

Letters of John Fenno and John Ward Fenno, 1779–1800

Part 1: 1779–1790

Edited by JOHN B. HENCH

THE LETTERS and other manuscripts of John Fenno and his son John Ward Fenno in the Joseph Ward Papers at the Chicago Historical Society provide scholars with an interesting and valuable view of the points of intersection of politics, fiscal affairs, and journalism during the ideologically charged first decade of the United States under the Constitution.

John Fenno was the founder, editor, printer, and publisher of the *Gazette of the United States*, a strongly Federalist newspaper published first in New York City when it was the seat of the federal government from 1789 to 1790 and then in Philadelphia when the federal government removed there in 1790. His son John Ward Fenno succeeded his father upon the latter's death in the Philadelphia yellow fever epidemic of 1798 and conducted the newspaper until he sold it in 1800. The elder Fenno's goal was to establish a newspaper, without advertising, 'in the City of New York, or at the Seat of the Federal Legislature, wherever situated,' that would be 'entirely devoted to the support of the Constitution, & the Administration formed upon its national principles.'¹ The somewhat defensive tone of Fenno's prospectus clearly demonstrates his awareness that a segment of the American public was still dubious about the merits of the new federal government created by the Con-

¹ 'An Address,' Jan. 1, 1789, below. Fenno first solicited advertising in the issue of Nov. 28, 1789, but his advertising patronage was meager for some time.

stitution, but neither of the Fennos could have anticipated how the rise of political partisanship in the 1790s would have so frustrated their hopes for political and journalistic success. The bitterness that their political and journalistic struggles engendered is clearly revealed in John Fenno's letter to Joseph Ward of September 14, 1794, printed here, and in his son's lengthy, signed diatribe, published in the *Gazette* on March 4, 1799, against the political actions of some of his editorial opponents.

As conductors of newspapers—as editors more than printers—the Fennos were part of a new breed that arose in the 1790s.² This new type was made possible at least in part by changes in the printer's business and political strategies of printers between the pre-Revolutionary era and the 1790s. As described carefully by Stephen Botein, these changes in strategy involved a transition in the role of the newspaper proprietor from impartial assembler and disseminator of other people's opinions to conscious molder of opinion.³ The career of the elder Fenno in particular demonstrates how one could attach oneself to a faction and earn its patronage—in the hope of obviating the economic need to court all sides—but shows also the still tentative and precarious nature of the political editor's role. Fenno's scrambling for preferment from Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, Alexander Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury, the Congress, and other government bodies indicates how transient such factional support could be.

John Fenno was born in Boston on August 12, 1751, the oldest of four children born to Ephraim and Mary Chapman

² On this development, see Jim Allee Hart, *Views on the News: The Developing Editorial Syndrome 1500-1800* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1970), esp. chap. 20. Hart is unfair to Fenno in implying (pp. 178-79) that he was a 'hired' editor, for the initiative in establishing and maintaining the *Gazette* was, as these papers demonstrate, clearly Fenno's even if the financial support came from others.

³ See two articles by Botein: "'Meer Mechanics'" and an Open Press: The Business and Political Strategies of Colonial American Printers,' *Perspectives in American History* 9(1975):130-211, and 'Printers and the American Revolution,' in Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1980), pp. 11-57.

Fenno.⁴ Fenno's father was a leather dresser who also used his house as a shop for selling cakes and ale. He married Mary Chapman, a young widow with a year-old son, in 1750. The Fenno family had been propertied prior to the Revolution, according to a biographer, but suffered financial reverses during the conflict.⁵ Ephraim Fenno, who had grown 'melancholy' in old age, spent the last year of his life in the Boston almshouse.⁶

John Fenno's education came at the hands of Abiah Holbrook at the Old South Writing School on Boston Common. Upon his graduation (about 1768) Fenno assumed the post of usher, or assistant teacher, at the school, now under the direction of Abiah Holbrook's younger brother Samuel.⁷ One of the masters in Holbrook's school when Fenno was an usher was Joseph Ward. Although Ward was fourteen years older, the two men struck up a warm and long-lasting friendship, as evidenced by their correspondence which lasted until Fenno's death and by Fenno's giving his son the middle name Ward.

Fenno left the employ of the school in 1774. His activities during the next fifteen years are not well documented, and much written about him has been mere conjecture. He may have seen some service during the Revolutionary War in 1777-78.⁸ On May 8, 1777, he married Mary Curtis (whom he

⁴ The biographical sketches of John Fenno and John Ward Fenno are taken largely from William C. Kiessel, 'The Family of John Fenno' (1950), typescript, American Antiquarian Society; and *Dictionary of American Biography* s.v. 'Fenno, John.' General treatments of his journalistic career appear in such sources as Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, 1690-1960: A History* (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 122-23; Sidney Kobre, *Development of American Journalism* (Dubuque: William C. Brown Co., 1969), pp. 111-12, 116; Margaret Woodbury, *Public Opinion in Philadelphia, 1789-1801*, Smith College Studies in History (Northampton, Mass., 1915), passim; and Douglas Southall Freeman, 'American Newspapers and Editorial Opinion, 1789-93,' in his *George Washington: A Biography*, 6 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), App. VI-2, pp. 393-413.

⁵ Kiessel, 'Family of John Fenno,' p. 4.

⁶ See Fenno to Joseph Ward, July 8, 1789, below.

⁷ See also Robert Francis Seybolt, *The Public Schoolmasters of Colonial Boston* (Cambridge, Mass.: Privately printed, 1939), p. 19.

⁸ Both Kiessel, *Family of John Fenno*, and the *DAB* article claim that Fenno served as secretary to Gen. Artemas Ward in 1775. An earlier work, Charles Martyn, *The Life of Artemas Ward* (New York: Artemas Ward, 1921), p. 99n, asserted that he had not been, and makes the more convincing argument.

called 'Polly') of Needham, Massachusetts, the daughter of loyalists who fled Boston for Nova Scotia. Later he operated an inn and livery stable in Boston. Next he apparently worked in some literary or editorial capacity for Benjamin Russell, printer and editor of the *Massachusetts Centinel*. Eventually his wife's uncle, Obadiah Curtis, a wealthy merchant, set Fenno up in the dry goods business at a store under the sign 'John Fenno—English Goods.' Apparently Fenno imported too much at too little profit, and the business failed. After settling with his creditors, he moved to New York City in January 1789 'in hopes of retrieving matters in the printing way.'⁹ He went to New York backed financially by some of the leading Federalist citizens of Boston and with a letter of introduction from Christopher Gore, a relative of his wife and one of his patrons, to Rufus King, the New York Federalist leader.¹⁰

After some delays, recounted in considerable detail in Fenno's letters to Ward, Fenno published the first issue of the semiweekly *Gazette of the United States* on April 15, 1789, from his printing office at 86 William Street. He later relocated his shop to 9 Maiden Lane, near the Oswego Market, and then to 41 Broad Street, near the Exchange, before accompanying the federal government to Philadelphia in 1790.¹¹ The last New York issue of the *Gazette* was dated October 13, 1790. It resumed publication in the Pennsylvania city on November 3, 1790, from offices at 69 Market Street. Subsequent moves took Fenno to two other addresses in Philadelphia, 34 North Fifth Street, and 119 Chestnut Street.¹² When John Fenno died on September 14, 1798, ownership passed to his son John Ward

⁹ Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard, May 2, 1789, 'The Belknap Papers,' *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th ser. 3 (1877):123.

¹⁰ Subscription paper, Jan. 1, 1789, below; Charles R. King, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, 1 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894): 357-58.

¹¹ George L. McKay, *A Register of Artists, Engravers, Booksellers, Printers, and Publishers in New York City, 1633-1820* (New York: New York Public Library, 1942), p. 27.

¹² H. Glenn Brown and Maude D. Brown, *A Directory of the Book-Arts and Book Trade in Philadelphia to 1820* (New York: New York Public Library, 1950), p. 47.

Fenno, who sold it to Caleb P. Wayne, effective with the edition of May 28, 1800.¹³

John Ward Fenno, whom the family called Jack, was the oldest of the fourteen children born to John and Mary Curtis Fenno. He was born in Boston March 29, 1778. His father trained him as a printer, but he received formal education as well, at Mr. Payne's Academy in New York and at the University of Pennsylvania (class of 1794).¹⁴ He had aimed at becoming a lawyer, but the death of his father necessitated his taking over the family printing business. His younger brothers Charles and George assisted him at first, the regular workmen having evacuated the city because of the yellow fever epidemic that killed both his father and mother.

Jack Fenno continued the strong Federalist slant his father had established. His partisan journalism caused him trouble when he lost (uncontested) a \$5,000 libel suit brought against him by Alexander J. Dallas, the secretary of Pennsylvania. Already bitter about the state of American politics and journalism, this event and the Federalist defeat in the 1800 elections thoroughly frustrated him. After his retirement from journalism, he opened bookstores in Philadelphia and New York. He died May 6, 1802.

Joseph Ward, the recipient of the letters of John Fenno and his son published here, was born July 2, 1737, in Newton, Massachusetts. In his early adult years he was a schoolteacher in several Massachusetts and New Hampshire towns.¹⁵ Ward

¹³ The publishing history of the paper is given in Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers 1690-1820*, 2 vols. (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1947).

¹⁴ *General Alumni Catalogue of the University of Pennsylvania 1922* (n.p., n.d.), p. 11. Kiessel, 'Family of John Fenno,' p. 16, gives the year of graduation as 1794.

¹⁵ Biographical information on Ward is from Charles Martyn, *The William Ward Genealogy* (New York: Artemas Ward, 1925), pp. 119-20, and Estelle Francis Ward, 'Life of Colonel Joseph Ward,' typescript, Joseph Ward Papers, Chicago Historical Society; both cited and summarized in the Chicago Historical Society's Collection Description for the Papers. For Ward's teaching career in Boston, see Seybolt, 'Public Schoolmasters,' p. 19, and his *The Private Schools of Colonial Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), pp. 68, 69 87-88, 91.

became secretary to Gen. Artemas Ward, his second cousin once removed, following the Battles of Lexington and Concord, and held the post until General Ward retired from the army on March 20, 1777. He next served as commissary general of musters, holding the rank of colonel. He was captured by the British on November 26, 1778, and held prisoner for several months until he was exchanged. He left the army in February 1780 when his office was consolidated with that of the inspector general of disciplines.¹⁶ He declined an offer to become commissary of prisoners in order to go into business in Boston. From 1781 until he retired in 1792, he was active as a real estate dealer and stock broker in the Massachusetts capital. In 1792 he moved to his birthplace, Newton, which town he represented in the General Court in 1796. He moved back to Boston in 1805 where he lived until his death. His activities in his later years centered on seeking remuneration for himself and others for loans made to the Massachusetts and continental governments during the war. He waged some of these battles as a contributor of letters to newspapers, a habit he had acquired in the early 1770s.

Ward died February 14, 1812, in Boston. He had married Prudence Bird of Dorchester, Massachusetts, on November 17, 1784. He fathered eight children despite the lateness of his marriage.

These Fenno letters in the Ward Papers at the Chicago Historical Society, published below, are revealing of what it meant to be a political editor in the late eighteenth-century United States. The letters identify some of the sources of Federalist financial support that John Fenno received to establish and

¹⁶ Artemas Ward's biographer cites letters dated late 1772 and early 1773 in the correspondence of Lord Dartmouth, the British secretary of state for the colonies, in which Ward asks for the position of secretary or lieutenant governor of New Hampshire, or some other crown post in New England, in exchange for information on measures patriots were 'pursuing to secure their independency.' Martyn, *Artemas Ward*, pp. 90-91n.

carry on the *Gazette of the United States*, yet demonstrate how difficult his financial course was nevertheless. They also tell much about the flow of news and commentary back and forth between important opinion makers and newspaper editors in the early national period. In a broader sphere, Fenno's reporting of the political and financial affairs of the young government indicate the close links between access to information and the possession of power. Fenno was especially observant of the fiscal affairs of the new government, particularly the origins and progress of the Hamiltonian financial program, and the information thus obtained could be used for the financial benefit of his friends if not himself. Able in New York or Philadelphia to follow closely the vicissitudes of government securities, he relayed his news to Ward, who, as a broker and real estate speculator, must have read his reports avidly. On one occasion Fenno, on the basis of 'some hints dropped by persons of the best information,' warned his friend Ward to get out of speculations in Yazoo lands.¹⁷ From these papers we learn much about the circles in which John Fenno traveled—a world of merchants, financiers, speculators, and highly placed officeholders in which familial and friendly connections were all important. Finally, at the human level, the Fenno-Ward letters provide vivid glimpses of warm friendships and family relationships, of births and deaths, of joys and sorrows. Of notable interest are John Fenno's letters written during the Philadelphia yellow fever epidemics of 1793 and 1798, the latter claiming the lives of both Fenno and his wife within days of each other. Fenno's descriptions of the sufferings of the victims in 1793 and the heroism of those who cared for them are especially poignant.

There are no letters in the Ward collection in Chicago written between June 1790 and December 1792, and thus the collection offers nothing on Fenno's severing of ties with the secretary of state and his subsequent taking up of a harder, even

¹⁷ Fenno to Ward, June 5, 1796, below.

more one-sided political line.¹⁸ Similarly, the correspondence sheds little new light on the circumstances surrounding the re-birth of the *Gazette* as a daily on December 11, 1793, following a nearly three-month-long suspension of the semiweekly *Gazette* owing to the yellow fever outbreak and the generally depressed business conditions. It is clear from the Hamilton Papers that Fenno in November 1793 sought the treasury secretary's help in securing a \$2,000 loan to allow him to continue his newspaper and that Hamilton agreed to do so.¹⁹ A letter from Fenno to Ward dated December 18, 1793, indicates that the loan was effected, but is cryptic as to the details of the transaction: 'There are some circumstances attending the business,' Fenno told Ward, 'which time will not admit of detailing at present. I hope for an opportunity of doing it should we ever meet again.'

Such disappointments aside, the Fenno-Ward papers published here are a valuable record of how one prominent journalist perceived the relationship between the press and the government in the early national period. They provide considerable detail on contemporary public affairs and professional and trade practices of use to historians of American printing and journalism, to students of American political history, and to scholars seeking to define more clearly the connections between the two fields.

The John Fenno and John Ward Fenno letters will be published in two parts. This first part covers the years 1779 to 1790, but all but two documents are dated 1789 or 1790. The 1779 letters are from Fenno, then living in Boston, to Ward who was then serving in the army as commissary general of musters. The 1789-90 materials mostly originated with Fenno

¹⁸ On the ties between Fenno and Jefferson, see Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 16 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961): ix, 237-62.

¹⁹ Fenno to Hamilton, Nov. 9, 1793, in Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke, eds., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, 15 (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1969): 393-94; and Hamilton to Rufus King, Nov. 11, 1793, *ibid.*, pp. 395-96. See also Hamilton to John Kean, Nov. 29, 1793, *ibid.*, p. 418.

in New York and were addressed to Ward in Boston. The second part, to be published in the next issue of the *Proceedings*, will contain letters written from Philadelphia between 1792 and 1800 by the Fennos, father and son. As noted, there are no letters dated between June 1790 and December 1792 in the Ward collection in Chicago, nor are there any copies of Ward's letters to the Fennos. The Ward Papers were given to the Chicago Historical Society in 1960 and 1961 by Mrs. William T. Priestley and Mrs. Morgan S. A. Reichner, descendants of Joseph Ward. They are published in the *Proceedings* with the permission of Harold Skramstad, director of the Chicago Historical Society. The editor is grateful to Archie Motley, its curator of manuscripts, for his help. He is grateful also to David Hackett Fischer, who first suggested an edition of the Fenno materials, and, for various favors, to John D. Cushing, William L. Joyce, William C. Kiessel, Marcus McCorison, and Michael McGiffert.

The Chicago collection contains typescripts of the Fenno materials, with some annotation, apparently made by or for Estelle Frances Ward, another Ward descendant. These transcriptions were corrected for this edition. The transcriptions are literal except that sentence-ending punctuation has been modernized and superscript letters have been brought down to the line.

