such a career as yours, to carry in their retirement the entire approbation of their fellow citizens with that of their own conscience. Never was a country left in a more flourishing situation than the United States at the end of your administration; and they are more united at home and respected abroad than at any period since the war of the independence.

**Richard Rush to Charles Jared Ingersoll, 9 August 1817**

[Commenting on Madison's papers in the files of the State Department] What history, what anecdote, what genius, what industry!

**John Quincy Adams: Memoirs, 19 November 1818**

Major Jackson, of Philadelphia, called upon me; . . . he was the Secretary of the [Constitutional] Convention of 1787. . . . He told me . . . that by far the most efficient member of the Convention was Mr. Madison.

**John A. Dix's Visit to Montpelier, Va., post-19 February 1820**

In the spring of — I went with General Brown on an excursion into the interior of Virginia, the chief object of which was to pay a visit to Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson. Our first pause was at Montpelier, the residence of the former, in Orange County. It was under his administration that the general received the commission which laid the foundation of his military reputation, and I need not say that the meeting was a cordial one on both sides. We passed two days with him, charmed with his interesting and instructive conversation, the graceful and unaffected hospitality of his wife, and the devoted attention of his son, Payne Todd. Mr. Madison was of low stature and quiet manners, and with no physical traits to mark the eminence he had attained; but his conversation, though simple and unpretending, would soon have impressed one entirely ignorant of his political career with the conviction that he was a man of great intellectual power, with a large and varied experience in public affairs.

**George Watterson: Account of Visit to Montpelier, Va., 15 August 1820**

Having visited this illustrious patriarch [i.e., Thomas Jefferson], we could not resist the inclination to call upon his friend, and the friend of his country, Mr. Madison. The natural scenery around the gentleman's residence is also rich and magnificent. The building is of brick, ornamented in front with a Roman portico, and opening, from a saloon behind, into a beautiful lawn, from which, through an artificial vista, you have a view of the range of mountains, called, from their appearance, the Blue Ridge. Groves of forest trees, extensive spots of cultivation, and the waving line of stupendous mountains, are constantly presented to the eye from this elegant retreat.

Montpelier, the residence of Mr. Madison, is about 25 miles from Monticello, situated in Orange county, so called from the Prince of Orange and about 5 miles from the Court House and the little village in which it stands. His farm is extensive and well improved; the soil, though of a deep orange, is rich and productive; and he seems to want no convenience that might contribute to his comfort or add to his happiness.

It is amidst those isolated mountain habitations that the social affections of our nature become more durable and vigorous, because, being less liable to distraction, they are more concentrated. It is in situations like these that man feels the dignity of his nature, and the happiness of which he has been made susceptible. Nature spreads before him her beauties; masses of verdure surround him; his foot softly presses the green lawn that has been furnished as his carpet; his eye plays over the ever-varying landscape; his ear is regaled by the melody of the grove; and he breathes an air as pure as his heart, and as gentle as the current of his feelings.

Oh, rus! Quando te aspiciam?

In such sequestered retirements the heart acquires a purity and innocence that nothing can destroy, and the happy inhabitant contemplates the objects around him with a pleasure that it would be difficult to describe. He beholds in the rising sun the gran epoch of creation, and sees in his descent, when he paints the clouds with a thousand colors, and gilds the summit of the trees that veil his retreat, the last scene of life, in which the projects of ambition and the pomp and trophies of greatness are “ingulphed in an abyss that never restores its prey.”

We found Mr. Madison in good health, very cheerful, and very happy. His person, you know, is small, and his countenance grave; but it is soon illuminated when he enters into Conversation, and the ease and fluency with which he speaks, gives to what he says a charm that cannot be resisted. His deportment has the same ease and dignity in private, as it had in public, life, and the former politeness of his manners, and hospitality of his heart, are still recognized and felt by all who have the happiness to visit him in his delightful retirement. In this retirement he devotes himself to the innocent pursuits of agriculture, and, like the patriarch of Monticello, he seems to manifest a degree of delight at the idea of having honorably freed himself from the cares, the burdens, and the miseries of government. . . .

“It is seldom (says Gibbon) that minds long exercised in business, have formed any habits of conversing with themselves; and, in the loss of power, thy principally regret the want of occupation.” But, like Dioclesian, both Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson have preserved their taste for the most innocent, as well as natural pleasures, and their hours, like those of that Roman emperor in retirement, are sufficiently employed in reading, planting and cultivating their farms, to exclude the miseries of Indolence, and the horrors of *ennui*. The residence of both Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Madison, is the residence of taste and elegance, and to both may be applied, with peculiar aptitude, the lines of the poet of nature;

“An elegant sufficiency—content,  
Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,

Ease and alternate labor—useful life,  
Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven.”\*

\*James Thomson, *The Seasons* (London, 1744), The Spring, lines 1157–60.

### **William Plumer: Biographical Notes, 9 January 1821**

No man was more tenacious of his opinions than he was—he would die sooner than give them up.

### **Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 17 January 1821**

Mr. Madison came into the House in 1776. A new member and young; which circumstances, concurring with his extreme modesty, prevented his venturing himself in debate before his removal to the Council of State in Nov. 77. From thence he went to Congress, then consisting of few members. Trained in these successive schools, he acquired a habit of self-possession which placed at ready command the rich resources of his luminous and discriminating mind, & of his extensive information, and rendered him the first of every assembly afterwards of which he became a member. Never wandering from his subject into vain declamation, but pursuing it closely in language pure, classical, and copious, soothing always the feelings of his adversaries by civilities and softness of expression, he rose to the eminent station which he held in the great National convention of 1787, and in that of Virginia which followed, he sustained the new constitution in all its parts, bearing off the palm against the logic of George Mason, and the fervid declamation of Mr. Henry. With these consummate powers were united a pure and spotless virtue which no calumny has ever attempted to sully. Of the powers and polish of his pen, and of the wisdom of his administration in the highest office of the nation, I need say nothing. They have spoken, and will forever speak for themselves.

### **James Madison to John G. Jackson, Montpelier, Va., 28 December 1821**

For myself, having from the first moment of maturing a political opinion, down to the present one, never ceased to be a votary of the principle of self-Government, I was among those most anxious to rescue it from the danger which seemed to threaten it; and with that view was willing to give up a Government, resting on that foundation, as much energy as would ensure the requisite stability and efficacy.

### **Samuel Whitcomb: Visit to Montpelier, Va., c. 31 May 1824**

Called on Col. James and P. P. Barbour and Mr. Madison. Mr. M. is not so large or tall as myself and instead of being a cold reserved austere man, is very sociable, rather jocuse, quite sprightly, and active. . . . Mr. Madison appears less studied, brilliant and frank but more natural, candid and profound than Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Jefferson has more imagination and passion, quicker and richer conceptions. Mr. Madison has a sound judgment, tranquil temper, and logical mind.

Mr. Jefferson excites interest immediately on entering his presence. Mr. Madison is nothing in his looks, gestures, expression or manners to indicate any thing extraordinary in his intellect or character, but the more one converses with him, the more his excellences are developed and the better he is liked. And yet he has a quiscial, careless, almost waggish bluntness of looks and expression which is not at all prepossessing. *His mind is his all.*

**Samuel Whitcomb's Account of a Visit to Monticello, 1 June 1824**

[Madison] appears less studied, brilliant & frank—but more natural, candid & profound than Mr. Jefferson. Mr. Jefferson has more imagination & passion, quicker & richer conceptions; Mr. Madison has a sound judgement, tranquil temper, & logical mind. Mr. Jefferson excites interest immediately on entering his presence; Mr. Madison has nothing in his looks, gestures, expressions or manners to indicate any thing extraordinary in his intellect or character. But the more one converses with him, the more his excellences are developed & the better he is liked.

**Daniel Webster to Jeremiah Mason, Washington, 29 December 1824**

We were two days at Mr. Madison's. He was very agreeable, & treated us with much hospitality. He keeps alive a stronger interest in passing events than his more advanced friend [Jefferson]. Mrs. Madison is in perfect health, & remembers her Washington acquaintances.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Monticello, 17 February 1826**

The friendship which has subsisted between us, now half a century, and the harmony of our political principles and pursuits, have been sources of constant happiness to me through that long period. And if I remove beyond the reach of attentions to the University [of Virginia], or beyond the bourne of life itself, as I soon must, it is a comfort to leave that institution under your care, and an assurance that it will not be wanting. It has also been a great solace to me, to believe that you are engaged in vindicating to posterity the course we have pursued for preserving to them, in all their purity, the blessings of self-government, which we had assisted too in acquiring for them. If ever the earth has beheld a system of administration conducted with a single and steadfast eye to the general interest and happiness of those committed to it, one which, protected by truth, can never know reproach, it is that to which our lives have been devoted. To myself you have been a pillar of support through life. Take care of me when dead, and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections.

**Margaret Bayard Smith to Mrs. Boyd Sidney, 17 August 1828**

I could scarcely credit my senses, when dinner was announced and I found it to four o'clock! So rapidly had then morning passed away. We did not rise from table until six o'clock, when we separated for the night, so rich in sentiments and facts, so enlivened by anecdotes and epigrammatic remarks, so frank and confidential as to opinions on men and measures, that it had an interest and charm, which the conversation of few men now living, could have. He spoke of scenes in which he himself had acted a conspicuous part and of great men, who had been actors in the same theater. No common-places. Every sentence he spoke, was worthy of being written down. The formation and adoption of the Constitution. The Convention and first congress, the characters of their members and the secret debates. Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, John Adams, Jefferson, Jay, Patrick Henry and a host of other great men were spoken of and characteristic anecdotes of all related. It was living History! When I retired for the night, I felt as if my mind was full to overflowing, as if it could not contain all the new ideas it had received, as if I had feasted to satiety. And this entertaining, interesting and communicative personage, had a single stranger or indifferent person been present, would have been mute, cold and repulsive. After dinner, we all waked in the Portico, (or piazza, which is 60 feet long, supported on six lofty pillars) until twilight, then retreated to the drawing room, where we sat in a little group close together and took our coffee while we talked.

Some of Mr. M's anecdotes were very droll, and we often laughed very heartily. I wish my letter was large enough to contain a few of them, which I am sure would make you laugh too. He retains all the sportiveness of his character, which he used to reveal now and then to those whom he knew intimately, and Mrs. M's says he is as fond of a frolic and of romping with the girls as ever. His little blue eyes sparkled like stars from under his bushy grey eye-brows and amidst the deep wrinkles of his poor thin face. Nor have they lost their look of mischief, that used to lurk in their corners, and which vanished and gave place to an expression ever solemn, when the conversation took a serious turn.

### **Timothy Pickering to John Marshall, Salem, Mass., 26 December 1828**

In looking today for a sample of General Hamilton's hand-writing, in some letters that I could part with, for Judge [Joseph] Story, I met with a copy of one of my own letters to a Virginia gentleman, of the date of 1817, to obtain authentic information concerning an anecdote recited at Mr. Catlett's table in Alexandria, where I was a guest. "That Patrick Henry once said that he could forgive every thing else in Mr. Jefferson, but his corrupting Mr. Madison." I could not recollect by which of the guests the anecdote was recited; nor could another guest, the one to whom I wrote. But both he & his brother (they were Henry and Thomas Turner) said it was a current report: and from their expressions, I supposed it was a generally believed fact.

I have myself long believed, that if Mr. Jefferson had died in Paris—or never seen Madison after his return from France—He and Hamilton would have co-operated in the administration of the government organized under the Constitution, in the framing and adoption of which they were cordial & successful fellow-labourers; Madison becoming, from a friend, a virulent persecutor.

### **Margaret Bayard Smith to Susan B. Smith, Washington, March 1829**

James Madison was the most solemn of men. In private life he was an incessant humorist, and at home at Montpelier used to set his table guests daily into roars of laughter over his stories and whimsical way of telling them.

### **Robert Scott: Diary, 26 October 1829**

[Madison was] in tolerably good health, thin of flesh, rather under the common size, and dressed in his customary black, old-fashioned clothes. His form erect, his step firm but somewhat slow, walks without a staff, his visage pale, and abounding in small wrinkles, he features well-proportioned but not striking, his head bald on the top but excessively powdered showing a point in front. . . . His forehead of common size, his brow grey, heavy, and projecting, his eyes small and faded, his nose of ordinary size and straight, his mouth rather small, . . . his ears obscured by whiskers and hair, his sight and hearing both somewhat impaired.

### **Jared Sparks: Journal, 23 April 1830**

I have passed five delightful days at Mr. Madison's. The situation of his residence is charming. The blossoms and verdure of the trees are just springing into perfection, and the scenery, embracing a distant view of the Blue Ridge, is commanding and beautiful. But I have had little time for these objects. . . . The intellect and memory of Mr. Madison appear to retain all their pristine vigor. He is peculiarly interesting in conversation, cheerful, gay, and full of anecdote; never a prosing talker, but sprightly, varied, fertile in his topics, and felicitous in his descriptions and illustrations.

He seems busy in arranging his papers. While he was in the old Congress he rarely kept copies of his letters, though he wrote many. He has recently succeeded in procuring nearly all the originals from the descendants of the persons to whom he wrote them.

### **James Madison to Mrs. Margaret H. Smith, September 1830**

I ought, perhaps, to have another fear, that of being charged with affectation in the microscopic hand in which I write. But the explanation is easy: the fingers, stiffened by age, make smaller strokes, as the feet from the same cause take shorter steps. I hope you will live to verify my sincerity.

### **John Marshall to Joseph Story, Richmond, Va., 15 October 1830**

I have read with peculiar pleasure the letter of Mr. Madison to the Editor of the *North American Review*.<sup>\*</sup> He is himself again. He avows the opinions of his best days, and must be pardoned for his oblique insinuations that some of the opinions of our court are not approved.<sup>\*\*</sup> Contrast this delicate hint with the language Mr. Jefferson has applied to us. He is attacked with some bitterness by our *Enquirer* who has arrayed his report of 1799 against his letter.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> I never thought that report could be completely defended; but Mr. Madison has placed it upon its best ground—that the language is incautious, but is intended to be confined to a meer declaration of opinion, or is intended to refer to that ultimate right which all admit, to resist despotism, a right not exercised under a constitution, but in opposition to it.

<sup>\*</sup>In this letter of August 1830 addressed to Edward Everett, James Madison refuted the theory of nullification and criticized its advocates who appealed to his “Report on the Virginia Resolutions” published in 1800. The letter appeared in the October 1830 issue of the *North American Review* (XXXI, 537–46).

<sup>\*\*</sup>Madison reaffirmed his view put forward in *The Federalist* No. 39 that the Supreme Court had power to decide controversies concerning the boundaries of power between the federal and state governments, adding: “But it is perfectly consistent with the concession of this power to the Supreme Court, in cases falling within the course of its functions, to maintain that the power has not always been rightly exercised. . . . There have been occasional decisions from the Bench which have incurred serious & extensive disapprobation. Still it would seem that, with but few exceptions, the course of the judiciary has been hitherto sustained by the predominant sense of the nation.”

<sup>\*\*\*</sup>The *Richmond Enquirer*, 15 October 1830 published Madison’s letter to Everett, to which editor Thomas Ritchie appended his commentary. Ritchie approved Madison’s views concerning the “doctrine and dangers of *Nullification*” but not his “opinions touching the *Supremacy of the Judicial power of the United States*. We in vain attempt to reconcile these opinions, with those which he has expressed in his memorable Report of ’99.” He then quoted extracts from both documents to show Madison’s alleged inconsistency.

### **James Madison to Jasper Adams, Montpelier, Va., 1832**

I owe you Sir an apology for the delay in complying with the request of my opinion on the subject discussed in your sermon. . . . I must rest the apology on my great age now in its 83d year, with more than the ordinary infirmities, and especially on the effect of a chronic Rheumatism, combined with both, which makes my hand & fingers as averse to the pen as they are awkward in the use of it.

### **James Madison to Nicholas P. Trist, Montpelier, Va., 29 May 1832**

I am still confined to my bed with my malady, my debility, and my age, in triple alliance against me. Any convalescence therefore must be tedious, not to add imperfect.

**Joseph Story to Ezekiel Bacon, Cambridge, Mass., 30 April 1842**

I entirely concur with you in your estimate of Mr. Madison—his private virtues, his extraordinary talents, his comprehensive and statesman-like views. To him and Hamilton I think we are mainly indebted for the Constitution of the United States, and in wisdom I have long been accustomed to place him before Jefferson. You and I know something more of each of them in trying times, than the common politicians of our day can possibly arrive at. I wish some one who was perfectly fitted for the task, would write a full accurate biography of Madison. I fear that it can hardly be done now; for the men who best appreciated his excellences have nearly all passed away.

**Edward Coles to Hugh Blair Grigsby, 23 December 1854**

In height he was about five feet six inches, of a small and delicate form, of rather a tawny complexion, bespeaking a sedentary and studious man; his hair was originally of a dark brown colour; his eyes were bluish . . . his form, features, and manner were not commanding, but his conversation exceedingly so, and few men possessed so rich a flow of language, or so great a fund of amusing anecdotes, which were made the more interesting from their being well timed and well told. His ordinary manner was simple, modest, bland, & unostentatious, retiring from the throng and cautiously refraining from doing or saying anything to make conspicuous—This made him appear a little reserved and formal . . . [He was] the most virtuous, calm, and amiable of men; possessed of one of the purest hearts, and best tempers with which man was ever blessed. Nothing could excite or ruffle him. Under all circumstances he was collected, and ever mindful of what was due from him to others, and cautious not to wound the feelings of any one.

## Samuel B. Malcolm

**Samuel B. Malcolm to John Adams, Utica, N.Y., 9 May 1812**

My Vanity, induces me to Satisfy your Solicitude as to the place of my residence, employment, domestic comfort &ca—Shortly after the decease of Genl. Schuyler [Malcolm's father-in-law] I determined to remove to this place, & was influenced by several considerations: Among the prominent difficulties, I had to encounter in following my profession, was the prevailing notion, that Mrs. M, had inherited a Very large Estate, this made my efforts at the Bar, assume rather the disgusting appearance of cupidity, than what was really my design, to become an useful, and Independent Lawyer—We did inherit it is true a large *Landed* Estate, but its revenue yield'd almost Nothing—accustomed as we both had been, to live in fashionable life, I was apprehensive of the Snare, which habit, example, or predilection for a City life, might induce, & therefore determined to retire; and grow with the Country—We cultivate a fine extensive farm, distant about one mile from Utica, which is nearly the center of the State, our most thriving Village, and a promising candidate in proper Season, for the Seat of Government—The ordinary employment of the Husbandman, although, independent, useful, and termed honorable, I cannot reconcile myself to, but Still I am not indolent—frequent occasions, to be useful among my neighbors, afford an agreeable employment, and my Books always a rational one—But among my blessings, I hasten to speak of my wife—Would She not be lessened by the attempt at description, I might be tempted to Say

“She is all my fond wishes could ask

or all the Kind Gods Could bestow”

—We have had four fine children, three of which have died of the Croup—With this domestic Summary I shall from the fear of tediousness finish—and proceed to acquaint you that a very late Law of Congress has authorized the establishment of an additional District Court for the State, designed for the accommodation for this Western Section, & one of its Sittings appointed to be holden at Utica—The flattering Suggestions of several friends, have encouraged me, for the first time to solicit *place*, and adventure my Slender Talents, on the high & responsible station of the Bench—In Saying I Solicit *place* in a department, which to render it pure & perfectly independent, it should be a Voluntary gift—I am aware of your censure, & not less unmindful of My own admonitions—all delicacy on these points, like that of Chivalry, having departed, I am compelled to become a reluctant follow in the beggarly practice of Supplication—I will not however demean myself, for in disclosing my wishes to you I feel that I am addressing a Father—Through your instrumentalIve every reason to beleive that without any immediate application on my part, my wishes to become a Judge may be gratified—Should you deem it proper to afford me Your aid, and think that the auxiliary aid of Mr. Jefferson would be of Service, I can only repeat to you the declaration he made to me on my takeing leave of him “rely upon my regards; all that is proper for you to ask, & me to grant you may calculate Upon”—The evidences I have recd. of Govr. Jay’s flattering & Kind attentions hitherto, might warrant me to presume, on the probability of his co-operation, nor less occasion to doubt, (if necessary to be consulted) that the present Govr. would afford me every support—On your interference I Solely rely; & Shall be governed conclusively by the advice, and Instructions, I May have the honor to receive from you—It is not unimportant to State that the appointment will Soon be made.—

### **John Adams to James Madison, Quincy, Mass., 21 May 1812**

Mr Malcom was three years in my family at Philadelphia as my private Secretary; and during that time his conduct was ingenuous faithful industrious and attentive and entirely to my Satisfaction. His connections in New York were respectable, and his Education to Letters and the Bar regular. Altho, since the dissolution of that connection between him and me there has been no intercourse and very little correspondence between Us, I have ever held him in Esteem and Affection.

## **William Malcolm**

### **Alexander Hamilton to Israel Putnam, Coryell’s Ferry, N.J., 30 July 1777**

Colonel Malcolm is an active, judicious man, and seems to have some skill in fortifications, and a turn for those things which it will be necessary to attend to at the posts to be commanded by General [James] Clinton.

### **Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, New Windsor, N.Y., 26 June 1779**

We have compared our ideas of Col. Malcolm’s character and they are not very dissimilar. I shall only observe that he is a man of talents, of a military turn, of attention, activity and method

in business. He is now out of the service, I believe from misconception. He thought himself neglected by Congress, by his not having been appointed in the first instance to the command of the incorporated regiments. I won't say that there was not a little caprice and impatience on his side. The history of a man's importance to himself is pretty strongly marked in most parts of his conduct. I have reason to think he repents his having thrown himself out of the service, and is uneasy in his present negative situation. He has signified to me a wish either to be reintroduced or placed in the Board of war. The first is in my opinion impossible without giving much discontent; the last is I think desirable. I am persuaded he would be *very useful* as a member of that board—as much so as any man I am acquainted with. Besides his utility in this capacity, if I am not mistaken, it will be good policy to employ him somewhere out of the State [of New York]. He is of a restless temper, artful, plausible and popular, addicted to cabal. As he did not make your government, it is not entirely to his palate and some few changes would give better security to the liberties of the people.

**John Jay to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 18 September 1779**

Your sentiments respecting the Gentleman named in your first letter perfectly correspond with my own and though I wish to see him in a Situation agreeable to himself & distant from the Place of his Residence, I cannot prevail upon myself to propose his appointment to the one you mention, which is daily growing into Confidence & Importance. My Doubts respecting this Gentleman are of long standing and arise from Circumstances which made deep Impression on my mind. I should never forgive myself if before these Doubts are removed I should recommend him to an office in the execution of which they should become fully justified. Our opinions of his Talents, Disposition & Passions are the same & I am well apprised of the Consequences which would result from their being exerted to obtain the objects of his Pursuit. Some other mode of diverting them may perhaps offer.

**Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, West Point, N.Y., 29 September 1779**

I feel the force of your scruples respecting a certain Gentleman; and while you entertain the doubts you intimate, it certainly would not be reconcilable to a regard for the public good to promote his appointment. My recommendation, besides motives of particular policy, was founded upon an opinion that he would really be useful in the station. Though I think his character defective and unamiable in many respects I have no suspicion of his fidelity and attachment to the *common* cause—indeed I am persuaded these may be relied upon; and as I had a high idea of his ability, industry and proficiency in the knowledge of men and business, I was induced on principle as well as policy to wish to see him a member of the board. The only subject of hesitation in my mind was his vanity, and consequently an extreme partiality to his own opinions, an impatience of control and a fondness for dominion. I should be apprehensive, if he could not rule the board, he would perplex it, but as he has the art of conciliating those with whom he is connected and is clear sighted in discerning and pursuing his interest, I thought these would overcome the dispositions I have mentioned and teach him the necessity of cultivating harmony with his colleagues.

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

Malcolm has a variety of abilities: he is industrious and expert in business; he wants not resource and is pretty right on the subjects of the day; but he is too fond of popularity and too apt to

think every scheme bad, that is not his own. He is closely linked with [John Morin] Scot, because he can govern him: A man of warm passions, he can control all but his vanity, which often stands in the way of his interest. He is accused of duplicity and insincerity. He has it in his power to support or perplex measures, as he may incline, and it will be politic to make it his interest to incline to what is right. It was on this principle I proposed him for a certain office.

## John Manly

### Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 27 July 1778

Capt Manly has obliged me with your favor of the 5th. He and McNeil are here with different Views. The one to obtain another Ship, and the other to get the Sentence of a Court Martial reversd. Perhaps both may be disappointed . . . “Manly is a blunt, honest and I believe brave Officer.” I observe your caution, and am pleasd with it; for I think it is a fresh Proof of your Integrity. Manly’s Bravery is an Article of your Belief. His Bluntness & Honesty are Matters of Certainty. I have not yet lookd into the Papers; but I recollect to have heard, when they were read, the Want of Experience imputed to him, and some thing that had the Appearance of blaming him for not giving any Signals for the Direction of the Ships under his Command. This it must be ownd, strongly implys a Want of Discretion. Does the Character of a blunt & honest officer intitle him to the Command of a capital Ship if he is deficient in Point of Experience & Discretion? Especially if he has had the Misfortune of losing one already.

### Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 September 1778

Your obliging Letter of the 25 of August came duly to my Hand. As you again mention Captn. Manly I will speak of him to you with Candor. I never saw him but once, viz. the last spring in Boston, till he came to this City. I had preconceivd an opinion of his Bravery, in speaking of which you tell me “no Caution ought to be used,” though I have newer yet been pointed to a single Instance. I confess his Appearance in Boston did not strike me most agreably. He was in the midst of a Crowd who were shouting his Entrance into Boston, and like some of his Superiors, he seemd to be intoxicated with popular Applause. I had some other Apprehensions, but I give you my most charitable Thoughts. I retaind however an Opinion of him; for I concluded, that Huzza for the brave Manly, might be sufficient to induce him to lay a Pop Gun Schooner alongside the Eagle if good Fortune should throw her in his Way. You think his Judgment and Abilities would not be equal to others in the Direction of more Ships than one. Here lies a Difficulty; for let us consider the Rank he holds in our little Navy, and judge how soon the Time may, perhaps must come when he may have the Command of more Ships, if you give him the Command of one. Having said this to you and to no one else though I have frequently heard the same thing mentiond by others, I am sure you will not conclude that I am here deeply engagd in a Party against him. Some, I know have formd or pretended to form such a Conclusion, not from a real Regard to the Merits of Manly, the Honor of our Navy or the great Cause we are engagd in, but to serve a different and very inferior, Purpose than either. Such Men, you know, I hold in ineffable Contempt.

# James Manning

## Isaac Backus to John Rippon, Middleborough, Mass., 19 August 1791

I shall now attempt to inform you of our affairs, especially as one of our most useful ministers is gone the way of all the earth: I was with President Manning two days in June past, and when I parted with him the 8th of that month, I had as little thought of its being the last parting for time, as at any parting we ever had. But near night on July 29, I recd. a line from Providence, informing me of his decease at 4 that morning. I went there the 1st instant, and met the college corporation the next day, who have thoughts of Dr. Jones for his successor, if he can be obtained; but we have no idea of obtaining any man who will equal President Manning in all respects, at least soon. His extensive knowledge, fervent piety, constant study to be publicly serviceable to mankind; his easy access to every class of people, with the gift of governing so as to be both feared and beloved by all, whose keen envy did not prevail, rendered him the most accomplished man for that station of any one that I ever saw. Yet in the midst of his usefulness he is gone, as, universally lamented as any man that I have known. A loud call to us all, to be always ready.

## Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 20 August 1791

Saw Col. [Henry] Sherbourne of Rhode Island this day at Mrs. Vandeerin's who told me that Revd. Dr. Manning "had died of his knife and fork," that is of eating too much. He was very temperate in drinking. His death was occasioned by an apoplexy, two weeks after dining most plentifully with the Cincinnati on the 4th of July.

