

London 14<sup>th</sup> April 1831

Dear Brother I received your letter of the 31<sup>st</sup> of January on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February and the Ariel on the 9<sup>th</sup> of April Mr Parsons is still it appears unwilling to fulfill his first engagements. He ought if he has any sense of honor or honesty to blush at such conduct; it is really scandalous for any man that pretends to either to ask to be favoured in so trifling a matter. He certainly knew when he made the bargain that he could not fulfil it or if he can he does not want to do it. In either case he deserves not to be favoured. I think you ought to compel him to pay one way or the other; for it is perfectly nonsense to take a Mortgage for the small sum of 100 dollars and then probably spend the half of it to recover by law - I wish to avoid the expense of going to law if I can; it is got to be as clear as any demonstration in Euclid that it is not worth while to go to law for small matters. I dont like to let the title slip out of my hands; if he will pay the sum he mentions and is satisfied with having it endorsed on the deed and let it lie in your hands untill he has paid the remainder with Interest you may agree with <sup>him</sup> as he asks; but not to throw off any of the interest or principal by any means, the land is certainly worth the money and I would as soon hold it as his money and sooner if he pays but part and gives a mortgage for the rest. I would too rather that you would follow my former advice that is to let the matter slip through entirely than go to law with the poor devil who seems not to know his own mind even for the penalty; but in this matter you may do still as you please. Do in the whole matter as you like. Father has been to see our relations in Franklin & Cumberland counties lately & found all well there, <sup>that</sup> were still living & but one dead. Uncle Thomas having died of a fall he got off the thrashing floor soft sometime in the fall. Uncle Paul has erected a new house for him and his second brood of young ones; and his son Thomas farms the place. Cousin John having persuaded Robert to go too New Orleans where there doing Selout know what. Robert had started farming in partnership with Thomas but had left off sometime in August. James lives in Indiana and is getting along something better than formerly. Alexander Graydon is at his storekeeping and I think is making money; his wife was delivered lately of a daughter which is the fourth if not the fifth - two sons and two daughters he has certainly beside Robert. Robert has enjoyed good



health all along and is a very smart boy, he has studied  
rather went through what is generally taught: as far as  
Euclid which he commenced lately as well as his Latin  
grammar. There is every prospect in the world of his being a  
great Scholar; which he ought to be for he will never be ca-  
pable of labour; owing to his slender make - he appears to me  
not to grow any either in height or thickness. I think it not  
right altogether to compel a child to cram his head so full  
of things which he can have but a faint idea of the use or  
meaning of. He is able to demonstrate a thing without being  
able certainly to give the why or the wherefore. I feel convinced  
that the burdening the infant mind with so much learning  
hurts the Intellectual as well as physical powers; that both are  
brought to a premature growth. Flour has been lately sold here  
5.75 and in the City at 6.50. Rye & Corn is worth here 50 cents  
Whiskey 29. Flour was between 6 & 7 all winter. We had a very  
severe winter: shortly after I wrote there fell a snow of about two  
feet in depth & it snowed occasionally until we had at least  
three feet of it on the ground and of such a dry nature that  
it drifted nearly all the roads shut: there never was in this  
part of the country so much difficulty in getting from one place  
to another nearly all kinds of business were stopped for a time. The  
cold was intense for two months without a days respite. Our  
March weather however proved more mild and the snow was  
entirely driven away by it without producing a flood which  
our weather wise people said would certainly take place and  
swich our Canals to clayey Sores. It passed away without much  
rain and slowly. There was no ~~ice~~<sup>frost</sup> in the ground when the snow  
fell and strange as it may seem there was little or no ice on the  
Streams though the cold was severe. The oldest inhabitants say  
they have not seen such a winter these forty years. The three  
last weeks past have been real spring weather but at present  
we have blustry cold weather: the <sup>therm</sup> was very high for those three  
days a good many roofs of barns were thrown of and a great  
deal of fence thrown down. I was told that there was a three  
story brick house blown down in Harrisburg. There is likely  
to take a new turn in Politics with us which I think will  
undo Antimasonry. The Legislature have passed an act to  
levy a tax of one Mill on a dollar throughout the Commonwealth  
for to pay the Interest on the Canal Loans: which <sup>will</sup> be about  
\$100 laid and is to be collected in October next. Which will  
produce such an excitement as to level all party distinctions.  
The friends of the Canal system have all along flattered  
the people into the idea there would be no necessity of taxation  
and consequently since the Election of Shulze it never has  
been made a party question with the people. You know what  
a buzz the Million loan of Heaster's administration made in the  
Country: when in fact former administrations had made it absolutely  
necessary. Which will becase again, Gov. Wolf will be hurld from  
office for the sins of the Dulshooken &c. I every once and a while  
tell they great Shulze men about their putting him in in opposi-  
tion to Canals, and then becoming the dupe of the canal party sanc-  
tioning every bill they passed till they have borrowed thirteen



