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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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for this copyof Prespose; after travelling there their fountry, governal Parts of Gurges, I am informed that he has returned to america, without procuring a Sefficient Subveription to Support his Experience Even and Institution of Leavening, to be established in Nova Section, the Petreat of the shoyalests, which is warmly recommended to the Patronago of the Public, a which has a just, . Clown to their Generosety, has procued as sil but very feeble Succon & Superior e However, altho from the advice of our prevent decline any fenther Solicitations; I do not despair of Sering a more favorable Disposition toward, Us talle place, which I hall gladly improve to the advantage of your homewhat News - wishing you to be afrered, that the Institution has not a Sinceren Frund, nor one that will more readily contribute to every Species of and & aprilance that it may eventually require Gent your ober the fer . AmBingham

London, December 29th, 1783.

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Previous to my departure from America, I received a Letter from Mr. Jno 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 and benevolent of this Country.

My Attachment to its Prosperity inclined 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 Prospects
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 inclined to contribute towards the Support of this truly Catholic Seminary, I renewed my applications, & more assiduously interested myself in its Behalf.

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 [50] 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 Undertaking; That whilst the Effects of the American War were So visible in the Marks of public & private Distress, that universally appear, all Sollicitations for the Support of American Establishments would be ineffectual; That Such Applications would lead reflective Minds, that were applied to, to contrast the Situation of the two Countries, which would Show America in all the Vigor of Youth & Constitution, making rapid Strides to Riches & political Importance, whilst this Kingdom exhibits all the appearance of a declining Empire.

I confess that I have been exceedingly disappointed in my Expectations; from the bountiful Contributions that have hitherto been received, in aid of Such Establishments, there Seemed to be Room for the Indulgence of a Belief, that very effectual assistance might Still be procured.

But the material Change of Situation that the two Countries have undergone, is the principal obstacle to a Successful application.

Pennsylvania no longer constitutes a Part of the British Empire; the Improvement of her Citizens in Knowledge & literary Acquisitions was once an object of Consequence with the British, as the advantages derived 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 Humor, there Seems to be but a very languid Disposition towards it.

This may appear Surprising, when it is considered how

advantageous it would be to them, to cement a friendly & intimate Connection with the Inhabitants of the 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, who commissioned Dr. Wheeler for this express Purpose; After travelling thro this 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 Generowsity, has procured as aid but very feeble Succor & Support.

However, altho from the Advice of our warmest Friends & Well Wishers, I shall at present decline any further Solicitations; I do not dispair 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'n Your Obed hble servt
Wm Bingham.