

**Rebecca Gratz to Maria Fenno Hoffman**

**[January 1819]**

I had quite a treat My Dear Maria, in your letter and Verplancks pamphlet. which certainly does him great honor. it is finely written and extremely interesting \_ I was surprised at its length when I took it up and at its shortness when I laid it down \_ it contains so much \_ without any parade of patriotism he is so truly American in his feelings and so eloquent in his conclusion that I have no doubt the Society & the State are very proud of him. he has a great deal of learning unostentationely displayed, we have been looking out for him for a day or two as Jo received a letter from Brevoort mentioning he would be here on Friday on his way to Washington. and this has delayed the papers he wished to see, which however, I shall send by this mail \_ the Backwoodsman, has found no quarters in our city tho' a young writer in the Analectic made some of its most striking defects more conspicuous by unmerited praise. Paulding must be a good deal mortified by the failure of his two last works on which he seems to have calculated so much. I do not suspect him of falling on Moores plan of continuing his own poem.

I have been to see Trumbulls picture \_ and am much pleased with it there are several faces I recognize as good likeness's and those who remember & knew most of the characters are still more gratified, the costume is happily preserved. and the feelings excited by the occasion are not lost when you see the representatives of these great men, who achieved so much for their & our country. Mrs. Meredith & Rachel amused themselves with Mr. Jeffersons taste in dress and were delighted to find him in his celebrated reds. the colouring does not bear a comparison with Alstons or Wests nor is there the same grace and ease in grouping \_ but then the artist was trammelled, he had the number and countenances to copy. and he has certainly succeeded in giving a proper expression of serious importance, to the characters \_  
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I am very much concerned to hear such accounts of my friend Mrs. Dey I never met with more gratifying attention, from strangers in my life \_ or saw a family more affectionate to each other than they are \_ Mrs. Dey is a very amiable woman, and an excellent mother, her dear little girls promise to be every thing she could wish to see them, but they require the maternal hand to lead them \_ I shall be grieved [if] at the dispensation that removes that blessing from them \_ and severs so happy a compact of domestic comfort \_ Dr. Osborn too would be a great loss. he has great skill I think in his possession, and his importance to the family of his wife is more to be considered. we do not so keenly sympathize in public losses as in private, for they may take a wider range to supply them. but the domestic tie once broken is irreparable \_ there is a gay New York widow here, however, who does not seem to take the same view of the matter. [Mrs. Hone?] \_ she is in the deepest external mourning. but goes to parties, and is very gay.

she is a good deal attended to, and admired. and only declined going to the Cotillion Party. because she could not put on a white ruffle, and was told no lady went to dances here in entire black \_

I have not seen Anne, or Emma in a long time, but heard they were well yesterday. Emma has only been twice to see me since she came to town, she is partaking of the amusements of the season, I now & then hear her mentioned as one of a party & I dare say she spends her time agreeably. Ann is very much concerned about Mr. Rhinelanders situation, when I saw her last she told me of a very interesting letter she had just received from him \_ his solitude must affect his spirits. and tho' it may be congenial to his feelings to be retired, the want of a single companion or friend in his state of mind is enough of itself to make him melancholy. and if diseased would be very apt to sink him to despondency \_ I hope his brother will succeed in bringing him away for the winter \_ Ann talks of paying him a visit next summer \_ and if he persists in continuing to reside there, her presence will be very valuable to him.  
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I hope you will soon have good accounts from Edward, we now hear pretty regularly from Ben, and the mails will afford you the same facility after he is once settled. Your evenings form a great contrast to Mrs. Cs. but I doubt whether they are not more productive of [more] real pleasure, I should like sometimes to be of your parties \_ tho' I feel no inclination to join hers. I have been to one or two of Dr. Pattersons lectures on Moral Philosophy with Isaac Hays lately, and am so much pleased, as to be induced to continue attending the remainder of his course, unfortunately it was more than half over before I consented to go at all, so I lose a very important portion of it \_ however, it is better to improve the opportunities we have of growing wiser, and it is but for an hour. two evenings in a week, so by reading the part I have missed, I may have some little knowledge of the subject. he is an excellent lecturer, and very successful in his experiments \_ there [...] a number of ladies attend, among whom is Mrs. Rotch a very charming [young?] woman, whose manners, appearance, & situation very much resemble dear Harriets, which gives her an additional interest in my eyes \_ she is about 23. or 24 years of age \_ delicate appearance \_ fine mind \_ and married to a man, much her inferior in talents tho' very attentive to her, she has no family but is very fond of children, and continually has a little niece of her husbands with her, I met her during my journey last summer and we rode a good deal together, her observations on the country \_ and her knowledge of botany & mineralogy made her a very valuable companion, she was educated in France where her father resided some years \_ and has travelled a good deal. which few of our American Ladies do \_ and what is particularly agreeable is Mrs. R. she has lost none of the modest simplicity of her character by it \_

Rachels children are all well again, an influenza went thro' her nursery even little Sally did not escape. but they are no longer prisoners \_ and she is quite relieved \_ She sends her best love to you, and so do Sisters Hays & Etting

Ellen too & Maria claim the privilege of adding theirs Adieu My dear friend  
the end of my paper, gives you breathing time or I might not have stopped this  
hour \_ ever most cordially your affectionate RG.

embrace your dear Children for me \_

[Address:]

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[Editors' Note: The date of this letter is based on the exhibition dates of John Trumbull's painting of the Declaration of Independence which was on public view in Philadelphia from January 12-23, 1819. It was written before her next letter on February 14, 1819, in which she responded to the death of Mrs. Dey's death.]