

Rebecca Gratz to Benjamin Gratz

March 7, 1819

I am always delighted My dear Ben, to receive your letters but do not feel any mortification at your silence, when your letters to our brothers, assure me of your health I am grateful for the blessing. and am too sensible of the amiable sensibility of your heart to doubt your constant affection for your family. the bond of sympathy will I trust never be broken, which has been such a source of happiness to our family. and you are cherished, with the fondest remembrance by all, even the little children of our Sisters enquire with interest for letters & receive your messages with delight. Miriam was much gratified by your flattering notice of her letter. and looks forward to the fulfilment of your promise as a thing of great importance. you must not fail to write to her.

I have never been apprehensive of your becoming attached to a wandering life _ but that some project of interest would induce you to fix your residence abroad. and I have considered few things in life worth the sacrifice of the society and habits of home, and the cherished associations of early life. at least few that could be obtained in the western wilds. If objects to advance your prospects opened in any city where you could enjoy such advantages as you are accustomed to whether in the new or old world. I believe I could submit to separation easier, because I should still believe you surrounded by friends & comforts, but the ideal good which of late has been so inticing to our young men of clearing land, building huts _ cultivating soil with the sweat of their brows. and waiting till it should grow into a populous city and seeing them selves great proprietors of lots and the wealth of ages is too chimerical for realization. and I could not bear, that you should waste the flower of your days – (which can never bloom again [end of page]

in such vain experiments. You have had a delightful season for your travels, the winter has been like a continued autumn. and spring has returned before we have felt the rigours of a months cold weather I hope you will be as well pleased with the remainder of your tour I have written to our friend Maria, and am quite ashamed of having neglected her so long. every body I see from Kentucky speaks of her in terms of deserved praise. I have not yet communicated to R.C. the contents of your letter. she is just beginning to be a little cheerful after a winter of depression, anxiety & disappointment and thought to postpone it, until nearer the period, when all her doubts would be removed. hers is the most determined self-delusion, I have ever seen an instance of. and think nothing but positive relinquishment on his part, can convince her of his perfidy. however, as she continually enquires if your letters contain any news for her, I shall show her your letter at a fit opportunity. Aunt Bell frequently talks of you. and always sends her love. the girls talk of writing to you. but

I do not whether they have done so yet _ Maria & Ellen Hays have also fixed many days to write, but I have not seen a letter produced yet. they are so anxious of doing something very pretty that they are never able to satisfy themselves & I am afraid your correspondents will not increase _ they have been a good deal in company this winter. and last week gave a large party. the amusements of the season has conformed very much to the weather _ they have had very little dancing and until lately few parties. the Theatre has been more fashionably attended and as there has been a succession of good actors here _ the dramatic taste of the citizens revived. the Streets exhibited a great deal more gaiety than usual. fine weather & good walking brought out belles in handsome walking dresses. Your studies in your Chesnut Street Office would have been constantly interrupted. and what the girls have lost by your windows being shut is hardly to be calculated _ but this genial weather does not seem to have quickened the growth of sentiment. there are no new matches on the tapis. at least none that come under this description. Dr. Rush is much devoted to Miss Ridgeway. but the value of her charmes were no doubt weighed and calculated before their passion grew in the public eye _ no one doubts his intentions. and her reception of him can only be interpreted into a determination to accept him _ or shew the world that she has it in her power to reject him.
[end of page]

Nancy Williams, Cabot, John Biddle & Logan dined with us on Sunday. they talked of you & I think. B. & W. said they had written _ Logan does not seem inclined to hazard his peace in the service of the Fair again, or he could not have wanted an opportunity lately as he was engaged in the bridal party of Tunis & Miss Fox. and he has become a great favorite with the ladies _

Our Sisters are well _ Richea only is very thin. her maternal fatigue & anxiety does not decrease as her child continues subject to that distressing disease _ Reuben too is thin _ disappointed in his hopes of obtaining a support for his family in the new office for which he was a candidate _ he seems hardly to have nerve to support the cares that oppress him _ Gratz is on a visit to his family _ his golden dreams _ passing thro the crucible of experience, come out (as might be expected) much lighter _ but upon the whole, he has no reason to complain. he is deputy A.[C.?] and has as much business as a new comer could expect. but the prospect of making a fortune is still distant _ however if he has patience & perseverance he may [...]take it _ at any rate if he can maintain himself and take a burthen off his father. it is worth the struggle some of your other acquaintances seen on the road to [p...tion?] E. Ingra[ham] is appointed an Associate Judge _

Jo is [sti]ll at Washington _ Hyman returned last week, and I [hope?] to have the remnant of our family collected, it has been very small all winter. the 10th. of April is Passover would I might expect you to keep it with us, when you went away I did certainly hope to see you at that time _ you must at least let me know where you will be at that period. on Thursday next is purim _ no longer a mirthful festival with us. it passes away sans celebration _ but more solemn feasts are more permanently observed. it is difficult to fix a time to be happy.

and tho' we feel grateful for the deliverance this feast commemorates
as nothing is required of us but to be glad & merry we are not always
able to do so. Accept the Affectionate love of all the family. My dearest
Ben, and believe me always with the sweetest prayers for your health
prosperity & happiness your most truly Attached Sister RG.

March 7th. 1819.

[Address:]
Benjamin Gratz Esqr.
Lexington, KY
[Vincennes, Ind?]
via Washington City

[Note: This letter was forwarded to Lexington, KY from Vincennes on April 29.]