

James Madison to Edmund Randolph, October 13, 1783. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO EDMUND RANDOLPH. MAD. MSS.

Philada Octr 13th, 1783.

My Dear Sir, —I returned yesterday in order to be with Mr Jones before his departure and make some little arrangement with him of a private nature. The past week has been spent by Congress in deliberating on 1. their permanent seat; 2. their temporary one. The competition for the former lay between the falls of the Potowmack and those of the Delaware. We hoped at first from the *apparent* views of the Eastern Delegates that they would have given a preference to Potowmack. In the event they joined with Pena & the intermediate States in favor of the Delaware the consequence of which is that the vicinity of its Falls is to become the future seat of the fœderal Govt. unless a conversion of some of the Eastern States can be effected. The next point was the abode of Congs untill their permanent seat could receive them. The expediency of removing from Princeton in order to the more convenient transaction of the affairs of the U. S. and accommodation of Congs, was first determined on, Massts, Cont, & R. I. alone being opposed to it. Trenton was next proposed, on which Question the votes were divided by the River Delaware. Philada came next in order. Besides its convenient position in relation to the Permanent seat & superior temporary accommodations for the public business and for Congs, arguments in its favor were drawn from the tendency of passing by these accommodations to others inferior in themselves & more distant from the permant seat, to denote a resentment unworthy of a Sovereign authority agst a part of its Constituents

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which had fully expiated any offence which they might have committed; and at the same time to convert their penitential and affectionate temper into the bitterest hatred. To enforce this idea some of the proceedings of Congs expressive of resentment agst Philada were made use of.

Great stress also was laid on the tendency of removing to any small or distant place, to prevent or delay business which the honor & interest of the U. S. require sd be despatched as soon as possible. On the other side objections were drawn from those sources which have produced dislikes to Philada, and wch will be easily conjectured by you. On the question N. Y, Pa, Delaware, Virga, & N. Carolina were ay; Massts, Cont, R. I., N. Jersey, no; and Maryland & S. Carolina, divided. If either of the divided States had been in the affirmative it was the purpose of N. Jersey to add a seventh vote in favor of Philada. The division of S. Carolina was owing to the absence of Mr. Rutledge & Mr. Izard both of whom would have voted for Phila. The State was represented by two members only. The division of Maryland represented by Mr Carroll & Mr McHenry was occasioned by the negative of the latter, whose zeal for Annapolis determined him to sacrifice every consideration to an experiment in its favor, before he would accede to the vote for Philada. The aversion of the Eastern States was the ground of his coalition with them. The arguments in favor of Annapolis consisted of objections agst Philada. Those agst it were chiefly the same which had been urged in favor of Philada. On the question the States were Massts, Cont, R. I., Delaware, Maryland & N. C., ay, N. Y., N. J. Pa Virga, no. S. C. divided. Virga was represented by Mr. Lee Mr. Mercer & Mr. M. The first was in the affirmative. Mr. Jones & Mr. Bland were in Philada. The vote of the latter wd have been in favor of Annapolis of the former in favor of Philada. The opinion of Mr. L & Mr. B in favr of Annapolis resulted from a dislike to Philada, & the idea that the views of Va would be promoted by it. That of their colleagues from a belief that the reasons drawn in favr of Philada, from National considerations reqd. a concession of local views, and even that a recision of the permanent vote for Trenton in favor of George Town, the object of Va, would be promoted by placing the Eastern States in Philada. They also supposed that the

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concurrence of the Eastern States in a temporary vote for Annapolis to take effect some weeks hence, was little to be confided in, since the arrival of a colleague to the Delegate from N. Hampshire would with the accession of Pena, who wd prefer Trenton to Annapolis & be moreover stimulated by resentment, would make up seven States to reverse the removal to Annapolis. Add to the whole that experience has verified the opinion that in any small place Congs are too dependent on courtesy & favor to be exempt either in their purses or their sensibility from degrading impositions. Upon the whole it is most probable that Philada will be [the] abode of Congs during the Winter. I must refer to Mr Jones for explanations on all these points, he will be in Richmond early in the Session. For myself I have engaged to return to Princeton to attend some interesting points before Congs. Having not yet settled my arrangements for the Winter I must for the present be silent as to my [torn out] situation. Mr. Van Berkel arrived a few days [torn out]. Congs are in a charming situation to receive him, being in an obscure village undetermined where they will spend the Winter, and without a Minister of F. A. After the rect of this you will stop your correspondence, and probably not hear further from me. I set off tomorrow morning at 3 oClock in the Flying Machine for Princeton, and it is now advancing towards the hour of sleep. In haste adieu My dear friend and be assured that I am Yrs Sincerely.