



LETTERS.

Do you like letter-reading? If you do
I have some twenty dozen very pretty ones.
—Epes Sargent.

LETTERS index character. Letters mark intellectuality.
Letters possess authenticity.

They live, they speak, they breathe

though the hand that inscribed is numb.

In these scenes revived if the actors can speak their lines I shall not substitute my own. So to do would be to presume; and from the genuineness to detract. The writers speak clearly to another as to me and merit and motive are as apparent to another as to me and extended comment on my part would be supererogatory. The letters are not sequential. Except a few, they are germane to incidents in other chapters.

I have reproduced the correspondence without the emendation of capitalizing and punctuating; indeed, at that period punctuation in writing was not systematically practiced and never a venture beyond a comma, a period or a dash. I have likewise to the extent the printer could assist copied other peculiarities, as the quaint abbreviation. Frequently I have eliminated parts.

Of the city of Washington, Mr. Greenleaf speaks of it as "the Federal City" and "the Federal Establishment;" both Mr. Morris and Mr. Law, as "the City."

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON TO TOBIAS LEAR.

MOUNT VERNON 25 September, 1793

MY DEAR SIR,

You will learn from Mr. Greenleaf, that he has dipped deeply in the concerns of the Federal city,—I think he has done so on very advantageous terms for himself, and I am pleased with it notwithstanding on public ground; as it may give facility to the operations at that place, at the same time that it is

embarking him and his friends in a measure which, although (it) could not well fail under any circumstances that are likely to happen, may be considerably promoted by men of Spirit with large Capitals. He can, so much better than I, detail his engagements and the situation of things in and about the city, that I shall not attempt to do it at this time.

The Commissioners having sold to Mr. Greenleaf numerous lots at \$80 a lot and he in a year having disposed of many at the rate of \$292.50 to "a gentleman from England" (Mr. Law) the President concludes they are novices at bargaining in real estate.

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON TO DANIEL CARROLL.

PHILADELPHIA, 7 January, 1795.

DEAR SIR,

You will consider this letter as coming from me in my private capacity, at the same time I do not object to the communication of the sentiments to your colleagues in office.

You will recollect no doubt that I yielded my assent to Mr. Greenleaf's first proposition to purchase a number of lots in the Federal City (altho' I thought the price he offered for them was too low) because at that time seemed to be in a stagnant state, and something was necessary to put the wheels in motion again. To the second Sale which was made to him, my repugnance was greater, in as much as the necessity for making it was not so apparent to my view—and because another thing had become quite evident—Viz: that he was speculating deeply—was aiming to monopolize deeply, and was thereby laying the foundation of immense profit to himself and those with whom he was concerned.

Viewing the matter in this light, you will readily perceive, at the first glance, how much my sentiments are opposed to any more *large* sales, if there be *any other* resource by which money can be obtained to carry on your operations.

The sum which will be necessary to compleat the public buildings and other improvements in the City, is very considerable. You have already, if I mistake not disposed of more than a moiety of the Lots which appertain to the Public; and I fear not a fourth part of the Money necessary for that purpose, is yet provided. The persons to whom you have sold are reselling to others (subjecting them to the conditions to which they are made liable themselves) and this they are doing to an immense profit. Lately, a Gentleman from England, has paid, or is to pay £50,000 for 500 Lots.—Will it not be asked, why are speculators to pocket so much money? Are not the Commissioners as competent to make bargains?

The business, I conceive, is now fairly on its legs—to sell therefore by whole-sale faster than is indispensably necessary to keep the machine in proper motion will, probably (as property is rising there), be deemed impolitic. And to part with the legal title to the lots (especially in large sales of them) on personal security, may be hazarding more than prudence will warrant.

For a variety of reasons, unnecessary to be enumerated, tho' some of them are very important, I could wish to see the force of your means, directed toward the capitol in preference to the other public buildings.

With great esteem &c

Dr. Caffry was the first pastor of St. Patrick's Church. Mr. Greenleaf for himself and his associates made a subscription, which was separately paid. For this kindness and the employment as draftsman of an Irish compatriot from the same county, just over, the good father was profoundly grateful and he ever effectively gave expression of this honorable trait. I find in Mr. Morris's letters he settled his share of the subscription several years after when the hurricanes of disappointment had swept away almost all save hope.

CITY OF WASHINGTON 8^{br} ye 1st 1794

D^r SIR

I thought I could have the pleasure of seeing you before y^r departure from this city. It is more than probable we shall not be favoured with a visit from you before y^r return from Europe. . . that God may take you under his providential guard & protection will be my daily prayer, untill I enjoy the happinefs of seeing you once more.

D^r Sir

Y^r Ever obliged & obed^t Serv^t

ANTH CAFFRY, D. D.

P. S. you^{ll} be pleased to tell Mr. Lafette that I wish him a most prosperous voyage & anxiously expect the happinefs of seeing him once more In this new world, I hope I^{ll} have the pleasure of see M^r Delagarene [∧] as I could not hear that he is to be on y^r Expedition you^{ll} be kind enough to give him my good wishes.

Mr. Greenleaf's friend, Samuel Ward, was a prominent banker of New York.

WARD TO GREENLEAF.

Nov 24. 1794

DEAR SIR

Your Washington business seems to lay heavy on your mind—I can sell bills but think it more prudent to wait your departure that they may arrive in London after you a short time.

Law admired Greenleaf. He was impressed with Greenleaf's many and mighty enterprises. Law and Greenleaf reciprocally expressed deep regard and were socially intimate. Both were men of letters and this consonance may have been the spring to friendliness. The letters mark the beginning and the ending of their association—an eventful six months.

To WILLIAM BLANE OF LONDON.

Dec. 5, 1794

Mr. Greenleaf a most respectable man for abilities and integrity will deliver this to you, & I beg you will pay particular attention to his Statements.—The President Washington confides in him, and you will find him a man of an enlarged understanding—I will give you particulars in my next—it is however sufficient to observe, that if a few of us sit down in Washington City, that numbers more will join us, & that land worth 1000 Dollars, will soon rise to 1000 £ Sg—I am writing to Young & Heatley & many of our friends—I am sorry to see you all in such embarrassments at home, & and have only once congratulated myself on taking this step in time—Here all the people are prospering, the Land only wants men, if a person with Cash is tolerably prudent, he must benefit—

Once more let me refer you to Mr Greenleaf & oblige me by showing him every attention—He is not an American, therefore you may have impartial accounts from him—

Your sincere friend

THOS LAW.

To GREENLEAF.

Dec. 6, 1794.

