

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz

December 31, 1820

Well My dear Maria, I have given you time enough to anticipate a letter, and I hope you will give it at last a welcome reception _ but do not believe me capable of such affectation as to have written merely to enhance its value by the length of time it was due _ indeed I have been very busy as I always am at the close of the Year _ and until my business was accomplished did not feel at ease to sit down to write letters _ but this evening I have spread all my dear correspondents claims upon my desk. and resolved my Sisters should be the first answered. _ You are quite a riddle Maria, & as I am not very ingenious in solving such matters: I shall wait patiently until you disclose your own secrets, in the mean time you may assure yourself of the tenderest interest, and best wishes of my heart _

I am very glad to hear our old friend Col Morrison is recovering _ from your letter I apprehended that we should never see him again, and I always feel so much indebted to him for the friendship he shews my brothers in Kentucky _ besides liking him for his own agreeable qualities, that his loss would be much lamented

Pray what part have you espoused in the british altercation? will you be pleased to hear that the Queen is acquitted, and the city of London been illuminated three nights in honor of her triumph? this is the latest news we have _ and more over what concerns us more. the Spanish treaty is ratified _ a short arrival brings this
account

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so that the New Year will be joyfully hailed by some of our citizens who have old claims on the Spanish nation _ as to the termination of the Queens trial, I cannot say that I feel much satisfaction in it _ she is not sufficiently interesting in her own character to make one rejoice for her, altho it is hard that a woman should have been discarded on such a plea as that first adopted by her husband _ I suppose we shall now [hear] of a coronation, and wonderfully loyal pagentries _ I have lately read a history of Geo: the 3rd. his court & family _ a collection of domestic anecdotes which were quite interesting & agreeable _ the old kings parents were excellent characters, and his bringing up such as was likely to produce a virtuous prince _ but his sons did not follow his example _ and his successor cannot boast much of his subjects love _ some of the caricatures of this trial are the boldest censures on the king that I have ever seen, and might be considered treasonable in any government _

It is a great pity that your Lexington ladies are so perverse _ as not to be instructed by Mrs. Caldwell _ is she not their own Professors wife _ and come all the way from Phila. of course she must know better than they. and if they would but allow her to set the fashions for them, she would treat them with an endless variety from [her] own fertile genius. and might even import an annual supply from [Tardy] _ but you western people are too proud to learn _ and so you must take the consequence, and be governed by reason & common sense as long as you live _ the learned & elegant Mrs. Russel in one of her visits to Saratoga was extremely anxious to form an acquaintance with some Indians _ she had a passion for every thing Savage and was particularly desirous of painting the portrait of an Indian, but could not find one handsome enough. she heard
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that there was one of great beauty and magnificent statue in the vicinity and sent a messenger in pursuit of him _ but could not obtain a visit from him _ she proposed to the ladies, to adopt the fashion of the Aboriginee fair & wear ear-rings in there noses _ but was not more successful than Mrs. C. her auditors had as much of Mother Eve in them as the Lexington women, and would not be led by the nose. altho Mrs. Russel was a real blue-stocking _ had been studying costumes in foreign courts, and ventured to exhibit in her own fair person the most picturesque absurdities possible. _ thus you see my dear Maria, how tyrant custom fetters us and makes us blind to the improvements held out to our imitation _

Ass[ure?] my dear Brothers of my ardent aff[ection] [tell Ben he] has totally neglected me these six months & [...] [more] our Aunt Hetty Simons was buried this morning [she had been] ill [four] weeks. she suffered patiently, and was [resigned] to the will of providence _ to regret the departure of one, whose life was bright'ned by few joys _ and blesst with little usefulness, would be vain _ for in fulfilling the lot assigned her, she had not many opportunities of conferring benefits _ but she was humble & affectionate & departed in peace _ our Sisters and their families desire me to mention them affectionately to you. and Benj & Hyman _ our brothers write, they a[re] all well _ do let me hear from you often, my dear Maria, or if you cannot write, plead for me with your husband for a favor which he used to some times bestow unsolicited for _ I do not think I shall be so long your debtor again, for like you I love to anticipate the pleasure of a letter _ Adieu, may the new Year bring you nothing but good _ and an encrease of happiness prays your
affectionate Sister RGratz

Decr. 31st. 1820.

[Address:]
Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington Ky