

**Rebecca Gratz to Maria Gist Gratz**

**August 19, 1832**

August [19]th. 1832

After the [clothe] was received yesterday and all the girls were assembled round the dinner table, I thought how long it was since I had heard from You My dear Maria \_ and expressed my desire to get a letter, when our brother Jo, drew one from his pocket which he had been in possession of for some days. and because you said so many flattering and agreeable things to him \_ he had been too modest to shew it \_ well, was he not rightly served for keeping it so long a secret \_ for there was Sarah Hays \_ and our three Moses girls as veritable daughters of Eve in such matters as could be found. and so your excellent epistle was handed round, and Mr. Joseph had to hear your praises, praised in good earnest. we admired the ingenuity & grace by which just praise can be rendered grateful. and when it flatters must not appear exaggerated. I hope My dear you will often have occasion to exercise your pretty talent on like occasions \_ there was a notice in it of your dear little Boys, which pleased me so much that I cannot help expressing my satisfaction \_ you say they gave up eating unripe fruit, because you told them it would make you uneasy,” and you must tell them, that this proof of their obedience, makes me love them better than ever, and that their example shall be recommended to all the children I know. it is very well to begin, such lessons of self denial \_ for here are [end of page]

we in the midst of a luxuriant season, with abundance of fine fruit & vegetables which are all forbidden our bill of fare, consists of meat \_ bread rice & potatoes \_ [desert], a pudding \_ by special favor. Dr. Chapman allows [one] peach a day. at first it was very hard. and I was afraid to look into Hyman’s market basket, particularly when corn came in season. he did bring it home daily for one week, but finding no one but himself transgress-ed even in that favorite article \_ he [left] off buying it \_ we moreover, sleep with our windows shut \_ wear flannel \_ and keep out of damp night air \_ these are sanitary measures \_ we have remedies at hand for premonitory indications and thank God have been thus far \_ free from the

“foul fiend” \_ and cheerfully keep the even terror of our way “hoping that the pestilence will pass by & we remain untouched.” except by a deeper [sense] of dependence on the guardian who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.”

a very small proportion of the citizens have removed, and I believe it is better so, in every direction the villages and towns have been affected in some degree with the Cholera and at New York & Montreal. it has been prolonged by the return of inhabitants who are said to be more liable coming from purer air \_ there was but one day of panic in Phila. and that was occasioned by the mortality in Arch street Prison \_ the only place that was totally unprepared for it \_ this is a receptacle for vagrants, and the police so defective, that nothing less might have been expected now all the poor prisoners are released (a large number by death) I hope the stain will be wiped off by appointing more efficient & [humane] officers \_ of all laws \_ imprisonment for debt is most abhorrent to reason & justice  
[end of page]

I will never again attempt to write you a letter on such paper \_ for I find it will [blot], and at best I am not very neat, but it was my poverty and not my will \_ I had no other, and a rainy day \_ well, dear, I am afraid you will find me out \_ my poverty is not only of paper but on it \_ if I could cover it sensibly \_ you would not [mind] its texture. and perhaps I should have forgot to apologize \_ thus we deceive ourselves, in attempting to deceive others \_ I have seen many a good letter, badly written on coarse paper but doubt whether I could make one on fine [vellum] \_

Henry Etting has arrived in Boston, and will be home in a fortnight \_ Isabella is better & Gratz well \_ Ben has taken a house but will not move until the beginning of Sept \_ our Sister [Hays] girls are all well \_ Ellens spirits begin to revive \_ her husband has gone to Baltimore, where his business is chiefly to be settled \_ the Dr. has been indisposed for [three] week \_ not ill, but never allowing himself time to get well. you know he has an attack every summer. this was slighter than usual \_ but an impatience to be up and doing, when all of his profession were employed has retarded his recovery & kept him weak \_ I believe he has consented to go into the country for a few [days]. which will restore him \_ our brothers are well & all in town \_ the one I never see I think of and pray that he, and those whom he cares for, may be preserved ~~[to him]~~, tell dearest Ben I think of him daily always with love & delight \_ because he is, as happy as he is good, the dear boys are always grouped around him in my picture and you on the fore ground making every eye brighten & every heart glad \_ I hope there is a letter on its way from you, but

there are so many claimants that I shall not address it \_  
if to me, pray let it say something that may [d...?] [to] a  
period of your expectations \_ God bless you My dearest  
embrace all you love for me. and believe me most truly Yours RG

[Address:]

To

Mrs. Benjamin Gratz

Lexington

Kentucky