

The Diary of Samuel Breck, 1814-1822

DURING the first half of the nineteenth century Samuel Breck was one of Philadelphia's outstanding citizens. Although not in business, and seldom occupying political office, his personality and character were such as to gain him the highest respect. At the numerous public meetings of the day, he was customarily called to the chair. A man of benign personality who is said never to have had a serious quarrel, he was a scholarly person, a man of reading and letters, and yet also one whose business judgment and financial acumen were well recognized.

Born in Boston in 1771, Breck was the eldest son of Samuel Breck, Sr., a socially prominent merchant who in 1779 was appointed fiscal agent to the French forces in America. This led to an intimacy with their leaders and resulted in his sending his son to France to attend the aristocratic, military school at Sorèze, where Samuel studied for more than four years before returning to Boston in 1787. This experience, unusual, perhaps unique, for an American, was strengthened by a second visit to the Continent and a lengthy stay in England in 1790-1791.

In 1792 Samuel Breck accompanied his parents to Philadelphia, where they were to remain and to enjoy years of well-merited distinction as social leaders in the nation's capital. A measure of the elder Breck's prestige may be seen in the offer he received of the presidency of the Bank of the United States. He declined the honor just, as years later, his son-in-law James Lloyd declined the presidency of the Second Bank of the United States.

His son Samuel, author of the Diary, had a brief career as a shipping merchant. In 1795 he married Jean Ross, daughter of John Ross who had amassed a fortune in the East India trade. Ross was a merchant prince who added lustre to Philadelphia society in its federal period. Soon after his marriage Breck moved two miles out of the city to a property on the west bank of the Schuylkill. "The mansion on this estate," he wrote in 1830, "I

built in 1797. It is a fine stone house, roughcast, fifty-three feet long, thirty-eight broad, and three stories high, having out-buildings of every kind suitable for elegance and comfort. The prospect consists of a river, animated by its great trade carried on in boats of about thirty tons, drawn by horses; of a beautiful sloping lawn, terminating at that river . . . of side-screen woods; of gardens, greenhouse, etc. Sweetbriar is the name of my villa." Today Sweetbriar is one of the notable houses in Fairmount Park.

This removal to the country, for until 1836 Sweetbriar was to be Breck's year-round residence, terminated his mercantile career, but did little to impede his participation in many activities in the city. However, it did give him leisure hours for study and writing, and permitted him the pleasures of gardening and farming.

Politically, Breck was a Federalist, and, although that party had lost its power, Breck, a reluctant candidate, nevertheless won elections. He spent the years 1817-1821 in the Pennsylvania Senate, 1823-1825 in Congress, and was returned to the Senate at Harrisburg in the 1830s. The causes he espoused were the abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania, internal improvements in the form of canals, and free education for the poor. For much of his life he was constant in his attendance at local political meetings; his efforts to guide public opinion are preserved in articles he wrote for the newspapers.

Having flirted with Catholicism when under the influence of the Benedictine monks at Sorèze, he became a devout Episcopalian. He was a founder of St. Mark's, a chapel at Mantua near Sweetbriar, and later of St. Luke's in Philadelphia, and of course a vestryman and an attendant at church conventions.

For a man out of active business, he received a surprising number of calls for his services. Thus, he was a promoter of two bridges over the Schuylkill, director of several canal companies, a founder of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society, a director of a commercial bank, and a board member of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad Company.

Interested in music—Breck played the flute and other instruments—he was, in addition, a reasonably accomplished amateur artist. He was also an antiquarian. Among his numerous speeches, for he was frequently requested to address public gatherings, are

several on historical subjects. In 1825 he joined the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, which had been founded the previous December. It was he who was mainly responsible for preventing its dissolution during a bleak period when interest waned in the late 1830s. It is appropriate that his Diary and other writings eventually came into the Society's possession. Breck lived to be past ninety. Following his death in 1862, Joseph R. Ingersoll, President of the Historical Society, delivered an address which was subsequently printed, *Memoir of the Late Samuel Breck, Vice-President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania*. Among Breck's contributions to the Society, Ingersoll mentioned the bequest of a portion of his library.

Promoting libraries was indeed one of his chief pleasures. He made important gifts of books from his overflowing shelves to the Athenaeum, of which he was president, to the American Philosophical Society, of which he was a member, as well as to the Mercantile Library and the Library Company of Philadelphia. He supported the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. He was a trustee of the University of Pennsylvania.

It may be said of Samuel Breck that he was constantly engaged in good and charitable work as well as in public service. The chief of his charities was the Pennsylvania Institution for the Blind, whose board he joined in 1841. He took the closest interest in this Institution, attending all its functions and exercises and serving as its president from 1850 until his death. His influence on this organization was summed up by J. Francis Fisher in an address, printed in 1863, *Memoir of Samuel Breck, Late President of the Pennsylvania Institution for the Instruction of the Blind*.

Breck spent much time writing. The products of his pen are to be found in the *Port Folio*, the newspapers, and in a number of pamphlets. Our concern here is with his diary, only a part of which has been printed. That portion is his reminiscences of the past which fill many of the Diary's pages and are not repeated here. These cover his earliest memories up to the year 1797 and, edited by H. E. Scudder, were published in 1877 as *Recollections of Samuel Breck With Passages From His Note-Books*.

Scudder refers to the Diary as "Note-Books." Commenced in 1800, these books ran with time lapses, and, after 1840 with meager

entries, faltering into the 1850s. Not all the volumes have survived. The period 1800 to 1814 is briefly covered and certainly represents more of a note book, more of a commonplace book, than a diary. But from 1814 on Breck's notations are more in diary form, although J. Francis Fisher wrote: "They are generally less a record of events than observations on them and abstracts from his studies and various readings." Because of this, the Diary as it will appear in this *Magazine* has been pared down to a concentration on Breck's comments on the local and nearby scene. Fearful late in life that his Diary might contain something that inadvertently could cause pain, he instructed his legatee to expunge such material. Whether such a censorship was actually exercised remains doubtful.

This installment of the Diary starts in 1814 during the War of 1812. Breck and his wife and their only child, seven-year-old Lucy, who was fated to die at the age of twenty-one, are at Sweetbriar, with the rest of his "family," some seven or eight servants, living comfortably, as one could in that day, on an inherited income of little more than three thousand dollars.

*The Historical Society of
Pennsylvania*

NICHOLAS B. WAINWRIGHT

January 1, 1814 In the evening I rode into town with Mr. Ross,¹ and went to the play. The house was full to overflowing. The play a melodrama, according to the fashion of the day, called the *Aethiop*.² The scenery and dresses fine, the fable ridiculous, and the dialogue so so. These tawdry representations are usurping the place of the regular drama both in London and Paris. The main exhibition consists of brilliant perspectives, uncouth costumes, a few songs and two or three stage ballets. Everything is arranged to please the eye; little or no regard is paid to the heart or mind of the spectator, once seen they become ever after uninteresting.

January 8, 1814 A cartel (the Bramble) arrived at Annapolis

¹ Capt. Charles Ross (1772-1817), the diarist's brother-in-law, was a merchant engaged in the China trade.

² The *Ethiop*, "a new romantick play in five acts." *United States Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1814.

in 40 days from Plimouth,³ with a letter from Lord Castlereagh, the British Secretary of State, to our Minister of State, Mr. Monroe. The rumour of Peace was immediately spread, but without any solid foundation. The speculations which a few days before had raised coffee and sugar to 36 dollars per hundred; tea to 3 and 4 dolls. per pound, Salt 3.50 per bushel, were much affected by this news, and these articles fell fifty percent. This vessel likewise brought the certain account of Bonaparte's defeat,⁴ and of the desertion of the principal part of the Rhinish Confederated troops over to the allies.

January 4, 1814 In the afternoon Mrs. Breck and myself walked to the Woodlands, the seat of the Hamilton family.⁵ The head of this family, Mr. James Hamilton, already rich, has lately sold a tract of land of 187½ acres, adjoining Philada. and known by the name of Bush-hill for a ground rent of thirty-six thousand dollars per annum, the one third of which goes to his brother Andrew, who consented to the entails being broken.⁶ The last gets likewise three thousand dollars from an estate in Lancaster County: so that the elder brother of this family will now possess perhaps forty thousand dollars income, and the younger about fifteen.

March 11, 1814 I attended as referee, under the arbitration act, at Morras' tavern, where with Lewis Jones and E. Thomas, the two other referees, we heard the complaint, proofs and allegations of Sophia McNutt, against Jacob Campbell, for running over her with a sleigh and horses about 7 weeks ago. It appearing that it was done carelessly, but without design, and that the girl was very seriously hurt, we awarded unanimously the following damages and costs to be paid by the defendant Campbell, vizt

³ The *Bramble* was a British three-masted schooner reported as from Falmouth rather than Plymouth.

⁴ Napoleon had suffered a disastrous defeat at Leipzig in October 1813.

⁵ The Woodlands in West Philadelphia, now the Woodlands Cemetery, was developed by William Hamilton into one of the most beautiful countryseats in America. Hamilton, who died in 1811 and left the place to his nephew James Hamilton, was outstanding as a horticulturist and landscape gardener.

⁶ A syndicate of investors sought to develop the valuable Bush Hill estate. Among the earliest properties to be let on ground rent were lots on Broad St. and on Callowhill, Vine, and Wood Sts., both east and west of Broad. The speculation proved disastrous for those involved.

Doctors bill	15.00
7 weeks wages lost	8.75
7 weeks board	14.00
4 weeks board and wages, being the time supposed necessary by the Doctor for her to resume her work	13.00
personal compensation for suffering	<u>9.25</u>
	\$60.00

together with all costs, except the compensation allowed by law to the referees, which they relinquished, and paid their own tavern expences.

