

The Diary of Samuel Breck, 1823-1827

SAMUEL BRECK's Diary, which is owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, was introduced to the readers of this journal in our October 1978 issue, when we published a selection from its pages covering the years 1814-1822. In this second installment Samuel Breck is still residing at his attractive country-seat, Sweetbriar on the west bank of the Schuylkill, and it is there that he gives a dinner in honor of Lafayette, despite the death of the cook a few hours before this historic event.

N. B. W.

January 3, 1823 This morning I spent an hour with the directors of the Schuylkill Bank. . . . A pressure for money is at hand. . . . After leaving the Bank, I went to the permanent bridge office,¹ in order to meet the directors for the purpose of declaring a dividend. This on my motion was placed at $4\frac{1}{2}$ p cent. The tolls for the last year amounted to about 18,500 dollars. I called afterwards upon Mr. N. Biddle, who will on Monday next be elected President of the Bank of the United States. I have recd. promises for about 3,000 shares from Boston, and was desirous to confer with Mr. Biddle before the election.

November 9, 1823 Judge Peters . . . mentioned to me . . . a very interesting Revolutionary anecdote in relation to the privateer *Holker*.² He said that when he was a Commissioner of the board of War, in 1779, Genl. Washington wrote to him that he had no cartridges but what were wet, and that he was entirely without lead or balls, so that if the enemy should approach him he must retreat. When I recd. that letter, said the Judge, I was going to a grand Gala at the Spanish Ambassador's, who lived in Mr. Chew's house in South 3d Street, and had the gardens superbly lit with

¹ The "permanent bridge" was the Market Street Bridge completed in 1804 and destroyed by fire in 1875. It replaced a crude floating (impermanent) bridge.

² See William Bell Clark, "That Mischievous *Holker*: The Story of a Privateer," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXIX (1955), 27-62.

variegated lamps.³ My spirits were very little in harmony with all the gaiety I met at this party, and Robert Morris soon perceived it. "You are not yourself tonight, Peters, what's the matter with you?" It was sometime before I could tell him the cause of my depression, but at length I ventured to give him a hint of my fatal inability to supply an ounce of lead for the army, and declared to him candidly the desponding state of my mind at the wants of the army, and the necessity of the Genl's retreating for want of ammunition. "Why," said Mr. Morris, "let him retreat, and what then. But cheer up. I have in the *Holker*, Capt. [Matthew] Lawler just arrived, 90 tons of lead; one half of which is mine, and at your service; the residue you can get by applying to Blair McClenachan⁴ and Holker,⁵ both of whom are in the house with us." Commissioner Peters accepted the offer from Mr. Morris with many thanks, and applied to the owners of the other half for their consent. Mr. McClenachan had already trusted large amounts of clothing to the Continental Congress, and did not seem at all inclined to give them further credit. Mr. Peters informed Mr. Morris of this refusal—"tell them," said that high minded and excellent patriot, "that I will pay them for their share." This settled the business: the lead was delivered to Mr. Peters and 3 or 400 men set to work to manufacture it into cartridge bullets for Washington's army, to which it was instantly despatched.

It appears that the *Holker* privateer was at Martinique, preparing to return home, when Capt. Lawler had this lead offered to him for ballast. Uncertain whether the market would be overstocked by arrivals from Europe, he rejected it, but after some persuasion received it on board, and it fortunately arrived safe, and in most excellent time for supplying the urgent wants of the army.

June 25, 1825 My Journal offers a large hiatus, having been suspended since the 9th of November 1823. I regret this circumstance on account of the great & various occurrences that have

³ This house was the home of Gov. John Penn from 1766-1771, when Benjamin Chew acquired it. From 1778 to 1780 it was occupied by Juan de Miralles (1715-1780), the first Spanish diplomatic representative to the United States. It stood next to Samuel Powel's mansion on South Third Street.

⁴ The *Holker* was owned by Blair McClenachan, Irish-born Philadelphia merchant.

⁵ John Holker, French Consul to Philadelphia.

taken place of a personal nature during that interval. For I have lead a life of considerable activity, having spent two winters at Washington as a member of the U. S. House of Representatives, and mixed otherwise largely in Society. This has been to me a period of great interest on many accounts. It has brought me acquainted with many of the leading men of the nation, and with some distinguished foreigners. . . . A daily account of events as they turned up during that time would have been worth recording and I am sorry that I did not continue my Journal. . . .⁶

June 29, 1825 I went to Norristown this morning by water, in a barge & 4 oarsmen, borrowed of the commanding officer of the Navy Yard. I was in company with Mr. White Engineer of the Union Canal,⁷ and the following gentlemen, directors & Treasurer of that Company: G. Vaux, Wm. Lehman, Mr. [William] Boyd, Mr. [Charles] Graff, Mr. Read, Mr. F. [Francis] G. Smith, Mr. J. [John] C. Stocker and Mr. Roberts.⁸ We ascended thro' the locks about 60 feet in 17 miles and had a pleasant cool day. One mile this side of Flat Rock we passed thro' a new & thriving manufacturing village, consisting of eighty or ninety buildings, and called Manayunk from the old Indian name of the river Schuylkill. There are 9 mills, principally cotton, already built here, some of them very large—6 or 7 years ago there was not a habitation erected.

At Norristown the same spirit of improvement is going on—manufacturing mills erecting, and preparations for more.

The object of this visit was to examine some property in the shape of an unfinished canal lying along the left bank of the river, and executed by the old Delaware & Schuylkill Company. The toil & expense bestowed on about 3 or 4 miles of excavation, principally thro' solid marble, must have been immense. The present company intend to dispose of their right & title in this work.

June 30, 1825 I returned home about noon this day, and parted from my friends at my landing, in front of my house.

⁶ Here Breck overlooks the fact that he did keep a record which he titled "Broken Journal of a Session in Congress when I was a member in the 18th Congress at Washington, from December 1823 to June 1824." It deals mainly with legislative and social matters, and, like Breck's other journals, is at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁷ Canvass White had been engineer of the eastern section of the Erie Canal.

⁸ Thomas P. Roberts was Treasurer of the Company.

July 18, 1825 General Lafayette saw company today in the Hall of Independence, where I called upon him. Just as I entered, he came forward and took me by the hand very cordially. "We were just talking about you. I wanted to know where I could visit your good mother. Is she in this neighbourhood?" On my answering in the affirmative, he said he had spent a delightful week under Mr. Lloyd's roof in Boston,⁹ where, continued he, we abused you very much for not coming to us at the grand Bunker Hill festival.¹⁰

July 21, 1825 Last evening Judge Peters called upon me, long after dark, coming from the dinner given to Mr. Rush, late minister to the British Court,¹¹ to request me to breakfast with him this day at his house (Belmont in my neighbourhood) in company with Genl. Lafayette. The heat was then intense and the glass had been for many days above 90 degrees; yet, to meet that great man, I arose early, and met at the Judge's beautiful seat the following company: General Lafayette; George Washington Lafayette, his son; Monsieur La Vasseur, his Secretary,¹² and Monsieur Le Compte de Lyon, who accompanies him as a friend; Chief Justice Tilghman; Mr. Nicholas Biddle, President of the Bank of the U. S.; Mr. Thomas Biddle; Mr. Roberts Vaux; Mr. R. Haynes; Mr. Warder;¹³ Mr. Richard Peters, Jr.; Mr. Joseph L. Lewis (chairman of the Committee of City Councils appointed to attend upon the General during his visit to Phila.); a French count, whose name I forgot, but who is the son of the Prime Minister of the King of Sardinia; & some other persons whose names I do not recollect.