I am fully satisfied with the whole transaction & am happy that it has made me acquainted with one whose Character stands so high—

I remain

Dr Sir

Yrs with Esteem

THOS LAW.

* * * * *

Postscript: Pray write to me from England.

To GREENLEAF.

Dec. 14, 1794

Dr Sir /

I have been desired by two Gentlemen East Indians, one acting for David Scott the great Bombay Merchant, East India Director, & friend of Dundas & an acqu^e of mine, to let them have a share in my Washington purchase.

Now if you are resolved not to part with any more on the same terms, I must be cautious & arrange accordy—Pray tell me, if not an improper question, whether I may positively say that you will not part with any more on those Terms.

Yr Scy & Obt^d

THOS LAW.

Scott afterwards came to the city. He was deterred from investing by the unforwardness in the demarcation of thoroughfares and by the inertness of the City Commissioners, so was Law's plaint.

To LADY RUMBOLD.

Dec. 15, 1794.

DEAR SISTER

John & George are now in the room with me & desire their affe regards to you, they are improving very much—The Climate has been delightfull hitherto we have now and then had a frosty night, but the sun shines all the day—I am sorry, very sorry to receive such accounts from Europe, the Dutch will suffer a sad change, a melancholy revolution, & may lament their lives this foolish war—I feel most uneasy about you all in England, the Taxes must increase two millions & a annually, and your numbers, to bear the burthen cannot increase as heretofore—this Country is wisely determined to pay off her Debt, & it will be all liquidated in 15 years—Mr. Greenleaf will deliver this to you and I beg you to receive him as my friend, He will tell you all about me, I wish you could be induced to settle here, I am almost afraid to persuade you, the return from hence is at any rate easy—If Tom came here for three or four years, he could double his fortune to a certainty—Maria will no doubt ask Mr Greenleaf a number of questions, and have him in the family way, without ceremony to Dinner, he will not stay long in England, as he is going to his wife and family in Holland, so try to get a few hours of his valuable time

Yrs. Sincy

THOMAS LAW

To GREENLEAF.

Dec. 17, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR /

Mr Duncansons terms were, these—100 Dollars for 200 Soys & 3 Pr Ct being half of the insurance,—I agree to draw on these terms—

If you have any friends that want to procure a good Cargo from India & have not Capl Immy I will write to my friend Morris in India, & he shall provide a Cargo on his own Capital—if the cash will be paid with interest in a certain time—India, is now overflowing with Specie—Ships that go suddenly with dollars must bring what is the market, whereas an order before hand will be of great advantage—

I will take a Share in a part of a Ships Cargo of worked Leather—Vizt boots & shoes.

Will you drink tea with me any day or breakfast then you stay as long as you like—but if I go to you I am afraid of interrupts

Yrs Sy

T. LAW.

LAW TO GREENLEAF.

Dec. 19, 1794

Pardon this request, I am you know acting for others,—within these few days I must you know, have heard a great deal & it may be some consolation to you, to be informed, that not one man, but speaks of you in the most favorable terms—Your word to me is a Law, but as you are going I naturally wish for some authority from you, for others to act upon.

To GREENLEAF.

Dec. 20, 1794.

DEAR SIR /

I thank you for your last proof of kindness & liberality—I shall certainly go to Washington City & my heart & mind are full of it—

That you may be assured I have some influence in India & among my E. I. friends—I enclose to you some testimonials; these did not get me one dinner in England, or one smile or Compliment from my Honorable Masters—

Yrs Sy

T. LAW.

NEW YORK, Dec. 20, 1794.

WILLIAM CRANCH, ESQRE

WASHINGTON

DEAR SIR

Notwithstanding the Two Million Four hundred thousand square feet of ground in the City of Washington purchased of me by Mr. Law has been already allotted to him, & with regard to the transfer of which you have rec^d my instructions; yet from the willingness to gratify Mr Law & to render him more than satisfied with the purchase he has made, I have consented that after he may have viewed the positions chosen for him should he prefer other situations he may have the liberty of changing, provided that no confusion is occasioned thereby in arrangements previously made.—My meaning is not that Mr Law should have the uncontroled choice of all the property possessed by M. N. & G. in the City, but that if he should prefer the ma^s allotted him transferred from the Eastern part to any other part of the City he may be allowed to do it, or that if he should fancy any particular square which is not already appropriated to an express object or necessary to the execution of my general plans that such square may be allotted to him—This letter will be handed by Mr Law whose residence at the City you will please make as agreeable as possible—

Believe me Dr Sir

Your affectionate friend and servant

JAMES GREENLEAF.

LAW TO GREENLEAF.

Dec. 31, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR /

Pray have the introduction & Treatise in defence of Usury corrected & if you could spare a moment to add to it, could have it reprinted, perhaps it would be well, bring a few with you

I have just rec^d an excellent plan for a College &c in, or near Washington City—The Prest will of course encourage & Foster it—The Arts and Sciences are now frightened from Europe by the din of War, here let them receive protection—The young men from the North & South shall here meet & imbibe amicable dispositions & general philanthropy—they will have the same studies & the same central objects, they will become more and more attached *namque velle idem nolle ea demum firma amicitia est* *

Do not however mention this till it is matured—

* Quotation seems to be from Cicero. Literally, "Because to will and not will the same thing—that in truth is firm friendship"; liberally, "Concord in studies is the bond of Friendship."

To GREENLEAF.

January 8, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR /

Yr Lre gave me a great pleasure—I participate in your feelings and am convinced that you have cast Anchor in a good spot.

I heard an excellent Trait of Morris, he was desired to sell some favorite spot near this Town, in a very delicate manner, & replied that he would never part with it—but when the gentleman was going away, he recalld. him & said that he had creditors pressing him & that he would sacrifice his private satisfaction to his pride and honor, and would part with it—This was a noble sentiment & a decision influenced by sensibility and Judgment—He has not settled our business & I, rely upon you to do it, when you come, he has however done all that man could do, he seems *entre nous* embarrass'd by a Public Spirit & private interest with^t distinguishing that the Latter must operate in favor of the general good, or in other words, he appropriates his funds to distant objects & Diverts his funds & the labor of the people from works more immediately productive—

The Junction of the Susquehannah to the Schuylkill is a speculation of 10 years, & quere, would it not be more advantageous to the United States to pour the productions into the Chesapeake than into the Delaware—300000 Dollars have been already spent—& how long will it be, & what sums will it require to finish the Plan—Pardon these remarks, they flow from a wish to see Morris decide—

He borrows at a dreadful interest & sells disadvantageously like a desperate gambler to recover what he has lost—He has I know great resources, but no fortune can support his constant drains—Calculate the interest of a million of dollars which the Canal will Cost perhaps &c—at an interest of 20 P cent at least, and then know that the project is not to exceed 15 P Ct by the Act of Congress—

I am perhaps writing without proper grounds, but it is to you, who may laugh at my ignorance and tear this.—I said every thing to *Miss Allen*, & your friends, they all wish to see you—Lagarrne & Le Farret—the City of Washington rises in estimation hourly Major Moore wants to buy more & Gen^l Steuart—the lrs you enclosed were an Elegant Composition—I gave them to Morris to cheer him—You may say that I had rather sell my horses or books or any thing rather than part with a foot at present of Washington City—

Rem^b me to all Friends

Yrs Mt Sincy

T. LAW

Mr. Law had a clear conception of Morris's condition and chance financially. He also had a conception of something else and mentions the future Mrs. Greenleaf.