March 19, 1814 In town in the morning. I met Dr. Caldwell a gentleman of very considerable literary eminence, who informed me that he had undertaken the editorship of the *Port Folio*, a monthly magazine of great circulation. I had sent to be published in it for the month of April next the life of the late Marquis de Valady. . . . Dr. Caldwell was so polite as to approve of and to invite me to furnish him 10 or 12 pages for the month of May, when he assumes the direction of that work.⁷

March 25, 1814 I went to look at the 74 gun ship building in Southwark [the *Franklin*], and fortunately met Mr. Joshua Humphreys, who introduced me to his son, the principal architect.⁸ He accompanied me thro' and around this stupendous fabrick. She is as large in dimensions (tho' with one tier of guns less) as a British ninety. Her keel is 155½ feet; her beam 50 feet. Her weight of metal is not yet decided upon, but will be 36 or 42 pounders on the lower deck, and 24 on the upper. The model room and other objects of curiosity in the Navy Yard were likewise politely shown to me.

April 23, 1814 Yesterday or the day before 18 of the British prisoners, principally officers, and held as hostages, escaped from

⁷ Dr. Charles Caldwell (1772-1853) succeeded Nicholas Biddle in 1814 as editor of the *Port Folio*. Breck's "Biographical Sketch of the Life of the Marquis de Valady" appeared in its April 1814 issue.

⁸ Joshua Humphreys (1751-1838), shipbuilder and naval architect, was succeeded by his son Samuel.

⁹ The Walnut St. Jail having become insufficient, in 1807 a jail, intended primarily for debtors, was erected on the southwest corner of Broad and Arch Sts.

the new penitentiary in Arch Street⁹ by sawing the iron bars of the window on the south of the west wing—8 of them have been re-taken. It is singular that while they were effecting their escape, an order was on the road from Washington for their release from jail to be put on parole.

June 7, 1814 This day the great news of the dethronement of Buonaparte and restoration of the Bourbons arrived.

June 15, 1814 Dr. [Benjamin] Rush used to say that the writers upon *Materia Medica* were the greatest liars upon earth, except the writers of epitaphs.¹⁰

June 20, 1814 Beautiful day. . . . In the afternoon the frigate *Guerrière* was launched at Kensington.¹¹ We embarked in a shallop at 3 o'clock, and sailed up the river to a spot nearly opposite where the ship was built. The exhibition was truly splendid on the water and shores. The Jersey & Philada. sides being crowded by well dressed spectators, while the river displayed a congregated assemblage of beauty and numbers which could not be short of ten thousand. Perhaps two hundred ships, sloops and boats were anchored off, filled with company, bands of musick etc, which together with galleys, barges and rowboats astonished the beholder, but the most magnificent sight by far was the perpetually moving steamboats, of which no less than six moved about, full of company, in all directions, disregarding wind or tide, and proudly bearing their numerous and beautiful charges into every space where room was left for their handsome forms to navigate through.

The launch was uncommonly graceful, and the spectators beheld for the first time [in] twenty-five years the white Bourbon flag flying at the stern of a ship anchored just before our shallop, containing the French Consul and his family, with a band of musick. It rejoiced my heart to see it. The Swedish, Spanish & Portuguese flags floated on board other ships around us. The celebrity of our brave and rising navy drew this unusual crowd about the *Guerrière* upon this occasion. God grant her a long and glorious existence. She is named after the British ship which Capt. [Isaac] Hull of the U. S. Frigate *Constitution* burnt in August 1812.

¹⁰ Breck disapproved of the laudatory epitaph on his brother-in-law's, John F. Mifflin, stone at St. Peter's. Mifflin and his wife had alienated all the rest of the family.

¹¹ From the shipyard of Joseph and Francis Grice.

July 4, 1814 I received a ticket from Dr. C. Caldwell, the orator of the Washington Benevolent Society, to attend at the New Theatre in Chestnut Street,¹² where he delivered an oration in honor of the day. It was replete with brilliant figures and flashes of eloquence, particularly upon the downfall of Buonaparte, but it was much too long, having lasted full two hours, and he had it very imperfectly committed to memory. . . .

One thing was dwelt upon by Dr. Caldwell, which can have none but a bad effect, and that was a comparison drawn in strong colours between the Army and Navy. The first has been unsuccessful and he made it the property of the Democrats—the second has covered itself with glory, and he claimed it all for the Federalists. . . . Upon this topick the orator used inflammatory and irritating language. Surely it cannot be good policy to foster a jealousy between the Army and Navy. . . .

July 12, 1814 We have very alarming accounts today of large reinforcements from Lord Wellington's army having arrived at Quebeck, leaving 17 regiments upon the point of embarkation; likewise that Elkton (49 miles from Philadelphia) is invaded. The volunteer corps are arming and marching. We must defend our soil. Perish those who presumed to encroach upon us.

July 22, 1814 This afternoon Mrs. Breck, my mother, Lucy and myself drank tea at the Woodlands (the seat of the Hamiltons) and brought home with us one of those splendid flowers called the Nightblooming Cereus. It just began to open at sundown. The gardiner cut it from the stalk and put it into a large wartery cucumber with a little mud on the top of the cucumber. In this way we carried it in the carriage. Every moment it increased in expansion, until about 11 o'clock it displayed its full bloom. No flower that I have ever seen can be compared with it for beauty. This bloom continued until 3 o'clock when it began to contract itself, and by sunrise it drooped its head and died.

July 23, 1814 The present state of our Militia for active service is worse than nothing, because it embodies without organizing many brave men whose courage in front of an enemy would

¹² The New Theatre on Chestnut St., west of Sixth, was so called to distinguish it from the Old Theatre on South St. It was built in 1791 and burned in 1820.

lead them into peril, without order or military instruction. Called together only four times a year as the militia now is by law, and drilled on those days frequently without arms, it is impossible to attain to, it would be folly to expect anything like a knowledge of the mere *manual*. . . .

August 13, 1814 I dined at the Quoit Club [*near Gray's Ferry*] today. Commodore [John] Rogers was there, together with a Lieutenant Little and Midshipman Wright of the British Navy. These are prisoners of war and sailor-like looking men, devoid of polish. Rogers appears to be a man of 50, rough and ungraceful, reserved and modest. He is undoubtedly a brave man and skillful officer.

August 23, 1814 I visited the new works on the Schuylkill for supplying Philada. with wholesome water.¹³ They are on a great scale and seem to be suitably arranged for their important object. In the afternoon . . . I went to the Vauxhall gardens. The grounds are pretty, and were well illuminated. In the centre stands a handsome temple, with orchestra, boxes etc for the accommodation of a 1,000 people. We had a concert which was so so.¹⁴ At eleven at night we returned to Sweetbriar.

August 25, 1814 In town in the morning. The most disastrous news arrived today from Washington, mentioning that an army under Lord Hill¹⁵ had debarked in the Patuxent river and were marching to that city.

August 26, 1814 I went to Hamilton Village,¹⁶ where I saw Mr. C. Ross, who told me that Philada. was in the greatest agitation, and had appointed a Committee of Safety of which he was a member;¹⁷ that a battle had been fought at Bladensburg, and that the British having vanquished, penetrated to Washington.

August 27, 1814 At ½ past 12 o'clock I went with an immense crowd to the post office to hear the news from the South.

¹³ The Fairmount Water Works which replaced the Centre Square Water Works.

¹⁴ Vauxhall Garden, copied after London's Vauxhall Garden, was opened in the summer of 1814 in the vicinity of Broad and Walnut Sts.

¹⁵ Rowland Hill (1772-1842), 1st Viscount Hill.

¹⁶ William Hamilton laid out Hamilton Village in 1804 adjacent to his Woodlands estate.

¹⁷ See *The Minutes of the Committee of Defense of Philadelphia, 1814-1815* in Volume VIII of the *Memoirs of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1867).

The postmaster read it to us from a chamber window.¹⁸ It imparted that the Navy Yard had been burnt (valued at from six to 8 millions of dollars including the new frigate *Essex*, Sloop of War *Argus*, some old frigates, a vast quantity of timber, from 5 to 800 large guns and many manufactories of cordage etc) by our people; that the President's house, Capitol and other publick buildings had been destroyed; and all this by a handful of men, say six thousand!

August 29, 1814 I went to town today to enter myself a private in an association forming for the defence of the City and County of Philadelphia.

September 5, 1814 I worked 4 or 5 hours today upon the fortifications now erecting near Mr. Hamilton's lodges. 300 men laboured there gratis yesterday and 500 today.

September 10, 1814 In the afternoon attend the nomination of officers for the new volunteer corps, called the Schuylkill Guards, when Sam. Breck was nominated Captain.¹⁹

September 14, 1814 The town is in the greatest gloom and anxiety, owing to the English, under General Ross,²⁰ having landed 8 miles from Baltimore to attack that city.

September 15, 1814 About eleven o'clock an express arrived from Elkton that dispelled the gloom which overcast the town. It brought the news of the re-embarkation of the British and the death of General Ross.

December 2, 1814 We rode down to the ferry to see Genl. Cadwalader's brigade return from camp, but were too late.²¹ They excited the admiration of everyone in town by their soldierlike appearance. [*The Brigade consisted of eighteen pieces of artillery, 1,200 riflemen, and 1,200 infantry, according to Breck, who on December 8 did not include the cavalry, one troop of which was commanded by his brother-in-law.*]

¹⁸ The Post Office was located at the southwest corner of Third and Market Sts. Dr. Michael Leib was the postmaster.

¹⁹ The diarist's command was brief, inasmuch as the Schuylkill Guards failed to recruit satisfactorily.

²⁰ Gen. Robert Ross (1770-1814).

²¹ Gen. Thomas Cadwalader (1779-1841), in command of the Advance Light Brigade, had been encamped at Winterthur, protecting the du Pont powder mills.

December 12, 1814 Capt. Ross's troop of horse, 64 in number returned from serving as videttes for 3 months.²²

December 30, 1814 I rec'd a note this morning from Dr. Caldwell, the Editor of the Port Folio, for which work I had furnished among other articles 3 or 4 papers entitled "Philadelphia unroofed," containing some innocent raillery in imitation of the "Devil upon two sticks" with this motto—"No leaven'd malice infects one comma in the course I hold." But some persons having sought for personalities where none were intended, the Editor has concluded to discontinue it.

January 6, 1815 This day arrived the gratifying and glorious account of General Jackson's victory over the British army near New Orleans.