We had a splendid *déjeuné à la fourchette* after which the General and his suite did me the honor to pay me a visit of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour.

I asked this illustrious man to dine with me, when disengaged.

⁹ Lafayette arrived in New York in August 1824 and made a tour of the United States culminating with his departure in September 1825. His first visit to Philadelphia was on Sept. 23-Oct. 6, 1824. On July 16, 1825, he returned and remained until July 25. Previously, while in Boston, he had been the guest of Breck's brother-in-law James Lloyd.

¹⁰ The Bunker Hill Anniversary took place June 17, 1825. Daniel Webster delivered the oration and Lafayette officiated at laying the cornerstone of the monument.

¹¹ Richard Rush (1780-1859), Philadelphia lawyer, diplomat, and statesman—Minister to Great Britain, 1817-1825—returned from England to become Secretary of the Treasury.

¹² Auguste Levasseur.

¹³ Possibly Jeremiah Warder, Jr. (1744-1842).

He said he could give me only Sunday, the day previous to his departure from Pennsylvania.

July 23, 1825 The glass at 94, higher than I have ever known it in my hall (a fine open space for every breeze that blows). I went to town to prepare for my greatly distinguished guest, who is to dine with me tomorrow.

July 25, 1825 General Lafayette did me the honor to dine with me, in company with Messrs. George W. Lafayette, his son, Mr. Levasseur, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Nicholas Biddle, Judge Peters, Mr. Wm. Meredith, Mr. Wm. M. Meredith,¹⁴ Mr. C. J. Ingersoll,¹⁵ Mr. Henry Wikoff, Mr. Joseph L. Lewis.

In order to give the party a good dinner, and to supply the *lamentable deficiency* of our common cooks, I had on Friday called on the celebrated French cook (Dupony)¹⁶ and begged him to furnish me with a dinner, and on a confectioner, requesting her to provide a dessert.

Having made these arrangements for a dinner of 20 covers, I supposed every thing would go on very well; what then was my disappointment at past eleven o'clock to learn that Dupony, the cook, had died that morning at 6 o'clock.

With the weather excessively hot, on a Sunday, and 20 people expected at dinner, this was an appalling piece of news; but it so happened that [Charles] Mercer the confectioner took some interest in the entertainment, and sent me out cooks who got thro' the business very well, and our dinner went off in good style.

The General, in taking leave of his old friend, Judge Peters, embraced him, and was much affected. He afterwards bid us all a tender adieu, and went away a little after sundown.

August 24, 1825 We returned today (Mrs. Breck, Lucy, myself and *Fortune*, a black servant) from a delightful tour through part of Pennsylvania. . . . We left Sweetbriar on Monday the first of August, and going about 30 miles slept at Downingtown. Here we fell in with my friend Wm. Lehman, who, like myself, was on his way to Harrisburg as a member of a general convention of the

¹⁴ William M. Meredith (1799-1873), son of William Meredith, subsequently Secretary of the Treasury and Attorney General of Pennsylvania during the Civil War.

¹⁵ Charles J. Ingersoll (1782-1862), lawyer, author, and congressman.

¹⁶ John Dupuy (possibly Dupony), "cook etc." of Chestnut St.

friends to internal improvements, which was to take place on the 4th. On the 2nd we arrived at Lancaster, and on the 3d at Harrisburg, where we put up at an excellent Inn, kept by Mr. Wilson.¹⁷ Here we met with a crowd of deputies, many of them my old associates in the Legislature.

On the 4th the convention opened in the Chamber of the House of Representatives, granted by special resolve before the adjournment of the assembly in March last. Mr. Lawrence¹⁸ was chosen President and the business was commenced by an able speech from John Sergeant,¹⁹ who reported resolutions that were subsequently adopted, altho' obstinately opposed by the counties of Lancaster, York, Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, Bedford and a few others, whose inhabitants, being provided with a good turnpike, made in part by the state, with an illiberality, not very creditable, raise their voices against the construction of a canal in the center of the state, which, by uniting the waters running east and west, may give to Pennsylvania a share of the transmontane trade.

December 10, 1825 I drew up the annual report of the Directors of the Union Canal Company to the stockholders, having been furnished with materials by the President of the company & Mr. Vaux.

January 5, 1826 I go tonight to Genl. Cadwalader's to meet what they call a mock Wistar party, the real one being held on Saturday evenings.

January 6, 1826 I met at Genl. Cadwalader's a large party of the most distinguished lawyers, physicians, merchants & strangers. The entertainment was excellent, the house finely furnished and very warm.

January 17, 1826 Weaver the coachmaker²⁰ finished for me today a coach, which I sent for to town, & which, with harness, he charges at six hundred & forty dollars. It is a well finished, strong handsome close coach. I gave him in part pay a chariotte that he

¹⁷ Mathew Wilson's hotel was at the corner of Market and Third Sts.

¹⁸ Joseph Lawrence of Washington County.

¹⁹ John Sergeant (1779-1852), lawyer, congressman, and unsuccessful candidate for Vice-President in 1832 with Clay. He was president of the Board of Canal Commissioners of Pennsylvania at this time.

²⁰ George Weaver, one of Philadelphia's best-known coachmakers.

built for me 4 or 5 years ago. I have likewise had built the past summer a beautiful light Dearborn carriage by Howell²¹ that cost with harness three hundred and twenty-five dollars. This is for warm weather and travelling, and can be used without the formality of a professed driver, because every man can drive himself, as in a Phaeton, altho' it carries four persons.

January 21, 1826 At the Union Canal office today, the Directors of that interesting work found themselves almost without money, having expended about seven hundred thousand dollars. Three hundred and fifty thousand more are wanted, and a loan of half that sum having been asked of the public on the 16th of this month, and having failed, we felt extremely anxious for the fate of the work, which, if stopt now, could not be resumed without a great increase of expense. In this dilemma some stockholders were called in to advise with the board, and while debating the matter with them a committee from the Pennsya. Insurance Company inform us that that institution would subscribe 60,000 dollars. This was welcome news and we breathed again.

January 23, 1826 Today I find at the Union Canal office 25,000 dollars additional taken by individuals, which, with a few thousand subscribed on the 16th and the loan of the disposable part of our lottery fund gives us about 145,000 dollars out of 175,000 asked for. The ballance will undoubtedly be obtained and the work probably finished this year.

January 25, 1826 On going to town today, I found the canal loan filled. This is joyfull news.

January 31, 1826 I went to town in the morning, and in the evening accompanied Mrs. Breck & my daughter to the city dancing assembly held in the beautiful rooms of the Masonic Hall in Chestnut Street.²² The company assembled about half past eight, consisting of too few ladies (42 only) and about 60 gentlemen. The band was good, and the supper superb. The party cost 500 dollars, which is a great deal too much, as much of the money is spent in gorgeous parade at the table. The Spanish dance performed re-

²¹ Amos Howell.