Except where otherwise indicated in the footnotes, the source of the present editor's identification of individuals named in the documents comes from one or more of the following sources: *The Boston Directory* (Boston: John Norman, 1789); *The Boston Directory* (Boston: Manning & Loring for John West, 1796); *The Boston Directory* (Boston: Rhoades and Laughton for John West, 1798); *The New-York Directory, and Register, for 1789* (New York: Hodge, Allen, & Campbell, 1789); *The New-York Directory, and Register, for 1790* (New York: Hodge, Allen, & Campbell, 1790); *Dictionary of American Biography*; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress*

1774–1961 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961); and the Thwing Catalogue of Boston Inhabitants 1630–1800, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. Identifications are not repeated beyond the first appearance of the name in the letters.

Boston 12 Octr. 1779

Dear Sir,

Tho' I have wrote you so recently I cannot omit so good a Conveyance as by Col. Keith.¹ I have this Day made up a small Box of Matters & left it with Capt. Davis² who will forward it to you in a waggon which sets off, he informs me to-morrow—it contains 12 lb. of the best Sugar I can get—1 lb. of excellent Congo Tea, as good, if not preferable to most green now at Market. 3 lb. Chocolate & 18 vest Buttons. Red Twist is not to be had.

I paid for these Articles as follows Vizt.

12 lb. Sugar - - - @ 12/,	- - - - -	£ 7. . 4. .—
3 lb. Chocolate - @ 24/,	- - - - -	3. . 12. .—
1 lb. Tea - - - - -	- - - - -	8. .— - - -
Cannister for do.- - - - -	- - - - -	1. . 10. .—
18 Buttons, (abominable)		4. . 10. .—
	£. NY - - - - -	24. . 16

As high as these Things are, some have risen 50 p cent since they were bought. You need not trouble yourself to send the Money—when I see you we will settle it. I congratulate you on the Counts'³ Arrival with the common smiles of providence, I think we shall do well, it will be a most timely Interposition. May success crown our united Efforts. We have nothing new or important transpires. Our Regulating Measures have well nigh starved us—for weeks together hundreds of Families cannot purchase a pound of Meat—some days not a joint is bro't into Town—but these Suffer-

¹ Probably Israel Keith. His obituary is in the *Columbian Centinel* (Boston), July 14, 1819.

² Capt. Amasa Davis, merchant, Orange Street, Boston.

³ Apparently a reference to the siege of Savannah in September and October 1779 and to either Charles Hector Theodat, Count d'Estaing, the commander of the French naval forces at the siege, or, less likely, to Count Casimir Pulaski, the Polish commander of the American cavalry, who died in battle on or about October 11.

ings are to do us good—we are got into a pitiable situation. All Friends are well, have many enquiries after your honor, but no one wishes you happy more than

Your JF

[*Addressed:*] Col. Joseph Ward
Commissary Genl. of Musters to the Forces of
the United States
Head Quarters

Favor'd by North River⁴
Col. Keith Or elsewhere

Boston 15 Novr. 1779

Dear Sir

Your highly agreeable favor of the several dates Octr. 20-29 and Novr. 3 is now before me; I sincerely thank you for it, as it contains moral, political, & friendly intelligence. Your reflections on the Penobscot Expedition & other public misfortunes are worthy of the patriot & man of virtue, what I can most cordially subscribe to, tho' perhaps I could not have suggested. I trust the war and its concomitant evils are drawing to a period. Our Sufferings have been great, but I wish our difficulties were not greater, for my part, I never tho't that we had paid half the price that Freedom ought to be estimated at—tho' I live in the midst of a vile race who lust after the Leeks & Onions of Sodom—Eternally complaining of evils that are comparative Blessings. My happiness is, that these wretches cannot set aside by their ingratitude the great designs of Omnipotence, which are fraught with Benignity to America. You say the path of Duty is plain. I suppose you mean Taxation? I cannot see the perspicuity of it. Tax the Countryman & he will enhance his produce in proportion. Tax the merchant and his merchandise will rise: and between them both the Continent remains in statu quo & the poor are crushed. Here difficulties rise insurmountable except by patriotism or coercion—patriotism is a shade & force is concession. O may Heaven prevent the necessity of another Campaign. The Articles I mentioned in my last were sent off by Capt. Amasa Davis about 10 Days since. He put the Box directed to you into a Cask of pepper No. 1—consigned to Mr. * at Peekskill. I hope you

⁴ Hudson River.

have rec'd ere this. I cannot purchase you a steel mounted Sword, but Capt Hallet¹ has a very beautiful silver mounted gilt open-work'd One, with a white shagrin [*i.e.*, *shagreen*] scabbard, which he asks 24 silver Dollars for or 3 half Joes.² It is the cheapest one I have seen, but as hard money now sells here will turn out more than 700 Dollars. I shall wait your further directions.

The Epaulets I have not been able to procure yet. Billings³ has engaged to inform me if any offers in his way.⁴ Your Intelligence respecting my Brother's situation is a most seasonable relief to me, as also to the rest of his Friends. Major Marsereau inform'd me last week that it was nearly his Turn to be exchanged. I pray for your Interest in his behalf. Should be glad to know if you have heard from Sam Chapman⁵ by Letter, or how? Your two Tickets in the second Class of the Continental Lottery Nos. 26,610 & 41,823 are both blanks, which I am sorry for. I think you are now out of the Lottery. I am to desire you to purchase for me as many *Sable* Skins as will make three Muffs and three Tippetts. If you cannot get so many, as many as you can. I should think they might be had of some person in General Sullivan's⁶ Army, or perhaps they may be bro't down the North River, you may buy them dressed or undrest & give a pretty good price as no such thing is to be had here. You may give as high as three Hundred Dollars & as much cheaper as you can get them. I long to hear of the Counts'⁷ Compleat Success, and his coming Northward, tho' I fear the latter will not take place. If that nest of Vipers could be routed at York, how great would be our Triumph! I should be glad to give you a few portraits in the female way—and were I not married could do it

¹ Possibly Capt. Jonathan Hallet, 2nd New York Regiment 1776–83. See Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of the Continental Army* (1914; 1932; repr. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1973), p. 269.

² Short for *Jobannes*, a Portuguese gold coin, valued at about \$8. See 'The Belknap Papers,' Part 2, *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th ser. 3 (1877): 271n.

³ Possibly Joseph or Richard Billings, Jr., tailors of Boston. See Thwing Catalogue of Boston Inhabitants 1630–1800, Massachusetts Historical Society.

⁴ Ward had lost his uniform and equipment while a prisoner of war. Typescript note to transcription of letter, Joseph Ward Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

⁵ Samuel Chapman (1749?–1807) was John Fenno's half brother—his mother's son by her first marriage. He was a captain in the Eighth Regiment of the North Carolina line.

⁶ Gen. John Sullivan (1740–95).

⁷ See note 3 to letter of Oct. 12, 1779.

entertainingly, as I see many sparklers daily, but form no acquaintance with them. I think the Town never exhibited a greater Number of handsome Girls. You must come and choose for yourself. Old Time will sow his wrinkles by & by: when even good sense & youthful sprightliness may not be able to save you. All well. Adieu.

Ever your JF

* I forget his name but it is the person to whom his matters are always sent.

[*Addressed:*] Col. Joseph Ward. Muster Master Genl.
Army United States Head Quarters
North River.

Boston January 1. 1789

Whereas Mr. John Fenno of this Town, hath exhibited to us the Subscribers the Plan of a new Publication, or publick paper to be established at the Seat of the Federal Government and as the prosecution of the Business will require a Fund, of which he is at present destitute—to obviate this difficulty, and from an approbation of the Design as calculated to promote the publick Good—and from motives of friendship to the party aforesaid. We the underwritten do hereby engage to loan to said Fenno for the Term of Two Years, the Sum affixed to our respective Names.

John Lucas¹ Fifty Pounds paid
Joseph Ward Fifty pounds paid
Christopher Gore² Thirty pounds paid
Thomas Russell³ Thirty pounds paid
Hon. James Bowdoin,⁴ Thirty pounds, paid
Saml. Eliot⁵ Thirty pounds paid.
Jonathan Mason Esq.⁶ Fifteen pounds paid
Caleb Davis,⁷ Esq.

¹ John Lucas, Esq. of Orange Street, Boston.

² Christopher Gore (1758-1827), member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

³ Thomas Russell, Esq., merchant, of Russell's Wharf, lived in Summer Street, Boston.

⁴ James Bowdoin (1726-90), governor of Massachusetts 1785-87.

⁵ Samuel Eliot, merchant, 36 Cornhill, lived in Tremont Street, Boston.

⁶ Jonathan Mason (1756-1831), member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

⁷ Caleb Davis, Esq., merchant, 37 State Street, lived in Orange Street, Boston.

An Address

The Art of Printing is justly considered as bearing a most propitious aspect upon the best interests of society.

To the general diffusion of that knowledge which has arisen from the productions of the press, more especially from News-paper publications, may be ascribed the rise, progress, & honourable termination of the American Revolution. But in no instance perhaps, since the first discovery of Letters, has their benign influence been more conspicuous, than in the production of that light, information, & harmony of sentiment, which have led this great & various people to the Adoption of the Federal Constitution now organizing by them and is soon to come into operation.

This event is unparalleled in the annals of mankind; which, the more it is contemplated, the greater is the admiration of the philosophick mind—while the bosoms of the patriot & the philanthropist, exult in the anticipation of the compleat triumph of reason, in a firm, & compleat establishment of this system, which under a wise administration, promises to our Country, the perpetuation of independence peace, liberty, & safety.

But however flattering our prospects may be, every person of reflection realizes, that the labours of the patriot in this important business, are not yet come to a period. The merits of the Constitution, which through the exertions of the wisest, & most distinguished friends of America, have appreciated with surprizing rapidity in the estimation of our citizens, have notwithstanding many difficulties & obstacles to surmount. These must be encountered with spirit, & obviated with address, before the Constitution will be familiarized to the ideas, & habits of the people, and be considered by them, as it really is, the palladium of their Rights & Liberties.

The object therefore of the present address is, to call the attention of those who feel interested in a speedy, peaceable, & efficient establishment of the Federal Government, upon the principles of the New Constitution, to a subject which the subscriber conceives to be intimately connected with, & as conducing very essentially to this important, & desirable event—and that is the establishment of a new periodical publication in the City of New York, or at the Seat of the Federal Legislature, wherever situated.

This publication to be entirely devoted to the support of the Constitution, & the Administration formed upon its national principles

—to be entitled *The Federal Oracle & the Register of Freedom*¹—and to comprize as fully as possible the following objects Viz:

1st. A continued series of Essays in vindication & support of the Federal Constitution, not only in a general view, but also of its several parts, connections & dependencies—likewise Essays in favour of every national & local Right of the citizens as founded on the Federal or State Constitutions.

2d. Early & authentick accounts of the proceedings of the Federal Legislature, its laws, acts & resolutions communicated so as to form an accurate history of the proceedings of the American Congress from the commencement of the New Era in our political existence as a nation.

3d. A succinct & impartial sketch of the debates of Congress, by which the characters, abilities & views of the members will be developed—and which will conduce, not only to the great & essential benefit of their constituents in all parts of the union, but justice will thereby be done to the patriot & the enlightened, upright Statesman.

4th. A series of paragraphs, calculated to conciliate the minds of our citizens, to the proceedings of the Federal Legislature; to obviate ill-founded surmizes, & jealousies, & to brighten the prospects of our country under the auspices of the general Government.

5th. Being published at the fountain head of information, it shall be a faithful conveyancer to all parts of the Union, of every species of Intelligence which may affect the commercial, agricultural, manufacturing, or political interests of the several States.

6th. The interests of America, as connected with its Universities, Schools, & other literary Institutions; its religious, & civil rights, & establishments. Improvements in science, arts & humanity; its domestick peace & social happiness; its foreign treaties, alliances, & connections &c shall be duly noticed upon national principles.

7th. A chain of Domestick Intelligence founded on a correspondence with every State in the Union.

8th. A Chain of foreign News exhibiting a general View of publick Affairs in the Eastern Hemisphere &c.

¹ Fenno did not use this title. His paper, first published on April 15, 1789, was entitled *The Gazette of the United States*. Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers 1690–1820*, 2 vols. (Worcester, 1947), 1:645.

In the infancy of the administration of our national government it is obvious that many difficulties will arise; these can be abated by no method so effectually as by a well conducted press, the productions of which shall be under the direction of characters who are fully in the Federal Interest, & deeply impressed with a sense of the necessity of an efficient national Government.

The Subscriber, from the first promulgation of the New System, to the present hour, has unceasingly advocated its merits, so far as his abilities extended—he is desirous of continuing his exertions in the same cause, & encouraged by some who have been successful in the printing business, & the advice of others his friends, his wish & intention are, to become the Editor of a publick paper upon the above, or a similar plan. He is assured of the assistance of an experienced & ingenious artist at the business,² and what other professional aid that may be necessary. From an estimate made by a person in the profession, it will require Two Hundred pounds, to furnish a press with its necessary Apparatus, and a sufficient Quantity of Types to carry so extensive a plan into execution—to this Sum a like amount must be added, for the payment of assistants in the business, contingent charges, & the support of a Family, till the business shall be sufficiently productive for these purposes.

The assistance therefore of those who may approve the plan, as favourable to the federal Cause, & who can confide in the integrity, abilities, & assiduity of the Subscriber, is hereby solicited.

Should he be so fortunate as to succeed in the establishment of this publication, through the aid of private patrons, it is not improbable that he may receive the patronage of Congress—and from his personal acquaintance with many of the Members, he flatters himself with the idea. Should this event take place, the period for which he would need assistance, would be shortened—but as uncertainty rests upon the future, to prevent a disappointment, & defeat to the primary object—the term of two years for the payment of the Loan to be effected, will be as short as is compatible with any prospect of success.

John Fenno

Boston, Jany. 1. 1789

² It is possible this was John Russell (1764?–1831), brother of Benjamin Russell, printer of the *Massachusetts Centinel*. See note 8 to letter of Feb. 17, 1789, below.

New York, Jan: 28. 1789

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 21 Inst. enclosing the Bill for £183 is just come to hand P[er] Post. I sincerely thank you for your attention to the business—the negotiations have issued thus far as I expected and as to any further assistance from your quarter, my hopes are very faint indeed. My obligations therefore to those who have patronized me are greatly enhanced: if a sufficiency should be collected for the support of my family, it will leave my mind in a much better situation to pursue the object of my tour. Since my arrival here several circumstances have concurred to impede my progress. Some of the Gentlemen absent—others engaged in the business of the Supreme Court of Judicature now sitting. Col. Hamilton¹ I saw for the first time, to day. I have delivered nearly all my Letters—and the project has met with universal approbation. My reception has been kind & flattering. Mr. [King?]² appears to be very much pleased with the Design & has rather more than intimated that if any pecuniary aid is requisite it shall not be wanted. I find however that the enterprise must depend for success upon my own exertions ultimately—this creates a difficulty as I have not yet found a person who can give me that information as to the state of the business in general, & the particular situation of any individual in it which would warrant my making the necessary proposals as to an Office. I hope however to make such an Arrangement as to be able to forward my proposals by next Thursday's post at farthest. Col. Hamilton informed me for my encouragement that I had not been anticipated in the idea—and that consequently the way was clear—and that he doubted not success would attend the undertaking if judiciously managed. I however feel the weight of the undertaking, and that many difficulties are to be encount[er]ed—but considering myself as committed, I am determined to persevere—tho' the *seasoning* will cost me more than I expected.

I spent an Evening with Mr. Watson³—he is a fine fellow, sprightly & very sensible. I saw Col. Rutgers⁴ & Mr. Bedlow⁵ to-

¹ Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804), Fenno's patron, shortly to become secretary of the treasury.

² Illegible. Probably Rufus King (1755–1827), member of the New York legislature and shortly to become United States senator from New York.

³ James Watson, merchant, 6 Goldenhill Street, New York.

⁴ Henry Rutgers (1745–1830), Revolutionary officer, landholder, and educational philanthropist.

