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Title: Letter from William Bingham to the Dickinson College Board of Trustees

Date: December 29, 1783

Location: RG 1/1 - 3.2.1.3

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London Decemr 29th 1783

Dear Sir,

Previous to my Departure from America, I received a letter from Mr J^r Montgomery in behalf of himself, & the other Friends of the Institution, which you so warmly patronize, requesting me to recommend its Interests, to the humane & benevolent of this Country. -

My Attachment to its Prosperity, inclin'd me on my Arrival here, sedulously to exert myself in favor of such Views; - - But it gives me Pain to inform you, that my Disappointment has been as great, as it was unexpected.

I have the honor to inclose you a Copy of what I wrote Mr Montgomery on the Subject, which will communicate the Particulars I then had before me.

On Receipt of the Letter, which you have done me the honor to address me, with the several Inclosures, empowering me to solicit & receive Donations from the Friends of Literature & Humanity, that might be inclin'd to contri-

- bute

contribute towards the Support of this truly Catholic
Seminary, I renewed my Applications, & more
aviduously interested myself in its Re-
habilitation.

I sought those Characters, whose
Reputation stood the highest for Liberality
of Sentiment, & who, from the purest Principles,
had befriended the Revolution of America.

I informed them of the benevolent
Views of the Founder of this Establishment, & of
the beneficial Effects that would result to
Humanity, from planting the Seeds of Know-
ledge in that Western Country, at present
remote from all Access to the Improvement
of the Human Mind —

They have invariably informed me
that no Success could now be expected in this Under-
taking; — That whilst the Effects of the American
War would be visible in the Marks of public &
private Distress, that universally appear, all Sollici-
tations for the Support of American Establishments
would be ineffectual; — That such Applica-
tions would lead reflective Minds, that were
applied to, to contrast the Situation of the two
Countries, which would show America in all the
Vigors of Youth & Constitution, making rapid Studies
to Riches & political Importance, whilst this
Kingdom exhibits all the Appearance of a declining
Empire — I confess that I have been exceedingly

disappointed

disappointed in my Expectations; -- from the
bountiful Contributions that have hitherto been received,
in Aid of such Establishments, there Seem'd to be
Room for the Indulgence of a Belief, that very effectue
-al Assistance might still be procured.

But the material Change of Situation that
the two Countries have undergone, is the principal
Obstacle to a Successfull Application.

Pennsylvania no longer constitutes a Part
of the British Empire; -- the Improvement of her
Citizens in Knowledge of literary Acquisitions was
once an Object of Consequence with the British, as
the Advantages deriv'd from them, were only
relative, & eventually centered in this Kingdom.

But the general Opinion at present, is, that
we are hostile to their Interests; -- So far from
a Spirit of Conciliation having already taken
place, & a Return to their old Good Humour, there
seems to be but a very languid Disposition
towards it.

This may appear Surprising, when it is
consider'd how advantageous it would be to them,
to cement a friendly & intimate Connection with
the Inhabitants of this United States; But
various Reasons of a political Nature continue
to operate against the Measure.

Similar Views of procuring Assistance
from this Country, in Aid of the same Plan of founding
a College, had been anticipated by the People of

New Hampshire,

New Hampshire, who commissioned Dr Wheeler
for this express Purpose; - After travelling
thro' the Country, & several Parts of Europe, I am
informed that he has returned to America,
without procuring a Sufficient Subscription to
Support his Expences.

Even an Institution of Learning, to be
established in Nova Scotia, the Retreat of the
Loyalists, which is warmly recommended to the
Patronage of the Public, & which has a just
Claim to their Generosity, has procured as yet
but very feeble Success & Support.

However, altho' from the Advice of our
warmest Friends & Wellwishers, I shall at
present decline any further Solicitations; I
do not despair of seeing a more favorable
Disposition towards Us take place, which
I shall gladly improve to the Advantage
of your benevolent Views, - wishing you to
be assured, that the Institution has not a
Sincerer Friend, nor one that will more
readily contribute to every Species of Aid &
Assistance that it may eventually require,
than I

Gent^l

Your obed^t & ble Serv^t

Wm Bingham



London, December 29th, 1783.

Gentn

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I Sought those Characters, whose Reputation Stood the highest for Liberality of Sentiment, & who, from the purest Principles, had befriended the Revolution of America.

I informed them of the benevolent Views of the Founders of this Establishment, & of the beneficial effects that would result to Humanity, from planting the Seeds of Knowledge in that Western Country, at present, so, remote from all Access to the Improvement of the Human Mind.

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But the general Opinion at present, is, that we are hostile to their Interests; So far from a Spirit of Conciliation having already taken place, & a return to their old Good Humor, there Seems to be but a very languid Disposition towards it.

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Gent'n Your Obed hble servt

Wm Bingham.