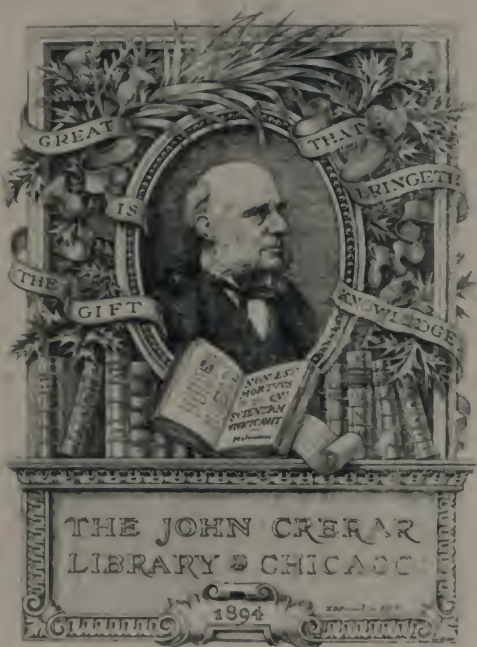


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PUBLICATIONS
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

THE
PAPERS OF THOMAS RUFFIN

COLLECTED AND EDITED

BY

J. G. DE ROULHAC HAMILTON, PH.D.

ALUMNI PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

VOLUME I



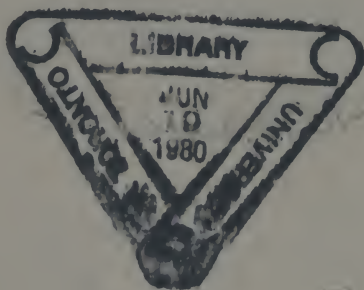
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PREFACE

The letters and papers of the following collection were, for the most part, preserved by Judge Ruffin himself, and, after his death, passed successively to his son, the late Sterling Ruffin, his grandson, the late Allen J. Ruffin, both of Hillsboro, N. C., and to his grandson, Bennehan Cameron, of Stagville, N. C. By Mr. Cameron, with the approval of the other two named, they have been entrusted to me for editing for publication. The ones from that collection here printed have been carefully selected from the total of more than ten thousand letters which compose it. The other papers included have been partly drawn from a large number owned by Judge Ruffin's daughter, Mrs. Catherine Ruffin Roulhac, which have been for some years in my possession, and partly from scattered sources. Since the Ruffin and Roulhac collections have been consolidated, no distinction is made between them, and, since they form the greater part of those published, I have not thought it necessary to indicate them. In the case of all the others, footnotes indicate the sources from which they have been obtained.

My guide in making the selection of the letters to be printed has been solely my desire to choose all such letters as may throw light upon the history of the State and Nation, or upon the personality and character either of Judge Ruffin or the writers. In this connection, it is to be regretted that such a small number of letters written by Judge Ruffin are included. Few of his correspondents, apparently, preserved their letters with the care which he employed, and in several cases where the letters were kept for years, war or fire destroyed them.

In the editorial work I have not attempted further annotation than that which seemed necessary to a proper understanding of the letters. Many of the writers, and a still larger number of persons alluded to, are unknown. In the case of men of established national reputation, I have not thought it necessary to do more than indicate, in cases of doubt, to whom the reference is made.

I have sought to present the letters as they were written, without changes of spelling or expression. Omitted words or phrases have been inserted in brackets where the meaning was doubtful, an occasional abbreviated word has been expanded in the interest of clarity, and the signs & and &c have been always replaced by *and* and *etc.* In the interest of space, I have in general omitted the forms of address and closing, including the signatures. I have omitted many references to matters of a

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professional, personal, or domestic nature, always indicating the omission of one or more paragraphs by asterisks, as * * * ; and of a sentence or less by periods, as, . . .

As a proper introduction to the letters, I am reprinting the memorial address delivered by Governor William A. Graham soon after Judge Ruffin's death, and a sketch of him by Francis Nash, Esq., of Hillsboro, published originally in the *Charlotte Observer*.

In one of the later volumes will appear several addresses delivered by Judge Ruffin and several of his more important decisions.

The work of editing has been greatly lightened by the use of The Murphey Papers, also published by the North Carolina Historical Commission, and I desire to make special acknowledgment of my indebtedness to the careful and thorough work on them of Mr. William Henry Hoyt.

I take this opportunity of expressing my deep sense of obligation to all those who have assisted me in my laborious but intensely absorbing task. Without the assistance and coöperation of Mr. R. D. W. Connor, the work would have lacked much of its completeness. I have also been greatly assisted by my colleague, Dr. Kemp P. Battle, Professor V. L. Collins of Princeton University, Mr. Richard H. Ritter, president of the American Whig Society of Princeton, President Lyon G. Tyler of William and Mary College, Mrs. Fanny Conigland Farinholt, Mr. Bennehan Cameron, Captain S. A. Ashe, and Dr. Stephen B. Weeks. To each of them I desire to express my grateful sense of their courtesy and aid. Above all, I desire to acknowledge the invaluable assistance rendered me by my wife, whose part in the preparation of the collection has been scarcely less than my own.

J. G. DE ROULHAC HAMILTON.

CHAPEL HILL, N. C.,

May 15, 1918.

CHRONOLOGY OF THOMAS RUFFIN

1787.
Nov. 17. Born at "Newington," King and Queen County, Va.
1801 - 1803. Student at Warrenton Academy, Warrenton, N. C.
1803. Entered Junior Class at Nassau Hall, Princeton, N. J.
1805.
Sept. 26. Received degree of A.B. from Princeton.
1806 - 1807. Law student at Petersburg, Va., under David Robertson.
1807. Moved to "Oakland," Rockingham County, N. C.
1807 - 1808. Law student under Archibald D. Murphey.
1808. Admitted to the bar.
1809.
June 9. Moved to Hillsboro, N. C.
Dec. 9. Married to Anne Kirkland of Hillsboro.
1813. Member of the House of Commons for the borough of Hillsboro.
1815. Member of the House of Commons for the borough of Hillsboro.
1816. Presidential elector on the Monroe ticket.
Member of the House of Commons for the borough of Hillsboro.
Speaker of the House of Commons.
Dec. 16. Elected judge of the Superior Court.
1818.
Dec. 23. Resigned from the bench to engage in the practice of law.
1820 - 1822. Reporter of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.
1824. Candidate for presidential elector on the Crawford ticket.
1825. Elected judge of the Superior Court.
1828. Resigned from the bench to become president of the State Bank of North Carolina.
1829. Elected judge of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.
1830. Moved to "Haw River."
1833. Became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
1834. Received degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of North Carolina.
1835. Delivered address before the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies at the University of North Carolina.
1852. Resigned from the bench.
1853. Delegate to the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York City.
1854 - 1860. President of the North Carolina Agricultural Society.
1858. Elected a judge of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.
1859. Resigned from the bench.
1861. Delegate to the Peace Conference.
Delegate from Alamance to the Convention of 1861.
1866. Moved to Hillsboro.
1870.
Jan. 15. Died at his home in Hillsboro.

CALENDAR OF LETTERS

LETTERS WRITTEN BY THOMAS RUFFIN HERE PRINTED

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written to</i>
Greensboro, N. C.	Oct. 26, 1814.....	Edward Jones
Greensboro, N. C.	Oct. 26, 1814.....	Edward Jones
Hillsboro, N. C.	Aug. 20, 1816.....	Kemp Plummer and others
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 5, 1820.....	James F. Taylor
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 6, 1820.....	James F. Taylor
Raleigh, N. C.	May 21, 1822.....	William Polk
Raleigh, N. C.	July 22, 1822.....	Bartlett Yancey
Pittsboro, N. C.	Feb. 10, 1824.....	Catherine Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	June 30, 1824.....	John Owen
Hillsboro, N. C.	Oct. 29, 1824.....	Catherine Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	Dec. 3, 1824.....	Bartlett Yancey
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 12, 1825.....	Catherine Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	Feb. 6, 1826.....	William Polk
New Bern, N. C.	Mar. 14, 1826.....	Catherine Ruffin
Asheville, N. C.	Oct. 12, 1826.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	Dec. 31, 1826.....	William K. Ruffin
Greenville, N. C.	Mar. 5, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	Apr. 3, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	May 16, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	June 6, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	July 5, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	July 25, 1827.....	Catherine Ruffin
Rockingham, N. C.	Sept. 25, 1827.....	Catherine Ruffin
Sampson C. H.	Nov. 5, 1827.....	William K. Ruffin
Hillsboro, N. C.	Jan. 17, 1828.....	William K. Ruffin
Perquimans County, N. C.	Apr. 14, 1828.....	Catherine Ruffin
Greensboro, N. C.	Oct. 22, 1828.....	Catherine Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 23, 1828.....	Joseph B. G. Roulhac
Raleigh, N. C.	July 1, 1829.....	William Boylan

LETTERS WRITTEN TO THOMAS RUFFIN HERE PRINTED

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Brunswick, Va.	May 5, 1803.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	Sept. 8, 1803.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	Dec. 29, 1803.....	Sterling Ruffin
	Jan. 29, 1804.....	Muscoec Garnett
Brunswick, Va.	Feb. 3, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	Mar. 14, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	May 9, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	June, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
Pittsville, Va.	Sept. 24, 1804.....	William Garnett
	Oct. 22, 1804.....	William Garnett
Richmond, Va.	Nov. 22, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
	Dec. 3, 1804.....	William Garnett
Brunswick, Va.	Dec. 6, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	Dec. 22, 1804.....	Sterling Ruffin
	Dec. 31, 1804.....	William Garnett

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Brunswick, Va.	Jan. 11, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
	Jan. 14, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Jan. 21, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Feb. 13, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Feb. 21, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
	Mar. 17, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Mar. 25, 1805.....	William Garnett
	May 6, 1805.....	William Garnett
Brunswick, Va.	May 11, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	June 11, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	July 1, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
	July 12, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Aug. 7, 1805.....	William Garnett
	Aug. 8, 1805.....	Robert Ruffin
	Aug. 9, 1805.....	Muscoe Garnett
Brunswick, Va.	Aug. 12, 1805.....	Sterling Ruffin
Essex County, Va.	Aug. 29, 1805.....	William Garnett
Richmond, Va.	Oct. 2, 1805.....	George Hairston
Princeton, N. J.	Nov. 20, 1805.....	John Reynolds
Essex County, Va.	Dec. 17, 1805.....	William Garnett
Princeton, N. J.	Dec. 20, 1805.....	John Reynolds
Philadelphia, Pa.	Jan. 18, 1806.....	John Reynolds
Pittsylvania County, Va.	Feb. 2, 1806.....	George Hairston
Petersburg, Va.	Feb. 24, 1806.....	Jane Harding
	Mar. 18, 1806.....	William Garnett
Spring Garden, Va.	July 28, 1806.....	Spencer Roane
Philadelphia, Pa.	Aug. 12, 1806.....	Elisha Clarke
	Sept. 3, 1806.....	William Garnett
	Sept. 20, 1806.....	William Garnett
Brunswick, Va.	Sept. 20, 1806.....	Sterling Ruffin
Lynchburg, Va.	Oct. 10, 1806.....	William P. Claiborne
Brunswick, Va.	Nov. 11, 1806.....	Sterling Ruffin
Brunswick, Va.	Jan. 8, 1807.....	Sterling Ruffin
	May 11, 1807.....	William Garnett
	Aug. 1, 1807.....	William Garnett
Petersburg, Va.	Sept. 9, 1807.....	John F. May
Brunswick, Va.	Nov. 3, 1807.....	James Niblock
Petersburg, Va.	Dec. 13, 1807.....	John F. May
Ravenna, Ohio	Jan. 5, 1808.....	Benjamin Tappan
Ravenna, Ohio	Feb. 16, 1808.....	Benjamin Tappan
	Mar. 6, 1808.....	William Garnett
Petersburg, Va.	June 16, 1808.....	John F. May
Petersburg, Va.	May 27, 1809.....	John F. May
Wentworth, N. C.	July 26, 1809.....	James Campbell
Washington, D. C.	Apr. 6, 1810.....	Richard Stanford
Petersburg, Va.	July 12, 1810.....	William Garnett
	Sept., 1810.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Hermitage	Jan. 1, 1811.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Petersburg, Va.	Feb. 19, 1811.....	Edward Dillard
Greensboro, N. C.	Mar., 1813.....	Bartlett Yancey
Caswell, N. C.	Apr. 2, 1813.....	Bartlett Yancey
Surry County, N. C.	Nov. 14, 1813.....	Jesse Franklin
	Dec. 2, 1813.....	William Garnett

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 6, 1814.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 10, 1814.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 12, 1814.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 4, 1814.....	Bartlett Yancey
Orange County, N. C.	Feb. 27, 1814.....	Duncan Cameron
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 5, 1814.....	Bartlett Yancey
Raleigh, N. C.	July 22, 1814.....	Joseph Gales
Raleigh, N. C.	July 29, 1814.....	Joseph Gales
Washington, D. C.	Oct. 5, 1814.....	Bartlett Yancey
Greensboro, N. C.	Oct. 26, 1814.....	Edward Jones
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 26, 1814.....	Joseph Gales
	Oct., 1814.....	A. Meilan
Washington, D. C.	Nov. 3, 1814.....	Bartlett Yancey
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 17, 1814.....	John MacRae
	Dec. 20, 1814.....	Duncan Cameron
Rockingham, N. C.	Jan., 1815.....	James Campbell
Norfolk, Va.	Jan. 16, 1815.....	James Campbell
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 21, 1815.....	Bartlett Yancey
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 26, 1815.....	William H Haywood
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 20, 1815.....	Joseph Gales
Rockingham C. H., N. C.	May 3, 1815.....	James H. Dearing
Hillsboro, N. C.	May 7, 1815.....	Richard Stanford
Petersburg, Va.	June 7, 1815.....	John F. May
Waynesboro, N. C.	Aug. 25, 1815.....	John R. Donnell
Fayetteville, N. C.	Oct. 16, 1815.....	John A. Cameron
Gibraltar	Oct. 17, 1815.....	William Roane
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1815.....	George McNeill
Wentworth, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1815.....	James Campbell
Morrisville, N. C.	Dec. 30, 1815.....	William M. Sneed
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 9, 1816.....	John Roane
Wilmington, N. C.	Feb. 12, 1816.....	A. Meilan
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 17, 1816.....	Bartlett Yancey
Warrenton, N. C.	Mar. 19, 1816.....	William Ruffin
Rockingham County, N. C.	Apr. 22, 1816.....	Ira Ellis
Raleigh, N. C.	June 18, 1816.....	John Haywood
Oakland, N. C.	June 25, 1816.....	Sterling Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 2, 1816.....	Thomas Henderson, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 2, 1816.....	Thomas Henderson, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 2, 1816.....	Thomas Henderson, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 9, 1816.....	Kemp Plummer and others
Ravenna, Ohio	Aug. 26, 1816.....	Benjamin Tappan
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 29, 1816.....	Thomas Henderson, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 30, 1816.....	Joseph Gales
Tarboro, N. C.	Nov. 2, 1816.....	George E. Spruill
Waynesville, N. C.	Nov. 12, 1816.....	Thomas Love
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov., 1816.....	William Miller
Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov. 25, 1816.....	James Webb
Fayetteville, N. C.	Dec. 4, 1816.....	George McNeill
	Dec. 8, 1816.....	Duncan Cameron
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 9, 1816.....	Weldon N. Edwards
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 16, 1816.....	William Miller
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 18, 1816.....	Richard Stanford
Oakland, N. C.	Dec. 18, 1816.....	Sterling Ruffin

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Tyson's, N. C.	Jan. 4, 1817.....	Archibald McBryde
New Bern, N. C.	Jan. 20, 1817.....	George E. Badger
Loyd's, Va.	Mar. 13, 1817.....	William Garnett
Oxford, N. C.	May 17, 1817.....	Thomas B. Littlejohn
Oxford, N. C.	July 5, 1817.....	Thomas B. Littlejohn
Vesuvius Furnace, N. C.	Aug. 10, 1817.....	James Graham
Lombardy Grove, Va.	Oct. 21, 1817.....	Richard Apperson
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 29, 1817.....	John Haywood
Vesuvius Furnace, N. C.	Nov. 9, 1817.....	James Graham
Wentworth, N. C.	Nov. 20, 1817.....	James Campbell
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 29, 1817.....	John MacRae
Wilmington, N. C.	Jan. 26, 1818.....	Adam Empie
Haw River, N. C.	Feb. 15, 1818.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Hillsboro, N. C.	Mar. 10, 1818.....	George E. Badger
Morganton, N. C.	Apr. 28, 1818.....	William Roane
Lincolnton, N. C.	June 1, 1818.....	James Graham
Oakland, N. C.	July 10, 1818.....	Sterling Ruffin
Haw River, N. C.	July 17, 1818.....	Archibald D. Murphey
	Sept. 15, 1818.....	John L. Henderson
Germanton, N. C.	Sept. 21, 1818.....	Thomas T. Armstrong
Petersburg, Va.	Oct. 10, 1818.....	John F. May
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 3, 1818.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 17, 1818.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 18, 1818.....	James Mebane
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 18, 1818.....	George E. Badger
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 27, 1819.....	James S. Smith
	Feb. 7, 1819.....	Gabriel Holmes
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 17, 1819.....	Montford Stokes
Vesuvius Furnace, N. C.	Mar. 1, 1819.....	James Graham
Rockingham, N. C.	Mar. 19, 1819.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Fayetteville, N. C.	Mar. 30, 1819.....	George McNeill
Montpelier, N. C.	Apr. 20, 1819.....	Gabriel Holmes
Petersburg, Va.	May 13, 1819.....	John F. May
Raleigh, N. C.	May 20, 1819.....	William Polk
Baltimore, Md.	July 8, 1819.....	George McNeill
Rockingham County, N. C.	July 13, 1819.....	Sterling Ruffin
Wilkesboro, N. C.	Aug. 3, 1819.....	William Roane
Edenton, N. C.	Aug. 4, 1819.....	James Iredell
Rockingham County, N. C.	Aug. 12, 1819.....	Sterling Ruffin
Montpelier, N. C.	Sept. 29, 1819.....	Gabriel Holmes
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 7, 1819.....	Joseph Gales
Wentworth, N. C.	Nov. 4, 1819.....	William Roane
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 18, 1819.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 18, 1820.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Pittsboro, N. C.	Mar. 30, 1820.....	Charles Manly
Orange County, N. C.	Apr. 24, 1820.....	Duncan Cameron
	June 3, 1820.....	William H. Ruffin
Haw River, N. C.	June 5, 1820.....	Benjamin Smith
Petersburg, Va.	June 19, 1820.....	David Robertson
Raleigh, N. C.	July 28, 1820.....	John Hall
Salisbury, N. C.	Aug. 15, 1820.....	James Graham
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 6, 1820.....	James F. Taylor
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 7, 1820.....	James F. Taylor

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Baltimore, Md.	Feb. 10, 1821.....	John Rogers
Charlotte, N. C.	May 10, 1821.....	James Graham
Hillsboro, N. C.	May 19, 1821.....	John Rogers
Raleigh, N. C.	June 6, 1821.....	William Ruffin
Haw River, N. C.	June 10, 1821.....	Archibald D. Murphey
New Bern, N. C.	June 12, 1821.....	John Stanly
Fayetteville, N. C.	June 22, 1821.....	George McNeill
Salisbury, N. C.	Sept. 23, 1821.....	James R. Dodge
Charlotte, N. C.	Nov. 9, 1821.....	James Graham
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 15, 1821.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Baltimore, Md.	Dec. 16, 1821.....	John Rogers
	Dec., 1821.....	John Witherspoon
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 22, 1821.....	Lewis Williams
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 24, 1821.....	George E. Badger
Salem, N. C.	Dec. 26, 1821.....	C. F. Bagge
Greensboro, N. C.	Jan. 17, 1822.....	John M. Dick
	Jan. 22, 1822.....	Thomas Hunt
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Jan. 23, 1822.....	Elisha Mitchell
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 30, 1822.....	John Hall
Grassy Creek, N. C.	Feb. 5, 1822.....	Joel Strong
Raleigh, N. C.	Mar. 14, 1822.....	Joseph Gales
Baltimore, Md.	Mar. 23, 1822.....	John Rogers
Petersburg, Va.	May 14, 1822.....	John F. May
Raleigh, N. C.	May 21, 1822.....	William Polk
Orange County, N. C.	Oct. 5, 1822.....	Duncan Cameron
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov., 1822.....	John Haywood
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Dec. 2, 1822.....	Gavin Hogg
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 25, 1822.....	Duncan Cameron
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 9, 1823.....	Francis L. Hawks
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 14, 1823.....	Francis L. Hawks
Stagville, N. C.	Apr. 15, 1823.....	Thomas D. Bennehan
Washington, D. C.	May 24, 1823.....	R. J. Meigs
Wentworth, N. C.	May 27, 1823.....	James H. Ruffin
Sydenham, Ga.	May 31, 1823.....	Hugh Ogleby
Haw River, N. C.	June 10, 1823.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Greensboro, Ala.	June 15, 1823.....	Samuel Stradwick
Raleigh, N. C.	July 1, 1823.....	Joseph Gales
Lynchburg, Va.	July 7, 1823.....	Thomas Crowder, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 12, 1823.....	B. B. Smith
Raleigh, N. C.	Sept. 2, 1823.....	B. B. Smith
Fayetteville, N. C.	Oct. 22, 1823.....	Duncan McFayden
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 28, 1823.....	B. B. Smith
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 29, 1823.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 1, 1824.....	William Ruffin and others
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 20, 1824.....	Willie P. Mangum
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 5, 1824.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 12, 1824.....	Henry Seawell
Raleigh, N. C.	Mar. 1, 1824.....	Henry Seawell
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 9, 1824.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Mar. 11, 1824.....	William F. Ruffin
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 14, 1824.....	John W. Long, Jr.
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 15, 1824.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 23, 1824.....	Henry Seawell

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 24, 1824.....	Willie P. Mangum
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Apr. 1, 1824.....	William F. Ruffin
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Apr. 10, 1824.....	William H. Thompson
Greensboro, N. C.	Apr. 29, 1824.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Caswell, N. C.	June 29, 1824.....	Bartlett Yancey
Wilkesboro, N. C.	July 9, 1824.....	John Finley
	July 13, 1824.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Milton, N. C.	July 30, 1824.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Warrenton, N. C.	Aug. 6, 1824.....	George E. Badger
Surry County, N. C.	Aug. 15, 1824.....	Lewis Williams
Randolph County, N. C.	Aug. 20, 1824.....	John W. Long, Jr.
Bladen County, N. C.	Aug. 20, 1824.....	John Owen
Bladensboro, N. C.	Sept. 28, 1824.....	John Owen
	Oct. 21, 1824.....	William Moore
	Oct. 25, 1824.....	William Garnett
Warrenton, N. C.	Nov. 15, 1824.....	Weldon N. Edwards
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 15, 1824.....	Willie P. Mangum
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 1, 1825.....	Lewis Williams
Fayetteville, N. C.	Jan. 15, 1825.....	W. F. Strange
Fayetteville, N. C.	May 29, 1825.....	George McNeill
Raleigh, N. C.	June 3, 1825.....	Charles Manly
Haw River, N. C.	June 5, 1825.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Richmond, Va.	June 8, 1825.....	William Garnett
Haw River, N. C.	June 11, 1825.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Fayetteville, N. C.	July 1, 1825.....	Robert Strange
Haw River, N. C.	July 13, 1825.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	July 16, 1825.....	George E. Badger
Raleigh, N. C.	July 18, 1825.....	Hutchins G. Burton
Asheboro, N. C.	Aug. 4, 1825.....	John W. Long, Jr.
Richmond, Va.	Sept. 12, 1825.....	Thomas Ritchie
Hillsboro, N. C.	Oct. 5, 1825.....	William A. Graham
Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov., 1825.....	Francis L. Hawks
Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov., 1825.....	Francis L. Hawks
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 8, 1825.....	Lewis Williams
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 8, 1825.....	William H. Haywood, Jr.
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 27, 1825.....	William Robards
Williamsboro, N. C.	Jan. 12, 1826.....	William Robards
Richmond, Va.	Feb. 10, 1826.....	John F. May
New Bern, N. C.	Feb. 29, 1826.....	Edward Graham
Caswell C. H.	Apr. 13, 1826.....	James H. Ruffin
Baltimore, Md.	Apr. 16, 1826.....	William K. Ruffin
Baltimore, Md.	Apr., 1826.....	William K. Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	Apr. 25, 1826.....	J. Wetmore
Lenoir County, N. C.	May 12, 1826.....	H. B. Croom
Milton, N. C.	June 21, 1826.....	Romulus M. Saunders
New Bern, N. C.	July 13, 1826.....	George S. Attmore
Milton, N. C.	Aug. 8, 1826.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Pittsboro, N. C.	Aug. 16, 1826.....	Robert Strange
Surry County, N. C.	Sept. 10, 1826.....	Lewis Williams
New Bern, N. C.	Oct. 2, 1826.....	Wright C. Stanly
Rock Rest, N. C.	Oct. 18, 1826.....	M. E. Jones
The Oaks, N. C.	Oct. 30, 1826.....	Romulus M. Saunders
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 5, 1826.....	Charles Manly

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Milton, N. C.	Dec. 6, 1826.....	Romulus M. Saunders
	Dec. 12, 1826.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Fayetteville, N. C.	Dec. 13, 1826.....	John MacRae
Newington, K. and Q. Co., Va.	Dec. 29, 1826.....	Archibald R. Harwood
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 6, 1827.....	William A. Graham
New Bern, N. C.	Jan. 10, 1827.....	John R. Donnell
Washington, D. C.	Jan. 15, 1827.....	Romulus M. Saunders
New Bern, N. C.	Jan. 15, 1827.....	John R. Donnell
Salisbury, N. C.	Jan. 26, 1827.....	James Martin, Jr.
Fayetteville, N. C.	Jan. 27, 1827.....	Robert Strange
New Bern, N. C.	Feb. 3, 1827.....	John Devereux
Haw River, N. C.	Feb. 8, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.	Feb. 13, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.	Mar. 7, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Person County, N. C.	Mar. 21, 1827.....	James H. Ruffin
Fayetteville, N. C.	Mar. 31, 1827.....	John MacRae
Haw River, N. C.	May 21, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Warren County, N. C.	June 10, 1827.....	Weldon N. Edwards
Haw River, N. C.	Aug. 20, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Oct. 28, 1827.....	Henry M. Miller
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov., 1827.....	John D. Eccles
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov., 1827.....	John D. Eccles
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov., 1827.....	John D. Eccles
Laurel Hill, N. C.	Nov., 1827.....	John R. Buie
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov., 1827.....	John D. Eccles
Richmond County, N. C.		Henry Dockery and others
Greenwood, N. C.	Nov. 6, 1827.....	George E Spruill
Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov. 7, 1827.....	William A. Graham
Richmond County, N. C.	Nov. 8, 1827.....	J. Macalister
Richmond County, N. C.	Nov. 8, 1827.....	Alfred Dockery
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 12, 1827.....	John R. Buie
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 16, 1827.....	John Louis Taylor
New Bern, N. C.	Nov. 20, 1827.....	Wright C. Stanly
Halifax, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1827.....	Joseph J. Daniel
New Bern, N. C.	Dec. 11, 1827.....	John R. Donnell
Fayetteville, N. C.	Dec. 27, 1827.....	John MacRae
Columbia, Tenn.	Dec. 31, 1827.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Salisbury, N. C.	Jan. 5, 1828.....	James Martin, Jr.
Loghouse Landing, N. C.	Jan. 8, 1828.....	Henry S. Clark
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 9, 1828.....	James Iredell
	Jan. 11, 1828.....	William M. Green
Columbia, Tenn.	Jan. 20, 1828.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Rockingham, N. C.	Feb. 13, 1828.....	Walter F. Leak
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 16, 1828.....	George E. Badger
Edenton, N. C.	Feb., 1828.....	A. M. Gatling and others
Edenton, N. C.	Feb. 18, 1828.....	James I. Tredwell
New Bern, N. C.	Feb. 20, 1828.....	Wright C. Stanly
Bonarva, N. C.	Feb. 22, 1828.....	Ebenezer Pettigrew
New Bern, N. C.	Feb. 29, 1828.....	William Gaston
	Mar. 1, 1828.....	Gavin Hogg
Washington, N. C.	Mar. 1, 1828.....	John Gray Blount
Edenton, N. C.	Mar. 1, 1828.....	James I. Tredwell

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Hillsboro, N. C.	Mar. 17, 1828.	Victor M. Murphey
Hillsboro, N. C.	Apr. 7, 1828.	Daniel M. Barringer
Edenton, N. C.	Apr. 18, 1828.	Augustus Moore and others
Raleigh, N. C.	June 11, 1828.	William Robards
	July, 1828.	Thomas P. Devereux
Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 7, 1828.	Peter Browne
Plymouth, N. C.	Sept. 25, 1828.	Thomas Turner
Plymouth, N. C.	Oct. 26, 1828.	Thomas Turner
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 16, 1828.	James H. Ruffin
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 17, 1828.	Frederick Nash
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 18, 1828.	George E. Badger
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 21, 1828.	Frederick Nash
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 22, 1828.	Frederick Nash
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 24, 1828.	James H. Ruffin
Enfield, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1828.	John Branch
Raleigh, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1828.	Frederick Nash
Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov. 27, 1828.	Bedford Brown
Anson County, N. C.	Dec. 10, 1828.	Adam Lockhart
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec. 16, 1828.	John Louis Taylor
Greensboro, N. C.	Dec. 17, 1828.	John M. Dick
Washington, D. C.	Dec. 29, 1828.	Lewis Williams
Edenton, N. C.	Dec. 29, 1828.	Joseph B. Skinner
Raleigh, N. C.	Jan. 20, 1829.	John L. Henderson
Haw River, N. C.	Jan. 24, 1829.	Archibald D. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.	Jan. 28, 1829.	Archibald D. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.	Feb. 3, 1829.	Archibald D. Murphey
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 5, 1829.	William Gaston
Pittsboro, N. C.	Feb. 10, 1829.	Patrick Henry Winston
Lexington, N. C.	Feb. 12, 1829.	John M. Dick
Pittsboro, N. C.	Feb. 12, 1829.	Frederick Nash
Washington, D. C.	Feb. 16, 1829.	James Iredell
Wilmington, N. C.	Feb. 28, 1829.	Robert W. Brown
Raleigh, N. C.	Feb. 28, 1829.	William Polk
Chapel Hill, N. C.	Mar. 1, 1829.	Nicholas M. Hentz
Rockford, N. C.	Mar. 2, 1829.	David F. Caldwell
Anson County, N. C.	Mar. 3, 1829.	Adam Lockhart
Salisbury, N. C.	Mar. 6, 1829.	John L. Henderson
Washington, D. C.	Mar. 8, 1829.	Henry T. Garnett
Asheville, N. C.	Mar. 13, 1829.	David L. Swain
Pittsboro, N. C.	Mar. 20, 1829.	Frederick Nash
Greensboro, N. C.	Mar. 21, 1829.	John M. Dick
Hillsboro, N. C.	Mar. 22, 1829.	James S. Smith
Albin, N. C.	Mar. 28, 1829.	David Clark
Salisbury, N. C.	Mar. 30, 1829.	David F. Caldwell
Greensboro, N. C.	Apr. 5, 1829.	John M. Dick
Salisbury, N. C.	Apr. 11, 1829.	William J. Alexander
Oak Hall, N. C.	Apr. 16, 1829.	William Bethell
Edenton, N. C.	Apr. 18, 1829.	James C. Johnston
Salem, N. C.	Apr. 24, 1829.	Emmanuel Shober
Weldon, N. C.	Apr. 25, 1829.	Andrew Joyner
Hillsboro, N. C.	Apr. 27, 1829.	Frederick Nash
New Bern, N. C.	May 6, 1829.	Wright C. Stanly
Edenton, N. C.	May 16, 1829.	Joseph B. Skinner

<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written by</i>
Raleigh, N. C.	May 22, 1829.....	John Owen
New Bern, N. C.....	May 22, 1829.....	William Gaston
Charlotte, N. C.	May 26, 1829.....	David F. Caldwell
Hillsboro, N. C.	June 2, 1829.....	William J. Bingham
Hillsboro, N. C.	June 12, 1829.....	Cadwallader Jones
Richmond County, N. C.....	June 27, 1829.....	James A. Vaughan
Washington, D. C.	July 28, 1829.....	Henry T. Garnett
Vesuvius Furnace, N. C.....	Aug. 10, 1829.....	William A. Graham
Caswell County, N. C.....	Aug. 16, 1829.....	James H. Ruffin
Salem, N. C.	Aug. 16, 1829.....	Emmanuel Shober
Hillsboro, N. C.	Aug. 18, 1829.....	Hugh Waddell
Salisbury, N. C.	Aug. 31, 1829.....	John Giles
Salisbury, N. C.	Sept. 5, 1829.....	John L. Henderson
Chapel Hill, N. C.....	Sept. 8, 1829.....	William K. Ruffin
Greensboro, N. C.	Sept. 9, 1829.....	John M. Dick
Oxford, N. C.	Sept. 12, 1829.....	Frederick Nash
Wadesboro, N. C.	Sept. 22, 1829.....	John Giles
Lexington, N. C.	Oct. 6, 1829.....	James T. Morehead
Chapel Hill, N. C.....	Oct. 12, 1829.....	William K. Ruffin
Richmond, Va.	Oct. 19, 1829.....	William H. Brodnax
Greensboro, N. C.	Nov. 7, 1829.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Chapel Hill, N. C.....	Nov. 16, 1829.....	William K. Ruffin
Warrenton, N. C.	Nov. 23, 1829.....	James Somervell
Fayetteville, N. C.	Nov. 28, 1829.....	Henry Branson
Plymouth, N. C.	Nov. 30, 1829.....	Thomas Turner
Anson County, N. C.....	Dec. 1, 1829.....	Adam Lockhart
Edenton, N. C.	Dec. 10, 1829.....	William R. Norcum
Salem, N. C.	Dec. 19, 1829.....	Charles F. Bagge
Plymouth, N. C.	Dec. 22, 1829.....	Thomas Turner
Edenton, N. C.	Dec. 29, 1829.....	Joseph B. Skinner
Raleigh, N. C.	Dec., 1829.....	William H. Haywood
Haw River, N. C.....	Jan. 13, 1830.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.....	Feb. 10, 1830.....	V. M. Murphey
Haw River, N. C.....	July 25, 1830.....	V. M. Murphey
Greensboro, N. C.	Aug. 31, 1830.....	Archibald D. Murphey
Greensboro, N. C.	Sept. 2, 1830.....	Archibald D. Murphey

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS HERE PRINTED

<i>Written by</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written to</i>
Alexander McCaine	Fellspoint	July 19, 1805..	Sterling Ruffin
Elizabeth Kirkland	Glasgow, Scotland.	Sept. 13, 1810..	William Kirkland
William Ruffin	Warrenton, N. C.	May 20, 1814..	Sterling Ruffin
William Hinton	Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 8, 1814..	William Henderson
William Henderson	Raleigh, N. C.	Aug. 9, 1817..	Thomas D. Bennehan
Romulus M. Saunders		Dec. 2, 1818..	William Norwood
James Walker		July 17, 1819..	Nathaniel Harris
Nat. Cutting	Washington, D. C.	Mar. 23, 1820..	James S. Smith
William Polk	Raleigh, N. C.	May 21, 1822..	Wake County Court
John McLean	Washington, D. C.	Aug. 27, 1823..	B. B. Smith
John McKechney	Quebec	June 30, 1823..	Duncan McFadyen
E. Freeman	New Bern, N. C.	Mar. 8, 1824..	H. Potter
William Norwood	Hillsboro, N. C.	Nov. 6, 1826..	William K. Ruffin

<i>Written by</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Written to</i>
Duponceau Jones ...	Pittsboro, N. C...	Feb. 2, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
Henry Webb	Middletown, Conn.	Feb. 27, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
B. McLaughlan	Baltimore, Md. ...	Aug. 20, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
M. C. Jenkins.....	Baltimore, Md. ...	Sept. 11, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
B. McLaughlan	Baltimore, Md. ...	Sept. 18, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
Jose Farres	Baltimore, Md. ...	Sept. 18, 1827..	William K. Ruffin
M. C. Jenkins.....	Baltimore, Md. ...	Feb. 22, 1828..	William K. Ruffin

MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS HERE PRINTED

Thomas Ruffin's Bachelor of Arts diploma from Princeton, Sept. 26, 1805.

To the Citizens of Rockingham County, by Alexander Sneed, July, 1809. Enclosure of James Campbell, July 26, 1809.

Extract from the *Lincoln and Catawba Journal* of Feb. 10, 1829, signed "One of the People." Enclosure of William Polk, Feb. 28, 1829.

LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF THE
HON. THOMAS RUFFIN,

Late Chief Justice of North Carolina

A MEMORIAL ORATION,

BY

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM,

Delivered before the Agricultural Society of the State, by its request,
at the Annual Fair in Raleigh, Oct. 21st, 1870.

RALEIGH, N. C.:
NICHOLS & GORMAN, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
1871.

ORATION.

The patriotic people of the County of Rockingham in a public assemblage at their first Superior Court after the death of Chief Justice RUFFIN, in which they were joined with cordial sympathy by the gentlemen of the bar of that Court, resolved to manifest their appreciation of his talents, virtues and public usefulness, by causing to be pronounced a memorial oration on his life and character. Such an offering was deemed by them a fitting tribute from a people among whom his family first settled upon their arrival in North Carolina, and with whom he had been associated as a planter and cultivator of the soil from his early manhood till his decease.

The Agricultural Society of the State, of which for many years he had been a distinguished President, subsequently determined on a like offering to his memory at their annual Fair. The invitation to prepare such a discourse has been by both bodies extended to the same individual. The task is undertaken with diffidence, and a sense of apprehension, that amid the multiplicity of other engagements, its fulfilment may fail in doing justice to the subject of the memoir.

THOMAS RUFFIN, the eldest child of his parents, was born at Newington, the residence of his maternal Grand Father, Thomas Roane, in the County of King and Queen, in Virginia, on the 17th of November, 1787.

His Father, Sterling Ruffin, Esquire, was a planter in the neighboring County of Essex, who subsequently transferred his residence to North Carolina, and died in the County of Caswell. Ardent in his religious sentiments, and long attached to the Methodist Episcopal Church, he very late in life, entered the ministry, and was for a few years prior to his death, a preacher in that denomination.

His Mother, Alice Roane, was of a family much distinguished in Virginia by the public service of many of its members, and was herself first cousin of Spencer Roane, the Chief Justice of that State in the past generation, whose judicial course, connected as it was with questions of difficulty and importance in constitutional law, gave him high professional, as well as political, distinction; but it may well be doubted, whether, in all that constitutes a great lawyer, he had any pre-eminence over the subject of our present notice, his junior kinsman in North Carolina, then but rising into fame, and destined to fill the like office in his own State.

His Father, though not affluent, had a respectable fortune, and sought for the son the best means of education. His early boyhood was passed on the farm in Essex, and in attendance on the schools of the vicinity. Thence, at a suitable age, he was sent to a classical Academy in the beautiful and healthful village of Warrenton, in North Carolina, then

under the instruction of Mr. Marcus George, an Irishman by birth and education, a fine classical scholar and most painstaking and skillful instructor, especially in elocution, as we must believe, since among his pupils who survived to our times, we find the best readers of our acquaintance in their day. His excellence in this particular was probably attributable to his experience on the theatrical stage, where he had spent a portion of his life. He made his first appearance in the State at the Convention in Hillsborough, in 1788, which rejected the Federal Constitution, in search of employment as a teacher, was engaged by the Warren gentlemen then in attendance, and many years subsequently was still at the head of a flourishing school, in which our student entered. The system and discipline of Mr. George conformed to the ancient *regime*, and placed great faith in the rod. He is described as a man of much personal prowess and spirit, who did not scruple to administer it on his pupils, when sloth, delinquency or misbehavior required, without reference to age, size or other circumstances. Yet he secured the respect of his patrons, and the confidence of the public, and inspired the gratitude and affection of his pupils in a remarkable degree.

This turning aside from our subject, to pay a passing tribute to his old preceptor, is deemed to be justified not only by the long and useful labors of Mr. George, in the instruction of youth in the generation in which Mr. Ruffin's lot was cast, but because he himself entertained the highest appreciation of the profession of an instructor, accustoming himself to speak of it as one of the most honorable and beneficent of human employments. Throughout his laborious and well-spent life, he often acknowledged his obligations of gratitude for the early training he had received under the tuition of this faithful, but somewhat eccentric son of Erin. And it may well be doubted whether Lord Eldon, in the maturity of his wisdom and great age, retained a more grateful and affectionate recollection of Master Moises of the High School of New Castle, than did Chief Justice Ruffin of Master George of the Warrenton Male Academy.

At this institution were assembled the sons of most of the citizens of Eastern North Carolina and the bordering counties of Virginia, aspiring to a liberal education. And here were formed friendships, which he cherished with great satisfaction throughout life. Among his companions were the late Robert Broadnax, of Rockingham, subsequently a planter of large possessions on Dan River, among the most estimable gentlemen of his time; and Cadwallader Jones, then of Halifax, but afterwards of Orange, at different periods an officer in the Navy and in the Army of the United States, a successful planter, and a model of the manners and virtues which give a charm to social intercourse. With both of these gentlemen his early attachments were in after life cemented by the union in marriage of their children. Here, too, he found Weldon N. Edwards, of Warren, subsequently distinguished by much public service in Congress and under the Government of the State,

thenceforward his lifelong friend, with whom his bonds of amity seemed to be drawn more closely as others of his contemporaries dropped from around him. Of these four youths of the Warrenton Academy, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mr. Edwards alone survives. Long may he live to enjoy the veneration and respect due to a life of probity, honor and usefulness.

From the Warrenton Academy young Ruffin was transferred to the College of Nassau Hall, at Princeton, New Jersey. It is believed that his father, who was a deeply pious man, was controlled in the selection of this College in preference to that of William & Mary, in Virginia, next to Harvard University the oldest institution of learning in the United States, not only by a desire to place his son in an unsuspected situation as to his health, which had suffered from the malarial influences prevailing in the tidewater region of Eastern Virginia, but to secure him as well from the temptation incident to College life, in an institution, in which as he supposed, there was too loose an authority and discipline exerted over the sons of affluence and ease. He entered the Freshman¹ class, at Princeton, and "graduated at the commencement in 1805;" the sixteenth in a class of forty-two members, "being the first of the second division of intermediate honors." The late Governor James Iredell, of North Carolina, was in the class succeeding his own, and for nearly the whole of his College course, his room-mate. Thus commenced a friendship between these gentlemen in youth, which was terminated only by the death of Mr. Iredell. Among others of his College associates who became distinguished in subsequent life, there were Samuel L. Southard and Theodore Frelinghuysen, of New Jersey, Joseph R. Ingersoll, of Philadelphia, the Cuthberts and Habershams, of Georgia, Christopher Hughes of Maryland, and Stevenson Archer, of Mississippi.

Returning home with his bachelor degree, Mr. Ruffin soon afterwards entered the law office of David Robertson, Esquire, of Petersburg, as a student of the law, and continued there through the years 1806 and 1807. Here he was associated as fellow-student with John F. May, afterwards Judge May, of Petersburg, and Winfield Scott, afterwards so highly distinguished in arms, and the only officer down to his time, except General Washington, who attained the rank of Lieutenant General in the army of the United States. General Scott, in his Autobiography, describes their preceptor, Mr. Robertson, as a Scotchman, a very learned scholar and barrister, who originally came to America as a classical teacher; but subsequently gained high distinction as a lawyer, and was the author of the report of the debates in the Virginia Convention which adopted the Federal Constitution, and of the report of the trial of Aaron Burr for high treason. In a note to the same work, General Scott mentions his chancing to meet Judge Ruffin in New York in 1853, while the latter was attending as a delegate, the Protestant Episcopal Convention, of the United States after a separation of forty-seven years, and recurs

¹This is an error. Ruffin entered the Junior Class in 1803.

to their association together with Judge May, as law students, and to the conversation in which they then indulged, with manifest pride and pleasure. He also refers to their subsequent intercourse in the city of Washington, in 1861, while Judge Ruffin was serving as a member of the Peace Congress, and expresses the opinion, that, "if the sentiments of this good man, always highly conservative (the same as Crittenden's,") had prevailed, the country would have escaped the sad inflictions of the war, which was raging at the time he wrote.¹

Sterling Ruffin, the father, having suffered some reverses of fortune, determined to change his home, and removed to Rockingham County, North Carolina, in 1807. His son soon followed, a willing emigrant. It was in North Carolina he had received his first training for useful life: here was the home of most of his early friends, and here he confidently hoped to renew his association with Broadnax, Jones, Edwards, Iredell and other kindred spirits.

He doubtless brought with him a considerable store of professional learning from the office of Mr. Robertson, in which he had been more than two years a student, but on his arrival in North Carolina, he pursued his further studies under the direction of the Honorable A. D. Murphey, until his admission to the bar, in 1808. Early in 1809, he established his home in the town of Hillsborough, and on the 9th of December, in that year, he was united in marriage with Miss Anne Kirkland, eldest daughter of the late William Kirkland, of that place, a prominent merchant and leading citizen.

The twenty years next ensuing, during which his residence was continually in Hillsborough, comprehends his career at the bar and on the Bench of the Superior Courts. In 1813, 1815 and 1816, he served as a member of the Legislature in the House of Commons from this town, under the old Constitution, and filled the office of Speaker of the House, at the last mentioned session, when first elected a Judge upon the resignation of that office by Duncan Cameron. He was also a candidate on the electoral ticket in favor of William H. Crawford for the Presidency

¹The mention to which Governor Graham refers is as follows:

"Mr. Robinson, in my time, had but two other students in his office—Thomas Ruffin and John F. May. The first of these and the autobiographer did not chance to meet from 1806 to 1853, a period of forty-seven years, when Mr. Ruffin, Chief Justice of North Carolina, came to New York as a member of the General Protestant Episcopal Convention. The greeting between them was boyishly enthusiastic. The chief justice, at the table of the soldier, said, 'Friend Scott, is it not a little remarkable, that of the three law students, in the same office, in 1805 and 1806, all yet in good preservation, our friend May has long been at the head of the bar in Southern Virginia; I long at the head of the bench in North Carolina; and you, the youngest, long at the head of the United States Army!' The last I saw of this most excellent man, always highly conservative, he was a member of the Peace Convention that met in Washington in the spring of 1861. Had his sentiments, the same as Crittenden's, prevailed, we should now (July, 1863) have in the thirty-four States fewer by several millions of widows, orphans, cripples, bankrupts, and deep mourners to sadden the land. Judge May, fortunately for him, died before the commencement of this horrid war." Scott, *Autobiography*, Vol. I, pp. 11-12.

of the United States, in 1824. But his aspirations, tastes and interests inclined him not to political honors, but to a steady adherence to the profession to which his life was devoted. He found at the bar in Orange and the neighboring counties to which his practice was extended several gentlemen, his seniors in years, who were no ordinary competitors for forensic fame and patronage; of whom it may be sufficient to name Archibald D. Murphey, Frederick Nash, William Norwood, Duncan Cameron, (who although he had suspended his practice for a time, resumed it not long after Mr. Ruffin came to the bar,) Henry Seawell, Leonard Henderson, William Robards, Nicholas P. Smith, of Chatham, and later of Tennessee. His first essays in argument are said not to have been very fortunate. His manner was diffident and his speech hesitating and embarrassed. But these difficulties being soon overcome, the vigor of his understanding, the extent and accuracy of his learning, and his perfect mastery of his causes by diligent preparation, in a short time gave him position among these veterans of the profession, secured him a general and lucrative practice, and an easy accession to the Bench in seven years from his initiation at the bar. His reputation was greatly advanced and extended by the manner in which he acquitted himself in this office. The wants, however, of an increasing family and an unfortunate involvement by suretyship forbade his continuance in a situation of no better income than the salary which was its compensation. He resigned to the Legislature of 1818, and immediately returned to the practice. Mr. Ruffin had kept up habits of close study of his profession before his promotion to the Bench, and the leisure afforded by the vacations of the office was eagerly availed of, for the same object. He came back to the bar not only with his health renovated, which had never been very robust, but with a brightness in his learning and an increase of fame, which, in the Supreme Court then recently established on its present basis, and in the Circuit Court of the United States, as well as on the ridings in the State Courts, brought to him a practice and an income, which has hardly ever been equalled in the case of any other practitioner in North Carolina. For forty-three weeks in the year he had his engagements in Court, and despite of all conditions of the weather or other impediments to travelling in the then state of the country, rarely failed to fulfill them. He held the appointment of Reporter of the decisions of the Supreme Court for one or two terms, but relinquished it from the engrossment of his time by his practice; and his labors are embraced in the prior part of the first volume of Hawks. Mr. Archibald Henderson, Mr. Gaston, Mr. Seawell, Mr. Murphey, Mr. Moses Mordecai, Mr. Gavin Hogg, and Mr. Joseph Wilson, all men of renown, were, with Mr. Ruffin, the chief advocates in the Supreme Court at that period, Mr. Nash and Mr. Badger being then upon the Bench; and according to tradition, at no time have the arguments before it been more thorough and exhaustive. The late Governor Swain being a part of this period a student of the law in the office of

Chief Justice Taylor, in a public address at the opening at Tucker Hall, in which he gave many reminiscences of former times in Raleigh, mentions a prediction in his hearing of Mr. Gaston to one of his clients in 1822, that if Mr. Ruffin should live ten years longer he would be at the head of the profession in North Carolina. By the same authority we are informed, that only a year or two later, Judge Henderson declared that he had then attained this position of eminence. Among the professional gentlemen he met in the wide range of his practice on the circuits, in addition to his seniors already named, were Bartlett Yancey, Augustine H. Shepperd, Romulus M. Saunders, James Martin, Thomas P. Devereux, Jas. F. Taylor, Charles Manly, Wm. H. Haywood, Jr., Daniel L. Barringer, Samuel Hillman, John M. and James T. Morehead, Bedford Brown, Willie P. and Priestly H. Mangum, Francis L. Hawks, Thos. Settle, John M. Dick, George C. Mendenhall, and several others, of high distinction among the advocates and public characters of the State; by all of whom his eminent abilities and attainments were fully acknowledged and appreciated.