February 12, 1815 Just as we were sitting down to dinner, Mr. [Richard] Rundle²³ sent me over word that the Favourite British Sloop of War was arrived at New York with the highly gratifying intelligence of Peace having been signed at Ghent on the 24 of December and ratified by the Prince Regent on the 28th.

March 1, 1815 I saw many people on the frozen Delaware, as well as a horse and sleigh going across that river on the ice. From the protracted winter wood is become so dear that 17 to 20 dollars have been given for hickory and 12 to 14 for oak.

July 26, 1815 Set off at 7 o'clock this morning in the steamboat for Bristol. We had 170 passengers without being crowded. It is the most agreeable way imaginable of travelling. On our arrival at Bristol, we went to the Bath Inn kept and owned by Mr. Merrick. . . .²⁴ Miss Keene shew us the new house she is building on the banks of the river, from a site which offers the finest prospect

²² This unit was the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry, whose present Armory is at 23rd and Ranstead Sts.

²³ Richard Rundle's property adjoined Breck's. Acquired by Rundle (1747-1826) in 1810 and called Eaglesfield, it was a highly improved farm with an "elegant and spacious mansion" and numerous other buildings. Rundle was a manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital and a director of the Bank of North America.

²⁴ The Bath Springs House, built in 1810 and run by Robert Merrick, was "once the resort for the elite of the country." The waters at Bristol were believed to be a cure for many diseases. Doron Green, *A History of Bristol Borough* (Bristol, 1911), 118-119.

of the river.²⁵ The Spanish Ambassador, Mr. DeOnis,²⁶ and the Swedish Ambassador, Mr. DeKansow²⁷ have fixed their residence at Bristol, which, together with the facility of communication with Philada. by land & water, and several American gentlemen beginning to buy and build there will make it the pleasantest summer retreat in the neighborhood of the city.

August 10, 1815 Mr. Nath. Hancock came out to see me and brought me several letters from Boston. He is desirous of settling in Philada. as a miniature painter and teacher of English classicks.²⁸

August 21, 1815 I took Mrs. Breck and Lucy to see the *Franklin* seventy-four gun ship launched. The crowd was prodigious, and the fine display of well-dressed females on board six steamboats and numerous craft in the river, as well as along the wharves, was trully beautiful. The totality of persons assembled was computed to amount to fifty thousand and the beauty of the launch was worthy of this assemblage. Nothing indeed could be finer than the manner in which the *Franklin* glided down her ways, and entered the Delaware. Graceful, slow and erect, she made one of the finest launches imaginable.

August 29, 1815 Mr. Hancock, a distant relation, came out to spend a few days and to take my little daughter's picture in water colours.

September 1, 1815 Joseph Bonaparte. This Ex-King has been in Philada. lately, and visited the Woodlands a few days ago.²⁹ He expressed himself much pleased with the botanick garden, walks, shrubbery, house, paintings and prospect. He has ridden a good deal about this neighborhood, and has taken, I am informed, the large house near New York called Mount Alta, formerly the residence of Lord Cochrane. He has reason to congratulate himself upon his good fortune in getting to this favoured land. His brother Napoleon is a prisoner on board the Northumberland British 74, going to St. Helena; his brother Lucian is a prisoner at Turin; his

²⁵ Miss Sarah Lukens Keene.

²⁶ Don Lewis de Onis.

²⁷ Baron Johan Albert Kantzow.

²⁸ Nathaniel Hancock is first recorded as a miniaturist at Salem, Mass., in 1792. George C. Groce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America* (New Haven, 1957).

²⁹ Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon's older brother and former King of Spain, escaped to America in 1813. He took the title of Comte de Survilliers.

brother Jerome is a prisoner and wounded at Valanciennes; and his brother Louis is writing novels in some village in Switzerland.

October 13, 1815 This afternoon I went to Norristown, where I had been invited by several gentlemen for the purpose of becoming cashier of the new bank about being established in that borough.³⁰ On mature consideration, I declined the offer, and concluded to continue my residence at Sweetbriar.

December 2, 1815 I took Mrs. B. and Miss Margaretta Plumsted to town and visited with them the *Franklin* seventy-four. We were accompanied over this noble ship by an officer, and met on the middle deck the gallant Decatur, to whom I was introduced by Commodore Murray.³¹ This brave man is just returned from the Mediterranean, where he commanded the squadron that has humbled the three Barbary powers and made a peace with Algiers. . . . He is a fine looking man.³²

January 15, 1816 I rode up to Judge Peters and sat an hour. . . .³³ When I came home the weather was exceeding sharp, and on putting the glass out of doors, I found it descended by 8 o'clock to $3\frac{1}{2}$ above 0; at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 it was one above 0, and at eleven it had fallen to one below zero, which is the coldest weather we have had since I have kept a thermometer (about 6 years).

January 17, 1816 At ten o'clock this morning the glass was up to 48; making a variation of 49 degrees in 35 hours!

January 21, 1816 In the late treaty with France, the four great allied powers are to receive by way of contribution from France 700,000,000 of livres, and three bankers it is said have offered to furnish France with the money £30,000,000 Stg. It so happens that I know personally the whole three. Hope I knew in Amsterdam, Baring in Philada, and Bethman in Bordeaux.³⁴

³⁰ The Bank of Montgomery County, chartered Mar. 21, 1814.

³¹ Commodore Alexander Murray (c. 1754-1821).

³² Commodore Stephen Decatur (1779-1820) dictated a treaty in June 1815 with the Dey of Algiers ending tribute and requiring full payment for injuries to Americans.

³³ Richard Peters (1744-1828), Revolutionary patriot, agriculturist, and noted wit, was from 1792 until his death judge of the United States District Court of Pennsylvania. He owned the Belmont estate near Sweetbriar.

³⁴ Breck no doubt met Hope on his visit to Holland in 1790. In 1783 he called on Bethman, an eminent merchant of Bordeaux, to whom he had a letter of introduction from the Marquis de Vaudreuil. Bethman was German consul in Bordeaux and was connected with the Bethmans of Frankfurt. Baring was Alexander Baring (1774-1848), first Baron Ashburton.

February 22, 1816 This being Genl. Washington's birthday, there was a parade of militia volunteers under General Cadwalader. I went to town upon business and met them on their march. They looked shabby compared with their appearance when they returned from camp during the late war. Many of their musicians were out of uniform and dressed in their dirty labouring clothes; nor were the men perfect in their marchings and manual. The business of a soldier is soon forgotten; without constant practice he becomes awkward.

May 12, 1816 In the afternoon Judge Peters called and soon after Mr. & Mrs. Busti³⁵ bringing with them Mr. Lechlingtner the Dutch consul general and two other Dutch Gentlemen. I gave them a bottle of old Hock that had been lying in my wine cellar 18 years and was bottled at Hamburg in the year 1748, and was of course 68 years in bottle. It was delicious and much praised.

May 26, 1816 Mr. Ross dined with us and staid all night. He informed me that he should sail for China in 8 days in the ship *Natchez*. He has the sole super cargo-ship of a valuable vessel.

June 3, 1816 At one o'clock I accompanied Mr. Ross to the steamboat, and bade him adieu amidst crowds of his friends. Perhaps no man is more beloved by his acquaintances, and very deservedly so, for he is a fine tempered, noble-hearted fellow.³⁶

June 10, 1816 I was again in town upon the Grand Jury, and in the course of the morning concluded to depart for Washington the next day.

June 11, 1816 At 3 o'clock this afternoon I embarked in the steamboat *Vesta* for Wilmington. . . . We arrived at Wilmington at 8 o'clock.

June 12, 1816 The next morning at 4 o'clock, five stages took the passengers across to the head of Elk river, where we found the steamboat *Eagle* ready to receive us, and to depart for Baltimore. We embarked at 8 o'clock and reached that flourishing city at 5 . . .

³⁵ Paul Busti, a gentleman farmer who lived at "Retreat Farm," Blockley, was an Italian who came to America in the service of the Holland Land Company which owned vast tracts situated in the northwestern part of Pennsylvania and in adjacent New York.

³⁶ Although Ross died in 1817, he is not forgotten. At their banquets commemorating their founding on Nov. 17, 1774, and on Washington's Birthday, his old command drink to his memory included in a toast "To the Memory of Captains Ross, Butler, and James."

went with a Mr. Bick, a Swedish gentleman, to the Fountain Inn. At 8 o'clock I called at the theatre, a pretty little building, where the Philadelphia company of comedians were playing.

June 13, 1816 I hired a neat hackney carriage for 3 days, in which I set off for Washington at 8 o'clock in the morning. I found the road much improved by being turnpiked and bridged. In the evening I stopt at Davis' within 9 miles of Washington.

June 14, 1816 After an early breakfast we departed for the city. On the road we passed through the battle ground of the engagement that lost us Washington of the 24th of August 1814. It so happened that my coachman had been waiter to some of the officers engaged on that disastrous day, and having been present was able to give me the particulars of our defeat. Some of the skeletons of the British soldiers still lay unburied.

On my arrival at Washington, I called at the Post Office; Clerk of the House of Representatives office; upon Mr. Wallach, clerk to the Commissioners of the Yazoo claims;³⁷ upon Mr. [William] Lee, commissioner of claims; upon the cashier of the Bank of Washington, and upon Mr. Caldwell clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States, with all of whom I had business, and all of whom shewed me the greatest politeness and gave me the greatest satisfaction; so that besides accomplishing my errands, I had time to accompany Mr. & Mrs. Lee and some other company all over the Capitol, and into the apartments of some Italian artists of extraordinary merit, who are sculpturing, modelling and drawing various beautiful things for the new Capitol.

I likewise saw Mr. Latrobe the architect, who invited me to spend the evening with him, which I was obliged to decline.³⁸ I was introduced likewise to Col. Lane, the sole commissioner of the publick buildings, and who shewed me the plan of the gardens, just about being begun around the Capitol.³⁹ I found very many houses built since my visit in 1809, and the city appearing upon the whole to prosper.