# François, Marquis de Barbé-Marbois

## Samuel Holten to Benjamin Lincoln, Philadelphia, 18 December 1779

The Chevalier de la Luzerne the new Minister, & Mr. Marbois his secy., are very agreeable Gentlemen, and appear desirous of strengthening the alliance between the two Countries, and assisting us against the common enemy.

## Samuel Osgood to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 3 April 1784

Yesterday in a free Conversation with Genl' Armand respecting the Chevalier's [Luzerne] leaving this Country, I asked him if he was not to return again—he answered no. But he looked a little consernd—And desired me not to mention it. He made very free Observations upon Marbois. He seems not to be pleased with his Conduct or Character—says he is a Pedant—And he has probably been against the Minister in Order to advance his own Interest. I told him very freely that we had a high Esteem for the Minister—should have been very happy to have had him continued here. But that we could not have the same Confidence in Marbois. That there would be Danger of his endeavoring to make Parties in Congress. That M—— had wrote very illiberally against the Interests of the United States with Respect to continuing the War, & with Respect to the Fisheries—he observed that it was for M——s Interest to have the War continued. That he was engaged in the

Flour Trade with the french West Indies—And the longer he enjoyed a Kind of exclusive Privilege, the more Money he would make. Is it possible that any Man, that any rational being should act from a Principle so infamous? The french here, generally, despise Marbois. They charge him with Haughtiness, Pride of Office, Pedantry, Ambition, &ca.

## Henry Marchant

### **Abraham Redwood to Trecothick and Apthorp, Newport, R.I., 28 June 1771**

My present letter is to introduce to your Acquaintance and Friendship an intimate friend of mine Henry Marchant Esqr.—You will find Him worthy your notice and esteem—As a Gentleman of the Law He hath gained the friendship and confidence of ALL. The Colony from that sense of Him, appointed Him the last year Attorney General of the Colony; which Office He now sustains.

### **Benjamin Franklin to Ezra Stiles, London, 13 January 1772**

I receivd your Favour by Mr. Marchant, who appears a very worthy Gentleman, and I shall not fail to render him every Service in my Power.

### **Nathanael Greene to Samuel Adams, Middlebrook, N.J., 28 May 1777**

Mr. Marchant one of the Delegates for the State of Rhode Island will deliver you this. I hope he will be agreeable to Congress. He is a man of good understanding and activity. He has a great Zeal for the cause and I hope will be useful in Congress.

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

Mr. Marchant from Rhode Island . . . appears to be a Gentleman of good Sense and Candor, and has hitherto sustained an independent Character, often joining in Sentiments with your Delegates, and that even in the Business of the Revolt [i.e., Vermont].

### **Nathanael Greene to Ephraim Bowen, Smith's Clove, N.Y., 21 June 1779**

The two Characters you mention are by no means upon the list of my warm friends. The Delegate [to Congress] would fain make me believe him so; but I know the duplicity of his heart and the pride and envy of his bosom too well to trust him very far upon the score of friendship. His pride is hurt at the growing consequence of my character. He is still more hurt at the small increase of my fortune. Military Characters are held up to public view when they grow important as dangerous to the well being of Civil government. This is done with an intent to sink their consequence not from a regard to the public interest; but from personal pride and private envy. The public good is often made the ostensible object to the most base and villainous practices. This I have seen verified in many instances.

**William Ellery to Benjamin Huntington, Newport, R.I., 31 August 1789**

Mr. Marchant was formerly a member of Congress and I believe is not unknown by you. He was a worthy member of that body & highly esteemed, is a firm patriot and a staunch friend to the federal government.—In a word wherever he goes, he carries along with him his own recommendation.

**John Adams to Jabez Bowen, New York, 18 September 1789**

I have been happy in the company of my old friend Mr. Marchant of Newport whose success in his negotiation I hope will recommend him to the favorable attention of his Country. I have known him these five and thirty years the same honest, candid and sensible man.

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

Henry Marchant Esqr.—Has been a Judge previous to the late system of politics,—but was left out upon opposing the measures of the state—has been a member of Congress—is esteemed as a man of some abilities & much integrity and has been a warm friend to the Genl. Govt.—

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

The Federalists of this State wish that Govr. Bradford or Mr. Merchant should be appointed District Judge. They are both Gentlemen of the Law, and fully equall to the Office, they have been equally good Wiggs and Firm for the Establishment the Federal Government.

**Jeremiah Olney: Memo on Persons to Fill Federal Offices in Rhode Island, 19 June 1790**

Bristol—William Bradford—District Judge  
Newport—Henry Marchant District judge

As to the abilities of these gentlemen there is but little difference perhaps the Preference if any may be in favour of Mr. Marchant but Mr. Bradford is the Firmest man of the Two—& has met with great losses of Property during the Revolution.

**George Hazard et al. to George Washington, Newport, R.I., 26 June 1790**

We the undersigned . . . recommend The Honorable Henry Marchant Esquire of this Town as a gentleman every way qualified to sustain the Office of District Judge.—We have been long acquainted with him.—He has sustained honorable employments both at home and abroad, has been Attorney General of, and for a long course of years, has practised the Law in this State, and has discharged his appointments with honor to himself and his constituents, and given universal satisfaction to the numerous clients who have employed him.

His respectability on account of his understanding, his integrity, and particularly his knowledge of the law, has excited in our breasts the warmest wishes that he might be appointed to the Office we have mentioned. We are confident that, in expressing these wishes, we express the wishes of the most respectable characters and of almost every man in this Town, and generally throughout the State.

## Francis Marion

### **Nathanael Greene to Francis Marion, Camp before Camden, S.C., 24 April 1781**

When I consider how much you have done and suffered and under what disadvantages you have maintain your ground I am at a loss which to admire most your courage & fortitude or your address and management. Certain it is no man has a better claim to the public thanks or is more generally admired than you are. History affords no instance wherein an officer has kept possession of a Country under so many disadvantages as you have, surrounded on every side with a superior force, hunted from every quarter with veteran troops, you have found means to elude all their attempts, and to keep alive the expiring hopes of an oppressed militia, when all succor seemed to be cut off. To fight the enemy with a prospect of victory is nothing; but to fight with intrepidity under the constant impression of a defeat, and inspire irregular troops to do it is a talent peculiar to yourself. Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to do justice to your merit, and I shall miss no opportunity of disclosing to Congress, the commander in Chief of the American Army and to the World in general the great sense I have of your merit & services.

## Humphreys Marshall

### **John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 12 January 1795**

Mr. Marshall is chosen for Kentucky instead of Mr. [John] Edwards—and is Said to be the best Man in the State.

## John Marshall

### **Philip Slaughter's Account of Marshall at Valley Forge, Pa.**

He was the best-tempered man I ever knew. During his sufferings at Valley Forge nothing discouraged, nothing disturbed him. If he had only bread to eat, it was just as well; if only meat, it made no difference. If any of the officers murmured at their deprivations he would shame them by good-natured raillery, or encourage them by his own exuberance of spirits. He was an excellent companion, and idolized by the soldiers and his brother officers, whose gloomy hours were enlivened by his inexhaustible fund of anecdotes.

### **John Marshall to Thomas Posey, Smith's Clove, N.Y., 1 September 1779**

When the Man who possesses a great, a generous Soul has inadvertently injured another he will not stop at barely giving him such satisfaction as will prevent his discovering resentment. He will repair the injury in the most ample manner imaginable.

**Edmund Pendleton to James Madison, Virginia, 25 November 1782**

Mr. Marshall is elected a Counsellor in the room of Mr. Bannister who resigned: he is clever, but I think too young for that department, which he should rather have earned as a retirement & reward by 10 or 12 years hard service in the Assembly.

**Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Pettus's, Va., 29 November 1782**

Capt. Marshall, a promising young gentleman of the law, is elected into the privy council.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Philadelphia, 29 June 1792**

I learn that he [i.e., Alexander Hamilton] has expressed the strongest desire that Marshall should come into Congress from Richmond, declaring there is no man in Virginia whom he wishes so much to see there, and I am told that Marshall has expressed half a mind to come. Hence I conclude that Hamilton has plied him well with flattery & solicitation, and I think nothing better could be done than to make him a judge.

**George Mason to John Mason, Gunston Hall, Va., 5 July 1792**

I beg you will talk with Mr. John Marshall, upon the Subject of my Suit in the high Court of Chancery against John Hooe Banbury & others, & enquire whether it was called & put off at the last Term . . . I expected it wou'd have been tried at the last Term; and am afraid it is neglected by Mr. Marshall; who tho' a very worthy Man, is an indolent one.

**John Adams to Charles Adams, Philadelphia, 9 February 1796**

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

\*Ware v. Hylton.

**Benjamin Henry Latrobe: Journals, 31 May 1796**

John Marshall (a general of Militia) is inferior to Edmund Randolph in voice and manner. But for talent he substitutes genius, and instead of talking *about* his subject he talks *upon* it. He possesses neither the energy of expression, nor the sublimity of imagination of Innes, but he is superior to every other orator at the bar of Virginia in closeness of argument, in his most surprising talent of placing his case in that point of view best suited to the purpose he aims at, of throwing a blaze of light upon it, and of keeping the attention of his hearers fixed upon the object to which he originally directed it. He speaks to the man of plain common sense, while he delights and informs the most acute. In a less captivating line of oratory than that which signalizes [James] Innes, he is equally great, and equally successful. The jury obey *Innes* from inclination and *Marshall* from duty.

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

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

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 3 June 1797**

The appointments of Envoys extraordinary, like every other measure of Government will be censured by those who make a point of abusing every thing. Mr. Marshall of Virginia is said to be a very fair and Honorable man, and truly American, a Lawyer by profession, against whom no objection is offered, but that he is not Frenchman enough for those who would have sent Jefferson or Madison, Giles or even Jarvis.

**Abigail Adams to Elizabeth Ellery Dana, Philadelphia, 6 June 1797**

Mr. Marshall who is joind with him supports a very fair and Honorable Character, and is sayd to be truly American.

**George Washington to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Mount Vernon, 24 June 1797**

This letter will be handed to you by Genl. Marshall, who with Mr. [illegible] joint Envoys with yourself, to try if the difference between France & America can be amicably adjusted. You will find him well worthy of your friendship & confidence. He is a firm friend, upon true principles to his country—sensible & discreet.

**George Washington to Comte de Ségur, Mount Vernon, 24 June 1797**

He is a man of great worth, and of the best disposition.

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

You will find in Genl. Marshall a sensible upright honest man. you may be of great service both to mr Gerry and him by a free communication with them.

**John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 17 July 1797**

[Adams found Marshall] a plain Man, very Sensible, cautious, guarded, learned in the Law of Nations. I think you will be pleased with him.

**Rufus King to Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, London, 17 October 1797**

You will be satisfied with General Marshall; his character stands well on all points. I know little of him, but his head is one of the best organized of any one that I have known. This I say from general Reputation, and more satisfactorily from an Argument that I heard him deliver before the federal Court at Philadelphia.

**William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams, The Hague, 20 February 1798**

I have not seen much of General P[inckney]'s or G[erry]'s, of Marshall's writing, but I consider Marshall, whom I have heard speak on a great subject, as one of the most powerful reasoners I ever met with in public or in print. Reasoning in such cases will have a fine effect in America; but to depend upon it in Europe is really to place Quixote with Genes de Passamante and among the men of the world whom he reasoned with so sublimely on their way to the gallies. They answer him, you know, with stones and blows, though the knight is an *armed*, as well as an eloquent knight.

**Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to Rufus King, Paris, 4 April 1798**

General Marshall is a man of extensive ability, of manly candor and an honest heart.

**Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *Travels through America*, June 1798**

In the evening with the sound of bells, amidst an escort of militia on horseback and on foot and a crowd of people, General Marshall, one of the commissioners dismissed from Paris, arrived. The more trouble he received in France and the less honor that he was accorded, the more, on his return, the people with public show, with honor and respect, have tried to sweeten the humiliations long undergone. General Marshall is a man of more than 40 years, quite handsome and one could recognize in his bearing that he had breathed the air of Paris. In talent, expression and humor he probably surpasses his colleagues Pinckney and Gerry, and therefore the Directory did not care for him and dismissed him. I was presented to him. In the evening the town gave him a splendid supper.

The next day, in the morning, when I was getting on the public stage, the very same Mr. Marshall, ambassador extraordinary who, here as everywhere he went, had been greeted with show and pomp was now leaving with bag in hand, and seeing that every seat was occupied, he sat quietly on the seat next to the coachman.

**Timothy Pickering to John Adams, Trenton, N.J., 20 September 1798**

. . . I shall also this day write to General Marshall to inform him that you have designated him to fill the vacant seat, and urge his acceptance of it: probably no appointment would be more universally approved: but I am sorry to think there is little chance of his gratifying what must be the public wish as well as yours: in a word, there is little hope that an eminent lawyer, in the full tide of practice at the bar, and receiving eight or ten thousand dollars a year, will relinquish it for the meager reward of thirty five hundred dollars, a large part of which must be expended in travelling expenses. The case might be different, if Genl. Marshall was weary of the toils and vexations of business at the bar; or if he possessed a very independent fortune.

**John Marshall: To A Freeholder, Fredericksburg *Virginia Herald*, 2 October 1798**

I am not an advocate for the alien and sedition bills: had I been in Congress when they passed, I should, unless my judgment could have been changed, certainly have opposed them. Yet, I do not think them fraught with all those mischiefs which many gentlemen ascribe to them. I should have opposed them, because I think them useless; and because they are calculated to create, unnecessarily, discontents and jealousies at a time when our very existence, as a nation, may depend

on our union—I believe that these laws, had they been opposed on these principles by a man, not suspected of intending to destroy the government, or of being hostile to it, would never have been enacted. With respect to their repeal, the effort will be made before I can become a member of Congress. If it succeeds, there will be an end of the business—if it fails, I shall, on the question of renewing the effort, should I be chosen to represent the district, obey the voice of my constituents. My own private opinion is, that it will be unwise to renew it for this reason: The laws will expire of themselves, if I recollect rightly the time for which they are enacted, during the term of the ensuing Congress. I shall, indisputably, oppose their revival; and I believe that opposition will be more successful, if men’s minds are not too much irritated by the struggle about a repeal of laws which will, at the time, be expiring of themselves.

**George Cabot to Timothy Pickering, Brookline, Mass., 31 October 1798**

Mr. Marshall has given great uneasiness here by his answers to the “Freeholder”; and Gerry takes advantage of it to enforce the belief that Marshall’s politics will not prove sound according to New England ideas, and he is confident “that Marshall will not in Congress act with New England men, *whom he holds in great contempt.*” I do not yet believe this. Mr. Marshall I know has much to learn on the subject of a practicable system of free government for the United States. I believe, however, he is a man of so much sense that, with honest principles, he cannot fail to discern and pursue a right course, and therefore that he will eventually prove a great acquisition.

**Timothy Pickering to George Cabot, Trenton, N.J., 10 November 1798**

I hope Marshall may get into Congress. His general politics are well known, and his integrity is unblemished. He will assuredly act with the intelligent New England men.

**George Cabot to Timothy Pickering, Brookline, Mass., 24 November 1798**

I concur fully with you in the sentiments that his merit is of the first order, and that he is to be cherished as a most precious acquisition to the cause of order, morality, and good government.

**John Marshall to George Washington, Richmond, Va., 8 January 1799**

I am by no means certain who will be elected for this district. Whatever the issue of the election may be, I shall neither reproach myself nor those at whose instance I have become a candidate, for the step I have taken, I feel with increased force the obligation of duty to make sacrifices and exertions for the preservation of American Union and independence, as I am more convinced of the reality of the danger which threatens them. The exertions made against me by particular characters throughout this State and even from other states have an activity and a malignity which no personal considerations would excite. If I fail I shall regret the failure more on account of the evidence it will afford of the prevalence of a temper hostile to our government and indiscriminately so to all who will not join in that hostility, than of the personal mortification which would be sustained.

**George Cabot to Rufus King, 26 April 1799**

I am ready to join you as well as Ames in reprobating the publication of Marshall’s sentiments on the Sedition & Alien Acts, but I still *adhere* to my first opinion that Marshall ought not to be

attacked in the Newspapers, nor too severely condemned anywhere, because Marshall has not yet learned his whole lesson but has a mind & disposition which can hardly fail to make him presently an accomplished Scholar & a very useful man. Some allowance too should be made for the influence of the Atmosphere of Virginia which doubtless makes every one who breathes it visionary &, upon the subject of Free Government, incredibly credulous; but it is certain that Marshall at Philadelphia would become a most powerful auxiliary to the cause of order & good Government, & *therefore* we ought not to diminish his fame which would ultimately be a loss to ourselves.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Stockbridge, Mass., 26 July 1799**

General Marshall you know is a member of the House of Representatives. His talents, his character and the situation he has been in, will combine to give him an influence, which will be further aided by the scene which he immediately represents. He may and probably will give a tone to the federal politics South of the Susquehannah. I well know the respect he entertains for you and for your opinions. I have brought this subject to your mind that you may decide on the propriety of a communication of your sentiments to him, which you may do in season to be useful. Should he, which, indeed, I do not expect, conform his public declaration relative to the alien & sedition acts, it would have been better that his insignificant predecessor should have been reelected. There never has been an instance where the commencement of a political career was so important as is that of General Marshall.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Fisher Ames, Philadelphia, 29 December 1799**

A number of distinguished men appear from the southward [in Congress], who are not pledged by any act to support the system of the last Congress; these men will pay great respect to the opinions of General Marshall; he is doubtless a man of virtue and distinguished talents, but he will think much of the State of Virginia, and is too much disposed to govern the world according to rules of logic; he will read and expound the constitution as if it were a penal statute, and will sometimes be embarrassed with doubts of which his friends will not perceive the importance.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Philadelphia, 29 December 1799**

I have been much in Company with General Marshall since we arrived in this City. He possesses great powers and has much dexterity in the application of them. He is highly & deservedly respected by the friends of the Government from the South. In short we can do nothing without him. I believe his intentions are perfectly honorable, & yet I do believe he would have been a more decided man had his education been on the other side of the Delaware, and he the immediate representative of that country.

**George Cabot to Rufus King, 20 January 1800**

In Congress, you see Genl. M. is a leader. He is I think a virtuous & certainly an able man; but you see in him the faults of a Virginian. He thinks too much of that State, & he expects the world will be governed according to the Rules of Logic. I have seen such men often become excellent legislators after experience has cured their errors. I hope it will prove so with Genl. M. who seems calculated to act a great part.

**George Cabot to Christopher Gore, 21 January 1800**

You see General Marshall leads in Congress. He doubtless has great talents and I believe great virtues; but I fear he is not yet a politician, and has much to learn on the subject of *practicable* theories of free government.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Philadelphia, 6 February 1800**

This gentleman is, as you know, a man of fine talents, and I have no doubt, of perfect honor and integrity, but like all the men I have seen from that State, who have talents, too much guided by the refinements of Theory.

**Theodore Sedgwick to Rufus King, Philadelphia, 11 May 1800**

Marshall was looked up to as the man whose great and commanding genius was to enlighten & direct the national councils. This was the general sentiment, while some, and those of no inconsiderable importance, calculating on his foolish declaration, relative to the alien & sedition laws, thought him temporizing, while others deemed him feeble. None had in my opinion justly appreciated his character. As his character has stamped itself on the measures of the present session, I am desirous of letting you know how I view it. He is a man of a very affectionate disposition, of great simplicity of manners and honest & honorable in all his conduct. He is attached to pleasures, with convivial habits strongly fixed. He is indolent, therefore, and indisposed to take part in the common business of the house. He has a strong attachment to popularity but indisposed to sacrifice to it his integrity; hence it is that he is disposed on all popular subjects to feel the public pulse and hence results indecision and *an expression* of doubt. Doubts suggested by him create in more feeble minds those which are irremovable. He is disposed to the erotic refinement, and to express great respect for the sovereign people, and to quote their opinions as an evidence of truth. The latter is of all things the most destructive of personal independence & of that weight of character which a great man ought to possess. This gentleman, when aroused, has strong reasoning powers; they are indeed almost unequalled. But before they are excited; he has frequently, nearly, destroyed any impression from them.

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

The appointment of Marshall as Secretary of State was a fortunate event—I believe there is not a man in the U.S. of better intentions, and he has the confidence of all good men—no man regrets more than does the disunion which has taken place, and no one would do more to heal the wounds inflicted by it. In a letter which I received from him a few days since he says, “by union we can securely maintain our ground—without it we must sink & with us all sound, correct American principle.” His efforts will, I fear, prove ineffectual.

**James McHenry to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Baltimore, Md., 9 November 1800**

I have been told Mr. Marshall has signified that he does not mean to resign [as Secretary of State] in the event of Mr. Jefferson being elected President, but to wait most patiently the development of his politics. Will there, my friend, be so great an antipathy between the politics of the two gentlemen, that one of them must fly off from the other?

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to James McHenry, Washington, 26 November 1800**

The issue of the election is uncertain, but if Mr. Jefferson should be chosen, Mr. Marshall will certainly retire [as Secretary of State]. The opposition of sentiment between these men appears to be decided, and I believe is unchangeable; what you have heard is therefore a mistake.

**William Paterson to Jonathan Dayton, New Brunswick, N.J., 25 January 1801**

. . . Your letter of the 17th of this month I had the honor of receiving today. With respect to the office of chief-justice, I have always considered myself as being out of the question. I long ago made up my mind on the subject, and have invariably and repeatedly declared, that if appointed to that office I would not accept. This opinion was the result of due deliberation. After this, if the president had put my name in nomination I should have considered it a complimentary thing, a mere feather, which might tickle a vain mind, but which I neither wished nor wanted. Mr. Marshall is a man of genius, of strong reasoning powers, and a sound, correct lawyer. His talents have at once the lustre and solidity of gold. I have no doubt, that he will discharge the duties of the office with ability and honor. But notwithstanding the nomination was unexpected, because the late president laid it down for a rule, which I presumed the present had adopted, not to select two judges from the same state. In casting about, therefore, for a chief-justice, I did not take Virginia into view, but supposed that a gentleman of another state would have been chosen.

**John Adams to Elias Boudinot, Washington, 26 January 1801**

I have already by the nomination of a gentleman in the full vigor of middle age—in the full habits of business and whose reading in the science is fresh in his head to this office, put it wholly out of my power and indeed it never was in my hopes or wishes [to nominate himself as Chief Justice].

**William Wirt: The Letters of the British Spy, 1803**

The Chief Justice of the United States is in his person tall, meager, emaciated; his muscles so relaxed as not only to disqualify him apparently for any vigorous exertion of body, but to destroy everything like harmony in his air and movements. Indeed, in his whole appearance and demeanor, dress, attitude, gesture, sitting, standing, or walking he is as far removed from the idolized graces of Lord Chesterfield as any other gentleman on earth. His head and face are small in proportion to his height; his complexion swarthy; the muscles of his face, being relaxed, make him appear to be fifty years of age, nor can he be much younger. His countenance has a faithful expression of great good humor and hilarity, while his black eyes, that unerring index, possess an irradiating spirit, which proclaims the imperial powers of the mind that sits enthroned within.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, 11 July 1806**

He is candid and upright.

**Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, Monticello, 24 January 1814**

. . . our cunning Chief Justice would swear to, and find as many sophisms to twist it out of the general terms of our Declarations of rights, and even the stricter text of the Virginia “act for the freedom of religion” as he did to twist Burr’s neck out of the halter of treason.

**Daniel Webster to Ezekiel Webster, Washington, 28 March 1814**

There is no man in the Court, that strikes one like Marshall. He is a plain man, looking very much like Col. Adams, & about 3 inches taller. I never have seen a man of whose intellect I had a higher opinion.

**John Marshall to Louis Marshall, Richmond, Va., 23 December 1816**

My wife continues in wretched health. Her nervous system is so affected that she cannot set in a room while a person walks across the floor. I am now preparing to convey her out of town in order to escape the noisy rejoicings of the season which is approaching.

**Thomas Jefferson: Josephus B. Stuart’s Account of Visit with Jefferson, 24 December 1816**

That Marshall is destitute of principal.

**John Marshall to Louis Marshall, Richmond, Va., 7 December 1817**

My poor wife continues in wretched health. I am entirely excluded from society by her situation.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 16 February 1818**

I am as usual in good health for an old man & very busily employed.

**John Marshall to Joseph Story, Richmond, Va., 13 July 1819**

I am highly gratified by the sentiments you express & shall always feel a grateful recollection of them. The esteem of those we esteem is among the most delightful sensations of the human heart.

**Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Ruggles, Monticello, 3 May 1822**

A late pamphlet gives to that court the infallibility of the Pope. Caesar then has only to send out his Proconsuls and with the *sanction of our Pope*, all is settled.

**Thomas Jefferson to William Johnson, Monticello, 12 June 1823**

This practice of Judge Marshall, of travelling out of his case to prescribe what the law would be in a moot case not before the court, is very irregular and very censurable.

**John Adams to His Grandson John Adams 2nd, Montezillo (Quincy), Mass., 7 March 1824**

The misfortune of Chief Justice Marshall is a severe affliction to me as it is to you and your family. I rejoice that his character and conversation are held in so high estimation by you, for he is a diamond of the first order.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 12 February 1826**

I am settled down in my old habits as regularly as if I was still on the right side of seventy. I get up as early as ever, take my walk of three miles by seven, think of you, & then set down to business.

**John Marshall: Autobiography, 1827**

The county in which I resided was decidedly Antifederal; but I was at that time popular, and parties had not yet become so bitter as to extinguish the private affections.

A great majority of the people of Virginia was antifederal; but in several of the counties most opposed to the adoption of the constitution, individuals of high character and great influence came forward as candidates and were elected from personal motives. After an ardent and eloquent discussion to which justice never has been and never can be done, during which the constitution was adopted by nine states, the question was carried in the affirmative by a majority of eight votes.

I felt that those great principles of public policy which I considered as essential to the general happiness were secured by this measure & I willingly relinquished public life to devote myself to my profession. Indeed the county was so thoroughly antifederal, & parties had become exasperated, that my election would have been doubtful. This however was not my motive for withdrawing from the legislature. My practice had become very considerable and I could not spare from its claims on me so much time as would be necessary to maintain such a standing in the legislature as I was desirous of preserving. I was pressed to become a candidate for Congress; and, though the district was unequivocally antifederal I could have been elected because that party was almost equally divided between two Candidates who were equally obstinate and much embittered against each other. The struggle between the ambition of being engaged in the organization of the government, and the conviction of the injury which would be sustained by my private affairs was at length terminated in the victory of prudence, after which the federalists set up and elected Colonel [Cyrus] Griffin, who obtained rather more than one third of the votes in the district which constituted a plurality.

**Timothy Pickering to John Marshall, Salem, Mass., 2 January 1828**

I learn from Judge Story, that your Constitution is strong and your health good; and as you take daily exercise, to confirm both, I trust your country will enjoy the benefits of your judicial labours for a long period yet to come.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 1 February 1829**

I do not walk as far as I formerly did, but I still keep up the practice of walking in the morning.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 28 February 1829**

I have looked eagerly through this week for a letter from some one of our friends giving me some information respecting you but have been disappointed. In spite of my firm resolution always to hope for the best, I cannot suppress my uneasiness about you. Your general health is so delicate, your spirits so liable to depression that I cannot controul my uneasiness. I was never more closely occupied than I have been since my arrival at this place, yet my mind wanders to that dear fire side at which is seated what is most dear to me on earth.

**John Marshall to Joseph Hopkinson, Washington, 18 March 1829**

My principles lead me to wish every administration to do well, because I love the government and wish it to be well administered. I therefore hope as long as hope can find any thing to feed on. Yet I perceive much more to fear than to hope for the future. I do not mean to apply this merely to the existing President.

