

July 19<sup>th</sup> —

My Dear Sister

Not to delay one hour the generous purpose  
of your benevolent citizens. I send you by this mail,  
(under cover to Mr. Clay as you desired) the constitution &  
of our Orphan Society it has been established 18 years —  
and as you know has succeeded as well as the imperfect  
nature of human institutions might be expected to succeed,  
and from my own experience I may say that difficulties  
in the outset but deepens the interest which the object &  
character of such an asylum awakens in the hearts of  
those engaged in it. It is a fitting moment for commencing  
the operations of this sublime charity in your City when  
so many parentless children cry for succor — and so many  
bereaved parents weep for these children "because they are  
not" — and their hearts are softened towards the penniless babes  
of others. — you must not be discouraged — dear, if only a few  
begin with you this labor of love, for every year it becomes  
more & more attaching — and when your house is opened, every  
winter feels its value & importance — We commenced by taking  
a small house, and opened it with but five children —  
one mother & her daughter as an assistant received \$150 m  
ann. and there were the only persons employed — the board  
of Managers consisted of 24 Ladies, who were very industrious  
in arranging the house and making rules for its regulation,  
and happily Mrs. Hall was an excellent house keeper  
and the neatness & order of the establishment made it  
a favorite with the public — and then we asked for a  
charter, and tho' its title was "Orphan Society of Phil<sup>a</sup>" instead  
of Penn<sup>a</sup> — it became known that all the children of the State  
were entitled to its benefit — & in process of time the Legis  
lature gave us a grant of \$5000 — and with this — donations



I begones - we have become rich - but in our poorest time  
these Maids, we were never obliged to refuse admittance  
to an orphan for want of funds - and in your land  
of plenty, such an evil can never be apprehended -

for economy's sake we dressed the children in uniform, and  
chose domestic stuffs - these food is specified in the chapter  
of rules - when the family increased we found it necessary  
for the preservation of morals in the family to limit the age  
of admission - as the introduction of large children who had  
been badly brought up, set dangerous examples - we like  
wise fixed an age for binding them out -

By the first opportunity I will send you as many of  
the annual reports as can be collected - that you may  
be able to calculate the expenses of such an institution  
I think from 30 to 35\$ per An. for each child while maintained  
I educate them -

Much depends on the character of the Nation - and that  
the managers should perfectly understand it - when con-  
fidence founded on this knowledge is established, the direction  
of the whole is an easy and pleasant task - we have found  
too, that to employ no more persons than ~~were~~ necessary to carry  
on the business of the house, is the best & most comfortable plan.  
In forming a board of managers care should be taken to select  
Ladies of different denominations of religion - that the whole  
community may be represented. The scriptures, and a homily  
for family worship (which I will have copied for you) it being  
only in manuscript, and selected ~~by~~ or rather written for  
the Institution has been adopted and approved by our board.  
When the church service would not be accepted - in truth my  
dear sister, that which is most prized is often least under-  
stood - and religion which means the same in every human  
heart, is so ill defined to the human understanding, that



that it is the hardest thing to regulate in associations  
of this kind. a practical & pious system of religious  
instruction - some good people expect so much of children  
that they are required to learn words, to which no correspon-  
ding ideas are associated in their minds. and then if these conduct  
contradicts their professions the poor things have the sin of  
deceit added to the common frailties of their age & condition.

I have two charming letters from my dear sister to thank you  
for. you can hardly realize how joyously I now break the  
seals of your letters - which a week or two since put me in such  
a palpitation that I could almost hear the throbbing of  
anxiety. thank God for all the mercy extended to you  
my beloved ones - I am going a little journey next week  
I will not say for my health - because I should get it  
as well at home - but being a little weak, our brethren  
are kindly going to send me to breathe the fresh  
of the country - Sister Mary & Ellen went this morning  
to Long Branch. we begin to hope that we shall escape  
a visitation from Cholera this season - I forgot to tell  
you that Hannah has her long wish gratified -  
she is with her husband at Virginia Springs  
and will return to make preparations for the  
winter before the commencement of another year.  
Ben is as happy & proud as if he had a pen  
upside to bequeath to her heir -

every body here send a deal of love to you and  
yours. I hope the dear boys may indulge in more  
business than potatoes before this time - what should  
I have done my dear sister. with broiled bacon!!  
do you think I could have peached thus in your beautiful  
land? - Adieu God bless you - ever your Obedt.





Mrs Benjamin Gath  
Lexington N.Y.