³⁷ The legislature of Georgia in 1795 bestowed huge grants on four land companies. Soon deemed fraudulent, this act was rescinded, but many innocent people were involved. When the rescinding act was declared unconstitutional, Congress undertook to pay the Yazoo claimants. The fraud received its name from the Yazoo River.

³⁸ See Talbot Hamlin, *Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (New York, 1955).

³⁹ Col. Samuel Lane.

About 5 o'clock I set out on my return to Davis' where I again stopt for the night.

June 15, 1816 Very early this morning we left our Inn on the road to Baltimore. About 8 o'clock I met a gentleman who begged to stop at a planter's house by the name of Snowden, and to permit his mother to go to Baltimore in my carriage. As I was alone, I consented to receive the old lady, and accordingly turned into her gate. While she was getting ready I conversed with the son and daughter, and learned that the old lady and her sister had turned Quakers, and liberated their slaves; the one to the number of sixty. The son still held 96 who were busy planting tobacco. This Mr. Snowden plants this year 600,000 plants. An acre of good ground grows 5,000 plants which gives one hogshead of tobacco of 1,000 lbs. weight, worth about 170 dollars.

When we were about getting into the carriage, I found the good lady expected me to take her sister in along with her, and as she weighed about as much as herself, which could not be less than 200 lbs, and would not be separated from her, I was obliged to drive off without either, with very little thanks for my good will, which cost me about half an hour of pretty precious time.

We arrived at Balto. in a thundergust at 2 o'clock and having dined at Barney's Inn, I again embarked at 5 o'clock in the steamboat. The wind soon turned to the N. East, which was directly ahead, and blowing strong, caused a heavy sea in crossing the bay, notwithstanding which we made $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour and arrived at 7 o'clock at Elktown, where stages met us and brought us to Wilmington at 12 [*June 16, 1816*], at which place the steamboat was ready to convey us to Philada. at which city it landed us at 4 o'clock, from whence I came to Sweetbriar in a hired gig, having in 5 days performed 360 miles, and accomplished my business in a satisfactory manner.

July 10, 1816 I discharged this day a black boy named *Sambo* who has been in my family nineteen years next September. I purchased him when 7 years old for 20 years. He has lately consulted

⁴⁰ The Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage was instituted in 1775.

the Abolition Society⁴⁰ about some rights he claims from his former owner, and altho' I consider my title to his time for 14 months longer to be perfectly good, yet seeing that he was dissatisfied, I gave him permission to go.

July 28, 1816 Feeling some strong symptoms of a vertigo yesterday, I sent for a bleeder who took about eleven ounces of blood from me this morning.

July 29, 1816 Joseph Buonaparte returned to Lansdowne yesterday.⁴¹ He shook Mr. Bones, the tenant, most cordially by the hand. He is devoid of pride and very sociable.

August 10, 1816 I was in town this day and received from Boston my mother's portrait by the celebrated *Stuart*. It is every way worthy of that great master, and is an admirable likeness. I have one of my own by Otis, which I design to send to my mother in return for hers. It is well executed and a good likeness. That young artist is rising to eminence.⁴²

The town was in a great bustle today to witness the death of a young man named Richard Smith, who was hung on the commons for murdering a Captain Carson⁴³ whose wife this Smith married during the Captain's absence, and on his return, a dispute taking place about the lady, Smith went to Carson's house, having previously bound him over to keep the peace, and on his refusal to leave the house, discharged a pistol into his mouth, which caused his death after lingering some days in great pain. The crowd (which however I did not join) to witness his death was excessive, if I may judge by the movements in the streets. Vast numbers of well dressed and delicate looking girls were hurrying to the scene, and those who would weep over a sick bed could stand in a scorching sun for hours to see a hearty man strangled! Smith was a native of Ireland.

September 1, 1816 Mrs. Breck called with me upon Mrs. Benj.

⁴¹ Lansdowne, the largest and most elaborate of all the summer estates along the Schuylkill, was built by Gov. John Penn and was later acquired by William Bingham. After Bingham's death in 1804 it was occasionally rented, as in 1816 to Joseph Bonaparte. Ultimately burned in 1854, the property was acquired for Fairmount Park in 1866.

⁴² Bass Otis (1784-1861) lived in Philadelphia from 1812 to 1845. His portrait of Breck is owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art and hangs in Sweetbriar.

⁴³ Capt. John Carson, returning from a three-year cruise, found that his wife had given him up for lost and had remarried.

B. Howell who resides for the summer at Solitude,⁴⁴ from thence we made a visit to the Woodlands, and drank tea with Mrs. Ross.

September 18, 1816 I spent the most of the day on the banks of the Wissahicon creek, sketching with Captain Watson.⁴⁵ We brought home several romantick views.

September 20, 1816 I took Mrs. Ross⁴⁶ and Mrs. Breck to town today, and dined at the Woodlands. I met General Skinner of the British army there.

October 17, 1816 I went to Haddonfield in Jersey today. The weather was exceedingly mild and clear. On my return in the afternoon I passed the Delaware in the team-boat, propelled by eleven horses. These are fixed in a circle, and being ingeniously yoked in iron yokes, and otherwise advantageously geared, move an immense paddle placed between two boats, on which the deck is built, bring the boat over in 10 minutes.

October 19, 1816 Captain Watson called upon me and invited me to walk to the falls and sketch the views in that neighborhood. We drew the fine scenery around them, and visited the wire works, nail factory; crossed the wire bridge, and viewed the great canal & lockwork now going on.⁴⁷

February 4, 1817 Various occupations have caused me to discontinue my journal for a few months past. I now resume it.

February 15, 1817 This morning a little after sunrise the glass was at 8 below zero.

February 27, 1817 In town. I had the happiness of taking my brother, Mr. Lloyd, by the hand today. He has been absent from his wife all winter at Washington upon publick business for the state of Massachusetts.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ "The Solitude," recently restored and standing within the grounds of the Zoo, was built in 1785 by John Penn, son of Thomas Penn and grandson of William Penn. In 1867 it was acquired by Fairmount Park.

⁴⁵ Capt. Joshua R. Watson of the British Navy was an amateur artist staying on the adjoining estate as the guest of his uncle, Richard Rundle.

⁴⁶ Mrs. John Ross, Breck's mother-in-law. She died at her house in nearby Hamilton Village on May 1, 1828, at the age of eighty-four.

⁴⁷ The wire bridge, a chain suspension bridge, was built in 1808 (and replaced in 1818 by a covered wooden bridge), spanning the river at the Falls of Schuylkill. Its wires and chains were manufactured on the site by a rolling mill. The canal and locks belonged to the Schuylkill Navigation Company.

⁴⁸ James Lloyd (1769-1831), Senator from Massachusetts, 1808-1813, 1816-1826, and a man of great wealth, was Breck's brother-in-law.

March 15, 1817 I went to town in a sleigh today, the snow 8 or 9 inches deep, but on my return I had to run a race with the sun, as it melted the snow faster than my horses could travel, so that we dragged a long way very heavily.

June 14, 1817 I am sorry circumstances have prevented me from keeping up my journal in a regular way, but as it is I will resume it after stating the principal occurrences that have taken place in the intervening time.

On the 14th of April I left home with Captain Joshua R. Watson, post Captain in the British navy. We embarked on board the New Castle steamboat at 12 o'clock and slept that night at New Castle. Captain W. sketched on his passage down the Delaware all the principal views. This he does inimitably well. We crossed the Chesapeake bay from Frenchtown the next day in a very pleasant manner, and arrived at Baltimore about 5 o'clock. After sauntering through this flourishing city, we retired to rest at Barney's Inn, and the next morning had a pleasant ride to Washington, where we arrived at 2 o'clock.

In the afternoon we visited the Navy Yard, and went through a fine line of battle ship then on the stocks. This was the 16th. . . . Capt. W. who had called upon Mr. [Charles] Bagot, the British Ambassador, brought me an invitation to dine with him at 5 o'clock. . . . In the evening Mr. Bagot accompanied us to Commodore Decatur's,⁴⁹ where we spent a charming evening. Mrs. Decatur is a fine woman, the Commodore a soldiery, accomplished gentleman.

The next day we visited Mount Vernon. The ride from Washington is 16 miles. Every thing looked shabby at the late seat of the great Washington, except what depended upon nature, such as prospects etc, and they were fine. Judge Washington with 20 servants has every thing in a slovenly way.⁵⁰ The General kept the house and grounds in a stile of great neatness.

On the 19th we visited the Patent office under the care of Dr. Thornton,⁵¹ who was excessively civil to us, and in the evening

⁴⁹ Decatur's house at the southwest corner of H Street and Lafayette Square (today Jackson Place) was designed for him by Benjamin Henry Latrobe in 1817. It is now a property of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

⁵⁰ Bushrod Washington (1762-1829), Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, inherited Mount Vernon from his uncle George Washington.

⁵¹ William Thornton (1759-1828), architect of many celebrated buildings, was in charge of the Patent Office from 1802 until his death.

took tea with Mrs. Bland Lee. On the 20th we sketched the Lower Falls and other scenery on the Potowmack, and in the evening visited Com. and Mrs. Decatur. On Monday morning the 21, I furnished my friend Watson with a letter for Mrs. Wirt of Balto. where he was desirous to lodge, and being obliged to stay a day or two longer in Washington, I bade him goodbye.

The 23rd I left Washington and dined in Balto. at Mrs. Wirt's, where I found Watson delighted with his accommodations. This lady is the daughter of Mr. S. Blodget, and keeps a very superior boarding house.

We visited Capalano's work shop after dinner.⁵² He is a very celebrated Italian sculptor, and was chief in that department in Spain when King Joseph Bonaparte governed that Kingdom. He is now doing well between Balto. and Washington. I made some purchases of him, such as medallions of Napoleon, Maria Louisa, Franklin, & Washington.

On the 24 we started early for the Susquehannah, with which river Watson was so pleased that we staid sketching on its beautiful banks until the evening of the 26, when we set off for Lancaster and reached home the next day.⁵³

June 14, 1817 This day our worthy and amiable friend Watson embarked on board the Rebecca Sims to return to England. I shall ever feel attached to this good hearted gentleman. He sketched for me in tints a view of the Capitol, as it is designed to be when finished.