**John Marshall to a Committee of Richmond Citizens, Richmond, Va., 25 March 1829**

[On declining to be run as a candidate for the Virginia constitutional convention] . . . my declining to become a candidate does not arise from indifference to the great subject on which the convention is to deliberate, or from insensibility to the kindness of my fellow citizens; but is to be ascribed exclusively to a conviction that I do not retain those physical powers which would enable me to take that part on the floor of the convention which my constituents would expect, and which their interests might require. I must therefore request that the attention of the district may be directed to some other person whose age and powers are more adequate to the important duties to be performed.

**John Marshall to Joseph Story, Richmond, Va., 11 June 1829**

I am almost ashamed of my weakness and irresolution when I tell you that I am a member of our convention. I was in earnest when I told you that I would not come into that body, and really believed that I should adhere to that determination, but I have acted like a girl addressed by a gentleman she does not positively dislike, but is unwilling to marry. She is sure to yield to the advice and persuasion of her friends.

**John Marshall to Joseph Story, Richmond, Va., 30 September 1829**

I hope I shall live to read your lectures. They will form an exception to the plan of life I had formed for myself, to be adopted after my retirement from office—that is to read nothing but novels and poetry.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 31 January 1830**

Every thing goes on as usual. I take my walk in the morning, work hard all day, eat a hearty dinner, sleep sound at night and sometimes comb my head before I go to bed. While this operation is performing I always think with tenderness of my sweet barber in Richmond. It is the most delightful sentiment I have.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Washington, 7 March 1830**

I am just returned from my mornings walk of three miles and all my brethren are fast locked in sleep in their rooms.

**John Marshall to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 3 October 1831**

I have always thought the interval between the conclusion of our revolutionary war and the adoption of our present constitution the most interesting and the most instructive portion of our history. . . . It has been always matter of wonder to me that with the lessons of that very instructive period before our eyes, any intelligent man should be found who would carry us back to a system so totally incompetent to the objects for which men congregate in society. And yet such is the direct tendency of some of the favorite dogmas of the day.

**John Marshall to Joseph Story, Philadelphia, 12 October 1831**

I have been under the Doctor's ever since my return in May from North Carolina and have been regularly growing worse. My disease, for which I have to blame myself, was mistaken. My Physician suspected it, but I was so confident against him that he never made the experiments necessary to establish the fact. At length I suffered so much pain and became so alarmed as to determine on a visit to this place. I have been here a fortnight. Doctor Physic, whom I consulted immediately proceeded very circumspectly. He made some examinations which led to the belief that I had probably stone in the bladder and on applying the sound at different intervals has decided that I have one. The usual operation was to have been performed a day or two past, but the rainy weather has confined the Doctor whose health is extremely delicate, and I must wait till we see the return of the sun. We have now the promise of a fair day; and should our anticipations be realised I count on going through the operation tomorrow. . . .

In the course of the summer I resorted to different courses of medicine none of which were of any service to me but which had a sensible influence on my general health. My nerves, my digestion and my head were seriously affected. I had found myself unequal to the effective consideration of any subject, and had determined to resign at the close of the year. This determination however I kept to myself being determined to remain master of my own conduct, I at length resolved to take no more medicine, after which I was slowly restored to my former self. This occurred about the time of my leaving Richmond for this place, and notwithstanding the pain I feel, I recover strength daily. I have therefore determined to meet you at the next term and to postpone any thing definite till then.

**John Marshall to Henry Lee, Washington, 29 January 1832**

I have never allowed myself to be irritated by Mr. Jefferson's unprovoked and unjustifiable aspersions on my conduct and principles, nor have I ever noticed them except on one occasion when I thought myself called on to do so, and when I thought that declining to enter upon my justification might have the appearance of crouching under the lash, and admitting the justice of its infliction.

**John Marshall to Joseph Story, Richmond, Va., 22 September 1832**

I yield slowly and reluctantly to the conviction that our constitution cannot last. I had supposed that North of the Potomack a firm and solid government, competent to the security of national liberty might be preserved. Even that now seems doubtful. The case of the south seems to me to be desperate. Our opinions are incompatible with a united government even among ourselves. The union has been prolonged thus far by miracles. I fear they cannot continue.

**John Marshall to Henry Lee, Richmond, Va., 25 October 1839**

I am certainly not regardless of the repeated unwarrantable aspersions on myself. In the first moments after perusing them, I meditated taking some notice of them and repelling them. But I have become indolent, and age has blunted my feelings. The impression made at first is in some degree worn out, and I do not renew it by repersuing the work. The parts of my conduct which form the subject of his most malignant censure are in possession of the public, and every fair mind must perceive in them a refutation of the calumnies uttered against me. To unfair minds anything I could urge would be unavailing and probably unread. Nothing is unknown or can be misunderstood by intelligent men unless it be the motives which compelled the court to give its opinion at large on the case of Marbury vs Madison.

**Joseph Story: Life and Letters of Joseph Story, 1851**

Marshall is of a tall, slender figure, not graceful or imposing, but erect and steady. His hair is black, his eyes small and twinkling, his forehead rather low, but his features are in general harmonious. His manners are plain, yet dignified, and an unaffected modesty diffuses itself through all his actions. His dress is very simple, yet neat. His language chaste, but hardly elegant. It does not flow rapidly, but it seldom wants precision. In conversation he is quite familiar, but is occasionally embarrassed by a hesitancy and drawling. His thoughts are always clear and ingenious, sometimes striking, and not often inconclusive.

He possesses great subtlety of mind, but it is only occasionally exhibited. I love his laugh, it is too hearty for an intriguer; and his good-temper and unwearied patience are equally agreeable on the bench and in the study. . . . He examines the intricacies of a subject with calm and persevering circumspection and unravels its mysteries with irresistible acuteness.

# Thomas Marshall

**Alexander Hamilton to Peter Colt, Philadelphia, 10 April 1793**

Marshall is an essential [to the Society of Establishing Useful Manufactures], and I believe a very deserving man. I think his salary ought to be increased.

# Alexander Martin

## Hugh Williamson to James Iredell, Philadelphia, 8 July 1787

I am inclined to think that the great exertions of political wisdom in our late Governor [Martin], while he sat at the helm of our State, have so exhausted his fund, that time must be required to enable him again to exert his abilities to the advantage of the nation.

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

Mr. Martin was lately Governor of North Carolina, which Office he filled with credit.—He is a Man of sense, and undoubtedly is a good politician, but he is not formed to shine in public debate, being no Speaker.—Mr. Martin was once a Colonel in the American Army, but proved unfit for the field.—He is about 40 years of age.—

## William R. Davie to John Steele, Newbern, N.C., 16 December 1792

. . . that despicable creature . . . I am strongly inclined to fatalism of late, and have believed for some time that God almighty made *that man* on purpose to disgrace this country.

# Luther Martin

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

Mr. Martin was educated for the Bar, and is Attorney general for the State of Maryland. This Gentleman possesses a good deal of information, but he has a very bad delivery, and so extremely prolix, that he never speaks without tiring the patience of all who hear him. He is about 34 years of age.

## James Madison to Eliza House Trist, New York, 27 January 1788

I have not yet seen L. M.—’s publication of which you give so flattering an account. It is impossible I think that he can be a very formidable adversary to the Constitution; though he will certainly be a very noisy one.

## “Civis”: To the Independent Electors of Maryland, *Maryland Journal*, 1 February 1788

He is so despised by the good people of Baltimore, and many a time have I heard him heartily cursed by the honest farmers in the country, where his arbitrary proceedings respecting their lands have long since made him obnoxious. I know it would be as much as his life is worth were he to travel through the upper parts of Cecil County.

**Luther Martin: Address No. I, *Maryland Journal*, 18 March 1788**

It was on Saturday that I first took my seat [in the Constitutional Convention]—I obtained that day a copy of the propositions that had been laid before the Convention, and which were then the subject of discussion in a committee of the whole. The secretary was so polite as, at my request, to wait upon me at the State-House the next day (being Sunday) and there gave me an opportunity of examining the journals, and making myself acquainted with the little that had been done before my arrival—I was not a little surprised at the system brought forward, and was desirous to learn the reasons which had been assigned in its support; for this purpose the journals could be of no service, I therefore conversed on the subject with different members of the Convention, and was favoured with minutes of the debates, which had taken place before my arrival—I applied to history for what lights it could afford me—and I procured every thing the most valuable I could find in Philadelphia, on the subject of governments in general, and on the American revolution and governments in particular—I devoted my whole time and attention to the business in which we were engaged, and made use of all the opportunities I had, and abilities I possessed, conscientiously to decide what part I ought to adopt in the discharge of that sacred duty I owed to my country, in the exercise of the trust you had reposed in me—I attended the Convention many days without taking any share in the debates, listening in silence to the eloquence of others, and offering no other proof that I possessed the powers of speech, than giving my yea or nay when a question was taken, and notwithstanding my propensity to “endless garrulity,” should have been extremely happy if I could have continued that line of conduct, without making a sacrifice of your rights and political happiness.

**Luther Martin: Address No. II, *Maryland Journal*, 21 March 1788**

I so frequently exhausted the politeness of the Convention, that some of those marks of fatigue and disgust, with which he [Landholder] intimates I was mortified as oft as I attempted to speak, might, at that time, have taken place, and have been of such a nature as to attract his attention;—or, perhaps, as the Convention was prepared to slumber whenever I rose, the Landholder, among others, might have sunk into sleep. . . . the repeated mortifications I experienced—the marks of fatigue and disgust with which my eyes were sure to be assailed wherever I turned them—one gaping here—another yawning there—a third slumbering in this place—and a fourth snoring in that. . . .

If my rising to speak had such a somnific influence on the Convention as the Landholder represents, I have no doubt the time will come, should this system be adopted, when my countrymen will ardently wish I had never left the Convention, but remained there to the last, daily administering to my associates, the salutary opiate. Happy, thrice happy, would it have been for my country, if the whole of that time had been devoted to sleep, or been a blank in our lives, rather than employed in forging its chains!

**Baltimore American, 16 February 1801**

The times must be momentous indeed: for on pretty good authority I have it that for a whole week Luther Martin has resided at Washington, he has not once been seen intoxicated in the public streets! Such is the fact told to me; if, however, my information is not founded, I throw myself on the mercy of Mr. M. to forgive an assertion so derogatory to his general character.

**Luther Martin to Mary Hager, c. 1801**

In the heat of summer my health requires that I should drink in abundance, to supply the amazing waste from perspiration, but having found that I was so unexpectedly affected as I was by cool water and brandy, I have determined to mix my water with less dangerous liquors, nay, I am not only confining myself to mead, cyder, beer, hock mixed with soda water, but I am accustomed myself to drink water alone. Thus, if we live to see each other again, you will find me most completely reformed and one of the soberest of the sober.

**Benjamin Galloway to Thomas Jefferson, Annapolis, Md., 5 January 1805**

[Martin] indulged in the almost daily practice of appearing in the Courts of Justice . . . intoxicated with spirituous Liquor, and that the Dignity of the State of Maryland is severely wounded by reason of the appearance of the Attorney General in its Courts of Justice in said condition.\*

\*Galloway had filed a motion to impeach Luther Martin as attorney general, and sent a copy of the charge to President Jefferson.

**Manasseh Cutler: Journal, 23 February 1805**

Mr. Luther Martin, Attorney-general of Maryland, spoke five hours [in defending Justice Samuel Chase in his impeachment trial]—did not conclude. Very pertinent, much law knowledge, and much well pointed humor.

**William Plumer: Memorandum, 23 February 1805**

Mr. Martin really possesses much legal information & a great fund of good humour—keen satire & poignant wit. He is far from being a graceful speaker. His language is often incorrect—inaccurate & sometimes is too low. But he certainly has *talents*—& from 27 years close application, & much practice, he has acquired much knowledge of the principles of law, the rules of Court & forms of practice.

**Thomas Jefferson to George Hay, Washington, 19 June 1807**

Shall we move to commit L.M. . . . this unprincipled & imputent bull-dog?

**Harman Blennerhasset: Diary, Washington, 29 October 1807**

Luther Martin has just made his final immersion into the daily bath of his faculties, after a series of apparitions, in all the phases of his accustomed orbit. Whether in a stage-coach, or a tavern, he is indefatigable, under the united stimulus of egotism and benevolence, to harass the gratitude or tax the patience of his friends. At 3 o'clock, A.M., on the Saturday morning, at Richmond, he joined us in the coach, and neither the privation of sleep, nor the fatigue of the journey, have in the least checked his loquacity or lessened his good humor. He read to me an able pamphlet, on the subject of Jefferson's rejection of the new British Treaty, while we were jolting and jarring over as bad a road as any country can lament, with more dispatch than I can peruse it in my chair. His strong memory made him interesting all the way, in his anecdotes and stories; and he is not unhappy in his powers of ridicule, which is well pointed, until it soon becomes blunted by the suggestions of

his benevolence and the abrasions of his verbosity, which, like the revolutions of a grindstone, soon wear away the subject applied to it, without undergoing itself any sensible diminution.

### Joseph Story to Samuel P. Hay, 16 February 1808

With a professional income of \$10,000 a year, he is poor and needy, generous and humane, but negligent and profuse. He labors hard to acquire, and yet cannot preserve. Experience, however severe, never corrects a single habit. I have heard anecdotes of his improvidence and thoughtlessness which astonish me. He is about middle size, a little bald, with a common forehead, pointed nose, inexpressive eye, large mouth, and a well formed chin. His dress is slovenly. . . . All nature pays contribution to his argument, if, indeed, it can be called one. . . . But everyone assures me that he is profoundly learned, and that though he shines not now in the lustre of his former days, yet he is at times very great. He never seems satisfied with a single grasp of his subject; but he urges himself to successive efforts, until he moulds and fashions it to his purpose. You should hear of Luther Martin's fame from those who have known him long and intimately, but you should not see him.

### Roger B. Taney: Memoirs, 1870

In the enumeration of the great men of the bar, I have placed Luther Martin first. He was not only much older than any of the other gentlemen, but he was the acknowledged and undisputed head of the profession in Maryland. He was so in the eye of the public, he was so admitted by the bar. Nobody disputed it with him until Mr. [William] Pinkney returned from Europe. Yet I confess, when I first heard Mr. Martin, I was disappointed; and, if I had followed the dictates of my own inexperience and unformed judgment, I should have awarded a higher place to some others. Mr. Martin's habits, however, had at the time become bad. He often appeared in Court evidently intoxicated, and, perhaps, was not free from the influence of stimulants when I first heard him. His dress was a compound of the fine and the coarse, and appeared never to have felt the brush. He wore ruffles at the wrists, richly edged with lace,—although every other person had long before abandoned them,—and these ruffles, conspicuously broad, were dabbled and soiled, and showed that they had not been changed for a day or more. His voice was not musical, and when much excited it cracked. His argument was full of digressions and irrelevant or unimportant matter, and his points were mixed up together and argued without order, with much repetition, and his speech was consequently unreasonably long. He was an accomplished scholar, and wrote with classical correctness and great strength. But in his speech (and what I say of this speech may be said of his speeches generally) he seemed to delight in using vulgarisms which were never heard except among the colored servants or the ignorant and uneducated whites. For example, I heard him say he *cotch* him, instead of *caught* him, and he *sot* down, instead of *sat* down, and many other words and phrases not much better. He seemed to take pleasure in showing his utter disregard of good taste and refinement in his dress and language and his mode of argument. He was coarse and unseemly at the dinner-table, in his manner of eating, as he was in everything.

But with all these defects, he was a profound lawyer. He never missed the strong points of his case; and although much might generally have been better omitted, everybody who listened to him would agree that nothing could be added, but unfortunately for him, he was not always listened to. He introduced so much extraneous matter, or dwelt so long on unimportant points, that the attention was apt to be fatigued and withdrawn, and the logic and force of his argument lost upon the Court or jury. But these very defects arose in some measure from the fullness of his legal

knowledge. He had an iron memory, and forgot nothing that he had read; and he read a great deal on every branch of the law, and took pleasure in showing it when his case did not require it. His associates at the bar had, as I have said, great respect for his legal learning.

Mr. Martin was Attorney-General of Maryland in the war of the Revolution, and continued so for a great many years. He did not resign until long after I had entered upon the practice. His prosecutions were always conducted with great fairness to the accused, and the attention of the jury called to the evidence which might operate in his favor as well as that against him. . . . He was strong in his attachments, and ready to make any sacrifices for his friends. This was proved by the zeal with which he defended Mr. [Samuel] Chase when he was impeached by the House of Representatives of the United States, and still more in the time he devoted, and the money he spent, in the defence of Colonel [Aaron] Burr. In both cases he was a volunteer. . . . He was kind to young members of the profession, and liberal, and indeed profuse, in his charities, and easily imposed upon by unworthy objects. Indeed his unfortunate habits made him reckless in money matters; and after a long life of severe labors and large profits, when late in life he was struck with paralysis, which impaired his intellect and rendered him incapable of business, he was found utterly penniless, and dependent upon charity for support. And the only good thing I know of Colonel Burr is, that, soon after this happened, he took Mr. Martin to his house and provided for his wants and took care of him until his death.

## George Mason

### George Mason to Patrick Henry, Gunston Hall, Va., 6 May 1783

I congratulate you, most sincerely, on the Accomplishment of what I know was the warmest Wish of your Heart, the Establishment of American Independence, and the Liberty of our Country. We are now to rank among the Nations of the World; but whether our Independence shall prove a Blessing or a Curse, must depend upon our own Wisdom or Folly, Virtue or Wickedness; judging of the future from the Past, the Prospect is not promising. Justice & Virtue are the vital Principles of republican Government; but among us, a Depravity of Manners & Morals prevails, to the Destruction of all Confidence between Man & Man. It greatly behooves the Assembly to revise several of our Laws, and to abolish all such as are contrary to the fundamental Principles of Justice; and by a strict Adherence to the Distinctions between Right & Wrong for the future, to restore that Confidence and Reverence in the People for the Legislature, which has been so greatly impaired by a contrary Conduct; and without which, our Laws can never be much more than a dead-Letter.

### James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Orange, Va., 10 December 1783

On the article of a convention for revising our form of government he was sound and ripe and, I think would not decline a participation in the work. His heterodoxy lay chiefly in being too little impressed with either the necessity of the proper means of preserving the confederacy.

**To James Monroe, Orange, Va., 13 May 1786**

You will have heard of the election of Col. Mason . . . [to the Annapolis Convention]. Col. Mason will be an inestimable acquisition on most of the great points . . . I am somewhat apprehensive likewise that Col. Mason may not be fully cured of his Antifederal prejudices.

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

Mr. Mason is a Gentleman of remarkable strong powers, and possesses a clear and copious understanding. He is able and convincing in debate, steady and firm in his principles, and undoubtedly one of the best politicians in America. Mr. Mason is about 60 years old, with a fine strong constitution.

**George Washington to James Madison, Mount Vernon, 10 October 1787**

The political tenets of Colo. M[ason] & Colo. R.H.L. [Richard Henry Lee] are always in unison—It may be asked which of them gives the tone? Without hesitation, I answer the latter; because the latter,\* I believe, will receive it from no one. He has, I am informed, rendered himself obnoxious in Philadelphia by the pains he took to disseminate his objections amongst some of the

leaders of the seceding members of the legislature of that State. His conduct is not less reprobated in this County.

\*Madison believed that Washington meant to refer to the former, not the latter.

### **Charles Tillinghast to Hugh Hughes, New York, 12 October 1787**

A Mr. Mason, who was a delegate to the [Constitutional] Convention, from Virginia, has, since the Convention broke up, been through the back Counties of that State, haranguing the Inhabitants, and pointing out the dangerous effects or consequences which would inevitably flow from the new Constitution—He is now, it is said, gone into North Carolina, on the same Business, and means to sound the Alarm through the southern States—I am told by the General [i.e., John Lamb], that he has seen his (Mason's) objections to the new Constitution, in Manuscript (I suppose at the CHIEF's [Governor George Clinton's]—he says, that his objections discover him to be a Man of the first rate Understanding.—It is said that he is very popular in Virginia, and, in point of Wealth, equal to any in that State.—

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

Mason too passionate.

### **James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Orange, Va., 22 April 1788**

Col. Mason is growing every day more bitter, and outrageous in his efforts to carry his point [against the Constitution]; and will probably in the end be thrown by the violence of his passions into the politics of Mr. H[enr]y.

### **Tobias Lear to John Langdon, Mount Vernon, 31 January 1789**

Your good friend Col. Mason has not given up his opposition [to the new Constitution] and I dare say will not so long as he is actuated by those *very liberal* principles which led him to oppose the system.

### **George Mason to John Mason, Gunston Hall, Va., 31 July 1789**

You are now, I trust, in a fair Way of having extensive Business, & making a Fortune; Yet every thing depends upon Diligence, Frugality, and Prudence; for without these, the fairest Prospects will quickly dwindle into Nothing. I have, I thank God, entirely recovered from the very severe Fit of the Gout, which I had in the Spring; and enjoy, for my Time of Life tolerable Health.

### **George Washington to James Craik, New York, 8 September 1789**

I always expected that the Gentleman whose name you have mentioned [i.e., Mason] would mark his opposition to the new government with consistency—Pride on the other hand, and want of manly candor on the other, will not I am certain let him acknowledge an error in his opinion respecting it though conviction should flash on his mind as strongly as a ray of light—If certain characters which you have also mentioned should tread *blindfold* in his steps it would be matter of no wonder to me—They are in the habit of thinking that every thing he says and does is right, and (if capable) they will not judge for themselves.

Founders on the Founders

**Pierce Butler to George Mason, New York, 25 July 1790**

Tho I have wished, and still do wish to see You on the floor of Senate, I admire and applaud Your resolution in withstanding.

**Edmund Randolph: History of Virginia**

Among the numbers who in their small circles were propagating with activity the American doctrines was George Mason in the shade of retirement. He extended their grasp upon the opinions and affections of those with whom he conversed. How he learned his indifference for distinction, endowed as he was with ability to mount in any line, or whence he contracted his hatred for pomp, with a fortune competent to any expense and a disposition not averse from hospitality, can be solved only from that philosophical spirit which despised the adulterated means of cultivating happiness. He was behind none of the sons of Virginia in knowledge of her history and interest. At a glance he saw to the bottom of every proposition which affected her. His elocution was manly sometimes, but not wantonly sarcastic.

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Fredericksburg, Va., 16 October 1792**

You have before this I presume heard of the death of Colo. George Mason which was about the 8th of this month of the gout in the stomach. His patriotic virtues thro the Revolution will ever be remembered by the citizens of this country, and his death at the present moment will be sensibly felt by the republican interests.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Philadelphia, 17 October 1792**

You will have heard of the reelection of Mercer, and of the death of Colo. Mason. This last is a great loss, and especially at a moment when our state seems ripening for a constitution.

**Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 17 January 1821**

In giving an account of the laws of which I was myself the mover & draftsman, I by no means mean to claim to myself the merit of obtaining their passage. I had many occasional and strenuous coadjutors in debate, and one most steadfast, able, and zealous; who was himself a host. This was George Mason, a man of the first order of wisdom among those who acted on the theatre of the Revolution, of expansive mind, profound judgment, cogent in argument, learned in the lore of our former constitution, and earnest for the republican change on democratic principles. His elocution was neither flowing nor smooth, but his language was strong, his manner most impressive, and strengthened by a dash of biting cynicism when provocation made it seasonable.

**Thomas Jefferson to Augustus B. Woodward, Monticello, 3 April 1825**

The fact is unquestionable, that the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution of Virginia, were drawn originally by George Mason, one of our really great men, and of the first order of greatness.

**James Madison to George Mason, Montpelier, Va., 29 December 1827**

The public situation in which I had the best opportunity of being acquainted with the genius, the opinions, and the public labors of Col. Mason, was that of our co-service in the Convention of

1787, which formed the Constitution of the United States. The objections which led him to withhold his name from it have been explained by himself. But none who differed from him on some points will deny that he sustained throughout the proceedings of the body the high character of a powerful reasoner, a profound statesman, and a devoted Republican.

## Stevens Thomas Mason

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

T. Mason is a meteor whose path cannot be calculated.

## George Mathews

**Catherine Greene to Jeremiah Wadsworth, Mulberry Grove, Ga., 18 April 1789**

Mathews they Say is tolerable Sensible which is all the information I can give you—

## John Mathews

**Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed, Camp at Teneck, N.J., 29 August 1780**

I can assure you there are but few people here that are your Enemies. If there are any freedoms taken with your Character, it is unbeknown to me; except by Mr. Mathews who has said some bitter things, however not altogether personal as they regarded the policy of the State more than your personal conduct.

This Gentleman came to camp with all the prejudices imaginable about him respecting the quarter Masters Department; and he appeared to be afraid to make enquiry for fear of meeting conviction. But I believe none of the Committee leave the Army with more favorable sentiments respecting my conduct and the order and management of the business than he does. I believe him to be a well meaning man, but a person of violent passions, great pride, and sudden prejudices. Under the influence of such a temper he may take a very wrong bias with very honest intentions. However this much may be said with certainty. you are not to number him among your particular friends. He and I have had several conversations respecting you; as I make it a rule in life, never to hear a friend of mine spoke injuriously of, without endeavoring to defend his character and conduct. But they have never been attended with any heat as it was only respecting the motives that led and governed your political conduct.

I have no wish to go into any farther disputes with him upon any matters; and therefore beg you to take no notice of this information.

**John Mathews to Thomas Bee, Philadelphia, 22 September 1778**

Oh! my Worthy friend, never was Child more sick of a school, than I am, of this same business, I am sent here upon. I have frequently heard heavy complaints in our Assembly of the tedious progress of business, but I will venture to say, you do more business in one day than we do, in three. To be a Witness of this, & no prospect of amendment, when there is business of such magnitude before us. every day's delay to the completion of which gives an almost fatal stab to the Interests of this Great Continent, I can assure you without exaggeration, frets me in such a manner, as frequently to deprive me of that indifferent share of health which I should otherwise enjoy. As far as my poor abilities extend I will never flinch from any duty that I may be called upon by my country to undertake but at the same time, I could wish to be placed in some station, where I could render some service. I fully intended when I came into Congress, to have accustomed myself to deliver my sentiments upon every important Question, but I have found the thirst for Chattering so extremely prevalent, that it absolutely disgusts me, & frequently seals my lips, least my conscience should upbraid me with the commission of that very Sin against our righteous cause that I see daily committed by others, vizt. the loss of so much precious, irretrievable time, & I am afraid the day will shortly arrive when some men, will be made sensible, that all the future services they can render their Country can never compensate for the invaluable moments, nay hours, days, & months they have trifled away, in idle debate. For my own part I seldom speak, except it is a subject in which the State I belong to, is particularly interested, for I most commonly find some member or other, speak my sentiments, then when is the necessity of a repetition? I thank God, I am not Coxcomb enough to conceive, that my clothing the same sentiments, in a different garb, can have greater influence over the minds of men, than the picture that has already been exhibited by my Neighbour. If anything has been left unsaid by others, that has struck my mind, & which I think material why I throw it out in as few words as possible. If every member would observe this line of conduct, the business of the Great Public may be done, but whilst every member is so tenacious, & so cursedly conceited of his own rhetoric, it never can. I am afraid, my Dear Sir, you will think your old acquaintance, has of late grown very ambitious, thus to presume to lay down a rule for the Government of so Wise & August a body as this one of whom I have been speaking, & that Egotisms, of all things, are most peculiarly disgusting. I submit it all to your candour, & will most cheerfully abide by your decision.

**Henry Laurens to John Laurens, Philadelphia, 27 September 1779**

I think no honest Man will censure me, nor would I have it understood that I mean to censure Mr. Mathews, we are perfectly good friends & I believe him to be a very honest Man.

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

Mr. Mathews Chief Justice of S. Carolina, is a Man of Talents and More Agreeable in his Address as well as language—but has an interruptive Manner of Speaking not Well adapted to Command attention—is undesigning and possesses a good deal of Candor, Which leaves him open to Conviction—and upon the Whole is a good republican.