On General Walter Stewart, nature so heaped her store naught remained for art to supply; he was acknowledged the handsomest man in all the States. He was a native of Ireland and a patriot of America. When aide-de-camp to General Gates and colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment bravery distin-

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gushed him. After the war he lived in Philadelphia and married Deborah, the daughter of Blair McClenachan. Under the persuasion of Morris he purchased in the city. He owned the Willard Hotel site. He began buildings in the first ward which he did not complete. Upon financial disaster close came death, 1796.

To GREENLEAF.

February 11, 1795.

MY DEAR SIR \

Genl Stuart surprised me last night by saying that you had agreed with him on every point, but particularly respecting the propriety of throwing every capital to the promotion of buildings towards the Potowmack & George Town—as it is high time that I should make myself a resting place & as I am now going to undertake an important step, pray if you can, let me have half an hours convⁿ with you.

Genl Steuart told me that he had not engaged to build, but upon your terms with the Commissioners, Now if I resolve upon keeping the Lots I shall exert myself to the utmost & imm^y —

I hope you will let me have the choice next to Genl. Stewart—he indeed has not virtually so good a claim on you as myself & he has parted with half to another, who ought to have come after me—Can I do anything for you at the City—

After our trip to New York I have indulged the hope of increasing our friendship & enjoying reciprocal regard—

You will see by the enclosed Lre that I have left men behind me who have affn for me, & I indulge the expectation of bringing a few of my Asiatic connections here—I shall be at home all the morn^g

Yrs Sy

T. LAW

There is shrewdness, diplomatically suggested, in Greenleaf's message to Cranch to confirm Law's good opinion of his purchase; and assurance in that he makes Law the messenger. Over there in Waterland Greenleaf as Consul must have had the duties of a diplomat.

PHILADA 17 Feby 1795

MY DEAR FRIEND /

My particular & beloved friend Mr. Thomas Law will bear this to you—as I have repeatedly expressed to you how nearly I have at heart to unite Mr. Law's talents & efforts to yours, in the promotion of my favorite object, the federal establishment, I shall forbear repetition; but beg only that you would receive Mr. Law as one who is deserving your warmest friendship & confidence, & who possesses mine in an unlimited degree & that you would practice every possible endeavor to render his residence at the City Comfortable & agreeable.

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Mr L will probably be accompanied by his friend Duncanson whom I also recommend to your kind attentions—

With regard to the selection of Lots for Mr Law you will have due reference to what has passed thereon in writing, observing nevertheless that it is essential to my happiness that Mr L should be pleased with his purchase & with your manner of conducting towards him in the selection of the property to be transferred to him—

believe me with truth & affection

Your

JAMES GREENLEAF

WILLIAM CRANCH, Esqr City of Washington

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Mr. Cranch says that Mr. Law arrived in the city the first time the 23d day of February, 1795 and remained until the 5th of March. That he met Mr. Law 10th of March in Philadelphia. That he with his family arrived home 29th of May, and on the preceding evening saw Mr. Law at Stark's tavern in Baltimore. Mr. Law was *en route* for the city and arrived the same time he and his family did.

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Mr. Law handed Mr. Greenleaf's letters dated December 20, 1794 and February 17, 1795 to Mr. Cranch the day after his arrival i. e. February 24.

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It may be urged that the Duncanson correspondence is trivial, without interest or historical value. Having from divers and diverse sources succeeded in collecting it complete I shall be so bold to include it all. It at least teaches that the cleverest diplomacy is that of plate and glass and knife and fork. It shows that surest success in large land deals is in summoning that ally, none other

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Than that all softening, overpowering knell,
The tocsin of the soul—the dinner-bell.

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To CRANCH.

(Wednesday, February 25, 1795).

DEAR SIR,

If you are disengaged to-morrow, will you favor Mr Duncanson & me with your company to dinner at 3 o'clock

I shall esteem it a favor if you could oblige me with a mem^m of the Lots you could allow me the option of, & with information when it is convenient for me to wait upon you—

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I remain

Dr Sir

Yrs mt Oby

THOS LAW

Feb. 25th 1795

TH^S LAW ESQ^R

D SIR—

I will with pleasure accept your polite invitation to dine tomorrow & will take with me the papers from which I shall form the mem^m you request. If you will ride over the ground noted to you in Mr. Greenleaf's mem^m I will call upon you at 12 o'clock for that purpose. Shall I have the fav^r of the company of you & Mr. Duncanson to dine on Friday 2 o'clock

I am D Sir

Your obed^t Serv^t

W. CRANCH.

CRANCH TO GREENLEAF.

February 27, 1895.

He seems pleased with the city, and some very great alterations must take place in his ideas before he will consent to relinquish his purchase—Captⁿ Duncanson has said something of making a purchase upon the same terms with those of Mr. Law—perhaps I shall make a contract of the same kind with him.

CITY OF WASHINGTON March 1, 1795

THOS LAW ESQ

DR SIR /

I am obliged to meet Mef^{rs} Morris Nicholson & Greenleaf in Philada before 10th instant. I am therefore as anxious as you can be to complete your selection.—

with respect &c I am Sr

Yr obed^t

W. CRANCH.

I hope for the pleasure of meeting you at Mr. Young's at dinner.