²² Masonic Hall on the north side of Chestnut St., west of Seventh, was built in 1811, burned in 1819, and was rebuilt in 1820.

markedly well by about 12 couples was graceful. The young gentlemen behaved with attention and decorum, and the evening, extending to 2 o'clock in the morning, passed very pleasantly.

February 1, 1826 At breakfast this morning, I met General Cortez,²³ who lodges at Miss McElroy's. He is the admiral of the Mexican Government and a native of Peru, and is now superintending the building of some ships of war in this city and New York for his Republic. He was the particular friend and aid de camp of the late Emperor Iturbide. . . . I had much conversation with him on the affairs of the new Government, and discovered very soon that he considered Mexico as the only powerful and rich country of all those that have lately shaken the Spanish yoke.

February 14, 1826 Mr. Cooper, the novelist, has lately given to the public a new work, entitled *The Last of the Mohicans*. It is a spirited narrative of the adventures of some white captives amongst the Indians, descriptive of savage warfare, wood trailing, scouting, camp manners—in a word, an admirable picture of every variety of Indian life, and managed with genius. The performers are few in number, but the action is kept up with great animation. I like this book as well as any of Mr. Cooper's preceeding works. This is the fifth novel published by that gentleman, and his printers, who paid a large sum for the manuscript, informed me yesterday that it sold very well, and was every where favorably received.²⁴

February 21, 1826 The Musical Fund Society gave a concert this evening at their new hall in Locust Street, at which an immense crowd was attracted, so large that after admitting 1800 persons many were turned away.²⁵

An Italian, Signor Cardini, calling himself the first tenor of the Florence Opera, sang, as did also an English actress named Kelly,²⁶ and two actresses from the Philada. theatre—Mrs. Burke²⁷ & Miss

²³ Eugenio Cortez, identified as a colonel, was ordering powder and cartridges from the du Ponts from Philadelphia on Oct. 17, 1825. Eleutherian Mills Historical Library.

²⁴ James Fenimore Cooper's Philadelphia publishers were Carey & Lea.

²⁵ The hall of the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, founded in 1820, was designed by William Strickland and was erected in 1824 on the south side of Locust Street above Eighth.

²⁶ Miss Lydia Kelly, comedy actress and vocalist.

²⁷ Mrs. Charles Burke.

Jefferson.²⁸ The vocal and instrumental parts were well executed, particularly a solo on the violin by a native Philadelphian, W. C. Hommann, and a duet by Mrs. Burke & Miss Jefferson, consisting of a verse from Rokeby, set to music by Mr. Carr, a teacher in Phila.²⁹

March 16, 1826 I met at this ball [*the Philadelphia Assemblies*] two persons who put me in mind of an occurrence that took place at Boston in the year 1788. General Washington had been elected first President of the United States, and made in the fall of this year a tour through New England. I resided at that time in my native town of Boston. Great importance was attached by Governor Hancock to the importance of *state* sovereignty, and he carried his notions of *state* independence so far as to expect that Washington, Chief magistrate of the Union, should pay him the first visit. The arrival of the President was, of course, a day of general festivity, and Hancock, who had made a great dinner on the occasion at which he had invited the principal citizens of Boston, the officers of the French squadron then in port (commanded by Ponteves and Gallisoniere) waited for Washington. But that great man knew what was due to his high station, and instead of going to the Governor's went to his lodgings to wait for a visit.

The Governor sent word that his health did not permit him to call upon him, and begged that he would do him the honor to come to his dinner. General Washington, seeing through his meaning, directed one of his aids (Major Jackson,³⁰ who had been Secretary to the great convention that formed the present national Constitution) to say that if his Excellency was well enough to receive a large party at dinner he was well enough to pay him a visit.

There the business rested until the next day (Sunday) when Mr. Jos. Russell called about noon at my father's to tell him (my father had dined the day before with the Governor) that Hancock had consented to go down to Washington's lodgings and pay him a visit.

A few weeks after, Monsieur de Moustier,³¹ the French Ambassa-

²⁸ Miss Cornelia Jefferson.

²⁹ Benjamin Carr (1769-1831), music master, composer, and conductor, was responsible for much of the early musical development in Philadelphia.

³⁰ Maj. William Jackson (1759-1828).

³¹ Eléonor Français Élie, Comte de Moustier.

dor, arrived at Boston, when Hancock took it into his head to wait for that gentleman's visit before he invited him to his house. Mr. de Moustier would not make the first advance and never saw the Governor. My father, however, entertained the French minister and his suite. In that suite was Mr. Victor Du Pont,³² whom I saw at the ball this evening, and with whom I have ever since kept up acquaintance.

Another person at this ball was Miss Elwyne, granddaughter of Governor [John] Langdon, who, at the time Washington was travelling in 1788, was chief magistrate of the state of New Hampshire. This gentleman, hearing of the etiquette which Hancock wished to establish, chose to show his dissabrobation of it by meeting Washington with a large escort of cavalry on the very frontier of his state, and accompanying the President to Portsmouth and showing him personally every attention.

At this time I have said there was a French squadron in Boston. It consisted of the Patriot & Leopard, ships of the line, and of several frigates. The Patriot, a beautiful 74 gun ship, had carried a few months before Louis the 16th a little way to sea, when that monarch visited the great sea breakers constructed at Cherbourg, and was now commanded by Monsieur de Ponteves.³³ On the evening of the day of Washington's arrival at Boston, Admiral de Ponteves and I walked from my father's house, where he had spent the evening, to Long Wharf, in order to embark in his barge that was waiting to convey him on board his ship, then lying in the lower harbour. I was walking by his side when we passed the house in which Washington lodged. All was quiet around it. No guards, no noise, no parade of visits whatever. It was about 10 o'clock. "Ah," said the good Ponteves, "This is the residence of the chief magistrate of your nation, reposing with confidence in the midst of his fellow citizens, and protected by their love, a defense infinitely better than bayonets. In my country," he added, "The smallest general would have had his house surrounded by sentinels." The shops were even then illuminated and dressed, and bonfires

³² Victor Marie du Pont (1767-1827) in 1787 became attaché to the first French legation in the United States. Later he was associated with his family's powder works.

³³ Henri Jean Baptiste, Vicomte de Pontèves-Giéns.

were burning thro' the town, but everything around Washington's residence was perfectly calm.

I saw this same admiral cry like a child when he first heard of the revolutionary movement in France, and of the personal insult offered to his sovereign, Louis the 16th. He died subsequently of a broken heart occasioned by his very fond attachment to that prince.

March 20, 1826 The Senate have at last agreed to confirm the nomination of Mr. Sergeant & Mr. Anderson as ministers to the Panama Congress.³⁴ John Randolph³⁵ opposed it with his usual vehemence. This man, possessing some genius, has ever exhibited in his political career little or no judgement, and a uniformly persecuting temper towards his antagonists. His heart is as malignant as his jack pudding speeches are eccentric, being as [Robert] Walsh calls them, "Elaborate salmagundis and zigzags." I never would make his acquaintance in Congress.

April 14, 1826 More quarrelling at Washington. Last Saturday Mr. Clay & Mr. Randolph fought with pistols.³⁶ Neither hurt. It is a pity that Clay had not slit Randolph's tongue, and prevented ever after his prattling nonsense in Congress, where his speeches are as long winded as they are impertinent.

