

Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman

November 29, [1814]

I had just commenced a letter, My dear Maria, of interrogations concerning your state, and perhaps it might even have proceeded to reproaches on your silence, when your letter arrived, and I threw down my pen too happy in the interruption to resume the subject, and most heartily rejoice that neither sickness nor sorrow kept you silent _ in these cheerless times of winter and war if we have nothing to complain of, we should consider ourselves happy and as your husband, sons & brothers are safe around you. I hope you repose in peace every night unheeded of the howling winds _ and fast descending rain _ but we have so much sympathy abroad for our encamp'd brothers' forlorn situation that we do not wear very cheerful faces during a storm. It is reported they are to be ordered home this week and they will make many hearts glad by their return. the bidette station on Mount Bull. is a bleak hill on the sea beach without any shelter but a leafless wood for the [horses] _ and tents for the men who all, even the Captain sleep on straw. which to men who have been accustom'd to all the luxuries & comforts of Oppulence in a city, must be severe enough _ two of the Willings and several other Married men [end of page]

are in the company and have been out ever since August we see very little of Military affairs, but feel more than you do, because all your camps are so near the city that your soldiers are not deprived of the pleasures of home _ Ben & Jo have only been home three times since they left it _ and never longer than three days at a visit _ they have enjoyed very good health. but many more delicate constitutions have fallen [...]
[-...]

Our dear Sally has lost all that exuberance of Spirits. that annoyed [her] so much last summer. for several weeks she has been quite well. but I think she is now more languid her nerves are so much shaken by these extremes that every sudden change alarms me. the return of our Brothers will cheer her up again I hope and the bracing weather, with exercise strengthen her, she bids me send you her affectionate love, write to her when you have leisure, she is always so happy to hear from you, that your charity should keep down your aversion to your pen. indeed if we did not know you are different from the rest of the world, and so much better than most of it _ we should sometimes fear even Your

recollection of us took a nap of a few months. and could only be roused by a good scolding _ I am glad to hear Eliza & her boy are return'd and [enjoy] health _ we have not heard from her in a long time _ tell her we love & sometimes talk of her _ inform Mr. Hoffman that Andrew Hamilton is gone to try his fortune with a Baltimore belle. The family
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continue to reside at the Woodlands _ how is Ann & her Children? does Charles' appointment keep him altogether on the Island? the family are in expectation of a visit from William & his wife. Maria Nicholas has been agood deal grieved at the death of her cousin Lucy. who was a very lovely woman & died suddenly of a liver complaint _ I wish our dear Eliza would get rid of hers, she must exercise all her prudence, to avoid colds at this season.

embrace all your darlings for me and present me affectionably to your husband. Maria Hays has had a swelling on her cheek that drew her face much in the way Mr. Nicholas's was some years ago. she is still confined to her room with it. tho' now much better _ Drs. Kuhn & [Physick?] has attended her these two months for it. they have [...] seen a similar instance and tho it is not considered dangerous nor at all painful _ we have had great anxiety about it _ "how many ills flesh is heir to," besides the ordinary evils that daily assail us _ Adieu My dear friend

let is hear from you soon, and always believe
in the unalterable attachment of your
affectionate RG _

Novr. 29th.

[Address:]
Mrs. Ogden Hoffman
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[Editors' note: This letter is dated 1814 based on Ben and Joseph Gratz's military service and other letters that mention Sarah Gratz's and Maria Hays's illnesses.]