I called on my brother in law, Mr. Charles Ross, who returned from Canton about a month since very much afflicted with dysentery. He has been seriously ill and has undergone a course of mercury. . . .

June 15, 1817 Seventeen years ago I witness the resurrection of the parents of the Locusts now buzzing in our woods. This curious and interesting insect is hatched under the bark of the tender twigs of almost all kinds of trees, and when in the worm state descend into the ground where they lie buried seventeen years, when they return to the cheering rays of the sun, almost to

⁵² Antonio Capellano was an Italian sculptor who worked in America from 1815 to 1827.

⁵³ Watson's sketch book has survived the years and plans have been made for its publication.

the day in which their parents and remoter ancestors arrived (about the 23rd of May).

July 10, 1817 Called on Miss [Rebecca] Bond and Genl. & Mrs. Cadwalader at Solitude, where they are fixed for the summer.⁵⁴ The Locusts were not heard to sing today. They seem to have all died away and disappeared.

July 13, 1817 In the afternoon I accompanied the ladies to Lansdowne house. We met Mr. Thomas Peters⁵⁵ who joined our party. This fine house is going to decay for want of a tenant and want of care. Mr. Peters told us that the Ex-King Joseph Bonaparte had offered to the heirs of Mr. Bingham an estate in Switzerland, which gives him his present title of Count Sevillier, in exchange for Lansdowne estate and the northwest square in Philada. at the intersection of 9th and Walnut Streets,⁵⁶ on which he (Joseph) is desirous of building a palace, to include a private theatre.

July 15, 1817 This day I had 12 reapers cutting down about 5 acres of rye. Excessive fine harvest weather.

July 21, 1817 I heard today that my friend James Hamilton of the Woodlands was either dead or dispaired of. He was on a jaunt of pleasure with his sister and nieces, whom he proposed to take to Quebec. He had got on nearly to Poughkepsy on the North river, when his coachman was taken ill, and being himself a pretty good whip, he put the sick servant into his gig and took the box to drive four in hand. The day was warm and the exertion fatigued him. At night he slept with a window open near his bed, and awoke in the morning with the glands of his throat and tongue very much swoln. An express was sent 80 miles to New York for Dr. Hosack⁵⁷ and another physician of celebrity, who both attended together with 2 doctors of Poughkepsy, but they apprehended by the last accounts that a mortification would take place.

July 23, 1817 On sending to the Woodlands today, we learnt that Mr. Hamilton died on Sunday morning of a mortification in the root of the tongue and adjoining glands. Mrs. Breck, who was ready

⁵⁴ Miss Rebecca Bond was an aunt of Gen. Cadwalader. As agent for John Penn, the General had the privilege of occupying The Solitude.

⁵⁵ Peters was a son of Judge Richard Peters.

⁵⁶ This was the location of Bonaparte's town house.

⁵⁷ Dr. David Hosack (1769-1835) was eminent not only as a physician but as a botanist.

to accompany Miss Plumsted (Clementina), Lucy and myself to Bristol was so agitated that she could not go. We however set off, taking Harry⁵⁸ with us, and arrived there in the afternoon. Lodged at McElroys, where we found Charles Ross slowly recovering. There is a good deal of genteel company at Bristol. We paid a visit to the Miss Craigs⁵⁹ who inhabit that village in summer.

July 29, 1817 I attended Mr. James Hamilton to the grave⁶⁰ as mourner this morning. Many sincere tears of sorrow were shed over his corpse. His body was brought from Poughkepsy, 80 miles above New York on the Hudson to Philada. in a copper coffin, and deposited in the family vault without the least smell coming from it, altho' dead 10 days. The procession of carriages and pedestrians was very large, and after service was performed in church his numerous friends bade a silent and solemn farewell to his remains at the door of his sepulchre.

August 1, 1817 Being a long time dissatisfied with some of my servants, I went on board the ship *John* from Amsterdam, lately arrived with 400 passengers, to see if I could find one for Mrs. Ross and two for myself. I saw the remains of a very fine cargo, consisting of healthy, good-looking men, women and children, and I purchased one German Swiss for Mrs. Ross, and two French Swiss for myself. . . . My two servants come from Lausanne in Switzerland, and having descended the Rhine in April are at length landed in this happy, free and fine country. I gave for the woman 76 dollars, which is her passage money, with a promise of 20 dollars at the end of 3 years, if she serves me faithfully—clothing and maintenance of course. The boy had paid 56 guilders toward his passage money, which I have agreed to give him at the end of three years, in addition to which I paid \$53.60 for his passage, and for 2 years he is to have 6 weeks schooling each year. Whether they will be worth anything is a lottery, for the choice of strangers in this way is truly a leap in the dark.

August 18, 1817 I was on board 4 ships today all loaded with passengers from Amsterdam, one of them had, as I was informed, near 500 on board, others 3 & 200, and the last about 60. Seven

⁵⁸ Harry was evidently a servant, possibly a coachman.

⁵⁹ Ann Craig (1757-1838) and Jane Craig (1759-1841), aunts of Mrs. Nicholas Biddle.

⁶⁰ In the Hamilton vault at Christ Church.

ships lie together now, besides one that discharged between 2 and 300 of the Quaker profession, which ships must have brought about 2,200 passengers. I made very liberal offers to some of the girls, one of whom I was desirous to engage for Mrs. Ross, but they refused. For instance, I offered a girl who had paid her passage, 75 cents pr week for 3 months, and 1 dollr. pr week for the other 9 months. I offered the parents of a young girl 80 dollrs. for 4 years and a present of 20 at the expiration of her time, if she served faithfully. At last I went on board a brig just arrived and bought the time of a young girl, calling herself 17 years old, for 3 years, for the sum in hand of sixty dollars, and a present of 15 dolls. at the expiration of that time, provided she conducts herself well. This girl's name is Salumey Trost, and is for Mrs. Ross. [*Added later by the diarist*] In a year she ran away and has never been heard of.

August 26, 1817 I found all kind of stock nearly at extravagant prices and I sold out U. S. Bk. stock at 145.

August 28, 1817 The rage for Bank stock continues. The bubble has swelled up to 153 to 154.

September 3, 1817 In the afternoon we rode to Bartram's garden, now in the possession of a Mr. Carr who married old Bartram's daughter. This is a beautiful spot, and rather better kept than formerly. As a nursery of young plants, it is rising into consequence. Mr. Carr informed me that he had 6,000 plants in pot for sale. His forcing beds are fine, and enabled him to take the first cucumbers to town, for which he obtained 50 cents each for the first 50 and 25 cents for the first hundred. In addition to this he is now building a large greenhouse.⁶¹

September 11, 1817 This day was so warm that I could not go to Trenton. Instead of that long ride we all three (George, Charles and myself)⁶² went to the banks of the Delaware in my carriage and thence to see the preparations making by a man who has undertaken to rise one of the ships that was burnt by the British in June 1778 on the Delaware near the mouth of Nancrocs creek. Five

⁶¹ John Bartram's house and botanical garden was on the right bank of the Schuylkill below Gray's Ferry, the house, which is still standing, being dated 1731. "Old Bartram" was John's son, John, Jr., whose daughter, Mrs. Ann Carr, inherited the property.

⁶² George and Charles were the diarist's brothers. George married and had a large family. Charles died unmarried at Amsterdam on May 8, 1821.

hundred dollars are offered for raising this wreck that has been lying there more than 40 years. It impedes the fishery very much, and by powerful jagged spikes and chains, fastened to joists placed on scows at low water, there is every hope of these buoyant vessels bringing up the hulk with them as the tide rises.

September 18, 1817 I set off this day with an intention to go as far as the Springs of Saratoga to drink the waters, as I had not been well lately. I went at one o'clock in the steamboat *Philadelphia* up to Trenton.

September 19, 1817 We slept at Trenton last night and breakfasted at Princeton, arriving at Brunswick a little after 12 o'clock, where we embarked for New York in the steamboat *Olive Branch*. We arrived at that city about 5 o'clock. I took lodgings at Mrs. Bradishes on the Battery. I awoke this morning quite unwell. As my bowels had been a little out of order, I called at an apothecary's and purchased some laudanum and prepared chalk, of which I took a few drops of the first. Captain Biddle whose fine sloop of war, the *Ontario*, lay in the stream, invited me to visit her.⁶³ I accompanied him on board and was delighted with the neatness and order of every thing I saw. He then politely offered to take me to the Navy Yard, 2 or 3 miles distant, to visit the steam frigate. I did not feel well and ought to have refused, but his barge had a fine awning, and I accompanied him. On my return to the city I was so unwell that I had to send for Dr. Post, an eminent physician,⁶⁴ who gave me medicine, and my disorder turned out to be diarrhea with high fever, which confined me to my bed for 8 days, and to my room 14. During which time, I hired a servant, who nursed me well, and sent for my brother Charles Breck, who came to me with fraternal zeal, and staid nearly a week.

October 4, 1817 This day accompanied by Charles, I embarked in the steamboat to return home, altho' very weak. The day was fine, and by hiring a carriage at Brunswick I was enabled to reach Trenton that evening.

October 5, 1817 I called in the morning upon Mr. Woodruff

⁶³ Capt. James Biddle (1783-1848) sailed from New York on Oct. 5, 1817, to proceed around Cape Horn to the Columbia River, where, on Aug. 19, 1818, he took possession of that territory for the United States.

⁶⁴ Dr. Wright Post (1766-1828), New York surgeon.

and Mr. Higby upon business of Mr. John Ross' estate and after dinner hired a carriage to bring us to Bristol, where we embarked in the steamboat *Philadelphia* for Philada. I reach[ed] the city just before dark, and went immediately to call upon my brother in law, Charles Ross, who was extremely ill.

October 7, 1817 I went into town with Mrs. Breck and Mrs. Ross. We found Mr. Ross extremely low, with the typhus fever, *as the Doctors said*. I returned home in a hack.