In the summer of 1825, upon the resignation of Judge Badger, Mr. Ruffin again accepted the appointment of a Judge of the Superior Courts. His recent successes had relieved him of embarrassment, and supplied him a competent fortune; his health demanded relaxation and rest; and his duties to his family, now quite numerous, in his estimation required more of his presence at home than was consistent with the very active life he was leading. He therefore relinquished his great emoluments at the bar for the inadequate salary then paid to a Judge, and virtually closed his career as an advocate. By the bar and the public he was welcomed back on the circuits, and for the three following years he administered the law with such universal admiration and acceptance, both on the part of the profession and the people, that he was generally designated by the public approbation for the succession to the Bench of the Supreme Court whenever a vacancy should occur.

The reputation he had established by this time, however, did not merely assign him capabilities as a lawyer, but ascribed to him every qualification of a thorough man of affairs. It was conceded, at least, that he could teach bankers banking and merchants the science of accounts.

In the Autumn of 1828, the stockholders of the old State Bank of North Carolina, at the head of whom were William Polk, Peter Browne and Duncan Cameron, owing to the great embarrassment of the affairs of this institution, involving disfavor with the public, and threats of judicial proceedings for a forfeiture of its charter, prevailed on him to take the Presidency of the Bank, with a salary increased to the procurement of his acceptance; and with the privilege on his part to practice his profession in the city of Raleigh. In twelve months devoted to this office, with his characteristic energy, mastering the affairs of the Bank with a true talent for finance, making available its assets and pro-

viding for its liabilities, and inspiring confidence by the general faith in his abilities and high purpose to do right, he effectually redeemed the institution, and prepared the way to close out in credit the remaining term of its charter.

At this period, also, another place of high political eminence was at his choice, but was promptly declined. A vacancy having happened in the Senate of the United States by the appointment of Governor Branch to the head of the Navy department, and the Honorable Bartlett Yancey, who had been the general favorite for the succession, having recently died, Mr. Ruffin was earnestly solicited to accept a candidacy for this position with every assurance of success. But his desire was, as he himself expressed it among his friends, "after the labor and attention he had bestowed upon his profession, to go down to posterity as a lawyer." Irrespective, therefore, of his domestic interests, and the care and attention due to his family, of which no man ever had a truer or warmer conception, he could not be diverted from his chosen line of life by the attractions of even the highest political distinction.

While assiduously employed in the affairs of the Bank, to which was devoted the year 1829, his services were still demanded by clients in the higher courts, and his reputation at the bar suffered no eclipse. Upon the death of Chief Justice Taylor, in this year, the Executive appointment of a successor was conferred on a gentleman of merited eminence in the profession, and of a singularly pure and elevated character; but the sentiment of the majority of the profession as well as public opinion, had made choice of Mr. Ruffin for the permanent office, and he was elected a Judge of the Supreme Court at the session of the Legislature in the autumn of 1829. In 1833, upon the demise of Chief Justice Henderson, he was elevated to the Chief Justiceship, in which he won that fame which will longest endure, because it is incorporated in the judicial literature of the country, and is co-extensive with the study and administration of our system of law.

Before directing attention to his labors in this highest court of appeals in the State, it is appropriate to remark on his prior career as an advocate, counsellor and Judge of the Superior Courts. Of his arguments at the bar, at *nisi prius*, or in the Courts of appeal, no memorials have been preserved save the imperfect briefs contained in the causes that have been reported. His nature was ardent, and his manner of speech earnest and often vehement in tone and gesticulation. Though versed in *belles lettres*, and with tastes to relish eloquent declamation, it was a field into which he did not often, if at all, adventure. His reliance was upon logic, not upon rhetoric; and even his illustrations were drawn from things practical, rather than the ideal. Analyzing and thoroughly comprehending his cause, he held it up plainly to the view of others, and with a searching and incisive criticism exposed and dissipated the weak points in that of his adversary: and all this, in a vigorous, terse and manly English, every word of which told. Few advocates ever equalled

him in presenting so much of solid thought in the same number of words, or in disentangling complicated facts, or elucidating abstruse learning so as to make the demonstration complete to the minds of the auditory; capacities, doubtless gained by severe culture, a part of which, as I learned from an early student in his office, had been a daily habit, long after his admission to the bar, of going carefully over the demonstration of a theorem in Mathematics. Thus habituated to abstract and exact reasoning, he delighted in the approach to exactness in the reasoning of the law, and no student could more truly say of his professional investigations, "*Labor ipse est voluptas.*" The accuracy thus attained in his studies, gave him high eminence as a pleader, in causes both at law and in Equity; and among his associates usually devolved on him the office of framing the pleadings in the causes in which they were engaged. It also gave him rank among the great counsellors of the time, whose opinions were not the result of cramming for an occasion, or a fortunate authority, but the well considered reflections of gifted minds imbued with law as a science, and who had explored to their sources, the principles involved in the subjects they examined, and made them their own. This full development of his forensic character does not appear to have been manifested until after his return to the bar subsequently to his first service on the bench. But from this period till his second retirement, in 1825, he had hardly a rival in the bar of the Supreme Court of the State or the Circuit Court of the United States, except Archibald Henderson and Gaston, and had a command of the practice in all the State Courts he attended. As a Judge of the Superior or *nisi prius* Courts, he exhibited equal aptitude for the Bench as for the practice at the Bar. With an energy that pressed the business forward, a quickness rarely equalled in perceiving and comprehending facts, patient and industrious habits of labor, and a spirit of command which suffered no time to be lost, he despatched causes with expedition, but with no indecent haste. Whilst he presided, it was rare that any cause before a jury ever occupied more than a single day, and none is remembered that extended beyond two.

It may be inferior to the dignity of the occasion to indulge in professional anecdotes. The promptness, however, with which he disposed of a case of some novelty on the circuit, may justify a passing notice. The plaintiff and defendant had disputed on a matter of law, and growing warm in the controversy, laid a wager on the question of whether or not the law was as affirmed by the plaintiff; and a suit was brought to have the point determined. After the contract of wager had been proved, the plaintiff rested. The Judge called on the counsel for the plaintiff to prove that he had won. The counsel replied that that depended on the point of law which he submitted to his Honor. The Judge rejoined, that it was one of facts in the controversy, on which he was forbidden to express an opinion; but for their trifling with the Court in instituting such an action, he ordered it to be dismissed, and each party to pay half

the costs, with an intimation, that it was leniency in the Court to stop with no greater penalty. It is worthy of remark, that about the same time, as we since learn from the reports, Chief Justice Abbott, in the King's Bench in England, ordered a cause "to be struck out of the paper," the subject of the action being a wager on a dog-fight, upon the ground that it was insignificant, and it would be a waste of time to try it.

In administering the criminal law, in which the extent of punishment generally depended on the discretion of the Judge, his sentences were such as to inspire evil doers with terror, but eminently tended to give protection to society and confidence to honest and law-abiding men.

His accession to the Bench of the Supreme Court was a source of general satisfaction to the profession, and to the people of the State, by whom his enlightened labors in the circuits had been witnessed with admiration and pride. He at once took a conspicuous part in the proceedings of this high tribunal, and for twenty-three years, that he continuously sat there, probably delivered a greater number of the opinions on which its judgments were founded, than any Judge with whom in this long career he was associated. These opinions are found through more than twenty-five volumes of books of reports, and form the bulk of our judicial literature for a full generation. They embrace topics of almost every variety, civil and criminal, legal and equitable, concerning probate and administration, marriage and divorce, slavery and freedom, and constitutional law, which can enter into judicial controversy, in the condition of society then prevailing in the State, and constitute memorials of her jurisprudence, by which the members of the profession are content she shall be judged in the present age and by posterity. They have been cited with approbation in the American courts, State and National, by eminent legal authors, and in the judicial deliberations of Westminster Hall; and the North Carolina lawyer who can invoke one of them as a case in point with his own, generally considers that he is possessed of an impenetrable shield. It has been rare in England that a Judge or Advocate has reached high distinction in the courts both of common law and Equity. The student of the judicial arguments of Chief Justice Ruffin will be at a loss to determine in which of these branches of legal science he most excelled. To the votary of the common law, fresh from the perusal of the black letter of the times of the Tudors and early Stuarts, and captivated with its artificial refinements and technical distinctions as to rights and remedies, he would appear to have pursued his professional education upon the intimation of Butler in his reminiscences, that "he is the best lawyer, and will succeed best in his profession, who best understands Coke upon Littleton;" or, advancing to the modern ages of greater enlightenment and freer intercourse among nations, that he had made a speciality of the law of contracts, bills of exchange and commercial law generally; whilst his expositions of Equity causes will satisfy any impartial critic, that he was at least equally a proficient and master of the principles and practice

of the jurisprudence of the English Chancery, and would induce the belief that, like Sir Samuel Romilly or Sir William Grant, his practice at the bar had been confined to this branch of the profession. The minute distinctions between the limits of the jurisdiction of the Courts of Equity and common law, he comprehended and illustrated with a rare discrimination and accuracy.

During the term of his service in that Court, it will be remembered by the profession, that three great departures were made from long established precedents in the English Courts of Equity, which have tended to give simplicity to our system, and to free it from the embarrassment and confusion of the authorities in the English cases; namely, First, in adhering to the direction of the statute of Frauds, and refusing to decree the specific execution of a contract for the conveyance of real estate required to be in writing, upon the ground that the parties had acted upon their agreement, and that it had been partially carried into execution. Second, in discarding the doctrine that a vendor who had sold land and parted with the title, trusting his vendee for the purchase money, yet had a lien on the land as a security for its payment. Third, in negating likewise the English doctrine of a married woman's equitable right to a settlement for her maintenance before her husband should invoke the power of the court to reduce her estate to possession. These have been acknowledged as salutary reforms both at home and abroad, in all of which Chief Justice Ruffin concurred and delivered leading arguments in their support. Accustomed tenaciously to adhere to precedents upon the theory, that the wisdom of a succession of learned Judges, concurred in or tolerated by the Legislature from age to age, is superior to that of any one man, and that certainty in the rules of the law is of more importance than their abstract justice; yet where there had been no domestic precedent, and those abroad were at variance with the command of a statute or with obvious principles, he readily embraced these opportunities to symmetrize and perfect the system of practical morality administered in the American courts of Equity.

His familiar knowledge of banking and mercantile transactions and skilfulness in accounts, gave him a conceded eminence in the innumerable causes involving inquiries of this nature. During his presidency in the Supreme Court, it cannot fail to be remarked that there was a great advance in the accuracy of pleadings in Equity causes, and in a general extension of the knowledge of Equity practice throughout the circuits. And the precision and propriety of entries in every species of procedure were brought to a high state of perfection, mainly by his investigations and labors, in conjunction with those of that most worthy gentleman, and modest but able lawyer, Edmund B. Freeman, Esquire, late Clerk of the Court, whose virtues and public usefulness, connected as he was for so many years in close and friendly association with the immediate subject of our remarks, now likewise gone down beyond the horizon, I am gratified the opportunity serves to commemorate.

In the department of the law peculiarly American, in which there comes up the question, whether the Legislature can legislate to the extent it has assumed, or other expositions of the Constitutions of the State or Union, though the occasions for such exercises were rare in the quiet times of his judicial life, Chief Justice Ruffin shone to no less advantage, than in those dependent on municipal regulations. His conversancy with political ethics, public law and English and American history, seems to have assigned to him the task of delivering the opinions on this head, which have most attracted general attention. That delivered by him in the case of Hoke against Henderson in which it was held, that the Legislature could not, by a sentence of its own in the form of an enactment, divest a citizen of property, even in a public office, because the proceeding was an exercise of judicial power, received the high encomium of Kent and other authors on constitutional law; and I happened personally to witness, that it was the main authority relied on by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, in the argument for the second time, of *Ex parte Garland*, which involved the power of Congress by a test oath, to exclude lawyers from practice in the Supreme Court of the United States, for having participated in civil war against the government; and in which, its reasoning on the negative side of the question, was sustained by that august tribunal.

The singular felicity and aptitude with which he denuded his judgments of all extraneous matter, and expounded the very principles of the case in hand, usually citing authority only to uphold what had been demonstrated without it, is the most striking feature in his numerous opinions. No commonplaces or servile copying of the ideas of others fill the space to be occupied, but a manly comprehension of the subject in its entire proportions, illustrated by well considered thought and lucid and generally graceful expression. His learning was profound, but not so deep as his own reflections. His powers of abstraction subjected every thing to scrutiny, and rare was the fallacy which passed through that crucible without exposure. If he did not develop new truths the old were made to shine with a fresher lustre, from having undergone his processes of thought and illustration. His style of writing was elevated and worthy of the themes he discussed. His language well selected, and exhibiting a critical acquaintance with English philology. A marked characteristic in his writings, as it was also in his conversation, was the frequent, dextrous, and strikingly appropriate use he made of the brief words of our language, usually of Saxon derivation; as in his response to the tribute of the bar to the memory of Judge Gaston: "We knew that he was, indeed, a good man and a great Judge."

In the autumn of 1852, while in the zenith of his reputation, and not yet pressed with the weight of years, Chief Justice Ruffin resigned his office and retired, as he supposed forever, from the professional employments he had so long and with so much renown pursued. But on the death of his successor and friend, Chief Justice Nash, in December,

1858, he was called by the almost unanimous vote of the General Assembly then in session, to fill the vacancy, and sat again as a Judge of the Supreme Court until the autumn of 1859, when failing health rendered his labors irksome, and he took his final leave of judicial life. Six years of rest in his rural home had induced nothing of rust or desuetude: he wore the ermine as naturally and gracefully as if he had never been divested of its folds; his judicial arguments at this time evince all that vigor of thought and freshness and copiousness of learning which had prompted an old admirer to say of him, that he was a "born lawyer." It is not improbable that this preservation in full panoply was in some design aided by the circumstance, that in a desire to be useful in any sphere for which he was fitted, he had accepted the office of a Justice of the Peace in the county of Alamance, in which he then resided, and had held the County Courts with the lay justices during this period. Though near ten years later, and when he had passed the age of eighty, in a matter of seizure, in which he took some interest for a friend, under the revenue laws, in the Circuit Court of the United States, a branch of practice to which he had not been habituated by experience, I had occasion to observe that he was as ready with his pen in framing the pleadings, without books of authority or precedent, as any proctor in a Court of admiralty.

In looking back upon his long life devoted to the profession, and the monuments of his diligence, learning and striking ability that he left behind him, it is no extravagance of eulogy to affirm, that if the State or any American State has fostered great advocates, counsellors or Judges, he assuredly was of this class.

But when, as Coke to Littleton, we bid "Farewell to our jurisprudent," who had basked so long in the "gladsome light" of jurisprudence, we have not wholly fulfilled the task assigned us. Jurisprudence was indeed his forte; and that in its most enlarged sense, embracing the science of right in all its aspects. Considering how thoroughly he had mastered the systems prevailing in England and the United States, the fullness of his knowledge in kindred studies and the facility with which he labored and wrote, it is to be regretted that he did not betake himself to professional authorship. But there are other aspects of his character than that of a lawyer and Judge.

At an early period he became the proprietor of an estate on Dan river, in Rockingham, on which he established a plantation at once, and gave personal direction to its profitable cultivation from that time until his death. Carrying his family to Raleigh for a sojourn of twelve months upon assuming the Presidency of a Bank as already stated, he removed thence to Haw river, in Alamance, in 1830, and there under his own eye carried on the operations of a planter with success until the year 1866, when the results of the war deprived him of laborers, and he sold the estate and removed again to Hillsborough. The law has been said by some of its old authors, to be a jealous mistress, and to allow no rival

in the attentions of its votary. Chief Justice Ruffin, however, while diligently performing the duties of his great office, and keeping up with the labors of his cotemporaries, Lynnhurst, Brougham, Tenterden and Denman, in England, and the numerous Courts exercising like jurisdictions in America, found leisure to manage his farm at home as well as to give direction to that in Rockingham. And this, not in the ineffective manner which has attended the like efforts of some professional men, but with present profit and improvement of the estates. From early life he appeared to have conceived a fondness for agriculture, including horticulture and the growing of fruit trees and flowers, which his home in the country seemed to have been selected to indulge. Here for thirty-five years, in the recess of his Courts, he found recreation in these pursuits and in the rearing of domestic animals; the result of which was the most encouraging success in orchards, grapery, garden, cereal crops, flocks and herds. Combining a knowledge of the general principles of science, with fine powers of observation, and the suggestions of the most approved Agricultural periodicals, he was prepared to avail himself in practice of the highest intelligence in the art. It was therefore no empty compliment to a great jurist and leading citizen, when the Agricultural society of North Carolina, in 1854, elected him to its presidency after his retirement from the Bench, but the devotion to public uses and service, of an experience and information in the cultivation of the soil, and all its manifold connections and dependencies, which few other men in the State possessed. He was continued in this distinguished position for six years, when declining health demanded his retirement; and at no time have the interests of the society been more prosperous, its public exhibitions more spirited; and it may be added, that on no occasion did he ever manifest more satisfaction than in the reunions of its members.

His farming was not that of a mere *amateur* in the art, designed as in the case of other public characters of whom we have read, to dignify retirement, to amuse leisure or gratify taste, though few had a higher relish for the ornamental, especially in shrubbery and flowers. This, he could not, or did not think he could afford, but to realize subsistence and profit, to make money, to provide for his own, and to enable him to contribute in charity to the wants of others. He consequently entered into all the utilities, economies and practicabilities of husbandry in its minute details, realizing the English proverb, quoted in the writings of Sir Francis Head, that "a good elephant should be able to raise a cannon or pick up a pin."

The liberal hospitality that he dispensed throughout life was a most conspicuous feature in the period thus devoted to practical agriculture. His nature was eminently social, his acquaintance in his high position extensive, his dwelling near one of the great highways of travel through the State in the old modes of conveyance, easy of access; and the exuberance of his farm, garden, orchards and domestic comforts were never more agreeably dispensed, than when ministered to the gratification

of his friends under his own roof. The cordiality and ease with which he did the honors of an entertainer in an old-fashioned southern mansion, is among the pleasant recollections of not a few between the Potomac and the Mississippi. It was here, indeed, surrounded by a family worthy of the care and affection he bestowed upon them, relaxed from the severe studies and anxieties of official life, in unreserved and cheerful intercourse, that, after all, he appeared most favorably.

By his industry, frugality and aptitude for the management of property, he accumulated in a long life an estate more ample than usually falls to the lot of a member of the profession in this State; and although much reduced by the consequences of the civil war, it was still competent to the comfort of his large family.

Judge Ruffin was, until superseded by the changes made in 1868, the oldest Trustee of the University of the State, and always one of the most efficient and active members of the Board. For more than half a century on terms of intimate intercourse with its Presidents, Caldwell and Swain, and the leading Professors, Mitchell, Phillips and their associates, he was their ready counsellor and friend in any emergency; whether in making appeals to the Legislature in behalf of the institution for support and assistance in its seasons of adversity, or in enforcing discipline and maintaining order, advancing the standard of education, or cheering the labors both of the Faculty and students. His criterion of a collegiate education was high, and he illustrated by his own example the rewards of diligent and faithful study. He retained a better acquaintance with the dead languages than any of his compeers we have named except Gaston, Murphey and Taylor. In ethics, history and the standard British classics, his knowledge was profound. In science and in natural history, more especially in chemistry and those departments pertaining to Agriculture, Horticulture, Pomology and the like, his attainments were very considerable, as they were also in works of *belles lettres*, Poetry, taste and fiction, at least down to the end of the novels of Scott and Cooper. He worthily received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of North Carolina in 1834, and the like honor is believed to have been subsequently conferred by his Alma Mater at Princeton.¹

His style and manner in conversation, in which he took great delight and bore a distinguished part in all companies, abounded in pleasantry, but exhibited the same wide range of thought and information with his public performances, and was full of entertainment and instruction to the young. His temperament was mercurial, his actions quick and energetic, and his whole bearing in the farthest possible degree removed from sloth, inertness and despondency. In political sentiment he accorded with the school of Jefferson, and for more than forty years was a constant reader of the Richmond *Inquirer*, the editor of which, Mr. Ritchie,

¹This is erroneous.

was his relative; though no one entertained a more exalted reverence for the character, abilities and patriotism of Marshall, with whom he cherished a familiar acquaintance while in practice before him at the bar, and after his own elevation to the Bench. Later in life he formed a like kind and admiring acquaintance with Chancellor Kent.

In the winter of 1861, the Legislature of North Carolina, having acceded to the proposition of Virginia, on the approach of the late rupture between the States of the Union, to assemble a body of delegates in the city of Washington, to consider and recommend terms of reconciliation, Judge Ruffin was appointed one of the members in the "Peace Conference," and is understood to have taken a conspicuous part in its deliberations and debates. We have the testimony of General Scott, in his Autobiography, already quoted, that his counsels in that assembly were altogether pacific. President Buchanan, in his work in defence of his action in that important crisis, makes assertion of the same fact. After the failure of the efforts at adjustment, and the war in his opinion had become a necessity, Judge Ruffin accepted a seat in the State Convention of 1861, and threw into its support all the zeal and energy of his earnest and ardent temper; one of his sons, a grandson and other near connections taking part in the dangers and privations of its camps and battlefields. When defeat came, he yielded an honest submission and acquiescence, and renewed in perfect good faith his allegiance to the government of the United States. Too far advanced in years to be longer active in affairs, his chief concern in regard to the public interests thenceforward, was for the conservation of the public weal, and that the violent convulsion of which we had felt the shock and the change might be permitted to pass without any serious disturbance of the great and essential principles of freedom and right which it had been the favorite study of his life to understand and illustrate.

With the close of the war his farm about his mansion having experienced the desolation of an army encampment, and its system of labor being abolished, he felt unequal to the enterprise of its resuscitation and culture, and therefore disposed of the estate and again took up his abode in Hillsborough. Here, in occasional occupation as a referee of legal controversies, in directing the assiduous culture of his garden and grounds, in desultory reading, in which he now and then recurred to his old favorites among the novels of Scott, in the duties of hospitality and the converse of friends in the bosom of his family, he passed the evening of his days. In the sense of imbecility or decrepitude, he never grew old, but was blessed with the enjoyment of a remarkable intellectual vigor and fine flow of spirits almost till his dissolution. And in anticipation of death in his last illness, he laid an injunction on his physician to administer to him no anodyne which should deprive him of consciousness, as he did not wish to die in a state of insensibility.

On the 15th of January, 1870, after an illness of but four days, though he had been an invalid from an affection of the lungs for a year or more,

he breathed his last, in the 83d year of his age. His end was resigned and peaceful, and in the consolation of an enlightened and humble christian faith. For more than forty years a communicant in the Protestant Episcopal church, he was one of its most active members in the State, and more than once represented the Diocese in the Triennial Conventions of the Union.

The venerable companion of his life, a bride when not yet fifteen, a wife for more than sixty years, yet survives to receive the gratitude and affection of a numerous posterity and the reverence and esteem of troops of friends.

This imperfect offering is a memoir, not a panegyric. It contains not history, but *particulars historiarum*—scraps of history which it is hoped may not be without their use to the future student of our annals, for the character we contemplate is destined to be historical. His life was passed in the public view in the most important public functions—in contact with the most gifted and cultivated men of the State for half a century; it ran through two generations of lawyers. It was given to a profession in which were engaged many of the first minds of other States, and I can call to recollection no Judge of any State of the Union who in that period has left behind him nobler or more numerous memorials of erudition, diligence and ability in the departments of the law he was called to administer. The study of his performances will at least serve to correct the error of opinion prevailing with many at the North, that the intellectual activity of the South delights itself only in politics.

To the members of the Agricultural Society and to this audience his devotion to, and success in agriculture is a subject of only secondary interest to his professional fame. It has been remarked by one of the British essayists, as “a saying of dunces in all ages, that men of genius are unfit for business.” It is perhaps a kindred fallacy to which pedantry and sloth have given as much countenance on the one hand as blissful ignorance on the other, that high culture and erudition as in the case of the learned professions, is incompatible with success in practical affairs in other departments. We have before us the life of one who demonstrated in his own person, that it is possible for a great and profound lawyer to take a leading part and become a shining light in practically promoting the first and greatest of the industrial arts, and although there be no natural connection between these occupations, that the same well-directed industry, patience and energy which had achieved success in the one, was equal to a like triumph in the other; whilst in high probity, in stainless morals, in social intercourse, in the amenities of life, and the domestic affections and duties, his example will be cherished in the recollection of his friends, and may well be commended to the imitation of our youth.

CHIEF JUSTICE THOMAS RUFFIN¹

By
FRANCIS NASH

THOMAS RUFFIN

THE FIRST BORN OF
STERLING RUFFIN AND ALICE ROANE,
BORN AT NEWINGTON,
KING AND QUEEN COUNTY, VIRGINIA,
NOV. 17TH, 1787,
DIED AT HILLSBORO, ORANGE Co., N. C.
JANUARY 15TH, 1870.
GRADUATED AT NASSAU HALL,
PRINCETON, N. J., 1805,
ADMITTED TO THE BAR IN N. C., IN 1808.
INTERMARRIED WITH ANNE M. KIRKLAND
DECEMBER 9TH, 1809.

A MEMBER OF THE STATE LEGISLATURE,
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS; A TRUSTEE OF THE
UNIVERSITY; TWICE JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT;
IN 1829, JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT, IN
WHICH HE PRESIDED FOR 19 YEARS AS
CHIEF JUSTICE
Labor ipse est voluptas.

In the eighty-third year of his life, in full possession of his faculties, ripe in learning and in wisdom, crowned with public honors and confidence, rich in the affection of his kindred and friends, he closed his long, active, and useful life in the consolation of an enlightened and humble Christian faith.

*"A man resolved and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill and obstinately just."*

That is the inscription upon Judge Ruffin's tomb in St. Matthew's churchyard at Hillsboro—his life in epitome. How severely true is this inscription! How characteristic of the man!

On this marble the salient features of his life and work are carved, that all may know "that he was indeed a good man and a great judge." He

¹Reprinted from the *Charlotte Observer* of March 19, 1905.

has, however, erected to his own memory a more indestructible monument than this, in the thirty-five volumes of North Carolina Reports in which his opinions are recorded. These can never become obsolete, for in them the foundations of our law are laid, broad and deep, strong and enduring.

It is my purpose to write something of this great lawyer and greater judge, of him who for so many years lived and labored and loved within the little town wherein I write, side by side with Murphey, Norwood, Cameron, Nash, Hawks, Henderson, Badger, and later, Graham, all compeers in his profession and friends and neighbors in his life, and some of whom should occupy a niche in the temple of fame as high as his own, while others would be but little lower. "Too clearly it is a topic we shall do no justice to in this place! One comfort is that great men taken up in any way are profitable company. We cannot look, however, upon a great man without gaining something by him."

"The first born of Sterling Ruffin and Alice Roane." Sterling Ruffin was a planter of Essex County, Virginia, a man of substance and character. It is said that at one time he was a great fancier of race horses, attended the races at Richmond and other places, bet heavily and lost or won as it might be. He owned several horses himself, and entered them and backed them freely at the annual club meetings. On one occasion, after having sent his horses on to Richmond, he in a few days commenced his journey to the same city. A Methodist camp-meeting was in progress at a place where he stopped for the night. He attended it, was converted, went on to Richmond, withdrew his horses from the races, paying the forfeit, and sold them all at a sacrifice, and ever afterwards was an ardent Methodist, becoming a preacher of that denomination late in life. His fortune becoming impaired, he removed to Rockingham County, N. C., in 1807.

Alice Roane was of a distinguished Virginia family, being first cousin to Spencer Roane, the great Chief Justice. Thomas Ruffin was born at Newington, the residence of his maternal grandfather, Thomas Roane, in the county of King and Queen, November 17, 1787.

HIS EDUCATION

"His early boyhood was passed on the farm of his father, in Essex, and in attendance on the schools in the vicinity," says Governor Graham, memorial oration, Raleigh, October 21, 1870. Later he was sent to the classical academy of Mr. Marcus George, in Warrenton, N. C. "Mr. George," quoting Governor Graham again, "was an Irishman by birth and education, a fine classical scholar, and most painstaking, skillful instructor, especially in elocution, as we must believe, since among his pupils who survived to our times we find the best readers of our acquaintance." Many years after this period, and not many months before his death, Judge Ruffin entered one of his granddaughters at a female school

then, and afterwards, noted for its thoroughness. As the principals of the school attended the old gentleman to the door, he inquired who of them taught reading. Being informed, he turned to the lady and exclaimed: "Then, Miss, for God's sake teach the child to read!" In Mr. George's school, as in near all the schools of the period, King Solomon was still an authority. Says Governor Graham: "He is described as a man of much personal powers and spirit, who did not scruple to administer it" [the rod] "on his pupils, when sloth, delinquency, or misbehavior required, without reference to age, size, or other circumstances. Yet he secured the respect of his patrons and the confidence of the public, and inspired the gratitude and affection of his pupils in a remarkable degree." Here, among others, Robert Brodnax of Rockingham County, Cadwallader Jones, then of Halifax, later Orange, and Weldon N. Edwards of Warren, were schoolmates of young Ruffin.

He went from this academy to Princeton, where he graduated sixteenth in a class of forty-two in 1805. Among his associates at Nassau Hall were James Iredell, the younger, of North Carolina; Samuel L. Southard and Theodore Frelinghuysen of New Jersey; Joseph R. Ingersoll of Pennsylvania; the Cuthberts and Habershams of Georgia; Christopher Hughes of Maryland, and Stevenson Archer of Mississippi. All these were subsequently distinguished.

After graduating at Princeton, he studied law under David Robertson, Esq., at Petersburg, Virginia; Winfield Scott and John F. May of Petersburg being with him in Mr. Robertson's office. In 1807, his father having removed to Rockingham County, N. C., he, too, came to this State and finished his studies under Judge Murphey. He was admitted to the bar in 1808, and located in Hillsboro for the practice of his profession June 7, 1809.

HIS ROMANCE

About 1790 there came a young Scotchman, William Kirkland, from Ayrshire, Scotland, to Hillsboro, to engage in mercantile pursuits. On the eve of Christmas, 1792, he married Miss Margaret B. Scott, and the following year, 1793, their oldest child, Anne, was born. In 1799 he purchased the old Few homestead, and lived there the remainder of his life.

Just east of Hillsboro, touching indeed its boundary, was a rounded mound, scarcely high or abrupt enough to be called a hill, whose sides and top were covered by an open grove of magnificent oaks, hickories, and maples. Through this, in 1809, ran a footpath to Ayrmount, the home of the Kirklands, a mile away. In this grove, the summer of the same year, and on a tree trunk fallen by the wayside, Thomas Ruffin, the ambitious young lawyer, with his future already to himself secure, but unsuspected by others, addressed Annie M. Kirkland, then scarcely more than a child—not yet sixteen years of age—and was accepted by her. They were married December 7, 1809.

On January 3, 1811, young Ruffin purchased 43 acres of land adjoining the town of Hillsboro on the east, and in this tract was included the mound with the grove on it and the fallen log. They built a little house near by, and there the young couple lived through the few first years of stint and poverty—a home so small and insignificant that now it would be contemned by a clerk on \$600 salary. Soon, however, as the great powers of the husband were afforded more and more a scope for action, their financial sky brightened and they were looking forward with assurance to an early attained affluence. Then the crash came. Mr. Ruffin had become surety on many undertakings of a friend and connection, and that friend had been unable to meet his obligations, so the young lawyer, with an increasing family and impaired health, found himself confronted with a debt, not in a sense of his own contracting, of thousands of dollars. With indomitable will and undaunted courage he labored as few men have ever labored, for forty-three weeks in the year, riding from court to court, or arguing cases in them, until at last his fortunes were again upon a firm basis. Over hill and vale and mountain, in all sorts of weather, on horseback or in open gig, as far west as McDowell County and back again to Raleigh, he went. Surely labor was his delight.

Throughout all these years of struggle and of striving, of disappointment and disgust, his wife was ever his good angel, soothing the asperities of his temper, restraining his ardent, sometimes intense, sensibilities, stimulating his hope and his ambition, and sharing his disappointments and trials. Meantime she was bearing him child after child, and caring for, guiding and controlling them all. It is said that she was the only influence that came into the life of this great but rugged personality to which he deferred—the kind of deference that is beautiful always, but is strikingly so in such a character.

Judge Ruffin, about 1820, donated the site whereon St. Matthew's Episcopal Church and churchyard is now situated. The church was erected in 1826 on or very near the spot where the romance of his life had commenced, and the land was donated as a memorial of that event and a thank offering to God for the blessings it had brought in its train. Ah! it commenced there, but it did not end there! For, many years afterwards, when he comes to put off the garments of this life to lie down to sleep, he thus speaks of his wife as he devises her all his property: "She has been as good and affectionate wife and mother as husband and children ever had;" and further, "my wife, who deserves all the affection and honour I have ever felt for her, or could feel."

Fourteen children were born to this couple, and only one died under age.

AS A LAWYER

It is said that the country lawyer must know something of everything. If this is true now, much more must it have been true when lawyers in gig or on horseback rode the circuit, with their library in their saddle-

bags. The capacity to acquire, and the capacity to use, knowledge are two very different things. Generally the *school* is the test of the former, *life* of the latter. To have both of these in an extraordinary degree makes a very high order of intellect. Now, Judge Ruffin's mind could not truthfully be called brilliant. The limitation was upon his capacity to acquire knowledge; but this he obviated by incessant, earnest, untiring labor. Endowed by nature with an excellent judgment, the soundest common sense, and an indomitable will, his capacity to use the knowledge that he acquired was almost unlimited. While the minds of some of his competitors may have been filled with knowledge, unassorted, ill-digested—a lumber room, so to say—his was a well-ordered cabinet, with a place for everything and everything in its place, all ready for use at the demand of the occasion. This orderliness of intellect was especially valuable when books were few, and those few, quite often in an itinerant practice, inaccessible. Very quickly would it supply the place of graces of oratory, and make its possessor much sought as an attorney. Judge Ruffin, though on occasions vehement, had none of these graces, and so he had been some years at the bar before his excellence was appreciated and clients knocked at his door (*e. g.* He is not marked as counsel on the equity docket until the March Term, 1814, and then in only 12 out of 57 cases. He commences with 3 cases in the county court, but by the November Term, 1814, he was in 42 out of 72). When he resigned from the bench in 1818 he had as much work as one man could do, and for six years and more literally coined money. Governor Graham says that at that period, *viz.*, from January, 1819, to July, 1825, his income was greater than that of any lawyer in the history of the State to 1871. When it is remembered that he was in competition with such accomplished lawyers as Murphey, Nash, Leonard Henderson, Cameron, Badger, Hawks, and others, any one of whom would have done honor to any bar anywhere and at any time, his extraordinary excellence as a lawyer can be easily seen. Quoting Governor Graham: "At first, his manner was diffident, and his speech hesitating and embarrassed. But these difficulties being soon overcome, the vigor of his understanding, the extent and accuracy of his learning, and his perfect mastery of his cases by diligent preparation, in a short time gave him position among these veterans of the profession and secured him a general and lucrative practice."

AS A JUDGE

Here his excellence was supreme. Few judges in the Union have been of the same class as he, and none in North Carolina. If Judges Shaw of Massachusetts; Tilghman and Gibson of Pennsylvania, and Kent and Spencer of New York, have had a greater influence upon the development of the law in this country, it was simply because their decisions dealt with questions broader in their scope and more varied in their aspect, and not because they were greater judges. However this may be,

it is certain that the older text-books on several branches of the law fairly bristle with citations from the North Carolina Reports, generally from opinions delivered by Judge Ruffin, though our State was, before the war, commercially unimportant, and the range of cases presented for judicial determination was relatively small.

A court in which Taylor, Hall, and Henderson, Ruffin, Gaston, and Daniel, Nash, Pearson, and Battle sat necessarily commanded the respect and confidence of courts and law writers throughout the country.

Judge Ruffin's mental constitution was more like that of the great Chief Justice Marshall than of any judge of whom the writer has knowledge; but the defects of Ruffin's temperament, assuming that he had been placed on so broad a stage, would have prevented him from becoming so great a judge. Both were endowed by nature with what for lack of better term we call a "legal mind"; both had great courage and strength of will; both were ambitious in and for their profession; both had a great capacity and fondness for labor; both had great vigor of understanding, and both loved the law as a science and were thoroughly imbued with its principles. Marshall, however, had a calm evenness of temper, a sweetness of disposition, a thorough control over his prejudices that Ruffin never had, nor could ever acquire; so the ardor of his temperament made him, who otherwise might have been a Marshall, more of a Thurlow. So great, however, were the endowments and acquirements of Judge Ruffin that one can but regret that he had not been placed upon the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, side by side with Marshall. What noble discussions of fundamental questions from opposing points of view we should then have had!

EXTRACTS FROM WRITINGS

The salient features of Judge Ruffin's opinions are their breadth of view, fullness of discussion, the battle-axe force of their reasoning, the strength of their language, and the almost inevitable character of their conclusions. He cited little authority. In theory and in practice he followed Lord Mansfield's dictum in *Cowper*, page 39: "The law of England would be a strange science, indeed, if it were decided upon precedents only. Precedents serve to illustrate principles and give them a fixed certainty." To show his style, as well as to throw some light upon his character, I make two or three extracts from his writings. The following is from *State vs. Boyce*, on the right of the owner of slaves to permit them to meet and dance on his premises at Christmas: "We may let them make the most of their idle hours, and may well make allowances for the noisy outpourings of glad hearts, which Providence bestows as a blessing on corporeal vigor united to a vacant mind. . . . There was nothing contrary to law or morals in all that, adding as it did to human enjoyment, without hurt to any one, unless it be that one feels aggrieved that these poor people should for a short space be happy

at finding the authority of a master give place to his benignity, and at being freed from care and filled with gladness." This from *Adams vs. Turrentine*: "Nothing is more speedily or certainly destructive of private and of public virtue than to relax the obligations of contracts and render the rights of creditors insecure. . . . The supposition cannot be tolerated that the law is of less binding force here than in any other country. The judiciary, at all events, can never adopt it, unless it should become that greatest of curses that can befall an unhappy and degraded country—dependent, and then, necessarily, the weak or pliant instrument of popular impulses."

The following is the conclusion of an address before the State Agricultural Society at Raleigh, in October, 1855:

"I cannot close, however, without asking you once more to cleave to North Carolina. Stay in her, fertilize her, till her, cherish her rising manufactures, extend her railways, encourage and endow her schools and colleges, sustain her institutions, develop her resources, promote knowledge, virtue, and religion throughout her borders, stimulate State pride and exalt her renown."

Six months before his death, July 8, 1869, he wrote of the Ku Klux organization: "The great objection is that the whole proceeding is against law, and civil power of government and assumes to supersede them by taking the power of trying, condemning, and punishing into their own hands. That is a power not to be entrusted to any man or set of men. No man can trust himself with it, much less all those indiscriminately with whom he is associated. Supposing them to have the best intentions in such case, there is danger of mistaking from want of a fair, open, and deliberate trial by a responsible tribunal. But in all events, it is an attempt in every case to do good by wrong means—a principle which St. Paul indignantly repelled as slanderously imputed to early Christians, and which from that day to this has been no less indignantly denounced by all good men. To do evil that good may come of it is a horrible heresy in religion, morals, and public policy, even if the good hoped for really resulted. But in truth it hardly ever does. Evil almost certainly follows evil, and what was begun in good faith for useful ends almost ever terminates in grave personal and private injuries. Perhaps at first only bad men are the subjects of the assumed jurisdiction; but it may happen, and after a while almost certainly does happen, that good and innocent men become the victims of their arrogant and self-constituted tribunal, and gross outrages are perpetrated. It is wrong—all wrong. It is much better that offenders should escape punishment than to attempt to repress crime by such unlawful presumptions and dangerous methods."

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

Judge Ruffin died when the writer was a small boy, so he had little personal knowledge of him. Only once did he see him face to face. Sent

by a relative on an errand to his house in the spring of 1869, I knocked at the door. It soon opened and the tall, gaunt, black-clad form of the great Chief Justice towered above me, with his hair all bushy and white, his nose like an eagle's beak, his eyes, deep-set under overhanging brows, calm but searching, and his smooth-shaven face all wrinkled and gray from age—the ruggedest and strongest face I have ever seen, and, altogether, the most impressive. Another has said: "Judge Ruffin, in person, was about six feet in height, and of a spare figure. His movements were nervous and rapid. The general expression of his countenance indicated great energy, resolution, and power. He was neat, uniform and tasteful in regard to dress. In his latter days his appearance was impressive and very venerable."

Two or three anecdotes are told that illustrate the dramatic force that resided in the intensity of his emotions. He was an ardent Union man until after his return from the Peace Convention of 1861 and Mr. Lincoln's call for troops. A public meeting was held in Hillsboro in April of that year, that the citizens of the town might express their sentiments on the alarming state of public affairs. Judge Ruffin, though residing in Alamance until after the war, was present. In the course of the meeting he called the veteran Democratic politician, General Allison, up into the bar, and, facing the audience, stood by his side with one arm about him and said: "My good old friend, I ask you what ought to be done, now?" General Allison's reply was inaudible, but as he was known to be a Union man, it was guessed. Judge Ruffin, leaving the old general standing, advanced a step toward the audience, and his whole frame in a quiver of emotion, extended his arms, bringing them down in vehement gesticulation at each repetition of the word as shouted, "I say Fight! Fight! Fight!" It was the scream of the eagle as he swoops upon his prey. The war feeling, already aroused, became the dominant passion in every man's breast.

In the convention of 1861 "he was fiercely indignant," says Dr. Battle (No. 3, N. C. 498), "at the proposition to abolish corporal punishment. His reply to the argument that it was an outrage to whip a free man was with bitter emphasis and vehement gesticulation, as he stood in the aisle: 'Whip a free man! No. Whip a rogue! Whip a rogue!'" and that was all, so another gentleman has informed me. Suffice it to say that rogues continued to be whipped until the bouleversement of the war.

This intense and dramatic mode of expression was probably an inheritance from French ancestors, the name Ruffin itself implying a French derivation. Those ancestors possibly were Huguenots who had for generations intermarried with the English.

Judge Ruffin had a wonderfully strong constitution. When he was an old man one of his daughters was taken suddenly very sick at Mr. Cameron's Fairntosh farm. A messenger was despatched for her father, who then was at his farm in Rockingham County. The old gentleman, on horseback, leaving Rockingham early in the morning, reached his

home in Alamance at noon, changed horses, and at dark arrived at Fairtosh—a distance of 80 miles, and was little the worse for his ride.

“In the sense of imbecility or decrepitude,” says Governor Graham, “he never grew old, but was blessed with the enjoyment of remarkable intellectual vigor and fine flow of spirits, almost until his dissolution.

. . . On January 15, 1870, after an illness of but four days, he breathed his last in the eighty-third year of his age. His end was resigned and peaceful and in the consolation of an enlightened and humble Christian faith.”

He was great as a lawyer, great as a judge, great as a financier, great as a farmer—a rugged, indomitable soul in a frame of iron, made to conquer, and conquering every difficulty on every side.

THE RUFFIN PAPERS

*From Sterling Ruffin.*¹

BRUNSW[IC]K [VA.] 5th May 1803.

My dear Son,

Your letter inclosing sundry receipts came safe to hand in due time, with its contents I was much pleas'd; first, because it was much better dictated than ordinary, secondly, as it was well spell'd, thirdly as there were few omission or interlineations and fourthly as it contain'd a promise to be very assiduous. Let me advise my Son to be not only attentive to your books, but particularly so to your manners. A man may be better read than his neighbor, and yet not acquire half the respect if the other should be more accomodating. Politeness, good humour and charity, (by which I would be understood to mean much more than giving alms to the poor) will allways as they deserve, obtain respect and friendship. You are now of an age to begin at least to form some opinion of mankind, and the advantages which result to individuals, as well as to society, from a proper demeanor of conduct. By History observation on manners is greatly to be improv'd; it will soon be time for you to commence that most improving study. When my Children will reflect on the anxious wish which pervades the minds of their most affectionate Parents for their future (both temporal and Eternal) welfare, surely they will leave nothing undone which may tend to their own happiness, and thereby lessen the pang which arises from fear, doubt and a thousand nameless tremors which vibrate on the aching Heart of Paternal affection. I recd. a letter from your Sister since you went from here; she desires me to inform you that your letter had come to hand, and that she would have answer'd it long since, but that she did not know how to direct. I have given her your address, and no doubt but you will receive one soon. From [torn] Election I suppose you have heard, [torn] borne is return'd majority 47 Votes; the pole will be purg'd, and I have no doubt but Field will oust him. Maclin and Caudle for the County. We are all well and join in best wishes for you.

Your afft. Father

[Address:

STERLING RUFFIN

Mr. Thomas Ruffin

Student at

Warrenton Academy.

Warrenton, N. C.]

¹Sterling Ruffin, the father of Thomas Ruffin. For a sketch of him, see pp. 19 and 36, *supra*.

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K. Sepr. 8th 1803

My dear Son,

Your two last letters on the subject of Luisiani¹ have come to hand, with which I am well pleas'd, and for which I thank you. I am well pleas'd, because you display in your account of that country, considerable Geographical knowledge, and an acute mind in drawing effects from causes, which is the grand and only principle, or foundation of Logic or reasoning; or in other words of becoming an Orator. I thank you, because you have shown such promptitude, and industry, in complying with my request of giving as accurate an history of that Country as you could collect, together with your own ideas, and reasons for such opinions; all this you have done, and I assure you in a much more satisfactory, and masterly manner than I expected. This I hope will stimulate you to persivere in your assiduity to receive information, for I think nothing is so great a spur to a *Noble mind*, as generous, honest praise, such as I now bestow with Heart felt pleasure on my Son. To convince you that I am sincere in what I have said, I inclose you a letter of your dear Sisters, in answer to one I wrote her; in which I only did you that justice which I really think your late conduct fully merits. From the contents of her letter you will see I must have represented you as an amiable Lad, worthy in some instances to be followed as an example. Here my dear Tom, I will take the liberty of offering her as a pattern to you in some others. *Meekness and gentleness of Temper.* Oh! my dear child believe me when I say that no human being can enjoy tolerable ease or content of mind, who is turbulent, tempestuous or tyranical in disposition. Meekness, gentleness, charity, and good will towards our fellow mortals of every discription, are the qualifications, which God bestow'd on man in his original, (or if I may be permitted the expression) in his divine state; but oh! how deprav'd have we become—endeavor then my Son, to check unruly passions and sinfull desires, ere it grow so much into nature as to deprive you of peace here, and draw on you the *eternal wrath of Heaven*. I shall bring your Sister home next month, when I assure you I shall be well pleas'd to have her again under our immediate care and direction. A Girl of her age, should not be left to the care of a boarding Mistress, as there is nothing so easily injur'd as the reputation of a Virgin; they are tender flowers that cannot bear the Wintery blasts, or Summers heats. I therefore now call upon you, should it please the Eternal and allwise Creator to deprive them of my aid, to be the protector of my familys rights and Earthly happiness. Latterly we have not been well, the whole of us having very bad colds

¹The purchase of Louisiana was of course a matter of general discussion at this time, and there was much curiosity concerning the newly-acquired territory.

tho' never confin'd, and now much better. I shall expect to hear from often. May the ever Merciful God take you under his immediate protection prays
 Your truly Aff Father

STERLING RUFFIN.

N. B. When you write again endeavor to improve the hand, for I assure you it is with difficulty I can read it. S. R.
 [Address: Warrenton, N. C.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 29th Decr. 1803.

My Dear Son,

Your letter from Princeton dated the 20th Inst. I recd. a few days past, which reliev'd us, from considerable anxiety for your safe arrival there. I am much pleas'd at the favorable opinion you entertain of Doctr. Smith;¹ and flatter myself, that your conduct, and general demeanor will be such, as to merit his esteem and approbation. Respect to the professors, and a strict adherance to the laws of the institution, together with a sufficient degree of application to your studies will certainly produce this desirable effect. There is a certain steadyness and uniformity of conduct mingled with humility *without servility* that must and will make friends of all who are worthy to be receiv'd as such. You will not forget the advice I gave you of not being too hasty in forming intimate connections with strangers; the more I reflect on that opinion, the more I am confirm'd in its correctness: treat all with civility and respect, but none with unreserv'd friendship, until you are convinc'd their characters are such as that prudence would dictate a greater intimacy with them.

I hope it will prove advantageous to you, to be in a room with the young Gentleman from Phida. as he is further advanced than yourself, he will be able to instruct you very much. Should his character be worthy, I shall consider it as a most fortunate circumstance. Your standing in college is very pleasing to me, as it is a proof among others that your time at Warrenton² has not been mispent, and as it is a great encouragement for me to hope that you will do yourself justice in future; allways remembering that your wellfare depends on the proper use of time, and that the expences attending your education is allmost more than I can possibly compass. I mean not by this to recommend parsimony or niggardliness, but a proper application of time, and prudence in spending your money, steering a middle course between meanness and

¹Samuel Stanhope Smith, 1750-1819, president of Princeton from 1795 to 1812.

²Reference is here made to Ruffin's course at Warrenton, N. C., under Marcus George. For details, see Graham, p. 20, *supra*.

extravagance. Your expences in College are so much more than I calculated on, that they appear to me to be quite enormous; there are many extra charges which I do not understand. How could Chamber furniture cost you so much when there are two others in the room with you? room rent, entrance into college beside tuition, and servant hire I do not understand. Inform me too how long the Session is, for if you are to pay \$83 p. quarter, it exceeds any thing I ever knew. If you can make any tolerable calculation of the amount of your Years expences I wish you would inform me, and when the different remittances must be made, for you know from my little fortune, that I cannot at all times raise as much money as you may want, without a little notice. When you have no other subject of more importance to communicate give a history of your travels which to us will be interesting. Your Mama (as you may expect) was much surpris'd on my return to find you were gone to Princeton, tho much pleas'd, preferring that situation greatly to Williamsburg, as do all your friends. Your Sister will write in a few days. Robt. Brodnax¹ has written you, I believe he has not determin'd what to do with himself next Year. Ned Johnson I fancy goes to Williamsburg: what to do I know not. We are all well and send our united love to a great fellow allmost a man, from whom we desire and expect to hear in a short time. May a Merciful God direct your studies to the temporal and Eternal welfare of your Soul and Body is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your Aff Father.

STERLING RUFFIN.

N. B. I send you all the B. N. I have by me \$10.

[Address: Mr. Thomas Ruffin

Student at Nassau-hall

Princeton.

Endorsed: Received January 7th 1804]

From Muscoe Garnett.²

January 29th 1804.

Dr. Ruffin

I received your envious letter a few days ago and should have answered it immediately. But was then at a Ball in Tappahannock where I had the pleasure of seeing your relations in King and Queen all in good health. Miss Catherine inquired very particularly after you and desired to be remembered to you. And now I have answered your inquiries with respect to your relations give me leave in turn to propound a few

¹Robert Brodnax had been a schoolmate of Ruffin at Warrenton. The Ruffin and Brodnax families were closely united by ties of friendship and long acquaintance. In later years a son of Robert Brodnax married one of Ruffin's daughters.