⁵ William Bedlow, New York's postmaster, 8 Wall Street.

day—& spent last Even'g with Col. Duer⁶ & some other Gentlemen—Duer is eccentricity!, but shrewd. We have nothing new here—packets hourly expected from Europe. It is supposed that Senators & representatives for the Fedl. Government will finally be chosen in this State. The National State House now preparing in this City exceeds every thing of the kind I ever saw, or I believe is to be seen in America—it is in some measure commensurate to its Object. My Sentiments of New York expect, when *Home* shall preponderate less. I think it would be advisable not to let my plan go out of your hands, some expressions in it may afford room for carping. As to the gapers &c I expected to hear from them but let them gape till they rend their jaws. If they should belch out lies, let them know it. I trust my friends will not leave me defenceless. I observe that Edes⁷ was after me—the result of my enterprize will confound the Anti-federal Junto I trust. If this should go pr post, I shall not write Mrs. F. You will please to let her know how it is with me & give my love to her and the flock—also to your good Girl⁸ & Mr. & Mrs. Durant.⁹

Shall be glad of a hint upon politicks should opportunity present. With a grateful Sense of your numberless favours & my warmest wishes for a thousand fold remuneration upon you & yours

I am Dr. Sir

Your ever obliged friend
& Servant

J Fenno

Jos. Ward Esq.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office
Boston

⁶ William Duer (1747–99), merchant, financier, and lawyer, who assisted Hamilton in the organization of the Treasury Department.

⁷ Benjamin Edes (1732–1803), printer and editor of the *Boston Gazette*. Edes had been one of the leading patriot printers of the American Revolution. He was an Anti-federalist by this time.

⁸ Ward's wife, Prudence Bird Ward.

⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Durand (also spelled Durant). Durand, a merchant of St. Croix and later Boston, was married to Fenno's sister Mary.

New York 7 Feb. 1789

Dear Sir -

As I know your solicitude for my success is great, I wish it was possible for me to give you positive assurances upon the Subject. After delivering my Letters, & opening the Subject to Gentlemen here, who promised me their countenance—I immediately made the necessary enquiries respecting an Office—last Thursday terminated a treaty (that had been on foot for more than a week, owing as I suppose to some of the party's being at 100 Miles distance) *this* ended in nothing. I have another just begun—meantime have wrote to Phila. to ascertain the practicability of purchasing Types from thence. There are more difficulties than I was aware of—but none that are insurmountable. I shall persevere, till perseverance can do no good. An House and Office are easily attainable—but Types that would answer, were not to be procured in this City. Agreeably to your Advice, I have made an attempt to *bire*, for a Season—hitherto without effect—but a prospect that way, opens upon me. I hope in my next to inform you, what *can* be done. This separation from you, occasions a *new* course of circulations in my blood. I hardly think it possible that I can ever be reconciled to it—indeed I cannot dwell upon the Subject. May all your happiness be continued—your goodness rewarded. My Compliments to Mr. Harbach¹ & Mr. Prime² & my Love to your Wife & Children.

Adieu

Yours with Affection

J. Fenno

P.S. I shall present the Bill for payment on Tuesday—there is no doubt of its being paid.

I breakfasted with Col. Platt³ this morning. He is a fine fellow! His Club have got my Business in there hands. By the Way, it is determined to unhorse Mr. G'r C— — — —n.⁴ if possible.

Connecticut & the Jersies for Washington & Adams certainly.

¹ John Harbach (also spelled Harback), a Boston broker and trader. His obituary is in the *Columbian Centinel*, Oct. 5, 1793.

² Nathaniel Prime, a broker in Boston. Thwing catalogue, Massachusetts Historical Society.

³ Richard Platt, broker, 195 Water Street, New York.

⁴ George Clinton (1739-1812), Antifederalist governor of New York.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office – State Street
Boston

Hond. by
Mr. Keiler⁵

New York Feb: 17. 1789

Dear Sir

By Mr. Catlin I recd. your very agreeable favour of 7 Inst: and it is not too much to say, that it was a word in season, & a consolation to my heart. My present situation is so much of a novelty, there is so compleat a separation from those with whom I have “taken sweet counsel” for twenty years, & the scene opened here, is so diverse from, & inferior to what I have left, that philosophy has had an arduous struggle. & altho’ it appears morally impossible that I can ever be detached from B——n [Boston] yet a sense of necessity & duty may induce a decent acquiescence. As to my prospect here—time only brings it nearer. Finding it impracticable to procure Types here, that would answer, or indeed a sufficiency of any kind—by the advice of several Gentlemen, propositions were made of forming a connection with some already established printer—this plan has failed in the instance which was tho’t the most eligible. Per last post I recd. returns from Philadelphia & find I can have a sufficiency of a small Letter from thence. I have another negotiation on foot, which I expect will issue in Fumo—in that case, shall procure the Types from Phila. & expect to write for them by Thursday’s post—these delays are vexatious, but they have been unavoidable—owing to my being obliged to originate & prosecute almost every movement, *solus*. I thank you for your politicks—£160! for the *great* & the *good* Lincoln!¹ “Oh shame, where is they confusion!” As to the reduction of the G—r’s² Salary! I am glad at the attempt, that it may open his Eyes to see what a Sett of *miser-*

⁵ Possibly Jeremiah Kahler, merchant, Summer Street, Boston, and, like Fenno, a member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts. See *Roll of Members of the Military Company of Massachusetts Now Called the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company* (Boston, 1895), p. 21.

¹ Benjamin Lincoln (1733–1810), Revolutionary War general, leader of the troops that suppressed Shays’s Rebellion, Massachusetts lieutenant governor, and collector of the Port of Boston 1789–1809.

² Gov. John Hancock (1737–98), of Massachusetts.

ables he puts his trust in. Your Electors have acquitted themselves nobly. *Washington & Adams* are the only Names that would be tho't of by the Federalists of this State, so that they will have their support as fully as if they had been voted for here. The antics of this Government are numerous; but hoodwink'd by the G—r³—there will be a very powerful effort to displace him this spring—should that be the case, there would be a very great revolution of Sentiment among the people & federal Sentiments would predominate, for at present they see every thing thro' a false medium. As to the Squibbers, they have their proper place in my esteem. One of your Two & Forties would annihilate a whole creation of them.

I hope Russell⁴ will continue to scald them & the Junto to which they are humble appendages, till they are so bare that the people at large may see & despise their nakedness, & deficiency of Wisdom, honour & patriotism, as fully, as some individuals do.

Please to make my Respectful Compliments to Deacon M.⁵ & thank him for his remembrance. I am not sorry Gerry⁶ is chosen. You say Boston looks just as it did before I left it. I realize it & so it would had I taken my final adieu from that, & all things else. You must not hum a body about New York—it is well enough; no more.

I thank you for introducing your Girl & just in that way too. I see her saucy eyes, speaking love, sentiment & pleasure. I will not put up with any thing short of Love—so no more dry Compliments from her, & those other Girls that are residents in my affections—but your blessing I always shall prize. My most cordial thanks are due to you & your sweet Girl for every mark of your attention to my Polly & her flock. She does not fail to mention your goodness—which alleviates the load of my anxiety greatly.

Should providence fix me here, the idea of your visiting us with Mrs. W—would serve to abate & lessen the disagreeable incidents that would intervene previous to so propitious an event. You say you “miss my calls.” I miss them too—as I have found no substitute & I never expect to. Doctr. Gordon's History⁷ is arrived here.

³ Gov. George Clinton, of New York.

⁴ Benjamin Russell (1761-1845), editor of the Federalist *Massachusetts Centinel* in Boston, for whom Fenno had once worked. See 'Belknap Papers,' p. 123.

⁵ Possibly Jonathan Mason, according to the typescript annotation.

⁶ Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814), elected to U.S. House of Representatives in 1789 from Massachusetts.

⁷ William Gordon (1728-1807), *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America*, 3 vols. (New York: Hodge, Allen, and Campbell, 1789). Evans 21861.

I suppose you have received it before this—it is wrote in Letters & I guess is a better performance upon the whole than was anticipated. I have not read it.

18th: Feb: I shall send for Mr. Russell⁸ by next post. All my negotiations wth. printers here respectg. a partnership are at an end—and tomorrow if I receive assurances wch. I expect of the necessary additional pecuniary aid wch. I shall want, I shall set off for Philadelphia, where only I can procure Types. I shall tarry there only one or two days, so that Letters may be forwarded as usual. My love to my Family—and to yours. Russell in his paper of the 11 Instant has done nobly—the Junto cannot hold a candle to him—and as to Galen he has a proper dressing in the Herald of last week.

If Populacius breaks the Laws
It is a trifling evil
But the two Toms for the same cause
Are blacker than the devil.

Adieu—may justice & common Sense be triumphant

Yrs J F

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office, State Street
Boston

Monday—New York 23d, Feb. '89

Dear Sir –

By Col. Stevens¹ I recd. your esteemed favour of 11 Inst:—and assure you that I derive no small advantage in the way of solace & comfort from your kind communications. By last Thursday's post I informed you that the time was come, when delay was no longer sufferable—by this Day's post I have wrote for Mr. Russell—and to-morrow I shall set off for Philadelphia—this is an expense I have been endeavoring to avoid, but cannot, without incurring a greater perhaps in the issue. My funds being so Small—by the advice of

⁸ Possibly Benjamin Russell or his brother John Russell (1764?–1831), who had edited or published a newspaper in New York, the *New-York Museum*, in 1788. Brigham, *History and Bibliography*, 1:671–72.

¹ Possibly Col. Ebenezer Stevens. Obituary in Boston *Columbian Centinel*, Aug. 2, 1800.

several of the first characters that I came recommended to, propositions were made to several of the profession for a connection, but the terms on which they would have acceded were quite beyond all calculation. Mean time I recd. Intelligence that every requisite could be procured at Philadelphia. Having determined, that upon the whole this would be the best Theatre to exhibit upon, it becomes necessary to collect my articles as soon as possible & on the best terms. The further I extend my enquiries, the more information I obtain with respect to the practicability of getting not only what I could make a shift with upon a pinch, at Phila., but also of those very articles that I would prefer—hence the eligibility of a journey thither in preference to negotiating by Letters. I shall be gone but three or four days. I hope Deacon Mason will not fail you, & am glad that you have some small hopes as to others—especially as at the present my expectations of pecuniary assistance here, are rather problematical. I can depend upon only *one* Gentleman here, & on him only for Thirty Pounds, so that it is rather a Speculation with the Sum I have, as it will require *the whole* to push off with, & keep the boat afloat for a few months at farthest. You do not mention in any of your Letters whether Mr. Burgess² has paid you anything or no. I have desired Mr. Russell to bring with him such articles, (if any there be) as he may have collected as I shall secure nothing previous to his coming but a Press & Types. He may want some Cash in consequence, and if there should be any in your hands for me, that can be spared, from the Sum which may be necessary for the comfortable support of my Family, would wish you to furnish him, if absolutely necessary. I do not suppose that he will want more than Six or Eight Pounds.

I do not see any probability of my being able to send for my family till towards the last of April. I hope it will be sooner, but would calculate for the longest time. I shall have powerful competition in my attempts for publick business—they all have their eyes that way.

I am greatly favoured by your animated counsel—& sincerely thank my generous benefactors for their sollicitude. Pray give my respectful Regards to Mr. Eliot & Mr. Lucas—and all others of those I respect—especially to Mr. Harbach & Mr. Prime.

Your allusion to the venerable *Nestor*³ is flattering & like your-

² William Burgess, merchant, 35 State Street, dwelling in Southack's Court, Boston.

³ Benjamin Franklin. His grandson was Benjamin Franklin Bache, who, as editor of the Jeffersonian *General Advertiser* and *Aurora* in Philadelphia from 1790 until 1798,

self pleasing. I mean to be introduced to him—he has a Grandson in the business—& a Type Founder.

Boston you say is dull—New York is ditto. The G.C. [*General Court*] had not risen by the last papers. I wish such another sett may never be saddled upon you again, as the majority of the Legion Club. The Senate have done worthily. I think with you that we are verging to such a point, that if it was not for the Federal Constitution, we should be a miserable people shortly—and as it is, I wish we may not have a *bitter seasoning*, before all comes right. I can in no wise dispense with not seeing you in the Spring—the tho't is perfectly intolerable. Your good Girls' Epistle I esteem myself greatly honoured by—thank her for me. I shall duly acknowledge it by some future opportunity. The enclosed circular Letter is the production of the signer—the object you see to remove the present Gov—r⁴ & I believe they will effect it.

Adieu my dear Sir—may prosperity attend you in your business, & blessings from heaven of the purest [*kind?*], continually surround you & the objects of [*your*] love. Prays Yr obliged friend
& hble Servt.

John Fenno

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office – State Street
Boston

New York March 11. 1789

My dear Friend –

Your favour of 25 Ulto.' is now before me. I have only time to acknowledge your goodness—but not to do justice to your Epistle. It is replete with that good & sound doctrine, that has so often distilled upon me—and I trust it has its due influence. Since I sat out upon the present expedition, it has been necessary for me to call to my aid the whole of my resources in philosophy morality & Religion—and at this moment my enterprize is not completed, consequently my trials not over. I expect some tidings from Russell this Evening, which may produce a decision—should that be the case—by Letter tomorrow Mrs. Fenno will be informed.

became Fenno's chief political and journalistic rival. Ironically, both Fenno and Bache died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1798 in Philadelphia.

⁴ Probably Governor Clinton of New York.

I shall certainly follow your advice respecting writing to all my benefactors—and shall always be happy in any & every hint you may be kind enough to throw out.

It is a most unhappy business that there is not a quorum of the New Congress yet arrived, & consequently nothing has been done—& I see no prospect of a sufficient numbers' arriving in ten or twelve days. The Election of Representatives in the Jersies is not yet compleated—& there is a talk of the choice's being set aside so far as it has proceeded there having been strange proceedings in that state. We have a Man arrived here from Philadelphia, with a design to publish the Debates of Congress &c in weekly numbers a Mr. Lloyd.¹ I do not think however that he will be an obstacle to my plan. The Federal State House is not yet compleated—but driving on.

I have a very good Letter from your dear Wife—but it is not in my power to answer per this Conveyance for want of time.

My love to her & the Children & Compliments to Mr. Harbach & Mr. Prime.

From Sir Your ever obliged friend
& Servant
John Fenno

[*Lead pencil note on blank side of letter.*] William Street No. 86²

New York April 5. 1789

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure to hear from you per post last Eveng. and that you were recruiting after an attack of your old Complaint. Am happy to hear that you are better—but should have been more so had you been free from every species of Indisposition—that disorder seems loath to quit you—but it must not retain its hold—do you remember the Doctor as usual—you must take care—there is a Season in our lives when we reel off our years, two threads at a time.

Your highly esteemed favour of 8 March is yet to be acknowledged—for all your comfort counsel & support I thank you. I am now come to a Point—and the appearance of the Paper will deter-

¹ Thomas Lloyd, shorthand writer, 56 Water Street, New York.

² The address of Fenno's first New York printing office.

mine its fate. I enclose you a Copy of the plan, & hope it will meet your ideas & wishes. I agree with you respecting the exertions to remove G—rs C— & H—¹ they will prove abortive—still I think Laco² writes well, & tells some wholesome truths if they had their due operation; & that it would be a happy circumstance to remove Gov. C—.

We shall as you observe have many good Men in Congress & some so so. You'll perceive the House has chosen a Speaker³ from Phila. & a Clerk⁴ from Virginia. Mr. Otis⁵ was a Candidate for the last—and is now pushing for Clerk to Senate—but has powerful competitors. There are applicants from all parts a dozen for an office. As soon as I begin which will be in 8 or 10 days I shall offer my services & hope for a *slice* from the Printing Loaf if no more. Should I fail the Paper shall be prosecuted under every advantage that will produce the *ready*. Among other projects that have occupied my mind, should I fail of publick patronage as a Printer I have thought of advertising myself as a Residuary Agent at the Seat of the National Government, & in that Character offer my Services to those individuals through the Union, who may have business to transact with Congress, that may be done by an agent. What think you of the Idea *as a Corps de Reserve*? Mr. B[urges]⁶ has paid you 9. . 5 /—so be it. If it please Providence to smile upon me, there is no more to be said but if necessity requires, he shall hear from me. I think the features of Mr. L—⁷ are strongly impressed upon several recent Publications which contain many capital strokes—but I think the System was too replete with allusions, to circumstances, not so fully, & generally known, as he seems to suppose—but his freedom, explicitness, & independency, do him honour—and if our Men of Sense, Property, & Principle, would unite, they would be like a whirlwind that would sweep the Chaff of Antifederalism, Juntoism, Idolatry & Nonsense into Nonentity. Thank you for all

¹ Governors Clinton of New York and Hancock of Massachusetts.