April 18, 1826 There has been an attempt to get up a new college in Philada. in connexion with the Franklin Institute. A town meeting was called, at which Genl. Cadwalader presided, and by which a board of trustees was appointed, with my name in the list. The object of the promotors of this measure is to form an institution where without excluding the dead languages a knowledge of them shall not be made a prerequisite to admittance. Those who chuse to learn Latin & Greek will be provided with teachers, and those who do not may study apart in classes suitably divided, as in the old Royal college of France, History, Geography, Mathematicks, including Engineering, Fortification, the theory and practice of perspective, every variety of drawing from the human figure to topography, natural philosophy, natural history, astronomy, grammatically

³⁴ The Panama Congress met at Panama City from June 22 to July 15, 1826, "to deal with the high interests of peace and war." Richard Clough Anderson (1788-1826) died before the meeting and John Sergeant got no closer to it than Mexico.

³⁵ John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833).

³⁶ The duel took place on Apr. 8, 1826, and arose out of Randolph's attacks on Clay.

the French, German, Italian, English and Spanish languages. . . . It is to be regretted that this scheme is likely to fail.

April 8, 1826 Having been appointed by our church in Mantua a lay delegate to the Protestant Episcopal convention to be convened tomorrow in Reading, I embarked this day at one o'clock, accompanied by my colleague the venerable Judge Peters, on board a new packet called the *Planet*. It was crowded with passengers, male and female. More than 70 persons were there. This company consisted of the Right Revd. Bishop³⁷ and most of his clergy and about 40 lay delegates from the churches of the city and neighbourhood.

While the weather was fine we managed well enough, except at meal times when some of us had to pick the bones of those who obtained seats at the first table. We reached Norristown about sundown and staid the night there. I had been earnestly pressed by my worthy friend Judge Peters, now 82 years old, to accompany him. He was my colleague from St. Mark's church, and my good neighbour of 30 years standing, and altho' I had made arrangements to visit the Union Canal a month later, yet, considering the necessity of so old a person having some one specially devoted to his service, I had consented to go. The Judge was lodged at Mr. Paulding's, and at 3 o'clock on the 9th the octogenarians (approaching which there were several) as well as the young, were all squeezed in the little appartments of the boat, amidst darkness and rain. A few moments before daylight the boat was driven on a snag, and in a short time the cabin floor was covered with water. The passengers were obliged to go upon deck with umbrellas. In about an hour or two an old carpet was procured and the leak stopt.

We reached the Girard Canal,³⁸ 24 miles long, at eleven o'clock, and the rain ceasing at that time we had a beautiful sail on it, looking down on the river Schuylkill that seemed to be 50 feet lower than our boat.

At 6 we reached Reading, having travelled seventy miles in the Packet. The Borough of Reading contains 6,000 souls, and is increasing. It is generally well built, and must benefit much by the

³⁷ Bishop William White (1748-1836).

³⁸ The Girard Canal was below Reading.

canal we came on, and the Union Canal that comes from the Susquehannah and intersects it at this place.

May 10, 1826 We found a very beautiful new structure ready to receive the convention, and ready for consecration, which took place this day. This temple is of brick, and of Gothick architecture, and called Christ Church. Every part of it is neatly finished, and it is furnished with very beautiful pulpit, cushions, cloths, lamps and an organ.

May 11, 1826 The convention met this morning at ten, Rev. W. Clay preached. I dined with Mr. Marks Biddle.³⁹ An election took place for theological trustees and various standing committees in the afternoon at which the clergy voted separately from the lay delegates, and I learnt from the division of sentiment amongst the clergy, that an opposition party, now pretty strong, was organized against the Bishop and his friends, whom they style high churchmen, inclining themselves to Presbyterianism & Methodism! They have not yet avowed themselves openly, but are aiming to obtain the government of the Church.

May 12, 1826 The convention having adjourned yesterday we were all prepared to start this morning, some returning in the Packet and some by land. The judge and myself hired a horse and a gig, and went west towards Womelsdorf, where we dined and in the afternoon visited the stupendous works of the summit level of the Union Canal and slept at Lebanon.

May 13, 1826 We visited this morning the tunnel, now constructing, of 289 yards, as part of the Union Canal, and in the afternoon rode 15 miles to Manheim, where we slept at the Sign of the Eagle, an excellent inn. We saw at the foot of the Conestoga hills a small vinyard, planted by a native German.

May 14, 1826 About 10 o'clock this morning we reached the city of Lancaster and visited the Judges of the Supreme Court who were sitting in bank here. We pursued our way homeward and dined at Witmer's in a place called Paradise. It was oppressively hot, nevertheless we went 12 miles after dinner.

May 15, 1826 Today we rode by a burning hot sun to the

³⁹ Marks John Biddle (1765-1859), Reading lawyer and public official, was a son of Judge James Biddle (1731-1797).

Warren tavern, where we dined, and slept at Miller's tavern of the Buck, and on—

May 16, 1826 at 10 o'clock I delivered the venerable Judge into the arms of his daughter, very considerably benefitted by the journey.

May 26, 1826 My very worthy neighbour and very good friend, Richard Rundle, died this morning. This event was long expected. He had an incurable disease, and that was old age, being in his 79th year.

June 1, 1826 I dined today with Mr. C. J. Ingersoll with a party made for his Serene Highness the Duke of Saxweimer. He is a young man of very pleasing manners and apparently well informed. I was happy to see him and to be introduced to him.

June 13, 1826 I was invited by Mr. Geo. Vaux to join a party of 36 gentlemen who had hired one of the large steamboats for the purpose of visiting the deep cut of the Ches. & Delaware Canal. I left home at 4 o'clock in the morning, and was at Chestnut Street Wharf at 5. It took an hour for the company to assemble. At 6 we started, having the Mayor & Treasurer of the city & the following among other gentlemen on board: Drs. [Thomas] Parke & Prescott, Messrs. Vaux, Smith, Collins, Roberts, Lewis, Norris etc etc. We stopt 40 minutes at New Castle and at about eleven o'clock passed the great fort Delaware, and landed at a spot laid out for a city by the name of Delaware, where we found carriages ready to convey us 9 miles to the deep cut. We arrived there at one and beheld with amazement the mighty excavation already executed. In the deepest place the digging will be between 70 and 80 feet, and here a bridge is to be constructed of one arch (the abutments of which we saw) two hundred feet span and ninety feet in height from the canal!! The earth is removed by a cylinder which may contain 3 or 4 hogsheads. This cylinder when at the foot of the bank of the excavation is filled with earth and hauled slowly up by some horse machinery fixed at the top of the bank. When emptied it returns rapidly to the place of excavation to be again filled. In this manner millions of square yards of earth are removed. The canal when finished will be sixty wide on the surface of the water and eight feet deep. The party returned before 4 to the boat, where dinner was soon served. We reached town at sundown.

July 9, 1826 I heard yesterday that Thomas Jefferson died on

the 4th at one o'clock, and today I learn that John Adams died likewise on the afternoon of that day!! This is a singular coincidence. These gentlemen resided 700 miles apart. The first died 83 years old and the second 91. They were both early & zealous friends of our revolution.

July 20, 1826 Lucy's health being out of order of late, I found it necessary to take her for a short journey, for change of air and exercise, and intended to have spent a few days at the Yellow Springs,⁴⁰ but she & her mother reading in the newspapers a paragraph announcing the dissolution of the Italian opera at the end of this month, requested me to change my plan and take them to New York.