October 8, 1817 This morning, just as I was sitting down to breakfast, Mr. Hoher arrived and announced to us that our excellent friend expired on that morning at 5 o'clock.

October 9, 1817 I was occupied all day in preparing for our excellent friend's funeral which took place on

October 10, 1817 Friday morning, attended by the First Troop of City Cavalry on foot, and all the officers of the first brigade in uniform, the Freemasons of Lodge No. 51, and members of the Washington Benevolent Society, with a vast concourse of citizens and many carriages.

October 15, 1817 At the election yesterday about 5500 votes were given in the city, and 6600 in the county. Heister as governor⁶⁵ had in these two districts a majority of near 2900. My name was run as federal candidate for Senator for 4 years, and I was elected by a small majority of 72, which, considering the strength of democracy in the County, is thought to be no small triumph by the Federalists.

November 5, 1817 In town. I called to see West's famous picture, sent by him as a present to the Pennsylvania hospital. The subject is Christ healing the sick and insane in the temple.⁶⁶ The execution appears to me to be worthy of its reputation. The grouping, character and expression of the numerous figures are very fine. The gallery was so crowded, and I was so little disposed to contemplate the decrepit, wild and piteous objects with which it abounds,

⁶⁵ Gov. Joseph Hiester (1752-1832).

⁶⁶ Benjamin West painted "Christ Healing the Sick" for the Pennsylvania Hospital in 1815. It was exhibited, subject to admission fees, in a building erected for it on the Hospital's grounds until 1843, when it was removed to the Department of the Insane, where it must have had a depressing effect. Today it hangs in the lobby of the Hospital's Pine Building.

that I did little more than give it a glance. At some more propitious moment I hope to view it at leisure.

July 26, 1818 I resume my *Journal* after a suspension of eight months. Various causes have contributed to this suspension. The principal one was my absence from home during the winter. I spent four months at Harrisburg in the Senate of Pennsylvania and returned to Sweetbriar on the 26th of March. Since then I have occupied myself with my farm, with reading, and with writing a pamphlet, which I published on the 17th of this month, entitled "Sketch of the internal improvements already made by Pennsylvania; with observations upon her physical and fiscal means for their extension; particularly as they have reference to the future growth and Prosperity of Philadelphia. . . ." I wrote this book with a desire to forward the internal improvements, which are now beginning, since 500,000 dollars have been subscribed for the perfection of the navigation of the river Schuylkill. This pamphlet, I am happy to say, has made some impression, and is selling fast.

July 29, 1818 I received several flattering testimonials of approbation of my pamphlet; two of which in *writing*, from Judge Peters and Nicholas Biddle Esq. are peculiarly gratifying, because they understand the subject.

August 3, 1818 Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Hamilton and Miss Ellen Lyle made a call. Mr. Hamilton is lately from England and drove down in a very stylish London Barouche—chariot; that is to say, a chariot with lamps etc which can be thrown open so as to form a Barouche. A seat is fixed on the rear for the footman to sit in, with his face to the horses. It is a beautiful vehicle, uniting style to taste, but heavy, requiring four horses to draw it. Mrs. Hamilton in her dress was the pink of fashion, having lilac boots, with feathers and shawl to match, and her gown etc highly and richly decorated. This extravagance is habitual with her, and finery in her attire is a hobby and daily occupation with her. She appeared affable and ladylike in her manners, and looked as well as I could see through a thick veil, both blooming and pretty.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Andrew Hamilton, who died in 1825, was the younger brother of the late James Hamilton. He had married Eliza Uruhart in England in 1817. His sister Ann had married James Lyle (1767–1825), a Philadelphia merchant, and had two daughters, Mary and Ellen. Ellen (1797–1852), mentioned here, was to marry Hartman Kuhn (1784–1860) later in the year.

It appears by a late account that there are 49 engines and hose carriages in Philada with 15,000 feet of hose. These are managed by fine active young fellows, who by their skill as firemen make the city secure against that calamity, at least as much so as any in the world.

August 4, 1818 The eldest son of my uncle Daniel Breck paid me a visit, and spent the day with me. He is a young gentleman of genteel appearance, intelligent and well behaved. We rode together up to the Flat Rock, on the Schuylkill, and viewed the crib-dam, locks and canal now making there. They appear to be executed in a workmanlike manner.

August 6, 1818 In town in the morning. I found the spirit of inland improvements gaining ground. Mr. Raguet⁶⁸ told me that he and a few others had taken of White & Co. a share in the Lehigh river concern to the amount of \$50,000.⁶⁹ Two years ago there would not have been a shilling lent upon this concern, for then no one cared anything about it. Now, I am happy to say the town begins to be sensible of the importance of removing the obstructions in our rivers, and of leading their waters this way.

August 8, 1818 I received a letter today from Mr. Joseph Delaplaine, requesting me to sit for my portrait, to be placed in his national gallery of portraits. This compliment (which I have done nothing to deserve) has rather mortified than pleased me, and I shall most certainly decline.⁷⁰

August 13, 1818 I find by an account which I have cut out of the newspaper called the "American Sentinel" that 30 stage-coaches & 7 steamboats leave Philada. *daily* (Sunday excepted)—13 three times a week, 4 twice a week and 5 once a week! What surprizing activity and movement all this going and coming denotes!

July 17, 1819 I once more resume my journal. Today I complete my forty eighth year.

July 30, 1819 We received a visit from Mrs. Cadwalader, the

⁶⁸ Condy Raguet (1784-1842), editor and economist.

⁶⁹ Josiah White and the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company.

⁷⁰ Joseph Delaplaine (1774-1824) had published *Delaplaine's Repository of the Lives and Portraits of Distinguished American Characters* (Philadelphia, 1815-1816).

lady of Genl. Thomas Cadwalader, who is a very amiable & accomplished woman.⁷¹ Her husband is now in Europe.

August 1, 1819 I received a letter from Doctor Leib, who seems alarmed at the old Federalists sticking to their political name.⁷² As part of the old school joined us last year, and called themselves "Independent Republicans," he has become anxious to have all the notices for the appointment of conferees made out in that way. I answered him that it was my intention to call our friends in Blockley & Kingsessing together under that name; that I thought whenever a name became obnoxious or unpopular, it had better be abandoned; that principles, not names were what we ought to cherish, and that I would this day cause the notices of this district to be placed at the taverns in the terms he requests.

August 8, 1819 I met Mr. Busti at Mrs. Ross's. This gentleman is agent for the Holland Company, landholders, or land speculators, in the State of New York. That Company purchased at three different times about three millions of acres, all in one body; they began to settle it in 1800, and the number of inhabitants now residing on about 1,800,000 acres *sold* amounts to eighty thousand. These settlers owe near three millions and a half of dollars, which they will no doubt pay one of these days. Mr. Busti does not press them. . . .

August 10, 1819 I called upon Mrs. Ross today, and afterwards went to a meeting of the "Independent Republicans" convened at Elliot's tavern at the sign of the Lamb, for chusing conferees for the county to arrange the business for next general election. For many years past these primary assemblies, if I may so name them, have been called by me, and very often no one has attended except the chairman, secretary and one other, and these have thus delegated all the Federal voice of the two townships of Blockley & Kingsessing to the conferees chosen by these meetings, which most commonly has consisted of the members of this slender meeting. In

⁷¹ She was Mary Biddle, daughter of Col. Clement Biddle. Because of opposition to her marriage on the part of Cadwalader's mother's family, arising out of ill-will connected with the Continental Army's winter at Valley Forge, the couple's marriage was achieved by an elopement.

⁷² Michael Leib was a fiery Democratic partisan, a full-time politician. Thought by many to be unscrupulous, he was tarnished by scandal.

this way, having been previously appointed, I have met the whole assemblage of County conferees in Phila and have been chosen chairman, when it has become my duty to name a sub-committee for the purpose of consulting with the city, and finally agreeing upon a ticket for almost every office. . . . I met yesterday at the meeting a farmer coming from market, whom I made secretary, having been previously appointed chairman by the landlord; the meeting being thus composed of us three only, we went to work!

September 2, 1819 Mr. Elliott was here, surveying my island, meadow and ground in front of the house, all which I shall probably lose by the construction of the water dam now erecting about one mile below me. This dam will back the water so as to cover the ground surveyed above, amounting to about 15 or 16 acres.

September 8, 1819 This afternoon, hearing that a balloon was to be raised at Vauxhall gardens, with a man attached to it who was to descend with a *Parachute*, I walked with Lucy and some other children to the high grounds of Mantua village, from which we had a good view of the garden. We waited until past 6 o'clock, without being gratified with this novel sight, and returned home. About 8 o'clock a great fire was seen in town by some of my family, and soon after two of my men who had been permitted to go in to the gardens of Vauxhall returned and informed us that the people outside the garden fence were pulling everything to pieces through rage at their disappointment at the balloon's having failed to ascend, and that they supposed the conflagration we saw was the theatre pavilion etc of the Vauxhall gardens.

September 10, 1819 I rode into town this morning and visited the Vauxhall gardens. The conjecture of my people proved true; for I found that every building had been consumed by a daring mob. It seems that a party of base villains, who had paid nothing for the sight undertook to revenge themselves upon the poor Mongolfier, who had given every evidence of his desire to ascend and perfectly satisfied 7 or 800 people inside the garden of this disposition; yet these people who had paid their dollar apiece, and witnessed the man's great exertions were pelted with stones by a gang of unprincipled rascals outside, who broke into the garden, demolished the balloon, instruments of music and buildings!

October 13, 1819 In town in the morning to select a school and

masters for Lucy and lodgings for Mrs. B. who wishes to be near her daughter this winter. We concluded to send our child to Mrs. Beazler, where she will be taught all that belongs to the English department, together with French, musick, drawing and dancing. Mrs. B. finds herself with Miss McElroy in Spruce Street, to be near her daughter's school.