²Muscoe Garnett, a college mate of Ruffin at Princeton.

questions to you some of which I think require an answering, well to begin with the first What in the world has been the reason of your long silence perhaps you had forgotten that William had a brother when he was at Princeton that became acquainted with you much about the same time that he did, for I can in no other way account for your writing frequently to him without even mentioning my name in the whole course of your correspondence. Suppose that I had have been in some of those dreadful situations which you mentioned in your first and last letter how wuld I possible have guessed whare to send for your aid unless kind chance had have been pleased to acquaint me with the place of your residence as you did not think proper to do it yourself. But as you have at last condescended as to let me know where you are to be found and as I still flatter myself that I possess some share [of] your friendship if I am ever reduced to one of those terrible extremities I shall not fail to make you acquainted with my situation.

N B Upon reading this letter over I find it so filled with reproach that I am almost tempted to sit down and write something more on this side by way of salving it over but as I am in a hurry to put in the office for fear of the posts going by you must take it such as it is.

[Address: Princeton, N. J.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWI'K Feby 3rd, 1804.

My dear Tommy,

Your letter of the 11th and 14th Ulto came to hand this day; it afforded us great pleasure, first as it came from you, and secondly as it manifested the mind being exercised by reflection; a requisite so essential in the acquirement of scientific knowledge, that there is no progressing towards perfection without it. I am much gratified at your properly discriminating between the motives which produce and promote, emulation; and cannot but hope, you will be advantaged by that laudable stimulant which appears to push you on. You have talents given you by an Infinitely Wise and Merciful Creator, who if I am capable of Judging impartially, has been very bountiful, and it certainly behooves you to improve them agreeably to your opportunity, and to make that use of them, for which they were bestow'd. On some weak and vain Minds this Elogium would produce a very contrary effect than what I wish, that is pride and contempt for those who have been less bless'd than themselves, instead of humility and Gratitude to the dispenser of the blessing, giving him all the glory as it is all his work, taking praise to yourself only, for having improov'd as a free agent the talent he has been pleas'd to bestow on you. Nothing can give me more pleasure than to hear frequently from you, and to receive particular accounts of

studies with the different examinations you may pass through. Whether the great anxiety which preys on my mind for your welfare, and which produces such repeat'd admonitions will be for your good, I cannot tell; I shall at least have the pleasing consolation of having done my duty towards you, and trust to Providence for the rest; hoping you will never forget, that you are a free agent, and made capable of working out your own salvation. You have enter'd now my son, your career of life, and on the offset, generally depends the station we assume, or rather support in Society; therefore it is absolutely necessary, you should be very circumspect in your demeanor; avoid all things that are censurable, and persue all that are praiseworthy. "Be not deceiv'd, evill communications corrupt good manners" said the greatest Man that ever did or ever will live. If you would take him for your guide I would not fear for you. I must request you as much as possible to obtain the friendship of Mr. Smith, as I think many advantages would result therefrom. Did you inclose the circular letter at his request, and is it necessary I should write him on the subject? I received a letter from your Uncle Tommy¹ a few days past, in which he says he has been inform'd the students at Princeton are as extravagant and dissipated as anywhere on the Continent. I hope he has been misinform'd, but should he be correct, I flatter myself, you have been sufficiently caution'd and possess sufficient firmness, to avoid following any course that may infringe the laws of the institution, which no doubt are founded on Religion and morality; particularly as you well know how distressing it would be to your Mother and myself to hear of [your] throwing away your time and patrimony. You so well know my pecuniary circumstances, and I have before observ'd it, that it is scarcely necessary now to remind you, that it will not be in my power to give you very little more than your education; make good use then My Son of your time.

Your cousin John Roane² was here soon after the receipt of your first letter, he was extremely anxious for the arrival of a Teacher from Princeton; I hope you have written him ere this as he expected you to correspond regularly with him. Your Uncle Tom is an amiable character cultivate his friendship by respectfull attention. You have not inform'd me how much money I must remit you nor when, tho' I suppose you [have] a sufficiency 'til April. Your poor little Brother has been at the point of Death, on the brink of Eternity, given out by the Doctr. (Walker), but thank God, he is restor'd to us, and I hope will ever be in good health; this is the first day he has been dress'd in nearly a fortnight, and he is now so weak and debilitated that he cannot walk alone: his disorder worms. The rest of us, and all your friends here are well Robert Brodnax is still at home, and I rather expect will not go to school

¹This was Thomas Roane "of the Forge," the younger brother of Ruffin's mother.

²The John Roane mentioned here was John Roane of "Uppowoc," the first cousin of Ruffin's mother. She also had a brother, John Roane of "Newington."

any more, what are his intentions I cannot say. By the *first possible opportunity* I will make you a subscriber for the Warrenton paper. Your cousin Tom Ritchie¹ has purchas'd the Examiner at Richmond and will commence a paper (the Enquirer) the 15th of March from his great abilities and industry I expect it will be one of the best papers on the Continent, and shall therefore subscribe to that for you. You have sent me no account in your last of expenditures, I hope you are not allready tired of transmitting to me the way in which you lay out your money, or perhaps no expences have been incur'd. I want to know whether you have enter'd on composition, and how you like it. Your Mama says you must write to her a letter as long as from here to Princeton, and to compensate you, if she lives till your return she will give you as much Peach Jam as you can eat every night you stay at home. Minerva² has such an antipathy to writing that it requires more influence than I have over her to get her to write you, altho from day to day she promises; it is not because she does not sincerely love her Brother, but because like many other persons in this world she is too indolent to do right. We all join in love to you, and prayers to All mighty God to guard you from harm, and to direct your studies for your temporal and Eternal good.

[Address: Nassau hall Princeton.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 14th March 1804.

Yours of the 1st Inst. came safe to hand yesterday, the contents of which, gave both pain and pleasure. To hear of your indisposition has somewhat alarm'd us, particularly as it proceeded principally from intense study; which cause, may again produce the same effects; I have therefore to request you will be carefull of your health, and altho I by no means should be pleas'd with idleness, yet you cannot suppose I should be gratified by your doing an injury to your Constitution. I think it nothing but justice to you (and I hope it will have the desir'd effect on

¹Thomas Ritchie, 1778-1854, the son of Archibald Ritchie and Molly Roane, the latter a great-aunt of Ruffin, was born in Tappahannock, Va., and, after beginning the study of law and then of medicine and deciding against them, turned his attention to journalism. Purchasing the Richmond *Examiner* at Jefferson's request, he changed its name to the *Enquirer* and made it a Jeffersonian Republican paper which became exceedingly influential. No other Southern editor enjoyed any such influence as Ritchie came to possess in politics. During Polk's administration, and at his request, Ritchie turned his paper over to his sons and went to Washington as editor of the *Union*, which was the Democratic organ.

²Minerva Ruffin, the second child of Sterling and Alice Roane Ruffin, born July 24, 1789, married (1) Edward Dillard, and (2) George McNeill of Fayetteville, N. C.

your mind) to inform you, that I have no cause of complaint against you for any part of your conduct as far as I am capable of judging since you left me. Your improvement is visible, and the close application which you have given, I think, I may say, has arisen from two laudable motives, viz: the one to give me pleasure, and the other, from an allowable degree of pride to excell in your class. For the first I really thank you, and I have no doubt, but if you live, you will see the day, that you will have great cause to rejoice that the latter motive operated so advantageously. Praise to a *deserving mind* is a tribute which justice demands, and one which at this time is paid with great pleasure by me. I hope as the spring advances the remains of the cough which still incommodes you, will be removed, particularly as you will by that time, have made up the most of your private studies, and therefore will not have to labour harder than your companions.

You have not said a word in your last letters of Doer. Smith. Is he attentive to you? Does he frequently offer his advise privately? or do you go to him for instruction?

You must give me leave to chide you, or rather to advise you, whenever I see any thing of, or from you, which I think wrong. How much more pleasing would it have been to me to have read in your letter to your Sister, an account of your travels to Princeton, of your amusements, and of the town and country about you than an illnatur'd (forgive the expression) philippick against the friend of your childhood, and the son of my *best friend*. If this Youth is unfortunate in his disposition and talents, he is much to be pitied, and for the first blam'd, inasmuch as it is his *duty* and Interest to amend it: but for the latter, tis the work of an allwise God whose designs are allways good, and with whose decrees we are not at liberty to find fault, at least in the way of ridicule. Alltho' this young man may never make a Milton or a Newton, nor yet a Jefferson, yet God has bless'd him with sufficient abilities to make a good and usefull member of society: He may shew merey, do Justice, and walk humbly before his God. Oh! my Son, I hope that letter was dictated unthinkingly and not by uncharitableness. Believe me this rebuke is dictated by Parental affection and a most anxious solicitude for your temporal and Eternal welfare. With respect to the necessary's of clothing to which you may from time to time want, it is impossible for me to judge; I leave it entirely to your discretion, believing you will be economical, and by no means wishing you to be niggardly. Inclos'd you will receive \$100 which I suppose will do for the present, you will inform me in your next when I must send more; should it be immediately, fear not to make the call; my wish is to support you genteelly, but not extravagantly. Your Sister will write you soon, she has been from home several days, or perhaps you would have heard from her ere the receipt of this.

Your Mama feels herself slighted, and will continue to do so, unless you write oftener to her. Your friends in this Neighborhood are all

well. Remember us in your regular prayers to the Throne of Grace, as we do you allways, petitioning for temporal and eternal blessings for the Son of
 YOUR AFFT. FATHER.

N. B. When you were initiated into the visible church of Christ by baptism, I promis'd as your sponsor, that you should lern the Catikism, the Lords prayer and the commandments, with the belief by Heart, you are now of an age to fullfil the promise: You will please me by performing it.

[Address: Princeton.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWICK May 9th 1804.

Your two last letters have arrived, the contents of which gave us great pleasure: first and principally the recovery of your health, then the figure you made in the examination, and lastly the sentiments contain'd in the first relative to those unhappy fellow mortals the Africans, whom our ancestors have entail'd on us. You say "if I am not pleas'd at your being the fifth in your class you cannot help it." You must suppose me too partial in the calculations I have made of your abilities if (considering the indisposition you labour'd under, together with your commencing late in the Season) I were not well satisfied with the stand you made. In so numerous a class as yours; we may reasonably calculate some of the cleverest young men in our Country are to be found. I cannot say that I should not have been better pleas'd, if you had been the first; but this proceeds from the anxiety which at all times exists on my mind for your welfare, I must now inform you that I shall look forward to the next examination with flattering expectations that you will excell. You did not say whether those eight that were distinguished, were rewarded with any honorary present, or by what means they were distinguish'd. You have not inform'd me when the vacation ends and what your studies will be in the next course. Pray does Doer. Smith or any other of the Professors dictate to, or tye up the consciences or opinions of the students on political or Religious subjects? or are they left free to exercise their own reason? a great deal has been said against the institution on those heads, and I hope ill founded.

Your Uncle Tom has left us this morning, not very well, he was the only one of our friends that came out; tho' they were all well, and have promis'd a visit this Summer. Your Cousin Robert from K. Co. is here, your Aunt and all friends are well. What is the reason you have not written to your Uncle ere this? He is very desirous to receive a letter from you, and promises to correspond regularly if you will commence it. I think it will afford you pleasure and improvement. Your Cousin John Roane I fear has not heard from you either. You will be surpris'd

at receiving a letter like this from me in answer to two, but this is written in a great hurry as I am just setting off to the post office, and having been engaged the whole of the last week from the time of your Uncle's arrival I have not time or opportunity to write you fully; you will therefore expect to receive another in a few days, in which I shall consider the subject of Slaves as well as I am able. We are all well and join in best wishes for your temporal and eternal welfare and may the Glorious God take you under his immediate protection and make you one of his choicest Vessels prayes

[Address: Princeton.]

Your most

AFFEC FATHER

From Sterling Ruffin.

[BRUNSWICK, JUNE, 1804]

I have no apology to offer for not complying with the promise made in my last, of writing again, in a few days, except that I wish'd to have forwarded you a small B. Note, for fear, from some unforeseen event, it might be serviceable to you; as yet, I have not been able to procure one; and as I find from your last which has come to hand, you are anxious to receive the promis'd one, I now do myself the pleasure of gratifying your wishes.

I was not surpris'd at reading your sentiments on Slavery, as I was well aware of the impressions which a different mode of treatment than that pursued in Virginia, would make on a Heart, which I hop'd was capable at all times of sympathising in the misfortunes of a fellow mortal; and would as the mind matur'd, and contemplated the miserable situation of these unhappy beings, feel most sensibly for them; but alas! like all others who are not intirely void of every spark of Sensibility, you feel for them, lament, greatly lament their uncommon hard fate, without being able to devise any means by which it may be ameliorated! That they are a great civil, political, and moral evil no Person will deny, but how to get rid of them, is a question which has employ'd many much more expansive minds than mine, without fixing on any rational, or probable means to make their situations more comfortable, without endangering the political safety of the State, and perhaps Jeopardising the lives, property, and everything sacred and dear of the Whites. You will not pretend to throw blame on the present generation, for the situation of these unhappy domestics, for as they are impos'd on us, and not with our consent, the thing is unavoidable. You will perhaps ask why we do not treat them with more humanity? the answer is obvious: the fewer there are of this discription intermix'd with the Whites, the more they are under our immediate eye, and the more they partake of the manners and habits of the whites, and thereby require less rigidness of treatment to get from them, those services which are

absolutely necessary for their support and very existence. Unhappily for us and them, there are too many with us to render a tolerably free intercourse of sentiment possible, and of course their minds have degenerated into as abject slavery as their persons; and as there is no tye of gratitude or affection on their parts towards their masters, nothing is to be expected from them, but as fear, servile fear operates on them, which produces a sluggishness of action, which must be increased momentarily by a greater degree of fear, with a greater degree of personal attention on our parts. It has been one of many benefits which has resulted to Society from the Christian Religion to expose the impropriety of keeping our Brothers in bondage, and however *we may* at present justify ourselves from the peculiar situation of our Country consider'd politically; I cannot but look forward with pleasure to the time, when an Alwise, and Mercifull Creator will by a more universal revival of his blessed Religion prepare the Hearts of all men to consider each other as Brothers, and put us more on an equality even in temporal things—When this much to be wish'd for period will arrive, or what will be the means adopted for a general emancipation, I do not pretend to divine; but that such a time will be, I have little doubt.

Tom you cannot conceive the happiness that I receive in believing from your letters that you begin to see the necessity and reallity of Religion; believe me my Son, who have had a fair opportunity of estimating the pleasure of Sin, (by enjoying all the comforts that indipendance and the things of this world could bestow unconnected with a Spiritual love for the giver of these blessings) that there is no comparison between the real solid happiness of a life spent in faith, bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit, and a hope growing therefrom that [Rest of letter missing.]

[Address: Princeton.]

*From William Garnett.*¹

PITTSVILLE [VA.] Sept. 24th, 1804.

Dr. Ruffin.

You will no doubt be very much surprised at not having heard from me before this but I can assure you that it has not proceeded from a want of inclination as I have been so much engaged and so unwell together that I have never untill now had leisure to write. Muscoe and myself recvd our money the night after you left us upon which we immediately got our dismissions and set off for home where I have at length arrived quite sound and safe. And having now gotten over the hurry

¹William Garnett, 1786-1866, son of Muscoe Garnett and Grace Fenton Mercer of "Elmwood," Essex County, Va., was a contemporary of Ruffin at Princeton and throughout his life his close friend.

and confusion of my journey I begin to feel very solicitous to know whether you return to Princeton again as you said when I saw you last that you could not inform me until you had advised with your father upon the subject. My sentiments on this head you have often heard in conversation. I cannot therefore now offer you anything new but as the decision which you are about to make is of the utmost consequence, I think it my duty once more to trouble you with my objections to Princeton college. They are these principally these, firstly the tyranny of the college government, secondly the conduct of Doctor Smith, with respect to politics and thereby the manner in which the sciences are taught and the particular branches of them which are taught. As to the first of my objections your own experience can so well testify to the truth of it I need not therefore expatiate very largely upon it. You have frequently seen young men given the lie in the public hall for the most trivial circumstance and you may also very well remember to have heard of an instance which happened this session in which Doctor Smith behaved so improperly to a student as to oblige his father to force him to make an apology for his conduct, But it would be an endless as well as a needless task for me to attempt to enumerate the number of similar instances which have happened at Nassau Hall. I shall therefore for the present lay aside the objection and proceed to examine my second which is to the conduct of the Doctor with relation to politics. You have read his political philosophy and consequently are sufficiently qualified to judge of its tendency which is directly hostile to republican principles. During the whole work the writer plainly evinces his partiality for the British constitution and endeavours in the most insidious manner to excite in his pupils an aversion to our own and a hatred against the supporters of it whom he stigmatizes with the names of Jacobins and anarchists. It must certainly be very disagreeable to a young man who has been accustomed to think independently to hear the principles in which he glories every day pronounced to be prejudicial to the interest of his country and the advocates of them loaded with the abominable names demagogues and disorganizers. But I will not insist any farther on this objection as you have seen enough of the Doctor's conduct to enable you to judge for yourself. The post is almost ready to set off. I cannot therefore now examine my last objection which is certainly as important as any of them but I will say more on this subject in my next letter.

Adieu and believe me to be

Your Sincere friend

W. GARNETT.

P. S. I have sent you ten dollars of the money which I owe you. I could not get a one dollar note or I should have sent you the rest but we can settle it when you come to see me this fall. Write to me by the next post.

[Address: Brunswick, Virginia.]

From William Garnett.

October 22 1804.

I have for sometime past delayed writing to you under an expectation that I should receive an answer to the letter which I wrote you upon my arrival. But I have been so often disappointed that I have given over all thoughts of receiving one. Acting under this impression I should not have troubled you again but I have since thought that either my letter or yours must have miscarried for I am certain that you cannot so soon have forgotten me. Judging therefore of your friendship by my own I shall continue to trouble you with my letters untill I am assured by their not being answered that they are disagreeable to you. Agreeably to your request in my last letter to you I detailed the principal objections which I have to Princeton college but was prevented from examining them all under an apprehension that I should be too late for the post. I will therefore, resume the subject and proceed to examine my remaining objections which were as well as I recollect the two following. Firstly to the manner of instruction pursued by the professors of that institution and lastly to the abridged and imperfect manner in which the sciences are there taught. The manner of instruction pursued at Nassau Hall I think admirably well calculated for a grammar school where boys require force to oblige them to study. But it can never answer with young men for if they are treated as children they loose all respect for themselves and will of course continue to conduct themselves as such.

Acting from no other motive than that of fear they cease to think that they are studying for their own improvement but only in compliance to the will of an arbitrary despot. The consequence of this is that they soon learn to conceive that every moment they can escape from the eye of an instructor is time gained to themselves which they have a right to mispend as they please. Such your own experience can tell you is the effect produced by this system of instruction at Princeton which is calculated only to make young men contract a narrow and illiberal way both of thinking and acting. The beneficial effects of an opposite system is I think obvious to every person who will only reflect a moment. When a young man is treated as such he will learn to respect himself and acquire an independence of thinking which will make him scorn to commit an action which he thinks unworthy the character of a man. Stimulated by such a motive his whole endeavour will be to acquire the respect and esteem of those around him. But it is needless to say any thing farther on this subject. I will therefore advert to my last objection which I think is of as much importance as any of them. The principal object of a young man in going to college is to make himself master of the sciences and if this object is defeated (which it certainly is at Princeton) I know of no other motive which he can have for going to one. There is not one single study of importance which is not either

abridged or compiled by men who must certainly be vastly inferior in point of talents and information to many others who have written on the same subjects. Thus for instance instead Blairs lectures in two volumes which they study at William and Mary at Princeton they have an abridgement of about an 100 pages and the same is the case with respect to logick. The course of moral and political philosophy also which they study at Princeton is equally deficient both in point, substance and length. The superiority of William and Mary over it is greater in these studies (which are certainly the the most important) than in any other for instead of Doctor Smiths Moral and Political philosophy they study all the most celebrated writers who have ever written on the subjects. But I must bid you adieu for the present.

P. S. Let me know in your next when you intend coming to see me. And let me know also whether you have recd my first letter as I inclosed you a bank note of ten dollars, which if you have not got I will replace, immediately or if my letter has miscarried mine will be returned to me. I shall then owe you one dollar which as I could not come at exactly we will settle when you come to see me which I hope will be *immediately* upon the recpt of this letter.

W. G.

[Address: Brunswick County, Virginia.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

RICHMO. 22nd Nov. 1804.

Your two letters from Princeton have come to hand; the last I recd. yesterday morning at your Uncles on my way to this place. I need not inform you that I was much gratify'd to hear of your safe arrival, and of your being judged quallified to join the Senr. class at that Siminary, where I hope you will be enabled to graduate the next fall. I am much hurt at Doer. Smiths conduct towards you; and can easily see that it is necessary your conduct should be very circumspect to retain your present standing. I do not conceive this will ultimately be of disservice to you, as it will necessarily produce a close application to study, and a strict observance of College dissipline. It may for a little time be unpleasant, but if you retain, and come up to your resolutions mentioned in your last, you need not be afraid. I have no doubt but Smith is a man possessing uncommonly strong passions, which for the want of Vital Religion are indulged to a dangerous excess, be this to himself; conduct yourself with that respect towards him, which as a man in years and your preceptor he certainly merrits. Politeness and good manners are due to all, but particularly so from you to him, this may at all times and situations be paid without condecending to meanness or servility,

which neither the laws of God or man exacts. Be extremely cautious how you speak of him to any person, it cannot possibly render you either satisfaction or profit—To indulge malice is one of the Deadliest Sins, it is our duty to forgive others as we hope to be forgiven by Him whom we have offended in a much higher degree than we can possibly be: it is our duty and interest to pattern after the glorious example our bless'd Master has set us; remember, that while he was expiring on the cross, his prayer was, "Father forgive them," (his murderers) "they [know] not what they do"—Oh! my Son learn of him to do the will of Our Heavenly Father, which is compleatly reveal'd to us in his blessed word. There has nothing occur'd since you left home worth communicating. Robt. Ruffin is out from Kg. Wm. all friends are well in that quarter. Doer. Niblock¹ appears very anxious to get a letter from you, his enquiries are allways friendly; a correspondence with him would not only be amusing, but improving to you. I expect to be at home on Tuesday next when I shall take your Sister who is still in Petersburg along with me. She no doubt will be mortified that I did not call to see her to day, but I was so situated as to render very inconvenient. Your letters will be frequently expected. That you may become wise, and happy is the prayer of Your aff. Father.

[Address: Nassau-hall, Princeton.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWICK 6th Deer. 1804.

I am much gratify'd at the affectionate and dutifull remembrance of us, you bear in your Mind, as express'd in your last letter of the 20th Ult. just receiv'd.

Your expectations 'ere this have been satisfy'd by receiving a letter I wrote from Richmond in which I gave you my advice relative to your conduct towards Doer. Smith. My opinion is by no means chang'd by his present behaviour; which has either been produced from your politeness, or from some hidden motive; in either case, it is necessary you should be circumspect; and common prudence will direct you to be silent on his *Tyranical whims*. Remember an old proverb which will well apply to you, "Your hand is in the Lions mouth, and you must get it out as easily as possible." Interest keeps you at Princeton and you must make the best of it. I am glad that you are comfortably fix'd with room-mates. You have said nothing of your expences, or how your money holds out, of this you will inform me in your next.

¹A physician of Brunswick County, Va., and an intimate friend of the family.

With respect to the plan of studies you are to adopt, and of which you ask my advice, I can only say I do not conceive you or myself as competent judges as the Faculty who have from long experience adopted the present system of education at that seminary.

You are as you justly observe young enough to have time for History, etc., other than your attention will be devoted to this year, and I am inclined to think from the mode recommended, or pursued, that the memory will be lastingly improved; and I see not why the judgment will not be as much exercised as by a different plan. Add to this the advantages which is derived from being at the head of your class, it gives eclat to a young man which goes with him into the World, and he commences business under every advantage which talents can bestow. Our lives are short at most, and when we have to work out our living a great deal depends on the outset. It is therefore my advise that you will so far as is in your power, conform to the system of Education laid down by the Professors, by which I hope you will be advantaged.

Our friends remain as when you left us except your amiable and much lamented Uncle Brokenbrough¹ whose death you will see announced in the Enquirer—That health, respect, and all the blessings of God may attend and await you.

N. B. The flower seed will be sent as soon as procured.

[Address: Nassau-hall, Princeton.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWICK 22nd Decr. 1804.

Yours of the 9th Inst. came to hand a day or two ago, by which I was glad to find but little of your late indisposition remain'd; I flatter myself in this it is intirely eradicated, and that health, the greatest temporal blessing will be perminently establish'd on its ruins; for which I hope you will endeavor to be thankful to the bountifull giver. On the subject of your studies, I wrote you in my last, which I imagine is at hand before this. The long experience of the Professors of Princeton together with the number of first rate Characters which have been educated in that Seminary, induces a wish for you to conform in all things to their method. I am much surpris'd however at that expression in your letter, "that after graduating your head will only contain a few Greek and Latin phrases without knowing any thing of polite literature." Without referring to the different branches through which the classes must pass, and of course have a pretty correct knowledge before they can graduate, I had made up an opinion that a great deal of polite

¹Dr. John Brokenbrough, the husband of Sarah Roane, Ruffin's great-aunt.

and useful learning was acquir'd. It is by no means my intention should circumstances permit to cramp you in your education, that system most proper to be pursued after this Year will therefore be adopted.

We were much pleas'd at the affection and duty you evinc'd by writing to your aged Grandmother. I am sure it gave her great pleasure to hear from you, which I imagine will not be diminished by being repeated. I can give you no information from that quarter as I have not recd. a letter from your Uncle since you left us, which is very unaccountable to me. Do you not think you might have chosen a subject in which you could have display'd more talents, and derived more advantage for your compositions than the Character of Hamilton? From your expenditures I find you are without cash, I have therefore sent you \$30 which must answer for the present. There is no neighborhood news, every thing as you left us. I congratulate you on being able at last to make choice of a profession, it is a good one, but I expect a very laborious one. We join in Love and good wishes to you, and bear you allways in mind in our prayers to our God, who I hope will bless you temporally and eternally.

[Address: Princeton, N. J.]

From William Garnett.

December the 3 1804.

I am not at all surprised to hear that neither myself nor my political principles are very popular at Princeton. But I must confess that I was a good deal astonished to hear of being considered so great a liar as I find I am. It is a character which I do not conceive that I by any means merit nor will I tamely submit to such an accusation's being brought against me. You will therefore much oblige me by informing me in your next what Doctor Smith has alledged against me and as near as you can remember the particular words which he made use of. I will also thank you to mention the reasons which have induced the students [to] brand me with the name of a liar as well as the names of those who have thought proper to make so free with my character. I wish you to be very particular in relating every thing which has been said as I mean if I find the case requires it to send on a publication to Duane¹ in vindication of myself and also to endeavour to exhibit the character of Doctor Smith to the public in its true colours. In doing this I shall carefully avoid bringing your name in as it will serve only to exasperate uncle Sammy still more against you. I did not receive the letter which you wrote me just before you set off for Princeton untill the other day or I should certainly have answered it. But I must bid you farewell

¹William Duane, editor of the *Aurora*, the famous organ of the Republican party.

for the present as I find my thoughts so taken up with the intelligence which your last letter contained that I cannot think of anything else to say.

P. S. I shall write you a long letter by the next post. Muscoe desires his love to you, do write a little plainer.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

December the 31 1804.

I should have acknowledged the receipt of your last favour before this but I have been so much engaged in visiting about during the Christmas holidays that I have not had one single moment of leisure time. The information contained in your last letter was perfectly satisfactory and convinces me in what manner I ought to proceed. I shall for the present wave an explanation with Doctor Smith until I can write to Fenton Mercer,¹ and know from under his own hand what it is that he has said of me. From your letter I observe that I am charged with having made three assertions highly derogatory to the character of Princeton college namely that the young men were dissipated that the government of the college was tyrannical and that political persecution was carried to a very great length by the professors. The two first assertions with which I am charged of having made are perfectly correct, but the last one is a palpable falsehood. I have always said that Doctor Smith's political philosophy was decidedly inimical to republican principles and turned rather towards monarchy. And I have also farther observed that I believed he endeavoured to influence young men in favour of the federal administration but I have uniformly denied my having any knowledge of his making use of coercive measures to induce them to change their political opinions although I believe from what I heard while I was at Princeton that I might have said so without violating truth. What I have said of the college and of the character of Doctor Smith I never wished to remain a secret, and feel myself gratified at hearing that it has reached his ears. I only feel vexed at the manner in which he has obtained his information and at the use which he has put it to when I am certain that he must be conscious of the truth

¹Charles Fenton Mercer, 1778-1858, a first cousin of William Garnett. A.B., Princeton, 1797; A.M., 1800; LL.D., 1825. His public record follows: captain U. S. A., 1798; lawyer; member of the legislature of Virginia from 1810 to 1817; brigadier general of militia in War of 1812; member of Congress from 1817 to 1840; member of the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829-1830. He was largely responsible for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and was president of the company. He was during all of his maturity a bitter opponent of slavery and the slave trade.

of my observations. I have never seen Mr. Mercer since my return from Princeton except for a few minutes and consequently have had little or no conversation with him about the College or its regulations, he could therefore have obtained the information which he has thought proper to give Doctor Smith in no other way than by a letter which I wrote to my mother during my residence at Nassau Hall stating my reasons for wishing to leave it. As I have said before I wished Doctor Smith to hear what I have said of him but at the same time I think that Fenton Mercer coming at his information in the manner in which he did has acted entirely out of the character of a gentleman for disclosing it and for which according to the modern laws of honour I conceive I have a right to demand satisfaction. Remember me to all my friends but particularly to Harrison¹ and tell [him] I shall expect soon to receive a letter from him. farewell and believe me to be your sincere friend

P. S. I heard of the letter which Fenton Mercer wrote to Doctor Smith before you wrote to me from a young man by the name of Simson who had just left Princeton. He mentioned the facts which are stated in your letter but he could not tell whether Fenton Mercer in relating them to Doctor Smith had mentioned my brother and myself as being the authors of them. I have myself conjectured that Doctor Smith knowing the connexion between our families had taken it for granted that we were without being authorized to say so from Fenton's letter. If I find this to be the case the affair may be settled without being carried to extremities and then I shall think of my old friend

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K, 11th Jany. 1805.

I am now certainly indebted to you one letter as I have recd three since my last, tho' not all of them dated subsequent to mine; and I with pleasure comply with your desire, and that duty which I owe to you and my own feelings, in answering them. I am greatly pleas'd at Doer. Smiths reconciliation and friendly demeanor towards you; and hope from the propriety of your general conduct, that it will not change again: nothing is so certain to procure respect, as a steady uniformity of upright behaviour, not forgetting, never to return evil for evil, but allways good as far as in your power. In my last (which I hope you have recd) I inclos'd you \$30 enough I suppose for present demands, more will be forwarded when wanting, if it can be procur'd; *times are very hard—*

¹Henry P. Harrison of the class of 1805, who entered the Junior class at Princeton, from Spartanburg, S. C., in 1804.

Yours of 27th Decr. contain'd information that at once pleas'd and astonish'd me. I was pleas'd at the particual interference of a mercifull providence in saving from temporal punishment by not permitting the mad men to be maim'd by the explosion of the house, and far more mercifull in preserving their lives while they were so unprepar'd to plunge into Eternity and meet the Judge of quick and Dead. It is a wise man my Son who improves by observation, and as much may sometimes be gain'd, by marking the conduct of the wicked as the Saint, Worship the great Jehovah who is alone worthy to be ador'd for his goodness, and by no means permit yourself to attribute that to *chance*, or *fickle fortune*, which is so evidently mark'd with the hand of an Infinite God. I was astonished that such conduct should take place at that seminary, but much more so that the transgressors should escape punishment; and can only account for it in one way, (which however may be erroneious) viz, that the principals were great favorites of the Professors, and rather then make an example of them, the whole were permitted to escape. Should this be the case, I shall entertain a more unfavorable opinion of Smith than before, which I am sorry to say was not a good one. I hope that your room companions, nor any of your intimates, were among the disorderly; if they were, it is my most earnest desire, and serious advice, that you should at once give up their company and intimacy; otherwise you may before you are aware, and perhaps innocently, be involved in great difficulties. I am much gratified at your determination of combating all opposition at Princeton this year; it manifests a firmness which is in all situations essential; it shews too a desire to adhere to principle, which will grow into habit and be serviceable, and pleasurable, as long as you live. These good determinations can neither be made or kept without the assistance of the great ruler above, look to him therefore my dear Son for strength, and when good is done let him have all the credit, and when evil take it all to yourself. "A happy New Year to you!" Bless the hand that prolongs your life and your dear friends, and withholds not those comforts which are suited to our situation. It is well for us, nay it is necessary that we should look back on our lives, not only from Year to Year, but from day to day, and improve therefore; avoiding the evil which we have done, and pursuing the good. With shame and regret I acknowledge that I have not profited as much as time and opportunity has permitted; I have not grown in Grace and Divine knowledge as I should have done, and as is my earnest desire to do in the present year, and as I hope *before it's too late my son will do*: for as we live and have communion on Earth, so I wish we may do in Heaven—I feel myself greatly indebted to you for the disire you express of conforming, or rather of obtaining Religion because your Mama and myself wish it: but my Son there is a far greater motive which ought to operate on your mind, and that is the Glory of God and your own happiness. Read as much as possible the New testament, and use [torn] prayer to Him whose word it is, to

instruct, and inform you of its truth and necessity, and agree to follow conviction whithersoever the Spirit leads, and I doubt not your obtaining what my Heart desires. You say you would make the attempt if you could see one advantage that would result. What interest can I have in deceiving you? What advantage can accrue to me, or any other practical Christian, in attempting to impose on any person? Must not our declarations be founded from the clearest conviction and experience of the truth of our allegations? and if so, what becomes of those after death who have not an interest in the blood of the covenant? and none can have this interest unless they love God, the test of which as our Lord declares is the obeying of his commandments—That these things may sink deep into your mind and be a part of the means of bringing to truth is my most earnest prayer.

We are well except Sarah who is very ill with a plurisy what her fate may be is very uncertain. Receive our united Love and good wishes.
[Address: Nassau-hall, Princeton.]

From William Garnett.

January 14th 1804. [1805]¹

It is now some time since I have had the pleasure of hearing from you but as I know that it must have proceeded from some accidental circumstance I shall again write to you without waiting for an answer to last letter which I wrote you. I have not yet heard from Fenton Mercer and I therefore cannot inform you by this post in what manner our difference will terminate but I hope for the best. It is not my desire to be at variance with any man whatever but much less with one who is so nearly connected with me it would consequently give me infinite pleasure to be enabled to inform you that our difference has been amicably settled. This settlement will take place shortly as I expect to hear from Fenton Mercer by the next post, and if it terminates as I have reason to hope it will I shall then have leisure to devote a small portion [of] my time to the Rev. Doctor Smith who I think merits a little attention from my hands. As to the other gentlemen mentioned in your last letter who have thought proper to make such severe strictures upon my conduct I think them beneath a public notice I shall therefore pass over the epithets which they have honoured me with in silent contempt. But if I should ever chance to meet with any of them I shall then treat them as all such scoundrels deserve to be treated. I have I expect already exhausted your patience on this subject I will therefore wave it for the

¹The endorsements upon this letter and its contents show that it was really written in 1805 instead of 1804.

present and I hope in my next letter to conclude it entirely. You must I imagine by this time be pretty much tired of Princeton if so I wish you would take a dismissal and come to visit an old friend who will always be happy to see you. I would offer to introduce you to some of the handsomest girls that ever your eyes beheld but as I know you to be very luke warm in your devotion for this fairest and most valuable part of the creation I fear that it would not be a sufficient inducement. I must therefore depend entirely upon myself for the pleasure of a visit from you.

[Address:

Mr. Thomas C.¹ Ruffin
Princeton
New Jersey]

From William Garnett.

January the 21 1805

Your ironical letter of the 10 Instant came safe to hand and I now take the earliest opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of it. You have I find made sufficient allowances for my want of punctuality in answering your last favour I will therefore extend the same charity to you whenever a similar Instance shall occur This however I apprehend will not be the case while you remain at Princeton as the people of New Jersey do not like the Virginians delight in the exercise of hospitality and social intercourse. But are more inclined to take for their guide the maxim of "a penny saved is a penny got" than that of "let us eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die!" It may be a matter of doubt with some persons which principle is the most laudable of the two. But for my part I feel no hesitation in declaring for the latter. For this very obvious reason that the disciple of this opinion will at least enjoy some pleasure while he lives and may possess many virtues. In fact such a position as this necessarily implies many very prominent virtues, viz such as liberality openness of heart and philanthropy. Whereas a disposition like the former excludes the idea of any thing like virtue. The man who is entirely devoted to his own interest is of all characters to me the most odious his narrow and contracted soul is incapable of feeling one single generous emotion and his icy heart is alike impenetrable to the genial warmth of friendship. The finer feelings of the soul which are such bright ornaments to the human character are entire strangers to his bosom and in short we behold him in every point of view an object which should excite hatred and disgust of every rational creature. From what I have said I would by no means infer that the maxim of Epicurus is a correct principle but I merely contend for its

¹Ruffin's middle name, Carter, was dropped soon after he left Princeton.

superiority over the one which principally characterises the inhabitants of the state of N Jersey. I heard from your relations in King and Queen a week or two ago and am happy to inform you that they are all well. John Roane¹ and Kitty² will be here in the course of a fortnight and I shall then be able to give you a more circumstantial account of them. Your request concerning my commentaries upon Smiths philosophy I am not at present able to gratify. But as soon as I feel myself industrious enough to commence the task it shall be complied with. As for Roanes academy I have not heard any thing respecting it for some time and am of course unable to give you any satisfactory information on this head. I believe that I have now answered all your enquiries except the one relative to myself which shall be answered in as circumstantial a manner as possible. Since I quited Princeton I have been engaged in studying metaphysics which I commenced with Reid's essays and Duncans logick. The course of study which I mean to pursue for the balance of the winter is history and politics. So much for my studies and now for my amusements I occasionally visit about in the neighbourhood amongst my friends and receive visits from them. Every thursday I go to Pittsville (which is about a mile from the house) to receive my letters and papers and then I always meet with a number of my friends we generally spend our time in passing about the grog and conversing upon the news of the day. All the Foxes near here are destroyed the amusement of hunting I am therefore obliged to forbear untill they become more plentiful. I however find game enough for my gun and as I am a pretty good hand on the wing I often join in shooting parties. This is an exact description of the manner in which I employ myself—and I shall expect one equally as minute from you. Muscoe was not at home when your letter arrived it will therefore be out of his power to answer it by this post. farewell and believe me to be your Sincere friend.

N B Let me know in your next whether there has been any accession of republican students at Princeton and if it is not a secret the authors of those disturbances which took place on christmas.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

February the 13, 1804. [1805]³

Your letter of the 31 instant arrived while I was in King and Queen and I consequently could not answer it by the last mail. Since my return I have received another from you but as it is only a continuation of the

¹John Roane was Ruffin's uncle, being his mother's younger brother.

²Catharine Roane was the younger sister of Ruffin's mother.

³The endorsements upon this letter and its contents show that it was written in 1805 instead of 1804.

former I shall comprise my reply to both of them in this letter. I have since I wrote you last had a conversation with Fenton Mercer through the medium of my brother James¹ respecting the reports which are in circulation about me at Princeton. He denies his ever having made such assertions of me as he is reported to have done and to prove his innocence has written on to Doctor Smith for a copy of his letter to him. So that I think there can be no manner of doubt but what we shall settle our difference amicably. But I will quit this subject for the present and advert to one which more nearly relates to yourself. My concern and astonishment at hearing of your dismissal from the W. S.² was extremely great but nevertheless I think you take your removal too much to heart as it was not in consequence of any disgraceful action committed by you.

The conscientiousness of the uprightness of your intentions should I conceive be sufficient to enable you to bear up under a much greater mortification than the one which you at present sustain. If you consider the motives by which you were actuated when you advocated the establishment of this new society, I am certain that you cannot think that there is any disgrace attached to your present situation and more especially as the students who are implicated with yourself are among the most respectable members of college. I do not clearly understand the plan on which you propose to organize the A. S.³ but from the imperfect apprehension which I have of it it appears to me that by its being composed of members from the two highest classes in college to the exclusion of the lower classes it would ultimately end in the abolition of the present existing societies. For this reason that as the societies now stand there is no body or society in college superior to them which would not be the case was the A. S. established. This society being composed of the best informed part of college would render the others much less respected as they would be thought much less honourable than they formerly were. The consequence would be that in the course of time they would be utterly neglected and perhaps dissolved. But as I expect the mail every moment I can not express myself so fully on this subject as I intended to have done.

¹James Mercer Garnett of "Elmwood," Essex County, Va., 1770-1843, was a member of the Virginia legislature for several terms, served in Congress, 1805-1809, and was a delegate to the Virginia convention of 1829-1830. He was a member of the grand jury that indicted Aaron Burr.

²The famous American Whig Society of Princeton was founded as the Plain-Dealing Society. Ruffin was evidently dismissed from it because of his connection with the founding of the Adelpic, another society, which was to be composed of the members of the two upper classes only. There are hints in the letters of his reinstatement, the records of the society do not tell of his dismissal, and the catalogue of 1914 includes his name.

³The Adelpic Society, which this letter indicates that Ruffin founded, was organized during the college year of 1804-1805. The Whig and Clisophic immediately took joint action against it and succeeded in stifling it after a short existence. Its origin probably lay in the desire of a few men to organize a society which would not be as crowded as the two Halls.

P. S. I staid in K. and Q. so short a time that I could not see your friend of that place but I heard that they were all well Remember me to Schenk¹ and tell him that I was from home when his letter arrived or it should have been answered before this.

[Address: Princeton.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

Feb'y 21st. 1805.

My dear Son.

Yours of the 25th Ult'o. came to hand when I was from home on an excursion up Dan river in Rockingham County North Carolina, in search of better land than I occupy in Brunswick; to which place I expect to return in the next week to close a bargain for a very valuable tract, on what is call'd the Saura town, which more than probable you have heard of. Mr. Brodnax accompanies me, and in a year or two (if we live) we both expect to be residents of that place. There is a part of this land more productive than you can have an idea of, and more valuable than the people surrounding it think, from its being almost inexhaustible and so level that there is no perceivable fall in 200 or 300 acres. You will at once know that this is low grounds, and yet there never has been a crop lost by the flooding of the River. To enable me to make the purchase I have sold part of my quarter tract, and must sell the remainder together with this place as early as possible. I shall be very hard run for money, and as this debt is contracted for the temporal good of my Family, they must help me pay for it by frugality. I am much gratify'd by Doer. Smiths attention to you as it is a confirmation of the propriety of your demeanor, which with your age I hope will increase. You will find on more mature reflection your idea incorrect: surely it is better to have a real, than a pretended friend—say in your next whether it is necessary to have \$150 in April, or at different periods through the Session. I am well pleas'd that you have got rid of Mr. Harrison.² "Evil communications will corrupt good manners," and are at all times very much to be dreaded, particularly by Youth. I feel it almost unnecessary, altho my duty compels me to say something on the subject of *swearing*—Surely there never was so idle, so sinful and so unprofitable a custom so universally prevalent as that of prophane conversation. May I not flatter myself that my son will be so much the Gentleman, and have so much of the fear of an avenging God before his eyes, as to refrain from habits that are so immoral?

No information could have been given, that would have been more pleasing, than your devoting a certain portion of each Day to the study

¹Evidently William Conover Schenck, A.B. Princeton, 1805; A.M., 1808; later a noted Presbyterian minister.

²Probably Henry P. Harrison of Spartanburg, S. C., a member of the class of 1805.

of the Bible. Let me intreat you not to discontinue so laudable a pursuit, and let me beg of my dear Tom that this time may be doubled on every Sabbath. I thank my God that you begin to see the beauties contain'd in this Holy Code, and that you admit it to be of Divine origin: the more you read and understand, the more you will admire and receive the truths contain'd therein. But my son reading alone will not do, humble yourself before a gracious God, and honestly confess your weakness, your ignorance, and your sinfulness, and ask him to lead in that way which will be most to his glory. Remember he is a God who never sleeps, and is always near to help in every time of need, be not afraid that he will be deaf to your wants, or that he will not grant those things which you essentially require for your happiness. He never yet withheld truth from the humble Heart, or refused bread to the hungry soul. When you address a throne of Grace endeavor to do it with suitable reverence, and never forget to implore Mercy for your unworthy friends at flower Garden.

Holy and infinitely merciful God, operate by the influence of thy blessed spirit on the Heart of the Son of thine unworthy servant and handmaid; give him grace to love and fear thee as he ought, to serve thee with a willing mind, and to make thy glory the principle which actuates his every deed. Lead him Oh. thou God of Love to the fountain which flow'd from the side of thine only begotten Son, and by sprinkling him therewith cleanse him from all pollution; let the truth as it was in the blessed Jesus enlighten his mind, burst the chain of unbelief which enslaves his Heart, and bring him into perfect freedom, by owning him as thy returning son. Oh. that thou mayst give him grace to stand a scoffing and persecuting World, the Carnal desires of his sinfull flesh, and the luring baits of a tempting Devil; and that each succeeding day may bring him nearer thee and his eternal rest, until it shall please thee to admit him into the full and compleat fruition of thyself through Jesus Christ our infinitely meritorious Redeemer.

N. B. Your Mama sends specially her love, She thinks herself slighted, not having recd. more letters particularly to herself. The Jerusalem Cherry is sent herewith.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

March the 17 1805

Your favour of the 27 Instant should have been duly answered had it not have been that at the time I received it I was confined to my bed by a severe attack of the mumps and thereby disabled from writing. I was the more anxious to give a prompt reply to your last letter as I observed that it contained suspicions entirely unfounded and permit me

to say extremely illiberal. To suppose that any alteration has taken place in my friendship for you on account of the different relations in which we stand is to imagine me capable of entertaining sentiments which I hold in utter abhorrence. I have from my earliest infancy contracted a habit of thinking and acting for myself And as I value the privilege more than life itself I am clearly of opinion that it should be extended alike to every one as a natural and inherent right of which they cannot in justice be dispossessed. It would therefore be in the highest degree preposterous and absurd in me to break off all intercourse with a man whom I valued and esteemed merely because we differed in our opinions. Were I a student of Princeton college, I should most undoubtedly oppose the organization [of] the Adelpic society from reasons which appear to me to be self evident. As the Whig society stands at present there is no body or corporation in college superior to it. By organizing one of a higher order you will most undoubtedly lessen the honour now attached to it and this would necessarily in the course of time occasion its dissolution. But as I am entirely unconnected with the Whig society I feel very little interest about it and indeed were I now a member of college I should censure in a most unqualified manner the animosity and intemperance which the members of the W. S. have shown towards those of the Adelpic. As I can see no reason why men may not differ in opinion and still maintain a friendly intercourse with each other. I must now conclude as I am still in a very weak and low state of health and I am apprehensive that sitting still too long will injure me.

P. S. Muscoe saw your friends in K. and Q. last week and he says that they are in good health

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

March 25th 1805.

I sincerely participate with you in the joy which you express¹ on the reelection of Mr. Jefferson to the office of president as it clearly demonstrates after a fair and impartial trial that principle will invariably triumph over corruption. And it further proves that truth is immutable that although it may occasionally be obscured it will ultimately emerge from the clouds which falsehood and deception have cast around it and

¹The political opinions which Ruffin evidently shared with Garnett at this time were not altered in his later life. In principle a Jeffersonian Republican, he was in his later years a member of the Democratic party. Such a large part of his life was spent on the bench that he never was for any length of time in active politics. But, nevertheless, he filled a number of political offices, being twice an elector, several times a member of the state legislature, and once speaker of the House of Commons.

shine forth with redoubled splendour. There is nothing which more clearly substantiates what I have advanced than a comparison between the acts of the present and those of the former administration. During the short time that Mr. Adams continued in office we beheld the influence and power of the executive increased to high truly alarming and we saw with astonishment his rapid progression in steps of tyranny and oppression almost without a paralile in the annals of America. By the embodying of a standing army the creation of a number of useless offices and a strict adherence to the false and accursed maxim of the british government that a public debt is a public blessing he vainly hoped to render himself invulnerable to any attack that could be made upon him. Not content however with this breastwork of Federalism he determined if possible to entrench himself still more strongly and to conceal from the scrutinizing eye of the public under the almost impenetrable cover of a sedition law his many and flagrant violations of the constitution. A fact which evidently proves that falsehood will ever shrink from investigation.

The success which he met with in the prosecution of his nefarious designs plainly evince the futility of human calculation. But let us now quit this detestable view of public abandonment—and advert for a moment to the measures of the present administration here the contrast between the simple garb of truth and the perplexed labyrinth of falsehood is at once obvious. Sensible that a government founded upon the solid basis of integrity will always testify for itself Mr. Jefferson has never in a single instance attempted to impose the least restraint upon the liberty of the press or the freedom of speech but he has on the contrary in several of his public communications invited a free inquiry into the conduct of the executive Knowing that measures founded upon principle can withstand the severest scrutiny. On whichever side we now cast our eyes we behold the prospect equally cheering a territory has been added to our country valuable on account of its extent and fertility and still more so as it in a great measure enables us to exclude from arround us a settlement of foreigners. Our public debt is daily diminishing our dignity with foreign nations supported the numerous list of taxes which were imposed upon us by the rapacity of Federalism are repealed and in short we find our liberty as extensive as man in his present corrupt and degenerate state is capable of enjoying. Such is the state of prosperity which by the wise and patriotic measures of Mr. Jefferson we now enjoy and that it may long continue God of his infinite mercy grant. The account which you gave of the mortification of the Feds of Nassau Hall was extremely diverting and the manner in which they displayed their disappointment shows a littleness worthy of the sentiments they advocate. You request that I will give you an account of the celebration of the 4th of March in Essex in this particular I cannot promise to be very exact as I was confined to my bed when it took place. But I will satisfy you as far as I am able. The gentlemen

of the county had dinner at Mr. Banks tavern in Tappahannock at which was drank 17 toasts prepared by my brother James and Mr. James Hunter and accompanied with appropriate music from a very excellent band. It would be needless for me to insert them as you take the enquirer in which you will find them published. An oration was also delivered by Mr. Horrace Upshaw in commemoration of the glorious and memorable revolution which that day gave birth to. Of the merits of this action there are various opinions some are of opinions that it was tolerable good others that it was neither good nor bad and others again say that it was indifferent but all agree that it was very badly delivered. Thus I have to the best of my ability given you a detail of our proceedings on the 4th of March. I will therefore conclude by assuring you that I still remain your sincere friend.