We made our arrangements accordingly, and started this day from Philada. at 12 o'clock in the steamboat Philada. Our passage to Trenton was rapid and agreeable, and so was the ride to New Brunswick. The stages, made to accommodate 9 passengers, are extremely commodious, the horses and drivers good, and we reach'd a new and excellent inn at Brunswick about 8 o'clock.

July 21, 1826 At 6 in the morning we embarked in the *Emerald* steamboat for New York, and ran the 44 miles to that city in 4 hours. I took lodgings at a good and fashionable boarding house in Broadway, kept by Mr. & Mrs. Street. We sat down 20 at dinner, and in the afternoon I visited, with the ladies, the academy of fine arts, which is quite in its infancy, if one may judge from the small and inferior collection contained in it.⁴¹ I showed the ladies afterwards the thick settled part of the city, about Pearl and Wall street, and returned to dress for the opera, where we went at 8 o'clock. The house was full. We paid two dollars for each of our tickets, and furnished ourselves with a pamphlet containing the play of *Don Juan* in Italian and English. Garcia,⁴² his beautiful daughter,⁴³ and one or two others performed admirably well, while all the others executed their parts with great precision and talent.

⁴⁰ In Chester County, about thirty-two miles from Philadelphia, a celebrated spa, elaborately laid out and the resort of fashion.

⁴¹ The American Academy of Fine Arts, presided over by Col. John Trumbull and controlled by wealthy collectors, proved to be a short-lived institution.

⁴² Manuel Garcia brought the first Italian opera company to New York in 1825.

⁴³ Garcia's lovely daughter Maria married about this time a worthless, bankrupt French merchant of New York, Malibran de Beriot, whom she shortly afterwards deserted to become the opera idol of Europe.

The piece (the fable of which is disgustingly profligate) went off as to performance extremely well, and we all returned home delighted with the facinating voice and acting of the very handsome daughter of Garcia.

I met Mrs. Prime⁴⁴ at the opera who invited us to her country-seat the next day.

July 22, 1826 Anxious to show the ladies all I could of the city and neighbourhood, I took them this morning from Fulton's slip over to Brookline, a village on Long Island, directly opposite the city and containing 10,000 people. It is rapidly thriving and so conveniently connected with N.Y. by steamboats that for 17 hours and a half out of 24 boats depart from each side every 5 minutes, making several trips each a day. I hired a Dearborn wagon, called in the magnificent language of the New Yorkers a *Barouche*, and went in it to the Navy Yard, thro which Commodore [Isaac] Chauncey, with whom I was acquainted, accompanied the ladies, pointing out the *Brandywine* frigate, going on board the new sloop *Vincennes* and 74 *Franklin*. The *Ohio* 74 lay in ordinary, and two large frigates were nearly finished in the shiphouses. We returned well pleased with our excursion and in the afternoon we started for Mrs. Prime's country house. I directed the coachman to drive up the whole length of Broadway and return by the Bowery, by which means I was enabled to show the ladies the two finest streets in N.Y., each a mile and half long, and to point out the new diverging streets running from them to the North and East rivers. This was exhibiting the city to very great advantage and showing its vast extent. The census in 1790 gave 28,000 inhabitants: it now reckons 150,000! (census of 1830 gave 203,000).

We found Mrs. Prime's house beautifully situated on Hurl (or Hell) Gate, and the grounds well laid out—new hot & greenhouses building, and extensive gardens. We were received with great kindness and returned thro' a blaze of gas and other light the whole length of the Bowery about 9 o'clock.

After our return we walked to the far-famed Castle Garden, which we found splendidly lit up with gas and a numerous company

⁴⁴ Wife of Nathaniel Prime of Prime, Ward & King, stock brokers and commission merchants.

inspiring the cool breeze of the sea, and listening to a good band of musick. This garden is in the center of a circular fortress, constructed formerly for the defense of the city, and standing in the midst of water at the confluence of the two rivers. In it are barrooms and numerous means for refreshment. It is worthy of its great reputation and by its extensive walks and delightful situation is unique and surpasses very much every thing of the kind I saw in Europe.⁴⁵

July 23, 1826 I went to Grace Church in the morning and afternoon, and sat in Mr. Prime's pew. The choir is excellent, and led by the Misses Gillingham, and pleased me full as well as the Italian opera. In the evening the Battery and Castle Garden were crowded with visitors.

July 24, 1826 The ladies desirous of seeing another opera, I staid for that purpose today, and saw a poor piece called Cinderilla, and on

July 25, 1826 We bade adieu to New York precisely at 6 in the steamboat *Thistle*, arrived at 10 at New Brunswick, where nine excellent coaches and four took the boat's passengers 33 miles to the beautiful steamboat *Trenton*, on board which we stept at 3 o'clock, and at six precisely landed at Philada., having come 100 miles by land and water in 12 hours without the smallest fatigue. I took a hack at the wharf and arrived safely at Sweetbriar by sundown.

The intercourse between Philada. and New York must employ at least 40 coaches daily, as thus:

The morning Trenton line averaging	18	} 44
The morning Bordentown ditto	12	
The afternoon Trenton	12	
The Mail	2	

The coaches are roomy, clean, strong and furnished with fine horses and steady drivers. The improvement is great, and very nearly perfect.

⁴⁵ Built between 1807 and 1811 as a fort to command the harbor and the approaches to the Hudson, the fort was ceded by Congress to New York and refurbished in 1824 as Castle Garden. Later it served as the Emmigrant Landing depot, and from 1896 to 1941 as an aquarium. It has since been restored as a fort.

August 3, 1826 The facilities of water communication have inspired the people generally along the Schuylkill, which is very particularly visible in the enlargement of Norristown by manufactories and dwelling houses.

Mr. McCreedy is building a cotton mill now about half finished, 150 feet long, 48 wide and four stories high intended for 5,000 spindles.⁴⁶ Mr. Wood has erected and just put into operation a white lead manufacture upon a large and greatly improved plan, and the same gentleman has in operation one hundred saws which cut blocks of marble into any thickness and are worked by a small water wheel connected with shafts of the most simple and ingenious construction, so simple, indeed, that no human labour seems necessary after the saws are fixed to the marble and the works set going, because the water for moistening the marble is supplied by a pump moved by the single wheel that keeps the whole machinery in play.

A new street between the main street and the river is about to be opened of the breadth of 50 feet, and thirty houses will soon be built upon it. At the west end of the street there is an extensive piece of ground sloping by a gradual descent to the river that offers several beautiful building lots with broad lawns reaching to the Schuylkill, from every one of which a prospect of the fertile island of Barbados⁴⁷ in front and the rich farming country of the heights up and down the river is seen to great advantage, and on this romantic stream an enterprising citizen, Mr. Lewis Schrack, has built and anchored a new and capacious bath house, floating on an arc, and arranged both for ladies and gentlemen, giving besides a dressing room three compartments with three feet of water in each and shower baths to the ladies, and one large room 4 feet deep for the gentlemen, besides a spacious gallery the whole length of the front of the building, making altogether the most commodious and neatest bath house I ever saw. The price for a bath is only 12½ cents, a very moderate sum, indeed, for the advantage of privacy, cleanliness and complete security enjoyed by the bather.