CITY WASHINGTON 3^d March 1794

DEAR SIR /

Will you sell to me the amount of from Eight to twenty thousand pounds Pennsylvania Currency of square feet in the City of Washington to be selected by me, from all the squares you have given Mr Law at Latitude to choose from (excepting those lots which Mr Law has now chosen) at the rate of five pence Pennsylvania Currency p^r Square foot, & subject to the exact Tenor of Mr Laws articles of Agreement with Mef^{rs} Morris, Nicholson & Greenleaf—I also wish to know, such part as I may not be able to give ready money for, at what periods of instalments, you would fix for the residue—

The terms of payment I can propose. As I must go to New York to Sell Stock &c for ready money—A note payable one month after date & it will be good that time before I can have inspected my Lotts—D^o of the residue one 3^d in six months—and the remainder of the residue, one year without interest

I am Dear Sir

Your most obed^t St

W. M. DUNCANSON.

Mr W. CRANCH City of Washington

CITY OF WASHINGTON March 3^d 1795 .CAPTⁿ DUNCANSON

DEAR SIR /

I have the pleasure of receiving yours of this date—I accept & agree to the proposals made by you—you giving your note payable in one month for seven thousand pounds M^d C.^y—your note for one third of the residue of the amount of the Lots you may select, payable in six months, and your note payable in one year for the residue of said Amount, the whole without interest.

I am, Sir,
your obed^t Serv^t

W. CRANCH.

I will expect your final Answer on next thursday morning

W. C—

CITY OF WASHINGTON 5, March 1795.

DEAR SIR /

Agreeable to your letter of the 3^d instant I have examined the squares from which Mr Law will be entitled to choose his number of Lots, and after he has chosen there will remain in those squares none equal in value to Mr Laws—In fact for his Choice I would with pleasure give six pence sooner than four pence, for that I am to choose, after him, I therefore leave to yourself whether my choice is equally four pence as Laws is five pence per square foot; and in every other respect agreeable to the Tenor of my Letter of the third to you; on these grounds I am ready to conclude the agreement before you go.

I am Dr Sir
Your most obt^t Serv^t

W. M. DUNCANSON.

CITY OF W. March 5th, 1795CAPTⁿ DUNCANSON

Dr SIR

I rec^d you fav^r of this date and think there is some justice in your observation as yours will be only a Second Choice, and if Mef^s Morris, Nicholson and Greenleaf should not think their Sale to Mr Law as too cheap, I think there can be little doubt of their complying with your propositions—But as my authority does not allow me to Sell under 5^d pr -Sq-foot I cannot absolutely agree to them. I will however assent to them, subject to the ratification or disavowal of Mef^s Morris, Nicholson & Greenleaf.

I am Sir, your obed^t

W. CRANCH.

CITY OF WASHINGTON

5 March 1795

at noon

Dr SIR

I have received your letter of this date & agree to it on these conditions, confident of the liberality of Mef^s Morris, Nicholson & Greenleaf

I am &c

W M DUNCANSON

Greenleaf without the help of Morris and Nicholson negotiated the sale to Law. Morris and Nicholson received the entire proceeds and Greenleaf credit on account for his share. Cranch had the notes of Duncanson and intended to deliver them to Greenleaf as an offset yet the rapacious partners vigorously demanded division. So great even at this time were the calls upon the syndicate that Law's considerable payment \$133,333 afforded no appreciable relief.

Law made the transaction of his life through Greenleaf and looked to him naturally for protection; and independent of this circumstance, he had confidence in him and less in his associates. Law's request for a mortgage to which Greenleaf acceded was a shrewd business move and it saved his investment entire. However without Greenleaf's acquiescence and assistance Law might not have received this indemnity; gratitude was owing to Greenleaf and the grateful debt was unacknowledged. Law is the only creditor who received his advance in full; no other, a moderate percentage.

DEAR GREENLEAF

(April 30, 1795.)

Since I made our first agreement—I have to write my friend that the purchase is made absolute, & I mean to tell them that they may be off if they please, & in that case will you on your own acct take 5000 £ Stg.—I offer it to you as being most advantageous—Pray give me a mortgage on enough of Notley Youngs property 50,000 £ till I can finally settle the squares—enable me I entreat to write my friends thus—

“By drawing upon you at an exchange of 10 pr ct I have gained for you that profit, but without consulting you I have done away the option of returning the squares if I disapprove of our purchase & therefore deem myself responsible, & Exchange being at par or below will upon rect of your answer remit your principal 5000 & profit by Exchange & Int if you are averse to the Concern—

I have obtained a mortgage of squares which Mefrs Greenleaf M & N held in fee simple, till I can have the squares selected by me properly conveyed over

This mortgage can be easily done & pray oblige me—Think not Dr Greenleaf that I have any Doubts of your security, my sole motive is to satisfy my friends at home, & to do away all censure of me—you know they will expect it of me

I remain

Yr Sy

T. LAW

Dr GREENLEAF

(May 1, 1795)

As I have made the purchase absolute with the consent of Mr Blane who holds 5000 £ in the Concern I request to know whether you would wish to have the 5000 should he regret it—

I offer to you as I deem myself bound so to do, to one who has acted so liberally—Yrs &c

T LAW

Friday Mong 8 May

DEAR LAW

I would come & breakfast with you agreeable to your Desire did not our friend Mr. Lear breakfast me, & who has important business to regulate with me before his Departure—

if you will accompany me to the City I will wait till next Friday for you & we can, if together doubtless fall upon some method or other of obtaining Carrolls titles, who must of necessity give them in Sept next—

Do my most worthy friend Determine to accompany me, & add to the obligation you have laid me under by giving me your confidence, that one of gratifying me in the wish I have the most near to my heart—

Yr most affectionate

J GREENLEAF

T. LAW Esqr

(Copied from Letter book page 2332)

NEW YORK May 11, 1795

THOMAS LAW Esqr

MY DEAR SIR

I thank you for your kind offer to Interest me in the place of M^r Blane in your Washington purchase should he decline holding the part reserved for him (say £5000 St^r) in that concern—in which case I will cheerfully Do it on the terms of your last contract with Morris Nicholson and Greenleaf, and shall in consequence hold myself bound to pay my proportion of the original purchase money with legal Interest thereon—

believe me Dear Sir

Yrs &c

J GREENLEAF

July 4th 1795

DEAR GREENLEAF

You have a copy of my two Lres to the Commisfioners. six squares they promised to convey to me & I was promised an answer in two days to the Lre I addressd respecting the Wharf &c but I have not yet been favored with an answer. Barry is urgent—he wants to erect a store there & to purchase grain & to build a ship—I mean to set up an agency house with him for East India Comifions in short I wish to benefit myself by promoting the City—Have I been wanting in respect or in attentions—my style is not harsh not immoderate—Yet not a line have I received from them—Do not the Commisfioners in their agreements with you strictly require you not to sell before Janury 1796 witht stipulations for buildings—*who however will build without titles*—They ought to rejoice at subdivisions of property and should encourage settlers in the City by every accommodations—They should have been obliged to settle near the Capitol whereas unfortunately they have made purchases near George Town—I beg of you to obtain some Decision & Titles or let me relinquish the City & be no more embarrassed—Three visits have I made there—I had taken one step but can yet retract—The City can only be made by the Eastern Branch. The President himself when he sees all that has hitherto been done will feel how much that part of the City has been overlooked—he will pity the ignorance of the man who proposed the Canal to run by 697 & 699 & 743 instead of 2 & L Street or between 742 & 769—he will blush when he perceives where the Commisfioners

have made their wharf—in short he will order some measures to be adopted to let the City branch out from the proper root the Eastern Branch—Crocker writes justly resp^s the Commissioners “That they do not posses minds sufficiently enlarged to promote the real interests of the City if they wished it”—