[P. S.] Muscoe desires to be remembered to you and says that he should have answered your letter but he is confined with the mumps as soon as he gets well he will certainly do it. I expect that it would divert you to see him now his head is swelled to twice its ordinary size so that you guess he is a very great beauty.

Col. New¹ our present representative in congress has declined and my brother James has offered to supply his place as there is no opposition he will certainly be elected.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

May th6 1805.

I shall after your example without any preamble enter immediately upon the subject of the contemplated convention in the State of Pennsylvania.² The position which I took on this subject in my last letter I shall still maintain viz have the people of Pennsylvania a right to alter their form of government and is it expedient at this time for them so to act. The right of the people to amend or abolish that constitution whenever they disapprove of it is so well known and acknowledged in America that I need say nothing upon this head. I shall therefore, advert to my last Question is it expedient for them at this time so to act. The great end for which government was first instituted is said by politicians to be the security of the life liberty and property of the governed. It follows as a necessary consequence that whenever any people find that the government under which they live is incompetent

¹Anthony New, a native of Gloucester County, Va., had been a colonel in the Revolution. A lawyer by profession, a Republican in politics, he had been a member of Congress since 1793. He was later a member of Congress from Kentucky from 1811 to 1813; 1817 to 1819; and 1821 to 1823.

²The agitation in Pennsylvania for a convention was fruitless, and it was not until 1838 that the constitution was altered.

to this important end it is expedient for them to alter or abolish it. This I apprehend to be the case with the people of Pennsylvania after fifteen years experience they find that their present constitution is insufficient to secure to them the blessings of liberty and happiness. They have witnessed the most glaring acts of tyranny and oppression committed by their public functionaries for which they have in vain sought a constitutional redress. Would it not therefore be madness and folly in them tamely to submit to such wrongs when they have it in their power to remove the sources from whence they proceed. Surely it would and I trust there is too much good sense in Pennsylvania for the people to let slip this golden opportunity of reforming their constitution. You have I observe deduced a consequence from one of my arguments which I by no means admit to follow. Because I maintain that it is expedient for the people of Pennsylvania to call a convention you infer from thence that I must necessarily advocate the proposed amendments. This I deny to be the case. I do not nor will not advocate any amendments which I have never seen. Does it necessarily follow that because the people of Pennsylvania are advised to amend certain parts of their constitution that they are also obliged when met in convention blindly to adopt the plan proposed to them without consulting their own reason at all. Certainly not they are free to judge for themselves. Should the alterations proposed meet their approbation they will adopt them—if not they will of course reject them and then propose such as they themselves think necessary. But you argue if they reject these amendments the object of the convention will be defeated and I must therefore either concur both in the amendments and the convention or disapprove them both. The object of the persons proposing the amendments I readily admit will be defeated but that the object of the convention (which is a reform in certain fundamental principles of their constitution) will be rendered nugatory I deny. Certain I am that there have been outrages committed against the liberty and property of the citizens of Pennsylvania which have undermined and saped to its foundation their present constitution, outrages which call loudly upon them for redress which warns them that unless a speedy reform takes place the beautiful temple of liberty will on their land be laid prostrate with the earth and the Gothic castle of despotism erected upon its ruins. It is from these momentous and pressing circumstances that I have been induced and shall ever continue to advocate the call for a convention in the State of Pen^{nia}. And such is my reliance upon the judgement integrity and good sense of the people of that state that I am convinced they will not act in servile compliance to the dogmas of any set of men but in reforming their constitution they will adopt the opinions of other men only so far as they are conformable to their own. The amendments proposed by the persons who have advised the convention are nothing to the purpose they may or they may not be proper this is to be determined after the convention has met no man can take upon himself to say what amend-

ments will take place in the constitution should the convention meet. I have no doubt but that there will be many alterations suggested which are not at this time thought of. But I have said enough on this subject for the present. I shall therefore take my leave of it and begin to draw my letter to a close. You accuse me of inconsistency when I affirm that you may by following my prescription recover your health in the course of a fortnight. To you who appear to be so callous and insensible to the captivating charms of the female race so considerable an effect produced from what you would term so inconsiderable a cause may indeed seem wonderful. But to me it does not bear the smallest mark of inconsistency. I do not however in this prescription recommend the ladies indiscriminately to you. I mean such only as to beauty and personal accomplishments add the more solid and durable advantages of an improved and cultivated understanding. It is such ladies as these that recommend to your acquaintance for as to the fine ladies as they are termed I hold them in sovereign contempt.

P. S. Your friends in King and Queen were all well the last time I heard from them as well as those in Essex excepting Mr. Edwin Upshaw¹ who got shot through the thigh in a duel which he fought on Saturday last with Carter Wood a brother of T. Woods our present representative.

I will thank you to get me some seed of the melon genus if you can procure any and send me directions at what time and in what manner they are to be planted as well as a receipt for dressing them.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 11th May 1805.

Your letter to your Mother is at hand which gives us the pleasing information of your perfect recovery from the late affliction you have experienced. You do not say whether the vacation has ended, or when if not, it will—you do not say, whether you have chang'd your boarding house, or whether you still remain a labourer in your Mistress's garden; and you never have said whether this garden is in the Town or Country; these are things we should like to know and would have afforded you the means of lengthening your letter. I am rather fearfull that subjects will fail me ere I make this a long letter, for my Mind is never prolific, and I confess at this time, I feel it less so than usual; and should not now have taken up my pen, but to gratify the solicitude of your Mother, added to the forwarding as soon as possible, the \$20 call'd for. You inquire after your friends in King and Queen Ct. at which I am really

¹Edward Upshur married Lucy Roane, Ruffin's aunt.

astonish'd as your Uncles Tom and John intended writing when I left them three weeks ago. Your letters to your Uncle and Grand-Mother were both reed. and apparently gave great pleasure, and John express'd great earnestness, and promis'd himself great pleasure in corresponding with you: ere this I think you must certainly have reed their letters. Your Uncle Tom meant to advise (he said) the Study of the Law. I think by this time you must have decided on your profession and yet you have not inform'd us. You inquire where we are to move to. Our next change *in time*, will be to Sauratown, for a part of which, (1000 Acres) I have just a few days ago concluded a bargain. Let not this distress you, as I do not propose selling more of my land here, than (1000 Acres of the quarter plantation) enough to enable me to make good this bargain, which will leave a sufficiency in sweet Virginia for you. A subject strikes my mind the persuit of which would make this a very long letter, but as I am not in the humour I will just drop a few hints, and leave it with you to improve. It is the grand part of Creation, the blessing given unto Man, a Woman. How is it possible that you can have a Heart capable of being warm'd with the genial rays of friendship; expanded with the pleasing sensation of love, and not respect the female sex. How can you view them as a nuisance, as a pest to Society when but for Woman you could not have existed, nay, a much more valuable person, even the great Saviour of fallen man. Is it because tyrannical custom, added to the bitterness of the *Ware* [sic] which prohibits their being educated at Colleges and obtaining classical educations and obtaining diplomas that they are not to be regarded? or is it because they are really below the notice of a wise man? or what is the reason that your letters breath nothing but disgust agst. the whole sex.¹ Far be it from

¹The following extract from a little diary containing occasional entries by Ruffin is interesting in connection with his views at the time this letter was written:

June 9th, 1809—This day I became a resident of Hillsborough. The motives for removal are to my mind, urgent in the extreme. Only one rises against it. My Father, tho' not opposing, thinks it will eventuate in my injury. To you, Oh God, I address myself. May that power which has led me thro' life thus far, still extend its arm of help to my weakness, still watch in aid of my blindness, still cherish and protect thy doubting and trembling servant, I pray!!!

On Monday the . . . day of June, 1809, I mentioned to Anna Kirkland the tender subject of many weeks and months reflexions. No man who has not felt, can conceive the hopes and fears, the pains and pleasures of early, first, and sincere Love. I mean that sensation which results from desire for one and only one woman, who is worthy of our esteem and can attach to herself our respect and friendship. With a trembling voice and beating heart I unfolded to her the secret of my soul. Agitated by a passion as warm as it was determined, convulsed with a fear of repulse and with conviction of my poverty preying on my mind, I scarce knew what to ask, scarce cared what should be the result.—*I did ask*. On this day, . . . June 1809. *She granted*. And I am happy! She promises to make me happy! She will do it, has done it!

THOMAS RUFFIN.

HILLSBOROUGH, December, 1809.

By cash pd. for hat	\$5.—
By cash pd. for marriage license	2.—
By cash pd. Parson Prather	10.—

me to wish your time spent in Gallantry with the fair sex, but I certainly should be pleas'd if you were to estimate them as they merit. We are all well and join in prayer to Heaven to bless the son of Your affect. Father

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

My dear Son,

BRUNSWK 7th of June 1805.

Your three last letters of 17th, 21st, and 23rd. Ulto are now before me, and in their order I shall answer them. Your first informs me of your choice of a profession, by which you expect to gain a livelihood, and no doubt pluck some laurels in your travels through the different wildernesses of this worlds pilgrimage, to which you desire my opinion and advice with respect to the mode of study for the next year. To the first, i. e. the study of law, I can have no possible objection, if you make choice of it, as best suited to your taste and talents. It is clearly my opinion that our avocations should be suited to our gifts, or what would be pleasurable, will be labourious and irksome.

To the other, i. e. the way in which you are to spend the next year. I do not feal myself intirely competent to advise; but should suppose it would be most profitable to begin the study of your profession at once; and devote a certain portion of time to history poetry etc. These are so intimately connected with Law, that no man can be a good barrister without being a good historian, and in some measure acquainted with the Muses. Yet I believe it is an invariable rule to unite these studies; i. e. to form a more intimate acquaintance with the two latter while you are preparing yourself to exhibit in the former, than you could possibly do, while in the classics. Under this impression I have written to Judge Roane¹ (who is justly considered one of the greatest Lawyers in this state) to give you admittance as one of his family: from thence should we live, you will no doubt go to Wm. and Mary College. There were no illnatur'd reports circulated against Gholson;² and the only

¹Spencer Roane was the son of William and Judith Ball Roane and was a first cousin of Ruffin's mother. He was born in Essex County, Va., April 4, 1762. He studied law under Chancellor Wythe and was immediately successful in practice. Serving a number of times in the legislature of Virginia, he became a judge of the general court in 1789, and of the court of errors in 1794. He married a daughter of Patrick Henry. He was Virginia's foremost jurist at the opening of the century, and was Jefferson's choice for chief justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Diametrically opposed to Marshall in political belief, his appointment would probably have profoundly affected the history of the United States.

²Probably Thomas Gholson, of Brunswick County, member of Congress, 1808-1816.

reason he was not elected was McLins long standing: there were about 100 Votes between them.

I was greatly pleas'd at your living with Mrs. Smith, as I well know the advantages which will result from Female society, if it is enjoy'd only while at the dining table; there is a certain ease and agreeableness in demeanor which never can be attain'd except from the company of Females; they can alone make the polish'd Gentleman: do not mistake me, I mean not a fop; but he who in all company's can make himself agreeable, and allways feel himself all things to all People; *sin excepted*. I am much afraid you are some what of a pedant in your opinion of Women; remember they are made by a wise God for wise purposes, and were given to man as the greatest blessing Heaven could bestow; remember also that they have or had, and yet may have the image of God stamp'd on them; remember too that Nature has in most instances dealt as bountifully towards them, as to the stronger sex, and that it is now owing to custom, tyrannical custom that they are *generally* inferior to Men in Moral, Civil and Political knowledge and usefullness. In Religion there are many of them perfect patterns, and worthy to be follow'd by the greatest man; In that sphere then, which they were intended to move, both by Divine and human laws, they are, and ought, and will be respected. You say you will never mention this subject to me again, you are wrong; nothing is so fatal to error as free discussion, nothing so enduring between friends, as free interchange of opinions, and surely none can, or at least ought to be nearer than a Father and Son. I have no doubt but I entertain many erroneous opinions, as well as yourself, and certainly I have a right to expect by free communication both will be benefited. You may rely on it, I shall not dispute with you on, or contradict your opinion of a Dueller; be he whom he may, he is a pest to society. I hope not to live to hear of your becoming one, whatever situation you may be placed in, for none can justify it. Your friend Mr. Monford did not call on us, it would have given me great pleasure to have seen him, and render him any service in my power. We and our Neighbors are generally well. We all join in love.

[Address: Nassau hall, Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 1st July 1805.

The Lord has been kind and gracious, to your Earthly Father lately; It has pleas'd him whose wisdom and mercy is as boundless as Eternity, to afflict this earthly tabernacle in which my Immortal Spirit is envelop'd with much pain. I have had, and am just recover'd from a tolerably severe attack of the Flux; during the continuance of which, I felt sore in body, but thanks be to God, I had much peace of mind;

through faith, I saw a Country where peace and pleasure uninterrupted reigns, and by Grace, I think I had a seat prepar'd for me there.

Thank God, I had some patience under his rod, which I do believe was dipt, and chasten'd in Love, and I humbly hope his gracious purpose will be answer'd, i. e. I hope it will be the means of making me more faithful to his Grace, and that I shall live nearer to him, and more to his glory than I have done before. The more I know of him who is enthron'd in glory and light inaccessible by mortals, the more I love him, and the more I wish to know; for it is well said, "who that loves can love enough." My soul is continually hungering for the perfect image of Christ my Saviour, and I can truly say my son, the more I have of it the happier I am. Remember Tom, and oh! that it may be deeply engraved on the tablets of your Heart, "that without *holiness* no man can see the Lord" that is in peace; and be assur'd that this temper cannot be attain'd by living to, and for the World, nor in any other way than that which is mark'd out by God in his holy word.

For your sake and Gods glory I write these things. Oh! my Son, let not your Father appear in Judgement against you, but from this time seek an interest in Jesus the friend of Sinners, and live and die happy in the Lord. Religion will not interfere with any of the comforts, or duties, of man below, but greatly heighten the enjoyment, and performance of them; and happy, truly happy is he, who keeps a good conscience to God and Man.

Your two last letters of the same date are safe at hand. If I find it in my power you shall have a draft to procure the books wanted. I must leave the manner of your coming intirely to yourself, by water or the stage. I am glad that you have consulted Mr. George on the subject of your studies, he is no doubt fully competent to advise, and I hope will do it. I shall be quite willing to follow his opinion. I have an answer from Judge Roane, in which he says he would gladly comply with my request, but there are some particular circumstances which prevent his taking you.

Should you now, or at any future time commence the study of Law, I shall endeavour to get you with some person in whose talents I can confide for the first year or two; believing it better than commencing at Wm. and Mary it will be sufficient to end there. Your prejudices against private Familys are unfortunate. Do you never mean to associate with any but Gentlemen, and that at a tavern? You certainly do not reflect on the advantages that result from different company, and at other places, or your eyes would be open'd to your interest.

The longer these sentiments are cherish'd the greater difficulty you will experience in surmounting them; the less you mix with different societies, the less qualify'd you will be to fill any important station of life. We are happy to hear of yr. good health I pray it may continue, and that you may be thankfull to the giver of that, and every good gift. Our friends to the North are well except Lucy, who could not come with

Robert in consequence of indisposition. The N. Family are not here, tho' they promise to be out this fall. May the Father of our Spirits bless you, and give you Grace and knowledge to serve him in Christ our Lord, prays Your aff. Father

[Address: Princeton, N. J.]

From William Garnett.

July 12th 1805.

The excuses which I made you for not being more punctual seems as the saying is to have gone in at one ear and come out at the other. I find it needless therefore to offer you any more and you must consequently be content to receive my valuable epistles as I have leisure to write them. But jesting apart you appear to be very much out of spirits and if I judge of your situation by what my own was while I lived in Princeton it is not without a cause. The sooner therefore you quit this modern Sodom and Gomorra the better and when you do set out let it be by land at all events. You need not be under the smallest apprehension about your cash's giving out for if you find yourself in the least streightened you know where to apply. I shall always be ready and extremely happy to furnish you with any sum of money or with any thing else that lies in my power. And the friendship between us is so cordial that I hope you will never be backward in asking of me anything that is within the compass of my ability and I am confident that will always expect me to act in the same unreserved manner towards yourself. When the commencement draws near if [you] will let me know on what day you expect to be in Fredericksburg I will meet you there in a gig and bring [you] down to Essex, for I cannot let you pass so near without spending some time with me. You have I find departed from your intention of studying physic in favor of the law. I approve very much of your choice as I think your constitution much too delicate to withstand the fatigues attached to the duty of a physician. I have myself some intention of studying one of the above mentioned professions. I am however as yet in doubt which but I rather believe that I shall decide in favour of the former. My principal inducement for adopting this method of gaining a livelihood is the great aversion which I have to the manner of cultivating our lands in Virginia by slaves. I feel myself utterly incompetent to the task of managing them properly. I never attempt to punish or to have one punished but I am sensible that I am violating the natural rights of a being who is as much entitled to the enjoyment of liberty as myself. Under such impressions as these I can never be happy while I am forced to act in a manner which my conscience reproaches me for. Such is the all powerful reason which has

almost determined me to endeavour to live by the study of a profession in preference to retaining my farm and undertaking the management of a set of slaves.

But enough of this stuff for the present. I have more agreeable news to tell you. Your Aunt Catherine Roane is now in Essex and in good health. I went down on yesterday to Mr. Archibald Ritchies¹ in a carriage and brought her Miss Brooke and your cousin Mary Ann Campbell to Mt. Pleasant—and they intend remaining here for ten or 12 days to come. I have been very busy for several days in making preparations for a barbecue which we are to have on this day week and to which I am appointed one of the managers being so great ladies man that they could not do without me.

[P. S.] Mrs. Roane says that they recd a letter from you a short time ago which took them 2 days to read. I could make the same complaint—but I believe you are incorrigible in the habit of writing bad.

[Address: Princeton, N. J.]

Alexander M'Caine² to Sterling Ruffin.

[FELLSPPOINT [MD.?] July 19, 1805]

My dear Brother.

Before you proceed one step towards the reading of this letter (if a letter it can be called) let me request you to sit down—and exercise patience in hearing my tale. An apology cannot be rendered for my silence which would weigh, if I were of sufficient note or of that importance, that my scrawl would have been of any great service. Such as is the production of my pen—you should have had it long before to day, were it not for the press of business that crowd upon me. See a Town in which there may be about 5 or 6000 Inhabitants, that Town visited with sickness, in that Town but One Minister and a Roman Priest, that Minister preaching three or four times in a Week—none to Baptize the children, none to visit the sick—none to marry the living, none to bury the dead but himself—see him also from 8 oclk in the morning—till 6 in the afternoon engaged in a large school—after school engaged in some one or other of the above callings. See this man running hither and thither by Night and by day without any one to assist him in the discharge of these Ministerial duties—without time to read and almost without time to pray. See this man—and then you will see me. An

¹Colonel Archibald Ritchie, the first child of Molly Roane and Archibald Ritchie, married his first cousin, Martha Hipkins Roane, the fifth child of Colonel Thomas Roane of Newington, and the younger sister of Ruffin's mother.

²No information can be obtained concerning the writer of this letter. Evidently he was a Methodist minister who had been associated with Sterling Ruffin in Virginia.

opportunity offering for me to write to Ireland, I was, I think upwards of Two weeks in writing one single letter to my Sister, five times I was at it before I could finish it, the like of which I have not experienced before—yesterday I was oblig'd to stop my school a little to Baptize some children that were sick and in the afternoon I attended one funeral and married three Couple between 6 o'Clk and 9. You will see by these things I am busy. But are you never tired? may you say. Indeed I am. Tired—weary—sick of life—Sick—weary—tired of myself on account of my little Religion—of the World—on account of its vanity—on account of the Friendship of it on account of its instability. Longing after immorality for its substantial joys—after Heaven for its real pleasures and permanent Friendships. The 62 Psalm and 9 v. has made an impression on my mind the whole is seen as I never saw it till of late.

The circumstances which have affected me this year, may have been hinted to you, if they have not been blaz'd abroad, I mean the treatment of some of the Virginia Conference to me. That has cool'd the ardor of my Zeal towards the - - - . I am here now, the wound then inflicted on my feelings is cicatrized but the scar remains. I have no great thought of committing myself all my days into the power of any man or body of men whose favourite principle is a man accused of Maladministration ought not to be allowed to produce witnesses or speak his own defence. This is so absurd a doctrine that no body will be found who will believe it—and so notorious is the fact of its being advanced by some of our Headmen in Conference that *no one can* be found who will deny it. To such a system of policy I enter my most solemn protest—and with such my honor will never be united. But enough of this!

I thank God my dear Br. I have had only one days sickness since I came to Fellspoint—altho' the weather has been extremely warm and dry. It is very healthy all things considerd—and should the Lord keep far from us Sickness it will be matter of Thankfulness and of Joy. You have understood no doubt that I am engaged in keeping a School. I could not get over it, private or pecuniary considerations were not the main or moving cause. I have procured an Assistant and have as many as keep us both pretty busy. Indeed I am so completely trammelled with my engagements that I know not how I could get them off were I now call'd from this place.

I have often thought of my Br. Sterling and his Companions perhaps a day has not

I got on as far as *not* when the Town Clock struck Eight I was obliged to drop my pen and run to School—and now about the middle of the day I resume the subject, and again say perhaps a day had not passed since I came that I have not thought of you, your family, your Br. Wm. and his family. I have thought of you—yes—and I believe you will have some of them while I have any at my disposal—this is all I can do—and this I think I will do when I am engaged in conversing with MY FRIEND. Touching anything more—as to a visit to your Neigh-

bourhood or even to Virga. I am afraid I got too much at the Con. to visit it again—not that I would be afraid to stand before the World in defence of Truth—I mention this to let you know the real motive. With many of my dear Brethren I am united and to all the rest I wish Peace.

Discharging everything that might raise conjecture I will tell you that our Dear Doctor Coke has got a dear Penne' he was lately married in Bradford a Town in England to a Miss Penelope Smith possessed of a fortune of 30,000 £ Sterl!!!!!!! Wonders will never cease. Who could—would—should—or ought blame a young Man of 30 when the Old man of 60 puts his head into the Halter. This my dear Br. has made me a little merry when I heard of it. I dare say it will in the two Worlds raise many a smile—Farewell dear Doctor—Farewell.

To be serious, this paper contains a mixt—a queer collection of matter, well, forgive everything that is wrong. I did not intend to write such a letter when I promised to write to the Ladies—this however is not for them it is for you *To let you know I am alive.*

Danl. Hall passed through this City a few days ago. I did not see him he has advertised his Chair—but whether he sold it or not, I cannot tell—they say he need not go to Tennessee if he is going to do as the other Dr. has done. Jesse Lee is gone to the Eastern Shore to a great Camp Meeting which is to commence the 25 Inst. He has gone largely into the book making no less than 4000 copies!! when he will return to Virga is, I believe uncertain.

And now Br. let me close by begging in the MOST SOLEMN manner an Interest in your prayers. Give my love to your Companion and family, Br. Wm and his family—Br.^s Hobbs—Gholson Jr—the Brs. Saunders's—and to those that may even enquire (if any should enquire) for your unworthy Br.

ALEXANDER McCAINE.

Fellspoint July 19th 1805.

[Address:

Mr. Sterling Ruffin

Gholson's near Gholson's bridge

Brunswick County.

Virginia.]

From William Garnett.

August the 7, 1805.

I received from you by the last mail two letters which contained as usual many complaints against me for my want of punctuality. I have once before informed you that mail arrives at Pittsville on wednesday evening and goes up so soon on the following morning that I cannot possibly answer your letters untill the post after. This excuse I think sufficiently accounts for my want of punctuality. I shall therefore advert to other circumstances of which you will probably wish to be informed.

Your aunt Roane and your cousin Miss Campbell left Mr. Pleasant before your letters arrived. I could not therefore deliver your message to them. Our 4th of July was celebrated in a very different manner from what it was in Princeton. We had a dinner at Tappahannock prepared by Mr. T. Banks at which there were a number of toasts drank but we had no oration. The night after the dinner we had a ball at which there were a number of handsome girls. I know of no other circumstance which occurred on that night worth relating. You have therefore received a full account of all our proceedings on that important day, and I have no doubt but you will think us a shabby set of rascals. I shall not however attempt to make any excuse for our conduct but submit ourselves entirely to your mercy. I am now writing in room so full of noise that I find it impossible to continue my letter I must therfor beg that you will excuse the shortness of this letter and believe me to be Your affectionate friend

[P. S.] You have I fancy forgotten to procure me the seed of the melon genus and the receipt for dressing them which I request you to send me some time ago. I shall write you a long letter by the next post.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Robert Ruffin.¹

FLOWER GARDEN August 8, 1805.

It will do well enough ha : ha : ha you ask'd if I would have resolution enough to read your letter to the end if I have I am sound soul and body this is an unfair way of Judging what would you expect of a child who was put to reading before he knows his letters can you judge of his abilities from that, suppose he cannot read you will then abandon him from your doctoring for I assure you this is a case to [illegible] you had as well have wrote in greak or hebrew as to have made those caractors I assure you there is but one person in this part of the world who can read it and that is your father to whom I had to apply for a translation. You desired that I would give you an account of the fourth of July in Brunswick which I should have done had it been conducted even tolerably well but knowing it must be insippid to one who had seen anything like what you gave me an account of I will say nothing about it more than that Gholson was our president and Stith was Vice; Your Father gave me 15\$ and told me to enclose it in my letter said he you may inform the boy so much for July; Uncle John Roane desired me to get from you an account of the proceedings and the different studies at Nassau Hall. I suppose he wishes to keep up the same rules and regulations

¹Robert Ruffin was a first cousin of Thomas Ruffin.

at the academy and King William; there is a great preparation for a camp meeting which will take place the day week it is supposed there will be more people than was ever at one in this part of the world. We are all well except your mother who is frequently complaining of the swimming in the head but under daily expectation of the mumps breaking out in the family I was down with your father at Petersburg where I caught it and it broke out after I got home; I saw the doctor yesterday he desired me to give his compliments to you.

[Address:

Citizen Thos. C. Ruffin
Nassau Hall
Princeton.]

From Muscoe Garnett.

August 9th, 1805.

Be assured that however deficient I may have been in demonstrating my friendship towards you it has not proceeded from any real want of it, on the contrary instead of diminishing as you seem to think, it has done, I can say with truth that it daily augments. What excuse can I then make for my long silence? No other than that of an incorrigible indolence, which although you have so severely commented on I am forced to plead to avoid a suspicion much more alarming to my feelings, which is that of a deficiency in friendship. But as you are so great an adept in the study of the human heart, I think from our long acquaintance that you might have known mine better than to have suspected that my silence proceeded from any such cause. I expect your return with the greatest impatience, but I cannot say with certainty whether or not we can spare sufficient time from our studies to accompany you to Brunswick as we shall be at that time very busily occupied in the study of the French language, and several sciences. It is with the greatest difficulty that I can force myself to write, indeed so great is my aversion to it that my correspondents are perpetually rebuking me for my neglect, and I can assure you that you may always look upon a letter from me as a strong mark of my friendship for as every action of our lives is the result of the prevailing motive I say that for any incentive to be at any time sufficiently strong to overcome that innate sluggishness in me as you are pleased to call it, is a proof of the strength of my friendship. It begins to grow very late and it is time to conclude for there is such a noise in the house I scarcely know what I write, but luckily we have no political subject to discuss as you and William always have, and I am no preacher as you are for I can scarcely call this letter of yours anything but a moral lecture on Indolence and if you go on to improve in proportion as your commencement promised I do not doubt that you

will in time rival Doctor Blaire himself. I have twice hurried on farther than I intended and will now conclude with assuring you of the continuance of my friendship.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 12th Augst. 1805.

Your letters of the 27th and 30th Ulto are both at hand, the first of which I shall attend to in this letter; the other affording important matter for a sepearte one, if I find time and inclination to write, before your return; or a conversation when we meet, that I hope will be edifying to at least one, if not both. Let me only in the mean time again request in the most *solemn manner* an interest in those prayers which I trust you put up to a throne of Grace. Let me hope that at, or about Sun rising and setting you will present your Father etc. to an Almighty and all mercyfull Creator, and implore his pardon and blessings on them, as a *part* of them will endeavour to *Remember you* when they are pouring out their souls to Him. Prayer is certainly food for the soul, and it cannot be kept alive without much of it. Oh! then my Son intreat the Father of mercies to give you and us praying Hearts. Your Cousin Robert wrote you a few days ago when I inclos'd \$15. I herewith send \$140 making the sum required. If you have recd. Hills draft you may make use of it in procuring books (among which I wish you to get me Cowpers Poems) and I will pay him. This sum \$200 besides your furniture and such books as you will dispose of (and which cost you a good sum) is more than I calculated you would want, and nothing short of the assistance of a friend has enabled me to send it at this time.

Alltho' I am anxious to see you, and your departure from Princeton immediately after the examination would hasten the time of our meeting, I can by no means consent to your leaving it sooner than commencement without the approbation of Doer. Smith. It would hurt me extremely if you were to come off contrary to the regulations of the Institution, by which your good name would be sullied. If then, you cannot make your arraignments with his entire consent, and come away with credit to yourself, you *must* stay until you get your *parchment*. You may say to Doer. Smith if he has no particular objection I wish you to leave Princeton as early after the examinations as possible. If you are in Richmond between the 20th and 25th of Septr. you will more than probable meet with me at the Bell.¹ We are all well except your Mother

¹A well-known tavern in Richmond.

who has been latterly afflicted with her old complaint. You should be particular in forwarding your trunks; and as you leave Nassau hall, perhaps forever, you should dispose of such things as you do not bring off.

[Address:

Nassau-hall,

Princeton,

New Jersey.]

From William Garnett.

[ESSEX COUNTY, VA.] August 29th 1805.

I have this moment received a letter from you but in consequence of the post office at Pittsville being this day put down I am obliged to send my letter to Laytons which I am fearful will prevent you from receiving it in time. You will however have sufficient leasure between this and the 20th of September to let me know the result of your application to Dr. Smith for permission to quit Princeton before the commencement takes place. If you will let me know at what time you expect to be in Fredericksburgh I will certainly meet you there in gig, if I can procure one which I think is a very doubtful matter as neither myself nor any of my neighbours are rich enough to burthen ourselves with so unnecessary an expence. But should I not be able to procure a gig you can easily get one by applying to one of the tavern keepers in Fredericksburgh. It is however needless to say more on the subject as we can arrange all matters when we meet which I hope will not long. I find by some observation of yours in the letters before the which I received from you that you have entirely misunderstood the remarks which I made some time ago respecting the condition of our slaves. I do not by any means think that it would be politic in *us* to emancipate them in their state. On the contrary I conceive that should such an event take place the evil done to themselves as well as to society in general would be incalculable. Nor do I think there can possibly exist a greater evil than that of partially emancipating our slaves. Besides the injury which you do to the community at large by turning loose upon them a set of men brought up as our negroes generally are you render those who are still retained in slavery much more discontented with their situation than they otherwise would be. And if you take all things into consideration you will find that the slaves themselves who are emancipated in this way are not in the smallest degree benefitted by it as they commonly act in such a manner as bring themselves under the correction of the law. No my plan was not to free my slaves but to dispose of them to some person who I would be assured would treat them well and thereby rid myself of the painful task of keeping them under proper

discipline. This plan I think, I shall still adhere to unless the task of managing them [is] much more agreeable than I expect it is.

[Address: Princeton, New Jersey.]

*Praeses et Curatores Collegii Neo-Caesariensis.
Omnibus et singulis has literas lecturis
Salutem in Domino.*

Notum sit quod nobis placet, auctoritate publice diplomate Praesidi et Curatoribus hujusce institutionis collata, *Thomas C. Ruffin* juvenem ingenuum, moribus inculpatum, literasque humanioribus imbutum, examinatione in artibus coram facultate collegii imprimis habita, titulo, graduque Artium Bacalaurei adornare.

Cujus haec membrana, sigillo collegii nostri rata, nominaque nostra subscripta, testimonio sint.

Datum Aulæ—Nassovicae

Sexto Kalendas Octobris

Anno Domini Millesimo Octingentesimo quinto.

SAML. SMITH PRAESES
JOSEPH BLOOMFIELD¹
JOANNES BAYARD²
ELISHA BOUDINOT³
ASHBEL GREEN⁴
J. B. SMITH⁵
IRA CONDUCT⁶
ISAACUS SNOWDEN⁷

} Curatores.

From William Garnett.

September 27th, 1805.

You will no doubt be surprised to learn that I was very much disappointed at receiving a letter from you a few days since. But as para-

¹Joseph Bloomfield, trustee of Princeton, 1793-1801. He signed this diploma as governor of New Jersey.

²John Bayard, trustee of Princeton, 1778-1807.

³Elisha Boudinot, trustee of Princeton, 1802-1819.

⁴Ashbel Green, professor at Princeton, 1785-1787; trustee, 1790-1812; president, 1812-1822.

⁵James Bayard Smith, trustee of Princeton, 1779-1807.

⁶Ira Condict, president of Rutgers College, and a trustee of Princeton, 1804-1809.

⁷Isaac Snowden, treasurer of Princeton, 1782-1808.

doxical as this may seem, to you it is nevertheless a fact. To hear that you had been so near me without my having the least intimation of it was indeed a disappointment and more especially as you have all along fed me up with the hopes of seeing you this fall. It is true that you endeavour in some measure to palliate your conduct but I really think your excuse appears to be rather a lame one. If you were afraid of being sick could we not have taken as much care of you here as they could at home no the truth of the matter was you were too impatient to see your relations in Brunswick. You therefore stand without any other excuse whatever and you can only make up for your non performance of promise by immediately complying with the one which you last made me of coming to see me as soon as you could possibly leave home. This I am the more anxious for you to do as I have several very important subjects which I wish to discuss with you and which I cannot so well do by letter as by a personal communication. Some of these points we have already partially discussed whilst you were a resident of Nassau Hall but there are others which I wish to advise with you upon that relate wholly to myself and are to me of the last importance. Calculating certainly upon seeing you shortly I shall defer saying more on this subject untill I can have by a personal appearance a better opportunity of explaining myself. I am at present busily engaged in the pursuit of my studies however I cannot say as I am learning nothing but the french language. This leads me to speak of a man in whom I have been more deceived that ever I was before in my life. From the great character under which Doctor Haller entered our family I had calculated upon his being to me an invaluable acquisition. His great reputation for talents information and integrity had prepossed me more strongly in his favour than any stranger that I had ever seen in my life.

You may judge therefore how great has been my disappointment when I tell you that I have found him entirely destitute of the first two requisites and I have many strong reasons to believe him to be also in a great measure destitute of the last. Of this I shall, however say no more untill I see you and shall only observe that at present neither Muscoe nor myself are upon speaking terms with him. Muscoe is just recovering from a spell of sickness which has for some time past confined him to his bed or he would otherwise have written to you. We have had for some time past a sick family two of my brothers are just getting well of the fall fever and I have a brother and a sister now confined to their beds with it. I am in fact the only one who can be said to have entirely escaped from sickness this fall. Adieu.

P. S. I wrote you at Princeton, since your return home as I did not get the letter which you left for me at Fredbg in some time after it was written and I should not then have gotten it but Mr. Potts happened there by accident and brought it down. Let me know when I shall expect you.

Our jockey club races in this neighbourhood took place a few days ago at which I saw Tom Roane John and archibald Ritchie they were all well, and spent a day with us before they returned home from the races.

[Address:

Harris Post Office
Brunswick
Virginia.]

*From George Hairston.*¹

RICHMOND Oct. 2nd 1805.

Dr. Friend

Yours from Petersburg I had the satisfaction to receive at [torn] gave me great pleasure to hear of your safe arrival. I have complied with your request in not neglecting your Diploma, and left it where you desired. The reason of my not putting an Adelphic ribbon to it you, I suppose, have heard. I was sorry to hear of the proceedings of that Society, with regard to you, but I do not know why I should be, because nothing in my opinion is more ridiculous than that of expelling a man from a thing which no longer exists and that too without giving him a hearing or even information of the business previous to their determination. Their conduct in this instance has been considered to be curious and contemptible. I suppose they found themselves fast sinking into oblivion and in order to prevent the members of College from forgetting that there was such a boddy, they proceeded to this unaccountable conduct, preferring to be remembered with disgrace, rather than to be sunk into the gulf of forgetfulness. The ribbon on your Diploma is the same kind with the others who were not members of either of the Societies.

Nothing very particular occurred on the day of commencement, the speakers delivered their orations rather better than usual. The remarkably numerous audience appeared to inspire them with oratorical fire. I left Princeton on thursday night and arrived here last evening in company with Messrs. Penn,² Brice³ [torn] I could not have supposed that parting with Friends would have been so affecting as I found it to be, in spite of me, I could not avoid shewing my weakness. I would

¹George Hairston, of Virginia, a student at Princeton who failed to receive his degree in 1805 because of his not having studied Greek, but who did receive a special diploma for the rest of his work. He was without doubt a member of the Hairston family which later settled at Sauratown in North Carolina.

²Robert C. Penn, of Richmond, Va., who remained at Princeton until May, 1807, when, just before his graduation, he was dismissed for rebellion.

³Probably Archibald Bryce, of Richmond, Va., a member of the Sophomore class at Princeton, admitted in 1805, who never graduated.

not undergo such an other [torn] no considerations whatever. I am just now hurrying off to the Fair ground. You will therefore excuse me for scribbling off these few lines in such a bungling and careless manner. If you can make out to understand it, I shall be agreeably disappointed. I shall tomorrow proceed on my way home where I will be happy to hear from you at any time etc.

[Address: Harris post office Brunswick Cty, Va.]

From J. Reynolds.¹

PRINCETON NOV. 20th 1805.

Dear Ruffin

I have delayed answering your letter a few days till I would complete your business with Mr. Robinson² and be able to give a full account of it to you. I will pay Robinson to night: as certain as death: and the reason why I could not sooner, is because leaving home two weeks before college commenced, I did not bring money with me: but had it forwarded to me at this place after I came. Pollard³ has no money he says at present but will be able to discharge his quota immediately—John Blair⁴ has paid his part, or had money and intended to pay it. Since I wrote the above line I have enquired and found that neither of them have discharged their several accounts. I urged Pollard strongly: he declared to discharge it *immediately*. It would be best for you, Sir to write to Pollard or Blair. I know well that they are dilatory, and that my words have not as much force as yours. I am sorry indeed that I have it not in my power to send you a satisfactory account of this affair—with respect to myself, you may be assured of promptness in the performance of my part of the business, probably when you next receive a letter from me, I will have the pleasure writing a more account of it.

Your departure from College without taking leave of me needs no apology: I am no advocate for forms and ceremonies—I am told that some time before your departure, you renewed your acquaintance with Robt: Green.⁵ I was surprised when it was mentioned to me: and no way displeas'd at your condescension.

Our college is very much crowded by the new students who have entered this fall, I believe the number is nearly 200 Every room in Col-

¹John Reynolds, of Shippensburg, Pa., a non-graduate member of the class of 1806.

²Probably Jonathan Robinson, of Philadelphia, a non-graduate member of the class of 1807.

³Robert Pollard, of Richmond, Va., a non-graduate member of the class of 1807.

⁴John H. Blair, of the class of 1806.

⁵Robert Stockton Green, of the class of 1805; A.M., 1809; died, 1813.

lege has its complement, and a large number board in town. I am afraid that our Society will be very much crowded, as a great number will apply and few can be refused.

You probably have been informed by Belnap¹ or Cuthbert² that your brother adelphians have with the firmness of popes excommunicated you from their august bodies. Indeed it seems strange that a Society would expel a worthy member, when the next moment it had in contemplation, a dissolution of itself. I heard that the cause of your expulsion, was the divulging of some secrets, one of which was that "the society was to be dissolved at Commencement and that the records were to be burnt. You yourself, know best the cause, and I will leave you to think for yourself.

It was my opinion that a new society would be formed this winter. I hardly think that it will be the Case at present—the number of Students so little exceeds the number of which the College has for some time consisted that the formation of a new society will hardly be attempted. You recollect I informed you of the intentions of some students together with myself—to establish a third Society: the business has fallen through—for my part think too much trouble would devolve on me if I attempted to carry it into execution with a few others. There would be great expense, and trouble for a few to carry it into effect. I hope to see the time, and I hope it will be soon, when we can again call you Whig. I then with some caution will lay before you the state of Society. I am of opinion that the College will never consist of many more students than it does at present. So many institutions have been lately established in the several states that, after some time this college will be confined nearly altogether to the education of the Youth of N. Jersey—the Jerseymen are pouring in like like the northern invaders upon the Roman Empire— $\frac{1}{3}$ of the present number are all Jersey men.

The Seniors are reciting Catoprics in Helsham³—I. M. is far the best scholar, will take the first honour

Write again soon inform me of every thing.

Mr. T. R.

[Address: Harris's, Brunswick, Virginia.]

¹Hezekiah Belknap, of the class of 1805; A.M., 1808; tutor, 1806-1807; librarian, 1807-1809; member of the New York assembly, 1814. Died, 1824.

²John Alfred Cuthbert, 1788-1881, class of 1805. Lawyer, member of the Georgia legislature for many years, captain in the War of 1812, member of Congress from 1819 to 1821, federal commissioner to treat with the Creeks and the Cherokees, 1829; editor of the *Federal Union*, 1831 to 1837. In the latter year he moved to Mobile where he became a county judge in 1840 and a circuit judge in 1852.

³I am unable to identify the classic mentioned. This was probably a local slang equivalent.

From William Garnett.

December 17th 1805.

If you are a man of your word this letter cannot reach you before you set out for Essex. But for fear that this should not be the case I have thought proper to answer the epistle which I received from you by the last mail. You mention matter which you wrote me some time ago, but which I have never yet received. You may therefore judge that I have had sufficient reason to conclude that you were either dead or that some dreadful catastrophe had befallen you. Your letter however has cleared up my doubts as to your non entity and soundness of body but the cause of your long silence still remains unexplained. I shall not however urge you farther on this subject but leave you to make such comments upon it as your own reflection will suggest. I believe that I shall commence the study of the law after Christmas but I do not well know how to give up medicine a Doctor having always been a favourite profession with me.

My view in studying the law if I determine so to do will be to gain a subsistence.

You will no doubt be surprised to hear a man who is in possession of a tolerable good tract of land and negroes enough to work it talk in this strain. But it is nevertheless a fact that my sole object in studying the law is to gain a livelihood. I dislike the present system of cultivation in Virginia so much that I think the situation of the master but little preferable to that of the slave. Under the influence of these impression I do not think it likely that I shall long retain my farm when I arrive at an age which will qualify me to dispose of it. And should this happen which I think there is every probability of its doing I shall then need a profession for my support. I shall I suppose see you in a few days and I can then enter more largely into my views to say more at present would therefore be superfluous.

ESSEX, VIRGINIA.

[Address:

Harris Post office,
Brunswick,
Virginia]

From J. Reynolds.

PRINCETON Decr. 20th 1805.

Dear friend.

Your letter afforded me much pleasure; I neither regard the postage or any trouble which I may have in receiving the letters or doing any business for a particular friend. I do not mean by these words that I

ever experienced any trouble in transacting any business relating to you. I agree with you on your eulogy of Friendship. It is a sacred tie: which binds mortals together. Unhappy must be the man for whom there is no "eye to pity or hand to save." The greatest pleasure that has been ever mingled with my cup of sorrow has arisen from the sympathetic affectionate kindness of my friends. No person ever needed more consolation from their fellow mortals than myself. Even this moment were I not conscious that I have friends, who watch with an anxious eye, my unhappy state of mind and body, my evil genius might hurry me imperceptibly to the commission of some rash action.—I have let the pen very foolishly glide along without heeding what it writes.—You must know that I at present labour under a scourging disease, which will force me to leave College in a few days. I have resolved to take a dismissal from College and go to Philadelphia. You may be anxious to know, what is the nature of the disease. I never informed any person but an intimate friend. You however shall know it. I always thought that the mention of it involved a point of delicacy and therefore I tell no person. But there is no shame attached to the discovery of the disease. If you consult any system of Surgery you will find a disorder called Hernia. Certainly it is one of the most afflicting diseases that the constitution of man is liable to. I shall be in the city on the 26 of Decr. It is my intention to put myself under the care of some eminent physician at that place, whose skill in surgery may promise a speedy cure. (I doubtless shall leave College and never return again.) Tho' I value somewhat a regular degree; yet when my health is put in competition with a nominal honor you know what choice is preferable. Most probably I shall immediately commence the practice of Physic; if I receive a successful cure. The operation will be somewhat dangerous, but I am prepared for the consequences death: or life, tho' I hope that the first will never happen.

* * * * *

I do not wish you to write me for some time as I am not certain where I will reside. I will inform you by Letter from Pha. what may be the result of my disorder.

I shall all ways esteem Ruffin as one of my best friends in life—and shall anxiously look forward to the day when I shall have better opportunities of perpetuating a friendship, which if it be as pure as it is at present will only terminate with my existence.

[P. S.] Ritchie sends the Enquirer yet: I only took it for one half year.

[Address:

Westward Mill
Brunswick
Virginia.]

From J. Reynolds.

Dear Ruffin

PHILADELPHIA Jan'y. 18th, 1806.

I have been in this city 3 weeks under the care of Drs. Physick¹ and Wistar²—they have given me a very favourable opinion of my disorder in consequence of which I will leave town in a few days. Whether I ever shall return to College again, depends upon circumstances. My ill health would prevent me from going to Princeton before spring at least, and I have partly concluded to begin the study of Medicine.

The faculty would be unwilling to receive me after being absent so long a time as four months and rather than being forced to stay at College another year, I'll drop the notion of taking a degree at Princeton College. I do not value a nominal degree: Among Republicans where equality is the favoured principle and monopoly of any kind is discarded by an intelligent people the pompous title of A.B. will have little effect, when a man is to rise by his own intrinsic merit. It shall be the business of my whole life to investigate all the mysteries of science: and seeing that I have some rudiments of taste implanted in my mind by an academeical education, I may be nabled to pursue them to a favourable issue. A degree certainly is of use to a man in the literary world, in the profession which he intends to pursue. If I study medicine, no doubt the degree of M.D. will be conferred upon me. Of the three professions that of Medicine will suit me best. There are bad prospects for Lawyer in the state of Pennsylvania. The spirit of litigation will in time cease throughout the U. States: instead of contentious strife which is the consequent of party spirit, and of the demoniacal effects of jacobinism, universal harmony and order will arise.

I intend to read much in the course of this winter if my health permits, and prepare myself for the study of Physic. I will write to the faculty and if they be unwilling to receive me in Spring, I will immediately commence study. I hope you will write to me at Shippensburg give me an account of every important occurrence in your sphere since I seen you.

The Students of Princeton did not pass over Christmas without showing something of their antient infatuation—Drunkenness, a monstrous practice, was common thro' College. Little William Hamilton³ of No. Carolina has been suspended for impertinence to Thompson.⁴ Neile⁵ is married, and gone from Princeton. Belpap is reading Law. John

¹Philip Syng Physick, 1768-1835, the "Father of American Surgery."

²Caspar Wistar, 1761-1818, a noted surgeon who succeeded Jefferson as president of the American Philosophical Society. The vine, wistaria, is named for him.

³William Hamilton, of Elizabeth City, N. C., a member of the class of 1808.

⁴William Thompson, professor of languages, 1802-1808.

⁵William Neill, of Pennsylvania, 1778-1860; A.B., 1803; tutor, 1803-1805; moderator, Presbyterian General Assembly, 1815; president, Dickinson College, 1824-1829; editor and writer.

Scott¹ is reading at Dr. Smiths. I. Smith² and Barton³ are studying medicine in Philadelphia. The Whig Socy. contains 80 members, and Old Morford is much of a rascal yet. Walker⁴ is one of the best scholars in the Senior class, and has exceeded the expectations of all—he will have the third or fourth honour.

I have been amusing myself in this City for 8 weeks.

T. C. Ruffin.

[Address:

Westward Mills

Brunswick, Virginia.]

From George Hairston.

PITTSLVANIA CITY [VA.] Feby 2nd, 1806.

I am afraid you have before this concluded that warm friendship cannot dwell in the breast of one, who has delayed answering your agreeable letter for so great a length of time, but believe me my dear friend it has been much less owing to inclination than to unavoidable circumstances; to detail which would be useless to your generous and unsuspecting heart; and would only trouble you with excuses, which I know you judge to be useless.

I have often conversed with my friends at Princeton and they perfectly agreed with me, with regard to the tyranical and unprecedented conduct of the Adelphians to you. I suppose it must have been the expiring struggles of ambition which had no other channel through which to give itself vent. It was no less useless than absurd. It could not possibly have been productive of any good consequences whatever; for that was the last groan of the institution and I suppose it has almost sunk into oblivion. As it could have proceeded from nothing but enmity

¹John Morin Scott, A.B. Princeton, 1805, was a lieutenant in the War of 1812; member of the legislature of Pennsylvania, 1816-1817; member of the constitutional convention of 1836; mayor of Philadelphia, 1841-1843. He died in 1858.

²Isaac Ambrose Smith, A.B. 1805, of Prince Edward County, Virginia; M.D. University of Pennsylvania, 1808; later of Louisiana.

³William Barton, of Philadelphia, 1786-1856; graduated from Princeton in the class of 1805. He received the degree of M.D. from Pennsylvania in 1808. While a student, following the example of the majority of his class who assumed names, he added Paul Crillon to his name. He was a surgeon in the United States Navy from 1809 to 1856, but was during that time (1816-1828) professor of botany at the University of Pennsylvania, and professor of materia medica and botany at Jefferson Medical College (1828-1830). He was a very prolific author.

⁴John Williams Walker, of Virginia, 1783-1823, a member of the class of 1806. He moved to Alabama where he became a very prominent lawyer, and after several terms in the legislature was elected United States Senator in 1819 and served until 1822 when he resigned.

I am in hopes you treat it with deserved contempt and I will spend not another thought about it. Writing one letter to the members was of more trouble than it merited.

Little did I expect, when we parted at Princeton to have the happiness of having you or any other of my Princeton friends neighbors of mine. This gives me encouragement to hope that the hand of providence will send more of our old class mates to become neighbors of ours. Do not take me to be like a miser the more money he gets the less he enjoys what stock he has and is so craving after wealth that he becomes miserable and a useless member of society. But on the contrary and if we should have but few neighbors we must make up the deficiency by frequent visits. You see my dear friend I already count you a visitant though you speak so indeffinitely of the time of your fathers moving, that I am some time afraid so pleasing an expectation will be frustrated. Must however trust in providence, qui gubernat omnia. Instead of 50 miles it cannot be over 20 from where I expect to reside.

