

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

June 29, [1809]

Philadelphia June 29th.

Since you commend my punctuality my Dear Maria, I feel strongly urged to preserve it, conscious that there is so little worthy of praise in [me], as a correspondent, that it is my interest to [ne] neglect nothing that is likely to produce me the pleasure of hearing from you! particularly when I can as in your last, recognize the cheerful smile of contentment. which has ever had so great charms for me, in your communications. I hope when you become resident in your little Cottage those impertinent interruptions will not occur which has twice robbed me of the treasures you were about entrusting to me. If your climate within the last week has resembled ours a removal to peace country air is "devoutly to be wished for." were it not for refreshing showers with which the day closes we should be quite enfeebled by the heat. particularly as we are still greatly confined in Mrs. Ettings chamber. who is, however much better than when I last wrote. we are in daily expectation of the arrival of our Dear Miriam's little Orphans. their Father is bringing them on to see us, I should have let you know of their being in New York but that they are in the Whooping Cough, and I thought there would be some risk of your sweet Georges taking the disorder. they arrived in New York from Georgetown last Saturday & left it yesterday. Poor Babes. they are young travelers! and forlorn ones too. thus early bereaved of a [end of page]

mother's tender cares. happily they are insensible of their own misfortune. and if any consolation can arise out of so severe an evil, it is that they can never feel the misery of parting _

I am a good deal surprised to hear that Ann is so soon going to leave you. Charles kept the secret so well that we did not suspect any thing of the kind. I concluded that she would have devoted this Summer to her Father. who must need the consolations of all his children. and to the memory of Beloved, lamented Matilda _ but _ happy are they, who can employ the short term allotted to human existence _ in the pursuit of such attainments as makes life a blessing _

I doubt not poor Ann, must have had many hours of sadness _ and many of struggles, ere she could consent _ and probably has sacrificed her own wishes, to promote the happiness of him, she has promised to love & honor.

You interest me extremely for Washington _ I always thought him worthy the pure attachment, of the purest [heart], that ever adorned the breast of a mortal! and felt almost a romantic solicitude on that subject _ but a richer reward, than any this world could bestow is given to the angelic being who here appeared so bright in virtue, and

he will I trust be comforted by reflecting that her happiness is complete _ and that all she felt of earth-born attachment was his own _ I am glad he is going to the country with you, you will cheer each other. his melancholy will yield, to his desire of chasing away every thing like gloom from your retirement. and he will find that the verdant season is full of lessons. all teaching gratitude & submission. in the country where natures face is full of joy. and the fields & woods
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resound with the merry sound of happy sporting creatures. it is almost impossible not to forget oneself _ and join the general festivity _ in town it is otherwise, where every days account renews our own sorrow, by the relation of similar afflictions being visited on others

To day Old Dr. Davidson paid the great debt _ and his Daughter unfortunately was absent, she had gone to visit our almost expiring friend P. Ewing _ and arrived express three quarters of an hour after her Father breathed his last _ she has fulfilled the duties of a most affectionate child. and has yet to [smooth] the pillow of a declining mother. _

Mrs. Davidson has been long lingering in the very portals of death. they both for many months were unable to move, or assist them selves or each other. Mary resided in, the house adjoining theirs ever since her marriage, but finding their infirmities encrease, and [w...] administer to their wants at all seasons of the night & [day?] [...] gave up her house, and went back to her parents _ where she [...] devoted herself entirely to them. and has thereby stored her heart with consolation that will enable her to endure every calamity _

Sally and Rachel desire me to present you their most affectionate love. make mine acceptable to your dear Husband Kiss the little darlings for me. and tell Ann she has my best & affectionate wishes for her happiness _ I did not know Eliza was absent _ how long has she been away? and at what distance from N.Y? my love to Rodman, tell him I shall be glad to hear from him, where ever he may rove _ and that he carries with him, my prayers for his success _ Adieu my Beloved, believe me always Yours

RG_

[Address:]
Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
New York _

[Editors' Note: The year of this letter is based on the death date of Matilda Hoffman in 1809.]