² Stephen Higginson (1743–1828), who wrote a series of essays under the pseudonym 'Laco' published in Benjamin Russell's *Massachusetts Centinel* in February and March 1789. They were published in pamphlet form as *The Writings of Laco* (Boston, 1789).

³ Frederick A. C. Muhlenberg (1750–1801), U.S. congressman from Pennsylvania.

⁴ John Beckley (1757–1807).

⁵ Samuel Allyne Otis (1740–1814), of Massachusetts, secretary of the Senate from 1789 until his death.

⁶ William Burgess, of Boston.

⁷ Possibly 'Laco' (see note 2, above).

your great & unmerited favours to me & mine. My Love to your Love, & to your children—& pray take care of yourself, for I hope to come & spend many happy years with you, after the Necessary is done here and that will be in less than ten years I hope. However lightly we may have tho't of laying bones among the dust of our Ancestors—I think differently now—the very dust of New England is dear to me—therefore take care of yourself, & do not think of quitting us this some twenty or thirty years—that to all the good advice you have given me, profitable to *live* by—I may, should Providence so ordain, have my education finished by being taught how to die. Adieu my dear Sir—and accept the ardent Wishes, for the happiness of you & yours of Your old friend & Servant

John Fenno

P.S. Compliments to Mr. Harbach & Mr. Prime.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Boston

New York June 6. 1789

Dear Sir –

I have just recd. the enclosed Letter for my Sister;¹ it is from Mr. Durant;² & I wish you to send it to her immediately & please to let her know that we are all well. I should write her, but have nothing very special to communicate, and It is but a few days since my last. I wrote your good Lady by a private conveyance last week. By the Boston papers which arrived last evening I find that the Gazette of the U.S. has not been punctually received—such mistakes I hope will be corrected in future—it seems they were stopped on the Road by some Proprietor in the Stage—who did not suppose that he should receive his proportion of pay for carrying them. But this matter will be rectified. No. 16. of Yesterday I put on board Capt. Barnard³ who left this place, with a fair wind this day—it is very mortifying, & provoking, that after sitting up *all Night*, (which I have done on Tuesday nights ever since the post has gone three times per week) to get the paper off by the Stage on Wednesday Mornings, they should after all, not reach their destination in Sea-

¹ Mary Fenno Durand (1755-89).

² Cornelius Durand (d. 1812), husband of Fenno's sister Mary.

³ Probably Capt. Tristram Barnard, Cold Lane, Boston.

son. I wish you would mention these facts, they may serve to justify me in the view of my Subscribers—there is no sacrifice that I do not make, that is necessary to accommodate the Gentlemen in Boston. I expect that in future they will not be so much disappointed. As to News, I can hardly mention any which the papers do not contain. Congress are jogging on—to form a permanent System of Revenue is an arduous business, & cannot be finished very soon. The Three Bills which have been reported for the arrangement of the three grand departments would meet your Approbation I think in general—that for the Treasury—is very full in your Ideas—UNDER the FINANCIER the Bill provides for a Treasurer, Register, Auditor, Comptroller & Chief Clerk all to be appointed by the PRESIDENT.

There is a gross absurdity in publishing Bills while on their passage thro' the Legislature; this has been done with respect to some which are *now* so altered, that they are quite a different affair—this has taken place without any authority, and will breed confusion. It is a wonder if the Bill regulating the Collection of the Duties, does not find its way into the papers* but very essential alterations will take place in it without doubt. My Subscribers continue to encrease. No choice of a Printer to Congress is yet made. Mrs. Fenno desires her love to your good Wife & Self—accept the same from her husband. I have recd. not a line from Boston, since you left us. Mrs. Fenno & I have wrote repeatedly. Adieu—may every Blessing attend you & yours is the fervent wish of Your ever obliged friend & Servt,

JF

* This Bill provides that all Duties shall be paid in SPECIE.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land-Office.
Boston

New York June 23. 1789

Dear Sir –

Your very kind favour per Post I received this evening, and most sincerely thank you for all the information, counsel, & comfort it contains. My Sister's situation is a source of the most painful Sensations; it throws a gloom over creation to my view. When I quitted my connections in Boston, it was like severing soul & body. I real-

ized the extreme difference it would create in my chance for future happiness; and I have ever since combated the most disagreeable reflections, in order to enjoy any tolerable degree of tranquility. But this afflictive dispensation revives all the keenness of my feelings—these things may do me good for my latter end—but there is no compensation in *this* world, for the loss of the pleasures of love & friendship—but amidst all I have a very great alleviation with respect to my sister in the firm confidence, that her friends are more to her, than expectation could anticipate; I realize your goodness—and feel for the exercise that your humanity & benevolence is put to—the reward of such disinterested goodness must come from above—& happy for those whose hopes are rightly placed, for it is not in time, they can be compensated. I enclose a Letter for my Sister, which I leave open—for your inspection—and if you think it proper for her to receive it—you will please to Seal & let her have it. If the Contents should be unsuitable—you will *say* what is proper for me & let her know how anxious we are, & how deeply engraven on our hearts her remembrance is. Doct. Townsend¹ has wrote me particularly; and I gather from his Letter, that all hope is nearly gone. I do not enlarge—the Subject will not bear contemplation:—should I ever see my way out—these things may improve my mind—but my situation is very inauspicious. O may that almighty being, whose arm is wonderful to save, retrieve her circumstances, & restore her to health,—if it is possible but if not—I cannot enlarge. My Family is well. Mrs. Fenno has had a most favorable time & the child is finely. She desires her love to you & to your good Girl. My Blessing on her & the Children. Let my Father know how it is with us; and give our Love to him—he will be glad to know that I feel grateful to his very kind friends. You will please to thank Mr. Vinal.² The Treasurer, & all others in my Name I feel their goodness. Congress is jogging on—the papers contain all that is to be known. I wish there was more dispatch—but time will bring all to pass. There are too many opinionated people in the world. My thanks for all your Goodness. My love to your Wife and may our future days be as happy as the past.

Adieu JF

¹ David Townsend, physician, Southack's Court, Boston.

² John Vinal, schoolmaster, West Street, Boston.

Polly will answer Mrs. Ward's Letter as soon as she is able. Please to charge me with the postage—it is now 12 o'Clock at night.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office
Boston

Favd. by
Mr. Doubleday³

New York July 5. 1789

Dear Sir –

Your inestimable favour of 25 to 30 Ulto. I recd. last evening per post, enclosing a letter for Mrs. Fenno from London. I sincerely thank you for your goodness, & attention; but do not think you ought to put yourself to the expence of postage on my account. Your Letter was a great relief to my suspence as I had heard nothing from my sister since yours preceding.

I perceive you began "*also some queries from Mr. Curtis*"—why did you not continue the sentence?—there is not many things which I am not prepared for. If it respects the debt I owe him—please to tell him, that when by the dint of a course of labour & application, the severity of which he can form no conception of, I shall be in such a situation as to get bread for my children, I shall then think of him; altho there is *something*, sometimes found in the heart of a *stranger* which would preclude an application for a debt circumstanced as this is—this demand certainly ought to be absorbed in the enormous Rent which was paid for nearly three Years—the demand however is *legal*, & must be paid. I thank you for the particulars respecting my poor Sister. I write her by this conveyance. I rejoice that Mrs. Ward & the children are well. Mrs. Fenno writes her. It is not a new idea that you and I agree in politics. I think this business of amendments a very unpropitious affair, at this juncture. Mr. M—¹ is universally acknowledged a man of the first rate abilities: but there appears to be a mixture of timidity in his disposition, which, as he is so influential a character, I sometimes fear will be

³ Possibly John Gardner Doubleday, grocer and member of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company. See *Roll of Members*, p. 21.

¹ James Madison (1751–1836), then a U.S. congressman from Virginia.

productive of effects, not salutary, to say the least—every movement of this kind, unhinges the public mind, gives an opening to the artful, unprincipled, & disaffected—who are waiting with burning impatience for an opportunity to embroil & embarrass public affairs.

Your account of the poor Schoolmaster's fate, anticipates an answer upon this Subject to some queries I wrote to Carter² by Mr. Crafts³—by whom I also wrote to you—"It is astonishing to me, that the great Mass of the Citizens, who are more particularly concerned in this business, should suffer their dearest Interests to be destroyed by a few men; who themselves would not Suffer, if every free school in the Town was annihilated.

Do the middling & poorer classes of citizens realize the advantages they enjoy?—the expence that my parents were put to, for the education I obtained in the Town School, was not two dollars a year, exclusive of the very small tax upon that account. So good a chance for learning cannot be had out of New England under twenty dollars a year—and equal taxes into the bargain. I look to the *institution*—independent of the Masters—good Men certainly ought to be employed—and if the Institutions are not properly supported, they will fall to the ground; or which is as bad, you will have none but the refuse of the world for the preceptors of your children. Whether sufficient attention has been paid to this point, I will not determine. Discouraging the *free Schools*, is encouraging *private*, & shutting the Door to learning, in the Face of the Poor. The increase of private schools has diminished the emoluments of the public Masters of late years—which renders it necessary that their salaries should be higher than formerly. The whole expence of the public Schools does not amount to so great a Sum, as the town pays to certain hungry creditors, (who urge the reduction of the Salaries) for interest, upon interest upon paper money debts." These observations may be made a paragraph if you think proper.

I perceive by some of your papers, that the leaven of iniquity is beginning to work—the publishing of Gerry's speech⁴ solus, is a barefaced violation of impartiality, and is evidently designed to make an impression, that shall forestall the public sentiment—the printer that can be made the tool of a party in so flagrant a manner merits universal contempt. I should equally reprobate similar con-

² James Carter, Court Street, Boston. Carter (d. 1798) was a long-time schoolmaster in Boston. See Seybolt, *Public Schoolmasters*, passim.

³ Probably Thomas Crafts, justice and county treasurer, Cornhill, Boston.

⁴ Elbridge Gerry (1744–1814), U.S. congressman from Massachusetts.

duct on the other side—the strictest impartiality has been discovered in the publication of the debates—and Mr. G— [Gerry] has had equal justice done him, with the other speakers—the Question has been determined by a respectable majority. Why then should such indirect methods be adopted to create jealousies & dissensions? May confusion cover the restless sons of discord & anarchy. I hope you will properly notice this.

I have to thank you for your brotherly affection & attention to my sister. I consider this, as the most alleviating circumstance respecting her—may your consolations comfort her heart—and return doubled to your own bosom. Remember me, my Wife & children to my father. I commiserate his situation—and pray for his restoration. The News you will have by the Papers. The President is quite recovered. We yesterday celebrated independence. I mean the Citizens—for my part I am nix—except in my Paper—I endeavoured to make that speak *Sbibboleth* as my good friend “*How are ye*” says. Some strokes will meet your approbation. I was indebted to a friend for the paragraph concluding with those beautiful Lines, “Whose loud trump Fame &c”—the next is mine—the long paragraph which begins “In congratulating &c” is by my friend F——. You say, you suppose you know the author of the Monitor; you do. I have wrote them all as yet. I attended at St. Pauls to hear Col Hamilton, but did not get a good Seat. What I heard was fine. I suppose it will be published. Congress have got thro’ with the impost & tonnage bill. G[err]y has his politics, and is very obstinate; tho’ generally deep in the minority. I expect matters will move with greater celerity in future. The Tonnage & Impost Bills were delivered to the President on Friday—have not heard whether they are signed or not. The Collection Bill is a very long one—and will take up considerable time. We have lately had several fine rains. I congratulate you on the prospect of the ensuing harvest. All accounts agree that it is flattering. From your ever obliged & affectionate

John Fenno

New York July 8. 1789

Dear Sir

I wrote you per last Post—since when nothing very important has transpired. I recd last Evening a Letter from E. Sigourney¹—

¹ Elisha Sigourney, merchant, 1 Spears Wharf, house Southack’s Court, Boston.

and accounts from him respecting my Sister, are as gloomy as heretofore—enclosed is a Letter for her—it is wrote by Polly—there has been no arrival here from St. Croix lately—it is so long since I wrote Mr. Durant, that I cannot but hope he will be with you in a few days. I heard by Capt Barnard that my poor Father still continues in his melancholy situation. May he experience the divine Mercy in supporting him, & preparing him for every event. Give mine, Polly's & the Children's Love to him. I forward you To day's paper. Congress have been on the Collection Bill for a number of days past. The Judiciary Bill comes next, which I fear will be tedious. The President is quite well again, my Family are as usual. Mrs. Fenno desire[s] her Love to you & yours.

We see nothing of Mr. Harbach yet. Respects to friends, From your ever

obliged Friend & Servant
John Fenno

July 15 Recd your Blank receipts.

[*Addressed:*] Jos. Ward Esq.
Boston

New York July 26, 1789

Dear Sir –

No Mr. Harbach last Evening, & no Letters from Boston. Your last has not been answered, and indeed, I have not time to do justice to its numerous beauties—for Congressional Movements, you'll please to be referred to the papers—and in future, I wish you to propose questions respecting any matters you may want information upon.

I recd. a Letter last Thursday from Mr. Durant—his arrival is a very happy circumstance at all events. O may it be blessed to the most salutary purposes. Mr. N. Barrett¹ informed me that it had revived my sister in some degree.

I have the great pleasure to inform you that we are all well. Mrs. Fenno suffers however as usual from Nursing a great hearty Girl. She wants air & exercise—but “the Destruction of the Poor is their Poverty”. The Gazette is jogging on. I have generally from 6 to 12

¹ Probably Nathaniel Barrett, a Boston merchant. See Thwing catalogue, Massachusetts Historical Society; obituary in *Columbian Centinel*, Dec. 28, 1793.

new Subscribers per Week. The whole Number now is 600—which will just about pay the expences of printing only—so that my time labour & subsistence have hitherto gone for nothing. The mere charge of the paper is nearly thirty Dollars a Week—it will require 1500 at least to afford subsistence to my Family—the whole amount of my receipts as yet is 90 Dollars—but sixty subscribers having paid me. The Letters² do not sell. I have disposed of only one Dozen—they were set too high—and I have accordingly lowered the price—but I expect to sink Money by them. You will perceive that the Ordinance for opening certain Ports in St. Domingo³ is published “by Authority”—this is from the highest Source—and I hope is an entering wedge to the executive printing business. Without some auxiliary aid of this Sort, I do not see how I can possibly get along—for altho’ there is no doubt but that the Paper might in the course of 12 or 18 Months become sufficiently productive—yet without funds in the Interim, the prospect is involved in thick darkness. I however keep up my spirits—and mean to trust and persevere—and if the worst comes, I am determined to make an open declaration of my situation to those that can effectually succour me.

Your approbation of the Paper is very pleasing to me. I know nothing of the public opinion of it here but from the Subscribers who call upon me, now & then, as I go into no Company—my only rout is from home to Congress, & from Congress home, week in, & week out. Was my Situation less embarrassed, there would be greater variety & correctness. Your approbation goes beyond that of all other persons (I hope it is not merely the effect of your partiality) for altho’ the original plan was supposed to be important, & no complaints have been made of a falling off, or a deviation, yet it is not propped by many advocates in this City. Gentlemen from the Southward have paid it the greatest Compliments.

As to collecting Payments of Subscribers in Boston Mr. Sigourney will take off a good deal of that trouble from your hands, should you find it burdensome. I am sorry to detail to you unpleasing accounts but it seems only like revolving over my situation in my own mind. You have always expressed a bright hope respecting

² John Adams, *Twenty-six Letters, upon Interesting Subjects Respecting the Revolution of America*. This was first published in London in 1786. An American edition, undated and without imprint save ‘Printed for the Subscribers,’ has been ascribed to 1789 and attributed to Fenno’s press by Charles Evans (21624). Another edition, dated with a full Fenno imprint and 1789 date, also exists (Evans 21625).

³ Published in the *Gazette of the United States*, July 25, 1789. This was the first publication with the heading ‘By Authority.’

me—and if it ever should be realized it will owe its existence under Providence to your benevolence—for your sake as well as my own, I hope you will not be disappointed. I am under great Obligations for your attention to my poor Father—let him know we are well & think of, & pray for him—give our love to him—& let him know that Bro: Sam & Family were well about two months since.