I suppose you will be a little surprised to hear that I am a going to become a person of business. Instead of that peaceful retirement which I promised myself after my return home, have engaged in the laborious study of the Law. What produced this change I can hardly tell you. I must confess vanity had a little share in it, I can't say fame because I never expect to be immortalised by my oratory but merely to be raised above the grovelling multitude and to be of some benefit to my acquaintances. In order to persue my studies with the greatest advantage I have put myself under the instruction of Christopher Clark¹ who is now in Congress. Write me soon what time in the Spring you intend up in Henry and if possible I will be at home about that time. However if I am not there "Old Bob" will; so that I am in hopes that you will not decline going on account of the uncertainty of my being at home. I understand two or three of your neighbors are about settling upon the same body of Land also, if any of them should come to see their intended residence with you. I shall be very happy to see them with you at my Fathers. I have had several letters from Princeton, no disturbance there this Christmas. Ronolds from Richmond is sent off. Mrs. Maddison, Mr. Striker² and his daughter Ca. have departed this life since we left there. But those things I suppose you have heard.

Happiness attend you and believe me to be yours etc.

[Address:

Westward Mill

Brunswick County.]

¹Christopher Clark, 1767-1828, of Albemarle County. He was several times a member of the legislature, and was elected to Congress in 1803 and served until 1806 when he resigned.

²Daniel P. Stryker, of New Jersey, a member of the class of 1804.

*From Jane Harding.*¹

PETERSBURG 24 February 1806.

What appology, What attonement, shall I make for neglecting to answer your letter so long. No doubt you have formd, a thousand conjectures about it. I plead guilty and must throw myself on your good nature for forgiveness and What ever pennance you chuse, to inflict I am determind, to submit without a murmur. but let me beg of you not to be too severe. a propos of pennances I have seated myself with a determination to answer your letter not to make appologies, yet I know not how to begin. here I have been sitting this half hour, studying a few words and my head is so thick and confus'd, that I find it impossible, to fix upon one that will please me. I must throw that idea aside and begin with the flattery you intended for me, but I am determind not to believe that you are capable of flattering, you are not yet in possession of that fine accomplishment. I have no doubt you intend to make it one of your studys if you wish to please the Ladys, according to Chesterfields notions, for he says the Least attention please them the greatest charm and flattery no matter how gross is greedily swallowed. I do not agree with him there I cannot admit the idea that a very ugly woman can be pleased with what she knows not to be her due. A handsome person, such as your Brunswick Belle might expect and no doubt gets a sufficient quantity. You do great honour in allowing me to fill Minerva's place in the Epistolary way, and I promise to be better pleas'd with your letters than you can be with mine, for there is no possibility of your being edified by such Letters as I shall write you but there is a possibility of my receiving the greatest instruction from yours. Perhaps you will observe that we do not write for edification or instruction but for amusement. I admit it and even for amusement my Letters must be dull, and insipid. I hope you will not think I am repeating all, this for another mouthful of flattery. No I am shure you will not, for I am certain, at least I hope as a Brother you will not think so meanly of me. I would write you all the news if I had any worth relating, for I am shure you will not be pleas'd with the silly chit chat of the town or village we live in. I shall leave that out and inform you of a very agreeable party I was in at Parson Harritsons. there was a very handsome Collection of both Ladys and gentlemen our famus Paris Beau doctor Holms was there, I think the title of formal much more applicable than Holms—therefore doctor formal at your service. he appears to have study'd the graces but not sufficient to divest himself of a stif and formal way he has acquir'd perhaps a little practise will make him perfect. I do not mean to be satyirical and if I have gone too far I beg his pardon. need I appologise for the lenth of my letter I fear

¹I am unable to locate the writer of this letter.

I have tiard you with my nonsense, you must forgive me as I cannot have the pleasure of conversing with you, we are seperated it is true but I hope you will make up the deficiency by writing often and not weight for an answer to every letter. I hope you are above such Ceremony. I heard Robert Ruffin was in town last week he thought proper not to call. I intended to have sent some things out by him that Minerva left here. I shall scratch him intirely off my Books. Mrs. Jeffrs sends her Love to you and intends to send you a kiss on the oather side of this letter take good care of it and prise it for I expect you do not often have kiss's sent you so far. Present my love to your Fathers family and accept the same from your sister

JANE HARDING.

When we dwell on the lips of the lad we adore,
 Not a pleasure in nature is missing;
 May his soul be in heaven, he deservs it I am shure,
 Who was first the inventor of kissing.
 —M. Jeffrs.

Patsey, I take your verses and your kiss,
 Such goodly offers I can ne'er refuse;
 My soul desires to reciprocate by this
 And dedicate to you the products of its muse.¹

[Address:
 Harris's Post Office
 Brunswick.]

From William Garnett.

18th March 1806.

I have this instant received a letter from you by a private opportunity from Tappahannock couched in the most bitter terms of complaint against me for my remisness in writing to you. In reply to the allegations which you have made I can assure you that I have not only answered all the letters which I have received from you but have written many which you have never acknowledged the receipt of. This I have in a great measure attributed to the irregularity of the mail as all the letters which I have received from you since your return to Brunswick have been lodged in Tappahannock and as I but seldom go there they have in many instances remained for months in the office before I knew of their being there. Having said thus much by way of exonerating myself from so heinous a charge as that of a dereliction from friendship I must request that you will hereafter give the post master a particular injunction to direct your letters to Laytons instead of Tappahannock as he has heretofore done. This being done I can assure you that there shall never be an interruption to our correspondence at least as far as

¹This is written in a different hand from the rest, and strongly resembles that of Ruffin as it was at that time.

it lies in my power. Your assurances of friendship were quite needless as I never once in my life had the smallest doubt of your regard and I solemnly aver that my attachment to you so far from being weakened by our long separation is if anything stronger than it ever was before. But as I am well convinced that you have every reason to place an entire confidence in my friendship I will urge this subject no further. You have requested to be informed of the place which I at this time call my home, of my present employment and of the plans which I have formed with regard to my future destination in life. To the first of your queries I reply by informing you that I still continue to be a resident of Mount Pleasant and shall in all probability continue to be so for many years to come. I employ myself at this time principally in attending to my farm and in prosecuting a course of history which I commenced this winter and which I hope to conclude sometime in the course of the next. I shall then if I do not alter my determination commence the study of the law, not as a profession merely but as a science from which I may derive amusement and information as well as profit. Having thus given you a full account of my present and future plans of operation I shall calculate upon receiving the same information from you in your reply to this epistle. But apropos what goddess is this who has so completely overturned your stoicism and obliterated from your memory those many wise and prudent maxims which I have so often heard you repeat upon the subject of matrimony. I had hitherto believed you invulnerable to the darts of Cupid but I find that you can no longer boast of being shielded by the impenetrable aegis of Minerva. Poor fellow I sincerely commiserate your situation and can only advise you to enlist all your philosophy to your aid if your case is a desperate one. My unfortunate brother Muscoe has very lately been in the same dilemma with yourself but his Dulcinea remained inexorable to all his entreaties so that he has returned home quite dispirited and broken hearted. I have written both my ideas and my paper out and must consequently bid you adieu.

[P. S.] I must make a request of you although I fear it will be needless which is that you will write plainer. So long as we have been corresponding I still find the greatest difficulty in reading your letters. Indeed there are several passages in many of them which I have never yet made out. It is a bad habit and one which you ought to correct, especially as you are to be lawyer.

[Address:

Westwardmill
Brunswick
Virginia.]

From Spencer Roane.

Dear Sir:

SPRING GARDEN July 28th, 1806.

I received your letter of 8th instant, only two days ago.

I regret to inform you, that the largeness of my family at present, and other circumstances of a domestic nature, make it entirely inconvenient to receive any further addition to the family. These considerations have been so imperious as to compel me to decline similar applications, from persons I wished to oblige, in every instance except two, and those some years ago.

Wishing you success in your studies, and with compliments to your father and family,

I am, y obt. st.

SPENCER ROANE.

[Address: Brunswick]

From Elisha Clarke.

PHILADELPHIA August 12th, 1806.

With blushes I acknowledge the extent of interval since my last communication—but permit me to urge in extenuation of the seeming neglect, that it proceeded not my dear fellow, from the most remote view of dissolving that friendly correspondence, and mutuality of sentiments and interest for the welfare of each other, which formed so prominent a feature in our first letters; but from a source, to which I am really ashamed so often to attribute any apparent indifference to my warmest friends. That indolence has heretofore been almost one of my elementary principles, I fear too many of my friends can bear witness, but from this period I will never more plead it in excuse, and the strongest testimony that I can give of my newly acquired resolution will be a strict adherence to those principles which form its basis. Thus I might continue the round of assurances of my sincerity, and desire to perpetuate that reciprocity of affection which at present exists in such an high degree, but I will desist, enjoying the consolation that your candour to excuse is not less eminent than your abilities to gauge. My movements are very similar to yours, not more rapid in Cullen and Rush than you in Blackstone. As to the women, they appear at one hour of the day, and I at another; but were I in your part of the world, amidst the pleasing murmurs of so many fine girls, I should from almost an innate principle be obliged to assume the garb of a gallant. But in this populous City, though to me one of the most unsocial places that I ever was in, I am obliged to move almost alone. The occurrences of the day are few and insipid, and upon the whole I enjoy no amusement except occasionally with my fellow students. No appearance of the late epidemic

scourge as yet, and from present appearances no suspicions are entertained. I am happy to hear that Dr. Niblock is doing so extremely well, the other two whom you mention in your letter, seem at the time of fixing their place of residence to have kept in mind the old proverb, that *birds of a feather always flock together*—rather than consult their own interest. The lectures are fast approaching, and as I have been a pretty close student all the summer, shall for relaxation take a little excursion in the country, probably to Princeton.

Accept, Sir, my tenderest wishes for your prosperity and write me often.

P. S. You ought to tell the Girls in Brunswick not to despair of getting husbands, that there is yourself together with several others who in all probability will not fly elsewhere to get wives, at least without previously offering their services. Two of your old friends and graduates. Messrs. Reynolds and Barton are here studying medicine, both of whom desire to be remembered to you.

[Address: Brunswick City, Virga.]

From William Garnett.

3^d September 1806

I have at length received a letter from you through its proper channel which induces me to hope that there will not hereafter be so many obstacles in the way of our epistolary intercourse as there have hitherto been. You express a fear that sickness has made me forget my promise of writing a long letter to you after I had finished my harvest—This I can assure has not been the case as I have never at any period of my life enjoyed better health than I now do. The supposed non performance of my promise can not therefore be attributed to this cause nor is it attributable to me in as much as I by writing the letter directing it to you and putting it in the post office did all that was in my power towards its accomplishment and am consequently in no degree blameable for my intentions not having the desired effect. I sincerely sympathise with you in the loss of your friend as I know by sad experience the agonising sensations that such an event must occasion. To most of the dispensations of providence I think I can submit with as much fortitude as any man But to be bereft by death of a valuable friend is a misfortune too great for my philosophy I give way to the impetuosity of my feelings without the ability of making a struggle against them. When we reflect seriously upon the subject it really appears astonishing that a man after so severe a loss should ever recover even a tolerable degree of tranquillity. The state of uncertainty that we are in whether we shall ever meet again or if we do in what relation we are to view each other are

considerations which fill the mind with anguish which defies the power of language to describe. I fear you will accuse me of being but a bad comforter and although I am forced to plead guilty to the charge I must add by way of extenuation that the subject upon which I have been writing has called forth feelings which though they occasionally lie dormant neither will or can ever be totally extinguished. The death of my father and a friend of whom you have frequently heard me speak T. Peyton often obtrude upon my mind and occasion the most melancholy reflections. To pour forth my feelings in the bosom of a friend who I know will sympathise with me in all my afflictions affords me a gratification which I cannot forego. But unless you should as well as my selfe be too much infected by the gloom which the subject naturally inspires I will dismiss it and take my leave of you.

[Address:

Westward Mills
Brunswick Va.]

From William Garnett.

September 20th 1806.

An opportunity offering of conveying a letter to you as far as Richmond through a private channel I hasten to avail myself of it; hoping that being so far safely carried, it may escape the fate, which has for some time past befallen both my letters, and your own. I have not received a letter from you since early in last month. This I do not mention as a circumstance which should attach any blame to you but as an event which I greatly deplore in as much as I can devise no remedy against it. For myself I can safely say (and I believe that I can with the same propriety affirm as much for you) that I have made every exertion within my power to prevent this vexatious interruption. All the efforts which I have made to this effect have and will continue to prove abortive unless some radical change is made in our post office regulations. I shall not however relax in any degree my exertion to maintain an intercourse from which I derive such infinite enjoyment. In your last letter to me you touched upon the subject of politics. I have hitherto been silent on this head as it is a topic (I allude to the politics of the day only) which from a variety of causes requires such a voluminous investigation as would far exceed the limits of a letter. I am on this account the more anxious to see you as I wish very much to have some conversation with you upon a subject which has lately become more than ordinarily interesting. The scenes now acting in Europe open a wide field for speculation—Should not some unforeseen circumstance occur to check the ambitious views of Buonaparte I wish that we may not have cause to tremble for our political existence. Great

Britain (whose navy as Mr. Randolph justly observes presents the only barrier which exists between us and French oppression appears to me to be almost upon the eve of dissolution. Already upon the brink of bankruptcy I do not think it possible that she can withstand the blow which the exclusive system that Buonaparte has established upon the continent must necessarily give to her commerce—annihilate this and you at once annihilate her.—And that this will unavoidably be the case (should the exclusive system now established continue in force) appears to me to be susceptible of demonstration. Can England possibly support the enormous expenses of her government when deprived of so considerable a portion of her revenue as that which she derives from her commerce with the continent of Europe—certainly not, the downfall of her navy will be the necessary consequence of this measure and with it her own ruin. That my presages may prove to be unfounded I most ardently wish but unless something (which I do not now foresee) turns up to materially alter the face of things I fear that I have but little reason to hope that this will be the case.

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWICK Sept. 20th 1806.

By Mr. Brodnax you will receive this, who will inform you of the situation of the family, and neighborhood. Inform Mr. McRae I shall be down between the 1st and 15th of Oct. at which time I shall calculate on receiving the money loan'd him, also that which is due to Robt. or rather desire Robert on his return to give McRae notice, if he has not done it. I received a letter from Mr. Robertson¹ by Capt. Gholson soon after you left us saying he could not admit you a student sooner than Oct. neither could he then, unless you would engage for at least two years; conscious that no young man could be qualify'd to commence the practice of the law with honor to himself and his instructor sooner: believing this opinion to be intirely correct and not wishing you to engage sooner than you are admissable by law (viz at 21 years old) I do not hesitate in recommending it to you, to accede to his proposition. His price is 25 Guineas p. annm. one half in advance the bal. at the end of the term. When I come down I expect to furnish the money; in the meantime, if circumstances should require it, you must draw on those notes you have. You have come to that time of life to discover your duty and interest so unequivocally, as to render any observations of mine on the importance of improving your time unnecessary; but perhaps

¹David Robinson, a Scotch lawyer in Petersburg, under whom Ruffin was now studying law. See Graham, p. 21, *supra*.

it may not be as much so to guard you against the vices that are prevalent in that place, and to make it my particular request, that you will keep at a distance all characters who would lead you to the commission of deeds which *your religion* would on reflection blush to own. Your friend Doct. Claiborne makes it his particular request, and thro me offers his advice, that you will be regular in the use of moderate exercise. He thinks your constitution imperiously calls for it. Tom, divide the day into so many parts as will render, rest, exercise, and study profitable; and let not small things break in upon your system; acquire a habit of firmness in making pleasure or amusement yeald to business while you are young, or you will find it harder than you are aware, and perhaps impracticable when you are old. We join in love and best wishes for your welfare, and expect to hear frequently from you.

N. B. Write to Yr. Mother particularly.

[Address: Petersburg.]

From William Presley Claiborne.

LYNCHBURG 10th Oct^r. 1806

Sir—

When I last saw you it was my intention to have spent this Winter in Philadelphia for the purpose of receiveing the benefit of the Physical Lectures, But the day after I left You I was taken so ill on the road it prevented my traveling and altho I had previously proceded nearly Fifty miles I was five days in reaching home only One Hundred and 20 miles. Nor had I been in Lynchburg two Hours before Dr. Cabell Senr.¹ an eminent physician, thought it requisite to take forty large oz: of Blood from me, From which time I spent *my time*, neither in hope nor fear, for two and a half days; and kept my Bed seventeen, You may well Imagine I was, and still continue much ematiated, But I am now fast recovering and hope e'er long to see you in Petersburg.

From which cause; my attention in Philadelphia this season will be impossible as the Lectures commence the first Week in November, and my strength will not admit of my traveling so fair.—I have not since I saw you been so lucky as to have received the scrip of a pen from Dinwiddie where I fear my Sister is ill. Will you be so good as to inform me by letter Doct^r. Gilliam's opinion of *her* real situation, And your's of her present health—I have a task to learn, which when compleated, will in my Breast raise monuments of approbation, Yet hard it is, to know, to here, and not to see, the Object that I love you yet are happy, you have not known the stings of disappointed Love, You have not felt

¹Dr. George Cabell.

as Mr. Otway¹ most gloriously express'es it when Polydore attempts to overcome the Virtue of Monimia

If to desire you more than Misers wealth,
Or dying Men, an hour of added Life;
If softest wishes, or a heart as true
As ever sufferd under Loves, suspence
Spoke e'r the tidings of his soul, 'tis I.?

Or if you have, some grasp of hope was left, some spray or twig whilst washing down the stream wav'd by the wind to raise thee from despair, [torn] thou siezd and raised thyself from misery. Yet me! I dare not speak, nor look in Love, for by the Eternal God's e'er her I knew, my Bloom was blasted. In her Opinion I wore the blackest garb, that eer was placed upon the back of innocence. For did she know, my mind cords with her own, dam'd be the Man who searches not for worth but covers blackness, with *Curs'd* sordid pelf. And she believes this groveling meanness mine.

P. S. Altho I cannot bring myself to hope success, I could wish to know the progress of other more happy than myself, Say, does she still continue to retain Scott, Hinton, Snelson, etc., etc., etc., and does any dare to hope more than to be cast for trouble and cost, say, Time lost, expences to plays, Horse hire, Hair dressing. etc. For did I proceed this would be but my Hope, But one Hours, one sparkling look would ful repay an age of foulest Bondage.

[Address:

at Cap. Goodwins
Petersburg, Va.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSW'K 11th Novr. 1806.

Last night I arriv'd in safety from Saura-town, and thro' mercy, found the Flower Garden family in good health. Your Mama sends your trunk containing your shirts, cravats, draws and books, which I hope will arrive safe. Tom, our lot is at last cast in Rockingham County, State of North Carolina! I have ventur'd greatly to exceed my resources in a purchase of Land, unless a kind and beneficent Providence will aid me in disposing of my possessions in Brunswick. From a retrospective view of past circumstances, apparently accidental, and yet all working together for the accomplishment of the end, I have no doubt but it is the will of Him whose Guardian care is particularly over those who love him, that it should be so; and therefore with fewer doubts I ventnr'd to

¹Thomas Otway, English author and dramatist, 1652-1685. The quotation here is from his most famous work, *The Orphan*.

engage. I now own the seat of Gov. Robert Williams,¹ containing two thousand Acres, for which I am to pay five hund^d pounds p. annum for four years, begining next Novr. (that is 1807). To this place I shall immediately move my People, and go as soon after them as possible in the mean time I have several, and to me, great arraignments to make, which perhaps, can be better done while the end propos'd remains a secret; you will therefore say nothing of what I am about, until you are licens'd by receiving an advertisement for publication. My crop of corn on Dan River is better than I expected. Our speculation in Corn yet wears an aspect of being profitable, but the expence of geting it to a *cash* market will be considerable. . . . Your Mama wants her dresses, hasten them and send them by some safe conveyance. The goods sent from McRaes receiv'd considerable damage and your present of the cheese altho charg'd has not arriv'd. Your Mama will visit her friends on York river this Winter after our goods are off. We expect to hear from you and often: let us know how you like Petersburg, its inhabitants, the study of the law and your progress.

[Address: Petersburg.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

BRUNSWK 8th Jany. 1807.

Yours by your Cousin I have just recd. and agreeably to your request hasten to answer it. I have no doubt of the propriety of your removal from Petersg. but I think the Spring will be sufficiently early, in the mean time I will endeavour to procure you a birth with Judge Haywood² or some other thro' the agency of your Unele who is now here. Your expences in your present situation are mostly paid for the next three months, in which, you will perhaps be able to read thro' Coke to much advantage not only having the advice of Robertson, but allso the assistance of May your friend. Were you to quit Petersg. previously to your fixing elsewhere, it might be attended with a loss of much time, which to you is invaluable. In March I expect to be with you when I will make

¹Robert Williams, 1768-1836, a native of Virginia, who had removed to North Carolina and owned land in Surry and Rockingham counties. He was a member of Congress from 1797 to 1803, and governor of the Mississippi Territory from 1805 to 1809.

²Judge John Haywood, 1762-1826; judge of the Superior Court for the district of Davidson, now in Tennessee, 1785; solicitor-general, 1790; attorney-general, 1791; judge of the Superior Court, 1794. In 1800 Judge Haywood resigned from the bench to defend James Glasgow, and in 1707 or 1708 moved to Tennessee where he had already large landed interests. In 1816 he became a judge of the Supreme Court of Tennessee and held the position until his death. He was the author of a large number of legal works and of two histories of Tennessee.

my wishes known to Mr. Robertson, and no doubt his assent will easily be procured. I sometimes think it possible that you withhold from me one motive for wishing to leave Petersg. either you have got prejudiced against R. or I furnish you with too niggardly a hand, which prevents your joining in parties with other young men; which is it? or is it both? I know that you have been dealt sparingly with, but I dare say you know the cause, and will justify the motive; but yet, if you are rather too much straighten'd, dont be afraid to say so, and I will endeavour to strain a point.

The Waggon's have not yet ret'd. as soon as they do I shall bid adieu to B. Write me in a day or two and forward it to Danville and I shall get it on my way up, which will somewhat revive a wayworn traveller. This is the third letter to night and it's past 12 oC. That God may bless you and give rest and peace prays Your Affect. Father

[Address: Petersburg.]

From William Garnett.

11th May 1807.

I received a letter from you by the last mail announcing to me the supposed death of my brother Muscoe. In this I am happy to inform you that you are mistaken. The gentleman's death which you have seen mentioned in the Enquirer was not as you immagined my brother's but a distant relation of mine. I feel myself however much gratified by the sympathy which you have expressed for my imaginary loss. Under a firm conviction that the lively sensation of regret which you express at the death of my brother proceeds from a heart warmly interested for my happiness I experience an indiscribable pleasure. This would be to me a great source of consolation under any misfortune that could befall me. To know that I have a friend who would so sincerely sympathise with me in my afflictions as I am persuaded you would conveys to me the most heart felt satisfaction. There is no man in existence in whose friendship I have a more unbounded confidence than I have in yours. This confidence I hope is reciprocal. Muscoe desires to be affectionately remembered to you. He will write you by the next mail, in the mean time he requests me to inform you that he intends becoming an extremely punctual correspondent. His remissness hitherto has he says proceeded from an almost unconquered aversion that he has against writing. This however he advises you through me shall no longer be an impediment to your epistolary communications. I find that you have not received any of the letters which I have written you since my recovery. This I suppose is owing to my having directed them (at your request) to Rockingham et house N. Carolina. In one of them I invited you to my wedding which is to take place on the 4th of June. This invitation I again

repeat but I fear that it will not be attended to. Do if you possibly can come over For I can with sincerity say that my desire to see you (instead of diminishing from the length of our separation) be comes every day more ardent. From the embarrassed state of my circumstances (in consequence of bad crops and bad management) it will be entirely out of my power to visit you in any short time. The only possible chance therefore of our meeting will be by your coming.

[Address: Danville Virginia]

From William Garnett.

1st August 1807

Were I in the habit of censuring (as has sometimes been the case with you) without waiting to hear a reason you would justly be entitled to a considerable share of censure from me. It has been many weeks since I received a letter from you during which time I have written one to which I expected an immediate reply. But in conformity to the principle laid down in the preamble of my letter I will not reproach you untill I hear what justification you have to make. Supposing it probable that the epistle above alluded to may not have come to hand I will state the circumstances which gave rise to it and the substance of what it contained. Perceiving from many letters which I have lately received that there is a considerable difference in our political creeds and that you wish a discussion upon these points I proposed not long since as in prelude to the controversy, the following queries: 1st Upon what principles do you defend the course pursued by the last congress toward Spain and Great Britain? 2^{dly} What do you think of the violation of the constitution by general Wilkinson?¹ 3^{dly} And lastly what do you think of the attempt made to justify Wilkinsons conduct by a suspension of the habeas corpus² act after the president had himself declared that all appearance of danger was dissipated?³ As the subject is a very voluminous one you had better begin by answering one question at a time until you get through the whole. You can then make a general reply to my answers. I am at present very busily engaged in a settlement of my pecuniary concerns. Some of them are involved in such intricacy that

¹James Wilkinson, at this time a major general in the United States army and in chief command. After becoming involved in the Burr conspiracy, he had betrayed Burr and was now very active in his attempts to break it up and avert suspicion from himself.

²Reference is of course here made to the suspension of the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus in New Orleans.

³In January, 1807, an attempt was made to induce Congress to suspend the writ. The Senate passed the bill but the House rejected it. Jefferson in his message had declared that there was no danger that would warrant such action.

I believe it would require the financial skill of Hamilton or Galatin to arrange them. As I cannot boast of the fiscal knowledge of either of these gentlemen I calculate upon encountering considerable difficulties. This however is but a momentary consideration to a man of my acknowledged industry. Do not permit our political discussions to exclude from your letters any thing relative to your private concerns—communications upon this subject will always be more interesting to me than the discussion of any philosophical or political question. They will now be peculiarly acceptable as it has been such a length of [time] since I have heard from you. As agreeable however as is an epistolary correspondence with you a personal one would be much more so. This I hope to enjoy in the course of the fall next ensuing. I will now conclude by a quotation from a letter which I the other day read from a very dissipated friend of mine "May you enjoy every happiness which this world can afford and an eternal crown of glory in the next.

[Address: Haw River P. O., N. C.]

From John F. May.¹

Dear Ruffin,

PETERSBURG. Sept. 9, 1807.

I read a few days since your letter of the 18th ult. The only one I have read from you since you left Brunswick. Hence you will not be surprised that after having twice written to you without receiving a reply and after the lapse of 6 months, I entertained some fear that when you left Virginia, you meant to part with Virginia feelings and to take leave of Virginia friends. It was however not a belief but merely a fear and one which never could affect me.

I am really concerned to hear that the spirit which I had fondly believed animated every American and pervaded every part of the union, has found a non-conductor in the bosoms of the N. Carolinians. You are I hope not correctly informed on the subject. Can they possibly be dead to the feelings of resentment which the hypocrisy and treachery the insults and aggressions of a pusillanimous govt. have excited in the whole American people?² Are they deaf to the voice of their peaceful but injured and exasperated countrymen? Are they blind to the paths of national interest and national glory? I hope that altho' there may

¹John Fitzhugh May, 1784-1858, a schoolmate of Ruffin in Petersburg. He was later one of the foremost lawyers in Virginia, a member of the legislature, and a state judge.

²Reference is here made to the excitement in the country over the case of the "Chesapeake" and the "Leopard." The President had called upon the governors of the States to have in readiness their respective quotas of 100,000 volunteers. A careful investigation of the North Carolina press of the period reveals no indication of any hesitancy in complying with the request.

be defects in their militia Laws, there is no want of American principles and American feelings in the people; that since the new volunteer system has been published and explained, the people of that State will come forward and offer their services to the Govt. with a zeal and alacrity increased by regret for their delay; and that tho' they may not have been as forward in resolving they are as prompt and determined in acting as any of their countrymen. But I do not mean to write an exhortation as you dont need one and they will not see it.

You have heard ere this of the acquittal of Burr.¹ He is to be tried today for the misdemeanor and will I expect be acquitted when a motion will be made to send him to Kentucky where I am informed by the counsel for the U. S. his guilt will be incontestibly proven.² I have attended the trial several times, and altho' I have differed with the Ch. Justice several times, I do not think he deserves censures hitherto recd. I mean since the trial commenced. His previous conduct was placed in a proper point of view by my excellent frd. Leigh³ in a piece wh. you saw in the Enqr. signed "a Stranger from the Country." Wirt⁴ is a prodigiously great man. I have seen him make Burr writhe and shrink from his terrible invective what J. R.⁵ could not do when he pronounced a "True bill." T. B. R.⁶ is appointed secy. of Orleans and leaves us in a few days. The Prest. unsolicited, wrote a very flattering letter to Gov. Page⁷ urging him to persuade Bolling to accept the appointment. Leigh and Ro. Pegram are candidates for the Assembly—a warm contest. I expect a bold independent majty. for L. but you know my feelings. I wish I could give you a "history of our campaign." Ritchie has done

¹Burr was tried for treason in August, 1807. After his acquittal, he was tried on an indictment for high misdemeanor, the charge being that he had begun on Bienerhassett Island an expedition against the dominions of the King of Spain. He was also acquitted on this charge.

²Ohio was made the place for trial and Burr never appeared.

³Benjamin Watkins Leigh, 1782-1840, a cousin of Ruffin. Graduated from William and Mary College, began the practice of law, and engaged actively in politics. He was a member of the Virginia legislature a number of times, a delegate to the constitutional convention of 1829-1830, and United States Senator from 1834 to 1836. In politics he was in his later years a strong Whig.

⁴William Wirt of Maryland, 1772-1834, one of the most eminent lawyers in the United States. In 1802 he became chancellor of the eastern district of Virginia, United States district attorney in 1816, and was attorney-general of the United States from 1816 to 1825. In 1832 he was candidate for President on the Anti-Masonic ticket. He was the author of *The British Spy*, a life of Patrick Henry, and a number of other works.

⁵John Randolph of Roanoke was foreman of the grand jury which indicted Burr.

⁶Thomas Bolling Robertson, 1784-1828, a native of Virginia, who had moved to Louisiana and commenced there the practice of law. He served as attorney-general under Governor Claiborne and in 1807 became secretary of the territory. He was a member of Congress from 1812 to 1818, governor from 1820 to 1824, and United States district judge from 1824 to 1827.

⁷John Page, of Gloucester County, 1743-1808. He was a member of the House of Burgesses and of the colonial council, of the convention of 1776, of the council, and the committee of safety, and saw service in the Revolution as a colonel of militia. He was a member of Congress from 1789 to 1797 and governor of Virginia from 1802 to 1805.

it I think pretty accurately. But he has not done justice to the Character of Genl. M.¹ there is not bitterness enough in his constitution to portray that character. An obsequious devotion to the British consul, a haughty foolish contempt for the soldiery, an infamous cowardice evinced during the Revol. War, and a private life chequered by the most infamous immoralities—such is the character of Brig. Genl. M. But the Gov. and council will never give him another command, this is resolved on. He will sink again into obscurity and contempt. But this man could get a character sent to Salem and published! could have an act of infamous swindling by which he gained £10,000 represented as an act [of] magnanimity and enterprise—and could get a vote of approbation from the *Norfolk* officers, but thank God no others. You see I have no objn to long letters but only to long essays, disquisitions on Revenue systems for 1900 etc., etc. Remember me respectfully to yr father and family and believe assurances of my regard etc.

[Address:

Thos. C. Ruffin
 Student of Law
 near Danville Va.]

From James Niblock.

[BRUNSWICK VA, Nov. 3, 1807]

With pleasure do I take the opportunity of tendering you my sincere congratulations on your entrance on the Sea of Life, by the honorable profession of the Law; and that your ships made of so good materials, both in Hull, mast, and rigging may with the assistance of propitious gales, waft you to the Haven of wealth and otium cum dignitate, is the sincere prayer of your warmest friend.

From your Fathers obligation to business added to similar causes in myself we've had but little time to reanimate the hidden fire of past friendships with delights of former associations. Indeed I'm this moment returned from Brodnax's where by appointment we were to spend the term of our last interview, his business however denied me the gratification. Hence am I induced to comply with the first and most imperious feeling of my heart, in luxurating in the anticipation of spiritual communion with my dearest friend which I take to be a pleasure the most delicate and divine, which the celestials in their bounty, have favored mortals.

I wish my dear friend, I could write you anything novel and entertaining. The Sun rises and sets every day, shines in the old way, which is the best tidings I can give you of my life, which is a continual revolu-

¹Probably Thomas Matthews, brigadier general of Virginia militia, commanding at Norfolk.

tion, the production of no novelty. The recklessness of the fall amply compensates for the salubrity of the past summer, and that state of things is peculiarly favourable to me; who am constitutionally incapacitated from bearing continual exposure to a vertical Sun. [Illegible] has been for some time been laid up in Lavender but this evening seems to have recovered fresh spirits. His assistant is a youth of inexperience, ergo, not to be relied on; between them however, I continue to keep continually in motion; as the good Citizens continue, or rather, are beginning to do justice the most ample to your friends claims to patronage.

Ive been to B. Fall races, no sport. Saw the *natives* exhibit at the Ball; none of the She's inspired me with the sensations that Rachel did Jacob. Nor, on the whole, did I return any more satisfied for being of the same Herd of animal life.

Have not seen Petersburg and therefore none of your town friends since you left us. Of our first rate Belles, pardon the impiety, all being *first*; none have thrown off the tramell of celibacy and assumed the free and Independant air of a matron. As for Mr. Jesse, he's as much in Love as ever with matrimony and infinitely less with existing circumstances. *Difficultas in omni passu est.* tell B.B. that Miss I is more lovely than ever. (Miracles will never cease) and in my judgment would bless her stars for a sight of him, to whom I would be remembered with interest.

You will not fail presenting Mrs. R. and Minerva with my Sincere love and warmest wishes for their felicity. The first time you write give *them* a cause in which to acknowledge me. It would be like rain to the Sunburnt clime, or the Suns rays to the benighted wanderer. Adieu, may God bless and multiply your joys, to as great an excess as the reverse is realized in your unfeigned wellwisher.

[P. S.] If sympathy or any other of the endearing sensations still possess your bosom, write. You may wish to know whether the Books I had let J. Gordon are all repair'd, three volumes only are missing. Miloe suffered those in his care to be carried off. Some of them I have got, and may, all of them.

The Vicar of W-field, I have not been able to lay hold of. It is however within the reach.

BRUNSWICK Nov. 3.

12 O Clock P. M.

I've opened this to say, that were I as near your home as you are Brunswick; It would not be as Wallace Informs me. So great a disparity however, exists in the incentives that the figure is, I must confess, of but small force—circumstances point with more satisfaction to a call from you toward Christmas.

A letter, dated August, from Ireland, says the military department is all *verve* in preparing for an American War.

[Address: Warrenton N. Carolina.]

From John F. May.

PETERSBG. Decr. 13th '07.

Your Letter of the 20th ult. was reed. in the same season of this climate that it was written in of yours, just after the quarterly courts, when we have some little indulgence from the labors of our profession. I am therefore enabled to reply to it more promptly than I generally do to the Letters of my *friendly* correspondents. I am sincerely pleased to hear that you have obtained a License and commenced the practice of the Law. God grant (as the chancellor said to me when he sent my License) that it may be the foundation of wealth, honor, and happiness. Every man can give excellent advice to a beginner; and therefore I shall not trouble you with any from Virginia, especially as you will have freight to pay—altho' if I could see you I should probably bestow it on you most copiously. Act with firmness, never with obstinacy—consult your own judgment, and your sense of propriety will be more valuable to you than all the advice which the world can bestow. I believe I informed you of the removal of my valuable friend T. B. Robertson. He consulted with Leigh and myself about accepting the appointment. We were divided in opinion and he followed Leigh's advice. His removal from this place will be I am in hopes very beneficial to me—His brother Wm. who has his law business here, is destitute of both the powers of his mind and the greatness of his soul. E. O. Goodwyn has been appointed Atto for Dinwiddie, the day after he got his License—recommended and supported solely by the dead influence of numbers. I had too much prudence to oppose a candidate so reputable from his connections, and formidable from their influence. In this Town however I succeeded in opposition to whole Bar except G. N. Taylor, D. Robertson, Allison and Leigh with the loss of only two votes on the first ballott. Leigh is unanimously elected Capt. of the Repb. Blues; and I hope and believe will succeed him in the H. D. It is with great pleasure I inform you that he is as well as he could possibly be expected to have been. He passed thro' town on Monday last on his way to Mr. Watkins' and can just move about on crutches. I wish to God that after the breaking of one child's Leg and the Death of another after the burning of his House and the fracture of his own thigh, providence would indulge him with some short respite from the continuance of such afflictions. But I very much fear that his amiable wife is near the last stage of a consumption. I would almost descend to the commonplace complaints against providence and arraign the injustice of those dispensations which can afflict so frequently and so bitterly so much worth and virtue.

I am getting a very good practice in this place and Dinwiddie. I am quitting Ch. City for Amelia, for tho' in full business there the profits since the old Chancery cases were tried in the spring are too inconsiderable. Chesterfd. is still very profitable and Nottoway unprofitable.

Amelia promises well. I qualified in Novr. and I see there my great friend Wm. S. Archer¹ and the most agreeable society male and *female too*, in the world.

What do the people of N. Ca. think (if sensation has not superceeded reflection) about the trial of Burr, and of Genl. Wilkinson? The orthodox opinion (i.e. of the administration party) is that he is as pure as virginity itself—the saviour of his country. But evidence and reason I think pronounce him a man whose whole life has been chequered with the most infamous immoralities who has been a time server to every administration and who in this affair has been convicted of stratagem fraud duplicity perjury and complicated Treachery.

Wirt I am informed has given him up. He said not a word about his testimony. Wirt is unquestionably the greatest character engaged in the trial. With Horace he may say, “Exegi monumentum aere perennius.” There is in his speeches an attic repartee a poignant irony a bold and eloquent invective which very properly castigate insolence and effrontery. Tho’ the subject is barren as the sands of Africa (or “naked as a sleeping Venus”) his argument always profound and cogent, is clothed in the richest and most varied imagery that the creation can afford. As long as Belles letters and oratory are admired Wirts talents will be graduated with those of Burke for their sublimity and those of Swift for their variety of invention. How would a common mind have been routed by the motion to exclude testimony? But unmoved by that sudden sortie he required no closet auxiliaries, no bumpswelling lucubrations, no torturing revolution of musty folios. In a moment a perfect pandect was produced—digested, harmonious, consistent, mature as Pallas from the brain of Jove. His virtues are as much and as deservedly admired as his talents. But I did not intend to write a Eulogy on Wirt and it is time to conclude. If I thought it fair to ask not only that a man should read a long letter but should *give an opinion on it too*, I would enquire what is this—a letter, an essay, a miscellany, or all?

[Address:

Rockingham N. Ca.
near Danville Va.]

From Benjamin Tappan.

RAVENNA [OHIO] Jany. 5th, 1808.

Yours of Novr. 10th we reed about Christmas, unexpectedly for we were apprehensive that you would forget your friends of the forest—

¹William S. Archer, 1789-1855, a native of Amelia County, Va.. After six years service in the legislature he was elected to Congress in 1820 and served there for fifteen years. In 1841 he was elected to the United States Senate and served one term.

but not unwelcome for many a time when the mail arrived had we hoped to receive some evidence of your recollection at least. You regard the event of your admission to the bar with the importance of a venture rather than that of a thorough paced lawyer, an *eminent lawyer* is made of dilligence and a moderate supply of judgment or good sense, nothing more is necessary, more is pernicious, but the *mere lawyer* is the vilest animal on Gods earth both to himself and others—you will never be of that class. The bar in the Eastern and middle states have combined to perpetuate the reign of judicial absurdity hitherto they have succeeded and eloquence gives way to subtlety, the flights of genius and the embellishments of fancy are rarely adventured since the *law* is to decide. You cannot have read law without disgust, your disgust will encrease when you become initiated in the practice of the courts, yet you may be a lawyer and preserve a nice sense of honor and a steady adherence to sound principles, but not without dispising the pettyfogging herd with whom you will be compelled to associate.

You know that wealth is a comparative appendage—you wish that you had funds to live in Ohio. I assure you that you have ample funds our citizens are neither so honest or discreet as to live without lawsuits, so that you would have some fees, a property of ten thousand dollars in Virginia is no nearer riches than one thousand is here. What was the cost of your education? mine (every sixpence) was 600 dolls, yet the rigid economy of Scotland boasts of as high a pedigree and as noble descent as the profuse liberality of England, and perhaps science doth not disdain to illumine the North with as pure a ray as the South. "Argat" if you should remove hither you would in all probability be a rich man. I know not exactly the extent of your finances nor the frugality of your habits tho' the former have hitherto proved sufficient with the aid of the latter to procure to you every advantage which might be desireable.

I do not like to have you go to Mississippi territory, it seems as tho' you would be farther from home, and if you will mount your nag and ride to my castle in the spring I will covenant and agree to satisfy you as to where it will be best to remain, then there will be one thing more you have fraternal and possibly filial *notions*, suppose I could give your Father an opportunity to *double* his property by a purchase here would he forego slavery? his bible he need not—be assured that I verily believe the country I now inhabit to be superior to any part of Virginia I have seen, if our friends were around us it would add to the real pleasures of existance some ten or twenty fold, and our selfishness in soliciting them to come is atoned to our minds by the advantages which we fancy would result to them.

The Ohio Militia turned out promptly at the call of their country best men without arms, discipline or skillfull leaders are not sufficient for modern warfare, we have very few good arms, the rifle is the only weapon in the hands of the frontier militia, *that* they can use with effect. I

suspect that Nancy would not be angry to see you step over the threshold of our door—she speaks of you often with sisterly affection, as to myself I cultivate the earth by daily labour and read to my wife evenings. Write to us what you intend to do with yourself.

[Address: Danville Virginia.]

From Benjamin Tappan.

RAVENNA, [OHIO,] Feby 16th 1808.

Since I wrote you last I have been informed that our Legislature in their wisdom have inter alia made a new county, you will possibly enquire how this can concern you and I will endeavor to enlighten your mind on the subject. The new county is so laid off that this settlement is in the center and accordingly my house is fixed as the temporary seat of justice, the probability is that the county town will not be more than two miles from it when it is fixed, which will be this spring. Now in the whole extent of this new County there is but one lawyer and he is a particular friend of yours—a question then very naturally arises in my mind, had not you better come here than to go to Natchez? The first court will sit the latter part of May—as to business I assure you that I have known many lawyers get rich who were inferior to you both in learning and tallents and I can say this without the smallest risk of flattery. I believe you would have business enough to support you and I know that as the country populates rapidly lawsuits encrease in number and importance, it will not be much for you a Virginian to take a ride here and see how the country and the people look. I have the business so well arranged in my own mind that I shall expect to see you alight at my door about the middle of May. The chance for a settlement is what would generally be thought a good one, yet I know not what it would be to you nor can know without knowing your views and prospects, the lawyer who first gets settled in a county town generally takes the lead in business—a county town by the way, with us is a central place for business, it will be the best town in the county, and not like a Virginia Courthouse, you have seen however the shiretowns in the middle states—one here is to be created—but property is lower and business not dull in the infancy of them—if you have an *inclination* this way or are wavering, I have said enough to determine you—but if you are fixed on another course it would avail nothing indeed it would look like selfishness to endeavor to induce you to alter your course. Nancy says it would be a good place for you, you see here an authority in point, she sends her love to you.

[Address: Danville Virginia.]

From William Garnett.

6th March 1808.

Ill health and pecuniary embarrassments have laterly much interrupted my epistolary communication to you. What excuse you may have for your remissness in this particular I know not. I can only state as a fact that it is now many months since I have heard from you. I shall however forbear to press this subject on you. I have no expectation of beholding you more on this side of the grave and our correspondence I have every reason to believe will soon be finally sealed by the termination of my existence. Since the severe attack of the nervous fever which I had during the winter of 1806 the state of my health has been such as to convince me that my constitution then received a shock of which I never can recover. I have now been confined at my mother's for three weeks with the most obstinate cough that I ever had in my life: it is indeed something better at this time but my indispositions are so frequent that it is impossible I can stand it long unless a radical change can be effected in my constitution. My wife's health is if possible worse than my own you may therefore readily conceive that my situation is not at all enviable. My path through life has been (no doubt for wise purposes) strewed with thorns instead of roses. I am destined I believe to date my happiness (if at all) from the hour of my dissolution. But this melancholy strain may perhaps be infectious. I will therefore endeavour to change the current of my reflections. You may perhaps imagine from our long separation and from the increase that I have made in the objects of my affection that my interest in your happiness has proportionally decreased. This according to the common way of judging is a very natural conclusion but in the present instance it is never the less a false one. My best wishes will never cease to attend you but with my existence. You must perceive from the foregoing part of my letter that there are insurmountable obstacles in the way of my visiting you, Be assured that nothing else would prevent me from doing what I so much desire. You were when I last heard from you unincumbered with a family and enjoyed good health if therefore you still retain the friendship for me that you once had, you will I am persuaded put yourself to some trouble to gratify me by making a trip to Essex. This is the crucible in which I propose to analyse your friendship. If it remains pure and unadulterated the process will not be tedious it will shortly be terminated by your appearance. You have no doubt heard of the death of your uncle Tom Roane¹ he is much regretted by all his acquaintances and particularly so by his neighbours. It is certainly one of the most unfortunate families that I have ever known. Your grandmother² has lived to bury all her sons but one and he bids fair to shortly share the fate of his brothers. Poor old lady, death will probably spare

¹Thomas Roane, Ruffin's maternal uncle.

²Martha (Hipkins) Roane.

her the pain of this addition to the measure of her afflictions. She has lately been dangerously ill but is now I believe almost well. I have no news to narrate and as I begin to feel something of the headache I must conclude.

[Address:

Lenox Castle

Rockingham

North Carolina.]

From John F. May.

[PETERSBURG, VA., June 16, 1808.]

Your letter of March last reached me some time in April. My engagements at our Dist. Court, and at the May quarterly courts, and engagements more interesting to my feelings, and I had hoped more important to my welfare must be an apology, I do not pretend they are a justification, for my long neglect to answer your very friendly and interesting letter. If any situation of life, except an absolute inability, would *justify* such neglect of such a letter, I would most confidently pronounce that a justification did exist in the ceaseless and arduous duties of the Lover and the Lawyer, in the labours and perplexities of the one and the agonies and raptures of the other. I am now, however, perfectly, and perhaps not unfortunately, freed from all those cares and duties—business of every kind is embargoed, the courts will scarcely grant a judgment, the people are unable to pay a fee, I have been dismissed by her whom but the day before I had embraced and pressed to my bosom as the woman who was to have been the partner of my future days and was to have blessed them. I have nothing to do—am myself again and at length, my soul can, unagitated, rest.

I dare say particulars might give you some satisfaction, but I do not much like writing even in general terms on these subjects and as I hope to see you in July (Wright tells me you'll then be here) I will defer it till then. In the mean time I can tell you I am the same that tho' my feelings have suffered for a time my reason teaches me that the suffering is the price of greater happiness—and that I am content.

Thus much of myself, tho not the *most interesting*—yet to you not an *uninteresting* subject.

We are still pretty warm and determined in the contest between Monroe and Madison. In this neighborhood the Madisonians are everything—we nothing. I am still and more zealously than ever in the Randolphian Minority.¹ When I see the governing party denouncing this

¹Randolph, just at this time, was using every effort to defeat Madison and elect Monroe, probably not for any particular desire for the latter's election, but to accomplish the defeat of Madison and, as he thought, disappoint Jefferson.

great and good man for speaking irreverently of the slippers of the President when I see the most unprincipled and malignant efforts made to humble him in the dust not for anything pretended to be dishonorable—not for any attempt to violate our constitution or our rights—not for a departure from any one principle that is dear to republicans but for opposing anti-republican measures of Govt. for intemperance not of conduct but of expression—an intemperance which is increased and embittered by that unprincipled denunciation—when I see this same overwhelming majority attempting to subvert the constitution by a Treason bill and a court martial Law—introducing standing armies in contempt of all their former principles—supporting in the command of those accursed forces in contempt of every principle of public and private morality, a man guilty of forgery, perjury, robbery of the mails, bribery, treachery, and treason—the H. of R. busily sacrificing their const^l. priviledges at his shrine—or at least to prevent what they suppose wd. be a triumph of Randolph—when I perceive that the Yazoo monster after being a little while protected at court has almost ceased to be loathsome, execrable among them—when I know that Madison is the advocate and Monroe the opponent of these things—I cannot, I shd. condemn myself if I could, hesitate a moment whom to prefer “That unfortunate and proscribed state” (the minority) carries no terrors to me. I will not swim with the current merely because it would carry me. What think you of the H. of R. rejecting four times 75 to 45 Randolph’s motion to publish the Documents etc. and passing it the next day the moment the P. thought it *not improper*? But I should write a Book instead of a Letter if I were to go on upon these subjects. Farewell.

[P. S.] I feel half disposed to give you another sheet on these subjects but the mail closes in half an hour. My letter, upon looking over it, has I think at least the merit of singularity. It has very much the cast of my mind and feelings—but when I reflect where it is to go, I feel perfectly satisfied without altering a sentence or a word.

In answer to your enquiries—Geo. Hay¹ wrote to the P. U. S. in Novr. that Wilkinson was beyond all question what I have represented and warned him against that imposition which been for some time practiced on him and Wirt. I cannot write, but I could tell you, some circumstances that [would] astonish you. Ritchie’s stories and statemts. contain about half the Truth. Hay is the writer of Hortentius. I have no idea of an administration caucus appointing the future Presidents of America. Washington and Adams could, Jefferson has, and his survivors always will have a Caucus majority for reasons too obvious to mention.

[Address: Lenox-castle N. Ca.]

¹George Hay was a distinguished lawyer and politician who had served in the Virginia legislature and who, as United States district attorney, had prosecuted Burr. He was afterwards a United States district judge. He was a son-in-law of Monroe. He was well known for the political articles which he wrote under the name “Hortensius,” and to some one of which May was now referring. He died in 1830.

From John F. May.

PETERSB'G May 27. '09.

I am not certain exactly who owes the other a letter, but as some time has elapsed since I heard any thing of you and as you have heretofore been rather in advance, I avail myself of one of the earliest leisure moments after my laborious and fatiguing spring circuit, to renew a correspondence from which I always derive pleasure. I do not know to what cause I may ascribe it, but without any subject, as I am, important enough to impel me to write, or interesting enough to induce you to read, withdrawn as I am from scenes in which we formerly engaged together, it seems to me to be still necessary to commune with one another. It tends to revive, in my bosom at least, recollections which are pleasant and which bring with them no regret that they are now mere recollections. I can however even now almost fancy myself in the company of my friend and companion, removing the thin veil of vanity in his presence, describing my spring campaign, the contests, which have been well fought, the victories which have been gallantly won, and as Darnum says, those which have been bravely lost.