# Timothy Matlock

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

Mr. Matlock is a strange Mortal for a man of sense. I never know one day where to find him the next. He hath a great notion of being a Courtier; perhaps in some Countries he would appear a coarse Courtier.

# James Maury

## **James Madison to Jacob Reed, 17 February 1784**

You will receive this from the hand of Mr. James Maury, who wishes to be known to Congress as a candidate for their favorable notice at the time of filling up consular missions to Europe. The confidence I have in his qualifications for such a service induces me to recommend him in the warmest terms to my friends remaining in Congress and to you in particular. He is a gentleman of sound abilities, of commercial experience, of liberal views, and of strictness of honor and probity which can yield to no competition. He possesses also the benefit of requisite skill in the French tongue and acquaintance with foreign manners acquired by residence in Europe.

## **James Maury to Thomas Jefferson, Liverpool, 30 March 1820**

I now am in my seventy fifth year; & altho this is the fifty second since I engaged in trade, yet I stil continue in it: not, I assure you, because I am so fond of it, but because it appears necessary for the benefit of those, who probably will soon be qualified to succeed me.

I have great reason to be thankful for the singularly good health I am blessed with at this advanced Stage: the cold bath still agrees well with me, be it the coldest day in winter or hottest in summer; and I continue the practice invariably, unless prevented by indisposition.

## **James Maury to Thomas Jefferson, Liverpool, 24 September 1821**

I also have uncommon reason to be thankful for the health I enjoy at this advanced period: and especially, as I think I have not been as vigilant in attending to it as you have been: For twelve Months past I have changed my plan of cold bathing: &, in place of three times a week as heretofore, I now plunge into cold water daily, be it summer or winter, unless prevented by indisposition & altho it suits me as well as it did half a century ago, yet I will not recommend it to you to make the experiment.

# Philip Mazzei

## **Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 5 October 1778**

I have a very high opinion of the republican principles and of the ability of Mr. Mazzei, and I think that if Mr. Maddison were sent to Genoa with him for Secretary we might have a good chance to succeed in borrowing there one of the millions, five of which are absolutely necessary to sustain, and restore our falling currency.

## **Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 16 March 1784**

I received yesterday by Mr. Maury your favor of Feb. 17. That which you mention to have written by post a few days before is not yet come to hand. I am induced to this quick reply to the former by an alarming paragraph in it, which is that Mazzei is coming to Annapolis. I tremble at the idea. I know he will be worse to me than a return of my double quotidian head-ache. There is a resolution reported to Congress by a Committee that they will never appoint to the office of minister, chargé des affaires, consul, agent &c (describing the foreign employments) any but natives. To this I think there will not be a dissenting vote: and it will be taken up among the first things. Could you not, by making him acquainted with this divert him from coming here? A consulate is his object, in which he will assuredly fail. But his coming will be attended with evil. He is the violent enemy of Franklin having been some time at Paris, from my knowledge of the man I am sure he will have employed himself in collecting on the spot facts true or false to impeach him. You know there are people here who, on the first idea of this, will take him to their bosom & turn all Congress topsy turvy. For God's sake then save us from this confusion if you can.

## **James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Fredericksburg, Va., 15 February 1789**

I have latterly heard nothing of Mr. Mazzei. I fear the want of punctuality in my correspondence has lessened me in his esteem, a circumstance I should much lament as I respect him for his virtues and talents. Philip Mazzei to Thomas Jefferson, Pisa, Italy, 22 October 1815

I want to see it [i.e., President James Madison's message to Congress] but if you do not send it to me soon, I will not. Remember, I am eleven years your senior, just as you are older than Madison. And, in addition to the weight of my eighty-four years (completed on the 25th of last December) my legs are very, very swollen. I have no appetite, and I am in great pain as I have to wear a support belt with a lead seal that presses heavily against my groin, in order to prevent my colon from entering into my scrotum, which would inevitably lead to a strangulated hernia.

## **Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Appleton, Monticello, 14 January 1816**

Your letters of Aug. 26 and Oct. 25 have been both received. The condition of my friend Mazzei, both of body and mind, is really afflicting. Of the former he had given me some account himself, of the latter I was unapprised altho' his very advanced age, with such bodily infirmities, might have given room to expect it. It is unfortunate too that persons in that situation are themselves the least & last sensible of it, and injure their affairs and family by not knowing when to give them up. Under thew circumstances you state, friendship to himself requires a cooperation with his family in keeping him and them from injury. It is what himself would have approved in the sounder state of his mind.

**Thomas Appleton to Thomas Jefferson, Leghorn, Italy, 20 March 1816**

The departure of a vessel for the U. States, in the course of an hour, allows me only the time to say, that I have just return'd from paying the last tribute of affection, to my inestimable friend, Mr. Mazzei, who died yesterday in Pisa—The first symptoms of his disorder, appear'd about a week since, by an erisipola\* on his legs, which it seems, his physicians were unable to prevent extending to the more noble parts; for little aided by nature, this morbid humour gain'd rapidly his breast, and baffled every effort of art.—as in health, the continual subjects of his conversation, were his “Cara patria adottiva,”\*\* and his unbounded affection for your virtues, so likewise, were they the unceasing themes on which he dwelt, until life expir'd.

\*Erysipelas, an acute infectious disease of the skin or mucous membrane caused by a streptococcus and characterized by local inflammation and fever.

\*\*Beloved adopted country

**Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Appleton, Monticello, 18 July 1816**

Your letters of Mar. 20 & Apr. 15 are both received: the former only a week ago. They brought me the first information of the death of my antient friend Mazzei, which I learn with sincere regret. He had some peculiarities, & who of us has not? But he was of solid worth; honest, able, zealous in sound principles moral & political, constant in friendship, and punctual in all his undertakings. He was greatly esteemed in this country, and some one has inserted in our papers an account of his death, with a handsome and just eulogy of him, and a proposition to publish his life in one 8vo [octavo] volume. I have no doubt but that what he has written of himself during the portion of the revolutionary period he passed with us, would furnish some good materials for our history, of which there is already a wonderful scarcity, but where this undertaker of his history is to get his materials, I know not, nor who he is.

## John Francis Mercer

**Chevalier D'Anmours to Thomas Jefferson, Baltimore, Md., 27 February 1782**

On my way here, I Call'd at Col. Mercer, who now is Become a Complete farmer. This piece of news is for Mrs. Jefferson, who will Scarce believe it. Yet Madam, nothing is truer. By his present appearance you Could never guess that he was once one of the first-Rate-Beaux. Red coats, Gold frogs, Gold and Silver embroider'd Jackets, Powder, Puffs, Smelling Bottles, &c. all is vanished. And if you, now and then, see some Remains of them, they appear Like the Ruins of those ancient magnificent cities, which serve to show what they once were: indeed the Reformation is as Complete as Can be imagined.

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

Mercer is acting a very extraordinary part. He is a candidate for the secretaryship of foreign affairs and tho' he will not get the vote of one state, I believe he expects the appointment. He has been endeavoring to defeat all foreign treaties to force the nations of Europe to send ministers to treat here that he may have the honor of fabricating this whole business. Tho' he could not change the vote of his state, he intrigued with a young fool from North Carolina [Richard Dobbs Spaight]

& an old one from New York [Ephraim Paine], got them to divide their states by voting in the negative, & there being but eleven states present, one of which was known before to be divided, the whole set of instructions were rejected, tho approved by twenty-one out of twenty-five members present. [Nine states were needed to approve instructions for the treaty commissioners.] The whole business has been in the dust for a month & whether it can be resumed & passed depends on the uncertainty of Delaware or Georgia coming on. Vanity & ambition seem to be the ruling passions of this young man and as his objects are impure so also are his means. Intrigue is a principal one on particular occasions as party attachment is in the general. He takes now about one half of the time of Congress to himself, & in conjunction with [Jacob] Read and Spaight obstruct business inconceivably.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 7 May 1784**

Congress is now on foreign treaties. Mercer has devised new expedients for baffling the measure. . . . He is very mischievous. He is under no moral restraint. If he avoids shame he avoids wrong according to his system. His fondness for Machiavel is genuine & founded on a true harmony of principle.

**Abiel Foster to Jonathan Blanchard, New York, 30 March 1785**

The Prince of the south, who used, as you well remember, to speak great swelling words, is lately retired.

**John Francis Mercer to James Madison, Marlbro, Md., 28 March 1786**

I have not yet determined with myself whether I shall serve any longer perhaps my Country will determine for me—whether they reject me or not will not occasion one moment's concern. I shall have left a record of my Opinions with them, that will at least present them in as fair a view as they merit I would not wish to be calumniated—but my Ambition becomes every day more limited—it is now only to be thought a Good Man, or only to think so myself. A man cannot be well contracted to a narrower Circle. I really wish well to America & in general & to this State particularly—few circumstances could give me more pleasure than to see these Governments answer the ends that were expected—but my doubts go far beyond my hopes. The confederal Government was always an object of derision rather than anything else with me—it's like a Man's attempting to walk with both legs cut off.

**James McHenry to George Washington, Philadelphia, 16 August 1792**

Mercer, who is, if possible, more desperately mischievous than the open, decided, and declared enemy of the constitution.

**David Ross to Alexander Hamilton, Bladensburgh, Md., 16 November 1796**

Col. Mercer has done as to Mr. Adams as to yourself charging him in a late public speech with being an advocate for monarchy. Partial quotations from his Works, and that he held the poorer classes of People in the greatest contempt—& gave in evidence of it, that Mr. Adams as a sumptuous entertainment, told Col. Mercer that that was too for him & that such a Democrat (or Republican) ought to be satisfied with black broth and brown bread. I was present.

If any thing of this sort did pass Mr. Adams was ridiculing Col. Mercer's pretensions to equality & Popularity as I have no doubt he enjoyed the entertainment as much, & showed as much as if not more aristocratical self-importance than, any one of the Company.

**Thomas Jefferson: Autobiography, 10 February 1821**

My colleague Mercer was one of those afflicted with the morbid rage of debate. Of an ardent mind, prompt imagination, and copious flow of words, he heard with impatience any logic which was not his own.

## Henry Middleton

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

Mr. Lynch introduced Mr. Middleton to us. Mr. Middleton was silent and reserved.

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 7 September 1774**

Col. Middleton . . . appears very modest, has said but little hitherto, is I judge Fifty Years of Age, and of a very slender Thin habit, but is in high esteem with his Acquaintance.

## Thomas Mifflin

**John Adams: Diary, 15 July 1773**

Mr. Mifflin is a Representative of the City of Philadelphia—a very sensible and agreeable man. . . . an easy Speaker—and a very correct Speaker.

**John Adams: Diary, 10 October 1774**

Mifflin is a sprightly and spirited Speaker.

**John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 21 June 1775**

Major Mifflin goes in the Character of Aid de Camp to General Washington. I wish You to be acquainted with him, because, he has great Spirit Activity, and Abilities, both in civil and military Life. He is a gentleman of Education, Family and Fortrune.

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 22 June 1775**

Mr. Mifflin of whom I have often spoke is a Major in the Militia here, & is Aide de Camp as I hear to the General. He is my particular Friend, & am happy in the Thought that you will be able to return some of the many Civilities I have received from him in this City.

If ever there was true Spirit & patriotism in Man he possesses them.

**Samuel Ward to Samuel Ward, Jr., Philadelphia, 23 June 1775**

Major Mifflin Who does Me the Favor to deliver You this is worthy of the greatest Regard as a Friend to his Country. I am afraid the common Cause here will suffer much by his Absence for he is almost the Soul of the City.

**Roger Sherman to Joseph Trumbull, Philadelphia, 6 July 1775**

Major Mifflin of this City who was a very Useful member of this Congress has before now Joined Your Army as Aide de Camp to General Washington, whom I would recommend to your Notice as an upright, firm, Spirited and Active Friend in the Cause of Liberty.

**Silas Deane to Elizabeth Deane, Philadelphia, 8 July 1775**

Your Letter of the 3d is now come to hand, and I find Your Opinion of the Generals and Mr. Mifflin agree with mine, the latter is greatly missed in this City, as he was the Soul, of every thing either Civil or Military here, not that the Military fails, but it does not increase as it would under his animating & indefatigable endeavors.

**James Warren to Samuel Adams, Watertown, Mass., 9 July 1775**

I admire the Activity, Spirit and Obliging Behavior of Mifflin.

**Richard Henry Lee to George Washington, Philadelphia, 26 September 1775**

I think you could not possibly have appointed a better Man to his present Office [Quartermaster General] than Mr. Mifflin. He is a singular Man, and you certainly will meet with the applause and support of all good men by promoting and countenancing real Merit and public virtue, in opposition to all private interests, and partial affection.

**Thomas Lynch to John Morgan, Philadelphia, 1 January 1776**

I hear with concern that our Friend Mifflin continues running himself into unnecessary Dangers, I wish he would consider that he has no right to have our Quarter Master General knocked in the Head.

**John Adams to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 4 August 1776**

Mifflin was a Gentleman of family and Fortune in his Country, of the best Education and Abilities, of great Knowledge of the World, and remarkable Activity. Besides this, the Rank he had held as a Member of the Legislature of this Province, and a Member of Congress, and his great Merit in the civil Department, in Subduing the Quaker and Proprietarian Interests added to the Tory Interests of this Province to the American System of Union, and especially his activity and Success in infusing into this Province a martial Spirit and ambition which it never felt before, were thought Sufficient Causes for his Advancement.

**John Adams to Joseph Ward, Philadelphia, 20 August 1776**

You Speak of a General Mifflin who was young in Experience, and in the service. I wish our Massachusetts Colonels, old as they are, had as much Activity and as extensive Capacities and accomplishments as that young General. However he is not so very young. He is old in Merit in the American Cause. He has the utmost Spirit and Activity, and the best Education and Abilities. He is of one of the best Families and has an handsome Fortune in his Country. He has been long a Member of the Legislature here, and of Congress. He was long the most indefatigable and successful Supporter of the American Cause in this Province, where it has labored more than anywhere else. He was the prime Conductor and the Creator of Motion to that association, which has completed the Restoration of this Province to the American Union, and has infused a martial Spirit into a People who never felt anything like it before. You can Scarcely name a Man anywhere who has more Signal Merit.

**Nathanael Greene to Griffin Greene, Valley Forge, Pa., 25 May 1778**

[On Mifflin spreading rumors attacking Greene's reputation.] General Mifflin was at the Head of this affair, altho behind the Curtain. His ambition and private views led him to pursue the most wicked line of conduct.

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

I am glad that the factious and designing Junto, who would sacrifice everything to their insatiable Ambitions are alarmed at their Unpopularity on account of their malevolent Machinations, and *now deny* all their Practices. It shews they will be cautious hereafter. I have heard it reported that Genl M has wrote to His Excy declaring he esteemed him above all men both as an Officer and Gentleman, and his particular Friend, and wondered how so many reports injurious to him could have been propagated. Now I myself heard him condemn him for his Partiality to You and Genl Knox. It is true, he did it in *very oblique Terms*. I never credited his assertions and I believe *very few now do*. I at Cambridge in my own mind set him down as a bad Man, and almost rendered myself hateful to all my acquaintances on my return home by freely saying so, for his Popularity was then amazingly high.

**George Lux to Nathanael Greene, Baltimore, Md., 24 October 1778**

Gen'l. M. lives within 2 miles of it [Reading, Pa.], and I often happened in Company with him—once when he was pretty merry in consequence of a plentiful infusion of the juice of Grape. He began to talk about (what he called) the injustice done him in Congress: he asked me, what was generally thought of it in Maryland, and I candidly answered his Conduct was very generally censured. He then said, he could easily prove that embezzlement of Public Money could not be laid to his charge, and I told him, Report did not allege it against him, but it did, that he caballed against our illustrious Gen'l.; he then declared solemnly, he never did, but acknowledged he was *sometimes* displeased at the General's not following his own opinion, rather than that of others; yet he thought him the properest Person on the Continent for his important Station, and that he dearly loved and greatly esteemed him. I asked him, if he had said, *you* were the Favourite that ruled at Head Quarters and he answered, in *some capital cases* you had. He said, that after his Trial was over, he should bring to light those, who had injured the Public and him, but descended not to particulars: I saw, tho tipsy as he was, he was evasive. I am told by some of his Friends that he

talks of challenging some Persons *in due time* and suspect, you are included in his *black list*, but don't think he means seriously to do it, as he puts it off so long. This I can assure you, that he is now disliked by most of the leading Gentlemen in Pennsylvania on account of his Cabals, although they make much of him at present in order to make an advantage of his influence among the populace, that they may amend their present absurd, ridiculous and tyrannical system of Government.

### **Benjamin Rush: Sketches**

Those who knew this man in the close of the Revolution and in the evening of his life, will hardly believe what is strictly true, that he possessed genius, knowledge, eloquence, patriotism, courage, self-government and an independent spirit, in the first years of the war. He was extremely useful in the gloomy winter of 1776 by rallying the drooping courage of the militia of his native State, which he did by riding through all the populous countries, and exhorting them to turn out to check the progress of the British army. His influence was much promoted by an elegant person, an animated countenance, and popular manners. Had he fallen in battle, or died in the year 1778, he would have ranked with Warren and the first patriots of the Revolution.

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

You say in your Letter before me "that you understand Gen'l. Mifflin wants the President's Chair [of the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council], that every Body wishes me to accept it, and none more than yourself." That the Chair would be very convenient to a publick Delinquent there can be no Doubt, and it is really diverting to observe the Windings and Turnings he takes to recover lost Popularity. That he would sacrifice every Thing for his own Safety and gratify his inordinate Ambition at any Rate is very obvious. But all his Artifices would fall, and he would have sunk into utter Contempt if he had not been bolstered up by many who derive their Importance from their Connection with you.

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

In Mifflin's Attempts to reestablish himself he found his Enmity to the General was a fatal Objection; he has therefore been obliged to recur to his old Ground that he did not oppose the Commander in Chief, but his Favourites (yourself and Knox) who had (an undue) Influence over him. This is the Language he is obliged to talk or he would have been utterly rejected, and this is the Language which some of your People have talked for him.

### **Nathanael Greene to John Cadwalader, Fredericksburg, N.Y., 10 November 1778**

General Mifflin because he could not get at the Head of the Army has turned Legislator again. I suppose he is aiming after the chief seat in Government [in Pennsylvania]. He is a restless spirit and like Belzebub would rather be chief in H—— than a servant in Heaven.

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

General Mifflin was almost the only speaker [in the Pennsylvania Assembly]; he delivered himself with grace and spirit, but with a marked intention of opposing the President of the State, who is not one of his friends. His manner of expressing himself, his gestures, his deportment, the air and ease of superiority he invariably assumed, perfectly reminded me of those members of the

House of Commons who are accustomed to give the tone to others, and to make every thing bend to their opinion.

**David Jackson to George Bryan, New York, 13 July 1785**

I believe there is not much to be feared, provided General M. should ascend the Presidential chair in Pennsylvania—he has not steadiness sufficient to pursue any plan long enough to render it very mischievous, provided he was so disposed—great as the honor may be, yet the seat will be irksome & the tax heavy on the score of peace of mind.

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

General Mifflin is well known for the activity of his mind, and the brilliancy of his parts. He is well informed and a graceful Speaker. The General is about 40 years of age, and a very handsome man.

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

At the dinner to which he [Alexander Hamilton] invited me I met General Mifflin, known for his distinguished record during the last war. He has the vivacity of a Frenchman, and is also extremely courteous.

**Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788**

Former general, President of Congress, orator of the assembly, etc.—declared and proven friend of France. Very popular and handles the people with an astonishing facility, that monster with a thousand heads called the people. Good lawyer, officer, and patriot, and from agreeable Society. Does well in everything he enters into, because he comes by everything naturally and he is only able to get ahead because he is such as he is.

**Benjamin Rush to John Adams, Philadelphia, 22 April 1789**

[In speaking of men opposed to James Wilson] With these our president general Mifflin has joined. You know the man—and therefore I shall make no comments upon his conduct, further than that he has detached himself from all the genius of the State, and placed himself at the head of a few men who are in our city what your Col: Sims's & Balchs are in Boston. Should Mr. Wilson be left to sink under this opposition, I shall for ever deplore the ingratitude of republics.

**James Iredell to Hannah Iredell, Princeton, N.J., 14 September 1790**

We have had a very agreeable ride thus far through a charming country, and I am extremely pleased with the company. Gen. Mifflin, whom we took in at Elizabeth Town, is a very agreeable man indeed.

**James Iredell to Hannah Iredell, Philadelphia, 15 September 1790**

We arrived here today after a very agreeable Journey about two o'clock. . . . I have since dined with President Mifflin, our most agreeable Fellow Traveller, whose wine was so good and his

importunity so pressing that I could do nothing more since dinner but engage places in the Baltimore Stage.

**Benjamin Rush: Commonplace Book, 13 October 1790**

This day Genl. Mifflin was elected Governor of Pennsylvania. This man was known to be of a very immoral character. He had lived in a state of adultery with many women during the life of his wife, and had children by some of them, whom he educated in his own family. It is said his wife died last summer of a broken heart in consequence of this conduct towards her. Besides this vice, he was much addicted to swearing and obscene conversation. His political character was as bad as his moral. He had deserted his friends and joined with the men who slandered them. He was wholly dissipated and given to low company. His popularity was acquired by the basest acts of familiarity with the meanest of the people. He avoided the society of gentlemen and cherished that of the mechanicks. He lived beyond his income, and was much in debt. He was elected by 1700 votes in our city, and near 30,000 in the whole State. The Quakers generally supported him.

**Louis-Guillaume Otto to Comte de Montmorin, New York, 15 November 1790**

The personal preferences of the President are really for the Potomac [residence of the federal capital], where his principal holdings are situated, but he is too discreet not to sacrifice his own convenience for reasons of state, especially in a case where the public may suspect his bias. A unique circumstance must make him more circumspect about the measures that he will take regarding the residence; General Mifflin, the only avowed enemy that Mr. Washington has ever had and who, during the war, had pressed his animosity very far, is about to become Governor of Pennsylvania, a position that, with regard to power and influence, one could consider the most powerful next to that of President. The popularity of the governor is so great that his election was almost unanimous. Meanwhile the aristocratic party accuses him of seeking the public's favor with too much show, and humoring his idol too much. Be that as it may, the President must be even more displeased with that election since the People of Pennsylvania know perfectly well the antipathy that prevails between him and Mr. Mifflin; obliged to be with the governor in the same city, where Congress has no jurisdiction and where Mr. Mifflin enjoys supreme power, he must desire a change of scene as soon as circumstances permit.

**Benjamin Rush to John Dickinson, Philadelphia, 4 October 1791**

Our *governor* has realized all the fears of the friends of virtue in the state. It is hard to tell whether his private immoralities or public follies expose him to the most contempt.

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

The Governor, having taken the place of the President of the Senate, made a speech in which he gave an account of the state of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. . . . His speech was clear, simple and appropriate, although without any rhetorical embellishments; such in a word that all magistrates, who have need neither to arouse feelings nor to flatter, might give everywhere.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 1 April 1799**

In this State affairs bear an unpleasant aspect: the Governor is habitually intoxicated every day & most commonly every forenoon.

**Oliver Wolcott, Jr., to Frederick Wolcott, Philadelphia, 2 April 1799**

Pennsylvania is the most villainous compound of heterogeneous matter conceivable. Though there are many good men and good things, yet as a state it is bad in the extreme. The governor is an habitual drunkard. Every day, and not infrequently in the forenoon, he is unable to articulate distinctly. The efficient powers of the government are exercised by Judge McKean and Dallas. Of these men I can sincerely say, that I believe them to be as vile as Porcupine represents them.

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

General Mifflin was a young gentleman and sanguine disposition. Active and zealous, he engaged early in opposition to the measures of the British parliament. He took arms, and was among the first officers commissioned, on the organization of a continental army. For this he was read out of the society of quakers, to which himself and his family had belonged.

**Mathew Carey: Memoirs**

Gov Mifflin:—was one of the most popular governors, perhaps I might say the most popular individual that ever lived in Penna. He owed his popularity, I believe in a considerable degree to his urbanity and politeness. He scarcely ever spoke to any person whom he did not salute whenever he saw him afterwards, no matter how abject his situation in life. He was a loose man of licentious manners—and had a number of illegitimate children. He was one of the best presiding officers I ever saw in the chair. When I took down the debates of the Assembly he was president of that body. Previous to his assuming the chair the assembly was very disorderly and irregular—the members talked, not *soto voce*\*—they read the newspapers and wrote letters. When he commenced his career, he stopped the clerk when members were talking or irregular till they stopped—“Gentlemen the clerk wait”—and if the admonition wd not suffice, he would call out the names—order, Mr Whitehill, Mr Fitzsimmons or Mr Clymer [?]. And even Robt Morris, then the most influential man in Penna did not escape amonadversion. Although I have reason to believe that he was under pecuniary obligations to the great financier.

\*In a quiet way so as not to be overheard.

# Henry Miller

**Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 14 June 1794**

Of the persons named [as possible supervisor for Pennsylvania], Colo. Miller, all circumstances considered, has the judgment of the Secretary in his favor. All agree that he is a man of good character, of friendly dispositions to the Government & Laws of the United States—of industry, exertion, *address & distinguished firmness*—of adequate, though not superior ability, and most likely of any man on whom equal dependence can be placed, to have weight in the most refractory

scene of this State. He is also a man of decent property unembarrassed. Among those who *warmly* recommend him is Mr. Ross, Senator of this State, who lives in one of the most western Counties. . . .

Among the persons who have been consulted is the Attorney General [William Bradford]. He gave a preference to Mr. Miller. His knowledge of State characters is diffusive & accurate. Mr. Miller was lately a very promising candidate for the place of *Senator* in the Senate of the United States.

## Nathan Miller

**William Samuel Johnson to Stephen Mix Mitchell, New York, 25 August 1786**

No very Signal Char[acters] now in Congs. Unless this Signally exopts. Genll. M, a worthy good Natd. Man.

## George R. Minot

**William Tudor to John Adams, Boston, 9 July 1789**

Mr. Ames & Mr. Minot are two excellent young Men, & very capable of serving their Country, in different Walks.

## Elizabeth Kortright Monroe (Mrs. James)

**Ellen W. Randolph to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, 19 March 1816**

The Election of the next President is a subject so interesting to every body, that even the most idle and indifferent think and talk a good deal about it. The merits of the candidates are discussed, & even the ladies of their families come in for their full share of praise or blame. Mrs. Monroe has made herself very unpopular, by taking no pains to conceal her aversion to society, & her unwillingness to be intruded on by visitors.

## James Monroe

**Alexander Hamilton to John Laurens, Middlebrook, N.J., 22 May 1779**

Monroe is just setting out from Head Quarters and proposes to go in quest of adventures to the Southward. He seems to be as much of a knight errant as your worship; but as he is an honest fellow, I shall be glad he may find some employment, that will enable him to get knocked in the

head in an honorable way. He will relish your black scheme\* if any thing handsome can be done for him in that line. You know him to be a man of honor a sensible man and a soldier. This makes it unnecessary to me to say any thing to interest your friendship for him. You love your country too and he has zeal and capacity to serve it.

\*Laurens was trying to get approval to raise black battalions.

### **George Washington to Archibald Cary, 30 May 1779**

I very sincerely lament that the situation of our service will not permit us to do justice to the merits of Major Monroe, who will deliver you this, by placing him in the army upon some satisfactory footing. But as he is on the point of leaving us, and expresses an intention of going to the Southward, where a new scene has opened, it is with pleasure I take occasion to express to you the high opinion I have of his worth. The zeal he discovered by entering the service at an early period, the character he supported in his regiment, and the manner in which he distinguished himself at Trenton, when he received a wound, induced me to appoint him to a Captaincy in one of the additional regiments. This regiment failing from the difficulty of recruiting, he entered into Lord Stirling's family, and has served two campaigns as a volunteer aid to his Lordship. He has, in every instance, maintained the reputation of a brave, active, and sensible officer. As we cannot introduce him into the Continental line, it were to be wished that the State could do something for him, to enable him to follow the bent of his military inclination, and render service to his country. If an event of this kind could take place, it would give me particular pleasure; as the esteem I have for him, and a regard to his merit, conspire to make me earnestly wish to see him provided for in some handsome way.