Your consolations to my dear Sister must have been very soothing to her mind—such are the solids of friendship. Give Mrs. Fenno's & my love to your dear Wife—the distance does not prevent very frequent communications in ideas. A dear select circle left behind, forms the sting that attends leaving Boston. Your Sentiments respecting Congress, coincide with my own—there is a great want of animation & decision—but the reason is obvious—no party has been formed—consequently there are no leaders—how long this will be the Case is uncertain.

I most sincerely regret that your health is not as you could wish it to be. You must get your foot into the track & pursue it with steadiness, maugre all other sacrifices it will cost. I have observed a writer under the Signature of *Caution*, upon the Subject of Titles—this I suspect is Jarvis⁴—he is plausible, but flimsey—he ought to be followed in a cool dispassionate manner, step by step—for his mode of writing is calculated to catch gudgeons, & raise a popular Clamour, but may be easily shown to be deceptive, & pregnant with mischief. I could add, but must conclude with my best wishes for Blessings on you & yours adieu

J.F.——

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Boston

Hond. by
Mr. N. Barrett

New York August 5, 1789

Dear Sir

Your esteemed favour by Mr. Harbach is now before me. Your exertions to promote my interest are the result of the purest benevolence, for at present there is very little prospect of your ever meet-

⁴ Most probably Dr. Charles Jarvis, a frequent contributor of political writings to the *Independent Chronicle*. See Joseph T. Buckingham, *Specimens of Newspaper Literature*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1852), 1:280–81.

ing with adequate returns. I am greatly obliged by the advance you are so good as to risque by Mr. Harbach, for I have got in debt 100 Dollars for Paper, which becomes due in a few days. My Subscriptions in the City come in tolerably well—rather better than is usual for goods of the kind. No debts are considered in a more unproductive view than those for News Papers—and this idea will operate unfavorably for me in the minds of those who make no difference between the Gazette, & papers in common. You observe that a number have paid a quarter & have dropped the paper—I am sorry for their purses—hope the wrinkles will be taken out, by being replenished. Some folks in Boston I have been informed complain of the price of the paper—but I believe it may be affirmed, that at the end of the Year, a greater quantity of matter & chiefly original will be had, than ever was sold for the same money. Magazines in Octavo, contain about 500 pages—and are sold at about 2½ Dollars a Year, the Gazette will contain 416 pages in *large folio*, more closely printed than any kind of book ever is. The account of your conversation with my good friend Mr. Eliot is flattering. I wish those who have it in their power may be brought to view the Subject in the same Point of light. I wish to be an auxiliary to good government—the Constitution is the only ark of safety to the liberties of America—viewing matters in this light, it will be a pleasing task to me, to enter into a hearty & spirited support of the administration so far as they appear to be influenced by its genuine Principles—here is plain sailing—and conscience, duty, & patriotism would unite in promoting my exertions. I should have one great object—and that object would confer dignity upon the Paper & give me a reputation upon a solid basis—but such a plan I fear can never be supported by public opinion—the public mind will with difficulty be brought to a coalesce in such manner upon so novel a Subject, as to supercede the necessity of assistance, (where there are no fund,) from some other quarter—in this Case the powers that be must step in—but how is this to be done? there is the rub; it would be unpopular for Government to establish a State Paper or give a Printer a Salary. I am very much puzzled to pioneer myself out of this dilemma—the management of the Paper is a task of such magnitude that few persons ever before undertook its equal—it employs all my time—it absorbs my *whole* attention in such manner, that I have not known a pleasing moment of relaxation since you were here—this seems to be sufficient for one, without engaging in any thing in addition—and yet some public business appears to

be the only counter balance to those deficiencies which will inevitably take place, & which would be sufficient to defeat my designs were my subscribers much more numerous—in addition to these considerations, I should find it difficult to undertake any additional business of any consequence, from the imperfection of my Office—to complete which it would require 500 Dollars. Your idea is the only competent one—but I have no reason to suppose that there is one person to the Southward of Boston that thinks as you do. There seems to be one alternative left, if I continue in this business, & that is, to embark in a general Scheme, and commence a publication to embrace every species of Speculations, public & private, serious, comique, satirical, personal & political—there appears to be an opening for something of this kind here—and such papers *have* succeeded—but this plan I should deprecate a necessity of adopting—nothing but a dire necessity shall compel me to abandon the present but there is no fighting against accumulating evils. I hope I shall have grace, wisdom & fortitude to persevere as long as perseverance shall be a virtue.

You have ere this, seen the appointments, and observed that the general plan has been to retain in office those already in—an exception in the Case at Boston however. I hope Mr. Lovell¹ will be satisfied—it is said here that if Genl. Lincoln had not been appointed Colr. that Mr. L. Jarvis would have had the Office—the present appointment I think will be more agreeable to Mr. L[ovell] than that would have been. I wish you would write me how Mr. L[ovell] views the matter. The Papers will give you the News—the Bill for establishg. the War department gives the power of removal to the President; but in that for the Treasury Department the Senate have struck out the Clause, and insist upon the amendment, conceiving that they ought not to give the controul of the Treasury out of the hands of the Legislature. I suppose a conference will take place, as the House does not appear disposed to recede.

Two persons from whom I have received communications for the Gazette are about leaving this place. I must therefore look out for substitutes—and who can I turn to but you, & some other friends in Boston. Mr. Dawes² gave me some encouragement when he was

¹ Probably James Lovell (1737-1814), collector of impost and excise for Suffolk County, Faneuil Hall Market Square, and a former schoolmaster, British prisoner of war, and member of the Continental Congress 1776-82.

² Probably either Thomas Dawes, Sr., Purchase Street, or Jr., office 9 State Street, house Summer Street, a Massachusetts state senator.

here, but I have not heard from him since. I wish you to apply to him to Mr. Gore,³ Mr. Eliot—Revd. Mr. Belknap⁴—Dr. Eustis,⁵ and such others as you may think proper—any Speculations from any of these Gentlemen, upon almost any subject will be acceptable—they might send the performance to you & you could forward them as opportunity offered. I must have some assistance—and do not know of any persons this way. As soon as the Government begins to operate I expect it will be assailed—there has lately been two *disappointments* to one appointment; these persons will kick and they must be counter kicked—the *Compensations* will be a fruitful topic for the restless and uneasy—but much was said in favour of them as they stand and I think the pay of the Members is not too high upon the whole.

Ere this I have reason to fear the worst respecting my Sister from Mr. Durant's last letter—this will be a severe stroke but God is wise & just. Your reflections upon life, & its enjoyments are in point. Time is sweeping all away—and independent of futurity—there is nothing but the name of happiness left. I thank you for your account of my Father—I shall write him soon. We are, as Mr. Harbach will inform you, well. I thank your dear Girl for her kind Letter, and shall duly acknowledge it. I congratulate you upon your new residence, & wish you may derive the most solid advantages from the Change. I observe some cruel aspersions upon somebody in the Schoolmasterial Line. I hope it is not your late neighbor. Pray write me how this is. Grant the worst—the bitterest reprobation of such treatment as he has received, ought to be shewn by every one that possesses the least humanity, or the force of the social affections. My Compliments to Mr. Edes, thank him for his honorable distinctions—tell him it is not in my power *public[ly]* to acknowledge *bis goodness*. My friends need be under no apprehensions—I think I have got the Gauge of that partly exactly and it will not be to their satisfaction to find as they surely will, that their chagrin & mortification is inseparably connected with the happiness, glory & prosperity of their Country & those Measures which *will* be pursued notwithstanding all their bellowing.

No appointments have taken place, but those published. I under-

³ Christopher Gore (1758–1827), member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and U.S. attorney for the District of Massachusetts.

⁴ Jeremy Belknap (1744–98), Boston Congregational clergyman and historian.

⁵ William Eustis, physician, Sudbury Street, Boston.

standing [*sic*] there is a Bill pending before the Senate for establishing a Department to embrace foreign & domestic affairs—the head of which is to be denominated Secretary of State—this will supercede the department of foreign affairs already established. Write me much & often—adieu

J.F.

Mr. Harbach will bring a receipt for the 100 Dollars. N.B. Tell Edes, or Johnny K—⁶ or Ben A⁷ &c that the Gazette of the United States, (not the Federal Gazette) No. 17 contains the only Debate upon amendments that ever took place in Congress—& was the only original conveyancer of them to the public.

[*Written in left margin of first page:*] What has become of the Address of Massachusetts to the President, & the Answer—they were sent on long ago?

New York Augt. 27: 1789

Dear Sir,

I snatch a moment to write you by a Mr. R[*eed*]berg[?] a Gentn. who came very well recommended to this City—by our friend Genl. Wadsworth¹—and is now on his return to Portland. Thanks to a gracious providence we are well—except Mrs. Fenno who is afflicted with a bad swelled face—it has been extremely hot here lately—and is very sickly—but my children thro' favour continue well.

I am slaving on—subscriptions encrease—but nothing in the auxiliary way—including the 100 Dollars you were so good as to send me, I have recd. only 370 Dollars—my subscription being 600 & odd there is 900 due. Congress have got thro' with amendments—but to my unspeakable chagrin, a vote was obtained this day by a majority of 1 or 2 to take up the subject of a permanent residence next Thursday. I hope this will be some how or other overruled, for according to present appearances they will be very lengthy debates—the time of adjournment you know—but there is a weight

⁶ Possibly John Kneeland (1729-95), a Boston printer.

⁷ Benjamin Austin, Jr. (1752-1820), a Boston ropemaker and frequent writer for the *Independent Chronicle*.

¹ Peleg Wadsworth (1748-1829), Revolutionary War general, land agent in Maine, and U.S. congressman from Massachusetts 1793-1807.

of business to intervene. I believe there will be nothing done about appropriations.

I have not wrote you since your never enough to be prized letter of condolence on the late fatal event. My obligations to you upon this & a thousand other accounts can never be cancelled. I trust your admonitions & consolations were in season—and that they conduced to abate the keenness of my anguish. May he who rules in all & disposes of every event lead to the wisest improvement of this dispensation. This is one of those events that leaves an impression never to be effaced—the world & all things in it almost, have long assumed a different aspect from what they once wore—but patience becomes us & fortitude & faith may bear us thro'. Mine & Mrs. love to your Wife & Compliments to Mr. Harbach—the papers of 26 Inst. contain the latest intelligence. With affectionate & every grateful sentiment I am your

friend & Servt.
J Fenno

Do let my Father know we are well & give our love to him—and pray write me how he is.

[*Note by Ward:*] In my answer to this, I must inclose Receipts from the Crockers² & from Henderson.³

The “Dangerous Vice”⁴ has been published here, but is too *vicious* to meet with approbation; it has been treated with contempt, & I hope & believe the publishers will lose money, as I think very few can be sold.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Boston.

² Possibly Allen and Joseph Crocker, merchant and shopkeeper, of Boston, or one of them and his wife.

³ Possibly either Benjamin Henderson, collector, Middle Street, or Joseph Henderson, sheriff of Suffolk County, Milk Street, both of Boston.

⁴ *The Dangerous Vice* ——— [President]. *A Fragment. Addressed to All Whom It May Concern. By a Gentleman, Formerly of Boston . . . Columbia Printed. MDCCCXXXI.* An anti-John Adams satirical poem, attributed by Evans (21736) to Edward Church (b. 1740) and by others to Silvanus Bourne. Evans ascribes publication to Thomas and Andrews of Boston.

New York Oct. 8. 1789

Dear Sir

I should be extremely happy to enter into a minute reply to all your invaluable favours—but it is not possible for want of time. I have been lately troubled with a bad cold but am getting better. You mention having money for me—but do not say how much. I am sorry that I shall be obliged to draw on you but I do not see how I shall get along without it. I suppose Mr. Harbach must be paid— & I intended he should be, out of the Sum you might have in your hands—if he cannot wait I must draw on Mr. Gore for the £20—in Mr. Harbach's favour—my bill on you will be for 50 Dollars. As the glooms have hitherto rested on my prospects—a gleam now breaks in. I have executed several small Jobbs lately for the Treasury & War Offices—also some for the President. I hope for more—but this kind of aid is not altogether the thing. My object is to carry the publication of the paper to the fullest perfection—in order to do this—I should have aid in a line that would not divide, & distract my attention from this one great object. Whether it is possible that this should be done, I know not—excepting yourself I have never met a person who appeared to comprehend an idea of the kind. Mr. Flint¹ continues my warm able & faithful friend. I have met none like him in this quarter. Some late Nos. of the Tablet were *not* his—Those on the compatibility of the Interests of the States are by Mr. A— that on Oratory in No. 51—by J.F. Mrs. Fenno desires her Love to your Good Girl & to Yourself—present mine also—& compliments to all enquiring friends.

Ever Yours
J F

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

Hond. by
J. C. Jones Esq.²

Mr G. [Gore] has put [t]welve months.

¹ Royal Flint, merchant, King Street, Boston.

² John Coffin Jones, merchant, Hanover Street, Boston.

New York Oct. 9, 1789

Dear Sir,

I wrote the enclosed intendg. it should go by Mr. Jones, but he went off sooner than I expected. I wish I could make the subject of the present more agreeable than I fear it will prove—but as I am under the necessity of drawing upon you, it is perhaps proper to give you some account of my present situation.

The 100 Dollars I borrowed of Col Platt¹ remains unpaid. I have borrowed fifty Dollars of Mr. Flint and I now owe 50 Dollars for paper—in addition to these there is the 100 Dollars due to Mr. Harbach and I now owe 100 Dollars for rent—the whole 400 Dollars. My account for Papers supplied Congress amounts to 117 dollars—which I fear I shall not receive till next Session. I gave my account in, but those who ought to have put it in train have gone home, and nothing was done. I make the whole of my first Subscription amount to about 950 Dollars, of which I have received rather more than 500—the 117 above and what I have to receive from Boston are included in the ballce. to be received—some of which is in So. Carolina, Virginia &c, & some in St. Croix which I am not to receive till next Spring. My Expences on account of the Paper exclusive of my Family, are 30 Dollars per week, 25 of which must be constantly paid in cash & have been, from the first day to this—which Sum must be supplied or the press would stop immediately. To Counterbalance this the Paper is *approved*. The President & Vice President have expressed themselves pleased—the former (inter nos) has mentioned it in terms of warm approbation in some of his private Letters to Virginia. I have received some Jobbs from the Treasury and War Departments—also one or two small ones from the President—but being obliged to put them out of my own hands to have them done, on account of the incomplete State of my own Office, the profit of them will be small. Should business of this kind encrease, it will perhaps, be several months before I should realize any money. Mean time the contemplation of my prospect is not very pleasing.

As nothing was said in my proposals about the second Payment I suppose that I must wait till Spring for it. The adjournment of Congress has taken off 100 Subscribers and tho' the Paper during the session appeared to be of consequence to them—there is not quite a dozen who have entered their Names as Subscribers during the recess.

¹ Richard Platt, broker, 195 Water Street, New York.

From some late letters I have received, I have reason to suppose that numbers will drop off at No. 52—however my list encreases upon the whole daily. I am sorry to pain your feeling heart by this detail—nor would I give it, did I think that you could possibly conceive yourself under the least particle of an obligation to make one Shilling's Sacrifice on my account, in addition to the numberless favours already conferred on me. No Sir—I could not consent, in any possible future situation that I may be in, to receive any further relief from your benevolence. It is very mortifying to me that I should be thus circumstanced, after bending the whole force of my abilities, and devoting my time day and night, with a diligence seldom paralleled, & I dare say never exceeded, to promote an object in which it is generally confessed, the public happiness is involved.

However, my determination is, to persevere. Sufficient, indeed, unto the day, is the evil thereof. Relief may come unexpectedly— independent of the Sum to discharge the above debts—it seems as if I must suffer without a sufficiency of the following supplies Viz.

100 Reams of paper which must be bo't before Winter		
—@ 2 dollars;		200.
I use 4 Reams a Week—		
15 Cords of Wood which may now be bo't at 3½	}	50.
Dollars—but will be 6 in 2 Mos from this by all account - - - - -		
An Addition to my Office to enable me to do any other work besides the Paper - - - - -		150.
Ink, Candles & Wood for my Office - - - - -		50.
Provisions for a Winter Stock for my Family, which are 50 pct. dearer in Winter - - - - - say		50.
	Dollars	<u>500.</u>

I suppose the result of this Statement will be this—as to Paper—I must get it by small quantities as usual. Wood I must be contented to purchase as I can. Jobbs I must hire out. Supplies for my Office as usual—and for my Family my faith is strong that he that hath supported us will not leave us. Perhaps if my situation was more to my wishes, like Swifts Goose being pamperd, my genius might grow heavy & sluggish—but at present I think, that if I had a little to hoist my spirits, I might do something to better purpose in my Papers.