I think I have your sympathies for the manifold grievances to which we are unfortunately subject—and this brings me down quite to Mr. Gholson's new judiciary system—from which Good Lord deliver the poor Lawyer of this commonwealth. You know when I saw you I hoped that the courts would have been invested with chancery powers and expected, in that event, to be much benefitted. But the system is in operation with all its original imperfections aggravated by inconveniences of which I could have had no conception. Dinwiddie supr. court and the Hastings quarterly court—Brunswk. supr. and Chesterfd. County—Dinw. quarterly and Chesterfd Supr.—Brunswk county and Nottoway and P. George supr courts are happily arranged by the supreme wisdom of the Legislature so as respectively to fall on the same days, and these are the only courts I wish to attend, or with any convenience can attend. I should not have attended P. George, but the same evil genius of mine contrived to get Petersbg transferred to that county *quo ad hoc*. I fear it will be impossible too, to get an alteration which will be in any respect important—unless as I devoutly hope the system be abolished.

My friend and neighbour Mr. Wm. Knox tells me he has an undoubted right to a tract of land in your state in the possession of some person holding under a State Grant in violation of his superior right. I have advised him to write to you on the subject and to institute a suit in the federal court. He is one of the soldiers of the revolution with a shattered fortune, a numerous family and a character never tarnished. If you can render him any service he will be grateful as well as he is able, will reward you liberally for it. Give our best regards etc. to your sister and family. We shd. be very glad to see her if [she] should be in this

state this summer or fall. My rib is still in a delicate state of health—in fact has been last winter in a low state of health—but the spring we are flattered is bringing about its restoration. We expect to be in Warren in the course of the next month from which if an opportunity offers you will hear from me. In the mean time I bid you an affecte. farewell!

[Address: near Lenox Castle No. Ca.]

From James Campbell.¹

[WENTWORTH, N. C., July 26, 1809.]

I received your letter dated 10th Inst. from Brunswick. I'm convinced you spent some happy hours there with the acquaintances and companions of your infancy and youth. . . .

Altho' you are situated at a distance from Rockingham, and in a place where objects of magnitude are apt to divert your mind from the recollection of your old cronies, yet I fondly hope that Oakland² and its invirons are sometimes near you. Presuming that this is the case, and that it will continue to be so I'm determined not to let slip any incident happening in the county, however trivial that I may conceive to be interesting to you.

Enclosed you have the effusions of our sage, Squire Sneed. I understand a great many printed copies are in circulation. The one from which I took a copy being only loaned a few hours I had no opportunity of procuring a Printed one in time for this days mail. You will observe he pegs it in to Daddy Menzies, nor does he spare uncle Robin Mallock etc. On perusing his circular the reader, sure enough will find the persons there spoken of guilty; but this is an ex parte statement. I have been at some pains to dive into the matter. I find that a Balance of £242.7.1 was struck in a settlement for the levy of 1806 as stated by Sneed, but the d—n—d rascal omitted in said statement to give credit for disbursements made in the same year to the amount of £222.5.4 leaving a Balnce in the hands of the Trustee of only £20.1.9 This settlement is in the office and signed by himself, Joseph Ladd and Jacob Young (the refuse of the Bench)—The sums of £41.10.2 and £31.11.6 respecting Strays which he states as "facts" would appear from his statement to be charges distinct from and exclusive of the Balance of £242.7.1—This happens to be a falsehood for they are both included as appears from the Commissioners report in office.

Well, you'll observe he stops short after ascertaining this Balance of £242.7.1 in place of the true Balance of £20.1.9, leaving this impression,

¹James Campbell, a prominent citizen of Rockingham County.

²The home of Sterling Ruffin.

that the trustee had actually in his hands this sum—why did not the Knave recite a subsequent settlement *several months prior* to the publication of his letter, whereby a Balance of only £150.15.4 was ascertained to be in the hands of the trustee and which entirely did away [with] all and every former settlement. Since this Balance was struck Mr. Menzies has taken in orders and claims to the amount of £115.16.8 leaving the pitiful sum of £34.18.8 proc: money due the county.

I wish you could see into this matter as clearly as I do. The peace and happiness of a worthy old citizen and his family whose characters and reputation in life stand unimpeached, disturbed by the scurrilous assertions and clamorous sayings of so miserable a wretch as Alexander Sneed, a man of no principle no honour and to use his own words, a designing demagogue and will stick at nothing in furtherance of his nefarious schemes.

The sum of £36.13. with which Mr. Gallaway¹ is charged is stated correctly, but let me tell you that the county at this time and are this moment indebted to him some hundred dollars, and he was in nowise bound to pay a cent of it but retain that sum in part payment. Col. James Hunter, Thos. Learey and Thomas Henderson² it is supposed have been auxiliaries to Sneed in putting out his Circular. There is no doubt with me but its publication was intended to affect Nathaniel Scales's³ election, and also that of our friend Harden,⁴ for I take the latter to be one of those whom Sneed hits at when he talks of "influential characters and designing demagogues." T'other day at Muster Harden handled him to a nicety. Poor Mays election in place of being better'd by the report will be materially injured, a great many being of opinion that he had a hand in the pye and that he has all along been a Sneed and Martins man (the minority in county matters). Enough about this business.

I made a tarry of two nights at our friends at the castle about a fortnight ago. The old fellow is in high spirits—two of my countrymen were at this time visitors at the camp and lately from Edinburg, Scotland, from whom I had pleasing accounts of the situation of that country. They are residents of Charleston and leave that place annually during the warm months for the Northern clime.

* * * * *

I shall be in the neighborhood of Oakland this Evening where I shall call and take dinner.

I shd. be glad you would drop me a few lines from Hillsboro' before you set out to the Several Courts, in which please say what you think

¹James Galloway of Rockingham County, member of the Senate, 1786-1790.

²Thomas Henderson, of Rockingham County, member of the House of Commons, 1792-1794; member of the Senate, 1796.

³Nathaniel Scales, of Rockingham County, member of the House of Commons, 1803, 1817; member of the Senate, 1806-1812, 1821-1823.

⁴Mark Harden, of Rockingham County, member of the House of Commons, 1806-1810.

of Sneeds expressions "designing demagogues, nefarious schemes, mismanagement, partial conduct" etc. ; altho' I do not see any hold that can be taken from these—old Menzies is staggering about at every Muster and gathering etc. with a pair of old saddle bags crammed full of papers, relating to his settlement as trustee, endeavouring thereby to discredit Sneeds statement, others are mute, some for suing him, others for giving him a drubbing.

WENTWORTH 26th July 1809.

[Address: Hillsboro'

Addressed a second time

Wm. Gaston Esqr.

Newbern North Carolina.]

[*Enclosure*]

TO THE CITIZENS OF ROCKINGHAM COUNTY.

Friends and fellow Citizens.

The time has actually arrived when I consider it my inevitable duty in vindication of the rights of the people to make the following statement of facts; and in doing so permit me by way of Introduction to take a retrospective view of things as they have come before us. In the first place it would be well to observe that the Citizens of this county have long paid a much higher county tax, perhaps than any other County in the State, when at the same time we have done nothing more conducive to the public benefit than other counties, and perhaps not so much as many of them. If this be true (and I believe it will be readily conceded) it is natural to inquire for the cause that has produced so striking a contrast. In answer to which I must be permitted to say, it has proceeded from the mismanagement, and partial conduct of a few influential characters who have long had the indirect control of our public affairs; a combination who have assumed to themselves the plausible character of being the exclusive friends of the people, with real design to direct, controul and counteract the public will;—a set of designing demagogues who under the mask of republicanism stick at nothing in furtherance of their nefarious schemes, whose sole object is to monopolize power, in order more effectually to prey upon the substance of the people with impunity, and take from the mouth of labour the bread it has earned.

It is a fact that John Menzies, county Trustee when called upon by the committee for a settlement of his public accounts for the year 1805 did produce a statement of his own (which he said was the way he had always settled) endeavouring thereby to bring the county in debt to him when in fact he was owing the county the sum of £46.19.6 as will be seen by the report of the committee for the said year.

It is a fact when called upon by the said Committee for the returns of the rangers which he had in his possession, he refused to produce them, at the same time producing a statement of his own for the sum only of £41.10.2 which he asserted was the full amount he had collected on Strays.

It is a fact that the Committee was then under the disagreeable necessity of calling on the rangers for copies of their returns, which copies when after being compared with the statement aforesaid, there appeared to be a further sum of £31.11.6 actually collected, and in the hands of the said Trustee, which he at first refused to account and settle for.

It is a fact that on a further settlement of his public accounts for the year 1806 he was indebted to the county a further sum of £195.7.7 making in the whole an aggregate amount of £242.7.1 actually collected, and in the hands of the said county trustee, as will be seen from the report of the Committee.

It is a fact that on further inquiry we found in the hands of the said county Trustee for collection the sum of £22.10.4 due on strays which he had failed to collect in due time as will be seen by said report—also in a settlement for all arrears of money due the county we found a further nett amount of £23.16.8 due on strays and not collected as per Strays Book of George Perry Esq. deceased, as will be seen by the report of the Committee.

It is a fact that on further examination we found in the hands of Nathaniel Scales Esqr. one of the commissioners appointed by the act of Assembly to sell and dispose of the several lots in the Power of the Wentworth the sum of £131.11.9 including the interest due the county in Bonds and money which he had failed to collect and account for in due time as will be seen by the report of the Committee.

It is a fact that John Matlock Sheriff of Rockingham County, on a settlement with the said Committee was indebted to the county the nett sum of \$184.25 it being the Balance of the monies levied and by him collected for the purpose of building a stone gaol. This Balance, he had failed to account and settle for in due time altho the county was then bound to pay and did actually pay Interest to Robert Gallaway assignee of Charles L. Hunter to the amount of \$63.50 in consequence of such failure as will be seen from the report of the Committee.

It is a fact that Robert Gallaway Esq Clerk of the County Court of Rockingham had failed to pay over to the county Trustee all fines and embursements by him received from May Sessions 1804 to Febry Sessions 1808 Amounting to \$36.13, altho' he at the same time was drawing Interest to the amount of \$63.50 as aforesaid on the Balance due him as assignee for building said stone gaol as will also be seen by the report of said Committee.

And it is further a fact that in consequence of the aforesaid settlements and investigation the county court has been enabled to reduce the county tax the sum of two shillings and six pence on the Poll in the two

last years—have repaired the courthouse at the price of \$493. built two Bridges and purchased a sufficiency of Law Books for the use of the court and still have outstanding debts due the County to collect to the amount of \$350.

These are plain simple facts which cannot be denied. Is it not time for the people to look out and say that such things shall not be?

N. B. The above statement has not been made with any invidious view, but from a Conviction (being placed in a situation to know) that it is my indispensable duty to let the people know how their money goes.

(Signed) ALEX. SNEED

One of the Committee.

From Richard Stanford.¹

WASHINGTON CITY, Apl. 6, 1810

I cover you a paper containing the opinion of the supreme Court in the case of "Yazoo title,"² and the report of Judge Johnson,³ the case is not a little interesting here, and may therefore attract professional curiosity your way.

Congress has done so little I have nothing to communicate of their doings, except that they have undone Macon's Bill. It is lost through the disagreement between the two Houses. Foreign news appearing rather to bear a favourable aspect, I presume the non-intercourse law will be left to expire with the session. This, if the Senate concur, we have voted to close on the 23d inst.

The additional duties proposed on the reduction of the naval and military force with that of the reincorporation of the Bank U. States are subjects which will probably engage us principally till we rise.

From William Garnett.

PETERSBURG, 12th July, 1810.

Agreeably to your appointment, in your letter to Mr. Matthews, I arrived in Petersburg on yesterday, prepared to greet you as soon as

¹Richard Stanford, 1767-1816, a native of Maryland, came to North Carolina in 1793 as a school teacher in the Hawfields. He was a Republican member of Congress from 1797 to his death.

²The reference is of course to the decision in the case of *Fletcher v. Peck*, 6 Cranch, 87.

³William Johnson of South Carolina, 1771-1834; member of South Carolina legislature, 1794-1798; speaker, 1796; state judge; associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States from 1804 to 1834. His opinion in the case mentioned above was a concurring one, but he differed widely from the Court in his reasoning.

you should alight from your horse. You may easily judge of the painful anxiety with which I watched, both yesterday and to day, for your arrival. After having traced so many wearisome steps to see you, to be compelled to leave this place without enjoying this pleasure, was a disappointment so little calculated upon, that it required my strongest efforts to support it with tolerable fortitude. But I will not reproach you with the mortification and chagrin, which I have suffered; I feel persuaded that you have a good reason for not keeping your appointment. I cannot, however, avoid bewailing my unlucky fate; and lamenting the accident, which has prevented your journey to Petersburg. I shall hate the place as long as I live, and, with, my good will, shall see it to-morrow for the last time in my life. I shall reach Richmond to-morrow where it is probable I may stay a day. Let me here from you as soon as possible; but to see you in Essex would be far more agreeable. It [torn] would afford me some consolation for a disappointment, which I believe I shall, otherwise, take six months to recover. Such was my impatience to see you, that I left fully $\frac{1}{3}$ of my harvest to finish, that I might enjoy a pleasure so long, and so fruitlessly, wished for. But I must conclude, for I find that this accursed misfortune hangs so heavily upon me that I can neither think or write of any thing else. Remember me affly. to your good lady and accept the assurances of the undiminished friendship of your disappointed friend,

P. S. I put up at the Bell Tavern—

[Address: .

Hillsborough,

North-Carolina.]

*From Elizabeth Kirkland to William Kirkland.*¹

GLASGOW 13th Sept. 1810.

My dear Brother.

It is impossible for me to express the heartfelt satisfaction your letter date 10th May afforded your Dear Mother and all of us, to be informed you were well and dear Sister and family proved quite a balm to us in the midst of our distress. I regret sincerely that our Congratulations to our dear Anne on her marriage should be mixed with bitter, but to the will of Heaven we must submit, in a letter I sent you previous to the one you answered I mentioned to you that our dear Janes complaints were consumptive which alas proved fatal she died on the 24th of July last and a blest example she left us of christian piety, and resignation to the divine will she was sensible to the last moment and when she

¹Elizabeth Kirkland was, as this letter shows, a sister of William Kirkland of Hillsboro. The latter had come to Hillsboro some time prior to 1790 and lived at Ayr Mount, a mile east of the town. He was a merchant and planter, and the father-in-law of Ruffin.

would have looked round and saw us the last last dawn she would have smiled and said happy happy, as much as to say we were not to mourn for her, and not many minutes before she breathed her last she named you and all the rest of her absent Brothers, indeed my dear Brother if our feelings would submit to reason we would rejoice at the happy change we have every reason to hope she has made, but nothing but the lenient hand of time can sooth our feelings, her poor husband is in the deepest distress as you may suppose, his little Anne is a very fine child, and very stout grown. I hope in God she will be spared for a comfort and blessing to him and all her friends. Brother John and Nancy has been at London visiting Nugent and family. John carried up his eldest son and daughter with him. Nugent had wrote for them some time ago. John is to be placed in a Millitary Academy for some time, Isabella is to be educate with their Anne, who has a governess to her self, and having only her she will be much the better of a companion.

Our dear Mother joins in sending her blessing to you and dear Sister with our most sincere congratulations to our dearest Anne and her better half, may Heaven have a plentitude of its blessings upon them and may they be long spared for a blessing and comfort to each other, and be to you and our dearest Sister just what you could wish. Tell my Nephew Mr. Ruffin that I shall certainly write him as soon as I am in better spirits assure him that nothing would make his Aunt Elizabeth so happy as to hear from him. I have not a doubt but he will be making me a very respectable woman some of these days for instance a Grand Aunt. happen when it will none will rejoice more than me, Nugent and Mrs. Kirkland wrote immediately on learning their was letters from you and begd we would offer their best wishes and congratulations on the happy occasion she is a most excellent woman and is as much interested in you, our dear Sister and family, as if she knew you all, by the by my dear Wm. I am going to request a favour of you and our dear Sister if your next is a Boy to name it Nugent or if a Girl to call it Pheba for Mrs. K. I hope you will pardon my presumption and may retaliate in the same way as soon as I get off the stocks which I will not do till you honour us with your presence having put it off so long I shall defer till then. We shall certainly look forward with much pleasure to the spring hoping it will bring you, think how much it will gladen the heart of your good old Mother to see her darling William who at the very Idea of it seems two or three years younger already. We had very comfortable letters from David lately date 29th Decemr last. He was then at Goa in Bombay, tells his mother he had purchased a House for forty Pounds and only wanted a good wife to make him quite comfortable and happy. I trust in God he will do well. John saw a young man in Ayr about eight months ago who had seen James about three years ago at Baltimore he was then a sailor in some vessel but could not tell the name of it; they had been old school companions and recognized one another, tis very strange if he is still alive that he does not write his friends, it is truly

lamentable that a young man of his abilities should have so far forgot himself. I trust the Almighty God will guard and protect him from evil, in whatever situation of life he may be in, and that we may yet hear comfortable accounts of him. I regret sincerely that times have been so bad in America indeed it is not to be wondered at considering every thing we feel it here very much, trade at present is very low, never was more so, we both want consumers and confidence but the blessing of hope is richly infused and we must not despair. The Almighty is all sufficient and can bring good out of evil. John is just arrived and sends a thousand loves to you all, and will write and give you all the news of his jaunt as soon as he is fairly settled, next week is the seventh week at Ayr and he is just hurrying on to have matters arranged, as his whole time will be occupied that week with the judges, he left Nancy in Edin[bur]g for two days with Mr. Kirklands friends, they went and came home by sea. Nancy was very sick but I hope she will be better for it as she was by no means very well when she went away which made us urge her to go. Took a peach wishes to know if you have any mind of her thats the name you used to give Anne you know, our family never was so little as it is at present, only my Mother Anne and me at home, Sister Mary has been at Ayr during her absence however I hope by next week we will be altogether again. So you have no less than two of addition to your family upon my word Wm. you are very rich and I sincerely hope they are all sent for a blessing to you and their dear Mother. Sir A. McKenzy I am sure will be very proud of his name sake, do you think Sister would not consent to let two of the children come with you to see their Grandmother it would be such a treat but we must not expect too much for fear we be disappointed. We rejoice to hear that your health is so much better, and intreat you to take good care and not make too free, its a blessing we too seldom prize till we are robbed of it, again Adieu Kiss all the children for me, and when you write Betsy and Peggy give all our love.

E. K.

I shall conclude with our most affect love and best wishes to all your happy family. May Almighty God Bless you all is the prayer of your truly affect and loving Sister.

E. KIRKLAND.

[Address:

William Kirkland Esqr.

Hillsborough, North Carolina.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

Dear Sir

[September. 1810.]

You will have learned before this reaches you, that great Part of Mr. Duffeys¹ library was sold on this Week by the Sheriff of Chatham. I could not Stand by and see the Books go for Nothing. I attended the Sale and bid up, so as to make them bring as *much* as possible: had I not done so, the Books would not have sold for one half of their value, nor, I believe, for one third. The Consequence of my bidding has been, that a great many of the Books have fallen into my hands. Among which are a Number of valuable Lawbooks. I intended, if money enough could have been received to meet the most pressing demands, to have offered those books, which I purchased, for sale upon a Credit of 12 Months for the benefit of the estate. But I find this cannot be done and I have to pay the Cash for them at the next Chatham County Court. I mention these things to you, to learn whether you are disposed to take part or most of the Law Books etc. You may take them at the same Prices at which they were bid off to me. You will never meet with an opportunity again of getting Books upon the same terms. Let me know by Isaac whether you will take these Books. If you do not, I shall let Love and Willson have them.

The following are some of the books with their Prices.

12 Vols. of Modern Reports	\$18	This book generally costs	\$36 or 40
3 Do of Willsons Do	6	general Price	\$ 9
1 Do of Cowper Do	2	Do	5
1 Do of Douglas Do	3	Do	5
1 Do of Willes Do	2.50	Do	
5 Do of Vesey Junr.	15	Do	25
2 Do of Vesey Senr.	3	Do	8
4 Do of Cooke	10	Do	15
			103
1 Latches	1.50	Do	1
3 Piere Williams	6	Do	12
2 Strange	2	Do	6
2 Henry Blackstone	3.50	Do	10
3 Dyer Do	4.	Do	10
2 Shower Do	3.50	Do	8
3 Dallas Do	8.90	Do	15
2 Fonblanque on Equity	3.50	Do	6
2 Vernons reports	3	Do	8
1 Cases tempore Talbot	1.25	Do	3
1 Kyd on Awards	1.50	Do	2.50
2 Hales Pleas of the Crown	2.70	Do	8
2 McNallys evidence	2.50	Do	5
2 Espenapi's Nisi Prius	2	Do	6
			47
			103
			150

¹William Duffy, a prominent lawyer and member of the legislature. He practiced successively in New Bern, Hillsboro, and Fayetteville. He had died shortly before this letter was written.

These books are very little injured—they are worth nearly as much as when Mr. Duffey got them—they will make you a very good Law-Library when added to those which you already have.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsboro.]

[Endorsed:

Mr. Duffy's Books

Sepr. 27th 1810

Duffy, a few days ago died!]

*From Archibald D. Murphey.*¹

HERMITAGE. 1st January 1811.

Dear Sir.

* * * * *

As soon as you reach Petersburg, enquire of the apothecaries for the *Alcornoque*,² which has lately been imported into Philadelphia by Mr. Chevalier and advertised for sale. This is the Vegetable so much celebrated lately for its efficacy in curing Pulmonary Complaints. I wrote to John Williams some time ago to procure some of it for me, and also Instructions for using it. If possible, get some of this Vegetable before you leave Petersburg. Dr. Umstead has induced Jenny to believe that the *Alcornoque* will restore her to good health.

With the greatest Anxiety for your Welfare and Happiness, I remain,
Dear Sir,

Yours Very Sincerely

A. D. MURPHEY.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

*From E. Dillard.*³

PETERSBURG 19th Feb. '11.

I returned from an excursion into the country about 12 days ago, and have since been compell'd to put myself under the hands of a Physician,

¹The omitted portion of this letter is printed in Hoyt, ed., *The Murphey Papers*, I, p. 46.

²A South American bark which was at this time much in use. It disappeared from the American Pharmacopœia about 1840.

³Edward Dillard, captain of the Fifth U. S. Infantry until May, 1811, when he resigned on account of ill-health. He married Ruffin's sister, Minerva, and died within a few years.

owing to an encrease of the infernal troublesome disorder under which I have so long labored. I am housed and shall continue so, literally feeding upon bread and water; and am determined to make use of the most desperate remedies, if mild ones will not do, to eradicate the disease. Permit me to plead the above as an apology for not sooner writing to you.

* * * * *

We have no news here, but what you will have seen in the papers, before this reaches you. Mon. *Bonny* it seems, has been a little civil in restoring certain condemned American property; and if it be true, which there can be little doubt of, that the Prince of Wales is appointed Regent, we may expect from the change in the Administration an abolition of the British orders in council. We can therefore reasonably *anticipate* better times, but it may be well not to "*count the chickens before the eggs are hatched.*"

I have a letter from a friend in the War department which mentions that much longer requisitions have been made than usual for Military cloathing, Camp equipage and other war materials and that the recruiting service has been revised, a number of the supernumerary officers having been detached upon that duty. From this he infers, that there is "a speck of War in the Horizon." I cannot tell in what quarter since the Florida's have submitted without a struggle. The probability is, that the Secretary at War intends filling up the existing Regiments for a permanent peace establishment. My own experience tells me that even this will be a very hard matter. I do not believe that it can be effected in five years by the present mode of voluntary enlistment.

Congress is wonderfully engaged about—*Nothing*. God knows what they will do about the non-intercourse.

Write me forthwith, and tell me candidly what are the sentiments of M's parents upon a particular subject. I hope and trust they are favorable. My furlough has been extended till the 20th next July.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

*From Bartlett Yancey.*¹

GREENSBORO: Monday morning March 1813.

I am this far on my return from the counties of my district: I set out on tuesday morning, dined at your father's and went that night to Wentworth; the next morning to Spring-Garden and to Robert Galloway's,²

¹Bartlett Yancey, 1785-1828, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, a distinguished lawyer, member of Congress from 1813 to 1817, state senator and speaker from 1817 to 1827. He was a close friend of Ruffin.

²A member of the large and influential family which was prominent in Rockingham County affairs for many years.

that night to Joseph Gentry's:¹ the next day to several Houses in Stokes, on to old David Dalton's and to my very worthy and patriotick old friend Col. Winston's.² In passing so far through the County, I met apparently with a most hearty welcome, all were my friends, and most actively engaged for my success before they saw me; I gave them a circular for themselves and Neighbours and a few to distribute, which they with alacrity promised to do, And I have no doubt will with a degree of zeal. from Col. Winston's Went on to Germanton, My old friend Winston with me, introducing me to every man, woman and Child. I found all the town, except Tho: Armstrong,³ (who was not at home,) my most decided friend: from there I went to Isaac Dalton's⁴ in whom I found a most active and valuable friend, and the next day I went to a muster on the borders of the Moravian settlement; Many of the Dutch were there and the Country just around having mentioned the day before, that I was expected at the muster, more than one hundred persons had assembled when I got there: several of my friends went on with me, and there I met with the Dobsons;⁵ I was introduced to many and had scarcely time, to shake hands and speak to them before I was called upon by a messenger from the Captains of both companies to address the men: I began, directly in the midst of them, and in a little time raised among them the war-whoop: I knew not how it would stick, but came out with a bold front, and with warmth: at the conclusion of my speech which was short, almost every man, flocked to me, telling me, they had heard of me, but they now knew my principles and would support me, this seemed to be the tune of all, with the exception of a single one, an old vulgar fellow of a Dutch-Irishman, who said he would vote for Martin:⁶ Lacy⁷ would not have gotten a single vote there on that day: from the muster, I went to Salem. I expected it the bed of federalism and disaffection: but to my great surprise, I found all the leading men among them, the advocates of the present War, in order to get a honorable peace: I think they will stand divided between Lacy and myself, myself getting many more of them, than I expected: I went to town in Company with our friend Capt Harden;⁸ we met many of my

¹Joseph Gentry of Rockingham, member of the House of Commons in 1804.

²Joseph Winston was a native of Stokes County and was a major in the Revolution, taking quite a prominent part in the battle of Kings Mountain. He was the first state senator from Stokes in 1790, and was also a member of the Senate in 1791, 1802, 1807, and 1812. He was a member of Congress from 1793 to 1795 and from 1803 to 1807. He died in 1814.

³Thomas Armstrong of Germanton.

⁴Isaac Dalton, a member of the House of Commons from Stokes in 1805, 1806, 1814, and 1815.

⁵Probably Henry B. and William P. Dobson, both influential in the politics of Stokes County.

⁶James Martin, Jr., of Stokes, who was a very prominent lawyer at this time and had been a member of the state senate in 1811 and 1812. He died in 1822.

⁷Theophilus Lacy of Rockingham, member of the House of Commons in 1799 and 1801. He later declined to be a candidate.

⁸Probably Mark Harden.

friends returning from the town: they told me Bloom, the tavern keeper was warmly my friend: that Criser was rather opposed to me, and thought me too warm a politician. After I got in, many of the young men came down to the tavern to see me, (for it had got to salem early in the day, that I was to be there, that night) Among the number who came down was Criser and Stiner: Criser and myself in the presence of the others fell into a political conversation, and I soon found from him, that after the late law upon the subject of the employment of seamen, he was an advocate for war: In that we agreed: I took occasion however, to discriminate between firmness and decision of opinion and virulence and madness: It seem to fit him, but I know he stood pledged to Lacy; during the conversation he remarked that if Lacy declined, Martin would get but little support: Stiner is a good Republican and Bloom tells me will support me: Criser on yesterday took considerable pains at the Church to introduce me to all their leading men: This town in politics can be revolutionized:

It is now ascertained beyond doubt that James Martin is a candidate, for since the first of the week, he has been into every county of the district, except Caswell. He and his friends are writing and riding daily: Lacy has been to this place during the last week: I can hear of him in many places, at some he talks of declining, at others he says, by George, it will not do, it looks too much like being beaten: In all my travels through Stokes, I never could hear of but 3 men, all of them living together that would support Lacy and they were doubtful: In this I was completely astonished: for I expected he would there get a good support: I am universily told he will get none: I am expected at Stokes Court on thursday: I propose that we should meet on Monday at Caswell, and on Monday and tuesday do all the plain business. there are but two litigation suits on docket, Barker and Reid; Harrison and Boyd: Settle is concerned in both and will not be there, we can make *use* of that for a continuance. On tuesday night we will get to your fathers, and on Wednesday night to Germanton: I am particularly anxious, that you should be with me at Stokes: you are well acquainted and I am told and believe you can do me good: I want to beat Martin in his own county: Murphy and Settle¹ will attend to your business in Stokes till you get there. think of this proposition till Court, I am confident it will answer a good purpose: My friends in this county and Rockingham tell me I will beat either of them a good ways. Strange to tell, they say in this county, Martin will get none except a few in the neighborhood of Lea Hunter.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹Thomas Settle of Rockingham County, 1791-1857; member of the House of Commons, 1816, 1826-1829; speaker, 1828; member of Congress, 1817-1821; judge Superior Court, 1832 until his death.

From Bartlett Yancey.

CASWELLS 2d. April 1813:

I have before written you from Greensboro, but think it possible this may reach you before that; as my Old friend Capt: Tait promises it a speedy passage. My letters from Guilford will give you a full account in a short way of my late tour through the district: Your letter by Mr. Evans from Hillsborough I have read, and precisely the same propositions you make me, I have suggested in my letter to you: it will suit the interest of both of us, and particularly myself.

My proposition was formed upon a Conversation with your father and other of my friends, I saw upon the rout: I have this day understood, that the post-Boy brings certain intelligence from Lacy's neighborhood that he has certainly declined: I have read. no letter from Mr. Lacy on the subject but it was a thing I fully expected from what I had heard of him on my tour: James Martin is certainly up, and making every exertion possible for success: I think I shall beat him very easy, but I mean notwithstanding to be active and endeavour to stir up my friends to activity, and impress on them to come out on the day of Election:

I shall be at home on Sunday before Caswell Co. Court, and shall be glad of your company: We must set out on tuesday night for German-ton; go to your fathers by promise: R. Ct. House to breakfast and on to Germanton: Campbell will expect us:

[Address: Hillsborough. No.C.]

From Jesse Franklin.¹

SURRY COUNTY 14th Novr. 1813.

You will recollect we had some Conversation at Germanton last Court upon the Subject of a Vacancy taking place in the Senate of the U. S., upon further consideration I am inclined to believe that none will happen—that our friend the Judge² will continue. But if a vacancy should ultimately take place and our friends after Coning over the Subject,

¹Jesse Franklin of Surry, member of the House of Commons, 1793, 1794, 1797, 1798; member of Congress, 1795 to 1797; United States senator, 1799-1805 and from 1807 to 1813; state senator, 1805-1806; governor, 1820; died, 1823.

²David Stone of Bertie, 1770-1818; studied law under Davie and became prominent at the bar; was member of the Commons, 1790-1794; judge of the Superior Court, 1794-1798; member of Congress, 1799-1801; United States senator, 1801-1806, when he resigned to become a judge of the Superior Court; governor from 1809-1810; member of the Commons, 1811-1812; United States senator, 1813 to 1814, when, the legislature having passed resolutions of censure on account of his opposition to the war measures of the administration, he resigned.

Should be of opinion that the use of my name as a successor will serve the present cause you are at Liberty to make use of it. Not Sir that I have any personal wishes ever to attend the sessions of the Senate, for if ever I had any they have been long since gratified, and after having been twice Honored with that High trust, Certainly I can have no farther Claims of that sort upon the State, but I can never Sit down and view with indifference the passing events growing out of the present Contest in which we are engaged, but on the Contrary I feel the most lively interest in the struggle, and it is with pain that I ever see thorns and thistles strewed in the way of those of the Majority, who must govern, who must necessarily point out the Course, that the nation must pursue. I did believe that longer forbearance with the British Government on our part would have been criminal; that from some fatality or other, no nation is exempt from the Horrors of war, and in their turn all must encounter it. That our cause is a just one and we in time must Join the *Dreadfull revelry*. To meet it manfully is our proper course to shrink from it would be a baseness to which Americans as free men, knowing and valuing their rights never could submit, and that a vigorous prosecution of the War is the only way to Honorable peace. I voted for the war, but not untill I believed that every effort had been made to preserve the peace of the nation, that every point of the political compass had been tried, and every Honorable offer made to the present enemy; notwithstanding what may be said by those in the opposition.

If a vacancy should take place and our friends can unite upon any Gentleman whose prospects of success are plisable let me not stand in the way.

I have not written to Judge Stone, indeed I have been at a loss How to answer his letter upon the subject. The Judge and Myself have ever been upon the most intimate terms of friendship both as publick men and individuals from long acquaintance and long service together.

N. B. I wish you an agreeable session and after doing much good for the State a Happy meeting with your family and friends.

[Address:

Mr. Ruffin Esquire

Member of the Legislature of the State of N. Carolina Raleigh
N. C. from the town of Hillsbo.]

From William Garnett.

2^d Dec, 1813

It is with very great pleasure that I am enabled by the receipt of your letter of the 15th of Nov, once more to reply to a communication from you. This pleasure is the more increased, as I had began to think that

our correspondence had, at length, reached the end of the tendency, which it has long appeared to have, to a termination. In June last, I wrote you a long letter, informing you that I should be in Richmond at the siting of the chancery court, and requesting a meeting if possible at that place; but, as well as I recollect, I gave it a wrong direction, directing it to Warrenton instead of Hillsborough, I, therefore, presume that you never recvd it. I rejoice with you in your prospects for domestic happiness, which I hope you may continue to realize as long as you live. My own, I think, are as good as I could reasonably expect, though I am far from being in the flourishing circumstances, with regard to my pecuniary affairs, that you seem to imagine. I possess, nominally, a pretty good estate. I own about 8 or 9 hundred acres of Rappahannock River land, and about forty negroes, I have, besides, a reversionary interest, which I estimate at between two and three thousand pounds, but notwithstanding this, I have been embarrassed and perplexed with debt ever since I began life. When I came to the possession of my estate, I found it burthened with debt, which building and purchasing furniture towards housekeeping very much encreased. Since then, I have bent my utmost exertions towards relieving it from its heavy incumbrances, but the embargo threw me back very much, and I was but just recovering from its baneful influence when the war assailed me, and will, I fear, shake me to center if it continues much longer.

My family consists of a wife¹ and three children, a son, and two daughters, and, I think, I have as much reason to be happy in them as most men. As you observe with regard to your children, mine are too young to exhibit any strong characteristick features; they are healthy, and viewing them with the partiality of parent, I suppose, I can see as little to object to in them, as in any children I know of their ages.

From your letter, I observe that you are in your state Legislature; the political ocean, I believe, is a very tempestuous one and the adventurers upon it, rarely ever promote their own happiness by it; but it is necessary that some should buffet the storm, and patriotism requires that no man should hang back when his services are required.

Your fate and mine has been very different in this respect, I have been long politically proscribed, and am considered, or rather affected to be considered, by those who aspire at despotic sway in one District, as nothing better than a tory. The ostensible, (though not the real cause,) for such an opinion, which I have good reason to believe is frequently expressed, behind my back and in the most insidious and secret manner, is because I thought it impolitick to declare war when we did, and because I have taken all proper occasions to express my disgust at the pusillanimous conduct of our govt. towards France, and at the shameful and barefaced manner in which they have persisted in falsely affirm-

¹William Garnett married his cousin, Anna Maria Brooke. Their children at the time of this letter were Anna Maria Catherine, born 1808; Muscoe, born 1810; and Charlotte Olympia, born 1812.

ing that the F. Decrees were repealed when the Presidents proclamation declared them to be. But I have not time to go into this long and disgusting subject, I will, therefore, reserve it for another letter.

I would not be in public life if I could, which bye the bye is well put in, unless my services were solicited, as I do not think my talents of that brilliant stamp to render it improper that I should indulge my predilection for a private life, and I believe it is one in which the people are very willing to indulge me. But I will now conclude, for the present—Remember me affectionately to all your family, and write to me as often as you can find leisure, and I promise you to do the same.

[Address: Raleigh North Carolina]

From Archibald D. Murphey.¹

RALEIGH, 6th Jan^y. 1813.² [1814]

Dear Ruffin.

Your letters have this moment come to hand. I will get the Copies from the Clerk of the Federal Court which you wish and either bring them or send them to Hillsboro. I have taken up your Fathers Note \$1461. If the Acts of 1764 and 1768 can be had in the Secretary's Office, I will get copies for you. I will attend to the Cases which you enclosed and get a Decision on them, if possible.

* * * * *

The Moravian Cause³ comes on Tomorrow, and I shall not get away before Monday or Tuesday. Mr. Robards⁴ is appointed Clerk—Great News here—Peace, I hope, is in prospect for us. The allies are triumphant in all quarters—the Papers of today give us details—the Prince of Sewartszenberg acted as Commander in Chief of the Allies, Supported by the Army of Siberia under Blucher and the Northern Army under Bernadotte Blucher fought Ney on the 17th Octo., and defeated him with great loss. On the first day the Main Allied Army was engaged agt. Buonaparte: On the night of that day Orders were issued by the Prince

¹Archibald De Bow Murphey, 1777-1832, well-known to North Carolina as a great judge, a great statesman, and a great orator. He was one of Ruffin's most intimate friends and also a connection by marriage. Ruffin also for a short time studied law under him.

²This letter is dated 1813, but its contents show that this was an error, as does the letter from Murphey to Ruffin, dated January 10, 1814.

³This was a very important case which involved the possession of and title to a large part of the lands of the Moravian Church in North Carolina. Murphey was the chief counsel for the Moravians, and in 1814 secured a decree of the Supreme Court in their favor. See *Benzien v. Lenoir*, 4 N. C., 117. The case was reopened later.

⁴William Robards of Granville, member of the House of Commons in 1806 and 1808; state treasurer, 1827-1830; clerk of the Supreme Court for many years; died, 1842.

of Swartzzenberg to renew the Attack on the next day and Notice given to Bernadotte and Blucher to make certain dispositions of their forces during the night So that a general combined Attack might be made upon all parts of the French Army—the Attack was made as concerted; Bennington who had just arrived with the Army of Rouen, seems to have sustained the hottest fire and contributed to the Victory in that Quarter where the Allied Army under Pr. Swartzzenberg fought. Bernadotte and Blucher carried all the positions of the French in the Quarters where they fought and before night the French Armies were routed and fleeing in all Directions. France has lost some of her best Generals. It is stated, but not officially, that MacDonalld is taken Prisoner, and that Prince *Poniatowsky*, who commanded the Polish Troops was drowned in his flight in the river Saalle. The official letters of Sir. Ch. Stewart written on the 19th, a few hours after the Allies entered Leipsig, announce the Capture of Generals Sabiston, Brune, Vallary and many other distinguished Commanders. General Latour Manbourg lost a leg. Since the death of Bessieres the Duke of Istria, Manbourg has been esteemed the best Commander of Cavalry in Europe, except Murat the King of Naples.

Buonaparte attempted a retreat by the Road to Erforth, But Bernadotte had detached such a force in that direction, that he changed his route, and took the road to Brunswick with the wreck of his Army. It is expected that by the route of the Saale he will endeavour to force his way to the Military posts near the Mouth of the Rhine. Genl. Blucher pursued him along this Rout and Bernadotte had Succeeded in throwing a Strong force between him and the Rhine in this Direction.

In the Battle of the 17th Octo. the Saxon Troops with their Artillery went down and joined Bernadotte, who made a Speech to them, put himself at the Head and lead them against the French. In the Battle on the next day, 17 Battalions of German Troops with their Artillery went over to the Allied Army. Bavaria has joined the Allies: the Saxon and many of the Wirtemberg Troops having joined them and the King of Saxony being taken Prisoner and all his Dominions in the hands of the Allies, he will of course join them. In forty eight hours, France has lost nearly 100,000 men and many of her best Generals. The Colossus of her Power is broken to pieces. Whilst she suffers this bad reverse of fortune in the North, Lord Wellington is entering her Territory in another quarter. He has stormed all the line of Military posts at the foot of the Pyrennees and displayed the British Standard on the Soil of Ancient France. How many Centuries have passed away since this Standard was unfurled on French Ground?

The Prince Regent's Speech is in the Papers of today. He announces the great events upon the Continent and the junction of Bavaria to the Coalition. He regrets the War with the United States, declares a Disposition to Settle the Difference, and applauds the Conduct of his Troops in Canada. It is conjectured that the Flag of Truce which has arrived

at Annapolis brings a direct proposition from Lord Castlereagh to treat either here or in England, and declining the Interference of a third Power. It certainly brings some proposition upon this subject and some say, a Minster is on Board—this is not believed. It was believed at Washington that in a few days Mr. Bayard would be nominated to the Senate as Envoy Extraordinary to England. God send us peace. My Heart bleeds for the unhappy sufferers on the Frontiers, whose Towns and Country Dwellings have been laid in Ashes, by way of retaliation for burning Newark. Genl. McClures friends declare he acted under the Orders of the Secretary of War:¹ this latter Gentleman denies it. One or the Other, or both deserve the execration of the civilized World. Do not our Disgraces sicken your Soul? Wilkinsons Army will, I fear, all be captured before I see you. It is said, they have been twice Summoned to Surrender—All the Officers almost, are to the South. I pray God to give us peace, and save us from further Disgrace. We shall get out of the War, loaded with Debt and taxes, Defeat and Disgrace. It is time for men of all parties to Unite and put into Office Men of Ability and Elevation of Character, that the Honour of the Nation may be reestablished, and the Dominion of low passion be broken down. God bless you, Dear Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

RALEIGH, 10th Jan^y. 1814:

It is now nearly 1 O'clock—engaged in the Moravian Cause which has already occupied two days and will probably take up two more. I have only time to write a few lines—the Judges have decided against the *Suspension Act*,² Unanimously.

10 Companies of detached Militia are ordered to march from this State immediately to Milledgville in Georgia—8 of Infantry, 1 of Cavalry and 1 of Artillery. The Governor is in Granville, he has been that far and will be here tomorrow or next day.

London papers of 14th Nov. have been recd.—Bonaparte escaped to the Rhine and had reached Mainz with 20 or 30,000 men. No particulars are received as yet.

¹The Secretary of War at this time was John Armstrong of New York, a Revolutionary soldier, the author of the "Newburgh Letters," delegate to the Continental Congress from Pennsylvania, senator from New York, minister to France and to Spain, brigadier general in the United States Army. He was forced to resign at the time of the capture of Washington.

²This was an act passed in 1812, providing for a stay of judgment in all suits for debt or damage from December 31, 1812, to February 1, 1814. The opinion in the case, *Jones v. Crittenden*, was written by Chief Justice Taylor, Judge Hall dissenting.

I enclose one of my circulars to you, I am for Mr. Kirkland. I wish you could think as Jas about some of the things contained in it. My love to Anne, Mr. Kirkland and all his family. God bless you.

T. Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

RALEIGH 12th Jany. 1814.

Dear Sir.

We have been nearly a Week on the Moravian Cause, and we shall not finish it before tomorrow or next day night—We are all tired.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Bartlett Yancey to Sterling Ruffin.

WASHINGTON: 4th Feb'y. 1814.

I fear that the conclusion which you have drawn with regard to my Silence in writing you is not dissimilar, with my own with regard to your Silence in writing to me: Permit me however to assure you, that much of my time which has been devoted to correspondence and attention to my constituents, has been in answering letters and dispatching news-papers to those parts of the district where I expected they were most likely to answer the cause which I am endeavoring support: Amidst my labors of this kind, however, I cannot, nor must not subject myself justly to be reproached with ingratitude to my friends and my most able supporters: To give you a detailed account of the proceedings of Congress, would be pretty much like the most of the business of the session, uninteresting.

Before much of the important business of the session, has been matured by the Committees, and brought forward in the House, Our Government received dispatches from the British Ministry containing a proposition to negotiate for peace: this Correspondence has been published and no doubt you have seen it before this reaches you: These dispatches were communicated to Congress, and Ministers to meet at Gottenberg to negotiate. Mr. Adams, Mr. Bayard, Mr. Clay (late speaker) and Mr. Jonathan Russel¹ were appointed for that purpose: Mr. Russel was also

¹Jonathan Russell, 1771-1832, chargé d'affaires in England at the outbreak of the war; minister to Norway and Sweden, 1814-1818; member of Congress, 1821-1823.

appointed Minister to reside at Stockholm. Notwithstanding this appearance of peace, it was recommended by the President, that we should adopt suitable measures for a Vigorous and determined prosecution of the war, during the next campaign.

This course, so necessary and indispensable, was fully determined on by Congress, both before and after the reception of that message. We have learnt, the truth of that Maxim, that to procure peace and maintain it, we should be prepared for war.

Congress has accordingly passed a Bill, to fill the Ranks of the Army: by which they offer \$124: and 160 acres of land as a bounty: \$50 to be paid at the moment of enlistment, \$50 at the place of Rendezvous and 24 at the end of Service: to be enlisted for five years, or during the war: We have also passed a Bill to authorize five of the Regiments already authorized to be turned into Rifle Corps—: And this day was passed to a third reading a Bill to accept of the service of any Volunteer Corps, who are now ready and willing to go into service and continue for five years, or during the war. It is believed that several of the corps to the North, are now ready to enter the service.

The Committee of Ways and Means have made this report in part, and the greater part of the present session will be devoted to providing the Revenue for the next year. They have reported a Bill to authorize the issuing of Treasury Notes and also a loan: It was to have been expected that the war, would have cost a great deal of money: the Expense has not been greater than there might be expected: The Military establishment for the last year is about 18 Millions. This Constitutes the greater part of the Expense. Nothing is yet heard from Mr. Gallatin. It is said and believed, that if he is not heard from in a short time, that there will be an appointment for the treasury. Who it will be is uncertain.

I need not tell you, I am tired of this place: of this I am persuaded you are already convinced. It is believed at present, that Congress will adjourn the last of March or first of April: It will be better to adjourn as soon as the public business will admit of it: It will give the Executive a better opportunity for the next campaign.

It is believed our Commanders to the North, will be changed: Brown¹ and Izard² have been promoted to Major Genl. within a few days: Wilkerson³ I hope will be sent from the North, and I would be willing if he is willing that he should be shifted.

¹Jacob Brown, 1775-1828, who after a varied career as teacher, surveyor, private secretary to Alexander Hamilton, judge, and colonel of militia, won fame in the War of 1812, and in 1821 became general in chief of the United States Army.

²George Izard, 1777-1828, a member of the regular army who became a major general in 1814. He was governor of the territory of Arkansas from 1825 to 1828.

³James Wilkinson was now in command in the North. A month later he made a complete failure at Lacolle Creek and was suspended from command to appear before a court of inquiry, which he had already requested. He was acquitted but never was restored to command.

We have just heard by letters from the North, that Forsyth¹ passed over the lines, had an engagement, killed 160 and took about 400 prisoners: God grant it may be true: I suppose you will see my friend Mr. Watt in a day or two: let him know of what I have written you: Since I came to this place, he passed through the city and would not call to see me: Mr. Williams was good enough to call and mentioned to me, that Mr. Watt, he expected, would do so: but he did not come nigh. Tell him I fear that a maxim may be applied to him in politics, which is sometimes said of the Christian faith, that he will not hold out to the end: He cannot have as an excuse, that he was a waggoner, and in a Waggoners garb; for he knows me too well to know, that I should not be glad to see him, at any time: I will write him before long; Will you be so good as to inform me, by letter what are the times since the Commencement of the Revenue System? What is the complexion of the times:

Upon the subject of peace you can form as good an opinion as myself: I see no obstacle to it and believe if the opposition made to it by the federalists, do not prevent it, we shall have a peace—but Sir, rely upon it, that we shall receive from them as much opposition to peace, as we have ever experienced in the prosecution of the war. It has already commenced here in public debate; the papers of that party have taken up the subject. Mr. Clay has left this for Gottenbergh, and will arrive there I suppose, about middle of March: two months I think will settle the question of peace or war. And thirty or fifty days bring back the tidings: so that from the middle of July to the first of August will give us the News. Mr. Clay was to see us the evening before his departure. He seems sanguine in his expectations of peace. But certainly could form but little better opinion than you or I: I do not wish Mr. Clay's impressions to be mentioned. Such part of this letter as you think expedient you will communicate to our friends and acquaintances: Your friend and relative Mr. Roane² is well: My respects to Mrs. Ruffin and the family: I hope to do myself the pleasure of staying with you as I pass on to Rockingham Supr. Court: Write me on the receipt of this.

[Address:

Sterling Ruffin Esquire
Wentworth
Rockingham Co.
No. C.]

¹Benjamin Forsythe of Germanton, Stokes County, North Carolina. He was a member of the House of Commons in 1807. He went to Canada in the War of 1812 as a captain, and was killed in 1814. Forsyth County is named for him.

²John Roane of Uppowoc, the first cousin of Sterling Ruffin's wife, member of Congress, 1809-1815, 1827-1833, 1835-1837; died, 1869.

*From Duncan Cameron.*¹

ORANGE Feby 27, 1814.

It was most sincerely my wish that our friend Mr. Nash² should have been appointed to fill the vacancy on the Bench,³ when I went to Raleigh; I understood the Governor⁴ intended to nominate me—I expressed my disinclination to him and suggested Mr. Nash. I found that in the event of my refusing that he would nominate some person other than Mr. Nash. I was finally tho' be assured very reluctantly induced to accept the appointment which was unanimously approved by the Council; all being present.—Particulars when we meet.

I set off for the Western Circuit on Thursday. I hope to see you in Hillsborough on that day.

I wish you to attend to all my Business in the County and Supr. Co. of Orange, when Mr. Nash appears on the opposite side—he will finish my Business where his engagements will permit. He has all my papers and will divide with you, such as are to pass over to you. In great haste.

[Address: Hillsboro']

From Bartlett Yancey.

HO. REPRESENTATIVES 5th March 1814.

Permit me to ask you if you have received 3½ dozen letters, which you have not answered? If so, whether you will postpone the answer to them till I see you? My Dr. Fellow, I think you might have spent as much time as would enable you to write me: How are things going on in the State and how is the business of the courts going on. I shall be able to get home by Caswell County Court: Congress will adjourn on the 2nd Monday of Apl.