### **Charles Lee to James Monroe, 18 July 1780**

The good figure you make flatters my vanity, as I have always asserted that you would appear one of the first characters of this country, if your shyness did not prevent the display of the knowledge and talents you possess. Mr. White tells me you have got rid of this *mauvaise honte* [bashfulness], and only retain a certain degree of recommendatory modesty. I rejoice in it with all my soul, as I really love and esteem you most sincerely and affectionately.

### **James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Richmond, Va., 9 September 1780**

A variety of disappointments with respect to the prospects of my private fortune previous to my acquaintance with your Excellency, upon which I had built as on ground which could not deceive me, & which failed in a manner which could not have been expected, perplexed my plan of life & exposed me to inconveniences which had nearly destroyed me. In this situation had I not formed a connection with you I should most certainly have retired from society with a resolution never to have entered on the stage again. I could never have prevailed on myself to have taken an introduction to the Country, or to have derived any advantages or even to have remained in connection with one by whom I felt myself injured, but whose near relationship & situation in life put it in his power to serve me. In this situation you became acquainted with me & undertook the direction of my studies & believe me I feel that whatever I am at present in the opinion of others or whatever I may be in future has greatly arisen from your friendship.

**Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Annapolis, Md., 8 May 1784**

I think Colonel Monroe will be of the Committee of the states. He wishes a correspondence with you; and I suppose his situation will render him an useful one to you. The scrupulousness of his honor will make you safe in the most confidential communications. A better man there cannot be.

**James Monroe to John Francis Mercer, New York, August 1784**

[While beginning a tour through the Northwest] I travell only with one servant . . . It is possible I may lose my scalp but if a little fighting & a great deal of running will save it, God knows they shall not be wanting & particularly the latter. The former I will avoid with as much care and address as any man ever evin[c]ed in extricating himself from a rencounter. If I am forc'd to injure an Indiam man or woman in my own defence, I will venture my reputation, that if the event of the battle sh[oul]d be against me, & I taken prisoner, that I acquit myself even before an Indian tribunal.

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 9 August 1784**

It is possioble I may lose my scalp from the temper of the Indians, but if either a little fighting or a great deal of running will save it I shall escape safe.

**Sarah Vaughan to Catherine Wilhelmina Livingston, 10 October 1784**

Poor Col. Monroe! The man is in despair he has written a letter to Gen. Gates telling him that he has lost his heart on board the Albany sloop, and fills the sheet with a panegyric upon his fair one. I fear his love did not meet with a return, but we were blind and not acquainted with one half his perfections of person or mind, they were summed up to me this day and amounted to eight which includes every perfection that a female can wish or a man envy. He is a member of Congress, rich, young, sensible, well read, *lively*, and *handsome*. I forget the other accomplishment, and will not subscribe to the last unless you prove the dimple on his chin to be what constitutes beauty, and I have a doubt about the sixth unless it is agreed that affording subject for gaiety and liveliness to the company you are in, is the same thing as being gay and lively yourself. If you are the goddess at whose shrine he worships inform me of it that I may think higher of his perfection. His being *your* choice will have great influence upon me, and stop me when I might be saucily inclined, for at present he is more the object of my diversion than admiration.

**Marquis de Lafayette to James Madison, New York, 15 December 1784**

Our friend Munro is very much Beloved and Respected in Congress.

**William Temple Franklin to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 18 January 1786**

In the Opportunity I have had of being with him, I have found him very sensible and agreeable, and possessing those pleasing Manners, which take off from the formality of a new Acquaintance and smooth the Way to Friendship.

**Thomas Jefferson to William Temple Franklin, Paris, 7 May 1786**

You have formed a just opinion of Monroe. He is a man whose soul might be turned wrong side outwards without discovering a blemish to the world.

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, New York, 11 May 1786**

You will be surpris'd to hear that I have form'd the most interesting connection in human life, with a young Lady in this town, as you know my plan was to visit you [in France] before I settled myself. But having form'd an attachment to this young Lady, (a Miss Kortright, the daughter of a gent[lema]n of respectable character & connections in this State tho' injur'd in his fortunes by the late war) I have found that I must relinquish all other objects not connected with her. We were married ab[ou]t three months since. I remain here untill the fall at w[hic]h time we remove to Fredericksburg in Virginia where I shall settle for the present in a house prepar'd for me by Mr. [Joseph] Jones to enter into the practice of the law.

**Thomas Jefferson to John Trumbull, Monticello, 10 January 1787**

[Jefferson has written a letter of recommendation to James Monroe] I enclose you a letter to Colo. Monroe, who without it would do every thing he could for you, and with it not the less. His warm heart infuses zeal into all his good offices.

**James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, Fredericksburg, Va., 27 July 1787**

The Governor [Edmund Randolph], I have every reason to believe is unfriendly to me & hath shown (If I am well informed) a disposition to thwart me; Madison, upon whose friendship I have calculated, whose views I have favored, and with whom I have held the most confidential correspondence since you left the continent, is in strict league with him & hath I have reason to believe concurred in arrangements unfavorable to me; a suspicion supported by some strong circumstances that this is the case, hath given me great uneasiness—however in this I may be disappointed & I wish it may be so.

**French Strother to James Higginbotham, [1788]**

[On Monroe running for the U.S. House of Representatives] I hope you will consider the necessity of uniting in favor of a Gentleman who has been uniformly in favor of Amendments [to the Constitution]. I mean James Monroe Esq., a man who possesses great abilities, integrity and a most amiable Character who has been many years a member of Congress, of the House of Delegates and of the Privy Council and whom I have prevailed on to offer in our District: Considering him as being able to render his Country Great Services on this important occasion.

**An Appeal for the Election of James Monroe, c. January 1789**

I hope you will Consider the Necessity of uniting in favor of a Gent. Who has been uniformly in favour of Amendments. I mean James Monroe Esq. a man who possesses great abilities integrity and a most amiable Character who has been many years a member of Congress of the House of Delegates and of the Privy Council and whom I have Prevald on to offer in our District, Considering him as being able to Render his Country great Service on this important occasion.

**Reverend James Madison to James Madison, Williamsburg, Va., 12 November 1794**

Our Friend Monro's Speech [as U.S. Minister to France] shows a good republican Heart, but I wish it had been a little more luminous.

**John Quincy Adams to John Adams, The Hague, 11 May 1797**

It is with extreme reluctance that I have given you, though in the most intimate confidence, my sentiments upon Mr. Monroe's conduct during his mission to France. A most unfortunate mission it has been for his country, and where its consequences will lead, I am more able to conjecture than willing to foretell. I hope he was not aware of them himself, because I had rather consider him as prejudiced and improvident, but honest, than something worse. . . .

**John Adams to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 30 May 1797**

I had no share in the Recall of Monroe, and therefore am not responsible for the Reasons of it.—But I have heard such reports of his own Language in France at his own Table, and the Language of those whom he entertained and countenanced, and of his correspondences with Bache Beckley &c and his Communication thro the Aurora, that I wonder not at his recall.—His speech at his Audience of Leave is a base false and Servile Thing.—Indeed, it was *Randolph* who appointed him. He was in senate as dull heavy and Stupid a fellow as he could be consistently with Malignity and Inveteracy perpetual. A more unfit Piece of Wood to make a Mercury, could not have been culled from the whole Forrest.—It is improper for me to delineate the System of Speculation and the Persons concerned in it.—Members of Congress—Collectors of Customs, Consul's, Secretaries & Ministers &c &c &c are suspected of such a Mystery of it, as I shudder to think of.—How far Monroe was directly or indirectly concerned in it, I know not. But he was the Friend and Idol and apparently the Center of the whole Group.

**John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, Hamburg, 26 October 1797**

Mr. Monroe has called upon the Secretary of State for the reasons of his recall; he seems to think that the tenure of the President's pleasure, expressed in his commission meant the pleasure of Mr. Monroe. He is trying to make a noise, and add one more puff to the bellows of faction, but his breath happens to be weak. He talks about liberty, and enlightened principles, and despotism, and coalition, as much as Molière's *Tartuffe* talks of piety, devotion, the love of God and sin. Mr. Pickering has answered him by plainly referring to the constitutional principles, which made an assignment of the reasons demanded improper; but at the same time gives him to understand what the reasons were, and offers in his individual character to tell him the reasons why *he* advised to it. This, however, Mr. Monroe chooses to decline, and the offer appears to have vexed him. He is going to publish a pamphlet; for you know with us everything ends in a pamphlet, as in France all ends in a song.

**John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, Berlin, 27 January 1798**

Have you seen Hamilton's vindication of himself against a charge of speculation? This affair must injure him with the rigid moralists, and makes him liable to a sort of censure, which he acknowledges and which I cannot but consider as just. But in the conduct of those who compelled him to uncover his nakedness to the public, there is something much worse than his offense. There

is a skulking, cowardly, malignant wish to stigmatize him with corruption, without daring to assert it. Monroe especially has shown himself at this time, what he was when he set Tom Paine to howl at his benefactor Washington, silencing him in word, while he instigated him in deed. There is no distinction of weapons in the modern philosophy; poison is just as freely used as the sword.

### **John Quincy Adams to William Vans Murray, 8 December 1798**

Monroe's greatest enemy is himself, and his own book. The most malignant foe could not pronounce so complete a sentence of damnation both upon his head and heart as that work. It is so unanswerably bad that you see even faction is ashamed of it.

### **Thomas Jefferson to John Taylor, Philadelphia, 24 January 1799**

Many points in Monroe's character would render him the most valuable acquisition the republican interest in this legislature [Congress] could make.

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

Mr. Munroe, a gentleman of unimpeachable integrity, much knowledge and information, united with distinguished abilities, great strength of mind, and a strong attachment to the republican system, was appointed and sent forward [as minister to France] by President Washington.

### **William Plumer: Memorandum, 16 March 1806**

Mr. Monroe, is I believe honest—a man of plain common sense—practical—but not scientific. His conduct in France in the time of their revolution partook of the delirium of the times. It was censurable.

He was an aid in our revolutionary army to Baron Steuben, or Lord Stirling. He was well known to Genl. Washington—& was by him honored with the important office of Minister plenipotentiary to the Court of France in a critical time.

### **James Monroe to Francis Baring, Albemarle Co., Va., 15 October 1809**

I am now withdrawn altogether from publick life, & may remain so for years if not for ever. . . . I am at present not only contented with my retirement but desirous of remaining in it. I think I shall enjoy more happiness in a private station than ever fell to my lot in a publick one. I shall certainly have it more in my power to attend to my own concerns, to improve my estate, to fulfill my engagements, & otherwise advance the welfare of my family.

We live in a county, whose name is prefixed to this, on a branch of James river, 80 miles from Richmond the first elevated country above the falls. The late President is my nearest neighbour. Our lands join. My estate here is a good one. ~~Consisting of about 300 acres of excellent land & between 30 & 40 a sufficient number of Slaves. But I have much to do to make my residence a comfortable one. It is an estate which I purchased many years since, by the sale of a patrimonial one on the Potowmack, and which my continual employment since in the publick service & great portion of the time abroad, has render'd it impossible for me to improve.~~ Its improv'ment, on a moderate scale, now engages my attention, and promises to form one of the most interesting occupations of my retirement. I have other property of some value in this State, & some likewise in the State of Kentucky.

**Richard Rush to President James Madison, Washington, 4 September 1812**

If Mr. Munroe would consent to head an army in the north west!—his name would rally, his talents leadt one!—this dificult department of the publiock service would be filled up, and so filled up as to collect anew the spirit and draw together, in augmented numbers, the force in that quarter, while it commanded the warmest and most unlimited confidence of the whole country.

**John Mason to President James Madison, George Town, 4 September 1812**

To what Mr. Rush has said Sir, I will only add, my certain and positive conviction, that at this moment; the appointment of some Man, who has, in an extraordinary degree, by the weight of his Talents, and personal character, the means of relieving the public despondency, produced by Hull's infamous Conduct, is necessary; and that no Man in our Community is so well fitted for this, as Mr. Munroe, but the objection to his leaving your Cabinet, at this time, can be overcome in no way but by Mr. Jefferson in person to supply his Place—and may not the Friends throughout the Continent, of that great and good Man hope, he will, on such an occasion, make the Sacrifice?

**Gabriel Duvall to James Madison, Washington, 5 September 1812**

The acceptance of the command of the North Western Army would add to the luster of Col. Monroe's public character.

**Thomas Jefferson to William Duane, Monticello, 1 October 1812**

I clearly think with you on the competence of Monroe to embrace great views of action. The decision of his character, his enterprise, firmness, industry, and unceasing vigilance, would, I believe, secure, as I am sure they would merit, the public confidence, and give us all the success which our means can accomplish.

**Josiah Quincy: Speech in the U.S. House of Representatives, 5 January 1813**

[Attacking the Cabinet and the administration's plans to invade Canada.] "He railed against the 'despotic' nature of a cabinet 'composed, to all efficient purposes, of two Virginians and a foreigner,' declaring that its policies for the past three years had been intended to ensure that 'James the First should be made to continue four years longer' and that its project for the next three years was that 'James the Second shall be made to succeed, according to the fundamental rescripts of the Monticellian dynasty.' Quincy also denounced the plan to create the rank of lieutenant general for the commander of the army. Assuming that Monroe would seek the position, he predicted that the appointment would be 'ominous to the liberties of this country.'" [Quoted in *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, V, 588n.]

**Jonathan Dayton to James Madison, 16 January 1813**

I cannot conclude without expressing the hope (& praying your pardon for doing so) that the vapouring of Mr. [Josiah] Quincey about cabinet influences, electioneering projects & such stuff, will not prevent the appointment (if it were contemplated) of Mr. Secy. M. to the command of the army. His talents of every description are so greatly superior, his promptitude & decision so much greater, & his views so far more enlarged as to admit of no comparison between him & the present

commander, & besides all this, the confidence of the Army would be infinitely greater in him, than the other, & most deservedly so. This matter of confidence too is of no small importance at any time, but more than ever essential now, after so many of our Generals have so greatly disappointed the public expectation.

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

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

**Aaron Burr to Joseph Alston, 15 November 1815**

A Congressional Caucus will, in the Course of the ensuing month, nominate James Monroe for President of the U.S. and will call on all good republicans to support the nomination—

Whether we consider the Measure itself—the Character & Talents of the Man or the State whence he comes, this Nomination is equally exceptionable & odious—. . .

Independently of the Manner of the Nomination & of the location of the Candidate, the Man himself is one of the Most improper & incompetent that could have been selected—Naturally dull & stupid—extremely illiterate—indecisive to a degree that would be incredible to one who did not know him—pusillanimous & of course hypocritical—has no opinion on any subject & will be always under the Government of the worst Men—pretends as I am told, to some Knowledge of Military Matters, but never commanded a platoon nor was ever fit to command one—“He served in the revolutionary War”—that is, he acted a short time as aide de camp to Lord Stirling who was regularly drunk from Morning to Morning—Monroe’s whole duty was to fill his Lordship’s Tankard and hear with indications of admiration his Lordship’s long stories about himself—Such is Monroe’s Military experience. I was with my regiment in the same division at the time—As a Lawyer, Monroe was far below Mediocrity—He never rose to the Honor of trying a Cause of the Value of an hundred pounds. This is a character exactly suited to the Views of the Virginia Junto—

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 4 July 1817**

The long experience of public affairs which Monroe has had, must have matured his judgment—his heart was always good—he begins his administration under most favorable auspices, & I hope therefore that both his country & himself will derive advantage & satisfaction from his Presidency—

**John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, Quincy, Mass., 10 October 1817**

Mr. Monroe has got the universal Character among all our Common People of “A very smart Man.” And verily I am of the same Mind.

**Josephus B. Stuart: Account of Visit with Jefferson, 16 December 1817**

[He] spoke highly of Monroe Whose knowledge of human nature he thinks unequalled.

**Joseph Story to Ezekiel Bacon, Washington, 12 March 1818**

The old notions of republican simplicity are fast wearing away, and the public taste becomes more and more gratified with public amusements and parade. Mr. Monroe, however, still retains his plain and gentlemanly manners, and is in every respect a very estimable man.

**Henry Dearborn to Thomas Jefferson, Boston, 22 April 1818**

Although Mr. Monroe came into the Presidency under very favourable circumstances, he has not been permitted to recline at all times on a bed of *roses*, but I am confident that his good Judgement & virtuous intentions will carry him safely through.

**President James Monroe to Andrew Jackson, Washington, 30 May 1822**

I am utterly incapable of doing injustice to anyone intentionally, and certainly, if it were otherwise, an injury to you would be among the last acts of which I could be capable, in any form whatever. All those acting under the Executive have a claim to its protection.

**Mathew Carey: Memoirs**

James Monroe . . . There was a great a contrast between the public feeling towards James Madison and James Monroe, as there was in their talents and merits. Mr Madison was a man of most amiable manners and of a respectable order of talents—whereas Mr Monroe was in almost every respect a second perhaps third rate man far inferior to Mr Madison. Yet the latter was abused in the papers for almost every act of his administration good or bad—whereas some most Culpable acts of that of Mr Monroe were passed over with scarcely any censure. A striking instance is to be found in the pardoning of the numerous pirates who were found guilty during his administration and letting them loose to rob and murder their defenceless comrades. The temptations to commit piracy are so strong, from the character of many of the sailors—the facility of perpetration and the difficulty of detection and proof—that sound policy and justice, together with a due regard to the safety of Captains, mates and the upright portion of the Crews, demand that the execution of the vengeance of the law should follow conviction with unerring certainty.

**James Madison to Tench Ringgold, 12 July 1831**

I need not say to you who so well know, how highly I rated the comprehensiveness and character of his mind; the purity and nobleness of his principles; the importance of his patriotic services; and the many private virtues of which his whole life was a model, nor how deeply therefore I must sympathize, on his loss, with those who feel it most. A close friendship, continued thro' so long a period and such diversified scenes, had grown into an affection very imperfectly expressed by that term; and I value accordingly the manifestation in his last hours that the reciprocity never abated.

## Joseph Montgomery

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

Doctr. Montgomery of Pennsylvania is a Man possessed of a good Share of reading and knowledge & is an Agreeable companion in private—has an apt Memory and a fertile imagination—Yet is Vain, fond of power & governed in publick Council by capricious Whims.

## Daniel Morgan

### Daniel Morgan to Nathanael Greene, Camp Sherrald's Ford, N.C., 24 January 1781

After my late success [at Cowpens] and my sanguine expectations to do some thing clever this campaign must inform you that I shall be obliged to give over the pursuit, by reason of an old pain returning upon me, that laid me up for four months last winter and spring. It is a ciatick pain in my hip, that renders me entirely incapable of active services. I have had it these three weeks past, but on getting wet the other day it has seized me more violently, which gives me great pain when I ride, and at times when I am walking or standing am obliged to set down in the place it takes me, as quick as if I were shot; I am so well acquainted with this disorder, that I am convinced nothing will help me but rest, and were I to attempt to go through the winter's campaign I am satisfied it would Totally disable me from further service.

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

Has been fortunate, and has met with eclat. Yet there are different opinions with respect to his abilities as an Officer. He is accused of using improper means to obtain certificates from the Soldiers. It is said he has been (if the case is not so now) intemperate: that he is troubled with a palpitation which often lays him up; and it is not denied that he is illiterate.

### Timothy Pickering to George Washington, Trenton, N.J., 13 September 1798

[Pickering's response to President Adams's suggestion of Morgan as second in command to George Washington.] Morgan is an excellent soldier, and has a capacity for a small command; but not exceeding a brigade. He however has now a broken constitution.

## George Morgan

### Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, Philadelphia, 14 March 1779

I believe it is unnecessary for me to say that Colo. Morgan is a Man of Honor and Truth as he is of your Acquaintance but as you may not know him so well as to know how much he may be

relied on permit me to assure you that I have the highest Reason to I that you cannot derive Information from a more certain Source or thro a surer Channel.

## John Morgan

### John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 18 October 1775

Yesterday they chose a Successor,\* Dr Morgan an eminent Surgeon of this City. . . . Dr Morgan will be with you soon. He is Professor of Medicine in the Colledge here, and reads Lectures in the Winter. He is a Brother of Mr Duche and of our Mr Stillman.

\*A Philadelphia physician and founder of the medical school at the College of Philadelphia, Morgan was appointed director general and chief physician of the Hospital.

### John Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 25 October 1775

Upon the Receipt of the Intelligence of Dr [Church's] Letter, Dr Morgan was chosen in his Room. This Letter is intended to be sent by him, and therefore probably will not go in ten days.

John Morgan, a Native of this City, is a Doctor of Physick, a Fellow of the Royal Society at London; Correspondent of the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris; Member of the Arcadian Belles Lettres Society at Rome; Licentiate of the Royal Colledges of Physicians in London and in Edinburgh; and Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Colledge of Philadelphia.

This Gentleman Served an Apprenticeship of six or seven years under Dr John Redman, an eminent Physician in this City, during which Time he had an opportunity of Seeing the Practice of all the eminent Physicians in this City, as he attended at the Hospital, and for one year made up the Prescriptions of all. After this he devoted himself four Years to a military Life, and went into the service as a Physician and surgeon to the Troops raised by this Colony; after this he went abroad, and Spent five years in Europe, under the most celebrated Masters in every Branch of Medicine, and visiting the principal Cities and Seats of Science in Great Britain, Holland, France and Italy.

This Gentleman in 1765, delivered a Discourse upon the Institution of Medical Schools in America, at a Commencement, which was published with a Preface, containing an Apology for attempting to introduce the regular Mode of practising Physic in Phyladelphia. Every Winter Since he has read Lectures to the Students at the Colledge as a Professor &c.

He and our Revd Chaplain Mr Duche, who is now promoted to be Recter of the three United Episcopal Churches in this City, married two sisters. Mr Stillman of Boston, the Antipaedobaptist Minister married Dr Morgan's Sister.

The Dr's moral Character is very good. Thus much sir I thought myself well employed in Writing to you, who have a Curiosity after Characters. I wish I could give a Loose to my Pencil and draw Characters for your Inspection, by the Dozen. But LIrs dont always go safe.

Dr Morgan sir, deserves particular Honour and Respect, wherever he goes.

### John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 28 October 1775

Congress has appointed instead of Church, Dr. Morgan of this City whose Character I will pourtray for your Satisfaction.

Founders on the Founders

The Gentleman appointed Director and surgeon general of the Hospital, is John Morgan M.D. Fellow of the Royal Society at London; Correspondent of the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris; Member of the Arcadian Belles Lettres Society at Rome; Licentiate of the Royal Colledges of Physicians in London and in Edinburgh; and Professor of the Theory and Practice of Medicine in the Colledge of Philadelphia.

This Gentleman was one of the first who received their Education in the Colledge in this City, and served an Apprenticeship of six Years with Dr. John Redman an eminent Phisician, here, during one whole Year of which he put up the Prescriptions of all the Phisicians who attended the public Hospital here, who were all eminent. After this the Dr. entered the Army and served four Years under Generals Moncton, Forbes and Stanwix, where he had an extensive Practice, in the Army among all Kinds of Diseases. Five years after, he left the Army he spent in Europe, under the most celebrated Masters in every Branch of Medicine. During this Period he visited the principal Cities and Seats of Science in Great Britain, Holland, France and Italy. Returning from his Travels, he was chosen Professor of Medicine in the Colledge in this City, where he has constantly read Lectures every Winter, and for many Years practiced among the Citizens.

Dr. Morgan's moral Character is very good, and his manners are civil, decent, and agreeable. He married a sister of the Lady of our Chaplain, Mr. Dushe, who is new Rector of the three united Churches in this City. A sister of the Doctors is married to Mr. Stillman the Antipaedobaptist lately in Boston, now in this Place.

Thus I hope We shall hear no Complaint that this Place is not now well filled. Jealousy and Envy spare nobody. Some have whispered that the Dr. is a little Visionary in Theory and Practice. But all agree that he is attentive, vigilant and laborious for the good of his Patients in a great Degree. and he is said to be a pious Man.

#### **Samuel Adams to James Warren, Philadelphia, 4 November 1775**

The Dr. though not yet arrived to the Age of forty has long sustained the Character of learned and is very eminent in the Profession of Physick and Surgery, and I dare say will fill the place to which he is appointed\* with Dignity. You will find him to be an agreeable Acquaintance.

\*Morgan was appointed director general of hospitals.

#### **John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, Princeton, N.J., 17 November 1776**

D[octo]r M seems very unfit for his Charge & seems set upon nothing but making Money. The Bearer will more fully inform you.

## **Gouverneur Morris**

#### **Edward Rutledge to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 19 October 1776**

I am Amazed at Gouverneur! Good God what will mankind come to! Is it not possible to awake him to a sense of his Duty? Has he no one Virtue left that can plead in favor of an oppressed & bleeding Country? Has he no Friendship for those who are standing so opposed as you & Jay are to the attacks of open and secret Enemies? One would think he would find a solid Satisfaction in

acting and even suffering with such Men in such a Cause. Does he desire to live forever in Obscurity, or would he prefer being “damned of ever Lasting Fame,” to a Life devoted to his Country? Tis a hard case indeed my dear Robert that the Burden should be cast upon the Shoulders of a few—but the Honor will bear a just proportion to the Trouble, & the Reflection of having deserved well of the Community will elevate you I trust beyond the reach of Affliction.

**William Duer to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 9 July 1777**

At present there are no very great Matters in which our State is particularly interested before Congress; and indeed if they were, Mr. [Gouverneur] Morris can supply my place with great Advantage to the Reputation of the State, as well as his own. His Coolness of Temper, and happy Vein of Irony are Qualifications, which would render him a very powerful Antagonist to Mr. R. H. Lee.

**William Duer to Francis Lightfoot Lee, Reading, Pa., 14 February 1778**

I must confess that I do not think there are many Men in America, who can be considered as Financiers, our contracted dependent System of Government not affording Scope for Abilities of this Species. Yet some undoubtedly might be found whose Genius fits them in a peculiar Manner for such a Line of Business. Two occur to me at present Mr. R. Morris of this State, and my Colleague Govr. Morris. With respect to the former, you know him so well, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon his Character—the latter, tho’ Young, has turned his thoughts and Course of reading much to the Subject of Money as a Science, and from his Genius would I am convinced make an Useful, and Shining Member in such a Department.

**Gouverneur Morris to His Mother Sarah Morris, York, Pa., 16 April 1778**

I would that it were in my Power to solace and comfort your declining Age. The Duty I owe to a tender Parent demands this of me but a higher Duty hath bound me to the Service of my Fellow Creatures. The natural Indolence of my Disposition hath unfitted me for the Paths of Ambition and the early Possession of Power taught me how little it deserves to be prized. Whenever the present Storm subsides I shall rush with Eagerness into the Bosom of private Life but while it continues and while my Country calls for the Exertion of that little Share of Abilities which it hath pleased God to bestow on me I hold it my indispensable Duty to give myself to her. I know that for such Sentiments I am called a Rebel and that such Sentiments are not fashionable among the Folks you see. Let me however entreat that you be not concerned on my Account. I shall again see you. Perhaps the Time is not far off.

**Gouverneur Morris to John Jay, York, Pa., 29 April 1778**

I am a busy Man tho as heretofore a pleasurable one.

**Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, York, Pa., 3 May 1778**

I believe all is right but you know I am quite a Candid.

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

Mr. R. Morris from New York is an eternal speaker, and for artifice a *Duane*\* and for brass equal to any body I am acquainted with.

\*James Duane, a reluctant advocate on independence, also represented New York in Congress.

**Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, Philadelphia, 17 August 1778**

You tell me that I must be with you at the opening of the Session [of the New York legislature] but you do not let me know when the Session is. Let me paint my Situation [in Congress]. I am on a Committee to arrange the Treasury & Finances. I am of the medical Committee and have to prepare the Arrangements of that Department. I have the same Thing to go thro with Relation to the Commissary's, Quarter Master's & Clothier General's Departments. I am to prepare a Manifesto on the Cruelties of the British. I have drawn and expect to draw almost if not all the Publications of Congress of any Importance. These are leading Things but the every Day Minutia are infinite. From Sunday Morning to Saturday Night I have no Exercise unless to walk from where I now sit about fifty Yards to Congress and to return. My Constitution sinks under this and the Heat of this pestiferous Climate. Duer talks daily of going hence. We have nobody else here so that if I quit the State will be unrepresented. Can I come to you? If there be a Practicability of it with any Kind of Consistency I will take half a dozen Shirts and ride Post to meet you. Oh that a Heart so disposed as mine is to social Delights should be worn and torn to Pieces with public Anxieties.

**Gouverneur Morris to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, 20 October 1778**

As to Personalities I am fully of Opinion with you that I speak too often and too long of which the Bearer of this Letter will give you I doubt not many Instances. To my Sorrow I add that I am by no Means improved in my public Speaking. I have no Doubt that the Instance you allude to is exceptionable and the Party by his own Wrong deprived of the Benefit of that Protection which altho given by the Law that is the Consent of Nations does by no Means suspend the Laws of civil Society so far as to excuse a Breach of those Laws. But I am a Civilian. That I am not a punctual Correspondent must be attributed to Distractions arising from an Attention to Business of so many different Kinds that your poor Friend hath but little in him of the gay Lothario. But you must believe, at least I entreat it, that my Heart holds you dear nor shall any Objects exclude you from the Place in it which you have acquired a double Title to by Right and by long Possession. The American\* is mine or I am the American which you please. Both it and the Writer have Faults, Alas a great Many.

\*Gouverneur Morris wrote four essays signed "An American" to the British peace commission led by Lord Carlisle.

**Gouverneur Morris to George Clinton, Philadelphia, 1 December 1778**

I have not seen the act you allude to in your Letter. I am told however, that an advance is made to each of the Delegates of 1000 Dollars. I am also told that in Consideration of the Expenses which must necessarily have accrued by living in this Town, the Legislature have directed the additional Sum of three Dollars pr Day, to be paid since our arrival in this City. I pray you, Sir, on the first convenient Opportunity to make the proper Returns on my Part for this equitable Provision. Since I am on the Subject of money, which I think will not be an object in many of my Letters, I am to observe that considering the high Trust with which I am honoured by my Constituents, I

determined to support the Character to the Extent of what would be afforded from my private Fortune. Whether the State would make Retribution rested indeed with their Generosity, but this was by no means a bad Foundation. At any Rate I knew the worst and after certain Expenditures, I should inevitably have quitted a station the Dignity of which I could not longer support. My expenses have been by no means small.

**John Adams: Diary, 22 June 1779**

In the Evening I fell into Chat with the Chevalier [Luzerne]. He asked me, about Gouverneur Morris. I said it was his Christian Name—that he was not Governor. The Chevalier said He had heard of him as an able Man. I said he was a young Man, chosen into Congress since I left it. That I had sat some Years with his Elder Brother in Congress. That Gouverneur was a Man of Wit, and made pretty Verses—but of a Character très legere. That the Cause of America had not been sustained by such Characters as that of Gouverneur Morris or his Colleague Mr. Jay.

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

Several circumstances which have come to my knowledge, lead me to suspect that pains have been taken to injure Morris in the opinion of his constituents. Justice to him as well as regard to truth obliges me to say that he deserves well of New York and America in general. It has been the uniform policy of some from the beginning of the contest, to depreciate every man of worth and abilities who refused to draw in their harness.

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

Morris will be serviceable [in Congress]—His Abilities enable him to promote every Cause he may advocate, but if I may be permitted to advise he should restrain himself from taking any Part or pushing any Measure respecting your Disputes [with Vermont or New England], without previous Concert with Livingston and Hobart.

**John Jay to Robert R. Livingston and Gouverneur Morris, Philadelphia, 29 September 1779**

I exceedingly regret his [Morris'] not being sent to Europe where his abilities would have done Honor as well as Service to his Country—but it seems that Period is not yet arrived. & Congress must for some time longer remain his Field. . . . if Morris governs his Imagination will conciliate Friends.

**Lewis Morris, Jr., to Nathanael Greene, Esopus, N.Y., 1 October 1779**

This morning the legislature proceeded to the choice of delegates [to Congress]; Mr. Jay, Mr. Scott, Mr. Duane, Mr. Floyd and a Mr. LeHommodieu are the persons chosen. The last is a refugee from Long Island, a man of sense but not out of the common track. Mr. [Gouverneur] Morris was dropt from a vulgar prejudice which prevailed in the assembly that he ridiculed the Christian religion and was a man of very bad morals. Thus from this idle notion they have lost the services of the ablest politician in the state.

**John Laurens to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 18 December 1779**

. . . the world in general allows greater credit for his abilities than his integrity.

**William Churchill Houston to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 15 May 1780**

I am unhappy this Morning to inform you of an Accident which happened yesterday to Mr. Gouverneur Morris. He was riding out in a Phaeton, and the Horses taking a Fright ran away in the Street, struck the Carriage against a Post, broke it all to Pieces and in the Shock fracture' Mr. Morris's Ankle to such a Degree that it became necessary to take off his Leg imediately. He bore the Operation with amazing Firmness. I have not seen him but am told this morning, that though his Fever is pretty high and he has a good Deal of Pain he is not in Danger of Life. The Bruises he received in the Fall are a great Addition to the principal Accident. There was no Person with him in the Carriage.

**Samuel Holten to George Partridge, Philadelphia, 16 May 1780**

I had like to have forgot mentioning that last Sunday morning Governr Morris got into his carriage at the city tavern to ride out & his horses took fright & he endeavouring to git out shattered one of his legs to pieces so that it was immediately taken of.

**Robert R. Livingston to George Clinton, Philadelphia, 18 May 1780**

You have heard of'poor Morris's misfortune in the loss of his leg; he bears it with becoming fortitude and is, I hope, in a fair way of recovery.

**Robert R. Livingston to Philip Schuyler, Philadelphia, 26 May 1780**

You will feel with me for'poor Morris' misfortune, & will therefore receive some satisfaction in being informed that he is in a fair way of recovery.

**William Bingham to John Jay, Philadelphia, 1 July 1780**

An unlucky accident lately happened to Gouvernuer Morris. In attempting to drive a pair of wild horse in a phaeton, he was thrown out and in the fall his left leg caught in the wheel and was greatly shattered. He was under the necessity of having it amputated below the knee and is now in a fair way of recovery.

**Robert R. Livingston to John Jay, Philadelphia, 6 July 1780**

You have I dare say heard of poor Morris misfortune in the loss of his leg. He bears it with magnanimity & is in a fair way of recovery. I feel for him & yet am led to hope that it may turn out to his advantage & tend to fix his desultory genius to a point in which case it can not fail to go far.

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

Gouverneur's Leg has been a Tax on my Heart. I am almost tempted to wish he had lost *something* else.

**John Jay to Robert R. Livingston, Madrid, 6 October 1780**

I lament Gouver's Misfortune. There are many Things good as well as great in him.

**Robert Morris to Gouverneur Morris, Office of Finance, 6 July 1781**

The cheerful manner in which you agreed to render me the assistance I solicited, soon after my appointment to the Superintendency of the Finances of the United States, gave me great pleasure on my own Account, and a still more solid satisfaction on Account of my Country; depending solely on my self, I trembled at the Arduous task I had reluctantly undertaken; aided by your Talents and Abilities I feel better Courage and dare to indulge the fond hope, that Uniting our utmost exertions in the Service of our Country, we may be able to extricate it from the present embarrassments, and dispel those only Clouds, that seem to hang destruction over it. The Honorable Congress by their act of this date have fixed a Salary for the Assistant I may appoint agreeable to the Powers annexed to my office by a former Act of Congress. My entire Conviction of the great and essential Services your Genius, Talents and Capacity enable you to render to your Country, and of that aid, ease and Confidence you can and will Administer to my own exertions and Feelings, never left me one moment to hesitate about the choice I shou'd make. I only lament that the provision allowed by Congress is not more adequate to your deserts, but as I know you are incapable of Mercenary Views and considerations, this circumstance shall be overlooked for the present in expectation that the Utility of our measures may draw a proper attention from those that employ us and at any rate we will have the Consolation to pursue the interests of the United States to the best of our Judgment and abilities whether we meet with suitable rewards or not. Therefore it is with the utmost satisfaction that I do hereby appoint you, an Assistant to the Superintendent of the Finances of the United States of North America, and I do assure you nothing will make me more happy than to acquire and divide with you the thanks of our Country and applause of the World.

**Mary Morris to Sally Jay, Philadelphia, 12 July 1781**

Mr. Gov. Morris's friends here and, indeed, all who know him, were exceedingly shocked at his irreparable misfortune—the loss of his leg . . . I never knew an individual more sympathized with.

**Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 19 October 1781**

Gouverneur is with me and a most useful and able adjunct he is. I hope our joint labors will in the end have the desired effect. We have mended the appearance of things very much, and are regaining public credit and confidence by degrees.

**John Jay to George Clinton, Madrid, 16 November 1781**

It gave me much pleasure to hear that G. Morris would probably be in your delegation [to Congress] this fall. Independent of my regard for him, it appears to me of great importance to the State that every valuable man in it should be preserved, and that it is particularly our interest to cultivate, cherish, and support all such of our citizens, especially young and rising ones, as are, or promise to be, able and honest servants of the public.

**Nathanael Greene to Charles Pettit, 21 December 1782**

[On the rumor that Superintendent of Finance Robert Morris had been killed in a duel, it was thought that Gouverneur Morris might fill the Superintendent's vacancy.] Gouverneur Morris is in the order of promotion; but the confidence of the people is wanting. His abilities are great; but I fear he has more of genius than judgment.

**Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 3 January 1783**

Your friend Gouverneur writes you political letters, but as he tells you nothing of himself, it is just that I tell you how industrious, how useful he is; his talents and abilities, you know; they are all faithfully and disinterestedly applied to the service of his country. I could do nothing without him, and our quiet labours do but just keep the wheels in motion.

**Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, N.J., Princeton, 30 June 1783**

At Trenton I shaved, washed & breakfasted & waited till eight in hopes of seeing Govr. Morris. . . . Govr. was gone a fishing and though I sent him a note to inform him of my arrival, I suppose he thought it too great a sacrifice to forego the pleasure of fishing.

**John Jay to Robert Morris, Passy, France, 20 July 1783**

Gouverneur is happy in your esteem; it adds to mine for him. I have long been attached to him, and sincerely wish that our friendship, instead of being diminished, may continue to gain strength with time.

**Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 4 November 1783**

I do not know whether Gouverneur writes to you by this opportunity; you must cherish his friendship, it is worth possessing. He has more virtue than he shows, and more consistency than anybody believes. He values you exceedingly, and hereafter you will be very useful to each other.

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

Mr. Gouverneur Morris, the lively intellect of the town, and it seems to me he has more ostentation, audacity, and tinsel than real value.

**Samuel Osgood to Elbridge Gerry, Philadelphia, 3 April 1784**

I have had an Opportunity of conversing freely with the D—— M——r [Dutch Minister Pieter Johan Van Berckel]. He has observed a very good Line of Conduct in my Opinion since he has been here—& I apprehend he will fall in, fully with the independent Americans. He is much opposed to intriguing. He has a good Opinion of R—— M—— but says he has very bad Councillors about him. I found he meant G—— M——. He has the same Sentiments of him that I have.

**Arthur Lee to John Adams, Annapolis, Md., 11 May 1784**

Our Treasury is as low & the prospect of raising it by taxes, as unpromising as possible. Either the present Superintendent must continue in with powers calculated solely to convert every thing

to the emolument of himself & his Creatures; or if a reform is made, he & his immoral Assistant have malignity enough to ruin where they can no longer plunder. However there is now a plan before Congress for reforming the department, by putting it into Commission & prohibiting the Commissioners from being engaged in trade or commerce; which I hope will take place.

### **Luigi Castiglioni: Sketches of American Statesmen, 1787**

All those who have the good fortune to know him marvel at his talents and can only profit from his conversation and his pleasant company. As courteous and refined as a European, free as an American, he combines the talents of French bon ton and republican frankness, and is welcomed with pleasure in Philadelphia society.

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

Mr. Gouverneur Morris is one of those Geniuses in whom every species of talents combine to render him conspicuous and flourishing in public debate;—He winds through all the mazes of rhetoric, and throws around him such a glare that he charms, captivates, and leads away the senses of all who hear him. With an infinite stretch of fancy he brings to view things when he is engaged in deep argumentation, that render all the labor of reasoning easy and pleasing. But with all these powers he is fickle and inconstant,—never pursuing one train of thinking,—nor ever regular. He has gone through a very extensive course of reading, and is acquainted with all the sciences. No Man has more wit,—nor can any one engage the attention more than Mr. Morris. He was bred to the Law, but I am told he disliked the profession, and turned merchant. He is engaged in some great mercantile matters with his namesake Mr. Robt. Morris. This Gentleman is about 38 years old, he has been unfortunate in losing one of his Legs, and getting all the flesh taken off his right arm by scald, when a youth.

### **“Cincinnatus” V (Arthur Lee): To James Wilson, Esquire *New York Journal*, 29 November 1787**

It is that a member of the late convention said, not very honorably distinguished for his moral or political virtue, admonished his associates that, unless they carried the constitution through before there was time for considering it, there would be no probability of its being adopted.\*

\*Morris wanted the states to call conventions to ratify the Constitution as quickly as possible. He stated that “his object was to impress in stronger terms the necessity of calling Conventions in order to prevent enemies to the plan, from giving it the go by. When it first appears, with the sanction of this Convention, the people will be favorable to it. By degrees the State officers, & those interested in the State Govts will intrigue & turn the popular current against it.” (August 31, 1787, Farrand, II, 478)

### **Otto’s Biographies, Fall 1788**

Citizen of the state of New York, but always connected with Robert Morris and having represented Pennsylvania several times. Celebrated lawyer, one of the best organized minds on the continent, but without manners, and, if one believes his enemies, without principles; extremely interesting in conversation having studied finances with special care. He works constantly with Robert Morris. He is feared more than admired, but few regard him with esteem.

**Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, Morrisania, Westchester County, N.Y.,  
12 November 1788**

I am of the breed of optimists, and believe that all will go well.

**George Washington to Thomas Jefferson, Mount Vernon, 27 November 1788**

You will find [him] full of affability, good nature, vivacity and talents. As you will also find in him a deportment calculated to do credit to the national character, I cannot hesitate to believe that you will be desirous of having opportunities of being useful to him.

**George Washington: Diary, 8 October 1789**

Mr. Madison . . . thought with Colonel Hamilton, and as Mr. Jay also does, that Mr. Morris is a man of superior talents—but with the latter that his imagination sometimes runs ahead of his judgment—that his Manners before he is known—and where known are oftentimes disgusting—and from that, and immoral & loose expressions had created opinions of himself that were not favorable to him and which he did not merit.

**Conversation between Alexander Hamilton and George Beckwith, New York,  
25 September 1790**

Hamilton: Morris is a man of capacity, but apt at particular times to give himself up too much to the impressions of his own mind.

Beckwith: It strikes me as possible that Morris has been occasionally out of England, has he been in France?

Hamilton: Not that I know of, and if Morris has cultivated an intimacy with the Ministers of any other power in Europe, or has caused suspicion on that ground with respect to France, or elsewhere, he has had no authority, for so doing; it occurs to me, that he was very intimate With Monsr. de la Luzerne the Ambassador of France now in London, when he was Minister in this country, possibly from that circumstance he may have been more frequently there, than prudence ought to have dictated, and the knowledge of this circumstance may have produced a greater reserve on the part of Your administration; these ideas strike me, although I have no grounds to go upon.

**Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, New York, 30 September 1790**

I had lately a visit from a certain Gentleman [British agent George Beckwith] the sole object of which was to make some observations of a delicate nature, which, as they were doubtless intended for your ear, and (such as they are) ought to be known to you, it is of course my duty to communicate.

He began (in a manner somewhat embarrassed which betrayed rather more than he seemed to intend to discover) by telling me that in different companies where he had happened to be, in this City (a circumstance by the way very unlikely) he had heard it mentioned that that other Gentleman [Gouverneur Morris] was upon terms of very great intimacy with the representative of a certain Court [the Marquis de la Luzerne, French minister to Great Britain] at the once where he was employed and with the head of the party opposed to the Minister [Charles James Fox]; and he

proceeded to say, that if there were symptoms of backwardness or coolness in the Minister [William Pitt], it had occurred to him that they might possibly be occasioned by such an intimacy; that he had no intimation however of this being the case, and that the idea suggested by him was mere matter of conjecture; that he did not even know it as a fact that the intimacy subsisted. But if this should be the case (said he) you will readily imagine that it cannot be calculated to inspire confidence or facilitate free communication. It would not be surprising, if a very close connection with the representative of another power should beget doubts and reserves; or if a very familiar intercourse with the head of the opposition should occasion prejudice and distance. Man, after all, is but man, and though the Minister has a great mind, and is as little likely as most men to entertain illiberal distrusts or jealousies; yet there is no saying what might be the effect of such conduct upon him. It is hardly possible not to have some diffidence of those, who seem to be very closely united with our political or personal enemies or rivals. At any rate, such an intimacy, if it exists, can do no good, may do some harm.

This, as far as I recollect, was the substance of what he said. My answer was nearly as follows.

I have never heard a syllable Sir, about the matter you mention. It appears to me however very possible that an intimacy with both the persons you mention may exist: With the first, because the situation of the parties had naturally produced such an intimacy, while both were in this Country; and to have dropped and avoided it there, would not have been without difficulty, on the score of politeness, and would have worn an extraordinary and mysterious aspect: With the last, from the patronage of American affairs, which is understood to have been uniformly the part of that Gentleman, and in some degree, from a similarity of dispositions and characters; both brilliant men, men of wit and genius; both fond of the pleasures of society. It is to be hoped that appearances, which admit of so easy a solution will not prove an obstacle to any thing which mutual interest dictates—It is impossible that there can be any thing wrong; but that as trifles often mar great affairs he thought it best to impart to me his conjecture, that such use might be made of it as should be thought advisable.

### **Thomas Jefferson: The Anas, 1792**

The fact is, that Gouverneur Morris, a high flying monarchy-man, shutting his eyes & his faith to every fact against his wishes, & believing everything he desires to be true, has kept the President's [i.e., Washington's] mind constantly poisoned with his forebodings [respecting the French Revolution].

### **James Monroe to St. George Tucker, Philadelphia, 24 January 1792**

[In the U.S. Senate considering Morris' nomination as U.S. minister to France.] The right of rejecting an unfit man admitted of no doubt and such many of us considered Govr. Morris and accordingly opposed him on the following grounds. 1st his general character which precluded all possibility of confidence in his morals. 2dly his known attachment to monarchic govt. & contempt of the Republican, rendering him unfit to represent us & especially at the French court in the present happy turn of their affairs. 3d his general brutality of manners & indiscretion giving him a wonderful facility in making enemies & losing friends, & of course unfit for a negotiator & 4thly his being at present abroad as a vendor of publick securities & back lands. No person vindicated him against these charges except his namesake [i.e., Robert Morris], & yet he passed, the vote being 16 for & 11 against him upon the yeas & naes.

**George Washington to Gouverneur Morris, Philadelphia, 28 January 1792**

[On the opposition to Morris's appointment as minister plenipotentiary to France.] Whilst your abilities, knowledge in the affairs of this country and disposition to serve it were adduced and asserted on one hand, the levity and imprudence of your conversation, and in many instances of your conduct were as severely arraigned on the other. It was urged that your mode of expression was imperious, contemptuous and disgusting to those who might happen to differ from your opinion; and among a people who studied civility and politeness more than any other nation it must be displeasing.—That in France you were considered as a favorer of Aristocracy, and unfriendly to its revolution (I suppose they meant constitution) that under this impression you would not be an acceptable public character and of consequence would not be able, however willing to promote the interest of this country.—That in England you gave evident proofs of indiscretion by communicating the purport of your mission in the first instance to the minister of France, at that court, who availing himself in the moment of the occasion gave it the appearance of a movement through his court.—This and other circumstances of a similar nature, added to a closer intercourse with the opposition members, occasioned distrust and gave displeasure to the ministry, which was the cause it is said of that reserve which you experienced in negotiating the business which had been entrusted to you.—But not to go further into the detail of this matter, I will place the ideas of your political adversaries in the light which their arguments have brought them to my view, viz. that tho' your imagination is brilliant the promptitude with which it is displayed allows too little time for deliberation or correction, and is the primary cause of those sallies which too often offend, and of that indiscreet treatment of characters, which but too frequently results from the enmity produced by it, and which might be avoided if they were under the guidance of more caution and prudence, and that it is indispensably necessary more reserve and caution should be observed by our representatives abroad than they conceive you are possessed of.—In this statement you have the Pros and Cons. By reciting them I give you a proof of my friendship, if I give you none of my policy or judgment. I do it on the presumption that a mind conscious of its own rectitude bids defiance to and may despise the shafts that are not barbed with accusations against the honor or integrity of it, and because I have the fullest confidence (supposing the allegations to be true in whole or part) that you would find no difficulty, being apprised of them, and considering yourself as the Representative of this country to effect a change and thereby silence in the most unequivocal and satisfactory manner your political opponents.—Of my good opinion and of my friendship and regard you may be perfectly assured.

**George Mason to James Monroe, Gunston Hall, Va., 30 January 1792**

I see by a late Paper, that Gr. Morris is appointed our Minister, to the Court of France; so that, I suppose, the Opposition in the Senate has been outvoted.

I don't think a more injudicious Appointment cou'd have been made. In the present Situation of France, to appoint a Man of his known monarchical Principles has rather the Appearance of Insult, than of Compliment, or Congratulation. And altho' Mr. Morris's Political Creed may not be known generally in France, it must be well known to Mr. de la Fayette, the most influential Character in the Nation. What a Man seems to value himself upon, and glory in, can't long remain a Secret, in a public Character. "Coercion by G-d" is his favourite Maxim in government. And in his place, as a Member of the federal Convention in Philadelphia, I heard him express the following sentiment. "We must have a Monarch sooner or later" (tho' I think his word was a *Despot*) "and the sooner we take him, while we are able to make a Bargain with him, the better."

**William Short to Thomas Jefferson, Paris, 29 February 1792**

I will not say any thing to you of the amazement which this nomination has occasioned here to the public and particularly to the friends of the revolution of all classes, as the manner in which I am affected by it renders it improper. My friends condole with me as far as it regards me personally. The preference given to Mr. Morris strikes them as well as others differently perhaps from what it should, but it leaves with all an impression with respect to me too humiliating and too painful not to render my existence a burden to me. In their eyes it is a kind of dishonor which I am unable to support the idea of. They judge of the subject not according to the ideas entertained in America of Mr. Morris's talents and worth in every respect (which however should be their guide) but according to the opinions they have formed of what they have seen here. They have seen me for two years past charged with the confidence of my country. They have known my zeal and see that my conduct was such as to prevent my being disagreeable to any of the parties prevailing here. They have seen Mr. Morris during that time busied in his own concerns, contriving all the ways of making money by his industry, by land jobbing and by plans of finance for liquidating the American debt, which have fallen through and they have seen him constantly attending on the ministers, and so busy with them as to have acquired the reputation (though I do not pretend to say deservedly, having always defended him from the inculpation) of an *intrigant*. They have seen him the constant supporter of what they consider a diabolical system of government, and what they suppose also must give much displeasure in America. They have seen him so constantly the enemy of the principles of the present revolution as to be constantly cited and to be considered as the servant of the opposite party. They have seen him forming a plan, without mission, for the King's acceptance of the constitution, which they considered as artfully designed for effecting a counter revolution &c. &c. They have considered him therefore as one of the last men that the American government would name here at present, and they now see me displaced to give way to him. . . . It is not for me to judge Mr. Morris's merits, much less of mine, but when I know that Mr. Morris was in commerce—of course that the interests of his house could often be in competition with those of the public—and particularly that his opinions are that it is more advantageous for the U.S. that their articles should be under a monopoly and furnished by individual contractors, as in the case of tobacco, which you must have often heard him express, I never could have supposed that any consideration whatever, could have counterbalanced such a situation, and such opinions which must ever follow such a situation.

**Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, London, 6 April 1792**

*I now promise you* that Circumspection of Conduct which has hitherto I acknowledge formed no Part of my Character. And I make the *Promise* that my Sense of Integrity may enforce what my Sense of Propriety dictates.

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 21 June 1792**

I have lately seen a letter from —— to —— on receiving his appointment. He pleads guilty to the charge of indiscretion hitherto, and promises for the future the most measured circumspection, and in terms which mark him properly and gratefully impressed with the counsel which had been given him pretty strongly as you know.

**John Quincy Adams: Diary, 22 February 1796**

Conversation with Mr. Morris. Do not at all concur in his opinions. Think him more decidedly English the more I see of him.

**George Washington's Comments of James Monroe's Pamphlet *A View of the Conduct of the Executive of the United States*, c. March 1798**

Monroe's Pamphlet: Mr. Morris was nominated minister plenipotentiary to the French republic; which nomination I opposed, because I was persuaded from Mr. Morris's known political character and principles, that his appointment, and especially at a period when the French nation was in a course of revolution, from an arbitrary to a free government, would tend to discountenance the republican cause there and at home, and otherwise weaken, and greatly to our prejudice, the connection subsisting between the two countries.

Washington's Comment: Mr. Morris was known to be a man of first rate abilities; and his integrity & honor had never been impeached. Besides, Mr. Morris was sent whilst the Kingly Government was in existence the end of '91 or beginning of '92.

**Alexander Hamilton to Rufus King, New York, 2 October 1798**

Why does not Gouverneur Morris come home? His talents are wanted. Men like him do not superabound.

**Robert Troup to Rufus King, New York, 19 April 1799**

Mr. Gouverneur Morris is at Morrisania. . . . He is in excellent health and is very happy to see his friends, to whom he is all hospitality. His wines are of superior quality and given with great liberality. His attachments to his own country and government have increased by what he has seen in Europe. . . . He seems determined to remain a farmer, and not again to embark in public life.

**Manasseh Cutler: Journal, 8 January 1802**

Mr. Gouverneur Morris delivered in the Senate a truly Ciceronian phillipic on the repeal of the Judiciary [Act of 1801].

**Thomas Boylston Adams to William Cranch, Philadelphia, 30 January 1802**

I have been charmed with the energetic language, the manly eloquence & the dignified style of Gouverneur Morris. I have seldom seen a more finished specimen of parliamentary elocution.

**Manasseh Cutler to Joseph Torrey, Washington, 1 February 1802**

You will find there has been much able speaking on both sides [of] the question [in Congress]. Mr. G. Morris has shown with distinguished luster. His eloquence has never been surpassed, it is said, in either House of Congress.

**Abigail Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Quincy, Mass, 7 February 1802**

I yesterday read Iris's speech in reply to Mr Mason and others. I do not recollect ever to have read a more masterly composl, or a finer peice of oratory.

**Gouverneur Morris to John Dickinson, 13 April 1803**

In adopting a republican form of government, I not only took it as a man does his wife, for better, for worse, but, what few men do with their wives, I took it knowing all its bad qualities.

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

A character eccentric from youth to declining age; a man of pleasure, pride, and extravagance, fond of the trappings of monarchy, and implicated by a considerable portion of the citizens of America, as deficient in principle, was not a suitable person for a resident minister in France at so important a crisis. . . . These circumstances required a man of character, rather than a dexterous agent of political mischief, whose abilities and address were well adapted either for private or court intrigue.