Pray rem^b to have the Post office established at the Capitol

I have written to Crocker not to say a word pro or con respect^g any part of the City—I have written to him also that Lusette is to have the one horse chair & to bring them with him.

The President & every one would be surprised at the rapid growth of the City if decisions were pass^d—respecting the right to erect Warehouses on the wharves George town cannot for the ice—New York flourishes by the facility of loading Vessels from stores on the Wharves—Season goes away after Season & the year 1800 will be soon upon us. You gave a Spring to the City by your Contract & buildings The Commis^sioners—You are building on N Street & will unite your Point & the Eastern branch

I am sorry that the Capitol has had an accident but I am not surprised—Hoban when he began the President’s house built one for himself close to it—The Commis^srs had one close to the Capitol which they sold to the Clergyman—The president is too mild & he will regret it. *The Commrs should be obliged to reside some where near the Capitol till then every thing will be counteraction and error—*

You know that Scot when he rode round with me did not know Maryland from Pennsylvania Avenue—how should he? Carrol altho enfeebled with age was the most zealous & active of the three—but no more of this I am heartily tired of murmurs to you who must be sufficiently chagrined—harmony & Union can do great things—they however cannot exist whilst the Commrs reside *West of the President’s House*. I subjoin my numbers of the elected squares—in some most of the Lots have been sold—

Between the Presidents house & Capitol

*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
East of the Capitol									
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
New Jersey Avenue									
*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Selection I will return—some of the squares are not measured or laid out—I had made the selection long ago

Yrs Sy

THOMAS LAW

DEAR GREENLEAF

I have been rendered very uneasy by Le Garennes Lre—in my first negotiation with you, your candor so confirmed the character I had received, that I did not read over the first deed—I placed more reliance in *your* words, than in any other persons writing—I have all along attached myself to you from a sincere regard & hoped that you would extricate yourself from your embarrassment with M^s M. & N. by taking the whole City concern into your hands—that desirable expectation is now compleately frustrated & the very reverse of it effected—

I engaged to build within a certain period & you at the same time engaged to give me title deeds—I made my Contract irrevocable in the hopes of obtaining

title deeds & of begs building immey you was rather hard upon me when you desired me to make the bargain absolute, but your reason influenced me *Viz that it would go abroad and give a spur to the City & promote your views*—I now rely upon you for obtaining for me a Writing to the followg Effect, "Whereas Mr Law had an option of rejecting his purchase made upon on the 4th day of December 1794 within 18 months & whereas it was agreed that the said Thomas should build a certain number of houses within four years after he so made the bargain absolute, Now the condition is that Mr Law is not required to build the houses specified till within five years & 6 months from the 4th of December 1794 aforesaid"—

I request this to prevent disputes & prosecutions—I made a common cause with you & hatred & malice will persecute me—The change is compleat as any in France—The Jacobins will persecute the Moderees—pardon me if I hurt your feelings—you must be conscious that mine are lacerated—If you obtain this writing for me & if Morris & Nicholson will say that the building required in compliance with their contract & that they do not mean to be rigid as the Commrs then will I join to go on—if not—like an hunted Boar I will seat myself at the end of New Jersey Avenue relinquish all my plans of promotions & foam & goar till I fall under chagrine—People in England will triumph if I fail—in short an accumulation of mortifying circumstances will overwhelm me—You are going to England in short when I cast my eye around, I see all my pleasing prospects vanished—I have written to Legarrene.

I had much to say & a long story to relate about a certain person who gave us some uneasinefs in Philadelphia—but my mind is too full of the present important transaction respects Washington City

Yr Sy

T LAW

New York

July 12th

I rely upon having the original Title Deeds of the Commrs & Nottley Young to confirm my mortgage—

I rely upon having also a Contract under a penalty that the first conveyance by Carroll shall be to me—

I entreat of you as a friend to do this—You told me you know that you had the Title deeds forthcoming & I went to the City under that persuasion.

PHILADA July 15, 1795.

THOMAS LAW Esq^{re}

My dear friend

The only circumstance that would render disagreeable to me the assumption of M & N of the whole concern in the Fed^l City is the uneasinefs I find it has created in yr mind, & which I shall remove by every means in my power—Lagarenes in his letter to you has explained the imperious motives which have induced me to divest myself of an object to which, situated as I was with M & N & the Commisrs I felt conscious it was no longer in my power to render that justice it merited—I can only repeat therefore that nothing short of absolute necessity has guided my conduct in that businefs & you, my friend, as well as Duncanson, will, I trust, (when I have it in my power to explain more fully my reasons) not only exculpate me from the charge of Selfish, narrow or contracted

views; but be convinced that I have been actuated by pure & honorable principles and that (to save me from a labyrinth of difficulties & vexations), I would never have consented to the bargain, had I conceived that it would in any wise be injurious to the Interests of Two friends whose interests & happiness (from the first moment of my connection with them, I never had an idea of separating from my own.

The *Original* Deeds given by the Commisrs & Notley Young are with Mr Cranch at Washington—*authenticated copies* only are at New York which shall be furnished you on my return—With regard to the improvements you have obligated yourself to make, no difficulty shall be made to extend to the term you propose Vizt five years & an half from 4 December. And an order shall be procured for Mr Cranch to transfer to you the property which I shall be entitled from D Carroll on his receiving payt 26 Sepr next,

Should the fear you express of failing in your undertaking be grounded, it would indeed render me wretched, & there is no sacrifice I would repine at to prevent or repair, so far as it lies in my power a misfortune of that kind; But it is not, nor can it be the case—& trust to me that I shall on no account ever suffer you to be injured, while it is in the pale of possibility to prevent it. What I say & solemnly declare to you is equally meant for our friend Duncanson, to whom I would give the same assurance & pledge my honor, had the short time I have left to close my immense & complicated concerns, allowed me to so do it.

