

Pomfretown 1 July 1783

J. Sir.

You will have no reason to blame me for my silence, and yet my keeping my excuse seems to imply its justice. I left you in Annapolis and when I left Baltimore I understood you were still there, and had proposed to go down the Bay with the Governor; from all which I conclude this letter will be fortunate should it ever now find you at home enjoying that retirement which I long to experience.

I had scarcely entered Congress when the cession of territory by Virginia was taken up. You have seen the conditions. There had been a report on these conditions and this was to be argued. Congress having embraced a conciliatory system the question of right could not be opposed to the conditions. All that remained was to bring them down to what was reasonable. I carried an amendment to the record, which stripped Virginia of a source of charges against the United States, the extent of which it was impossible to ascertain. Finding that no other amendments would succeed I had its further discussion postponed. To get us much as we can of this territory with the consent of Virginia seems to be the preponderating sentiment, and indeed it ~~is~~ ^{may be} all things considered, the most prudent measure at present in our power.

Y^{rs}

The United States are without force to support their claims. And should we delay receiving what Virginia is willing to give she may revoke the cession and open a Land office. In this case there is no doubt but she will find purchasers, and that there will assert their claims. But without such an act the north west lands of the Ohio must in a little time be covered with the claims of adventurers, who will hold upon the title of occupancy. On this I am inclined to think, that we at least require advantages by delay, that may not be counterbalanced by any cession to be expected hereafter. You know the Land Virginia reserves to herself, and to which she has no right by the King of G. Britain's proclamation of 1763, lays between the Alleghany mountains and the Ohio. This it is said added to Virginia will make her too powerful. But it appears to me, that in a very short time it would secede from the Dominion, and become what Congress would make it, an independent republic. The Laws enacted at Richmond would either not be known - have no efficacy, or be cancelled over the Alleghany.

No doubt you will have heard before this of our adjournment. You would be surprised at the want, and hurled for the cause. The enclosed is our convention offer ~~and~~ resolution, which is unsatisfactory you must wait for a

statement of the whole affair that will soon be published by Congress. I will only say, that the danger from the mutinies was real, that no support could be obtained from the Executive, and that the citizens discovered no disposition to take arms.

I know not whether this want will convince the States of their real situation, of the weakness of the confederation, and how very near we have approximated to anarchy and bankruptcy. It is time however, that all men should know, that a breath of wind would break the few fettered threads that remain of the union; and that it is folly of the first rank to keep representatives responsible without their being provided with the means to discharge their trusts.

How far this want may be favorable to the removal of Congress to Annapolis I will not pretend to predict. To be out of Philadelp^ha is not to be in Annapolis, altho' it brings Congress a step nearer this point, by lessening the chances for that place in this question, private considerations will act contrary to the general good. The Southern delegates have a leaning to a cold climate, and the Northern gentlemen dread a warm one. I will work however, but it would be presumption to suggest a favorable issue to my labors. The present instant is promising as it respects the votes of Virginia, North & South.

Carolina, but then Georgia and Maryland is unrepresented
so that nothing can be done but shuffle the cards and
be patient.

Write me on this perplexing
western territory business and believe me most
cordially and sincerely your friend & ally

James M. Henry

No definitive Treaty.

John Henry Esq.