I suppose that it might be possible for me to raise by a loan a Sum sufficient for my present exigencies—but I feel no encourage-

ment to do this, as I see no prospect of a reimbursement. I should not hesitate to anticipate from the treasury department, to be repaid in work; but this I fear is not possible to be done in the present situation of the public funds.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this, that I shall draw a bill on you to-morrow in favr. of Mr. Fowler² for 100 Dollars; and lest that should exceed the Sum you may have in your hands, I now enclose a draft on Mr. Gore, in your favour for the Twenty Pounds. I shall not write Mr. Gore any other Letter than the enclosed, on the Subject—and I wish you to exercise your own Judgment respecting presenting the Draft—as you will be able to ascertain with the greatest precision, how far it will be eligible for me to avail myself of his generous offer. I do not mean that this addition to his former goodness shall go to the former Account, but mean to replace this sum much sooner if possible.

From all that I can learn—the plan with respect to the Public Debt is, never to reduce the Principle or Interest by any scheme of Scaling, consolidating, or depreciating whatever—but to keep the Public faith sound—this forms the basis of the intended System. However as you justly observe this will be the most arduous & important business that ever came before Congress—and I expect that the Antis, and some weak heads will exert all their powers to frustrate such a plan of Justice. I anticipate that the discussion of this Subject will convulse the public councils greatly—but a decided majority will be found whose souls will be inspired with magnanimity to do right. In to-morrows Paper there will be some flashing upon the Subject.

There has been an almost universal Complaint here of a severe Cold—every individual almost has been affected. I have been more indisposed by it than I ever was on any occasion—Mrs. Fenno also—but we are getting better. She unites with me in love to your self and to your Wife & Children—and Compliments to all Friends.

Adieu. Ever Yours
J Fenno

New York Oct. 10. 1789.

Dear Sir,

I wrote you a long epistle last evening, which I sent by Mr. Secy. Otis who left this place early this morning. In that letter I fully ex-

² Theodosius Fowler, broker, 27 Water Street, New York.

plained the motives and necessity of my drawing a bill upon you, which I have since done in favour of T. Fowler & Co. for 100 Dollars—at 5 Days Sight. I have also drawn on Mr. Gore in your favour for the Twenty Pounds which he offered to loan me—lest Mr. Otis should not get on so early as the Post, I tho't it necessary to write, as I suppose the bill will be sent immediately. As bills to a considerable amount may now be sold here, I am led to suspect that securities are lower with you than with us. I believe they give from $5/2$ to $5/4$ —and as to sales—they are quite indifferent about making any. I suppose that no considerable Sum could be had under $5/6$. From some hints, I have reason to suppose that heavy Sums are appropriated to purchase to any Amount that may be obtained under $5/6$. My intelligence may be very good—but as I am not much conversant in these matters, it may not be worth much.

I think the success of a Speculation in the funds will turn upon this—Unanimity with the Majority of Congress. I believe there is but one Sentiment with the Federalists, and that is to support the *Plighted Faith* of the Country at all possible events. The Antis will make scaling, depreciating, discriminating &c so many rounds in the popular ladder—but if the Federalists should have various Plans to propose & so endanger the System—the Antis will be as much, or more divided in their plan of Opposition. They are pretty much like what we saw in our State Convention. Great things are anticipated from Hamilton. I think that he considers his fame as much at stake as ever a General of an Army did—and I think further, that he is one of those sort of men that consider wealth as less than nothing and vanity contrasted with Honor & Reputation. These things being so—it appears to me that now is the time for a stroke—but your penetrating eye may see dangers in Ambush which escape me. However there it is; make what you please of it. I wish you to realize every wish of your heart. Should it shower porridge in this respect—I have no dish to catch it. We are afflicted with the Influenza—I can call it by no other name. I was confined 3 Days. Mrs. Fenno is now a good deal indisposed—but in all conditions remembers her love to you & your dear Wife.

Adieu. Yrs. J.F.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land-Office
Boston

New York Nov. 14. 1789—Recd. 27

Dear Sir,

This day Barnard arrived, and brought your inestimable favor; also that of your dear Wife. How mixed are the dispensations of Providence! We most sincerely condole with you on your late affecting loss in the death of your brother¹—but the hope you have that he has exchanged the vale of tears, for the mansions of glory is greatly consoling—blessed be God for the Gospel of his son, which holds out such rays of Comfort beyond the glooms of mortality. Your reflections on the occasion were lively, and affecting—and such as alone can support the mind under such bereavements. My dear Friend you know not how apposite they were to the situation of your Friends. God has been pleased to take from us our youngest child—the dear Caroline²—a sweeter babe never opened its eyes upon this world of sin & death. She had had cough for several months, but did not appear to be very much affected with it; however, about ten days or a fortnight since, she was troubled with a constant vomitting. A week since we called the Doctor, he prescribed an emetic and greatly alarmed us by saying he feared her Lungs were affected. Convulsions followed the effects of the vomit and the Flegm accumulating, as her strength decreased, on Thursday Evening last at about 9 oClock she fell asleep as calm as the breath of Zephyr. She was not emaciated, but looked lovely in death. My dear Polly is too sensibly affected by this stroke. May God afford her strength & consolation. She will pour out her heart to your dear Girl, when her strength & spirits are recruited. Meantime, She rejoices with her in her recent happiness.³ Give our tenderest Love to her—may she soon be restored—& the little Stranger & your other precious pledges be preserved to you. I shall answer your Letter more particularly another time. You must if possible pursue some course steadily; that may eradicate that cholic. The President arrived yesterday—but we have no news—there is some talk of raising Forces for the Southward. I have heard nothing from

¹ Deacon Enoch Ward (1752 – Oct. 13, 1789). Typescript annotation.

² Caroline Fenno (b. June 23, 1789). Kiessel, 'Family of John Fenno,' p. 16.

³ Mrs. Ward gave birth to a daughter Nov. 3, 1789. Typescript annotation.

authority. Before the receipt of your last, it seemed as if I was never to hear from you again. Pray write more frequently.

Adieu—ever Yours J. Fenno

P.S. Do request Mr. Harbach to write me.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office—State Street –
Boston

New York, Nov: 20. 1789

Dear Sir,

I wrote you per Post, last Monday, in which I acknowledged the receipt of your favors by Barnard—also informed you of the death of our youngest child. Mrs. Fenno lays this event very much to heart—indeed it is a heavy affliction—we promised ourselves very much from its opening mind. The past year has been pregnant with events, & many of them, very serious—and all, of so unusual a complexion, that life has assumed an aspect so different from all former experience that I can hardly be said to live—how emphatically true the observation “that life is but a passage at best.” I am greatly obliged by your consolatory hopes respecting my situation—one of the greatest evils of which, is the suspense which attends it. Mr. Gore’s acceptance of the order lays me under new obligations to him. Your ideas of him, correspond with my own; I have always found him consistent, independent, just & discerning in his political Sentiments—and I doubt not that he will rise to eminence in public life. I believe he is much tho’t of by important characters this way.

With respect to the funds—I have nothing very important to say. Mr. Crocker¹ when here sold a considerable Sum at 5 /6—it is very difficult to procure to any amount here—and I have reason to suppose that large Sums are continually sending off in various directions to make purchases—large Sums have been sent to Boston & to the westward & southward of this. I cannot ascertain with certainty what Plans are in agitation. The consolidating the whole debt will be an object—agreeable to Plan of the “*observer*” but as to a Depreciation or diminution of Principal or interest I hardly think it will be tho’t of—certainly nothing of the kind will take place

¹ Possibly Allen or Joseph Crocker of Boston.

without the consent of the Creditors. I have wrote to Russell on the subject of the Subscribers—for to this hour I know not the exact number. I have sent on Papers for 170. I suppose he has some supernumerary papers—No. 30–37 to 48 both inclusive I am now deficient in. I am sorry for Mr. Prime's confinement, hope he is well & about again before this. Your new Situation is a good one. I hope it will prove highly salutary to your health. Has Palmer² taken his new situation for a Public-house, or for what? How comes on your School reform? I must again condole with you on the death of your brother—as you knew him, & had so much reason to love him, your loss must be poignantly felt—but a faith like yours can pierce beyond the glooms of mortality, & anticipate a more happy reunion. May his Wife & Fatherless Children find a Husband and Parent, in the kind Parent of the Universe.

Mrs. Fenno writes your dear Wife by this conveyance we both sincerely rejoice in her recent deliverance—tell her “once more & then.” She must have one boy more.

I thank you for the Paragraph—you see I made use of it. The People of Boston acquitted themselves well—on the arrival of the President—it was fortunate that the arrangement was not left to the great booby³—he would have spoilt all. I have recd. a curious detail of matters. Pray what says Bror Kneeland⁴ to these things—what says he about the Gazette of late?—do the Paragraphs suit him? I think with you respecting the Addresses—and I cannot account for their clumsiness. Do not let so long an interval again elapse without writing—give my love to your Wife—& to Mr. Durant, if he is not gone. We are so so at present. Genl. Lincoln leaves this on Monday. I think we shall *not* have war with the Indians. The Commissioners' report is very long, 100 Pages—it is not yet given in. Adieu—may blessings rest on you & yours,

Prays your ever affectionate

Friend & Servant

J.F

² Possibly Thomas Palmer, merchant of Boston. See Thwing catalogue, Massachusetts Historical Society.

³ Possibly a reference to Governor Hancock.

⁴ Probably John Kneeland, a Boston printer.

P.S. Compliments to Mr. Harbach—desire him to write me. What think you of French Matters, are they not democratically mad?

[Addressed:] Joseph Ward Esq—
Land Office State Street
Boston

New York Nov: 21, 1789

Dear Sir,

The Assumption of the Debts of the individual Governments, by the United States is an Object that appears to excite considerable attention. To the best of my recollection, this Plan was very early suggested by you—and its necessity becomes every day more apparent—indeed it seems to be the only method of saving the State Securities from annihilation—and will, if effected, cut off one of the most prolific sources of future discord,—however, as the Plan will undoubtedly meet with specious opposition from those who wish to get rid of those Debts, it becomes necessary to advocate the measure very extensively. No man has tho't better on the Subject than you have—would it not be well to write some Speculations for Adams & Nourse's Paper¹—also in the Salem & other eastern Papers. Among other things it may be almost demonstrated that our domestic debt will very soon become the Property of foreigners, except their purchases should receive some check from this quarter—for the Continental Debt will appreciate in proportion as the other depreciates—which they will do very rapidly in consequence of the funds being appropriated to pay the Interest of the former. We have nothing new here. I have already wrote you a long Letter by Genl. Lincoln, who is detained beyond his Expectations. My Family is well—and send love &c to you & yours. Adieu

Yours affectionately

JF——

P.S. I find Russell has lately republished from the Gazette, several things. I wish him to be encouraged so to do. Every *Monitor*, & every Paragraph excepting about 7 or 8 which has appeared were wrote by your Friend. I wish those who disapprove, would send me something better.

[Addressed:] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office, State Street
Boston

¹ The *Independent Chronicle*, published in Boston by Thomas Adams and John Nourse.

New York Nov: 28, 1789

Dear Sir

Your favor by Mr. Furman¹ was duly recd. and I thank you for the statement of a recent business—it was more regular than some other accounts I had recd. of the same affairs, tho' corroborative of them—the whole amount [*sic*] is a confirmation strong of former opinions, but is I confess topping off the Pinnacle of human weakness & folly. When will the people learn wisdom? Gov. Bowdoins' conduct was charming—and I doubt not was properly received, and made the best impressions. The President appears to have acted with propriety & great dignity.

JA———² lines are very good—somewhat obscure however. I think Geo: Richards'³ Ode in Thomas' Magazine, the best thing that has appeared. You will ere this, have seen Genl. Lincoln—he informed me that such arrangements were made, as would, if the Georgians were wise and prudent, prevent a war. "You wish to hear of my having solid Compensation" &c, alas! I *feel* the necessity of it—by the advice of some friends I have notified the public, as you will perceive, that the Gazette shall be open for the reception of advertisements. It is with great regret that I have bro't myself to this, as I wished to finish the Year, as I began it—and this I could have done with great ease on the score of matter to fill the Paper—as I am constantly obliged to postpone, & reject many important matters. Whether I shall find my account in this is uncertain; I expect some will drop the Paper in consequence—but if I get advertisements they will more than counterbalance a considerable defection. After all—is it not a pitiful business that One Paper upon this Plan cannot find support in the United States—for I assure you, that, as I am now going on, provided every individual Subscriber should pay me I shall sink five hundred Dollars, or which is worse, be so much in debt, by the Publication at the year's end—but when I reflect that in all probability there will be deficiency of, from 10 to 15 PCent in the Payments, how much more displeasing the prospect. The first Payment should have amounted to upwards of 900 Dollars—I have recd. only 600—of the ballce. Congress owes 100—the rest is scattered thro' the Continent.

¹ Probably Gabriel Furman, broker, corner Queen and Chatham Streets, New York.

² Possibly Vice-President John Adams (1735–1826).

³ George Richards, schoolmaster, Middle Street, Boston.

You say, I must touch up H.K.⁴ &c they are friendly—and do employ me—but at the present moment I want some effectual assistance—by an Advance of 5 or 600 Dollars—this they cannot do. As to H—— [Hamilton] he is cautious, sage *prudent & economical* as a public man to the greatest degree—and tho their work is of some small advantage, yet from the incompleteness of my office being obliged to hire it out, that advantage is reduced to a pittance. Advertisements may afford some present relief—but I am reduced to an existence almost literally upon Hope & Loans.

I rejoice to hear that Mrs. W. is getting up again. The Name you have given the little girl is pretty—but we expected it would have been Celia, Fanny or Nancy.

I do miss my Son in my business—but the advantage he was of to me, was little better than idleness to him—he could not progress in any kind of Learning, as I kept him almost continually on the pad. The expense of his Education & board at the Academy, I do not think will exceed one farthing the expense of his support at home. The Printing business is very peculiar; tho' artists in that line deal wholly in Letters, yet [it] is notoriously the Case that there [are] as few Men of ideas in that profession as any other whatever. Mr. Payne⁵ has a very good reputation, & I think my son can hardly have a better chance. I rejoice exceedingly that your health is better may it be confirmed—and your valuable life protracted to a very distant period. We anticipate great pleasure in your proposed visit —& hope it will not be diverted from taking place. Russell has sent a list of 25 who have dropped the Paper—*some* I am surprised at—*others* are the children of *spleen & caprice*. What different ideas must such persons have of the merits of the Publication, from those who appear at *this day*, as solicitous to procure the Papers from the *beginning* as they are those of yesterday. And as a miscellany it is considering the Quantity at less than One Third the Price of any magazine published in America. However, the *disappointments* which have served as a stalking Horse to cover the *littleness* of some & to excuse the want of friendship in *others*, from whom I expected better things, will not in future happen, as by the new arrangement in the Stages—a Person is to go from hence to Boston, as a Conductor twice a week & to his care the Gazette will be committed.

⁴ Henry Knox (1750-1806), secretary of war 1785-94.

⁵ The master of John Ward Fenno's school, 'Mr. Payne's Academy,' apparently in New York, according to Kiessel, 'Family of John Fenno,' p. 16, but no other evidence has been found to identify Mr. Payne and the location of the school.

As to the funds—what shall I say? Finals are up to 6/6 & 6/9. You perceive that the plan of assuming the State Debts is talked of—this will not, I conceive take place very soon—it will require the consent of the Creditors, this will require time. One object in view is, perhaps, to check the rise of Continental Paper—and it will have an influence that way. I have heard it rumoured, that some proposals will be made of reducing the Interest from 6 to 4 PCent. This you may be certain of, that the amount of the Impost will not be equal to paying 6—not with a continental excise, in addition to it—which you may expect will come on the carpet n[ext] Sessions of C—— [Congress]. I cannot view the public debt in any [other] light than a Sea of Speculation at present, and [w]henever you can *realize* anything substantial by selling out—do it. 1st *Should the Interest be lowered.* 2d *Should a continental Excise take place.* & 3d *Should the State Debts be assumed.* Would not these circumstances be of moment in your arrangements?