Let me intreat you, therefore my worthy friend, to ease your mind, & do not suffer groundless apprehensions to lead you to a misconception of the principles & delicacy of a friend, in whom you never shall have reason to repent having placed an implicit confidence, and do not suppose, my dear Law, that what I say with regard to a continuance & a willingness to aid and assist your views, is meant as a momentary *palliation* for the present unintended disappointm^t, but consider it as an *engagement* on my part to support & promote by every means in my power the interests & the happiness of a Man for whom if you do justice to my sentiments you will be persuaded I feel the warmest return of attachment & friendship.

Let me repeat, what Lagarenne has already said in my name, that if you conceive it for yr advantage or security, I will cheerfully interest myself in your contract & shall, with more pleasure than I ever did, go hand in hand with you in insuring success to an establishment which has not, nor ever will cease to be very dear to me.

This profesion will I hope dispel from your mind the clouds that circumstances have tended to collect there and trust in me, my dear Law, that at all times you will find in me a sincere and unalterable friend—

JAMES GREENLEAF.

At the letter's date Aaron Burr was United States Senator. His name with large sums opposite appears in Greenleaf's *account current*.

TO GREENLEAF.

(December 14, 1795.)

"I was sick & you did *not* visit me"—for which sin of omifsion I hope you will atone in some other way—I have amused myself very piously by reading

your paraphrase of a part of the bible, which devout employment has inspired more feelings than ideas—

At what hour & place in the morning shall I see you about the Bill—Let it be payable to John Lamb or order—

Yr affec

A BURR

14 Dec Evng

The correspondence turns from him of iron nerve and empire aspiration to another whose name with his is linked and who "to guide the chariot" was content not to hold the reins but to point the way. It is said that Burr in Boston suddenly confronted by the statue of Hamilton unabashed, unhesitatingly, ran his hand over the features and remarked to his friend who tried to avoid it "Here are the lines of poetry." The first Secretary of Treasury established the nation's credit by the funding system and before with Jay and Madison established the nation itself on a firm base by a series of essays in the "political classic," the *Federalist*, advocating the adoption of the constitution.

GREENLEAF TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

NEW YORK, July 27th, 1796.

DEAR SIR :

In the indispensable necessity of an immediate though short respite from business, united by motives of interest, and an unbounded attachment to reputation, induced me to make a proposition to you of a pretty extraordinary nature, but which after due reflection I flatter myself will be deemed not unworthy your attention. My engagements of every possible nature do not exceed twelve hundred thousand dollars, and my real and personal estate may with ease be liquidated and made to produce five millions of dollars; say, rather a million dollars annually for five consecutive years; but in consequence of some important and unexpected delinquencies on the part of persons whose engagements have become due to me, and must be paid from securities given my own engagements become due more rapidly than my means (without having recourse to improper operations) can be made to answer. If you will now be induced to aid me with your name, responsibility and talents, in the liquidation of my concerns and payment of my engagements, in such wise that no undue sacrifice of property shall result, and my name be borne through with the credit and propriety it deserves, the one-third part of the net residue of my whole estate, both real and personal, after payment of my engagements, shall become yours, provided you will consent that the mass shall remain undivided for ten years, and constitute the capital of a banking-house, to be established either in this city or at Philadelphia, in our joint names and under your sole guidance, and the profits divided between us in equal portions.

I have reason to believe that, with the aid of your name and our joint responsibility, accompanied with the names of three other persons as trustees for

deposited property, it will by a reputable mode of financing I shall communicate, be practicable for me to obtain the use of a million of dollars at legal interest for the average term of five years, and with this sum I should calculate on being able to pay off all my engagements with due credit and advantage, as considerable amounts are due at distant periods, and may be purchased in at a considerable discount.

If these outlines so far meet your approbation as to induce you to wish my entering into a particular detail, it shall be done at such time as will best suit your leisure and convenience.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON TO GREENLEAF.

NEW-YORK, July 30th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have carefully reflected upon the subject of your letter of the 27th instant.

Though the data which it presents authorize an expectation of large pecuniary advantage, and though I discern nothing in the affair which an individual differently circumstanced might not with propriety enter into; yet, in my peculiar situation, viewed in all its public as well as personal relations, I think myself bound to decline the overture.

With great regard, I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant.

PHILA 20 July 1795

MR WM CRANCH

SIR

Mr J Greenleaf has communicated to you the Change which has taken place in regard to the property which did belong to him Mr Nicholson & me of his share therein, and he gave me assurance that you would continue your Care and assiduity in regard to that property until we might make such arrangements as to the future management as might be judged proper—I depend on this assurance—Hitherto I never gave myself any trouble about it because I depended upon Mr Greenleafs Care & attention, but now I feel myself in a different situation & however inconvenient a portion of my time must be devoted to this Object—It seems that we have bot of Mr Greenleaf at a time when our affairs under your Care are in disgrace & distrefs, which ought never to be the case and which if I can prevent shall never again happen after they are once extricated—Mr Greenleaf has given me Extract of your letters to him dated the 13th & 15th July—It would not be doing Justice to myself if I did not tell you that Mr Greenleaf ought to have made payment to the Commistrs of my part as well as his own of what was due on the 1st of May because he owed me much more money at that time on acct of my payments for his Share of Lands purchased on our joint acct—To this effect I wrote him when I consented to his drawing those bills on me in favor of Mr. Deakins or the Commrs as you will see by the enclosed Copy of my letter to him which I send for your own conviction and not with any hostile intent to Mr Greenleaf, nor from any desire to raise my own Credit at the expense of his—The tables are now turned Mr Greenleaf has lately paid me \$45000 in my notes that were due, on which he

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got six months accomodation that was offered to myself & which if I had taken it & required money of Mr Greenleaf as I had a right to do, that money would have paid my Acceptances—The purchase Mr N & myself have made of Mr G & the payment he has made me in notes has turned the Tables and I am now become his Debtor—

I have however provided Funds to pay my acceptances to the Commisrs— These Funds at present exist in undoubted good Bills of Exchange & must therefore be turned into Cash which is so cursedly scarce here that nothing will command it—You may assure the Commisrs that my acceptances will be paid as fast as these bills can be sold which I suppose cannot require above a week or ten days.—Mr Nicholson I know is trying to provide for his and I expect he will succeed. We will also provide remittances to enable you to discharge arrearages and as soon as possible a plan shall be formed for future proceedings upon a Basis that will be supported without embarrassment—In the mean time you will avoid as much as possible incurring any Expences or Debts—I will very soon address you again being

Sir Yrs
ROBT MORRIS

MORRIS TO WILLIAM CONSTABLE.