July 17, 1820 I once more resume my journal on this my birthday, which completes my 49th year. On Saturday I attended a county meeting, and was called to the chair. The meeting was held in the Commissioners hall in the northern liberties and was convened for the purpose of selecting a candidate for Governor. . . . I find myself figuring away in the newspapers as the chairman of the County meeting at which a string of enthusiastic resolutions on General Hiester were passed, and recommending him for our next Governor. [*Breck had privately favored the incumbent, Governor Findlay.*]

July 20, 1820 This afternoon we set off to go to the Woodlands. . . . We then went to Mrs. Powel's, whom we found at home. This lady is very pretty, was born at New York, where Col. Powel married her 3 years ago.⁷³ As a New Yorker she does not like Philada. Speaks of our climate as very trying to the constitution, and condemns it as little inferior to that of New Orleans. Expatiated upon out heats etc.

July 22, 1820 At the Agricultural Society,⁷⁴ where I had the pleasure to record the unanimous opinion of its members that our crops are so bountiful as to call for the loud hosannas of the whole community.

August 1, 1820 This day my Swiss boy Justin Des Coudres is free, having served me three years. These foreign servants are getting out of fashion, people beginning to like the country-born ones better.

August 3, 1820 We rode to the Woodlands this afternoon. The grounds are all in superb order. The place with one hundred acres of ground is for sale at seventy-five thousand dollars. Altho' the state of the times forbid the hope of making a sale at that price, I

⁷³ Col. John Hare Powel (1786-1856) married Julia deVeaux in 1817.

⁷⁴ The Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, formed in 1785.

do not think it too high. The Hamilton family have lately met with a drawback in their income, arising from the relinquishment, on the part of the Bush-hill compy. of a contract that gave that family thirty-six thousand dollars per annum. The Bush-hill estate will not now bring the one half of that sum in rents.

August 12, 1820 Oppressively hot. I was in town in the morning, and was told by Dr. Lehman⁷⁵ that a society of gentlemen were desirous that I should join them at dinner at the fish house in my neighbourhood.⁷⁶ I went accordingly and found there Messrs. George Vaux, Sam. Ewing, Wm. Lehman, Jos. Lewis, Genl. Cadwalader, Mr. Markoe, Mr. Rundle, Mr. Richd. Peters, Jr. and a few others. Considering that this was an assemblage of some of the smartest wits of the town, our party was heavy and rather stupid. No scintillations of fancy, no glitterings of enlivened genius, and very few flashes of momentary merriment. Was it the warm day or the alarm of fever [*yellow fever in Philadelphia*] that relaxed the springs of minds usually brilliant and cheerful?

August 15, 1820 In the afternoon Mr. Sully, the celebrated painter, paid me a visit. His talents for historical portrait and even landscape painting are very distinguished. I engaged him to paint between this and November a copy from Raphael of a Madona. He has already executed one very successfully, and Mr. Lloyd for whom he is to paint the one bespoke by me is to have the choice of either at two hundred dollars.⁷⁷

As a gentleman, I was much pleased with Mr. Sully. His manners are polished, soft and winning, his countenance the very index of goodness. All his actions confirm the barometrical exactitude of that index.

⁷⁵ Dr. William Lehman (1779-1829), a nonpractising physician who served in the legislature from 1814 until his death.

⁷⁶ The "fish house" is a reference to the State in Schuylkill, founded in 1732 as the Colony in Schuylkill, which maintained its club house, or Castle, and other improvements necessary for its members' fishing and culinary pursuits on Richard Rundle's river bank. Its Castle has since been moved three times and is now at Andalusia.

⁷⁷ Thomas Sully (1783-1872), for many years Philadelphia's most popular portrait painter, made a number of copies after old masters. On Oct. 12, 1820, he finished a "Holy Family" after Raphael for "Lloyd of Boston," referred to here, and at the agreed upon price of \$200. Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding, *The Life and Works of Thomas Sully* (Philadelphia, 1921), 360.

August 17, 1820 The yellow fever is spreading, 8 new cases were reported yesterday by the board of health, who are closing up the district in which my real estate in Philada. lies. This untenanted property will be now wholly unproductive.

August 18, 1820 I walked with my daughter to the canal & dam now constructing by the corporation of Philada.⁷⁸ It is upon a stupendous plan and will cost between one & two hundred thousand dollars. These works are for the publick benefit, and must of course be executed, altho' to the great detriment of individuals, particularly myself, as my estate here (at Sweetbriar) will be deprived of 16 acres of its best meadow land, and all my alluvial pasture will be drowned.

August 19, 1820 This afternoon the corps of cadets stationed for their studies at West Point arrived here and encamped in my neighbourhood at Mantua. It consists of about 200 young gentlemen from 14 to 20 years old, the sons of our first citizens, and are educated at the expense of the Nation for the purpose of entering the army. . . . They were escorted to their encampment by the volunteer militia of Philada., who, with 3 bands of musick, made a fine appearance. The cadet band is uncommonly fine, and has for its chief a scientifick musician, who receives Captain's pay (75 dollars per month). He is an Englishman and performs upon a variety of instruments with great taste and execution.

August 20, 1820 To gratify my daughter, I visited the cadet camp twice today. It appeared to me that no fewer than 4,000 well dressed people of both sexes were there in the afternoon.

September 9, 1820 On Thursday last was launched at the Philadelphia navy yard, in the presence (says a newspaper) of 40,000 people, the ship of the line *North Carolina*. This makes the sixth line of battle ship of ours afloat on the Atlantick: the *Independence*, *Washington*, *Franklin*, *Columbus*, *Ohio* and *North Carolina*. Three more are nearly ready to launch. These ships, altho' rated at 74 guns, carry from 90 to 100, and may be ranked as ships of the first class. The two last in the above list are named after states, in conformity to an act of congress, which directs that ships of the line

⁷⁸ The Fairmount Dam and the locks of the Schuylkill Navigation Company on its western side.

shall be named after the states; frigates after our principal rivers, and sloops after our principal cities; and, in order to avoid any jealousy by an appearance of preference, the names are selected by lot.

October 13, 1820 I now go to the city three days in the week for Lucy's education. Dancing from 10 to 11, drawing from 11 to 12, musick from 12 to one, and the alternate days a private tutor is to attend her 2½ hours for grammer, cyphering, writing, reading, geography, history etc etc. A country residence is peculiarly inconvenient for the education of children. . . .

August 27, 1821 I resume my journal after a lapse of many months, during which a variety of business has so occupied my time as to leave neither inclination nor leisure to attend to it.

September 16, 1821 On Tuesday evening last, I met an assemblage of highly respectable gentlemen at Judd's hotel⁷⁹ for the purpose of considering a proposition of the Philosophical Society relative to the cutting a communication between the Chesapeak and Delaware bays. The meeting did me the honor to put me in the chair. A resolution was adopted naming a committee of 12 gentlemen and the chairman of the meeting to take this very important business into consideration, and to investigate former proceedings. Mr. Girard was put at the head of this committee, with the hope that he would serve as chairman, but this I understand he declines. It is singular that he appointed *Sunday* at 3 o'clock to receive the committee at his house, alleging that business out of town prevented his seeing the gentlemen at any other time.⁸⁰ It is to be hoped that this great undertaking will be revived and successfully executed.

September 20, 1821 After attending the board of Directors [*of the Union Canal*],⁸¹ I staid dinner in town for the purpose of seeing Mathew Carey respecting the contemplated canal from the Chesapeake to the Delaware. Mr. Stephen Girard having refused to serve as chairman of the committee of investigation, Mr. Carey addressed himself to me for the purpose of taking his place, and rather than

⁷⁹ Anson Judd's hotel was on South Third St.

⁸⁰ Most people of refinement were, at this time, strict Sabbatarians.

⁸¹ Their office was at 6 Carpenter's Court.

retard the progress of this desirable work, I issued notices to the com[mitt]ee in that capacity.

September 20, 1821 The conferees of the City of Philada. deputed Messrs. Caleb Newbold Jr. and Clemt. S. Miller to urge me to serve as Senator in the State Legislature another four years. [*Breck declined.*]

September 24, 1821 I went to town to meet the Committee upon the crosscut canal from Chesapeake to Delaware. I was appointed chairman. A subcommittee was appointed by the chairman of Messrs. Carey, Fisher, Meredith, Sergeant & Gratz,⁸² who were instructed to collect information and report to a future meeting.

September 27, 1821 Our young lad, Henry McConnell, took sick, and as I have had one of my family sick before, and feel somewhat timid about the effects of the dam lately erected at Fairmount, just below me, indeed I felt some concern upon that head long ago, and am still apprehensive that it will throw us into fever & agues, intermittent, remittant or bilious fever. The water has been heretofore in constant motion in front of my house caused by the flux and reflux of the tides, but now it is apparently stagnant and must alter the character of the atmosphere hereabouts which for 23 years (that I have resided here) has been of the most salubrious kind.

April 18, 1822 I once more resume the task of journalizing the current events of the day. Soon after I ceased writing, namely on the 9th of October, I was taken down with a remitting fever, which confined me to my bed chamber for 8 weeks. My family that consisted of nine persons had 5 sick at once. The whole country was afflicted, particularly along the waters, except cities and large towns. . . . Not a house escaped on either side of the river between the new dam and the falls, whilst last year every family enjoyed good health. May we not ascribe this to the absence of the tide, particularly as few or no persons were attacked on the tide waters below fairmount dam and Gray's ferry?

In the course of the winter I visited Dover in the State of Delaware, in company with my friend Mr. Wm. Meredith,⁸³ upon some business regarding the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. . . . A short time afterwards I made in conjunction with Mr. Meredith

⁸² Mathew Carey, James C. Fisher, William Meredith, John Sergeant and Simon Gratz.

⁸³ William Meredith (1772-1844) was a lawyer and a prominent civic leader.

the report that is posted overleaf. [*The report urged that with the Schuylkill and Lehigh rivers now opened to the coal trade, and with the Union Canal connecting the agricultural country of the Susquehanna with the Schuylkill River that the construction of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal was essential to complete Philadelphia's chain of inland navigation.*] It is the desire of the well wishers to the city to get the cross cut effected, so as to bring to our port the Susquehanna trade and part of the Chesapeake bay.