⁴⁶ In 1826 Bernard McCreedy built a cotton mill at the foot of Swede Street in Norristown. Later enlarged under another ownership, it became known as Simpson's Mills.

⁴⁷ Barbadoes Island in the Schuylkill opposite Norristown has long been the site of an electric generating plant.

The intercourse between the beautiful Borough of Norristown and Philada. is daily encreasing, the splendid buildings now erecting for Mr. McCreedy and Mr. Pastoris,⁴⁸ the respectability of the inns, the picturesque scenery of the river, the comfort of the packet, and kind attention of the Captain & men; but above all the luxury of Mr. Schrack's baths make it sufficiently attractive to warrant a prediction that 'ere long that thriving Borough will be a place to which the exquisites and the fashionable will resort to seek health & amusement, or to gratify a liberal curiosity.

August 9, 1826 As I drink nothing but Marsala wine, it is well to make the following note of the man who has for many years given me an oppo. of drinking this mild and palatable wine. Mr. Perot of Philadelphia, who has sold ten thousand casks of this wine for Mr. Woodhouse, told me that that gentleman found, when he arrived at Marsala, the peasants gathering the grapes for wine without care, mixing the sound, rotten and unripened together, so that the wine was of a very inferior quality. The first thing he did was pay very generous prices for a selection of the sound, ripe grape; and, using none other for making wine, he greatly improved the quality and caused an encreasing demand for it.

A late traveller in Sicily says that he was most hospitably received at Marsala by Mr. Woodhouse, who, he adds, arrived at Malta, about 20 years before, a poor journeyman cooper, and having some knowledge of the wine business, and hearing that there was in Sicily great abundance of most excellent wine, but that no one there understood the management of it, he determined to go there. He settled at Marsala, and having but little capital he was at first able to do but little; but by continued activity and industry, he gradually got on, and at that time was considered worth upwards of a million of piastres.

August 12, 1826 We attended today the funeral of Mr. James Lyle. This gentleman was more than 30 years my somewhat intimate acquaintance. He was an Irishman of respectable connections, and married into the Hamilton family. Being industrious, prudent and fortunate, he is supposed to have left to his two daughters about

⁴⁸ Jacob Pastorius built a saw mill in 1824 and converted it into a grist mill two years later.

800,000 dollars—as I hear!! He died after a short illness, at Long Branch,⁴⁹ aged 61.

August 23, 1826 At a meeting of the Federal Republicans of Blockley, at which I did not attend, I was appointed sole delegate from that township to meet the County conferees respecting the arrangement of the ensuing general election. For this mark of confidence and respect, I feel highly gratified. It is a small thing to be sure, but it has been given at a moment of complete political retirement on my part. My approaching journey to Boston, where I go to accompany my mother, obliged me to appoint Evan M. Thomas, Junr in my place.

September 9, 1826 I met in Chestnut Street this day my friend Mr. William Meredith, who urged me to permit my name to be offered to the public as member of Congress for the first Congressional District. I told him there was no chance of success in a district so friendly to Genl. Jackson and so averse to Mr. Adams; and that having voted in Congress for the latter I could meet with nothing but defeat, and moreover I did not want to serve if elected. He persisted, and I consented.

September 11, 1826 This being the day fixed by my mother for her journey to Boston, I went to town in my carriage with my daughter, and there took a private stage, hired for the purpose, which was to carry us to New Brunswick. At my brother George's our good mother and his eldest daughter Mary joined us, which with our black servant Leonard made up our party. We dined at the Red Lion and slept at Bispham's excellent Inn at Trenton.⁵⁰

September 12, 1826 Today our hired stage, with 4 good horses, took us 25 miles in about 4 hours over a good road to New Brunswick, where we dined, and in the afternoon embarked on board the *Thistle* steamboat, by which we were conveyed 44 miles in about 4½ hours. We took lodgings at Mrs. Street's in Broadway, and hearing that the Italians were to perform the opera of the "Barber of Seville," the young ladies went to see it, accompanied by me.

September 13, 1826 I spent this day looking around New York, and am satisfied that for amount of tonnage, commercial movement

⁴⁹ A popular resort on the Jersey shore.

⁵⁰ J. M. Bispham's City Tavern.

and extent of trade, it may be ranked the third city in the world! I have seen Amsterdam, Bristol, Dublin, Havre, Bourdeaux, Marseilles, Nantz etc, and they did not appear to me to equal it. London and Liverpool alone surpass it.

September 14, 1826 We embarked this afternoon at 3 o'clock on board the steamboat *Connecticut* for Newport and Providence. This vessel is large and carries masts and sails. The wind was high and fair, and we went along the Sound very swiftly. At midnight, however, the wind changed. Nevertheless we advanced rapidly, tho' without sails. Opposite Point Judith, where we fairly came abreast of the broad Atlantic, the waves were high enough to make all the females sea sick, except my daughter.

September 15, 1826 We reached Providence at 12½ o'clock, having made the passage (of more than 200 miles) in about 22½ hours. Providence appeared to be doing little business, and Newport still less. At this latter place a manufacturing of lace is in successful operation, and at Providence and its neighbourhood very many cotton and other factories are plentifully employed. Some of the handsomest houses in the United States are in the town of Providence.

September 16, 1826 I hired a close carriage and four to take us for 18 dollars to Boston, always avoiding the common stages when I can, even at considerable additional expense. Four miles from Providence stands Patucket, a pretty large and very flourishing manufacturing village. The country between Providence and Boston is, for the most part, uncultivated. Nothing but weeds, woods & marsh for many miles. Where cultivation exists, the husbandry is bad, and the fields neglected.

At about one o'clock we entered Boston and drove to my brother-in-law's, Mr. Lloyd, who, together with my dear sister, Mrs. Lloyd, and my niece Anna Breck, rec'd us with great kindness.⁵¹ In the evening, hearing that the New Market house was to be lit up, we walked through it. This is a splendid granite building 550 feet long, 2 stories high, standing in a wide street, with warehouses, also of granite, 4 stories high on each side—the whole built by the

⁵¹ Anna Lloyd Breck, a daughter of the George Brecks, was living with her uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. James Lloyd who had no children.

City Corporation, and stands unrivalled for splendour in this country.

September 17, 1826 We went to Trinity Church in the morning. Col. Wood, inspector general of the U.S. Army,⁵² dined with us and accompanied us to the Stone Chapel, where a female organist accompanied her cousin, a pretty young woman, who sang *alone* an anthem that pleased me more than anything I heard the far-famed Signorina Garcia sing at New York.

September 18-21, 1826 During these days we rode about, visited our friends and returned many visits made to us. Lucy & I were unwell, with slight attacks of fever and ague, which we cured with sulphate of quinine, brought with me from Phila. . . . We refused all invitations to dinner or evening parties.

September 22, 1826 Mrs. Lloyd had an evening party of more than 150 this evening, which I was obliged to attend, altho' in a paroxism of the ague. Many of my old friends, male and female, were there, but I was hardly able to hold my head up.

September 25, 1826 The theatre opening for the first time this season, Mr. Lloyd & my sister accompanied us there. The house is pretty, tho' small. The company of actors, very so so, and the pit and boxes not half filled. In no theatre in America except that of Philadelphia do females sit in the pit, which, of course, from the dark clothes generally worn by the men, make it appear gloomy, and habits of vulgarity are indulged in much more freely than if females were there.