Be good enough to give a friendly assistance to my business in the courts: I am very tired of this place: I have no intelligence except what you will find in the public papers: The debate on the loan Bill termi-

¹Duncan Cameron, 1777-1853, a native of Virginia, member of the House of Commons, 1802, 1805, 1807, 1812-1813; member of the Senate, 1819, 1822-1824; judge of the Superior Court, 1814-1816; president of the State Bank, 1829-1840.

²Frederick Nash of Orange, 1751-1858, member of the House of Commons from New Bern, 1804-1805; from Orange, 1814-1817; Hillsboro, 1828-1829; speaker, 1814; judge Superior Court, 1818-1826, 1836-1844; justice of the Supreme Court, 1844-1852; chief justice, 1852-1858.

³Francis Locke of Rowan, who had been on the bench since 1803, had just resigned in consequence of his election to the United States Senate.

⁴William Hawkins.

nates on the 3d: In this dispute the *Quids*¹ have been more severely handled, than they ever were before, they find themselves opposed by men of more talents and firmness than they ever before had.

I have just heard from our State, that Cameron is appointed judge: How did it happen: Write me in answer.

[Address: Hillsborough No. Ca.]

From William Ruffin² to Sterling Ruffin.

WARRENTON 20 May 1814.

I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since you last left this place. I hope you reached Oakland in safety, and found the family all well.

When you were last here, I think, you mentioned that our Friend Watt had a load of Whiskey to dispose of; if he has not sold, would take 75 Cents per Gallons, delivered here, and wait a short time for the money. I think I could aid him in getting rid of it, provided he would deliver it soon.

Can you make enquiry of him and let me know by return of the mail. My reason for wishing to know by that time is, that I have some idea of going to the North, and should like to be determined before I set off.

I received a letter from Robert last night, dated Sackets Harbour 6 May, he was then, thank God, well, and appears to consider the Harbour as secure from any attack from the Enemy and that our Fleet will soon be ready for service, that our force is superior to the British, and will of course soon obtain the ascendancy upon the Lake.

I very much fear we have met with a discomfiture at Oswego. Robert mentions a heavy cannonading was heard at the Harbour on the morning of the 6th in that direction.

The late accounts from Europe are uncertain and contradictory. But they all agree that there has been several very bloody battles, and that G[reat] B[ritain] has abandoned the idea of dethroning Bonaparte. You must excuse this note, it was my intention to have written you a Letter. But I was prevented by companies coming in, till it was too late for me to indulge my inclination. But I cannot conclude without informing you that thro' the merciful dispensation of a Kind Providence and an indulgent God, we are all in the Land of the living and in our usual health.

¹The group of independents headed by John Randolph.

²William Ruffin was Sterling Ruffin's brother.

The family joins me in best wishes for the health and happiness of you and yours.

N. B. if you have an oppy. send me a Kegg or two of Tobacco, such as you had.

[Address:

Sterling Ruffin Esq.

Rockingham County No. Ca.]

*From Joseph Gales.*¹

[RALEIGH, N. C., July 22, 1814.]

Provided the friends of an Agency of the State Bank in Hillsborough should succeed in their wishes, which I think they will, would you be willing to accept of the Agency? In discussing the subject your friendly services to the Institution were spoken of as they deserve, and that the Board was informed that you recommended D. Yarborough as Agent, it was concluded that if an Agency was established, an offer of the Business should be first made to you.

Though unauthorized, I drop you this line to enquire whether it will suit your convenience to accept of this appointment. I do this to save time. The establishment of the office depends upon a contingency, which if it turns out favorably, I wish the Business to be immediately effected, which can be done provided we have your answer in the mean time.

RALEIGH, July 22, 1814.

The salary of the Agent will be \$500.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Joseph Gales.

[RALEIGH, N. C., July 29, 1814.]

I duly received your favor of yesterday by today's mail, and I write you a line to say that I am well satisfied with the reasons which you give for declining the contemplated Agency, and to inform you that the question of establishing Offices being somewhat connected with another subject at present under consideration, which has been thought of sufficient importance to call together all the Members of the Directory, which cannot be effected before the latter end of August, this Business has been postponed to that time also.

I mention this, lest not hearing from us on the subject, you might

¹Joseph Gales, founder and editor of the *Raleigh Register*, at this time one of the directors of the State Bank.

have supposed the Business was relinquished, which is by no means the case. I am firmly of opinion that the office will be established in Hillsboro' and that our friend Mr. Yarboro¹ will be the Agent.

RALEIGH, July 29, 1814.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Bartlett Yancey.

WASHINGTON 5th October. 1814.

I have just time to write you a scrip before the closing of the mail, so as to meet you at Caswell Court: We are now engaged in a very unnecessary and I fear protracted debate on the question of removal. Instead of attending to the necessary and imperious business of the nation, the Representatives from New York and Pennsylvania, with a few exceptions, are seizing on this unpropitious time, to remove the seat of government to one or the other of these states. The pretended object is temporary removal, but the intention is a permanent one. If this be established, and those gentlemen have power hereafter to keep us in one of these states, the consequence will be, one will have the Congress and the other the President alternately.

Besides this objection, the proposition is at a most unfavorable time: In my opinion it would have a most fatal tendency upon public credit. I hope my business at Caswell court will not suffer in my absence. Mr. Sanders² will afford you such assistance as may be in his power: the state of our finances you will see from the Report of the Secretary of the Treasury are in a miserable condition. You now see what I told you, upon my return at the last session, that immediately upon the Repeal of the Embargo, the Capital of the Country would be employed in commerce, because it was more profitable, than to leave it to government. It is not yet ascertained what measures will be adopted by the Committee of ways and means. We must increase the taxes, both Direct and internal. We shall have to raise near 20 Millions.

I apprehend that we shall not adjourn till the 3rd of March; it is impossible however to say at this time.

I should be very pleased to hear from you; give me a general account of the aspect of things, and when I write you next, I will be more in detail.

[Written on back of letter:] Col. Rhone, now by my side, pays his respects.

[Address: Caswell C. H., N. C.]

¹David Yarborough.

²Romulus Mitchell Saunders, of Caswell County, 1791-1867, member of the House of Commons, 1815-1820, 1852-1854; speaker, 1819-1820; member of Congress, 1821-1827, 1841-1845; attorney-general, 1828-1835; judge of the Superior Court, 1835-1840; Democratic candidate for governor in 1840; minister to Spain, 1846-1849.

To Edward Jones.¹

GREENSBORO, Octo, 26th, 1814.

Sir.

It is essential to my reputation, that you should declare that the remark which you made to day in the Court house in relation the leaf of the Minute Docket being torn was not intended as an insinuation that I had torn it, or, if such an insinuation was intended, that it was utterly without foundation in Truth.

I am,

Sir

Your Obedt. Servant

THOMAS RUFFIN.

Colo. Edward Jones
Greensborough.

[Written on same sheet]

October 26th, 1814.

As to *Mr. Ruffin*, I had not any the most remote intention to insinuate that he had any Agency in the interpolation of the docket had Mr. Ruffin mentioned it in court I should more courteously have explained, the other parts of the above note from me requires not a reply to.

ED. JONES.

P. S. I believe there was no intended misconduct anywhere.

To Edward Jones.

GREENSBORO—Octo. 26th 1814

Sir—

It is very satisfactory and gratifying to me to learn by your note that no imputation derogatory to my character was intended by you today. Certainly any such imputation was entirely undeserved. But the inference was so obvious, that I, and no doubt others, instantly drew it. To do me justice therefore commensurate with the injury I might have sustained, You cannot but be willing to explain it in the morning in Court—I am content that it should appear, as of your own mere mention, without any requisition from me.

I am Sir

Your obedient Servant

THOMAS RUFFIN.

Colo. Edward Jones
Greensboro

¹Edward Jones, of Chatham, at this time solicitor general of the State. He and Ruffin were warm friends in spite of the feeling evident in this letter.

From Joseph Gales.

[RALEIGH, N. C., Oct. 26, 1814.]

Agreeably to promise, I inclose you the opinion on the Libel Case¹ which I recd. from Washington.

The opinion was given, as you will discover from reading it, without a sight of the Libel. I afterwards inclosed the Piece with a copy of the Indictment, and received the slip of Paper also inclosed.

When you next come to Raleigh, you can return me these papers.

RALEIGH, Oct. 26, 1814.

[In Judge Ruffin's handwriting]

Covering the opinion of A. J. Dallas Esqr. on the publication of "Graccus"; for which a prosecution had been pending in State Supr. Cot, as a libel. Mr. D. thinks it libellous. The Defendt. was acquitted.

[Address:

Thos. Ruffin, Esqr.
Hillsborough

Endorsed:

Jo. Gales Esqr.
Octo. 1814.]

From A. Meilan.²

[OCTOBER, 1814.]

My Dear Sir.

I have to return you many, very many thanks for your kind and friendly Civilities to me during my Residence in Hillsborough and particularly for the occasional Use of your Library. But as Good-nature is accustomed to be encroached upon, I have taken the Liberty of borrowing one of your Books, as a Compagnon de Voyage, but will take the greatest possible Care of it and return it shortly and in as good Condition as at present. I have ventured this freedom because I do not think it a book that you may have daily use for. It is the Dr. and Student. And I perhaps should not find it in many other Libraries.

My stay in the Low Country will depend entirely on Circumstances as they arise—but in whatever Situation I shall ever retain a grateful Remembrance of your kindness and subscribe myself

Your sincere and obliged Hble Servt.

A MEILAN.

¹Romulus M. Saunders was indicted in 1813 in Stokes County for libel, on the basis of a communication written by him and published under the name "Graccus," favoring the election of Bartlett Yancey to Congress in opposition to James Martin, Jr., of Stokes, on whose political character the article cast serious reflections. He was defended by Ruffin and acquitted, October 21, 1814.

²A foreigner who had been staying for some time in Hillsboro.

From Bartlett Yancey.

WASHINGTON 3rd Novemr. 1814.

I flattered myself that before this time, I should have received a letter from you. I am however disappointed. By the Register of last Week, I see that you succeeded in the defense of Mr. Sanders.¹ I have recd. a letter from Mr. Sanders merely mentioning his acquittal. I hope that upon the reception of this, you will give me a full account of the trial and the apparent impression produced upon the people by the trial and acquittal. Having been from our State so long and having received no information of a political nature, I am just as ignorant of the state and condition of parties, as you are of the secrets here of the opposition; they are somewhat at a loss in the Courts. Among them seems to be a difference of opinions on the correct course for them to pursue. Some are for the ways and means, others against it—: they move on in their own way of opposition without regard or respect from their political opponents. The Bill to fill the Ranks of the Regular Army is now before the House. It is yet impossible to say what will be the details of the Bill that will become a law. The Ways and Means have not yet reported their Bills, or the several resolutions decided on by the House. Their first proposition will be on the Bank: they are now maturing that, and upon that will greatly depend the other Bills. If we cannot establish the Bank we must then resort to Treasury Notes and lay a tax equal to the whole expenditure of the Government: this cannot possibly be paid without it be a tax in *kind*. You know I am friendly to a National Bank, on correct principles. Indeed I would almost take it on any terms, rather than inundate the country with paper money.

I am sorry to inform you, that I have this moment recd. information directly from Kentucky, by the Representatives from the Red Banks, that our friend and acquaintance Richd. Henderson² *is dead*. He died in a sudden attack on the 10th of last month.

You have perhaps previous to this, understood, that your cousin Robert Ruffin died at George Town, on the saturday before Congress met. He was in a mounted Volunteer Company. He was in good health a very little time before his death.

The feds here, I understand, are in fine spirits, from the information they have from their friends from our State. They expect the whole State, with the exception of one or two members will be federal: for my own part I have no such expectation and am willing to indulge them without contradiction.

Write me I will write you more at length.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹See note to letter of Gales to Ruffin, October 26, 1814.

²Richard Henderson, of Kentucky, 1766-1814, the younger son of Judge Richard Henderson of North Carolina.

From John MacRae.¹

FAYETTEVILLE 17th Nov. 1814.

* * * * *

Arrived in Wilmington a few days since the private armed Schooner Saratoga from a successful cruise in the British channel. She has brought in some late London dates which have been forwarded to Washington. In one of them I read an account of the Expedition under Lord Hill having their sailing orders countermanded, also an account of the destruction of the British Sloop of War Avon of 20 Guns by the Amern. Sloop of War Wasp Capt Blakely² of equal force; the Avon went down a few minutes after the action with all her sails standing but her crew were fortunately saved by the boats of another sloop of war which was in sight during the action—the Wasp immediately left her cruising ground and is probably on her return home—the papers furnish nothing from our commissioners, they have ceased to parley with those of the Enemy upon the subject of negotiations and all the communications they have with each other now are in writing—the war has become of such a nature now that nothing but a determined and vigorous prosecution of it and (some say) a change of men in power, can bring us Peace.

In the last London papers they make great complaints of the injury which they suffer from Amern. Privateers which are so *audacious* as to take their property almost from their very doors. A meeting of the Merchants of Glasgow was held upon the subject and a memorial sent up to the Lords Coms. of the Admiralty.

My respects to Mrs. R. and Family and to the good people at Ayre Mount. I expect to have the pleasure (with my *old woman*) of taking a Christmas dinner with you.

Tho. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Duncan Cameron.

Decr. 20th 1814.

After wading through the long Bill which you sent me by Mr. Murphy—I have granted an Injunction—not, because I am certain that it

¹John MacRae, 1793-1880, postmaster of Fayetteville for forty years, who was the brother-in-law of Ruffin's wife. He was the author of a map of North Carolina.

²Johnston Blakeley, 1781-1815(?), was a native of Ireland who was brought by his parents to Wilmington in 1782. He was adopted by Colonel Edward Jones, who sent him to the University and procured for him an appointment in the navy. His exploits as commander of the *Wasp* in the War of 1812 and his disappearance are too well known to require elaboration.

was *right* to grant it—but lest I might be *wrong* in refusing it. I have done it penitenter et dubitanter—if I am wrong, the error will not be rectified.

I have not been *two* miles from the House since I came home in November—and have seen but a few persons other than my own family. Like yourself, I want a social friend to chat with for a day. I am pleased with your promised visit; and shall feel highly obliged by it. I shall certainly be at home, and shall be much disappointed if you do not come to-morrow or next day as promised. We are well—which I hope is the happy lot of your family. I am with great regard and esteem.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

*From James Campbell.*¹

[ROCKINGHAM N. C. Jany 1815]

I've got this far—I could not leave Raleigh till late on Wednesday on acc^{nt} of furnishings necessary for Bill—at that place I was introduced to his Excellency² and half a Gross of the members.

I've nothing to boast account my Swap with A. R. R.³—Archie (the swaped horse) can't knock out more than 2½ in 3 miles an hour, and if he does not get rid of his laziness and occasional lameness he will be a fit subject for the Tanner and the slow: hound when he gets to Norfolk. I have not written to Archibald. I wish you would do so, hinting to him what passed 'twixt you and myself about the exchange. If he has not returned the large Bay request him to swap him off. If you find him at the Court House on Saturday the 31st Instant direct Mr. Scales to swap him with Mr. Murphey—his son has a good horse. Halifax is a pretty little village. Keep all the ladies about you single 'till I return—Will you?—Yes! well do so. God bless you.

[P. S.] The troops passed Southampton C. H. on Tuesday last, so will not touch this road till within 30 miles of Norfolk. I'm quite pleased with Colo. Atkinson.⁴ He has promised to follow in a few days. I will write to you again shortly after I get to Norfolk. In the *interim* shd. any new thing happen write me—a letter from *you* will always be exhilarating to my spirits.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

¹James Campbell of Rockingham was first major of a regiment of detached militia which had been organized at Hillsboro, November 28, 1814, and from there marched to Norfolk. The companies composing it came from Chatham, Person, Caswell, Rockingham, Guilford, Randolph, Stokes, Surry, and Wilkes.

²William Miller.

³Archibald Roane Ruffin of Stokes.

⁴Richard Atkinson of Person, lieutenant colonel commanding the regiment.

From James Campbell.

NORFOLK 16th Jany. 1815.

In the first and foremost place I beg you to excuse this course sheet of rati^on: paper. I arrived here on the 27 ultimo, nothing particular happening on my route excepting a complete dislodgement from Archie, 11 miles in the rear of this place. I limped a few days from the fall I recd., but marching time to good music has limbered me—our situation has been pitiable. Even at this time nearly two companies are yet in the thin tents brought down with them. We, however, have made a beginning to build houses for those thus situated. We have, in every respect, been much neglected—our supplies of provisions, wood etc. is very irregularly brought to us; Since, however, we have become acquainted with the heads of departments, and the proper places where application is to be made to reme^dy such negligence we are a little better off. We and the Field:Officers frequently call upon those officers, and tell them in positive tones that such remissness in their several duties will be reported to those having the power to punish etc.—only 8 deaths have happened since our arrival—276 are reported sick and unfit for duty this morning; none of them dangerous. The measles is the only complaint prevailing—at the Peach Orchard where the 1st Regt. of N. C. Militia¹ are stationed 61 died last month—the diseases there have all originated from an exposure after having the measles which subjects the system to diseases of a mortal termination, colds settling on the lungs, quineys etc., etc. No appearance of the latter complaint among us yet. If it does creep into our Camp we may calculate on losing 73 or perhaps *one half* of our men, they being at this time in houses badly cover'd and on damp dirt floors.

Camp Defiance, for so our Station is called is situated nearly a mile north from the main or middle street of Norfolk, altho' from the great number of buildings promiscuously situated, adjoining the town on the road towards it, it may properly be called a part of the Borough. Until a few days ago, Hunter,² Winston,³ McCauley,⁴ Doctors Kimbro⁵ and Atkinson,⁵ Serjt. Major Cummings,⁵ two white servants and three negroes roosted in one hut, indifferently covered, half dobb'd; pots, ovens,

¹The First Regiment of North Carolina Militia was also at Norfolk at this time. As regularly constituted for the war it was composed of companies from Chowan, Currituck, Camden, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Gates, Hertford, Bertie, Northampton, Halifax, Warren, and Nash. Its regular officers were: Duncan McDonald, colonel commanding; Andrew Joyner, lieutenant colonel; Joseph F. Dickinson, first major; John C. Green, second major. As it went to Norfolk, so far as can be discovered, the regiment was composed of troops from Granville, Wake, Johnston, Franklin, Warren, Halifax, Northampton, Nash, Edgecombe, Martin, Bertie, Hertford, and Gates.

²Samuel Hunter of Guilford, lieutenant in the regiment.

³Joseph Winston of Stokes, second major in the regiment.

⁴This is possibly Andrew McCauley of Orange.

⁵The persons named cannot be identified.

skillets, kettles, frying pans etc. on their *right* 5 Beds or Cots in the centre, daily rations of green pine wood on the *left*, provisions for man and *beast*, saddles, bridles, Portmanteaus, Bear skins, valises, saddle bags etc., etc., in the *rear*, and to complete a proper *foundation*, Potters' Field (where the remains of from 10 to 15 arrive daily) 55 yards in *front*! Oh! what a fine thing it is to be a soldier! I'm enjoying health, but begin to find out that my hands will be full, and in place of my trip affording me a release from business, it will be quite otherwise, but you know I dislike being idle. Wentworth crosses my mind sometimes which makes me restless. From letters however from that quarter matters are going on smoothly. You deserve bumping—Why didn't you meet Simon and others at the C. House on the 31st ulto? If you have not done something in Brown's business pray, my good Mr. Ruffin, set about it. Colo. Atkinson joined us a few days ago. The Frigate Constellation rides before my eyes in superb style (being in the garret of a four story house from which I can see her in all her splendour). I have not found any Town acquaintances as yet, having been much confined in Camp. I cannot rest nor feel satisfied until I see the poor soldiers more comfortably situated. The field officers, Lieutenants Sheppard,¹ Webb,² Henderson,² Surgeons Mebane,² Kimbro', Atkinson and a few more board at Mr. Sutters house 200 yds from the Barracks. I've been officer of the day twice since I came down. This is a most arduous duty. It is this—This officer is compelled twice in 24 hours to visit all the guards at the outposts, a route of 16 miles, to be performed in the day from 10 A. M. to 2 oc. P. M. and in the night from 7 oc. to midnight, crossing old bridges of great width, gullies, marshes etc., etc. We have every day fatigue parties employed in draining the muster ground, cleaning before the huts etc. and many a good baptist and men of other professions had to use the spade yesterday (Sunday). The British Barges captured the Hampton packet tother day. We heard the firing and at the time had many conjectures. The Constellation manned and sent out 6 Boats full of men, but too late to see the fun. This mornings report from the Pleasure House states the British force to be off there, one 74, 2 frigates, a sloop of war and a tender. You know the Constellation has been buried up here since the commencement of the War. It is hinted that she will shortly make a trial to get out. Colo. Atkinson and myself are the only two in the mess who know any thing about the game of Bagammon—we are at it every other Evening and play for the first kisses of the ladies about Hillsboro—at this time I am 10 games a-head. I am very much pleased with the Colonel. He requests to be remembered to you. Keep to yourself what I have said about the number of sick and the situation of the camp. My *chapeau de brees* came very securely and without the least injury from the nice cover Mrs. Dilliard made for it. Do write

¹Probably Egbert Sheppard of Orange.

²The persons named cannot be identified.

to me immediately on the receipt of this—tender my *best* respects to every member of your family.

Tom, I've no notion of dying, but may be I may send you a memoranda from which you can make out the last speech and dying words of
Your very Sincere friend

J. CAMPBELL.

Capt. Young¹ has just recd orders from Head Quarters to march his men to Craney Island 6 miles off to act as artillerists. In his company are Lieuts. Henderson and Webb (the latter is now in fine health and spirits) This situation is a very enviable one, being the only healthy scite abt. Norfolk and could the whole Regt. be quartered at this Station the lives of many fine fellows would be spared. Jno. Ruffin is here dashing about. He looks well.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Bartlett Yancey.

HO: REPRESENTATIVES, 21st Ja'y 1815.

On yesterday evening the fate of the Bill to establish a National Bank² was decided. It is now or will be, when it receives the signature of the President become the law of the land. In common with the rest of the Country, you feel no doubt, such an interest, as to induce a desire on your part to understand its provisions. It is composed of a Capital of 30 Millions of dollars, of the following proportions—In Treasury Notes, or New Stock 15 millions: In War-stock (meaning stock created since the war) 10 millions: In specie 5 millions, and a power on the part of the government to subscribe whenever directed by Congress 5 millions of public stock, then to be made and funded in the Bank: so that the capital virtually is 35 millions: $\frac{2}{5}$ of the capital in the several proportions mentioned above to be subscribed and paid (I believe) the fourth Monday in March, $\frac{1}{5}$ in 4 mo. thereafter $\frac{1}{5}$ in 6: and $\frac{1}{5}$ in 8 months. The Bank to be established in Philadelphia, with power to establish branches in the several states. The other details of the Bill are pretty much like all other Banking institutions, with a power on the part of Congress, by committees to examine into the proceedings of the institution and pointing out a remedy, by which an abuse of the powers and rights of the Bank have been made, and the mode of trial.

A proposition for the establishment of a Bank, has been before one branch or another of Congress, almost the whole of the session: The

¹This is probably Francis Young.

²This bill was vetoed by President Madison on the ground of unconstitutionality.

great point of Controversy between those who were in favor of a Bank, especially of the Republican Party, has been as to the kind of stock of which the Bank was to be composed: Many thought that the greater part of the Capital should be War Stock, for by that means, you would take up the stock in the market and thereby be able to negotiate new loans. Others were of opinion, and of that number was myself, that we were under no obligations to the owners of stock except such terms as our contract with them imposed, and that in establishing a Bank, the greater part of the Capital should be New-Stock, for by that means, we should immediately procure a loan to that extent at par, and by that means, save the interest and bonus and certainly procure the loan: there are many other views of this subject—to numerous for a letter, that I will defer until I see you.

The present plan is pretty much a compound of the two plans; and in my opinion better than either. It is a plan in many particulars, very different from either: It was adopted by the select Committee to whom the Bill had been referred in the House of Representatives: of that Committee I was a member: the plan of the present Bank, I proposed myself and at first only two members of the Committee, Mr. Findly¹ and myself voted for it: We postponed the subject for a day and night, and had two or three meetings on the subject: a sober and temperate discussion and deliberation of the Bill and a mutually discussion of opinions; produced an unanimous opinion on the part of the committee and a vote in the House of Representatives of 120 to 38: more than half of the latter, would have voted for it, except for Constitutional obligations: it was resisted in the Senate by several of our political friends, upon the ground of the proportions of the capital and also upon the ground, that there ought to be in the bill a provision relative to the suspension of specie payment, if in the opinion of the Directors it should be necessary: my own opinion however is that the War-stock was the real objection. It is scarcely possible to imagine the transcendent, indirect influence of monied interests.

I am in great haste: I have expected a letter from you before this: I have however recd. none, though, I have written you frequently: on this morning, we recd. a very able report from the Secretary of the Treasury.² He asks for more taxes to the amount of several millions: I think it probable that we shall adopt a small *income tax*, to raise several millions; but it is very uncertain what may be adopted, relative to taxes, until the subject is taken up and discussed.

We are in daily expectation of advices from Europe: Be so good as make such opportunities as may be convenient when you are on your

¹William Findlay of Pennsylvania, a native of Ireland, who after service in the Revolution became active in Pennsylvania politics, serving in the constitutional convention of 1790 and as a member of Congress, 1791-1799, and 1803-1817. He died in 1821. He was the author of several books.

²The secretary of the treasury at this time was Alexander J. Dallas, 1751-1817, a native of Jamaica, who had emigrated to Pennsylvania.

feb'y circuit, at the several courts, explaining the circumstances relative to the Bank, and my apologies, *which you can offer*, for my not having given the information to more. I think, perhaps, I shall write a circular: but I have really been very busy all the session. I shall expect a letter from you directly.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From William H. Haywood.¹

STATE BANK OF NO. CAROLINA

RALEIGH 26th Jan'y 1815.

Thomas Ruffin Esquire

Sir.

I am directed on the part of the board to request that you will superintend the suits which it may from time to time become the interest of this Bank to cause to be brought on notes due the bank by its customers. It was suggested in the board that you intended practising in the Superior Court of this County and as it would be much more desirable and convenient that the suits should all be brought in this court I am directed to issue or cause the Writs to be issued from Wake Superior Court. There are now only three or four on which Writs may be issued.

I am Sir Respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

WM. H. HAYWOOD, Cashr.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Joseph Gales.

[RALEIGH, N. C., Feb. 20, 1815.]

* * * * *

You are right in supposing that I was one of those in favor of employing you in any Law Business which the Bank may have. I can assure you that you have many Friends at the Board. I do not recollect that there was a dissenting voice to your appointment.

As the Servant of J^{as}. Mebane² waits to take this, I have time only to

¹William H. Haywood, a native of Edgecombe County, brother of Treasurer John Haywood, was cashier of the State Bank and clerk of the United States district court for North Carolina.

²James Mebane of Orange, 1774-1857. He was educated at the University of North Carolina where he was one of the founders and the first president of the Dialectic Society. He was a member of the House of Commons, 1798, 1801, 1803, 1818, 1820-1824; speaker, 1821; member of the Senate, 1808-1811, 1828.

say, that we have certain News that Preliminaries of Peace were signed at Ghent on the 24th. inst. that they have been ratified by the Prince Regent, and there is no doubt they will be ratified by the President.

I most heartily congratulate you on this News.

I had liked to have omitted saying, Writs will be issued without giving you any trouble in the Business.

RALEIGH, Feb 20, 1815

[Address: Hillsborough]

From James H. Dearing.¹

ROCKINGHAM C. H. N. C. May 3rd 1815.

Having understood that Genl Scott is now at Washington City, fixing the peace establishment—And knowing that you are personally acquainted with the Genl.² I have taken the liberty to solicit your influence in my behalf for a birth in that establishment—And also in behalf of brother Pleasant³ who is a 3rd Lieutenant in the same corps (artillery) with myself.

I know that a line from you if early forwarded will be amply sufficient.
THOS. RUFFIN ESQR.

P. S. I am under orders for Columbia, S. C.—and shall march with my men the 4th inst. Farewell

J. H. D.

[Address: Caswell Court House, N. C.]

From Richard Stanford.

HILLSBORO May 7, 1815.

I am passing on from Person to be at the meeting of the Directors of the Cape Fear Navigation⁴ on Wednesday next, at Pittsboro. If you are not to be at the Chatham Court, say if you have still the desire you expressed to me to have an interest in the company? If you have I will as you suggested transfer two of my shares to you, and thereby qualify you for a Directorship. If you feel the proper solicitude for that business I shall endeavour to have you appointed a director the first occasion

¹James H. Dearing of Rockingham County, first lieutenant, Second Artillery, from May, 1812. He resigned in 1816.

²It will be remembered that General Scott and Ruffin studied law together.

³Pleasant Dearing, third lieutenant, Second Artillery, who was honorably discharged six weeks later.

⁴The Cape Fear Navigation Company was chartered in 1815, succeeding the Deep and Haw River Navigation Company.

that offers. You can pay for the shares to Mr. Kirkland as I owe him a good deal more than their amount, which is only fifty Dollars that is 25\$ a share. No instalment remains due upon my shares.

From John F. May.

PETERSBG. June 7. 1815.

I have not time to write you such a letter as I intended when the high Ct. of Chancery is over. My object at present is to introduce to you, if chance should throw him in your way, my friend, my pupil, and my kinsman, Rob. Strange.¹ He is going to N. C. with a view of obtaining a license and settling there as a member of our illfated profession. Knowing you both well; without writing a formal introduction, I will only say that when you know Strange you will find in him every thing to excite esteem or attract regard—respectable talents, an honest heart—a true Virginian and a staunch patriot. (This latter—*God be praised!* I can boast of, as to *all* my pupils!!) I hope he will meet with you; as I am anxious to make you acquainted with each other, from a firm belief that you will both be pleased.

I have been very sick and very busy this spring—and *therefore* have not answered your friendly and gratifying letter. Mrs. May and Anne are well—and by the time I write you again I hope to be able to make mention of another of the family.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From John F. May.

PETERSBG. June 23d, 1815.

Shortly after the receipt of your letter of the 31st March, I wrote you a hasty reply by some gentleman, not now recollected. . . .

I was not a little gratified at the frank and friendly account which you gave of your prosperous situation; and that gratification was increased by the motives that dictated, and the sentiments which accompanied the communication. You are indeed blessed by Providence, in a healthy climate, with a happy and growing family, with acquisitions

¹Robert Strange, 1796-1854, settled at Fayetteville and was, in 1821, elected to the House of Commons from that borough and served until 1823, and was again a member in 1826. In the same year he was elected a judge of the Superior Court and remained on the bench until 1836, when he was elected United States senator. He resigned in 1840 on the issue of instruction from the legislature. He was later solicitor, serving until his death.

and endowments which at once procure prosperity, and command respect and esteem!! Of your success in your profession I never doubted; but I acknowledge that it has gone beyond my expectations. Long may it continue—"Length of days be in thy right hand; in thy left riches and honour. May all thy ways be ways of pleasantness; and all thy paths be peace." (I do not know that the quotation is as accurate, as the application is sincere.)

My prosperity in life, all things considered, has been considerable. My practice is extensive, and laborious; but its evils are mitigated by a knowledge that I enjoy the confidence, and am sometimes even cheered with the applause of those to whom it is best known. I derive from it a competent support; I always can command more than is necessary for ordinary purposes; I am freed from the embarrassment and debt with which I began life and which tho' small, required *time* only to have humbled me into dust. And for these, I ought to rejoice, and do greatly rejoice. But I can hardly say that I am laying up any thing, as a provision for old age or a maintenance for infancy. I have now two daughters, having had another about ten days ago—and when I reflect, as I sometimes must do, upon their situation in the event of accident to myself, the reflection plants thorns in the roses which are blooming around me. But notwithstanding the baleful effects of various political causes; tho' the frost of embargo blasted my first fruits; and although a war of extermination has been waged against the stock from whence they spring, still, my prospects, I think, brighten and expand. My practice in the town and country is, I believe, better than any of my competitors. In the Superior court of Chancery, it is increasing, not only from the counties in which I practice, but in all the adjacent country. I have not qualified in the court of Appeals, tho' I have about 10 or 12 cases waiting my determination (this fall) in that respect. My receipts I suppose are \$250. they may be \$300; for I keep few accts. and no genl. acct. of rects. and exps. which I never could do for three weeks together in my life. For fees, I usually require cash or bonds; and thereby save trouble as well as money. The expences of a town life are considerable and have been increased by the war; and my father's unfortunate situation, also requires some aid from me.

All these things however leave pretty clear of Debt and worth from \$8, to 10,000. In this estimate I do not include a late speculation. I have purchased a body of Kentucky lands on these terms—J. Wilder and myself in partnership—\$4000. cash (all paid by W. in consideration of my admitting him into the partnership) and \$5000 out of proceeds of the sales of the Lands. This is a complete leap in the dark. I am told that my half is worth 10, 20, and even 50,000 Dols. but I really *know* nothing about it. I have thus followed your example "and opened all my affairs to you unto the very bottom" and altho' you beat me 100 pr. ct. in profit and loss, you have no advantage over me in the pleasure resulting from this open communion between friends interested in each

other's welfare—"old messmates bound together by similarity of temper and feelings; and identity of views and pursuits." It would give me great pleasure to make our wives known to each other, and our children, too, when they grow up. But unless your good woman will come here to see the fine London Goods, or unless there is much *gold* to come out of my Kentucky Lands, I hardly know how to accomplish it. For really I never have leisure to leave home ten Days, not even to go and look for *that Gold!*

I gave to my estimable friend Strange a short letter of introduction to you. He is desirous of settling in the lower part of N. C. but as you might meet, I wished to make you acquainted. He will probably settle in *Fayetteville*, (or as the ungrateful Inhabitants say, *Fateville*, a circumstance which makes me dislike the place I confess.) I have advised Strange to see you before he settles if he can; because I think you could, and know you would, serve and aid him.

My best respts. to yr. father, sister and family.

P. S. . . . Tell your father I recd. the last halves of his notes. By the way, ask him what is difference, arithmetically, or mathematically between two equal risks of each half, and one like risk of the whole. But then the puzzle must come from you, not me. You understand he sent one half of \$720 by one mail and the other by another, and the disadvantage is, that if a thief takes the first half, the 2d will never escape; besides which, if the first was safe, there is still his chance for the second, and as the Banks will pay half to such half notes, there is exactly two chances of losing a half equal to one chance of losing the whole.

[Address: Hillsboro', N. C.]

*From John R. Donnell.*¹

WAYNESBORO Augt. 25th 1815.

* * * * *

Permit me before I conclude to congratulate you on your election from the Town of Hillsboro and on the unexpected triumph of our Republican friends in almost every part of the State at the late Congressional Canvass.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

¹John R. Donnell, 1791-1864, a native of Ireland, solicitor, 1815-1819; judge of the Superior Court, 1819-1836.

*From John A. Cameron.*¹

FAYETTEVILLE Octo. 16th, 1815.

I have come to the determination of becoming a candidate for the office of Comptroller of the State at the approaching session of Assembly, and take the liberty of apprising you this early with my intentions. This is an office of small emolument, but as I can never hope to resume my profession and as I *must* adopt some other pursuit, I have thought of this office as one which my education and habits qualify me for filling with credit to myself and usefulness to the public. 'Tis true that the person now in office may wish to remain so: to this I will only say, that *I want* the office, and rotation is a principle universally admitted to be correct amongst the friends of republican governments. I might say tis true, that my capacity for being useful in my profession was destroyed while in the service of the State, but as I do not want the office *as a pension*, I forbear to urge any consideration of the kind.

Will you be good enough to mention my intention to your colleagues and to each other member of the Assembly as you meet with. I shall be in Raleigh early in the session if in my power, but I am afraid that it will not be, as I expect an increase of family about that time.

I wish you a pleasant and profitable circuit.

Anything you may do in furtherance of my designs will be gratefully acknowledged.

[Address: Guilford Ct. House.]

*From William Roane.*²

U. S. SHIP CONSTELLATION,³ BAY OF GIBRALTAR 17 Octr 1815

According to promise I write this for the purpose of letting you know how and where I am, as well as what kind of a passage we had, On the 10th Sept^r. we sailed from the capes of Virga: on the 12 a gale commenced which lasted 2 days during which time one half of the officers were sea sick myself amongst the number; after which we had a pleasant passage being able to take an observation at meridian every day. On the 19th made Land a high peak on the Island of Corvo, one of the Azores or western Islands belonging to Portugal, the two succeeding

¹John A. Cameron, 1788-1837, of Fayetteville, a native of Virginia, member of the House of Commons, 1810-1812, 1820; major in the War of 1812; consul to Vera Cruz, 1829; judge of the United States district court for Florida from 1831 until he was lost at sea.

²William Roane, a close relative of Ruffin's wife, was at this time a midshipman, having been appointed in November, 1814. He resigned in 1816.

³The *Constellation* was a twelve-hundred-ton ship with ten guns.

days passed Fayal, (The port in which the Armstrong Privateer was defended so gallantly by her crew during our war with Britain) Corvo, Terreserra, St Georges, St Michaels and St Maries which appear to be covered with Vineyards and towns, wherever they are habitable (being the most broken land I ever beheld.) On the 30th we saw an English Frigate to the Northward, which as soon as she discovered us bore down untill she came close along side when we showed the Yankie stars which as soon as she saw she bore away with every foot of canvas she could spread—

On the 12 Sept^r we came to anchor in the Bay of Algerias (opposite the rock of Gibraltar on) on the Spanish main. On the 14th I was attached to this Ship. Capt Gordon¹ who is a very fatherly commander and who by the by has a very clever set of officers The midshipmen are mostly young men of genteel families many of them from Virga., a son² of Mr Jones formerly the editor of a noted paper of Richmond a Randolph³ and Armsted⁴ Also a Son⁵ of the Rev [sic] Eldridge Gerry former Vice President of the U States—So of course you may conclude I am well pleased with my situation.

When we first arrived our squadron was on good terms with the English of Gibraltar, but the Scoundrels have since been giving themselves some airs which will cause us to remove our head quarters even after having began to unlade our stores They have been guilty of a most paltry and pitiful act; that of charging us with having made efforts to enlist some of their soldiers As soon as the Comodore heard of the charge he stopt all communication with them and informed the governor that he would hold a court of enquiry to try the sergeant who was implicated by them; as soon as they learnt that he was offended they began to apologize, but he told them for his part no apology would do. And insisted that they should bring forward their evidence to trial; the court of which no doubt you have learnt officially. Yet I will make one remark they accused the seargeant of offering one of their men 5 Double loons to desert, (when it is a matter of fact that money was so scarce in the squadron that but few of the officers can do more than pay for their washing. And it has been proven that at the time the sergeant went on shore he had no more money than half a dollar which he borrowed.) The ship to which the sergeant belonged had more than her compliment of men and has since turned over to another ship 50. in consequence of not wanting them. We do not knowingly suffer an infernal British dog on board our ships. Yet that corrupt and malicious government by her wicked scoundrel like servents accuse our officers of

¹Captain Charles Gordon, who died in 1817.

²Richard A. Jones became a commander in 1844 and died in 1846.

³I am unable to locate this Randolph among four who were in the navy at the time.

⁴Robert Armistead.

⁵Thomas R. Gerry.

tampering with her soldiers: but thank godd they have completely disgraced themselves by it and we are getting in our timbers again which had been hove out for storage

Octr 25th 1815

We are again under weigh for Malaga.

MALAGA. Octr. 27th. 1815

After a pleasant passage we arrived on the 26th.—I have been a'shore and seen one of the pleasantest towns in Spain but have not time to do more than finish my letter as the Comodore has just made the signal to remove. Do write me and get the letter sent from washington by the secretary of the Navy. Let me know how all friends are The sine qua non will take this to New York My best respects to Mrs Ruffin and all friends Tell sister I shall write the first opportunity Ask your Father to write me; as I have done him but fear his letter will not go safe as I left it at Gibraltar

Most respectfully sir I remain Yours

WM. ROANE

midm
U S Navy

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

*From George McNeill.*¹

FAYETTEVILLE, Nov. 27th, 1815.

* * * * *

We are as yet, ignorant of the proceedings of your honble. body—at least the papers contain nothing except the election of speaker and his *Excel^s long message*. I hope you will make C. Fear navigable before you rise. Wishing you an agreeable Session

[P. S.] busy times

Tob. \$8 C 15

Salt 151—falling.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From James Campbell.

[WENTWORTH, N. C., Nov. 27, 1815.]

Your communication by master James E. Gallaway, addressed to your father, and in his absence opened by me contained a paper writing which gladdened us much. Gallaway arrived about 9 A. M. on Friday.

¹George McNeill, Ruffin's brother-in-law, was a prominent merchant and business man in Fayetteville.

I enjoined on him secrecy as to the contents of your letter. Young Nathl. Scales (at whose father's house Mr. Gallaway remained all night) *daddy-like* gave it too much publicity,—altho' I believe unknown to poor Welch.¹ He *certainly* calculated on suffering death. At 12 O'C. he was taken from the Jail for the place of Execution (on the west-side, about 150 yards below W. Wrights) attended by Thomas Moore, Robert and Charles Moore, Methodist preachers. I held the Governor's pardon, and at 2 O'clock when the ministers had nearly finished I went down and gave it to the Sheriff. I read it to nearly one thousand persons. Welch was brought back to prison where he will remain until tomorrow when he will Swear-out. He is grateful to you and your father. By your means his life has been spared. I was with him an hour on the Evening of Friday—he promises enough.

Any Parliamentary news, interesting, will be thankfully received. T was fortunate you sent an express, there being no mail on Monday last.

WENTWORTH 27 Nov. 1815.

Settle, Hill, and Lacy are the only attornies expected.

[Address: Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

Atto. at Law

presently in Raleigh.

Endorsed: Majr. Ja. Campbel

Novr. 1815]

From William M. Sneed.

MORRISVILLE Decr. 30th, 1815.

* * * * *

The caucus at Louisburg have chosen Weldon N. Edwards² as their successor of Mr. Macon. W. P. Little³ is also a Candidate also R. H. Jones⁴ and I. I. Hill and probably Blake Baker.⁵

[Address: Hillsboro.]

¹Welch was convicted in Rockingham County in 1815 of horse stealing, then a capital felony, and sentenced to death. He was pardoned by Governor William Miller on November 14, 1815.

²Weldon Nathaniel Edwards, 1788-1873, a protegé of Nathaniel Macon and Ruffin's schoolmate at Warrenton and lifelong friend. He was a member of the House of Commons, 1814-1815; member of Congress, succeeding Macon, 1815-1827; state senator, 1833-1846, 1850-1854; speaker, 1850-1854; member of the convention of 1835; president of the convention of 1861.

³William P. Little of Warren was member of the state senate, 1804-1806.

⁴Robert H. Jones, member of the House of Commons, 1816-1818, 1823-1824, 1826-1827; United States district attorney under Jefferson; attorney-general of North Carolina, 1828.

⁵Blake Baker, attorney-general of North Carolina, 1795-1802; member of the House of Commons, 1807; judge of the Superior Court, 1808-1818; died, 1818.

From John Roane to Sterling Ruffin.

WASHINGTON Jany 9th 1816.

* * * * *

The state of my family and affairs prevented me, from taking my seat untill Friday last since then a number of letters have engrossed my time so that I can give you little or nothing passing here. Late communication from England, which you will have seen in Gazettes before this can reach you, create some expectation of an adjustment of differences, but I have not much confidence in such a result, unless our armies cooperate better, than they have of late. Indeed the enemy's efforts on the Canadian line have been too successful to sustain a hope of advantageous terms under existing circumstances. Something must be done here, to correct blunders in the fighting departments, add strength and vigor to our enemies, and change present prospects, before an honorable peace can be expected. I will shortly say more of these topics, when time permits.

Your friend in King Wm. are well. Present me affectionately to yr. family and accept yourself the best wish of yr friend etc.

[Address:

Sterling Ruffin Esqr.
Lenox Castle
Rockingham County
North Carolina.]

From A. Meilan.

WILMINGTON N. C. 12 Feby 1816.

I must once again intrude upon your kind and friendly disposition towards me and request your Assistance to obviate the objections raised by His Honor Judge Cameron to sign my Licence for the County Ct. Bar when originally presented to him about this time last year by my friend Mr. Nash. You are no doubt acquainted with the Circumstances and therefore it is needless to trouble you with a Repetition. My then recent admission to Citizenship and the then political situation of England and America was I conceive the principal objection. A lapse of further time conjoined to a former Residence of Eleven years will I hope have the same effect in removing the former in the opinion of his Honour as the happy return of Peace must in reality have in removing the latter. You know my Dear Sir the Record is complete and ought therefore to be unimpeachable—that the Oath and Abjuration are binding on me and consequently both should be reciprocally effectual in their operations and Consequences. But as under all circumstances I would more willingly owe the success of my application to friendly Exertions

and favourable dispositions than to argument or Authority I will rather rely on the United Efforts of others than to my own logical Deductions.

I have written upon the same Subject to Mr. Murphey, Mr. Nash and Mr. Kirkland and sent the Certificate of my Citizenship with the incomplete Licence to the latter—to be used when and how you may deem most advisable hoping that some private business may induce Judge Cameron to visit Hillsborough during the County Ct. week. I entreat you thus once again to exert your Influence in my behalf to present my respectful Regards to Mrs. Ruffin and Mrs. Dillon and to believe me sincere in subscribing myself

T. C. Ruffin Esqr,

From Bartlett Yancey.

WASHINGTON 17th February 1816.

The interest and importance of public affairs of this place is daily becoming more interesting and important. With the dispatch and attention to public business, our time would be sufficiently employed, but to this duty so multifarious in its parts and so important in its object is added the interesting question who ought to be the next President? From the continued paragraphs which you see issued and copied in the National Intelligencer, you would be induced to believe that the Republican party thought of no other person, but Col. Monroe. Such, however, is not the truth: This representation of opinion here, is not only untrue, but it is known to be untrue by those who daily scribble in that paper, upon the subject of the Presidential Election. It is believed to be done for the purpose of giving tone to the other Republican papers of the Country, and by that means give tone to the party in favor of a man, who however respectable otherwise, requires the aid of such means to be palmed upon the country as the next President. I believe I am certainly correct when I say, that a decided majority of the party, now in Congress, prefer Mr. Crawford for the appointment. The choice of Mr. C. is not confined to a few states, but is extended to some of almost every state in the Union—from what has been published as proceeding from him, upon this subject and which has been issued to the world for the purpose of impressing upon public opinion, that he declines all the pretensions of himself in favor of Col. Monroe, you will be able to form some opinion of the management of this place. It is, however, considered, that if Mr. Crawford had upon any occasion volunteered his services for the appointment, or declared, that he would not accept of the nomination, if made by the Republican party, he would have discovered a degree of arrogance and imprudence, which the whole history of his life has not afforded a specimen. It is known to a certainty here, by those who intend to contribute as far as their vote will permit, to nominate him for the presidency, that if selected, he will serve.

With Mr. Crawford's public character you are somewhat acquainted and permit me to tell you, that if you were more minutely acquainted with his talents and fitness for business, it would add much to the high character he now sustains in your estimation. The objection to the most of our great men, is that they are more remarkable for theory than practice. It results from habit and education, more than nature. Such men seldom possess those qualifications, necessary to constitute an Executive officer. To this general rule Mr. Crawford is an exception. He is remarkable for the resources of his mind, the comprehensive, yet practical view, which he immediately takes of every subject. He is prompt in the discharge of his own duty as an officer, and enforces observance and attention on the part of those around him. His talents in this respect have been most remarkably exhibited in the war Department since he came into it. When he entered it he found the business of the whole Department much deranged. It has now assumed a system which in a little time, will be in such a perfect state of arrangement that its duties will be much easier performed, and with much greater advantage to the country. I hesitate not to say that from the acquaintance I have with him, that he would make the most able President this Country ever had.

I have thought proper to say this much on the subject for your information and those of our friends with whom you are intimate: It became the more necessary because I have understood, that you were among the number nominated for the general ticket.

I should be very glad to hear from you and that in your letter, you would inform me of the public opinion of our state on this subject: A considerable majority of the Republican Delegation of our State is decidedly for Crawford. I see that Gales, has come out in his Register for Monroe. I have reason to believe he had his orders from here. I never write as a member of Congress for the papers, but if you think any extract from this in the Register and Star would be productive of good, you are at liberty to make such extract, withholding however my name.

Will you be so good as to write me immediately.

From William Ruffin.

WARRENTON No. CA. 19 Mar. 1816.

It was with equal surprise and mortification (I must confess) I heard the other day, that you had expressed yourself hostile to the Election of Mr. Monroe, as the next President. Knowing the correctness of your opinions upon political subjects (generally) and believing the Republican Members of the last Legislature, made up the Electoral ticket with an eye to Monroe, I should certainly have discredited the information if the Gentleman had not made the assertion with so much confidence as to

leave me no grounds to doubt. Still I am unwilling to believe yours was an unqualified expression, and as I have experienced some anxiety upon the subject, I have at length determined to address you upon the subject, and request the favor of you to satisfy me, as to the truth of the report.

In the mean time will you permit me to state some of the reasons which have influenced my mind in favor of Monroe? First, negatively, not because I have an objection to Mr. Crawford; for of this Gentleman I cherish the most exalted opinion, and firmly believe that the Government might with great safety be confided to his charge. His integrity is irreproachable, his understanding of the first order—and his firmness not to be questioned. But his claim upon the publick and the publicks claim upon him are not reciprocal, as to cite you, we have a right to exact of him, his services in that station to which we may call him, when as a Citizen he may have no just claim to an office he may solicit—the appointment to office being frequently intended as a reward for past services. Again Mr. C. is of that age, that without hazarding much he could wait one Presidential term, and still be several years younger than Monroe.

Affirmatively, I do not know that I can say thing under this head, that you are not already acquainted with. Certainly there are very few characters now in office, who have served the Commonwealth longer, none in as great a variety of office, and few with the same zeal, ability or usefulness as Monroe. I first knew him as a *soldier* in the Revolutionary army—then as a member of the Virginia legislature—a member of the Executive Council—next a member of the old Congress, under the Confederation, when he displayed his firmness and foresight in opposing the surrender of the Navigation of the Mississippi to the Spaniards. He was also a member of the Virginia Convention, then a Senator from that state, next a minister extr. and resident to France—after his recall, chosen Govr. of the State—once more deputed upon foreign service and charged with two most important negotiations—one was happily accomplished. Returning to the bosom of his native Land was again called to the first office within the State—from this station he was called to the important office of Secy of State—then Secy of *War* and when “The Storm of War blew over” did not retire to the shades of tranquility and ease; but again resumed the duties of Secre^{ry} of State where we now find him.