PHILA July 27, 1795

Mr Greenleaf offered to buy or sell the Washington Lotts at a price & on Terms which he named—This was manly, and I first concluded to sell, but on further Consideration Mr N & myself concluded it was better to buy because it was more likely that the Lotts would command money to pay our Debts than Mr G's paper.

PHILADA April 19th 1797

Mefrs WILHEM & JAN WILLINK
AMSTERDAM
GENTLⁿ /

I was obliged to visit the City of Washington & remain there several Months engaged in clearing away the Clouds and difficulties in which Mr James Greenleaf had involved our Joint property there. In short the unhappy engagements which I had been tempted to make with that man, have proved a source of vexation & misfortune to me beyond anything I could have conceived possible—My whole time and attention is necessarily called for to extricate myself; as our means of doing it Mr Nicholson & myself purchased him out of all the concerns in which he held an interest with us, in doing this as well as in other transactions we were obliged to issue a large number & amount in negotiable notes, at the same time such a general scarcity & want of money has arisen in this Country that we cannot sell the property or obtain loans, our ready money run out and not being able to pay as the notes fall due they have depreciated down to nothing, and we are held in continual scenes of distrefs.

I remain with Esteem & respect Gentln /
Yours &c

ROBT MORRIS.

PHILADA Sept^r 21th 1795

HIS EXCELLENCY
GEO WASHINGTON ESQ^r
DEAR SIR

You will readily believe that I have suffered severe mortification at being in arrears with my Payments to the Commifioners of the Federal City, but my feelings are still more deeply wounded at the idea of an application from them to you upon this subject. The only apology I can make for being in that situation, is the Impossibility of obtaining money for the sale of property or upon Loan, I have long & unceasingly endeavored to procure it and have offered to make sacrifices that sufficiently prove my anxiety. Mr Law gave me some faint hopes before he went from hence that he might accommodate me with the sum necessary to discharge the arrearages of Mr Nicholson & myself of which he was to give me information after his arrival at the City. The offers I made to induce him thereto were such as I think he will accept if the money can be commanded without too much in convenience to himself—However I was not until the receipt of your letter acquainted with the necessity there is for supplying the Commifioners with money, and imagined that a little delay was not of any *real* importance. I see the matter now in a very different light & will immediately commence my remittances & continue them until my part of the arrears are discharged, that part is \$15000, Mr Nicholsons \$25000. As to the loan mentioned in the Treasurers acc^t; neither he or I, have anything to do with it, excepted in our written Contracts with Mr Greenleaf and I peremptorily refused to engage in the Concern upon any other terms. It is therefore Mr Greenleafs affair solely. What were the inducements that led the Comm^{rs} into the first Contracts with Mr Greenleaf I neither knew or enquired, the purchase was made by him and afterwards I agreed to take one third part therein, in the expectation of fulfilling my part of the engagements specified in the Contract (the Loan excepted) and of gaining a handsome profit upon resales of the Lotts & Houses. To the second Contract or purchase, I am a party, my letters written on that subject to the Comm^{rs} & Mr Greenleaf show what were my motives & expectations and I will fulfill every obligation that is or can be implied by those letters. No body can suppose that Mr Nicholson or myself entered into these engagements with an expectation of holding the property. It was from the beginning & is now our intention to resell when it can be done to our satisfaction & I believe the interest of the City will be more certainly promoted by interesting a number of Individuals, than by any one or two men, continuing to hold a large number of Lotts. Thus I think that on Sales to Mr Law, Mr Duncanson, Gen^l Stewart & c is of much more advantage to the City, than if we had continued to hold the whole. My intention is to settle my son William in the City (if he continues in the same mind as when he left me) and of course to retain a considerable interest therein. I must also add that by purchasing of Mr Greenleaf we have not increased the payments we now have to make to the Comm^{rs}, what we owe, was due before we made that purchase, and the future payments are but little increased thereby, in those we do not expect ever to be delinquent.—Our embarrassments have arisen from another source, Mr Greenleaf is under Contract with his hand & seal, to provide us with money to carry through the operations which at his instance we were tempted to undertake, but the French invasion of Holland put it out of his power to fulfil his engagement. The failure being occasioned by public Events which

1795

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could neither be foreseen or avoided, we became the victims, have paid immense sums & have more to pay, all which we have submitted to without complaining as he in some degree has been a sharer in the misfortune and inconvenience.— Pardon me my dear Sir for troubling you with these circumstances but sensible as I am of the very friendly terms & intention of your letter, I thought it due to you & to myself that you should know something of the cause of that delinquency which has called for your interference. I am of opinion that under existing circumstances the Commrs would not stand justified were they to advertise our property for sale to discharge the present debt due to them by Mr Nicholson & myself, and at any rate I hope they will not do it, for you and they may rely that our exertions shall possess them of the money much sooner than they could obtain it by such sales. I return herewith Mr Scotts letter & the acct & shall make him my acknowledgements hereafter for the sentiments he has expressed personal to me.—With the most sincere affection & esteem I am Dr Sir

Your obliged & obedt hble Servt

ROBT MORRIS.

SIR

You have already had an offer of Mr Nicholsons & my concern in the Great Falls of Potomack or Matilda Ville which if I understand your answer right you declined.

My opinion of that place is that it will require a large Capital to make any thing of it besides the personal attendance at that Spot, of He who expects to improve to advantage I shall therefore sell to Genl Lee my right in it unless you make me a better offer.

Yr hble servt

ROBT MORRIS—

JAMES GREENLEAF Esqr

March 8th 1797

The letter is introduced merely to exhibit the syndicate's ownership of this wild and wondrous work of nature, and that they at that time planned the utilization of its power, at this time so inadequately employed.

PHILADA 20 April 1795

THOMAS LAW ESQR
CITY OF WASHINGTON
DEAR SIR

Your letter without date arrived a few days since—Mr Greenleaf was here and I read it to him, but as the President was gone nothing could on our part be done in respect to the several points which you recommended as necessary to be done, but as you will have opp'ys of conversing with the President on the spot I am in hopes that your Observations will have the weight they deserve, and produce effects beneficial to the City of Washington—The president I know is sincerely desirous to promote the growth & prosperity of that City. Convince him of the best way of doing so and you may be sure of his cooperation—Mr Greenleaf will be at the City early in May, I should like to come with him but doubt the practicability of my leaving this Theatre of action—We thank you for your Congratulations on the marriage of my Daughter who is and I hope always

will be happy—I think you had best look out elsewhere, and not from any Expectations from my tipping off, for I think your patience may be compleatly worn out before that event happens to

Dr Sir

ROBT MORRIS.