September 26, 1826 Tonight Mr. Lloyd invited us to go to a practicing ball of a dancing master named Labassé. We found his room new and splendid, and well lighted, and his scholars dancing as well as with us. The dancing master himself is a good danseur de société.

September 27, 1826 Today we prepared for our return, that is to say Lucy and I. For this purpose I hired a Boston hack-coach and a pair of good horses for seven dollars a day to take me to Albany, allowing 4 days for the coach to return.

[*The Brecks left Boston on September 28, 1826, and arrived in Albany on October 2, putting up at Rockwell's Hotel.*]

⁵² Col., later Maj. Gen., John E. Wool (1784-1869).

October 2, 1826 Albany is a fine bustling city of 16,000 souls. The grand canals, North and West, end here, and being a great thoroughfare, and seat of government, stages without number pass and re-pass every hour in the day.

October 4, 1826 At 10 minutes past 6 this morning we left Albany in the matchless steamboat *New Philada.*, built at our good city of Phila. She greatly exceeds in swiftness every steamboat that has yet appeared, and was so fast that we arrived about 7 o'clock at New York, making the passage of 150 miles, including an hour's stoppage on the road, in less than 13 hours—and so cheap that I paid for passage and subsistence on board, at a sumptuous table, for my daughter, myself and servant, only ten dollars. . . . Fulton, when he first established steamboats on the North River, contented himself with 30 hours passage. Then boats were constructed that performed it in 22 hours, next in 18, and this was thought the ne plus ultra; yet the owner of the *New Philada.* expects, as I am told, to make the trip in 10 hours, by improving his engine.

October 6, 1826 At 6 this morning we took the steamboat for Brunswick, where I hired a private carriage and went with it to Kingston and dined. . . . In the afternoon we reached Bispham's Inn at Trenton.

October 7, 1826 Coming down the Delaware on the steamer, we arrived at Phila. at 10, and a hack took us home at 12.

October 10, 1826 Election Day. Not caring anything about the result, I did not go, nor any of my people.

October 11, 1826 I learn today that Sutherland has succeeded in his election, and I am glad of it. The conferees took me up in a very flattering way, yet I am pleased with the result, which gratifies me with an oppo. of staying at home.

When in Boston last September, my niece Miss Anna Lloyd Breck, asked me to write a few lines in her Album. . . . On the first page of this Album I found the following, written by Lafayette and John Quincy Adams.

Copy of Lafayette's lines, in Miss Breck's Album:

I am very proud of the kind request of the amiable young lady, who is pleased in me to recognize the old friend of her parents, and I beg her to

keep these lines as a memorandum of my claim upon her friendship.
God bless her!

Washington Feby. 23, 1825

Lafayette

Lines written by the President of the United States, underneath the above:

Fair lady may thy lot be sweet
As mortals lot may be;
And whenso'er thine eye shall meet
This page—a hero shall repeat
His blessing upon thee.
Propitious be the power divine
To his orison and to mine.

John Quincy Adams

Washington 10th March 1825

October 24, 1826 This was the anniversary of the landing of the great William Penn in Pennsylvania. A Society, of which I am a member, has been formed to celebrate this event.⁵³ An oration was delivered by Mr. Wharton,⁵⁴ and a dinner in Mr. Head's best style served up to about 70 persons in the Masonick Hall, where much conviviality prevailed. It was emphatically "a feast of reason." I gave the following toast: "Our early institution: The Dutch and the Swedes preceeded Penn by 50 years on the Delaware. They did nothing. Penn came and the next half century produced a city of 12,000, and a colony of 30,000 inhabitants, the result of that excellent man's wise and liberal laws."

October 27, 1826 I accompanied Lucy to a ball given by Mde Segouin.⁵⁵ It was to her (Lucy) very pleasant, but I have outgrown, in a good measure, my relish for these things; nevertheless, as my daughter has no other beau, I was obliged to accompany her to another dance, this—

⁵³ This was the Penn Society which in the following year erected the city's first public monument, the Penn Treaty Monument, still standing in Kensington at the site of the great elm.

⁵⁴ Thomas I. Wharton, a founder of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁵⁵ Madame Anne Marie Aimée Condemine Sigoine (1770-1851), a French refugee from Santo Domingo who with her daughter Adèle conducted a girl's school. Both mother and daughter were accomplished with the piano and the harp.

November 3, 1826 to Doctor La Roche's,⁵⁶ where the party was large, fashionable and elegant. The second son of the late King of Naples (Joachim Napoleon the 1st) was there. He is a fine looking young man, dances well and is apparently contented. His name in Lucien.⁵⁷ His eldest brother Achille is in Florida. His father rose from a trooper in the French army to be one of Napoleon's best cavalry generals, married his sister, was created sovereign Duke of Berg, and reigned ten years King of Naples. . . .

December 10, 1826 In the course of the last month Lucy had several invitations to dances. . . . Thus it was I went to Mrs. La Roche's, Mrs. Tilghman's etc., and to Mrs. Rundle's. The latter was a musical party, where some Virginia ladies by the name of Carter, the Misses Bolmann, Miss Rundle, and some eminent professors gave us the best pieces on the harp, violin & piano.

On the 8th (Friday) we gave at Sweetbriar a ball in return for these civilities, at which were present about eighty ladies and gentlemen. By converting the hall into a dancing room, and dancing in the north parlour we had an abundance of room. The large dining room had card tables, and the breakfast room was kept for preparing the creams, jellies, boned turkeys and other good things served up in the evening.

March 5, 1827 I recd. a day or two ago a letter from my friend Isaac Wayne,⁵⁸ son of the celebrated Revolutionary General, Anthony Wayne. Isaac and I sat together in the congressional hall of House of Representatives for two sessions. At the foot of the letter lately received are these words: "I should be happy to see you at my retired farm, rendered now almost insupportably so since the loss of two fine sons and a charming little daughter, all carried off a few years since by dysentery; to this affliction by a mysterious dispensation of Providence I live to know that within the walls of the Pennsylvania Hospital now is confined my only

⁵⁶ Dr. René La Roche (1795-1872), a close friend and relative of Madame Sigoigne. His father had come to Philadelphia from Santo Domingo prior to 1793.

⁵⁷ Lucien Murat had attached himself to his uncle Joseph Bonaparte at Bordentown. He was a born spendthrift.

⁵⁸ Isaac Wayne (1772-1852) served one term in Congress. His principal interest was in farming.

hope and only son, Anthony Wayne. May God preserve you from sorrows like these”!

March 24, 1827 At Mrs. Cadwalader’s this evening I met the celebrated statesman and orator, Daniel Webster. He is on his way to Boston from Washington. We had some conversation together. I found him in low spirits, principally (I presume from the tenure of his remarks) on account of some dismal political forebodings that haunt his mind respecting the next presidential election.