Millions of dollars. Such has been the conduct of our patent dem-  
ocrats these eight years past. They have gone on borrowing and borrowing  
untill the present crisis when they are obliged to borrow ~~the~~ money ~~to pay~~  
the Interest of former loans or resort to taxation which latter  
they have determined on. What their success may be is yet to be deter-  
mined. All personal property is also to be taxed at the same rate, taking  
in Mortgages Judgements Bonds notes pleasure Carriages & gold  
and silver watches that are worth twenty dollars. The Canals are all  
in operation that are completed or at least the water has been let into  
them. There is one continued water communication from Northumberland  
via Middletown & the Union canal to Philadelphia. The Juniatta canal is now  
yet in operation owing to some damage it has suffered. The Chesapeake  
and Delaware canal is doing the Baltimoreans more damage than  
they apprehended a great part of the trade of the Susquehanna  
goes through it to Philadelphia. The rail road from Columbia to the  
City is to be put under contract this summer and the canal from  
Columbia to Middletown which will make the line of communication com-  
plete. There has been some flour taken from Middletown to Philadelphia for  
forty cents per barrel this spring. I was to see Baltimore and Washington the  
latter end of March. Baltimore is a trifling city in comparison with Philad-  
and the country from York to Baltimore and from Baltimore to  
Washington miserable poor. The City of Washington is small and the houses  
chiefly two and three stories high which is the same case with Baltimore.  
The Capital of the United States and the President's house are the only  
things worth looking at in Washington. The Capital stands at the east  
end of the town and stands on an eminence. The rise in the ground from the  
level of the street to the first step we make to ascend the main hill is 10  
feet at least if not 15 then you rise thirty steps of six inches each on to a  
level of about 100 feet in breadth when there is another flight of steps  
of the same number of the first on to another level of the same breadth to  
the port of the building. The bands of both these levels on each side of steps are  
faced with sods and look beautiful. These levels or the banks that support  
them are semicircular. They are brought round in a circle on either side of the  
way till they strike the main bank. After you are on the level you must rise  
thirty six steps to get into the Rotunda or on a level with the floor of both  
houses of the legislature which is on the second story. The Building is four  
stories high & is 120 yards in length & about half the number in breadth  
the breadth I did not see step. The Building is fenced in with Iron fence  
about 10 feet in height. After the fashion of rails the rails or bars are 4 inches  
square and pointed at top. I think one would have to travel a mile to go  
round the whole enclosure. Before the East of the building which I would  
call the front of it though don't face the town is the chief part of the  
enclosure which is planted with a great variety of trees intersected with  
gravel walks straight and circular the rest of the ground amongst the trees  
is entirely green with grass. The building facing the East is one continued straight  
line except in the centre where the portico is; the main building stands back about  
four feet further than the wing. The Portico or porch where we enter into the  
Rotunda is supported by three rows of pillars of the gothic order (square ones  
and round ones) eight in the first or outer row 12 in the  
middle and 6 in the inside row all top of which are formed a complete arch. When  
on is laid the floor of the portico the whole of which is of heavy stone. There is a rise of steps  
into this floor which are supported by an arch leaning against the floor of the porch.  
The roof of the Portico appears to be arched with heavy stone and is supported by  
as many round pillars standing in the same order as the the floor of the porch  
the height of two stories of the building. The Rotunda is in the centre of the building & is  
circular having four doors in it. They are or you enter from the East and one in  
front going directly out again over the town Westward & the door of  
Senate chamber on the right over which stands Penn and two Indian cut  
in marble in the Act of signing a treaty. And on the left the floor of the house  
of representatives over which stands an Indian and a white man standing  
upon a slain son of the forest in mortal combat. The intermediate spaces are  
hung with drawings of the declaration of independence & the surrender of Cornwallis  
(several others). The whole fabric appears to be entirely stone floors and all  
the floor of the Rotunda which I think takes up the third of the whole story it  
stands upon is stone and is laid upon an arch supported by 48 round pillars  
standing in two circles the outer has thirty two of standing 160 & two together the  
inner are 16 standing single. The outer part of the building is of heavy stone & is white



As you come out of the west door you have a view of the town and never of  
Presidents house which stands on another rise about two miles from the Capital  
in this I may be mistaken but at any rate it always took me a good while to  
travel it. From the Capital to the President there is a very wide street leading direct  
ly from the one to the other and there is about 12 feet of pavement on either side  
& then there stands a row of lumbered Poplars on each side 16 feet from the  
curb stone & then from each of these rows of trees a middling wide road another  
two other rows of trees & between the two last rows another road making four  
rows of trees & three roads beside the pavements. This street was not quite  
parallel with the river - the Presidents house being about half a mile & the Capital  
three fourths from it. I hope I have not wrote any thing but what you can read  
I did not expect that the description of the Capital would take up so much room  
or I should have said nothing about it. What hurts the pleasure of a view of the  
Capital is the barrenness of the surrounding country. it is so poor that they  
dont think it worth fencing. The country is better from Baltimore to the Capital  
a distance of 36 miles or nearly so. I did not see the President Hugh Wilson & sister nor the  
single. Doctor Wilson I saw lately - he has finished his course of studies & is gone to  
up the Susquehanna to settle himself - he was well but looks to be forty  
Nothing more at present but that we are all well so farewell.

To John Geddes

William Geddes



10  
Campbells Ford 25  
April the 11<sup>th</sup> 1831

1831

Mr John Geddes

Ann Arbor

Michigan Territory