These last you may reckon upon as data, especially the two first as PROPOSITIONS seriously to be agitated—but these hints are INTER nos, & for your government only.

Certain it is—that no engagements will be made to the public, that cannot be fulfilled—and those who calculate upon a rise of Paper, supposing that 6 PCent will be paid will find themselves disappointed. Mrs. Fenno's & my Love to your dear Wife. Polly is yet very inconsolable and you will do a work of benevolence to pour in a Cordial of Comfort from your fountain—Pray write us—Adieu

Yours ever

P.S. As it cannot be determined during the next Session of Congress, what the Capacity of the United States for the payment of Interest will be—it is worthy consideration, whether it is not probable that another Session will elapse without funding the Debt—it is my opinion that it will not be funded the ensuing winter. [*Circled:*] Inter nos

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq—
Land Office
Boston

New York Dec. 5. 1789

Dear Sir,

I wrote you by Post last Monday. I should not have put you to the expense of Postage, had I not supposed, that the hints respect-

ing the funds might be of service—from that principle, I again trouble you in the same way. Finals are rising here rapidly. Fowler told me this day that he gave 7/. for small Sums—and said he did not know of any *considerable* Amount to be bo't at *any* price. I wish you to avail yourself of the *Top* of the Market—the following may serve you in *some degree* as data on which to form your calculations.
Amount of

	Dollars – 90 ^s 80 ^s
Domestic Debt March last	27.383.917.67
Interest which will be due	} 11.519.646.9.6.
the first Jany. 1790	

Dollars

of which only 5.411.377.37—were registered on the 12th Sept. last—

Foreign Debt. The Whole Amount	
which will be due 1st Jany. 1790	Dollars
Principal & Interest	3.402.971.56

Dollars 90ths

The Interest is 1.840.071.65—So that the whole Interest to be provided for you see is above 13 Millions Dollars.

I think much will depend on what is done the next Session of Congress—it appears to be a prevailing opinion with *some folks*—that *certainty*, as to what *can be done*, is a desirable object. The Amount of the revenue cannot be known till the year comes about. Whether proposals will be made (in effect) to reduce the Interest to 4 pCent. or whether it will be finally determined to make a partial Payment of Int: say 2 or 2½ pCt. is uncertain; One, or the other plan, I am persuaded, will be adopted—and I rather think the *first*—& should that be the Case where are the funds to pay even 4 pCent—or 2½. I throw out these hints, which you will be careful not to let be known as coming from me. I think you will consult your Interest by coming this way, either now, or when Congress gets together—as you may judge best.

You must send me something for the GUEST. I design that as the medium of morals, principally. How do you like the Title? it is Mrs. Fenno's fancy. No. 1—I guess hit your fancy—it was wrote by your friend—No. 2—is excellent—author unknown. Mrs. Fenno is not at present very well. She desires her love to yourself & to Prudy—I hope She is about again & that all your little ones are well. N Carolina you'll see has adopted the Constitution. I congrat-

ulate you on the event—it will prevent difficulty. No official dispatches are yet received—but there is no doubt of the fact. Compliments to Mr. Harbach & Mr. Prime. Adieu ever Yours *JF*

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

New [York] Dec. 20. 1789

Dear Sir,

Your invaluable packet by Mr. Otis I recd. this day—am exceedingly sorry that you were not benefited by the rise of paper—and more so that you should suffer by it. Paper is again falling—and it is tho't will continue to fall. Finals have been sold from 9 to 10 /—they may be now bo't at 8 /—if not for less. Indents are now at 5 /—have been at 5 /9. I cannot particularly reply to your Letters now. You mention, seeing my Father. Mr. Durant informs me that he is in the Alms House. We are very apt to diminish in our mind the importance of such benevolent public institutions, till we realize an advantage from them. I desire to bless God that there is such a retreat for him. I doubt not he will be well taken care of—the precarious Situation he was in, often filled me with disagreeable ideas lest he should suffer. I thank you for mentioning me, and the family to him. When you see him again give our love to him—let him know that we think of him—and that I am not mortified at his being where he is—tho' I *do regret* that it is not in my power to relieve him. There are many worse things than poverty. I shall rejoice to hear that he is resigned & tranquil, and makes the best improvement of all his trials. Am very glad that Mother is expected—should she be arrived—and you see her—Give our Love to her. Make Pollys & my tenderest regards to your dear Wife. Mrs. Fenno has been alarmingly threatened lately by a spitting of blood*—she voided it in considerable quantities twice—but by the application of means has had no return of it for fourteen days past—& is recruiting. I notice the State of the Audt. I hope the delinquents will pay up soon. I have kept the Paper along for six Weeks past *by Loan*, principally from my real friend Flint. Adieu—may every blessing reward your goodness to

Yr. J.F.—

*The Doctor says owing to extreme poverty of the Blood it does not appear that there is any rupture.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

New York Jan: 3. 90.

Dear Sir -

A Happy New Year to you & yours—thank Providence in tolerable health. Mrs. Fenno mends gradually—walkd out this day—the Children all well—have nothing new but what the Papers contain. Indents 6 /—Finals 9 /—vibrating between 9 and 10 rather on the rise. Congress collecting pretty fast—but will hardly make a house to morrow. Polly will write your good Wife ere long. She thanks her & you for your invaluable Letters. Your consolatory one was as the balm of Gilead. My Subscribers encrease but my finances are 0. You will send on as you collect from the rest of the Subscribers. Please to inform Doct. Appleton¹ that I have never recd. anything from the Person he sent me the order on. The Doct. may therefore pay you if he pleases.

I have wrote Mr. Sigourney a long Letter—he will consult you respecting a Plan of future operations in favor of the Gazette. Remember me to all friends. Love to your Wife. In great haste as it is just on the time for closing the Mail. Adieu. JF

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

New York Jan: 10. 1790

Dear Sir,

Your favor by Dr. Craigie¹ I recd. and as I said before I am sorry you have not profited by the late fluctuation of Paper. As to your bank, if it is as good as it once was I fear you have missed it in not

¹ Nathaniel W. Appleton, physician, South Latin-School Street, Boston.

¹ Andrew Craigie, Boston apothecary, financier, and speculator; in New York 1787-99. See Collection Description, Andrew Craigie Papers, American Antiquarian Society.

selling out at 10 / 6 as I suspect that it will not be worth so much, when the funding system shall be completed—if they should, as probably will be the Case pay no more than 2 PCent—on one third & the other two thirds be funded on the Lands—that is Certificates issued for the Amount to those who will locate but not on Interest. Some Ideas of this kind I have heard thrown out but whether I comprehend them fully, I cannot say. Securities are rising again. A great Price is given on Credit—and immense purchases are made in [t]hat way. Indents for Cash are from 6 / to 6 / 3—Finals fro[m] 8 / 6 to 9 /.

The Budget is to be opened next Thursday. It was made a Subject of Debate yesterday whether the Secretary should appear in the House to make a verbal explanation of his plan, and finally a Vote passed that the House would receive his Communication on Thursday—the door is left open for his appearing, but it will be opposed, however I think the probability is that he will be admitted. A Committee is appointed to answer the Presidents Speech. Some oblique objections to a particular reply to the several parts were made, on the old score of its being anti republican to *eccho*. What *magic* there is in some *words!*

I think Congress will proceed with more decision & dispatch this Session than the last. It is in vain to reason with some characters—and as the public Sentiment is pretty well ascertained, the Antis will be less loquacious upon the subjects of disaffection to the Government &c. I hope for the pleasure of your Company, and think it very probable that your interest may be promoted by it.

I am sorry Mr. Prime continues so long unwell, hope he will be about again soon. Your kind wishes merit thanks—if I can weather out the present Winter, I shall make the Gazette productive next Summer I trust—but at present it is hard rubbing. Shall be very much obliged by your assistance in the QUEST—as the Debates will interfere with my prosecuting it. Your plan of writing a Father's Advice &c will be an acquisition to the world. The Weather with you has been fine—it has also with us—and in great favor to me & my family I assure you. Mrs. Fenno has had no return of her bleeding—but is very thin & feeble—she recruits some however. I enjoy my health at present very well & all our Children are finely.

By Mr. John Williams² who left this yesterday for Boston I wrote

² Possibly John Williams, a Boston merchant. See obituary in *Columbian Centinel*, Apr. 19, 1794.

you a few lines, and enclosed a Letter from Mrs. Fenno to your good Wife—to whom give my love. I address to you some letters to John Huttes which I wish you to deliver to him personally for particular reasons.

I wrote Mr. Sigourney particularly upon his proposal of collecting the second half year's Subscription, & requested him to consult you as to the eligibility of any plan he may think proper to suggest. I am sorry for the trouble you have in my business—and wish you to consult your own ease & convenience entirely—by giving it such a direction as will conduce to those objects.

Your truly consolatory reflections upon our afflictive loss demand our grateful acknowledgements. Such tho'ts & Ideas can flow from one Source, a principle of Faith in the eternal rectitude of providence—and as they flow from the heart, they come with peculiar energy upon the mind. O for a faith to lose the present in the glorious & solacing hope of a glorious immortality!

Compliments to all friends. Adieu—J.F.—

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq—
Boston

Per Capt Barnard

New York Jany. 17, 1790

Dear Sir,

The report of the Secy. as given into the House,¹ will be published in about eight or ten days; mean time it may be advantageous to you to know the Outlines of it. I could not depend on my memory, so omitted it in my Paper. I have since reflected that it may be construed into design, influence or what not—but it is entirely owing to the above circumstance—in my next shall attempt an abstract. The substance is—Public credit to be supported—the Debt of the United States funded at 4 PCent—and an equivalent in lands, or a future annuity, for the present suspension of the 2 PCent—six different Schemes to be adopted the Creditors to subscribe to which they please. Interest to commence Jany. 1791—the Interest now due to be funded as principal. No discrimination between original creditors—& those by purchase. Proposals to be issued for the as-

¹ Alexander Hamilton, secretary of the treasury, submitted his First Report on the Public Credit on Jan. 14, 1790.

sumption of the State Debts. Interest to commence on them Jany. 1792—at 4 PCent.

The discussion of this important business will come on in about 3 weeks, not much sooner. I shall send on a book as soon as it comes out—there are some who propose 3 PCent—but this plan *will be supported & adopted* without any essential alterations—so that you may I think make your Calculations accordingly. I do not learn that it has had any very great influence as yet. Indents are however 7 / & Finals from 8 /6 to 9 /.

My opinion is that the Secy. will be called upon to explain his report on the floor of the house—and as I think his abilities paramount to all opposition it will go down. This report is a most masterly performance—the result of an application that is almost incredible—it was received with a most profound attention, I have no doubt, but many persons have a different idea of the superiority of a financier to all the boards or committees that ever were instituted, from what they have been led to entertain. Mine & Polly's love to Mrs. Ward. We are all well. Charles has had the Measles favorably & I expect the rest of the Children will soon have it. Adieu ever Yours

JF

I wrote you by Barnard last week.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

Honr. by
Mr. Barrett

New York 31 Jany. 1790

Dear Sir,

By Doct. Putnam I recd. yours of the 12 Jany. & by continuation to the 20th. Its various Contents are both pleasing & instructive. If my information respecting the funds has conduced to your advantage I shall be extremely gratified. Finals are now at 7 /6 & Indents 5 /6 and dull—cash being scarce is the reason. As to the Secy's report—it will occasion much debate—but will I think be substantially adopted. Ames'¹ motion being adopted by a considerable ma-

¹ Fisher Ames (1758–1808), U.S. congressman from Massachusetts 1789–97.

jority is symptomatic of the Debt's being funded. I suspect the present posture of affairs will rather encrease, than abate your perplexity respecting future speculations. As to Grayson² & Lee's³ Letter you may depend it has sunk them in the view of their own party in Virginia. I was told this by members from that State—besides it was contrary to the declaration of the latter in Senate—I note the Acct. you enclose of the Subscribers—and now send a receipt with many thanks to you for all your trouble & attention. I am also much obliged to Mr Prime, & expect he will retain a customary Commission. If Mr Sigourney will undertake for me, I shall think myself strong. You say the G.C. [General Court] is setting but hatch nothing. I wish they may not hatch mischief—it will not be the fault of some folks if they do not. Confusion on the unprincipled demagogues. I see you have some precious, pickled characters in a late Majority—and there is a pretty preacher in father Edes Paper. I think he had better confine his preaching to Orphans & Widows—than be busy in sowing sedition and abusing persons who have preserved a consistency of Character, which he never has. I expect your Gen. Court will be monstrous honest & just in providing funds for their State Debts *on Paper*—but let the Creditors beware.

Mine & Mrs. Fenno's love to your good wife. She is greatly in Mrs. Fenno's debt—hope your little ones are well. Kiss them for us. Thank you for your intelligence respecting the little Maria⁴—may a gracious Providence preserve her life. I shall write Mr. Durant the first Oppo: I am sorry for Mrs. Curtis's⁵ illness—give our love to her. How is it with my Father[?] Should you see him let him know how it is with us, & remember us to him & to Mother if she is in Boston. I have the pleasure to inform you that last week I begun printing the Journals of Congress for the present Session—this will be of some service to me. My friends in Congress are many and my Subscribers encrease daily. Your approbation of my labors is a prop to my spirits. My engagements are arduous—but my health continues pretty so so—tho some say I am thin. Our 3 youngest Children have lately had the meazles very favorably. I heard from Jack a few days since—he was well—and I think im-

² William Grayson (1740-90), U.S. senator from Virginia 1789-90.

³ Richard Henry Lee (1732-94), U.S. senator from Virginia 1789-92.

⁴ Possibly Ward's daughter Myra, born Nov. 3, 1789. See Charles Martyn, *The William Ward Genealogy* (New York: Artemas Ward, 1925), p. 120.

⁵ Possibly a Susan Curtis. See list of correspondents, Collection Description, Joseph Ward Papers, Chicago Historical Society. Fenno's wife was a Curtis.

proves greatly in his learning. Mr. Payne is an excellent preceptor. To morrow the Sup. Judl. Fedl. Court is to be opened by the Chief Justice⁶ & Judges Wilson⁷ & Cushing.⁸ Adieu—may heaven shower its choicest blessings on you & yours Prays

Your ever affectionate friend
JF

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office
Boston

Hond. by
Mr J Williams

New York March 7. 1790

Dear Sir –

It is a good while since I had the pleasure of a line from you—several good opportunities have escaped you. I have the pleasure to inform you that Mrs. Fenno has had no return of her complaint since Mr. Harbach left us—and appears to recruit in strength & spirits. My fears respecting a cough are not quite removed—the children are all well. Mrs. F. desires her love to you & Mrs. Ward—to whom present mine also—it will give you pleasure to be informed that my Subscribers have encreased much of late, I reckon a Thousand at present—and in addition to the Journals of the Senate Mr. Otis has promised me other business.

You will see by the Papers how we are going on—there is a bare majority in favour of the Assumption—at present—and it is tho't that it will be finally carried—there is a great party opposed to any Funding System—but as they are divided in their Sentiments, & none of them appear to have any plan, when their Speechifications are out, & they are properly fatigued, the Secretary's System will be adopted—at least this is my opinion—there is a decided Majority of the Senate in favor of the Assumption. Securities appear to be stationary. Finals & Indents, the last price I heard quoted were 7 / 6 & 5 / 10 to 6 /. Remember me & the Family to my Father, when you see him tell him I heard from Bror. Saml. not long since he was well

⁶ John Jay (1745–1829).