I asked him how Mr. Adams stood the Georgia squabble⁵⁹ and British colonial dispute, and added that the 18th Congress (in which I sat with Mr. Webster) was pacific, calm & courteous, compared to the last. “Yes,” said he, “and yet all those congressional bickerings are nothing. The Georgia and British commercial disputes will lead to no bad consequences, but what disturbs me most is to find Mr. Adams’ friends in this city deserting him. Sir,” continued he, “if General Jackson is elected, the government of our country will be overthrown; the judiciary will be destroyed. Mr. Justice [William] Johnson will be made chief justice in the room of Mr. [John] Marshall, who must soon retire, and then in half an hour Mr. Justice [Bushrod] Washington and Mr. Justice [Joseph] Story will resign. The majority will be left with Johnson, and every constitutional decision, heretofore made, will be reversed. The party is a profligate one,” added Mr. W., “and unless they place their condidate in the chair of government will become bankrupts, including even Jackson himself. I know,” said he, “more than fifty members of Congress who have expended and pledged all they are worth in setting up presses, and employing other means to forward Jackson’s election.”

I must own that I do not agree with Mr. Webster in all these sad prognostics. When the Federalists lost their power in 1801, it was then as loudly proclaimed and our fears as greatly awoken with respect to the consequences as they can be now; yet our successful rivals stept into our shoes only to tread in the same paths that we had followed—our navy has been cherished, public faith kept inviolate, the laws judiciously enacted, and wisely administered; such will again be the case; it will be a change of *men* and not of *measures*.

⁵⁹ A conflict between Georgia and the federal government over Indian lands.

Public opinion is omnipotent, and the nation is too enlightened to adopt any opinions hostile to its welfare.

March 25, 1827 I dined today with Doctor Chapman, in company with Mr. Webster, Mr. Walsh, Mr. N. Biddle, Mr. Joseph [R.] Ingersoll, Mr. R. Peters, Junr. and the celebrated English tragedian Macready.⁶⁰ The party was select, lively, and very entertaining, Macready is a man of polished manners, pleasing conversation, great modesty, and suited to win applause for his gentlemanly demeanor in society as well as for his brilliant talents on the stage.

April 3, 1827 My gardener told me this morning that he had a dish of asparagus in the garden fit for the table, and he added that he saw that vegetable up on Sunday the first of April. This is . . . at least a fortnight earlier than it commonly comes.

April 3, 1827 I have from the age of sixteen been in the habit of drinking 5 or 6 glasses of wine after dinner, and frequently more. Thinking it an unnecessary indulgence and useless expense, I reduced my allowance on Sunday the 18th of March last to three glasses and on Sunday April 1st I again diminished that quantity to one and a half glasses. It appears to me that my feelings and health are rather improved by it. . . . Spirituous liquors of no kind are used by me.

May 6, 1827 We were this day honored with a visit from the Baron de Mareuil, his lady, two daughters and two sons. They were accompanied by the Chevalier Caravadosy, Consul General of Sardinia. M. Mareuil has been French Ambassador at Washington for 3 years past, and is now on his return to France. . . . I went with the party to Fairmount Waterworks. They appeared greatly pleased with these fine works, and with the beautiful scenery of the Schuylkill.

May 23, 1827 I started this morning on a journey to Mount Carbon and Pottsville, two towns adjoining each other near the headwaters of the Schuylkill and in the midst of the coal country. Two years ago, I visited the same district and found only about a dozen houses. The places have greatly encreased, and the Schuylkill Bank of which I am a director, having entertained some thought of establishing a branch there, appointed a Com[mitt]ee of 4 to

⁶⁰ William C. Macready (1793-1873) made his first visit to America in 1826-1827.

visit the places. It was as one of this Com[mitt]ee that I undertook this journey. I slept within 5 miles of Reading, and early on May 24 continued my journey, rather rapidly in order to overtake Mr. Aaron Demman, Mr. Flemming & Mr. Holmes, my colleagues who were in advance of me a few miles. I joined them at Maiden Creek. . . . In the afternoon we passed thro' Orwigsburg and reached Weaver's tavern at Pottsville about 8 o'clock.

May 25, 1827 This morning we visited some of the coal mines, and contemplated with surprise the rapid encrease of the place, which now contains about 100 buildings. We did not, however, find the coal trade very brisk on account of a scarcity of that article and the high toll. The last is 144 cents a ton, and absorbs all the profit of the trade, which very naturally languishes and threatens a still further decrease. The shippers are willing to pay one dollar per ton, but unless there be a reduction to that price they will lay up their boats. We saw between 40 and 50 boats in dock idle, out of about 100 owned in the place, and one gentleman, who paid \$2,500 tolls last year, told us that he had not paid a cent this year, that his 5 boats were not employed in the coal trade, and that he lost \$1,500 by the business last year. Others told us that they likewise lost money. . . . On the whole, finding much discontent, little capital, and a dull trade, we unanimously agreed that it would be inexpedient to recommend the establishment of a branch or discount agency here.

We started in the afternoon for the Union Canal works on the Swatara, and travelled 8 miles to Fredensburg, where we slept.

May 26, 1827 We rode 11 or 12 miles this morning before breakfast, and stopt to bait at Pine Grove, within 4 miles of the numerous and rich coal mines of the Swatara. We saw a heap of 500 bushels of this coal, which we thought very beautiful. It weighs 2 lbs per bushel less than that of Schuylkill, but ignites much easier. It is an anthracite and will be brought to Phila. by a canal about to be constructed to join the navigable feeder of the Union Canal.

After breakfast, we climbed to the very top of the blue mountains, by a road narrow and steep, and had a magnificent view of Lebanon County, beautifully cultivated and dressed in its richest vernal robe. At 12 we reached Stumpstown, a considerable part of which we found in ruins, owing to a fire that took place a week ago. A tavern,

several dwelling houses and barns were totally destroyed. Several teams were on the spot, hauling materials for rebuilding the place, and it was delightful to see the benevolent feeling that was shown by the surrounding country. A com[mitt]ee appointed by the towns in the county was in the place, appraising the loss, and the sufferers were assured that their whole damage should be made good by a general subscription.

We dined at Jonestown, and then visited the engine houses of the Union Canal. The steam pump forces 700,000 cubic feet of water into the feeder in 24 hours, and the waterwheel 300,000. . . .

We passed from these vast, ingenious and useful improvements 4 miles, along the little feeder, to the tunnel, which is an excavation thro' solid rock about 880 feet in length and 18 wide. This tunnel cost 30,000 dollars and stands on the summit level.

We slept at Lebanon, and next morning—

May 27, 1827 passed along the deep cut for more than half a mile, 27 feet perpendicular thro' lime stone rock, and dined at Womelsdorf. Thence in the evening to Reading. I should think that in this latter town nine tenths of the people speak German. The population is 4 or 5,000.

May 28, 1827 I crossed Neversink Hill this morning and parted from my companions at Pottsgrove bridge, they going to the Yellow Springs, and I to Norristown, where I slept at Mrs. Markley's.

May 29, 1827 I returned to Sweetbriar and learnt that General and Mrs. Wool had passed the preceding afternoon there, and were to be shown the waterworks by our ladies this afternoon. I accompanied them and Mrs. Wool there and to Pratt's garden,⁶¹ and on

May 30, 1827 Went with them to the Woodlands.

June 1, 1827 I went to the bank and made a report against the establishment of a branch at Pottsville, which I presume will be adopted by the Schuylkill bank.

⁶¹ Pratt's garden was Henry Pratt's Lemon Hill, now in Fairmount Park near the Art Museum. Lemon Hill was renowned for its horticultural collection.