**Gouverneur Morris to Jared Sparks, c. December 1809**

I have no notes or memorandums of what passed during the war. I led then the most laborious life, which can be imagined. This you will readily suppose to have been the case, when I was engaged with my departed friend, Robert Morris, in the office of finance. But what you will not so readily suppose is, that I was still more harassed while a member of Congress. Not to mention the attendance from eleven to four in the House, which was common to all, and the appointment to special committees, of which I had a full share, I was at the same time chairman, and of course did the business, of three standing committees, viz. on the commissary's, quartermaster's, and medical departments. You must not imagine, that the members of these committees took any charge or burden of the affairs. Necessity, preserving the democratical forms, assumed the monarchical substance of business. The chairman received and answered all letters and other applications, took every step which he deemed essential, prepared reports, gave orders, and the like, and merely took the members of a committee into a chamber, and for the form's sake made the needful communications, and received their approbation, which was given of course. I was moreover obliged to labor occasionally in my profession, as my wages were insufficient for my support. I would not trouble you with this abstract of my situation, if it did not appear necessary to show you why I kept no notes of my services, and why I am perhaps the most ignorant man alive of what concerns them.

**David Jones to James Madison, Eastown Chester County, Pa., 17 September 1812**

The News Papers will inform you that great Exertions are making in this State for Dewitt Clinton as president. I shall oppose this with all the Energy & influence I can command, & so will Duane, for he told me so this Day. Some of my Reasons are, that governeur Morris is at the head of the Business. I have watched him for more than 30 years, & in all that Time I never knew him to do one good act. With me this is reason enough to oppose Dewitt Clinton. Morris is in my opinion one of the most unprincipled men on Earth, & a vile Intriguer.

**Gouverneur Morris to Timothy Pickering, 1 November 1814**

Propositions to counterbalance the issue of paper money, and the consequent violations of contracts, must have met with all the opposition I could make. But, my dear sir, what can a history of the Constitution avail towards interpreting its provisions? This must be done by comparing the plain import of the words with the general tenor and object of the instrument. That instrument was written by the fingers which write this letter. Having rejected redundant and equivocal terms, I believed it to be as clear as our language would permit; excepting, nevertheless, a part of what relates to the judiciary. On that subject, conflicting opinions had been maintained with so much professional astuteness that it became necessary to select phrases which, expressing my own notions, would not alarm others nor shock their self-love; and, to the best of my recollection, this was the only part which passed without cavil.

**Thomas Jefferson to DeWitt Clinton, 24 November 1816**

The papers recently announce to us the death of my old acquaintance Gouverneur Morris. Genius has lost in him one of its distinguished subjects. It is a consolation to understand that he leaves his family in affluent circumstances.

**James Madison to Jared Sparks, Montpelier, Va., 8 April 1831**

[Sparks had asked Madison whether it was true that Gouverneur had written the final form of the Constitution in the Constitutional Convention of 1787.] The *finish* given to the style and arrangement of the Constitution fairly belongs to the pen of Mr. Morris; the task having, probably, been handed over to him by the chairman of the Committee [of Style, i.e., William Samuel Johnson], himself a highly respectable member, and with the ready concurrence of the others. A better choice could not have been made, as the performance of the task proved. It is true, that the state of the materials, consisting of a reported draft in detail, and subsequent resolutions accurately penned, and falling easily into their proper places, was a good preparation for the symmetry and phraseology of the instrument, but there was sufficient room for the talents and taste stamped by the author on the face of it. The alterations made by the Committee are not recollected. They were not such, as to impair the merit of the composition. Those, verbal and others made in the Convention, may be gathered from the Journal, and will be found also to leave that merit altogether unimpaired. . . .

It is but due to Mr. Morris to remark that, to the brilliancy of his genius, he added what is too rare, a candid surrender of his opinion when the lights of discussion satisfied him that they had been too hastily formed, and a readiness to aid in making the best of measures in which he had been overruled.

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

The appearance of Mr. Morris was very commanding. His noble head, his majestic mien, the dignity of his deportment were all impressive.

## Lewis Morris, Jr.

**Nathanael Greene to Otho H. Williams, Headquarters near Bacon's Bridge, S.C.,  
6 June 1782**

Morris as careless [as ever].

## Mary Morris

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

Mrs. Robert Morris, called antonomastically Queen Morris, for her vain, haughty, and somewhat affected character; an obscure birth and no foundation of formal education give a shadow of quite unfortunate position to this refined personage.

**Robert Morris to Mary Morris, New York, 6 September 1789**

I have this moment left my bed, but I did not leave there my thoughts of you. It is now a little after 5 o'clock on Sunday Morning and I can but barely see to Scribble, therefore you have proof positive that my first devotions are paid to that Goddess whom I most adore on this earth & who is most justly entitled to them. I hope it will not be long before I may have the happiness to demonstrate in Person the fervency of them.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 21 February 1798**

[After Robert Morris's incarceration in debtors' prison.] If ever said Mrs. Law,\* I had felt a disposition to extravagance, I should have been cured by a visit to Mrs. Morris. Two years ago, Mrs. Morris was a remarkable well looking woman. Maria, my companion gay and blith as a bird, blooming as a rose in June. I went to visit Mrs. Morris, & met her without knowing her, so altered that I was shockd. Maria pale was dejected & Spiritless. Such is the change.

\*Elizabeth Parke Custis Law, granddaughter of Martha Washington.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 11 December 1799**

I sometimes walk for exercise and make some visits in that way. I yesterday made one in this way to Mrs. Morris, which to both of us was painful. I had not seen her since the very great reverse of her circumstances. She received me with all that dignity of manners for which she more than any Lady I ever saw, is distinguished. I called rather at an improper hour (having been detained from going sooner by visitors). She was in a small neat Room and at dinner with her daughter & youngest son, who is with a merchant, and on whose account she said, she always dined at o'clock, but instead of refusing herself, she rose and met me at the door. Her feelings were evidently strongly excited. She endeavoured to smile away the Melancholy which was evident upon her whole countenance, and entered into conversation. When I left her, I requested her to come and take Tea with me. I took her by the Hand. She said she did not visit, but she would not refuse

herself the pleasure of coming some day when I was alone. She then turned from me, and the tears burst forth. I most sincerely felt for her.

## Richard Morris

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

I am told you have made Richard Morris, Chief-Justice [of New York]; this is well. I had my apprehensions about this matter.

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

Mr. Morris the chief Justice is a well meaning man.

## Robert Morris

### **Mathew Carey: Memoirs**

This celebrated man lived too long for his honour.

### **Benjamin Rush: Sketches**

A cheerful amiable man and a most disinterested patriot. He had three sons at one time in the army. He suffered the loss of many thousand pounds by the depredations of the British army upon his property near New York without repining. Every attachment of his heart yielded to his love of his country.

### **John Adams to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 27 April 1776**

You ask me what you are to think of Robt. Morris? I will tell you what I think of him. I think he has a masterly Understanding, an open Temper and an honest Heart: and if he does not always vote for What you and I should think proper, it is because he thinks that a large Body of People remains, who are not yet of his Mind. He has vast designs in the mercantile Way. And no doubt pursues mercantile Ends, which are always gain; but he is an excellent Member of our Body [i.e., Congress].

### **Robert Morris to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 27 October 1776**

I am not one of those Testy Politicians that run resty when my own plans are not adopted, for I think it the duty of a good Citizen to follow when he cannot lead, & happy would it be for America if all her Inhabitants would adopt this Maxim, and make it an invariable Rule during this great Contest for the Minority on every question to Submit to & cooperate with the Majority; but alas this cannot be. It is not to be expected from Human Nature. We must take Men as we find them, and do the best we can.

Founders on the Founders

**Robert Morris to John Hancock, Philadelphia, 21 February 1777**

I have really had my hands, Head & Heart full business since I saw you but thank God my Spirits never failed.

**Robert Morris to George Washington, Philadelphia, 27 February 1777**

I do not like to be too sanguine & yet it is very necessary in a Contest like this we are engaged in to view the best side of the picture frequently, remember good Sir, that few men ever Keep their feelings to themselves, & that it is necessary for example sake, that all leaders should feel & think old in order to inspire those that look up to them. Heaven (no doubt for the Noblest purposes) has blessed you with a Firmness of Mind, Steadiness of Countenance and patience in Sufferings that give You infinite advantages over other Men. This being the case You are not to depend on other People's exertions being equal to your own. One Mind feels & thrives on misfortunes by finding resources to get the better of them, another sinks under their weight, thinking it impossible to resist and as the latter description probably includes the Majority of Mankind we must be cautious of alarming them. Under this Idea I have been backward about removing the public Stores, well knowing that a panic is sooner Caused than retrieved, and I confess myself much hurt At finding you Concerned. Your admonitions on that score were not attended to; during our greatest alarm here and when our prospects were at the Worst. When my inward feelings were most wrung, I put a good face on things and was then Convinced it was of infinite us. I hate deception and cannot wish any thing like it should ever escape You, but I really think if the bright side of our affairs were sometimes to be painted by your pen or Sanctified by your Name it would draw forth the exertions of Some good Men sooner than distress does from others.

**John Jay to Gouverneur Morris, White Plains, N.Y., 29 August 1778**

Few men have more of my esteem.

**Robert Morris to James Duane, Philadelphia, 8 September 1778**

Ambition had no share in bringing me forward into Public life nor has it any Charms to keep me there. The time I have spent in it has been the severest Tax of my life and really I think those who have had so much, should now be relieved & let some fresh hands take the Helm. These notions prompt me to get out of Congress at the next appointment of Delegates, but my Namesake [i.e., Gouverneur Morris] swears I shall not depart.

**William Bingham to John Jay, Philadelphia, 6 June 1780**

A reforming Spirit seems to have gone forth, & the first object it will be exercised on is our Finances—a Superintendant of them is created, & the Choice has fallen upon a Gentleman whose Knowledge & Integrity, are unquestionable—If he is but properly supported by Congress, he cannot but meet with infallible Success, in bringing order & Arrangement into the Affairs of this Department.

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

I am told you have made Richard Morris, Chief-Justice [of New York]; this is well. I had my apprehensions about this matter.

**John Swanick to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, c. 20 February 1781**

I declare to you sir most solemnly—Pardon the Expression—that I do not believe there is in America any Man fit for this office of Financier but you. And if I prove this assertion, the Result must be, that either you will accept and discharge this high office with your Usual Zeal, or else that you will by Refusing, perhaps Contribute Indirectly to the Ruin of yourself and this Country. For this is my Opinion: That the Fate of this Country is so nearly tied to yours that as she Rises or Falls so is your Fate determined; and that unless her Finances be regularly Ordered by an Able and diligent officer, she must forsake her Trophies and under an Ignoble Shade await the first bold Invader who shall seize her.

In the Character of a General director of the Finances of a Country I think these things are wanting. *Fortune* that he be not subservient to Temptation of wealth or the offers of a job. *Abilities* that he do not Injury to the Country by Neglect or Ignorance. *Credit* so Whigs and even disaffected People may Repose Confidence in what he shall say as coming from a Man of tried Honour who Scorned ever to take advantages. By this Means the Miller at Brandywine and thousands others would do for him what not even Gold Could tempt them to do for others. *Intelligence of and in the Country* so that he may know how to take his Measures and how to Conciliate and if need be enforce them, for if he be known to the Principal Characters in the Country and respected by all he will be able to gain knowledge from even such as would not be fond of Imparting it to others and Men in office will execute his pleasure Readily whom from early Life they have Esteemed and are Used to repose Confidence in. *A Man of Weight Abroad*, and to be this he must be known there by very extensive dealings Conducted with Probity and Fame. The two principal Financiers of Europe Mr. Neckar and Lord North are Certainly Men of Surprising Genius. We have to hope that the former would be agreeably surprised to hear that the affairs of the Treasury of the Allies were no longer in their Wretched needy State, that they were no longer a draw back on him and doubtless his Esteem for America would be greatly enhanced by the Reflection that their Resources were in the hands of a Man whose Name must ensure Economy and Integrity those two Corner Stones of Publick Fortune; and as to the latter, with what Ingenuity will he tell Parliament that the Affairs of America are deserted to amass Private Fortunes, when he can be told that a Merchant of great Eminence forsaking this Narrow System consents to live or die with his Country? A Man a Financier ought to be Accustomed to Rank and Honours not a Man indebted for them to this single appointment, for then he will not be Lording it in his new Jurisdiction, but observing that happy Medium between the State of Office and the Manner of a Gentleman which will secure him Love and Respect. He ought to be a Man of true *Industry and Application* and where shall that be sought more properly than in the Life of a Man who from early Youth accustomed to business has made it at once his Pleasure and his Study. And now sir, where is the Man Uniting these Qualities? I will not answer. This Country knows him and has declared him in her Choice.

**Joseph Jones to George Washington, Philadelphia, 21 February 1781**

Yesterday Mr. Morris witht. a vote agt. him (tho' S A and his Colleague Genl. W. declined to ballot)\* was chosen Financier. I cannot say he will accept, but have some hopes he will. Our Finances want a Necker to arrange and reform them. Morris is I believe the best qualified of any our Country affords for the arduous undertaking.

\*Samuel Adams and Artemas Ward.

**Alexander Hamilton to Robert Morris, De Peyster's Point, N.Y., 30 April 1781**

I hope Sir you will not consider it as a compliment when I assure you that I heard with the greatest satisfaction of your nomination to the department of finance. In a letter of mine last summer to Mr. Duane, urging among other things the plan of an executive ministry, I mentioned you as the person, who ought to fill that department. I know of no other in America who unites so many advantages, and of course, every impediment to your acceptance is to me a subject of chagrin. I flatter myself Congress will not preclude the public from your services by an obstinate refusal of reasonable conditions; and as one deeply interested in the event I am happy in believing you will not easily be discouraged from undertaking an office, by which you may render America and the world no less a service than the establishment of American independence! Tis by introducing order into our finances—by restoring public credit—not by gaining battles, that we are finally to gain our object. Tis by putting ourselves in a condition to continue the war not by temporary, violent and unnatural efforts to bring it to a decisive issue, that we shall in reality bring it to a speedy and successful one. In the frankness of truth I believe, Sir, you are the Man best capable of performing this great work.

**Robert Morris to John Jay, Philadelphia, 5 June 1781**

Our friend Gouverneur has acquainted you with my appointment to the superintendent of finance; the motives of my acceptance are purely patriotic, and I would this moment give much of my property to be excused; but pressed by my friends, acquaintances, fellow-citizens, and almost by all Americans, I could not resist. I will therefore most assiduously try to be useful, and if in this I do but succeed, my recompense will be ample. Gouverneur and others have promised me the assistance of their abilities. congress promise support; if the Legislatures and individuals will do the same, we will soon change the face of our affairs, and show our enemies that their hopes of our ruin, through the channel of finance, is as vain as their hope of conquest.

**James Madison to Philip Mazzei, Philadelphia, 7 July 1781**

These advantages [from America's allies] as they have been & are likely to be improved by the skill of Mr. Robert Morris whom we have Constituted Minister of our Finances afford a more flattering prospect in this department of our affairs than has existed at any period of the War.

**Gouverneur Morris to Robert Morris, Philadelphia, 7 July 1781**

Your Industry, your Abilities, and above all your Integrity will extricate America from her Distresses; and consequently, Malice will blacken and Envy traduce you. I will freely share in this bitter Portion of Eminence.

If, contrary to the common Course of human Affairs, you meet with the just tribute of Applause; you will have this additional Title to it, that your Conduct has been actuated by a Love of your Country, and not by the Thirst of popular Acclamation.

**Francisco Rendón to Don José de Gálvez, Philadelphia, 11 July 1781**

In addition to being an individual full of spirit, skill, and experience in every kind of business, he has the admirable characteristics of being very devoted to the cause of Independence, and therefore very beloved and respected by the public in general, and he is the possessor of the most outstanding fortune in the country, for his fortune is reckoned in the millions, and certainly he has at least three millions in pesos Fuertes.\*

\*Literally hard dollars or species.

**Benjamin Franklin to Robert Morris, Passy, France, 26 July 1781**

I have just received your very friendly Letter of the 6th of June past, announcing your Appointment to the Superintendence of our Finances. This gave me great Pleasure, as from your Intelligence, Integrity and Abilities, there is reason to hope every Advantage that the Publick can possibly receive from such an Office. You are wise in estimating beforehand, as the principal Advantage you can expect, the Consciousness of having done Service to your Country. For the Business you have undertaken is of so complex a Nature, and must engross so much of your Time, and Attention, as necessarily to hurt your private Interests; and the Publick often niggardly even of its Thanks, while you are sure of being censured by malevolent Criticks and Bug Writers, who will abuse you while you are serving them, and wound your Character in nameless Pamphlets, thereby resembling those little dirty stinking Insects, that attack us only in the dark, disturb our Repose, molesting and wounding us while our Sweat and Blood is contributing to their Subsistence.

**“The Continentalist” (Alexander Hamilton) No. 4, *New York Packet*, 30 August 1781**

Congress have wisely appointed a superintendent of their finances, a man of acknowledged abilities and integrity, as well as of great personal credit and pecuniary influence.

**Benjamin Rush to Horatio Gates, Philadelphia, 5 September 1781**

Mr. Morris has become a new star in our American hemisphere. Our safety consists in the *number* of our great men.

**John Jay to Benjamin Franklin, St. Ildefonso, Spain, 10 September 1781**

The sanguine expectations entertained by our country from the appointment of Mr. Morris, his known abilities, integrity, and industry, the useful reformation he has begun, and the judicious measures he is pursuing abroad, as well as at home, afford reason to hope that, under his direction, American credit will be re-established, and the evils which have long threatened us on that head avoided.

**Nathanael Greene to Gouverneur Morris, South Carolina, 21 November 1781**

I have the highest opinion of Mr. Morris the Minister of Finance and had I the least inclination to enter the department you propose [i.e., Secretary of War] a connection with would be a strong motive. My acquaintance with him is small. I venerate his character and the more for his engaging in so difficult a department under such unfavorable appearances. Was I the fiftieth part as independent as he is I should have fewer objections to what you propose as a failure could only affect my reputation and not my living not that I think my present employment more lucrative but less expensive and perhaps upon the whole less hazardous.

**Joseph Reed to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, c. December 1781**

If you retain any Resentment against Congress you will now give it up. The Humiliation is sufficient to disgust their greatest Enemies. For in fact they now [must?] register Mr. Morris Edicts which they do with an obsequiousness as any Parliament in the Dominion of the Grand Monarque. He has engrossed all the Affairs of the Continent at the Head of the Treasury & Admiralty. All Estimates of every kind in the Department & civil subject to his Controul & if not, a Penny of Money attainable but with much Difficulty & profound Submission. In the mean time he is largely concerned in Trade being Principal for capital Houses: Had the Paper Money in his Hands which he raises or falls occasionally so that it is computed his Profits by this alone last year amounted to £30, or 40,000. In short he bids far to show no Trinculos Government in the Play. You shall be King and I will be King over you.

**Samuel Osgood to John Lowell, Philadelphia, 2 February 1782**

I think Mr. Morris is very well calculated for his Office, perhaps no Man in the united States is better qualified, & it is my Opinion, that it is of the utmost Consequence that the States should give him every possible Assistance.

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Philadelphia, 4 June 1782**

My charity I own cannot invent an excuse for the prepense malice with which the character and service of this gentleman are murdered. I am persuaded that he accepted his office from motives which were honourable and patriotic. I have seen no proof of malfeasance. I have heard of many charges which were palpably erroneous. I have known others somewhat suspicious vanish on examination. Every member in Congress must be sensible of the benefit which has accrued to the public from his administration. No intelligent man out of Congress can be altogether insensible of it. The Court of France has testified its satisfaction at his appointment which I really believe lessened its repugnance to lend us money. These considerations will make me cautious in lending an ear to the suggestions even of the impartial; to those of known and vindictive enemies very incredulous. The same fidelity to the public interest which obliges those who are its appointed guardians, to pursue with every rigor a perfidious or dishonest servant of the public requires them to confront the imputations of malice against the good and faithful one. I have in the conduct of my colleague here [Theodorick Bland] a sure index of the sentiments and objects of one of my colleagues who is absent [Arthur Lee] relative to the department of finance.

**Samuel Cooper to John Adams, Boston, 22 July 1782**

It is acknowledged the States have a great Financier in Mr. Morris; He has made great Savings to the States by his new Arrangements, and to the Surprize of every one has amidst all our pecuniary Perplexities established a National Bank upon firm Credit.

**Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, August 1782**

The rapacity of a certain person after power & profit, the little caution or wisdom that governs appointments are the reasons for the accumulation of Offices in an unprincipled & suspected Individual. The distress of our Finances which he has the art of colouring high, & plentiful promises of relief from wonderful abilities, operate like a charm upon weak minds.

**John Jay to Gouverneur Morris, Paris, 13 October 1782**

I find you are industrious and, of consequence, useful; so much the better for yourself, for the public, and for our friend Morris, whom I consider as the pillar of American credit.

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

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

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

. . . Mr. Morris . . . is a very rich merchant, and consequently a man of every country, for commerce bears every where the same character. . . . It is scarcely to be credited, that amidst the disasters of America, Mr. Morris, the inhabitant of a town [Philadelphia] just emancipated from the hands of the English, should possess a fortune of eight millions (between 3 and 400,00 £ sterling). It is, however, in the most critical times that great fortunes are acquired. The fortunate return of several ships, the still more successful cruises of his privateers, have increased his riches beyond his expectations, if not beyond his wishes. . . .

Mr. Morris is a large man, very simple in his manners; but his mind is subtle and acute, his head perfectly well organized, and he is as well versed in public affairs as in his own. He was a member of Congress in 1776, and ought to be reckoned among those personages who have had the greatest influence in the revolution of America. He is the friend of Dr. Franklin, and the decided enemy of Mr. Read. His house is handsome, resembling perfectly the houses in London; he lives there without ostentation, but not without expence, for he spares nothing which can contribute to his happiness, and that of Mrs. Morris, to whom he is much attached. A zealous republican, and an Epicurean philosopher, he has always played a distinguished part at table and in business.

**Robert Morris to Congress, 24 January 1783**

I should be unworthy of the Confidence reposed in me by my fellow Citizens, If I did not explicitly declare that I will never be the Minister of Injustice.

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, Philadelphia, 11 March 1783**

The peremptory style & publication of Mr. M's letters have given offense to many without & to some within Congress. His enemies of both descriptions are industrious in displaying their impropriety. I wish they had less handle for the purpose.

**Stephen Higginson to John Lowell, Philadelphia, 11[?] March 1783**

Since I last wrote you We have had close work on the Letters of resignation from the R[obert Morri]s which the papers have announced to you in the most imprudent manner. Col. Dn moved for an acceptance & the imiadiate institution of a Board of Treasury . . . experience has clearly shewn that the great departments are managed by one man of Abilities vastly better than by Boards or Committees of the members. Our expences the last year was amazingly lessned by the late arrangements—if the appointment be judicious, a more rigid œconomy, greater decission, & a closer adherence to System will always be found in the former than can be expected in the latter Case. The members are frequently changing where the Business is managed by Courts hence a departure from good Systems frequently happen, besides when many are concerned, no one applies sufficiently to Business, & they do not feel that obligation to account nor that fear of reprehension a punishment, as an individual who is placed at the head & must respond for every thing that is done in his department. But though those advantages result from the late managements & though a man may have great merit in his official character, yet care should be taken that he does not become too necessary & acquire too great an influence—the Creature should not be suffered to rise above the Creator.

**Arthur Lee to James Warren, Philadelphia, 12 March 1783**

Barney is arrivd wi'h Dispatches. He left L'Orient the 17 Jany. He keeps strict silence & none of his Crew are allowd to come on shore. The Letters were all carried to Mr. Morris, from whom Congress have not yet receivd any intelligence. When his speculations are settled we shall be favord with the news. All these restraints upon public information & the engrossing all the Letters, are by his own order, Congress knowing nothing of it; & I verily believe for the sole purpose of speculation. I was persuaded when his friends propo'd the purchasing Barney's vessel & dispatching her under his direction, that it was fo' the same purpose. Thro' the whole war he has made his public trust subservient to his private Speculation, & has thereby become as rich as a Jew.

**Joseph Reed to Nathanael Greene, Philadelphia, 14 March 1783**

Mr. Morris has been for a long Time the Dominus Factotum, whose Dictates none dare oppose, & from whose Decisions lay no Appeal: he has in Fact exercised the Power really of the three great Departments, & Congress have only had to give their Fiat to his Mandates.

**Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Pettus's, Va., 15 March 1783**

There is a report, that Mr. Morris has actually resigned his superintendency: and the speculations are various on the subject, Some impute the step to weariness and fatigue; others to an excess of private business; while others, whose disposition is not cordial towards him, ascribe it to a more disagreeable motive. For my part, I conjecture, that he must have been led to this measure by disgust, & want of due support. But even my respect for him will not suffer me to acquit him for resigning at this hour, when fresh vigor may be added to the arms of the enemy, by an assurance, that he abandoned the office through despair of our finances; and the affections of France herself, or rather her inclination to succor us with seasonable loans, may be diminished, from the apprehension of her aid, being misapplied, if thrown into other hands than his.

**Edmund Randolph to James Madison, Richmond, Va., 22 March 1783**

Lucius\* has expressed the destructiveness of Mr. Morris's resignation in colors not very tender, nor yet very extravagant on the score of cruelty. At such a season to quit his office, even if it were steeped to the lips in poverty and difficulty! Personal embarrassments from personal engagements he might have avoided. He ought to have avoided an obedience to that impulse of petulance, which caused him to proclaim the bankruptcy of America.

\*See "Lucius," Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, March 15, 1783.

**Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, Philadelphia, 8 April 1783**

As to Mr. Morris, I will give Your Excellency a true explanation of his conduct. He had been for some time pressing Congress to endeavor to obtain funds, and had found a great backwardness in the business. He found the taxes unproductive in the different states—he found the loans in Europe making a very slow progress—he found himself pressed on all hands for supplies; he found himself in short reduced to this alternative either of making engagements which he could not fulfill or declaring his resignation in case funds were not established by a given time. Had he followed the first course the bubble must soon have burst—he must have sacrificed his credit & his character, and public credit already in a ruinous condition would have lost its last support. He wisely judged it better to resign; this might increase the embarrassments of the moment, but the necessity of the case it was to be hoped would produce the proper measures; and he might then resume the direction of the machine with advantage and success. He also had some hope that his resignation would prove a stimulus to Congress.

He was however ill-advised in the publication of his letters of resignation. This was an imprudent step and has given a handle to his personal enemies, who by playing upon the passions of others have drawn some well meaning men into the cry against him. But Mr. Morris certainly deserves a great deal from his country. I believe no man in this country but himself could have kept the money-machine a going during the period he has been in office. From every thing that appears his administration has been upright as well as able.

**Stephen Higginson to Unknown, Philadelphia, May 1783**

I have mentioned to You the large Peace Establishment, the formation of a Navy, and other favorite projects of the *Financier* and his Followers and Adherents. But these Propositions ought to be rejected by Congress, and I think they will, tho' they will be back'd by that Influence which

I have already described as being far too great. A thorough Understanding betwixt *Morris, Livingston*, the French Minister, the Spanish Agent, and some of the wealthier Citizens of this place, forms a Phalanx that attacks with great force, and when their whole Efforts are brought to a point, and their numerous Dependents are brought forth to action, they are almost irresistible. It is their practice to *hunt* down every man that can't be brought over to their Views, and so many Engines are set at work to depress every individual Opposer, that a man must have more than a common Share of good fortune to escape them, so that an Independent Spirit here is in a constant State of Warfare. I find it difficult to be well with these people, and at the same time act honestly; but as I am not easily discomposed I am determined they shall finally respect me in spite of themselves.