⁷ James Wilson (1742–98), associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

⁸ William Cushing (1732–1810), associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

—have heard nothing from Eph.¹ for a long time. I live so recluse a life that I know little of what is going forward in the world—so must refer you to Papers for news. My respects to Mr Harbach & Mr Prime—with Compliments to all enquiring Friends. In haste

Adieu. Ever yours
John Fenno

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Land Office, State Street
Boston

Favd. by
Capt Geo. Lane²

New York Apl. 11. 1790

My dear Friend –

Your fav. p post I duly recd. last evening—and with you, most sincerely regret the wretched progress of public business. You see I spur them on as much as I can. More than a week has passed, since it was expected the Question on Assumption would have been taken—but, the friends of the Measure, after *three* Members from N.C. had arrived, and a majority of Pennsylvania had joined Virginia & Maryland, found themselves in the Minority on the Question—this has occasioned the procrastination. (Inter nos) It is said that Virga. & Myland have agreed to vote for an adjournment to Phila. on Condition of Pennsylvania's voting against Assumption. That this Contract has been made is confidently asserted. I much suspect it is the Case tho' something like an uncertainty appears to have been entertained by both Parties. The Penna. Members have played a vibrating part thro' the whole discussion. New York has been open & candid & will in all events vote for the Measure—but *they* do not make it the *sine qua non* respecting a funding System—as some of the Eastern Members appear to—therefore I think the Assumption of the State Debts will not take place this session, but under such Conditions & modifications as will be almost tantamount to a total abandonment of them to their fate with the State Governments. It was expected that the Question would have been determined yesterday, but it was not—however, tomorrow is assigned—and if the

¹ His brother Ephraim Fenno, Jr. (b. 1753).

² Probably Capt. George Lane, of Charlestown, Massachusetts (1805). See obituary in Boston *Columbian Centinel*, Jan. 2, 1805.

question should appear in a dubious situation, I expect warm work—for Sedgwick¹ Wadsworth Ames & Gerry will not let it be lost without some heavy Shots. We must, however, have patience. Legislation, is arduous; greatly so—when the Machine is new and designed to effect so many objects. Besides Men, are Men—in a large Assembly—there are many *queer* men—and some of the absurdest Compositions of Nature are in C[ongress]. You have depicted some of them very aptly. Your Sketches are almost too free, or else I would make them extracts from the history which I have lately announced, as being on the Anvil. As soon as this Question on Assumption is over, they will progress with more rapidity—but the terrors of election I fear will fall on them & produce some Mischief. They talk of adjourning by the middle or last of May—to have another Session at the close of the year—therefore, everything that is to be done respecting funding, must be done before the adjournment or never for the opinions that have been sported in Congress, have created a strange diversity of sentiment among the People—and if the present Session should pass without a System we shall not get one the Next—being so much nearer their demise, the terrors before cited will make the majority act very *comically* at least. Your allusion to Grout² was much in point—it is enough to rouse stupidity itself—it is said nothing moves him from his design of voting *against* assumption. I thank you for your interest in my success. Mr Jefferson³ has given me the Publication of the Laws—my subscribers have greatly encreased—and I now do all the Senate business. My Debts have accumulated to about 800 Dollars. I have upwards of twelve hundred due—but scattered from Dan to Beersheba. The Paper has cost me near 1700 exclusive of my Family—my Receipts have been about 1200—so that if all my subscribers should pay me, I shall be nearly 500 Dollars the worse for Publication the first year. I reckon now, upwards of a 1000 Subscribers—these if tolerably punctual with my other business, will bring matters upon a ballance another year—after which, barring contingencies, my prospect will be flattering. Poor Greenough⁴ I sympathize with, most sincerely. Sigourney wrote me of his Situation—to whom I wrote fully my Sentiments—they accord with yours, & I should like to have you see that Letter.

¹ Theodore Sedgwick (1746–1813), U.S. congressman from Massachusetts 1789–96.

² Jonathan Grout (1737–1807), U.S. congressman from Massachusetts 1789–91.

³ Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), then secretary of state.

⁴ Possibly Nathaniel Greenough, 32 Cornhill, Boston.

I was pleased with your remarks—therefore published them—and they were well received—I shall make some extracts from your last. You will perceive, by some *Fables &c* that we think in a channel. I have the pleasure to inform you that my Family is well. Mrs. Fenno desires her love to you—and please to give both our Loves' to your dear Wife & kiss your little ones for us. Son came home from the Academy, to day being a vacancy. He is in good health, & desires a respectful Remembrance to you Mrs. Ward & Mr Harbach—to whom please to present my Compliments. I am sorry for Mr. Prime's long Indisposition. If you can take a Trip this way—it will do you a great deal of good—& perhaps lay the foundation of a series of health thro' the Summer.

I have heard little about Securities lately—suppose them pretty much in statu quo.

With every wish for the Happiness of you & yours, I am Dr. Sir your ever obliged friend & Servant.

J.F.—

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Boston

Hond. by
C. Gore Esq.

New York May 16. 1790

Dear Sir —

Yours to May 11—I recd. by Post—and thank you for its various Contents. My poor Father's death is an event that I did not anticipate so soon; & tho' I wished, yet I hardly expected to see him again—the close of his life is attended with many affecting ideas—if his end was in Peace, as I trust it was, & he is now at rest, as I fondly hope—all is well—God's will be done. I most sincerely thank you, for all your goodness to him—and trust that God who delights in every transcript of his own benevolence, will reward you—& so smooth the slope of your future life, that its termination may be a gentle transit from that Peace which here passes all comparison, to joys that are as permanent & perfect as infinite Goodness can make them. How sorrow mends the heart, & rectifies the judgment. All is best—what once in prospect appeared dreadful—time & reflection have served to convince, is wise & benevolent such are the Asylums which enlightened humanity has established for the wretched.

Any further particulars respecting my Father which you may collect—I should be glad to receive.

I perceive that great uneasiness exists respecting the delays of Congress—many of them however, are unavoidable—and tho' the reasons of others are at present involved in clouds I doubt not you & other anxious friends to Govt. will see that there is no intentional delay—& will be convinced by the Members that all is right. The serious, & almost equal division on the essential Point, Assumption, occasions all the difficulty—the Majority is not perfectly satisfied in the decisions that have been made—and the Minority think *all* is suspended on the Question. Mr. Madison's very long Speech is the last that has been made on the Subject (it will appear in my next Paper) and contains many extraordinary assertions—this led Ames to call for Documents—some delay unavoidably ensued—they are now before the House—and the reverse of the picture must be exhibited. Madison's Speech must be dissected. The Assumptionists think they will carry the point, finally, by a handsome Majority—all the rest will speedily follow—and as they talk of adjourning by the last of the month & very strongly—they must make dispatch. The talk is of adjourning to Philadelphia to meet there in Dec. next. [*Heavily crossed out:* I am sorry that the new married man, appears to want ballast,]—you should tread on his toe. My Compliments & Mrs. Fenno's to him; & please to present our Congratulations. I will mention what you hint to Col. Trumbull¹—the idea had occurred to me but I believe it is entirely too late—as that Piece was finished I think before he left England. Pray is not Col. Prescott² dead? All the Portraits in his pieces are taken from the life as far as possible or from pictures drawn from the life. You say the apologies will not do. I assure you, that persons here on the spot (not merely the Citizens who are interested) do not find so much fault as those at a distance—and it is my sincere opinion that there is not an influential member in the House that wishes to protract the Session unnecessarily—but this Subject of funding is attended with innumerable difficulties. There are however delays that I cannot account for—last Wednesday was assigned to take up the funding bill—the Tonnage-business however was taken up, & unexpectedly has consumed the Time ever since—however, this is in the line of Revenue and I think a good, & popular System will be

¹ John Trumbull (1756–1843), Revolutionary officer and painter.

² William Prescott (1726–95), Revolutionary soldier.

adopted. Meantime I think the members are coalescing with respect to Assumption—the Fundg. & Ways & Means Bills—so that when they are taken up, a mutual understanding will prevent much more collision.

Our beloved President is alarmingly sick with a Pleuresy—expectorates blood & has a very high fever—he was a little better last night. May God be gracious to the United States in sparing his life.

Thro' divine Goodness my Family is at present in tolerable health—we have had attacks of the disorder of the day but are recovered. Mrs. Miles was taken very ill yesterday with a Pleuresy—& is very sick. Very few persons have escaped, & numbers have died. I suppose you get the price of Paper by every Post. Finals were the [last] time I heard anything about them at 8/4—& In[dents at] 6/8. You will notice the address to the public [torn] of the U.S. in my yesterday's Paper—it ought to [be] published. We have a packet from France yes[terday] which left Bourdeaux about 1st. March—have heard nothing new. There has been a number of arrivals with Emigrants from France. One vessel arrived at the Hook with 100 Parisians all cloathed with the National Uniform. Mrs. Fenno desires her love to you & Mrs. Ward. She has a letter wrote, waiting for a conveyance.

I notice Col. Allen's³ Letter to you. Mother is affronted with me for writing a Letter, complaining of some improper terms used by her in a letter to Mr. Durant—I feel no resentment—when you write her, let her know we are well & send our love. I will write her soon. Poor Woman, I pity her Situation with all my soul. She will be greatly affected at Father's death. I doubt not your letter to her will console her—may she receive divine support.

Adieu—ever Yours JF——

P.S. My Compliments to Mr Harbach & thank him for his goodness in attendg. ye funeral.

[Addressed:] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office, State Street
Boston

³ Possibly Col. William Allen. See obituary in *Columbian Centinel*, May 15, 1830.

New York May 23, 1790

Dear Sir,

Your favr. by Barnard I recd.—for some Apology for Congress in Answer to your criminations, please refer to my last. In addition to which I would say, that if a good funding System is finally agreed to—if many matters of a national complexion are effected, which if not done now, will never be accomplished—if the Assumption of the State debts is made part of the System—by this dreadful delay—it will be bringing *good* out of *evil*. All this I hope for—and doubt not will take place. There is no talk of bringg. on the permanent Residence' question—but I much fear that the next session will be held at Phila.—which would be an almost ruinous derangement to me. The President has been extremely ill with a Peripneumony—but is now recovering fast—there are five or six Acts ready for his Signature. As the funding bill advances, Securities rise. Finals are said to be a[t] 9 / and Indents 7 /. You will see the old money is set at 100 for One. It is expected that it will be finally set at 75 for 1—tho' I feel doubtful. New Emission will be considered as State Debts.

Mrs. Fenno wrote Mrs. Ward this morning by Mr. Dana¹—please to give my Love to her—and Compliments to Mr. Harbach. The Season is fine—I wish it would tempt you to come along this way. I do not think it will be possible for Congress to adjourn before the middle of June. Adieu—ever Yours

JF

[*On the blank page:*] This will be handed you by a Mr. Bradford² of this City a young Gentleman of respectable Character. He is one of two, who drew the highest Prize in your State Lottery.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esqr.
Land Office—State Street
Boston

Hond. by
Mr. Bradford

¹ Possibly Francis Dana (1743–1811), judge of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court 1785–91; chief justice 1791–1806.

² William Bradford, Philadelphia Coffee House, Old Ship, New York.

New York May 27. 1790

Dr. Sir –

Yesterday the House agreed that old Conti should be funded at 75 for one. The funding bill was passed this day & ordered to be engrossed for a 3d. reading on Monday. The Propositions for Assumption offered by Mr. Gerry were this day bro't forward by Mr. Boudinot¹ in the form of resolutions. I *now* think that no assumption will take place this Session—the majority are silent, but determined. It was moved in the House this day by Mr. Fitzsimons² that Congress meet, & hold their next Session in Phila. A similar motion was agitated in the Senate yesterday—it is supposed that it will be negatived in the Senate—it is to be determined next Thursday. The President is so much better, that he signed four Bills yesterday. I have only time to say that we are well. Mrs. Fenno desires her love to you & Mrs. Ward to whom give mine also. Adieu ever yours,
JF——

P.S. Let Russell have the News in this which you may see proper to communicate.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office
Boston

New York June 3, 1790

Dear Sir,

It seems a *very* long time since I heard from you—thro divine goodness we are all well. I most sincerely hope that no sickness or misfortune has prevented your writing.

The funding bill passed the House yesterday & was sent up to the Senate. I enclose you a Copy. We have been a good deal agitated at a vote of the House to meet the next session at Philadelphia—the business however appears to be arrested in its progress, in the Senate—it has been referred to a Committee to whom a Bill respecting the permanent Residence is committed. It is expected that the funding bill will receive some amendments—among others, I expect a Clause in favor of the assumption whether such a Clause will not defeat the funding bill altogether I really feel uncertain. It is possible that at the *close* of the session, those in opposition may

¹ Elias Boudinot (1740–1821), U.S. congressman from Pennsylvania 1789–95.

² Thomas Fitzsimons (1741–1811), U.S. congressman from Pennsylvania 1789–95.

be more reconciled—but matters appear to me in so precarious a State as to their final Issue, that I was never more puzzled—every appearance either pro or con, as to funding, immediately affects *stock*. Finals are now up to 9/6 and Indents were this day sold at 7/6—in consequence of the passing of the Bill—but should it receive a check in the Senate, they would immediately fall & should the funding System be postponed to the next Session they will lie down, down, down. Tell Mr. Russell if you please, that I congratulate him on his appointment to print the Laws. He will I suppose be informed of it by a Letter from one of his Friends by this Post.

I want to write you many things but have not time. My Love to Mrs Ward & Compliments to Mr. Harbach—Mrs. Fenno's also.

It is rather a cloudy time with us—but the Sun will break out—and I really expect that Congress will attempt to set matters right before they rise.

Adieu—JF

Post is in—and no Letter.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esquire
Land Office
Boston

the Conductor is requested to Deliver this with his own hand

New York June 22, 1790

Dr. Sir

The Senate have agreed to fund the Indents and the whole debt at a simple 4 PCent—so you see the alternatives are rejected. How this will suit the house is hard to say. I rather think it will be agreed to—the Ways & Means Bill being rejected by the Eastern people because the State Debts are not assumed, & by some of the Southern on account of the Excise, is lost in the House.

It was a great object with the assumptionists to defeat this bill—supposing it would conduce to their plan. It is now said the assumption is in a fair way—as I still think a fundg. System will be agreed upon the assumption is a consequence. These fluctuations have affected Paper—as I wrote you on Sunday last—since when have not heard any Price mention'd. All well.

Adieu JF

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq
Boston

New York June 27, 1790

Dear Sir,

By Mr Freeman¹ have just recd. yours of the 17 Inst:—& am very happy to hear of your agreeable Interview with your Family. Mine & Mrs. Fenno's love to your dear Girl and compliments to Mr Harbach—whom we shall be happy, very happy to see. I rejoice at Mr. Prime's recovery, please give my Compliments to him. I had a Letter from Mr. Durant last week—he was well—and has been so good as to remit me the full amot. of my Subscription in St. Croix—tho' it had not all been recd. there—this is a very seasonable supply—by such relief in succession, Providence smiles upon me, & adds one month to anothy [*sic*] by its timely provision.

I have wrote to Mother—the letter has been waiting some time for an Opportunity. As to her going to North Carolina—I hardly know what to say—the Climate is the most material objection. Mr. Chapman informed me some time since that he had given the Invitation. I am informed that his Circumstances are very eligible, & doubt not he would do every thing to make her situation agreeable. If she should determine to go, it would perhaps be best to take New York in her way—as there are Vessels constantly going from this place—and I should greatly regret not seeing her before she went. Mine & Polly's love to her—and please to inform her that we & the children are all well. I find Mr. Dalton² is superceded. This may be right, but it savors of fickleness. I hope advantage has not been taken of his absence—his conduct has never been impeached to my knowledge. Mr. Cabot³ is a very judicious choice however, & I sincerely wish he may serve.

As to Politics—Residence & Assumption still embarrass—but I expect this week will bring light, order & decision. Paper is 9 / & 7 /—& appears to be stationary. It seems as if the influence which protracts, lest the Assumption should be lost, would be able finally to effect the measure—but these questions are so involved that it is

¹ James Freeman (1739–1835), first Unitarian minister of King's Chapel, Boston; married to Fenno's sister. See *DAB* s.v. 'Freeman, James,' and 'Belknap Papers,' p. 315.

² Tristram Dalton (1738–1817), U.S. senator from Massachusetts 1789–91; unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1790.

³ George Cabot (1751–1823), U.S. senator from Massachusetts 1791–96.

extremely difficult to decide. I think I have wrote you twice since your return. Adieu—ever yours J.F.

[*Addressed:*] Joseph Ward Esq.
Land Office—State Street
Boston

Favd. by
Mr. Bourne⁴

⁴ Probably Silvanus Bourne, later U.S. ambassador to Holland. See obituary in *Columbian Centinel*, June 18, 1817.

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