I spent a pleasant winter at home, having recruited my health with rapidity—the noise and bustle of public life at Harrisburg, to which I had been subject for the last 4 winters were replaced by domestic quiet and the pleasing occupation of educating my daughter . . . attending to the concerns of the Union Canal Company as a director, and mixing moderately in the gayeties of fashionable life.

April 21, 1822 In the afternoon I walked to Mantua Village⁸⁴ and spent an hour with Mr. Value, a gentleman who was educated at the same College in France that I was.⁸⁵ He is about establishing an academy and has lately built a convenient house for that purpose.

April 24, 1822 In these United States nothing would be wanting to make life perfectly happy (humanly speaking) had we good servants. But so easy is a livelihood obtained that fickleness, drunkenness and not infrequently insolence mark the character of our domestics. In my family (consisting of 9 or 10 persons) the greatest abundance is provided . . . 70 lbs of fresh butcher's meat, poultry & fish a week, and when I have company nearly twice as much—the best and kindest treatment is given to the servants . . . their wages are the highest going, and uniformly paid when asked for, yet during the last twelve months we have had *seven* different cooks and *five* different waiters!! One leaves me because there is not enough to do; another because there is too much; a third quarrels with a fourth; a fifth gets drunk and absents herself for a week; in short, they are the most provoking compound of folly, turpitude, ingratitude and idleness that can be possibly conceived by any one who has not resided in America.

April 26, 1822 In the afternoon we visited Belmont, the seat of Judge Peters. In walking thro' his fine grove of spruce hemlock,

⁸⁴ Mantua Village later became a part of the District of West Philadelphia.

⁸⁵ Victor Value, professor of French at Mantua Village, had attended the College of Sorèze.

the Judge told me that Joseph Bonaparte, when he occupied the adjoining estate of Lansdowne, walked over one afternoon to see him, and whilst rambling about under the shade of these lofty hemlocks, the Ex-King asked by his interpreter what name the Judge had given to this umbrageous walk? I call it, said the Judge, The Grove of Oblivion. Ah! exclaimed Joseph, what would I not give to possess such a treasure! It was here that General Washington, when President, used to seek relaxation from his official labours, and in it would seem to forget all the cares of government.

May 14, 1822 With my 4 men I began today to remove my greenhouse plants from the conservatory to the new garden.

October 5, 1822 The Federal Conferees having put me in nomination for member of Congress for the first district . . . I went by invitation to Mr. Diney's this afternoon, where I met Michl. Freytag Esq., Mr. Fine and Mr. Houton, all my sincere friends except the latter. . . . We arranged our plans for Tuesday next.

October 8, 1822 Before the election opened today, I went to town for an hour or two and then drove to the tavern in Blockley where the election is held for this district. Altho' my friends were active, my enemies were not idle. I found the most absurd and extravagant falsehoods in the mouths of the Hestons, Leintners & others. To operate upon the Quakers, it was said that I had declared I would rather see the Devil pass the threshold of my door, than a Quaker; to operate upon the poor, it was reported as my opinion that a poor man should be distinguished from a rich one by a badge. With such ridiculous stories afloat, and knowing as I did the preponderance of Democracy in Cedar Ward and Southwark, I do not expect to be elected, particularly as my rival is an artful man of an intriguing character, and considerable influence in the southern suburb, where there reside at least 25,000 out of the 40,000 souls that form the first congressional district.

October 9, 1822 Mr. Freytag & Mr. Fine called upon me this afternoon to inform me of my success. It seems that the two city wards gave me each a majority, and even in Southwark I came within 60 of Mr. Sutherland,⁸⁶ so that my majority is on the whole 191.

⁸⁶ Joel Barlow Sutherland (1792-1861), a Jacksonian Democrat, subsequently served in Congress from 1827 to 1837.

October 22, 1822 When in town the other day, I met with rather a singular circumstance, considering the abject state in which the blacks are held in these United States.

A Negro man named Fortune or Forton⁸⁷ accosted me in the street by offering his hand to me, which (knowing his respectability) I accepted, when he told me that at my late election to Congress, he had taken 15 white men to vote for me. In my sail-loft (he is a sailmaker) I have 30 persons at work, said he, and among them are 22 journeymen—15 of whom are white, the rest coloured. All the white men went to the poles and voted for you. It is very uncommon in America to see *coloured* men, as they are called, conducting business upon a large scale, and, notwithstanding the laws of Pennsylvania do not forbid it, no blacks vote at elections, at least in the eastern part of the state. By our Constitution this degraded, and I am sorry to say, in the region of Pennsylvania, dissipated race, are allowed to give their suffrages at all elections, provided they pay the legal taxes. Yet, owing to custom, prejudice or design, they never presume to approach the hustings, neither are they taxed or summoned upon juries or at militia musters.

October 29, 1822 Mrs. Breck went to town with me today to select some marble pieces for 3 of our bed chambers, and a plain paper to paper them.

November 4, 1822 I attended the board of Union Canal directors today for the purpose of dismissing Mr. Baldwin our engineer.⁸⁸ This man's talents are good, tho he is slow in his motions, but his temper is proud, irascible, and suspicious, so much so that we could not get along together, and we shall discharge him in 2 months, and probably employ Mr. Strickland at \$3,000 per annum, instead of \$4,000 that we give to Mr. Baldwin.

November 9, 1822 We offered Mr. Wm. Strickland a salary of three thousand dollars to superintend as chief engineer the works of the Schuylkill & Susquehanna Union Canal cut. Which he declined.

November 11, 1822 Mr. [Simon] Gratz in pressing terms asked me to serve as director of the Schuylkill Bank.

⁸⁷ James Forten (d. 1842) was the most highly respected black man in the city.

⁸⁸ Loammi Baldwin, a Boston canal engineer, had been hired in 1821 through the agency of James Lloyd.

November 18, 1822 I came to town early to attend an election of Bank directors at the Schuylkill Bank. My name was on the successful ticket. There had been some excitement in the old board, and two of the members were turned out. . . . I dined with the directors at Rubicam's tavern,⁸⁹ and in the evening went to the circus. The house was full, and amongst the audience was the Ex-King of Spain, Joseph Bonaparte and his daughter. For more than 3 months performances have been going on six nights in the week at the circus, and almost always to overflowing houses, never without a full one. Yet the attractions are not very strong, with the exception of the horsemanship which is pleasing.

November 19, 1822 Our Union Canal election took place to-day, no change in the ticket. After the election we dined at Franklin house in very good style. This is an eating house kept by Joseph Head, a gentleman who once moved in the most fashionable circles and possessed a handsome fortune which he was desirous of increasing by trade, and sunk the whole. Having a family of children to maintain, he was obliged to cater for pay, instead of pleasure.⁹⁰

November 20, 1822 In the afternoon Mrs. B. & Lucy called upon Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd at the Washington Hall hotel,⁹¹ and afterwards went to an oratorio of Hayden's creation, given in the saloon of that hall. The musick was fine, and much relished by an audience of upwards of 2,000 persons.

November 21, 1822 In town to see Mr. Lloyd. This gentleman has been importuned to take upon himself the Presidency of the Bank of the United States, but he declines.⁹²

December 3, 1822 Being detained all day [in town], I went to the New Theatre in Chestnut Street in the evening.⁹³ It was the

⁸⁹ Mrs. Rubicam's Coffee House was on the northwest corner of Fifth and Minor Sts. The Philadelphia Club, founded in 1834, traces its antecedents to a group of gentlemen who met at Rubicam's to play cards in 1830.

⁹⁰ Joseph Head, previously listed in the directories simply as a gentleman, had a summer home at Bristol, where he was prominent prior to his failure.

⁹¹ The Washington Hall Hotel, designed by William Mills and built in 1814, was on South Third St., north of Spruce.

⁹² Langdon Cheves having announced his retirement as president of the Bank, a search for his successor was in progress. James Lloyd could have had the position had he wanted it.

⁹³ This was the second Chestnut Street Theatre, erected on the site of the first which had burned in 1820.

second night of its being opened, and yet was it scarcely more than half full. Yesterday, when opened for the first time, it was not crowded. Nothing, however, can be more beautiful, convenient, secure and substantial. The exterior is of marble, and inside a little *bijoux*. The house can contain about 2,000 and has seven entrances for the audience, beside those for the actors.

December 7, 1822 Some arks loaded with coal from the Schuylkill mines sunk opposite to my house a few nights ago, and 4 men, overcome with fatigue, who had charge of them applied in the evening of Thursday last for lodgings, which was given them, and today the sunken boats were raised and floated down the river. About 150 arks have passed down in the course of the year. These arks are, however, too fragile. When the improvements on the river are finished, they must be differently constructed.

December 23, 1822 As I was preparing for town this morning, I received a note from my neighbor, Mr. Thos. George inviting me to go to Merion Meeting house to hear a Mr. Hicks, a Quaker preacher.⁹⁴ I ordered my gig and drove to Merion. The meeting house was crowded with both sexes, and after sitting in silence for half an hour, Mr. Hicks rose, and delivered an incoherent address upon the proper mode of worshipping the Almighty. He said that no preacher should possess a will of his own, that he and the people came together to wait on the Lord, who knew better than anyone of them what was good for them, and by consequence praying was useless. It was proper, he said, for those assembled to watch the spirit within them, and if it prompted them to speak, all deficiency of book learning would be supplied. It was not necessary to recur to scripture or any other written law. This spirit was true worship, and not the ceremonial of churches, which was all pomp & parade, and no worship. So refined were the man's doctrines on this head, that he thought it improper for a true worshipper to hold any office whatever, and advised all those who were in possession of commissions of the peace or any other offices to resign them immediately. Government, he considered as administered by wicked people for

⁹⁴ Elias Hicks (1748-1830), Quaker preacher and leader of the separation in the Society of Friends, was a champion of liberal views and the Inward Light. The Hicksite movement took its name from him.

the purpose only of restraining the wicked. Tell me not of the danger of a worse man's taking your place, if you do not act as a magistrate. Let the ungodly control the ungodly, and resign you your posts. So that after having in very false syntax and very bad grammar and worse pronunciation condemned the use of prayer, of the scriptures, and of government, he dismissed us at the conclusion of nearly a two hours discourse.