PHILA July 1, 1795

THOMAS LAW ESQ^{RE} (N YORK)

DEAR SIR

Your communication from New York under date of the 26 ulto you say is in confidence, otherwise I would have enclosed the whole to the President, and I do so yet if you give me leave—At any rate I shall take the first Oppy of conversing with him on the subject—I lament that there should be any cause of Complaint. If there is any jockeying work we must *resent* as well as *lament*, but then we must be clear and certain that the Charges are well founded—I expect Mr Greenleaf here, after which you shall be informed of what passes in regard to this business of the Federal City—

I remain D Sir

Yrs

ROBT MORRIS.

PHILA July 18, 1795.

THOMAS LAW ESQ^{RE} N YORK

DEAR SIR

I carried in my Pocket for some time the letter which you honored me with, together with that from Mr Barry to you, intending to shew both to the president, but after opening a Conversation with him on the subject of the Federal City I concluded it was better not to produce those letters because they contain general and not specific Charges against the Commifioners—The President with great propriety observed that if the Commrs gave any real cause of Complaint, the Cause or Causes on which Complaints are grounded ought to be specified so as to enable a correct Judgement to be formed and a prompt decision in Consequence—For my part I do not know either of the Gentn Commifions nor the things alledged against them but this I know, that it is very necessary that a good understanding ought to be preserved between them, Mr Nicholson & myself so that we may act unitedly in promoting the growth and prosperity of the City, and let who may be Commifioners, I will endeavor to promote and preserve a good understanding with them, being well convinced that disputes & Contention may injure but cannot serve the Common Cause—I think the president is disposed to give his assent to the building of Stores upon the wharves & if Mr Barry, Mr Duncanson or you follow up the application you will obtain a decision and I believe one to your wishes—I told him that it would be in vain to attempt such a Regulation because it could not be preserved any length of time—The Interest of all Holders of Water Lots would combine against it, and sooner or later they would carry the point—The same thing was attempted when the City of Philada was first laid out, but the plan could not be preserved altho' it would have made a most beautiful street of three miles long fronting on the Delaware & have given a walk the whole length, commandg a view of the River and every thing moving thereon and have overlooked every thing that was doing on the wharves & Quay—Interest however got the better of all other Con-

siderations. Water Street is built where the Quays and Stores or Warehouses should have been and the latter are on the Wharves—I believe the same thing has happened wherever restraints of the kind have been attempted and the President said if the System could not be preserved it was best not to begin with it—therefore convince him that the Owners of Water Lots will not *cannot* be restrained from building on their wharves and he must yield the point—I wish also to do away all Restraints about building, except that of conforming to the lines of the Streets Lanes & Alleys as laid out, because I am sure the Houses will be increased much faster if every Owner of a Lot is allowed to do as he pleases than it possibly can if he is obliged to follow the *will* of another—There is however greater appearance of difficulty in gaining this than the other point.—Mr Greenleaf has told you of the sale he has made to Mr Nicholson & myself—This purchase increases our Interest & our Cares in the success of the City—Before I rested myself upon Mr Greenleaf's attention to it—now I must look after it myself, and I will do so—I expect my son William from Europe the ensuing fall & shall fix him in the City of Washington for life I expect—He will of course become my Agent, and feel an Interest in the good management of the Estate—In the mean time I will pay every attention in my Power, and I beg leave to assure you that both Mr Nicholson and myself are entirely disposed to accommodate you and Mr Duncanson, to promote your Interests and gratify your wishes in every thing that can reasonably be expected of us—I hope it may not be long before we shall have the pleasure of seeing you this way—I am

Dr Sr Yrs

ROBT MORRIS.

PHILADA NOV^r 22 1796

DEAR SIR

I did not come away from Washington until Mr Nicholson & myself had every thing in such a train, that we saw the certainty of your Titles being completed without any farther interference on my part being necessary; and we had received intelligence that demonstrated that my immediate presence here was indispensibly necessary to our affairs. I arrived in the nick of time; am usefully employed & shall on this Theatre do more to establish your Titles & promote the City, than I could have done by longer stay there. I beg you will assure Mr^s Law of my esteem & respect & that you will believe me to be your obliged & obed^t hble Servant

ROBT MORRIS—

THOS LAW Esq^r WashingtonPHILADA NOV^r 22^d 1796

DEAR SIR

Before my departure from the City of Washington Mr Nicholson & myself had got every thing in such train in regard to Mr Law's & your Titles that any longer stay my part for that purpose was deemed altogether usefless, as Mr Nicholson could carry all that remained to be done into effect and I doubt not but it is or soon will be done. My presence was indispensable & has produced good Effects not only to our affairs generally but even to all our dependency in the City of Washington. I have written a line to Mr Law, and I wish he could prevail on himself to be quiet until his Titles are completed which is done or soon will be, unless his Wrestlessnes & frequent interferences with Mr Cranch prevents it He

has an excellent Heart & neither means to injure or wound, but without intending it, He sometimes does both. On our part you may depend on the most certain & speedy performance of the duty We owe both to him & you I have told Mr Cranch that you would endorse for him and be assured that I will duely provide for payment I pray you to present me most respectfully to Miss Duncanson whose attentions I shall ever remember with gratitude as I shall with pleasure the marks of your Friendship.

I am Dr Sir

Your obliged & obed servt

ROBT MORRIS—

WM M DUNCANSON Esqr
Washington

PHILAD^a June 21th 1797

To THOMAS LAW Esqr

DEAR SIR

I have your Letter of the 14th inst. My son William * is at Morrisville with his Brother Robert I expect him here today or tomorrow and shall show it to him. He is now to make his Election whether to commence the practice of the Law here or in the City of Washington, perhaps he may choose to visit the City before he decides and if so he will call on you & Mrs. Law altho I suspect his mother will fear the effect of your Eloquence & Mr^s Laws influence may have a tendency to fix him at a distance from her.

With the best wishes for your health & happinefs

I remain Dr. Sir

Your obedt Servt

ROBERT MORRIS

In the rotunda of the Capitol are two paintings by the soldier-artist John Trumbull *The Declaration of Independence* and *General Washington Resigning His Commission at Annapolis*, in one sits the sturdy Morris and in the other stands Elizabeth Park Custis (Mrs. Law) in the balcony with her grandmother and two sisters.

* Died October 9, 1798.