**Stephen Higginson to Samuel Adams, Philadelphia, 20 May 1783**

It is the avowed intention of some to create a Congressional influence by the disposal of places of honor & profit, but the effect of this plan if adopted will be a very great increase of particular individual influence & not Congressional. Congress may appear to appoint but it will be, of such persons only as may be nominated by others. Some late instances will show you what extensive influence some Gentlemen have—& many I dare say wonder that after what has passed Mr. Morris should remain in Office. It is however not an easy matter to set him aside. His Friends in Congress are many & powerful. His continuance in Office is by others deemed absolutely necessary at present. It is supposed, & perhaps justly, that if any other person was to be appointed to his Office, or if the business was attempted by a Board, he would be able to so to obstruct & oppose their measures that no success could be expected. I confess that I am much of that opinion myself, I should wish however to run the risk, persuaded that the difficulty will not lessen but increase. He will always have it in his power to embarrass if displaced & the disposition is not to be doubted. Disappointed Views in ambitious minds will certainly produce resentment.

**John Jay to Catherine W. Livingston, Passy, France, 20 July 1783**

Mr. Morris it seems has postponed his Resignation, and I rejoice at it—That Resolution is fortunate for the public, and in my opinion conducive to his Reputation—he has his Enemies it is true, and so all men so circumstanced ever have had and ever will have—

**John Jay to Robert Morris, Passy, France, 20 July 1783**

Your intended resignation alarmed me, and would have been followed with ill consequences to our affairs. I rejoice that you continue in office, and by no means regret that it will be less in your power than inclination to retire soon. I am well aware of the difficulties you will continue to experience. Every man so circumstanced must expect them. Your office is neither an easy nor a pleasant one to execute, but it is elevated and important, and therefore envy, with her inseparable companion injustice, will not cease to plague you. Remember, however, that triumphs do not precede victory, and that victory is seldom found in the smooth paths of peace and tranquility. Your enemies would be happy to drive you to resign, and in my opinion both your interest and that of your country oppose your gratifying them. You have health, fortune, talents, and fortitude, and you have children too. Each of these circumstances recommends perseverance.

**Arthur Lee to St. George Tucker, Philadelphia, 21 July 1783**

Congress are yet at Princeton. The Citizens here are signing an Address intended to effect their return to this City. As Mr. Robert Morris's undue & wicked influence depends so much upon the residence here, it is presumed that he will use his utmost authority for that purpose. But his influence has manifestly diminished since the removal from Philadelphia, & the fixing of Congress in any other place will I hope restrain it within due bounds. It is much suspected that he & his friends have been the prime movers of all the disturbances in the Army, for the purpose of enforcing the 5 per Ct. in the shape most parental of a corrupt influence in Congress of which he with reason expected to be the prime Minister.

**Chevalier de la Luzerne to Comte de Vergennes, Philadelphia, 26 September 1783**

The Superintendent is not a man to become discouraged.

**Charles Thomson to Hannah Thomson, Princeton, N.J., 24 October 1783**

Mr. Morris had entered into his Office at a time when there was an end of all public credit, when our army was on the point of disbanding for want not of pay but of provisions, when those who were enemies to our cause were pluming themselves with hopes of our speedy ruin, the timid & wavering seemed ready to provide for their safety by going over to the enemy & the most stout hearted had the most serious apprehensions of distress & danger. Without a farthing in the public treasury, without any well grounded hopes of a speedy supply, Mr. M stepped into office & by his personal credit & wise measures retrieved & established credit, & fed & kept the army together, until our enemy was compelled to acknowledge our independence and agree to a cessation of hostilities.

**James Warren to John Adams, Milton, Mass., 27 October 1783**

Morris is a King, & more than a King. He has the Keys of the Treasury at his Command, Appropriates Money as he pleases, & every Body must look up to him for Justice & for Favour.—When [James] Wilson succeeds as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Fitzwilliams is at the Head of the Marine, & a Suitable Person succeeds Genl. [Benjamin] Lincoln, who has resign'd the War Department, when he shall say what Number of Troops shall be kept up, & have an Host of New Placemen to collect an Impost Mortgaged for Twenty-five Years, he will have us all in his Pocket;—It is this Alliance that makes me tremble,—the Foreign Influence might be destroy'd, or be discourag'd by the Expence, or ballanc'd by Ministers from other Courts, especially from Britain, but if this Oligarchical System is not Annihilated, I think our Liberties must be.—You will be able to Judge from all this what an Influence Money & Fortune give a Man in this Country, especially when you recollect the Character you have heard given of this Man, & his Abilities.

**James Warren to Elbridge Gerry, Milton, Mass., 16 November 1783**

The People see the Cloven foot and have no Confidence in those or rather in him who is Invested with such Indefinite powers.

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

The Financier & Secretary for foreign Affairs [Robert R. Livingston] were admirably well adapted to support, and not only so, but to become the principal Engines of Intrigue. The first mentioned Officer, is a Man of inflexible Perseverance. He Judges well in almost all Money Matters; and mercantile Transactions. He well knows what is necessary to support public Credit. But never thinks it necessary to secure the Confidence of the People, by making Measures palatable to them. A Man destitute of every Kind of theoretic Knowledge; but from extensive mercantile Negotiations, he is a good practical Merchant; more than this cannot be said with Justice. He Judges generally for himself; and acts with great Decision. He has many excellent Qualities for a Financier, which however do not comport so well with Republicanism, as Monarchy. Ambitious of becoming the first Man in the united States, he was not so delicate in the Choice of Means, and Men for his Purpose, as is indispensably necessary in a free Government. The good Ally of the united States could assist him in Money, & he was heartily dispos'd to make her very grateful Returns. The United States abound with Men absolutely devoted. With such a Financier and with such Materials, it is easy to conceive what an amazing Power he would soon acquire. He stood in need of foreign Support, & they stood in need of him; thus far the political Machinery was in Unison, and republicanism grated harsh Discords.

**Marquis de Lafayette to Robert Morris, Paris, 26 December 1783**

Your Opinion will have Great Weight in the Affair, because of the Confidence Europeans have in your Abilities, and the Respect which is paid here to your Character.

**David Howell to Jabez Bowen, Annapolis, Md., 31 May 1784**

I hope & trust that the time is near at hand when the sanguine pursuit of new-fangled and (to use the modern phrase) balloon Schemes of financiering will be abandoned.

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

By a resolution of Congress, the Superintendent of Finance is to quit his office on or before the 10th of Novr. Next, & his powers are vested in three Commissioners of the Treasury. A Majority of Congress could not have been brought into this measure so ungracious to the talents & merits of Mr. Morris, but that the States in general, (not so sensible of his private benevolence, or public services) seemd determind against his possessing such enormous powers.

**François Barbé de Marbois to Joseph-Matthais Gérard de Rayneval, Philadelphia, 24 August 1784**

From the superintendent we ought not to expect anything but that which he will not be able to prevent himself from doing. . . . I do not think Mr. Morris susceptible of affection or aversion for any power; but I have reason to believe that his avidity can make him capable of very reprehensible irregularities; and that, unless he is bound by the instructions of Congress, he will take very little pains to fulfill the obligations of the United States towards his Majesty.

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

Robert Morris, superintendent of finance, etc., seems to me, without doubt, the official of greatest capacity and performance in his line that the United States has had during the past strife, in any department! It is nevertheless said that the extraordinary assistance of Gouverneur Morris has contributed principally to this.

**David Jackson to George Bryan, New York, 13 July 1785**

The business of appointing commissioners to investigate the accounts of the late superintendent of finance, has been for sometime at a stand, because suitable characters seem difficult to be found. I confess myself at a loss on the subject—the influence of the great man is so extensive in Philadelphia, that few probably of the citizens there properly qualified could be found perfectly free from bias—Can you point out any persons either in Pennsylvania or elsewhere which you would suppose fully qualified?

**Abigail Adams to Cotton Tufts, London, 16 September 1785**

The Board of Commissioners [Treasury] consists of able Men and I hope they will bring order out of confusion, tho I fear they will find the publick money making voyages to China. I have been informed that the late Financier lived at an expense of 5000 sterling a year.

**Benjamin Rush to Richard Price, Philadelphia, 27 October 1786**

An important revolution took place on the 10th day of this instant in favor of the wisdom, virtue, and property of Pennsylvania. Mr. Robt. Morris, the late financier of the United States, is at the head of the party that will rule our state for the ensuing year. This gentleman's abilities, eloquence, and integrity place him upon a footing with the first legislators and patriots of ancient and modern times.

**Luigi Castiglioni: *Sketches of American Statesmen, 1787***

Mr. Morris is now the wealthiest merchant in America, but he shares his fortune with friends who are welcomed to his table and into his home without ceremony, but with complete cordiality. He devotes his mornings to business and evenings to joviality and conversation. He has given a good education to his children, two of whom are now traveling in Europe; and he will leave his wealth to whoever is capable of making good use of it. Many persons have not failed to speak badly of him, asserting that he made his fortune by illicit means. Among others, M. Chastellux, ill-informed, fell into this error. It is certain, however, that he is esteemed by all his correspondents as most exact, punctual, and clear in his dealings—qualities forming the active and honest businessman. He has of late gotten much involved in politics, and being very influential both because of his money and a natural, unstudied, eloquence, he was made head of the Republican party, or of the city inhabitants—a party that exerted a great influence in legislation in the year 1787; and he succeeded in obtaining from the State the legal foundation of the Bank of North America in Philadelphia.

He is a man of more than 50 years of age, with a rustic and pleasant-like face, fond of the table and the bottle, which he gladly shares with his friends.

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

Robert Morris is a merchant of great eminence and wealth; an able Financier, and a worthy Patriot. He has an understanding equal to any public object, and possesses an energy of mind that few Men can boast of. Although he is not learned, yet he is as great as those who are. I am told that when he speaks in the Assembly of Pennsylvania, that he bears down all before him. What could have been his reason for not Speaking in the Convention I know not,—but he never once spoke on any point. This Gentleman is about 50 years old.

**Comte de Moustier: Journal, 30 July 1788**

[On the attempt to move the U.S. capital back to Philadelphia] R. Morris who was burning with impatience again to attend all financial operations and to cause the revival of the pernicious stockjobbing which had ruined the states during the war. . . .

**Otto's Biographies, Fall 1788**

Superintendent of Finances during the war, the most powerful merchant in his state. A good head above all, and experienced, but not well-educated. He has somewhat cooled toward France since M. de Marbois has taken the side of Mr. Holker with so much eagerness and that one has disapproved his contract with the firm. It will be easy, however, to win him over with proper handling. This is a man of the greatest consequence whose friendship is not a matter of indifference to us.

**George Thatcher to Sarah Thatcher, New York, 1 October 1788**

Robert Morris & William Maclay were chosen federal Senators for that State. The former lives in the City of Philadelphia—and is the greatest Merchant, perhaps, in all America. He was for several years Financier-General of the United States, in which Office, he acquired immense Riches—whether honestly or dishonestly—is not for you or me to determine, nor is it of any consequence to us now. And it may be enough to regulate his future Conduct for him to know, which I believe he does, that the people in general think pretty independently upon this subject; and three to one don't hesitate to say, in speaking of his wealth, that *ill-gotten Riches are of short duration*.

**James Campbell to Tench Coxe, York, Pa., 7 October 1788**

. . . the city Senator is at once the genius of commerce, the patron of manufactures and an extensive landholder.

**Benjamin Rush to Jeremy Belknap, Philadelphia, 7 October 1788**

Our senators are both highly federal. Mr. Morris' character for abilities and integrity is well known.

**James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, 8 December 1788**

. . . the affairs of R. Morris . . . are still much deranged.

**Tench Coxe to James Madison, New York, 27 January 1789**

In this particular instance it is fortunate that our Senator is a man of extensive political information, and landed property and, though a practical Merchant, a friend to a pretty System of Trade. I do not think the most captious agriculturist in the Senate will find Mr. Morris tenacious of any principle that will be injurious to the landed interest.

**Benjamin Rush: Sketches**

A bold, sensible, and agreeable speaker. His perceptions were quick and his judgment sound upon all subjects. He was opposed to the *time* (not to the *act*) of the Declaration of Independence, but he yielded to no man in his exertions to support it, and a year after it took place he publicly acknowledged on the floor of Congress that he had been mistaken in his former opinion as to its time, and said that it would have been better for our country had it been declared sooner. He was candid and liberal in a debate so as always to be respected by his opponents, and sometimes to offend the members of the party with whom he generally voted. By his extensive commercial knowledge and connections he rendered great services to his country in the beginning, and by the able manner in which he discharged the duties of Financier he revived and established her credit in the close of the Revolution. In private life he was friendly, sincere, generous and charitable, but his peculiar manners deprived him of much of that popularity which usually follows great exploits of public and private virtue. He was proud and passionate, and hence he always had virulent enemies, as well as affectionate friends.

**William Constable to James Chalmers, 24 February 1789**

Mr. Morris has been here those 10 days past, & makes a rapid progress in the settlement of his public Accounts notwithstanding the Obstacles thrown in the way by party. . . . I have no doubt his Character will come forth refined from the Examination like Gold from the furnace, & am convinced that when Party subsides it will be acknowledged that had it not been for his Correspondence & Abilities, the War could not have been carried on; almost by his Means alone were the Importations of Arms & Ammunition &ca. made—

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

Here is Bobbe in all his glory nor do I see anybody disposed to eclipse it.

**Robert Morris to Mary Morris, Morrisiana, N.Y., 12 July 1789**

I am again My Dearest Friend on a Visit at Morrisania from whence I am now writing a Number of letters and shall just steal time enough to tell you that I have desired Mr. [Garrett] Cottringer to pay you One hundred Dollars out of a Sum which I have sent on to him, this is for Family Expences your prudence will make it go as far as possible Knowing as you do my embarrassments and the difficulties I now meet with in Collecting Money, when this shall be nearly gone apprise me of it, that I may Contrive you another Supply. . . . Dearest Molly I am never so happy as when you partake in the enjoyments of this Life, Mine are constantly interrupted, Separation from you is a deprivation of the first of them, and unless Congress removes from New York I must either quit or bring you there but of this more hereafter.

**Paine Wingate to Timothy Pickering, New York, 14 September 1789**

It is suspected that Mr. Morris has the ear of the President as much or more than any man. How it is or where the influence lies I can not say, nor do I care if that influence is not abused.

**“Civis,” Philadelphia *Federal Gazette*, 12 December 1789**

The numerous publications which have lately appeared against the Hon. Robert Morris, Esq. have given great pain to every friend to the honour and happiness of the state of Pennsylvania.

A writer in your paper has pledged himself to improve an assertion in a late publication against that great and good man, to be false. From the whole tenor of his public and private conduct, there can be no doubt but that every other charge against him which calls his patriotism or integrity in question, is equally without foundation.

It is impossible to review the history of this gentleman’s conduct as a patriot, as an officer of government, as a merchant or as a man, without feeling the keenest indignation against those assassins who have for seven years past been trying to ruin his reputation.

The decided part he took with his country in the beginning of the war—his long, faithful, and successful services to his country in the cabinet—the influence of the credit of his name, at one time, in arming, feeding and clothing the American army—the firmness of his mind, under every species of danger and difficulty which he underwent, as financier, and the immense sums he saved to the United States by his economical arrangements; all merit, from his countrymen, more than they are able to bestow. In the opinion of all candid men, he stands second to *General Washington* in his claims upon the esteem and gratitude of the United States.

In his private capacity, honour, integrity, generosity and friendship, have marked every part of his intercourse with his fellow citizens. Where is the tradesman or the mariner that can say he ever suffered wrong, or even an unkindness from him? On the contrary, how many valuable citizens of that description, as well as unfriended young merchants, have owed their prosperity to his benevolence? His goodness has not stopped here—the widows and the orphans of those who have been connected with him in business, have always found a steady and sympathizing friend. Some of them have been saved from ruin, and poverty, and even advanced to competence and independence, by means of his friendship and generosity.

I wish the citizens of Pennsylvania would consider how much their honour, and the credit of our young republic, are concerned in not suffering an ancient and faithful servant of the public to be run down by a few angry and disappointed men. It would be deemed highly disgraceful for the citizens of Philadelphia to sit still at their doors or windows and see one of their neighbors torn to pieces by a furious animal, without offering to rescue him; and yet we commit the same offence against duty and humanity, by being tame spectators of the attempts to destroy a fellow citizen’s character. Who will serve the public? Who will risk life and property to save a sinking country, after reading the volumes of scandal and falsehood that have been published with impunity against a man, to whom America owes so much of the blessings of her liberty and new government?

**Fisher Ames to Alexander Hamilton, Boston, 31 July 1791**

Mr. Morris, whom they [the eastern stockholders of the Bank of the United States] fear as a man of talents & intrigue, with his connections, will make a property of this man [Thomas Willing as possible president of the Bank of the United States] & govern him at their pleasure.

**John Adams to Abigail Adams, Philadelphia, 23 June 1795**

I went out to Lansdowne on Sunday about half a mile on this Side Judge Peter's where you once dined. The Place is very retired, but very beautiful a Splendid House, gravel Walks, Shrubberies and Clumps of Trees in the English Style—on the Bank of the Skuykill.

**Robert Morris to Alexander Hamilton, Philadelphia, 2 June 1797**

I am to be sure disagreeably situated, but my affairs are retrievable if I could get the Common aid of Common times and I will struggle hard. Keep All this to Yourself.

**John Marshall to Mary W. Marshall, Philadelphia, 14 July 1797**

I like no body so well as the family of Mr. Morris. There is among them throughout a warmth & cordiality which is extremely pleasing.

**Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz: *Travels through America*, January 1798**

The house of Robert Morris, recently sold, is a monument to the folly of this man who, in spite of all his genius for commerce, has finished by becoming bankrupt. He undertook it in a spirit of rivalry with Bingham. He took as his architect another fool, Major Enfant. He built for him a real confection which was to be all covered with white marble. The undertaking was abandoned in that state most suitable to show all its extravagances.

**Robert Morris to Alexander Hamilton, Hilles, near Philadelphia, 17 January 1798**

I am Sensible that I have lost the Confidence of the World as to my pecuniary ability, but I believe not as to my honor or integrity and I shall certainly deem myself unhappy if yours is diminished in any respect.

**Abigail Adams to Mary Cranch, Philadelphia, 21 February 1798**

Mr. Morris delivered himself to his bail and went to Jail last week.

**Gouverneur Morris to James Parish, 14 January 1803**

I would trust the matter to your decision if you could spend this summer with me as your old acquaintance Robert Morris did the last. He came to me lean, low-spirited, and as poor as a commission of bankruptcy can make a man whose effects will, it is said, not pay a shilling in the pound. Indeed, the assignees will not take the trouble of looking after them. I sent him home fat, sleek, in good spirits and possessed of the means of living comfortably the rest of his days.

**Louisa Catherine Adams to John Quincy Adams, Philadelphia, 30 July 1806**

A dreadful circumstance has just taken place in this town R. Morris has gone off after having forged Bills to the Amount of a hundred thousand Dollars his family are very much distressed.

**John Adams to F. A. Vanderkemp, Quincy, Mass., 16 February 1809**

Robert Morris (since you ask me my opinion of him) was a frank, generous, and manly mortal. He rose from nothing but a naked boy, by his industry, ingenuity, and fidelity, to great business and credit as a merchant. At the beginning of our revolution, his commerce was stagnated, and as he had over-traded, he was much embarrassed. He took advantage of the times, united with the wigs, came into Congress, and united his credit. supported by my loans in Holland, and resources of the United States. By this means he supported his credit for many years; but at last grew extravagant, as all conquerors and extraordinary characters do, and died as he had lived, as I believe, all his days, worth very little solid capital.

**John Adams to Benjamin Rush, Quincy, Mass., 14 November 1812**

Robert Morris, who [in 1789] was then thought to be infinitely rich, though I never believed him to be worth a groat if his debts had been paid.

## Jedidiah Morse

**John Adams to Jeremy Belknap, New York, 5 June 1789**

I had the last Week an Opportunity of commencing an Acquaintance with Mr. Morse himself, who appears to be an interesting Character and a Man of literary Merit.

## Samuel Finley Breese Morse

**Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 10 February 1816**

Mr Morse has been taking a likeness of your Father, at the request of a Gentleman in Philadelphia, a Mr de La Plain, who is collecting the likeness of all our great revolutionary Heroes. Mr Morfine young Man. their is Genius in his Eyes. He came here to take the portrait, and past near aI us. I hope he may be Successfull in introducing a taste for the fine Arts amongst us—but in the portrait he has taken of your Father, he has failed. it is a Stern unpleasing likeness. Age has Softned his features, and Shed a mild lusture over them, which Stuart has happily Seazd—I regret that Mr Morse is So bad a likeness as it was taken to be engraved. your Brother claims your Fathers portrait for you.

## Perez Morton

**“Publius Valerius” (John Quincy Adams): To the Citizens of Massachusetts, *The Repertory*, 30 October 1804**

Mr. Morton appears to be gifted with the endowment of the great McFingal—he sees what is not to be seen.

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

In the [Massachusetts] house for a speaker Perez Morton had 257. Timothy Bigelow (a Federalist) 204. Morton’s private character is not good. He is a lawyer—a sensible cunning man.

## Jonathan Moulton

**William Plumer to John Hale, Exeter, N.H., 18 September 1786**

A self-created Convention has twice met at Rochester in the County of Strafford in this State. Their views are similar to that of the Chester Convention, but they have more information. Jonathan Moulton, Esq. of Hampton, in this County, is their President. This man is one of our Brigadier Generals of the militia.

Apropos, of his biography. His parents were poor and lived in obscurity. Jonathan was bound an apprentice to a Cabinet maker. When he was almost 20 years of age he purchased the residue of his time of service of his master, and opened a huckster’s shop, and by his unwearied attention in buying and selling small articles he soon became an extensive dealer in English and West India goods. The property that he obtained from a valuable ship that was wrecked on Hampton beach gave him increased credit and business. There is too much reason to believe that he aided David Folsom, one of his Clerks, in forging and passing counterfeit bills of exchange. The instances of his fraud and deceit, injustice and oppression, are numerous. He has reduced many families from affluence to beggary. For 20 years he has been a constant suitor in the Courts of law. He has often attempted to corrupt judges, bribe jurors, suborn witnesses, and seduce the Counsel employed by his opponents. I am in possession of evidence of his conveying a right of land to a judge who was to decide the title to that and all the other land he claimed in that township. The fact was discovered and the judge never decided the cause. I know an instance of his making liberal promises to an influential jurymen. His influence in the Courts was extensive, and his success ruined many; but now he is unable to obtain justice. It is difficult to find a jury, but some of whom or their relations or connexions he has wronged. A few months since he lamented to me his condition. He said, “Such sere the prejudices against him that he could not obtain that common justice which is administered to the most obscure man.” So true it is that the success of the wicked accelerate their ruin.

He is the owner of immense tracts of uncultivated wilderness. He has expended much money in making settlements in new townships, and in opening and making and repairing roads. And in this point of view his labours have been useful to the Country. But many of those whom he hath

settled in his townships complain of his having ruined them. Those who are most intimate with him censure and condemn him the most.

He is a man of good natural abilities; his address is pleasing and his manners easy. He has uniformly and sedulously flattered the views and follies of mankind. He does business with great dispatch. He is hospitable at home and abroad, he is more, he is often generous, even to profuseness.

The hand of time has visibly impaired his talents and injured his person; he is now sixty.

Notwithstanding the immense tracts of land he now owns, the money due to him and the relief he has obtained by the Tender law, yet his taxes, debts and suits threaten him with imprisonment. This has made him the advocate for paper money.

## William Moultrie

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

Brave, and it is believed accommodating in his temper. Served the whole of the last War; and has been an Officer in the proceeding one, at least had been engaged in an Expedition against the Cherokees; having defeated them in one or two considerable actions. What the resources, or powers of his mind are; how active he may be; and whether temperate or not, are points I cannot speak to with decision because I have had little or no opportunities to form an opinion of him.

## Comte de Moustier

### **Henry Wynkoop to Reading Beatty, New York, 18 March 1789**

The French Ambassador, I find a most sensible, easy, good humored, intelligent man. On dining with him the other day, with company, at his house, he was clad in the manufactures of Hartford, with buttons of clam shells. An example this, which ought to disconcert every American macaroni, who struts in the fripperies of Europe.

## Peter Muhlenberg

### **Abigail Adams to John Adams, Richmond Hill, N.Y., 25 October 1789**

It is reported that Speaker Muhlenberg died last week from a burst blood vessel.

### **John Adams to John Adams Smith, Quincy, Mass., 1 February 1813**

As to your Father's [i.e., William Stephens Smith] offer of his services; I will give an anecdote of a similar offer to the administration preceding Mr Jefferson's. When our Quasi war with France commenced, I received a letter from General Peter Muhlenburg then and many years before a

representative in Congress from the State of Pennsylvania; offering his services in the Army then about to be raised and officered; and expressly stating that he would make no Conditions relative to rank. I was pleased with the frankness and candour of this overture and very desirous of embracing it: but I had a master in the Senate to consult and what was still worse, a blind popularity had imposed upon me, three other masters in Washington, Hamilton and Pinckney. Washington after dining with me one day spent some hours with me alone. I proposed to him General Muhlenburg for a Brigadier General in the new army. Washington said “Muhlenburg is a good officer,” and I doubt not but he would have readily consented to his appointment: but he had a master to consult, and that master was Hamilton. Muhlenburg was neglected addressed the Electors in Pennsylvania in the German language, and turned half the votes of that state, in the Election of 1800.

**Henry A. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of the Revolutionary Army* (Philadelphia, 1849), 332**

A stern republican, he was ever on the side of the people, and unhesitating and undeviating in his opposition to all aristocratic measures.

**Democratic Review, XVI, 70, quoted in Henry A. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of the Revolutionary Army* (Philadelphia, 1849), 332–33**

General Muhlenberg was one of those characters which in a revolution always find their level. He was by nature a soldier. The frolic incident of his youth indicated the turn of his mind. He entered the church, doubtless, with as sincere and honest purposes as any of her ministry, but the agony of his country called him from the altar with a voice that touched every chord of his soul. The time for fighting had come—the time to try men’s souls. His whole heart was with his country; rebellion against tyrants was obedience to God, and so feeling and so thinking, he went forth from the temple to the field. He was brave and generous to a fault, a proper brigadier to Greene, *who loved him*. Cool in danger, sound in judgment, indifferent to fame, zealous in duty: these were his distinguishing traits as a soldier. His virtues in private and political life were all cognate to these.

**Henry A. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of the Revolutionary Army* (Philadelphia, 1849), 333**

*Tombstone inscription:* Sacred to the Memory of General Peter Muhlenberg, Born Oct. 1st, 1746. Died Oct. 1st, 1807. He was Brave in the Field, Faithful in the Cabinet, Honorable in all His Transactions, a Sincere Friend, and an Honest Man.

## William Murray

**Harry Innes to John Adams, Frankfurt, Ky., 30 April 1800**

I have reason to believe that Mr. William Murray and Mr. William McDowell both Attornies at law will be recommended to you to fill the Office, should one be created by the passage of the Bill under consideration. It is upon the subject of this appointment, that I shall venture to obtrude

some observations under a certain confidence that they will remain within your own bosom & that you will make use of the information *only* as the exigencies of the case may require.

Mr. Murray is a sound Lawyer, he wants application, yet is capable of making a good Judge, if it was not his misfortune to be at times guilty of great *intemperance*, which would place him occasionally in a situation very much unbecoming a Judge. . . . With Mr. Murray I have lived for twelve years last part in habits of intimacy.

## William Vans Murray

### **Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams, Quincy, Mass., 15 March 1797**

I only have time to inform you that your old Friend William Vans Murray is appointed your successor. This give you pleasure, because he is a sensible Worthy Man, and a firm Friend to his Country.

### **Abigail Adams to Joshua Johnson, Quincy, Mass., 15 March 1797**

William Vans Murray of the state of Maryland, is appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the Batavian Republick.

This Gentleman I presume, is well known to you, having resided Some years in England and studied in the temple. He is esteemed a Gentleman of abilities, and has acquired much reputation since he became a Member of Congress. He is considered as a firm Friend to his Country and a very able Man.