Where, my dear Thos. shall we find one other man passing thro’ all the gradations of office—manifesting an equal degree of zeal, intellect and integrity, with so little censure attaching? or how shall such a man be rewarded? While the Crowned heads and Despotisms of Europe are lavishing their offices, their honors and their wealth upon their Vassals? Shall we withhold from him the only boon worth his acceptance? Is it pretended that the Government would not be *well administered* by him? What are the necessary traits to constitute a great statesman, which are not found in Monroe? His mind clear, cool and discriminating. His

virtue and patriotism almost proverbial. And his public services acknowledged on all hands. The only thing he can be reproached for is, *that he is poor!* (the strongest proof of his virtue) and shall it also be said he is friendless! Forbid it gratitude forbid it honor.

To withhold from Monroe the office his friends now ask for him, is to drive him into retirement, and cast a damp upon the vivid hopes of all, who look forward to a promotion in office, as a reward for past services; While the luster of his past life shall illumine the page of history, it will only shine to portray in darker colours the ingratitude of an ungrateful nation. What is it that prompts a soldier to seek danger in the "Cannons mouth" or the statesman to devote his time and talent to the General Weal? Next to a self approving mind, is public esteem and confidence. I could say much more but you see my mind and my feelings, and as far as I am capable of Judging they are in perfect accord and with those of my acquaintance in this part of the Country.

My family join me in best wishes to yourself, Mrs. Ruffin and *all* your family and our acquaintances who are in Hillsboro.

[Address: Hillsboro' No. Ca.]

From Ira Ellis.

1 R. coon. 1 Mink 6 Rabbit.....	\$ 0.62½
6 M'rat. 8 Rabbit.....	1.75
14 Rabbit, 2 M'rat.....	0.87½
26 Rabbit	0.80
2. M'rat, 7 Rabbit.....	0.62½
4 Rabbit, 2 M'rat.....	0.81¼
1 M'rat	0.25
50 Rabbit, 2 M'rat.....	2.00
3. R.Coon, 10 M'rat, 12 Rabbit.....	3.75
10 M'rat, 2 R.Coon 21 Rabbit.....	3.50
24 Rabbit, 3 M'rat.....	1.55
25 Rabbit, 1 R.Coon, 3 M'rat.....	1.82½
7 M'rat	1.75
19 Rabbit, 1 M'rat.....	0.71¼
1 Rabbit, 10 M'rat.....	2.43¾
31 Rabbit	1.00
25 Rabbit, 2 R.Coon, 1 Mink.....	1.16½
14 Rabbit 9 M'rat, 9 R.Coon.....	5.18¾
9 Rabbit 1 Mink.....	0.50
3 M'rat, 1 R.Coon.....	1.00
6 Rabbit, 1 R. Coon, 7 Fox.....	2.97½
2 Rabbit, 11 M'rat.....	2.50
13 Raccoon	5.50
	\$ 43.09
36 Rabbit	1.20
	2.20
	45.29
33 Do	1.00

[ROCKINGHAM, N. C., Apr. 22, 1816.]

Above you have a Bill of the Fur that Irwin has got for you the last Winter and Spring. I have charged your Father with the Amount, and you may give him Credit for that sum.

Two years ago we procured about 160 or 70\$ worth and I wrote to you to send Nicholas a Hat, and if you judged the services worth two hats, you might send one for Irwin also. You sent them both. Some time after your Father informed Irwin he had paid you \$5 for his Hat.—Irwin now sends you the within Fur, and leaves it with you to say how much he shall pay your Father beside the services rendered in purchasing this fur, for the Hat he has had and he will settle it with Him. If you have charged your Father, (as I suppose you have) for the Hat sent Irwin, you will Credit him for whatever you now allow Irwin for his services.

ROCKINGHAM April 22d, 1816.

P. S. No hat expected for this Fur.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

[CIRCULAR]

From John Haywood and Others.

RALEIGH, June 18, 1816.

Sir,

The destructive fire of last week, which has laid waste a square and a half of the closest built part of our City, has given to a number of our Citizens large claims upon the benevolence of their fellow men.—Many of them were thus suddenly deprived of house and home; and all have seen themselves stripped in a moment, by the devouring element, of the hard earnings of their laborious industry. In a word their condition calls loudly for relief. Their neighbors acknowledge this; and feel every disposition to extend towards them the hand of friendly assistance. But in a small place, like ours, it is to be feared the degree of bounty must fall very far below the measure of distress. Under this impression, a committee has been appointed with the duty prescribed to them, of inviting to these circumstances the sympathetic eye of our sister Towns: and the committee perform with pleasure, this task, confident that the appeals they make will be as effectual as the nature of the case can require.

Permit us, therefore, to request, Sir, in furtherance of this design, that you will take such steps as may be usual with the view of obtaining from the liberality of your citizens whatever aid they may be willing to contribute. A trifle from each, will only be felt, by the generous bestowers, in the happy consciousness of relieving the sufferings inflicted

by a terrible calamity; while the aggregate shall essentially serve in helping industry to recover from the blow which had destroyed its best hopes.

Any remittances which may be made, you will be kind enough to have directed to the undersigned; who pledge themselves that the sums received shall be distributed with a scrupulous regard to the selection of such objects as may seem most to require relief.

We tender you, Sir, the assurances of our highest regard; and respectfully remain your obedient servants,

JOHN HAYWOOD,
HENRY POTTER,
HENRY SEAWELL,
JOSEPH GALES,
CALVIN JONES,
A. S. H. BURGESS,
T. HENDERSON, JR.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

OAKLAND 25th June 1816.

By Charles you will have an opportunity of sending an account of the Charleston hides, that we may proportion the gain or loss and know how much we have received of you. Inform me when you and Mr. Scales will commence your business, and of course when money will be taken up at the Bank. I am apprehensive that I shall be harder press'd for cash shortly than I ever was; and therefore it is necessary to begin to lay up three months before. This place is entirely barren of information worth communicating; dry and cold weather, bad crops, and the approaching election, are the only subjects of conversation. I begin to think that Douglas¹ will be permitted to stay at home, some of his former influential friends having declar'd against him. I am well satisfy'd that Bethell² should out pole him, altho I do not feel willing to assist him by my vote. How does Mr. Scott³ succeed? is he likely to have a seat in the next Legislature? I shall endeavour to meet you at the next Caswell Court.

* * * * *

[Address:
Hillsborough
No. Carolina.]

¹William Douglas of Rockingham, who for a number of years had been a member of the House of Commons. He was a candidate for the Senate in 1816 and was elected.

²William Bethel of Rockingham who had been a member of the legislature at intervals since 1786, and who was to continue his membership until 1820.

³John Scott of Hillsboro, who was frequently a member of the House of Commons from that borough.

*From Thomas Henderson Jr.*¹

RALEIGH, August 2, 1816.

I have received your letter which informed me that you were instructed, in the event of my refusing to give up the proper name of a writer of my paper, of the 12th ult. under the signature of "a citizen of Wake," to commence a suit against me as the Editor.²

Since the receipt of your letter I have taken advice of eminent Counsel as well as of intelligent friends, and they have united in expressing an opinion that the person who threaten the suit will not be able to establish any libellous matter or to recover a cent of damages. Of this I have from the first felt individually confident.

Not the smallest particle of animosity to either of the Public Officers in question governed me in giving place to the article which has offended them;—on the contrary, I felt myself to be discharging merely my duty to the public as the conductor of one of the journals to which they recur for information. The same channel I held open for reply; and indeed I did not at first publish the article until I had informed several gentlemen, of both parties of the nature of its contents, and heard their unanimous opinion that it was of sufficient importance to *demand* an insertion.

Now, Sir, although I consider myself entirely shielded against injury, or even blame for what I have done, I am still very unwilling to have disagreeable litigations with my neighbors. Permit me to observe, too, that I cannot think they have any proper motives for persevering in the proceedings. They have industriously and very improperly, as I think, endeavoured to identify me with the author. Their object in this is of course best known to themselves. They have also made use of my paper, as offered to them, not only to vindicate themselves, but actually, as I have just hinted, to injure me by attempting to make me a party in a dispute from which I have really held myself aloof, farther than considerations of public duty urged me.

In my opinion an opportunity has been given them to refute the charges against them; and I have no doubt, my readers, as I am, are generally convinced of their innocence. What then have they to complain of against me; or what object do they propose to themselves by a prosecution, in which I am assured they do not calculate on obtaining a verdict? I am at a loss to know.

My wish is, that the business should proceed no further; but this wish is expressed, as I hope you will believe, frankly and candidly, without any fear of consequences should it not be met. I have done the gentlemen for whom you act no wrong; and have never myself, publicly or privately, expressed any opinion of their having acted improperly in

¹Thomas Henderson, editor of the Raleigh Star.

²So far as is known, no file of the Star for 1816 is in existence. I have been unable to discover anything in regard to the contents of the article mentioned.

the discharge of their duties. They erred, perhaps, in not making public the circumstance of the 5 per cent (additional valuation of slaves) which at once would have put every thing in a proper point of view. The want of knowledge, among the people, on this head, shows that there were grounds of misapprehension; and I think it was fortunate for the reputation of the public officers that the subject was so soon agitated:—otherwise doubts of their correctness would *still* exist, and the charges which some *individuals* might have made would have been countenanced by the calculations of hundreds who had not a proper understanding of the facts.

I do hope, Sir, that upon properly weighing the subject your clients will see the propriety of relinquishing their intention; and sparing themselves, as well as me, the disagreeable feelings which law-suits for the imaginary reparation of character always occasion.

Tho. Ruffin Esqr.

Atto, at Law,
Hillsboro.

From Thomas Henderson Jr.

Dear Sir.

RALEIGH, Augt. 2, 1816.

Enclosed you will receive my answer to your official letter of the 27th ult. For your friendly letter accompanying it, I thank you, and would most willingly follow your advice could I do so with propriety. But under present circumstances (tho' I fear no such consequences) I would suffer the fate of Woodfall before the name of the author should be surrendered. I have neither seen nor heard from the author since your letter was received.

I am, Sir, very sincerely,

Yours,

THOS. HENDERSON JR.

Tho. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

[ENCLOSURE]

From Thomas Henderson Jr.

Sir.

RALEIGH, Augt. 2, 1816.

On Wednesday last I received your letter of the 27th ultimo asking as Attorney for Messrs Gales, Vanhook and Whitaker, the name of the writer of a piece lately published in the Star, under signature of "A Citizen of Wake."

Having been threatened with a prosecution before I had it in my power to consult the Author, and being advised that the piece contains no libel, though I abhor the idea and misery of litigation, I have to inform you that the author's name will not be given up.

I am, Sir, very respectfully

Yours,

THO. HENDERSON JR.

Tho. Ruffin, Esqr.

Atto. for Messrs. Gales,
Whitaker and Vanhook.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Kemp Plummer and Others.

RALEIGH, 9th August, 1816.

Sir,

At our last General Assembly, and subsequent to the passing of the Act providing for the appointment of Electors to vote for a President and Vice-President of the United States, the Republican Members of that body, having convened as private citizens, proposed fifteen persons (of whom you are one) as fit characters to be chosen Electors under that act: and at the same time nominated the undersigned as a Committee of Correspondence, to make such communications as would probably produce unity of action; without which, a small but undivided minority might frustrate the object of the law and the wish of a large majority of the people.

In compliance with this nomination, and in the discharge of the trust thus reposed in us, we feel it our duty to afford every facility in our power to the fair and faithful execution of the law, according to its spirit and import. To this end, permit us respectfully to enquire of you, Sir, whether you will serve if elected, and whether you will vote for James Monroe as President, and Daniel D. Tompkins as Vice-President of the United States?

A knowledge of these facts will enable us to announce not only the names proposed, but also the sentiments of the candidates. Did the functions of an Elector require discussion and deliberation, we should not presume to ask any question inconsistent with the free exercise of that judgment which should be the result of future enquiry and investigation; but viewing the subject as presenting to the people an abstract proposition, which, from the necessity of the thing as well as the constitutional provision, must be answered through the Electors, as the proper organs of communicating their will on this single point, it would seem that the duty of an Elector required nothing more than to ascertain the opinion of his constituents, and to adopt that opinion by his vote.

There is, to be sure, but one candidate for each of the high stations mentioned; but this circumstance does not entirely forego the propriety

or even necessity of the enquiry we now make, since a feeble opposition, acting in concert, might outweigh any fragment of a divided majority.— And although it be true that no man is bound by this or any other nomination for Electors, but any man or set of men, have an equal right to propose other characters, yet if no ticket be held up to public view, the will of the majority can never be known. Unanimity, therefore, in the Electoral Vote, is the great object—and it can be matter of no moment to the people whether they are personally acquainted with the candidates or not, provided they are satisfied as to the votes they will give.

An answer, addressed to us at this place, at as early a day as may suit your convenience, is desired.

With sentiments of respect, we have the honor to be
Your obed't, humble serv'ts,

KEMP PLUMMER,¹
THOS. FALCONER,²
HENRY POTTER.³

[Address: Hillsborough.]

To Kemp Plummer and Others.

HILLSBOROUGH. August 20th, 1816.

Gentlemen—

I take an early opportunity of answering the questions proposed to me in your (Circular) Letter dated 9th Inst. I answer both of them in the affirmative. If chosen an *Elector* by the Citizens of North Carolina, I will serve; and, believing that the people would wish or expect me so to do, I shall vote for James Monroe for the office of President, and Daniel D. Tompkins for that of Vice-President.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen

Your most Obed. Svt.

THOMAS RUFFIN.

KEMP PLUMMER
THOMAS FALCONER
HENRY POTTER } Esquires.

From Benjamin Tappan.

August 26th 1816.

It is now several years since we have heard from you and as long ago as Octo. 1812 since we have recd any intelligence from our surviving friends at Petersburg. . . .

¹Kemp Plummer of Warren County.

²Thomas Falconer of Granville County.

³I am unable to locate Henry Potter.

I do not know that except the wear and tear of time we have altered much since you saw us, we have a son now $3\frac{1}{2}$ years old, the only child we have been able to raise and he promises fair. as to myself our Legislature have thought proper to make me President of the Courts of Common Pleas over a Circuit of 8 counties, so that I have left the bar to younger men.

In this State the Congress are much condemned in all quarters for the compensation law and the probability is that no one who voted for it will be reelected, in Kentucky but 3 of 10 present members are reelected, a change of men may have a good effect in bringing back the government to the economical principles of 1801 from which a sad departure hath taken place.

N. B. Nancey says I have made a slight mistake in the age of our boy and that he is $4\frac{1}{2}$ years old—so it is.

From Thomas Henderson, Jr.

RALEIGH, August 29, 1816.

Enclosed I send you what I deem a conciliatory letter and which I hope will satisfy all parties. It was written after mature reflection and consultation with my friends here.

I sent it to Mr. Gales, who I suppose has taken a copy of it, as I requested him to do, if he thought proper.

[Address: Hillsboro'.]

From Joseph Gales.

[RALEIGH, N. C., August 30, 1816.]

Col. Henderson did not shew me the Letter he has sent you till today.

It is not so satisfactory as I could have wished but I suppose it must be accepted as a *sort* of apology.

If it had occupied less room and been less equivocal it would not have been necessary to have accompanied it with the remarks which will now be unavoidable.

It is the course, however, which the Col. and his friends have chosen, and we must make the best of it.

When I have the pleasure to see you, I will do what is right for the trouble you have had in the business.

RALEIGH, Aug. 30, 1816.

You will of course shew Mr. Van Hook the Colonel's Letter.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

*From George E. Spruill.*¹

TARBORO November 2, 1816.

In compliance with the wish which you so kindly expressed I avail myself of the first opportunity of writing. Since I parted with you I have been in several of the lower Counties and though I did not see the members, I think I can calculate on the votes of those from Tyrrell and Washington Counties. General Iredell² cordially promised me his support, I expect the votes of the members from my own County. I have friends who will make interest for me in other Counties, with what success I [am] unable to determine.

Such are my prospects in this part of the Country. With what success you have advocated my cause in the Western interest, you have, by this time, discovered.

I have not seen Mordecai³ since I left you; but have no doubt he will be a candidate. Mr. Drew⁴ has declared himself a candidate. "And by my Gods, sir" says he, "I deem it no egotism to say I can beat any man that will offer." *Credat Judaius Apella*. Such is the opposition which I already anticipate. And to confess the truth, two such opponents against one young practitioner are fearful odds. How many more will spring up between this time and the election I am at a loss to discover. The election will hardly take place until the latter part of the Session. Col. Burton told me, he would certainly resign; but probably not until the latter part of the Session; the reason of the delay I did not learn. Do you think it would be worth while to go to Raleigh before the Election?

Such are the facts within my own knowledge, upon which my hopes of success are founded. Whether, these, in addition to what you know yourself, will justify such a hope you can determine. We so easily believe that which we wish to be true; that I am always ready to distrust my own views of a subject in which I am myself interested. The head is so often the dupe of the heart, the understanding so often biassed by the feelings, that I almost involuntarily anticipate disappointment when my hopes are strongest. In the present case, I must confess I indulge some expectation of success; but I shall nevertheless be prepared to meet disappointment. It will rest with you and Gen. Iredell whether to bring my name forward or not. And in making the election I doubt not you will exercise the same prudence and wisdom, and in both I have the

¹George E. Spruill of Halifax County, member of the House of Commons, 1825-1830, at this time a candidate for attorney-general to succeed Hutchins G. Burton, who had announced his intention of resigning.

²James Iredell of Chowan.

³Moses Mordecal of Pitt and later of Wake, 1785-1824, one of the most distinguished lawyers in the State at this time. He was educated at the Warrenton Academy and was probably a schoolmate of Ruffin.

⁴William Drew of Halifax. He was elected by the ensuing legislature.

greatest confidence, that you would in your own case. From the interest which Mr. Brown has manifested in my behalf, I doubt not he will give you what information lies in his power.

I shall be anxious to hear from you, and hope you will write as soon as you conveniently can.

Whatever may be the event of the election, I shall feel myself under the strongest obligations to you, for the very kind interest which you have taken in my favour. It will be remembered with gratitude, and reciprocated when occasion shall offer, with pleasure. And though I am unable to command success I hope to do more, to deserve it.

Tho. B. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Hillsboro N: C:]

From Thomas Love.¹

WAYNESVILLE 12th NOV. 1816.

Permit me to trouble you with a few remarks, Respecting the Dilemma that our State has got into with respect to perfecting titles to the vacant and unappropriated Lands within the State of Tennessee, which right she had previously reserved to herself by her Act of Cession; But the wild and unprecedented measures Taken by Congress and Tennessee on that Occasion, In my Humble Opinion, Calls aloud for some Legislative aid of Our State. If you recollect we had some conversation respecting that Business at our last Assembly, And would have Taken up the Subject at that time But the Law of Tennessee of 1812 entramelling any further proceedings on the part of No. Carolina Could not then be procured. I shall Trouble you with but a few remarks, merely reciting you to the several Laws that have been enacted on that Occasion; for from my personal Acquaintance with you, I am well assured that from a review of the several Laws on that subject, You will at once discover the imposition about to be practised on the Claimants under No. Carolina, and I Trust will be able to prescribe some mode to remedy the Evil. You will see by the Act of Cession of 1789 that No. Carolina Specially reserved to herself the right to perfecting Titles to all Bonafide Claims of Lands within the Limits of the Lands then intended to be Ceded; But from the frequent solicitations of the State of Tennessee, No. Carolina in the year 1803 passed a Law, giving to Tennessee the right of perfecting Titles, to all the Bonafide Claims of Lands then within the limits of said

¹Thomas Love of Haywood County. He was a member of the House of Commons from Buncombe from 1797 to 1809; from Haywood, from 1809 to 1812, from 1814 to 1816, and from 1817 to 1821. He was a member of the Senate from 1823 to 1829. This total of twenty-five terms, so far as I can discover, has been exceeded only once—by James Wellborn of Wilkes, who served twenty-seven.

State, in as full a manner as No. Carolina had reserved to herself under her Act of Cession, Upon Congress first giving her Assent thereto; Now Sir for a moment examine and see what has been the Conduct of Congress and Tennessee on this Occasion; In the Session of Congress of 1806, They have Entered into an intire new Compact, leaving out of the question the Act of No. Carolina of 1803 and the Act of Cession of 1789 which all the Laws relative to that Business grew out of, and between them have made a conditional line known by the name of the Congressional reservation line, which you will see described in the Act of Congress of 1806 page (87) In which Act the State of Tennessee has agreed to relinquish all right and claim to perfecting Titles to the Lands South and West of the said line to Congress, And in consideration of which Congress have relinquished all their right of Soil East and North of the said line; furthermore Congress in their goodness have made a Donation of a Tract of Land of 100,000 acres in an intire body to the State of Tennessee for the use of Colleges and 100,000 acres more for the use of Academies and 640 acres for every six miles square for the use of schools etc. But not one single acre for the use and benefit of No. Carolina who was the original proprietors, and who had fought Bled and wasted her Treasures for those very Lands; You will see by the 2nd Sec. of the Act of Cessions, that it is Expressly Stipulated, that if the Bounds laid out for the Officers and Soldiers of the Continental line should not contain a sufficient quantity of Land fit for cultivation that such officers or soldiers falling short of his allotment should be at Liberty to take his quota in any other part of the Lands then intended to be ceded which were vacant and unappropriated; and there is a further provision in the same Sec. for all Subsequent Entries where there were prior Entries for the same spot or piece of Ground, That such subsequent Entries should be at Liberty to remove his Claim to any other vacant Land within the limits of the Land then intended to be Ceded; The 3rd Sect. Provides that all the Lands intended to be Ceded, and not appropriated as above, should be considered as a Common fund for the use and Benefit of the U. S. North Carolina inclusive.

Now Sir I will ask after Congress had accepted of the Cession with those several Conditions, where she Acquired the right to appropriate one single acre, Untill all the Just Claims of No. Carolina was first satisfied. The late Treaty made by Genl. Jackson¹ with the Indians includes a Considerable portion of the Lands within the Congressional reservation and so soon as the Treaty shall be Ratified, Those Lands will be subject to the satisfying of the Claims under No. Carolina; But how are they to obtain Titles to their lands, Congress having no right to perfect Titles to none of those Lands, Tennessee has relinquished all the right vested in her by No. Carolina And by the Law of Tennessee

¹The treaty referred to is the one made by General Jackson with the Creek Indians in 1814.

of 1812 If No. Carolina should Send her Surveyors there to survey those Lands they are to [be] fined and imprissed like fugitives; This Shews the necessity of a prompt and Spirited interference of our Legislature on that subject.

I had some conversation on that subject at our last spring Court with his honour Judge Cameron, he appeared decidedly of Opinion that some Legislative interference of our State was highly necessary in the protection of our rights, And thought it would be advisable for the Legislature to appoint some man of Standing and Talents as an Agent to Congress and these have the matter fairly investigated. My Brother Robert Love¹ will be at Raleigh Early in the Sessions, and will hand you the Tennessee Law alluded to. I hope and Trust that you will in your Official capacity as a representative of the people endeavour to Provide some means by which the Heroes of the Revolution and those who have paid their money for those very lands more than Thirty years can come at their Titles etc.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address:

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

Member of Assembly

Raleigh No. Carolina.]

From William Miller.²

EXECUTIVE OFFICE N. C.

RALEIGH NOVEMR. 1816.

Sir,

Upon an examination of the returns from the different counties, I have the satisfaction to inform you, that you are elected an Elector to vote for a President and Vice-President of the United States; and to request your attendance at this place on the first Wednesday in December next for the purpose of giving your votes for these officers.

Very respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

WILL. MILLER.

Thomas Ruffin Esquire.

[Address: Raleigh.]

¹Colonel Robert Love of Haywood.

²William Miller of Warren. Before his election as governor in 1814 had served several terms in the legislature.

*From Dr. James Webb.*¹

My Dear Sir

HILLSBORO NOV 25th 1816.

From a conversation I had with Dr. Caldwell² when he was last here I have no doubt that he will accept the Presidential Chair of our University if offered to him provided the trustees give him a strong Faculty; in this matter you can act as circumstances and your better Judgment may direct.

Your family and friends here as well as usual.

Wishing you a short and pleasant session believe me your

friend and servant

[Address:

J. WEBB.

The Honorable

Thomas Ruffin

Speaker of the House of Commons

Raleigh.]

From George McNeill.

FAYETTEVILLE Decem 4th, 1816.

Your regarded favour of the 30th Ult. covering Note of Wm R. Puckett Esqr. was duly received. I will attend to the collection of the note. The *State Bank* here will not collect!!! and the note has not time enough to run to be discounted even if they were discounting any paper. I have secured the payment of *Brown* note to you by agreeing to take it out in Fr.gt. . . . is a bad debt. Specie is selling at 15 p cent, and one person asks 25 p. cent—it is very scarce and, while the Banks continue to receive it, as they now do, it will no doubt keep high.

Before we recd yours of the 30th we had sent on \$1100 to Richmond to purchase the stock for you—we intended to have purchased it in Boston but found we should not have time to get the transfer made. We have something more than \$1100 of yours in our hands including the pro[ceeds] of the silver.

I observe what you say about the "School Association"³ and other money manufacturing persons—I am no way interested in the "Associa-

¹Dr. James Webb of Hillsboro, an alumnus of the University and one of the most interested and active of the trustees.

²Dr. Joseph Caldwell, who had been president of the University from 1804, had resigned in 1812 to give his entire attention to mathematics. He had been succeeded by Dr. Robert Hett Chapman who held the office until 1816. Caldwell was at once elected to succeed him.

³Reference is probably here made to the Fayetteville School Association, which had been incorporated at the preceding session of the legislature.

tion" but I cannot imagine how you are to get at them, unless you lay aside the *Constitution*, that the Assembly did (and I suppose can do again) when they issued the *State due Bills*, or treas[ur]y notes as they are call'd. I mean that section of the U. S. Constitution which says "no State shall coin money or issue Bills of credit"—it is to be hoped that the Assembly will *suppress* their own due Bills in the general suppression.

I hear this morning that Mr. Daniels¹ is made Judge.

Your friends here are all quite well and join in Love and affectionate regards to you.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From Duncan Cameron.

Decr. 8, 1816.

I was much gratified by hearing that you were called to the chair during the present session of the General Assembly.² I delight to hear that marks of distinction and confidence are conferred on my friends.

The session will soon be drawing to a close—three weeks of it have already elapsed; and but little publick Business is done. I fear that the various elections will prevent the maturing of many publick acts. And that the present will, like many preceding it, terminate, without much having been done for the improvement of our judicial system, and the amelioration of our penal code.

I have enclosed to you my resignation as a Judge;³ which please do me the favour to present to the Assembly. Many considerations with which I have already acquainted you, forbid my longer exercising the function of a *circuit* Judge. I despair of seeing a separation of the Supreme Court from the duties of the circuit Judges—nevertheless should such an event take place, and my friends wished it, with the approbation of the Assembly, I would attempt to perform the duties of a member of the Supreme Court. I mention this, as it grew out of the conversation we had on this subject, this week.

¹Joseph J. Daniel of Halifax, who served sixteen years as a judge of the Superior Court. Elevated to the Supreme Court in 1832, he served for sixteen years, dying in 1848.

²Ruffin had already served as a borough member of the House of Commons from Hillsboro in 1813 and 1815. During the session of 1813, when the war fever and the excitement against David Stone was at its height, Henry Seawell wrote Bartlett Yancey, in a letter dated December 17: "It is with the greatest heartfelt satisfaction I inform you of the signal distinction our friend Ruffin obtained by his conduct in this respect. He has deservedly acquired a pre-eminence for understanding and patriotism which I trust is not to be forgotten and which I believe is to make him useful in a high degree to his country and himself. He stands decidedly foremost on the republican side, and I rejoice that the interests of the community are measurably committed to so safe a guide." Ruffin was unanimously elected speaker on November 18, 1816.

³Ruffin was elected, on December 16, 1816, to succeed Judge Cameron and at once resigned from the legislature. James Iredell, his intimate friend and roommate at Princeton, was chosen to succeed him as speaker.

Since I commenced writing this letter the mail has brot the newspapers; and from them I have learned for the first time, the result of the balloting for Judge and Senator.¹ You have indeed had tough work and close cutting.

I have not been more than two miles from the House, since I saw you. My family has been, and yet is very sick. My children are all sick with the measles—some of them very sick.

Wishing you a pleasant time of it, and a safe return to your family, I remain with great regard.

[Address: Raleigh.]

*From Weldon N. Edwards.*²

WASHINGTON CITY 9th Decr. 1816.

Dear Ruffin.

I have postponed writing you longer than I wished—but hope to be excused, when you are assured the delay has proceeded entirely from a desire to collect something to write about. Indeed I wish I could even now present you something of Interest, but I am prevented that pleasure by the short time I have been here, and by the fact that no communication, or report, except the message of the President, has been made us; without which you know it is impossible to speak with any certainty of the measures we shall probably adopt, or even of the particular views of members; for conversation never becomes busy and lively untill the *budgets* are all before us.

The Presidents communication appears not to have suddenly excited activity in business, nor indeed comparatively speaking, does it present much to be done—yet it has given birth to feelings of the most consolatory kind. The picture it presents of our pacific relations with foreign powers, and of the happy economy of our domestic concerns, seems to excite in the breast of every one sensations of joy and pride, and it is not unfrequent that you hear members giving a loose to such feelings; particularly those whose exertions have mostly contributed to produce the present state of things. There is no doubt but our commercial relations with G. Britain will early command our attention in order to remedy, as far as practicable, that inequality of which the President so properly makes mention. The alterations recommended in the Judiciary³ are of great magnitude, and certainly have their difficulties. The additional expense necessary is perhaps unimportant compared with other consider-

¹James Turner resigned from the United States Senate in December and Montford Stokes was chosen to succeed him.

²Weldon N. Edwards had succeeded Nathaniel Macon in Congress when the latter was elected to succeed Francis Locke in the Senate.

³President Madison recommended that the federal judiciary be reorganized so as to relieve the justices of the Supreme Court of the arduous duties of the circuits.

ations of a political nature. Some think Executive patronage already sufficiently great, such would perhaps be opposed to the proposition—but others believe *it* confin'd to its proper sphere, and without the means of dangerously extending itself, who would probably think the administration of Justice much ameliorated by it. For my own part, I hope so to decide the question as will be most promotive of my Country's good.

The compensation law has furnish'd us with some talk out of doors, but there are so many floating opinions, that I cannot even guess the result of the proposition now before us upon the subject of it. It will no doubt be repeal'd; but whether the old law will be restored or an increased *p diem* substituted, I really cannot tell. I sometimes think the one, and then the other will be the case. You will have seen before this the speech of Colo. Johnson,¹ preliminary to his motion to enquire into the expediency of repealing it. He was not wanting in his usual *honest* zeal and interesting animation yet advocating the measure, while he proposed its repeal deprived his speech of some portion of its merit. But he says "*vox populi, vox dei,*" is his guide.

I have heard of the confirmation of Judge Daniel's appointment, and the election of Genl. Stokes as successor to Govr. Turner in U. S. Senate. You have had many candidates before you, and, as you remarked, I could readily conceive the dilemma in which my very worthy friend Mr. Plummer that good man, was. So many friends knocking at the portals of his heart, and not *wherewithall* to satisfy all, must have made him occasionally scratch his head. Do make my respects to him, and tell him I wish he had the dispensation of many of the *goods* of this life, that I know all his friends would be amply provided for and fare well. *Can't you give him a sinecure—He should have one?*

I heartily concur in the attempt you are making at internal improvements—Yet I have my apprehensions for the success of your several *projects*. Our State will never be respectable either in numbers or wealth, untill that all important branch of domestic economy is better encouraged among us—emigration and all its concomitants will always keep us under the Hatches unless the Legislature by its high-mindedness and public spirit create new inducements to the citizen to abide with us. Your judiciary Bill I have scarcely any hopes for, having some knowledge of the temper and disposition of members in regard to it. Expense! Expense! opening the avenue to the destruction of the C. Court system! these will be the cry. The amendment of our penal code by a Penitentiary has its origin in the best feelings of the heart and is strongly recommended by humanity; but I respectfully submit that sound Policy is against it, and think the latter should always be able to withstand the eloquent, tho silent, language of the former. I know we differ on this subject, but can say no more here. The revision of our Constitution may possibly have its dangers yet if the object is to do justice and to correct

¹Colonel Richard Malcolm Johnson of Kentucky, afterwards Vice-President of the United States.

injustice, I think it should be assay'ed. Yet is the injustice in question as great as you seem to think it? Is not our population at present too sparse and too fluctuating? However, it is a subject upon which I have not seriously reflected. This much I will venture, that eastern and western jealousies seem to distract and exasperate our councils without any profit, as experience proves, and it is to be much wish'd that they may in future be buried.

Your Land warrant will soon be obtained. It had better remain in my hands to draw the grant should it issue during this session. But upon this I will wait your advice—remember me to my friends.

I have written much more than I intended, and without regard to matter or style, but I knew it was for the eye of a friend.

The "*Honble*" Thos. *Ruffin*.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

His Excellency William Miller Esquire Governor
Captain General and Commander in Chief.

To the Honourable Thomas Ruffin Esquire, Greeting

We reposing special trust and confidence in your prudence, integrity, abilities and learning in the Law,
[SEAL] do hereby authorize you, after taking the oaths prescribed for your qualification, to enter upon the office, and discharge the duties of a Judge of our Superior Courts of Law, and Courts of Equity, you having been appointed thereto by joint Ballot of both houses of the General Assembly.

To hold the said office, exercise and perform the authorities and duties, and receive and enjoy the Salary annexed during your good behaviour therein.

In testimony whereof I have caused the Great Seal of the State to be hereunto affixed and signed the same at the City of Raleigh the 16th day of December one thousand eight hundred and sixteen and of the Independence of the United States the forty-first.

WILL MILLER.

By the Governor
S. T. Sanders P. Secy.

State of North Carolina

Supreme Court January Term A. D. 1817.

In pursuance of this Commission from His Excellency William Miller Esquire Governor etc of this State, The Honorable Thomas Ruffin esquire

at the Supreme Court began and held in the City of Raleigh on the first Monday of January A. D. 1817 took the Oaths prescribed by Law for his qualifications as Judge of the Supreme Court and Superior Courts of Law and Equity within State.

In Testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of my office at the City of Raleigh
 [SEAL] the 7th day of January A. D. 1817 and 41st year of our Independence.
 W. M. ROBARDS.

From Richard Stanford.

WASHINGTON CITY, Dec. 18, 1816.

You have professed some friendship for our Cape Fear Navigation which I have no doubt you feel,—let me request you, therefore, to aid Murphy (should his larger and more general project fail) to consolidate into one the various laws respecting our Cape Fear company, and charter. We want our stock increased, and such privileges, and no other, as have been conferred upon other companies. I think if we are moderately encouraged, we may be able to go on, tho' we should fail in the encouragement we think we deserve from the State.

We have done nothing as yet, and prepared little to do; but there seems to be a good deal in a course of preparation. No subject presents itself however either thro the message, or otherwise, which seems likely to produce much party division or discussion. Indeed I don't anticipate much division of the kind, an increase of the army is to be attempted (and that too from the Republican side of the question) but I don't know how it will go—that I shall be against such increase you will readily imagine, but my unfashionable notions have little effect. If it should be increased it will be a *republican measure* of course. I verily believe, so far from increasing, we might reduce and economize out of the army, and army expenditure alone enough to dispense with all the internal taxes at the present session, but *economy-ism* is now out of the question, Republicanism is the order of the day. I am really pleased, however, that the prospect is more than usual harmony is like to prevail throughout the present session.

Even on the subject of President there seems not like to be the usual party division; For I do not hear, nor is it probable any Presidential candidate will be held up from among the Federalists. The division then, if any will be among those of the majority, and among them there are a few schismatics, not willing to have another President from Virginia, for Monroe is certainly at present the object of the caucus; and if from some cause, not yet known generally, he should not be laid aside by his friends beforehand, he will certainly be the man. But the business is working, and it is said, a deep system of intrigue is going on from

N. York to change the Virginia dynasty. If this be true, we may yet find ourselves under the *benign* and *republican* auspices of a Tompkins.

I have folded my arms, and am just looking on to see what they will make of it.

[Address: Raleigh, N. Caro.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

OAKLAND 18th Dec. 1816.

James arrived with William yesterday; he returns tomorrow by whom I write.

Herewith you will receive One hundred dollars which I should have sent you sooner, had an opportunity offer'd. Maj. Campbell intended to visit Raleigh, but inform'd me a few days ago that he had declin'd it. Should you have as much money *to spare*, and an opportunity should offer, send Mr. McNeill \$50.00 which I owe him for the Crate; and I will endeavour to return it, when Wm. comes again to school.

For ten days your Mother and myself have been much indispos'd with the prevailing cold; she is getting better but I believe I am waxing worse and worse. The papers have announced to me the great impropriety of your conduct, in submitting your name to be held up as Judge. Calculating from every circumstance within my knowledge, I am obliged to pronounce it the most unadvised act of your life. If you were determined to sacrifice your practice of the Law, why did you not go to Congress? Amidst all the clouds which overshadow this misterious act there is a ray of light which portends some good, viz: to quallify yourself to fill the important station to which you are call'd, with that dignity to which your pride and good sense will aspire, you will have to read *much, very much*; which after one or two years should you be dispos'd to resign, will enable you to resume the practise with much greater prospects of success. I want very much to see you; will you be at the next Caswell County Court?

This is the last year of the five which Mr. Ellis and myself engaged for; the business will go on as heretofore, but we shall want to close the whole of the first concern; and take inventory bonds etc. at the end of this year; you will therefore see that the necessity of my receiving an account of your transactions with the bank in this year.

Send up as early as possible for your sheep, such is the injury they are sustaining from being too numerous, that I have lost several.

Pray write me immediately; I am both surprised and mortify'd at not having heard from you since I saw you. We join in Love and prayers to and for you and our dear Anne and little children. May Heaven bless you all.

[Address: Hillsborough No. Carolina.]

From Archibald McBryde.¹

TYSONS 4th Jany. 1817.

Dear Sir.

Give me leave in the first place to offer you my sincere congratulations on your present appointment; next to the public good it is my real wish that it may prove agreeable and advantageous to you and your family.

The bearer Mr. McIver read Law in my office. I think he is a very good young man and of respectable talents, he obtained a County Court License a year ago and will apply at the ensuing supreme court for a Supr. Court License. Anson County Court is on the 2nd Monday of this month, and it will be of some consequence to him be examined so early in the first week of the Supreme Court as to be at Anson Court. It would also oblige Dear Sir

Sincerely Yours

A. MCBRYDE.

Be so good as to tender my respects to Mr. Murphey.
[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From George E. Badger.²

NEWBERN Monday Jany. 20th 1817.

I arrived here this morning and am happy in being able to inform you that my Mother has no objection to the proposed change in the place of residence. I shall leave this place for Hillsborough on Monday next and unless prevented by accident shall be with you on the Thursday following.

I cannot conclude without assuring you that I feel grateful for the good opinion of me which prompted your offer to put your business under my care, and pledging myself that if the most persevering attention on my part will avail anything you shall never have cause to regret your confidence.

The Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough N. Carolina]

¹Archibald McBryde of Moore was a distinguished lawyer. He was a member of Congress from 1809 to 1813.

²George E. Badger of Craven. He had been licensed to practice law in 1814, but had been solicitor for almost the entire period since then. He was a member of the House of Commons in 1816 where he and Ruffin formed a warm friendship which lasted all their lives. When Ruffin became a judge he offered his practice to Badger.

From William Garnett.

[LOYD'S VA] 13th March, 1817.

It is a long time, my dear friend, since I have taken up my pen to write to you, or since I have rec'd a letter from you. I trust, however, that no inference, derogatory to that friendship, which we have so frequently possessed for each other, can be drawn from this fact. I am well aware that age has a chilling influence, both upon our physical and moral nature; but as friendship constitutes one of the strongest ligaments, which bind the human heart, I am persuaded that it is least accessible to its baleful influence. Can you reciprocate this sentiment? I would not for worlds think otherwise of you. For it is "the cherished madness" of my heart, (if it can be called madness, to indulge in retrospections of which pain constitutes a considerable ingredient), to retrace many of the pleasurable scenes of our former intercourse, and to recall to my memory "departed joys," which are never to return. There is a melancholy luxury (if I may be allowed the expression) derived from reflections of this kind, which I would not exchange for years of that empty unmeaning kind of frivolity usually termed happiness. I have always been an enthusiast, in love, in friendship, and indeed in every thing else; and like all other enthusiasts, I am sometimes, apt to endeavor to persuade myself that no one else can feel as intensely as myself, that I am a kind of isolated being in this respect. This disposition, however, to arrogate a monopoly of feeling, is checked by the consideration that to outward appearances there is no great difference in men. To the world, I make no doubt, that I appear to be as much interested in the common affairs of it, as other people, and as little corroded by care as any of them. But the state of my heart, my dear friend, presents a very different aspect to myself. I have [met?] with misfortunes that has deadened the interest that I formerly took in the concerns of this life. I have lost many of my dearest and most valued friends, and I have lost one of my children. More than a twelvemonth has elapsed since the date of the latter visitation, but it has made an indellible impression, an aching void, a chasm, which can never be filled on this side of the grave. O may you never have a practical knowledge of the heart rending agony of such a misfortune. This world affords no consolation for grief arising from this cause,—it is to religion alone that we can look for succor. This, I know, when its influence is properly felt, contains a sovereign balm for every wound. But I have never yet been able to realize that fervid piety, that faith, which overcomes the world, and without which we are taught to believe that no one can be reconciled to God. I trust, however, in the mercy of that God whose mercies I have so often abused, that he will not close my eyes in darkness, without imparting to my soul a ray from that sun of righteousness, whose beams can penetrate the darkest recesses of tomb, and make bright with the refulgence of eternal day the

gloomy passage through the valley of the shadow of death. I intended when I sat down to have written you a much longer letter, but I feel oppressed with the subject that I have inadvertently fallen into and must, therefore, conclude for the present. I am now by myself, and at Mantapike, a house that has been recently almost desolated by death, which must be my apology for the gloomy impression my letter. Present me affectionately to your wife, who I should be happy to see at my house, if you can ever find time to bring her to Virginia. As to myself, circumstances confine me almost as rigidly to my farm as if I was one of the slaves; it is certainly not the most agreeable profession in the world, for a man, who has always held slavery, of every kind, in most unqualified abhorrence, to be compelled to confine himself to the management of slaves, for his subsistence, and the future support of his family. We must, however, take things as they happen in this life. Farewell, and believe me ever your most affectionate

WM. GARNETT.

[Address: Warrenton, North Carolina.]

From Thomas B. Littlejohn.

OXFORD 17th May 1817.

By the appointment of Mr. Nathanl. Robards to the Sherifalty of this County, the Office of Clerk and Master will become vacant, and as you will have that vacancy to fill, I beg leave to inform you that I will be glad to receive the appointment provided you should think me qualified to discharge the duties of that Office. I am with great respect

Honble. Thos. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Thomas B. Littlejohn.

OXFORD 5th July 1817.

I have the pleasure to acknowledge receipt of your much esteemed favor of the 30th ulto., wherein you are good enough to inform me that you had appointed me to the office of Clerk and Master for this County. If I shall not be prevented by some unforeseen event, I will be in Raleigh some time in the Course of next week for the purpose of taking the oaths of office before you.

The Honble

Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Raleigh]

William Henderson¹ to Thomas D. Bennehan.²

RALEIGH August 9th 1817.

Dear Sir.

Can't we keep the man* of many pursuits at home? At least let us endeavour to do so. He is a perfect Proteus, always varying. Here, he is a federalist, an admirer of Washingtons politics, no administration man; in short sir he is every thing, but a federalist. I hope the Doctor will pardon me; The pursuit would be a fruitless one, too elevated for one of his political persuasion. I enclose the letter of Colonel William Hinton, of this county to you, in obedience to the request of Mr. Dickens;³ that you may transmit it to Person before the election. Mr. Dickens supposes, if the charges contained in Colonel Hintons letter can be established in his own county; he will command almost, an unanimous vote. It is then important for we are apprehensive, the contest is doubtful here, as well as in Orange. I hope not, I trust we are not so far declined. We can ascribe it to nothing but the supineness of Mr. Dickens's friends. Wake is certainly Federal, when she chuses to rise in her strength. Smith's friends have left no stone unturned. It is the intention of Mr. Dickens to make Smith commit himself, by denying the charge, and then to prove it. May God prosper every good word and work. (Micklejohn).

Will you let me know by the messenger, whether you will find it convenient to send to Person, and whether Mr. Dickens called on you, on his return home. I tremble for the fate of the election.

Thomas Bennehan.

*Dr. Smith.

[Address: Flatt River, Orange County.]

[Enclosure]

William Hinton⁴ to William Henderson.

[Aug. 8, 1817]

In answ. to your letter I shall make use of the language that I have done in private, in the open streets of Raleigh, and to many of Smiths friends, when I believe he was in hearing, which was as follows, on the last day of July I saw Doct. Smith⁵ (for the first time) at a muster in

¹Dr. William Henderson was a son of Chief Justice Leonard Henderson.

²Thomas D. Bennehan of "Stagville," Orange County.

³Samuel Dickens of Person County, member of the House of Commons, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1818; member of Congress, 1816-1817.

⁴William Hinton of Wake, a prominent citizen and frequently a member of the legislature.

⁵Dr. James S. Smith of Orange, then a candidate for Congress. He was successful and served two terms.

my neighbourhood and when he address'd the Company he uttered sentiments very different from what I calculated on, for they were such as I should have expected from a Federalist and strongly urg'd the necessity of adopting Washingtons principles, and in the Course of his address he made use of sentiments to this effect (if not in the precise words, they had the same meaning) that the administration had been in an error and it was Honorable to retract.

Some time after the Company was dismissed Mr. Fennell and my self got into argument and I told Fennell that I was sorry he wou'd not acknowledge his error for his Friend Doctr Smith has this day in the course of his address honestly did acknowledge that the administration had been in an error and it was Honrbl to retract this Mr. Fennel rather denied and propos'd to me to go to Smith which I refus'd to do and told him to bring him to me which he did, and the same question in substance was put to Doctr. Smith which he (I thought) reluctantly assented to. I returned him my thanks for his candure, and turn'd to Fennel and ask'd him if he was satisfyd he made no ansr. but I know from his countenance he was mortifyd and disappointed this last conversation I can prove by Charles King esqr. and perhaps by several others.

Mr. King is not at home and Robertsons was not present therefore I dislike giveing a Certificate alone but you may consult Dickins best inform'd friends and if they think this letter will be usefull and no disadvantage to me you are at liberty to make use of by sending it to Dickins or in any other adviseable way.

[Address: Doctr. Henderson, Raleigh.]

From James Graham.¹

LINCOLN VESUVIUS FURNACE August the 10th 1817.

I left Hillsboro within a few days after I parted with you in Raleigh. I assure you Sir it gave me no small degree of pain to part with many of my friends in and about the Boro. For although many make a profession of Friendship, yet comparatively very few act in conformity with their professions; and therefore when once a person has evidence as high as heaven of a course of conduct which uniformly bespoke friendship of the sincerest sort; then, that man's heart must be as cold as the

¹James Graham, 1793-1851, a native of Lincoln County, the son of General Joseph Graham and a brother of Governor William A. Graham. He became well known as a lawyer, but was especially prominent in the politics of the western part of the State. After service in the legislature for some years, he was for six terms a member of Congress.

ice at the north pole, who feels no regret at parting from friends whom time and the ties of golden friendship have endeared to each other, and who feels no degree of gratitude for an invariable hospitable and polite attention. It has been my lot for many years past to sojourn here and there without any permanent place of abode, in the course of which I have had favourable opportunities of testing the conduct and motives of many different persons in various places and situations. I therefore trust that I am not unable or unwilling to appreciate services and favours which flowed from the purest source, from friendship in the plain garb of simple sincerity, unsurrounded by the tinsel of parade and untrenched behind ceremonious forms. To say, therefore, that I am under great and lasting *obligations* of respect gratitude and esteem to those whose kindness and polite attentions I have informly received, is not to pay the Debt of compliments but of *merit*. I arrived at my fathers during the week of Lincoln county court. I went up to Lincolnton before the court adjourned and took the oaths prescribed by law which are usually taken on similar occasions. The bar is pretty thronged, the business however is chiefly in the hands of three men—R. Burton,¹ R. Williamson,² H. Webb.³ From court I returned to my fathers where I have been ever since, except two days on business to Statesville: where I accidentally saw Mrs. Harris who was [in] good health, and high spirits. She whispers and smiles as usual, and therefore, I said accidentally for as I was walking the street I heard her voice before I saw her face and then directed my course accordingly. She returns to Hillsboro next week, she informed I have heard no one speak of her in Iredell who did not extoll her usque ad coelum. I have read very little law lately, but I shall before the last of this month pitch upon some place where I shall locate myself and resume my studies for one year but shall not make any permanent settlement, prior to the expiration of that time. I should be much obliged if you would write me to Lincolnton stating what books I ought to read before I apply for superior court license. My father wishes me to go to Tennessee this fall and dispose of his lands in that state: but when I reflect how it would conflict with the arrangements which I have chalked out in my professional pursuits, I am obliged to decline it for the present. You, Sir, can't conceive of the anxiety and confusion that pervades all ranks of people in this section of country to remove to the Alabama, numbers have actually sold and many more are desirous to sell and hunt a new home in the wide wild wilderness. The consequence is that land here is deminishing in point of value, and the country losing many of its most enterprising and

¹Robert H. Burton, 1781-1842, a son of Colonel Robert Burton of Granville. He was one of the most prominent lawyers of Western North Carolina.

²Robert Williamson of Lincoln County, a member of the House of Commons, 1818-1821; Senate, 1821-1823.

³Henry Young Webb of Lincoln, member of the House of Commons, 1817. He later moved to Alabama and became a judge there before its admission to the Union.

respectable inhabitants. Crops generally, with the exception of cotton and very low bottom lands, are quite good and we expect to enumerate this among the most plentiful years in the annals of crops. You may probably reckon I would mention something relative to the election, but as I know nothing respecting it and make no enquiry you will not be surprised that I venture no conjectures with regard to the result; for nothing is more certain than the *uncertainty* of an election; it is a vessel without a Helm in a boistrous sea, over or against which the billows of discord malice and envy beat and break.

When I write you again I shall have struck my Tent for one year. I have spent my time very pleasantly since my return in examining the acts of Assembly and in hearing my reverend old Father recount the difficulties and dangers to which he was exposed in the morning of Life, and enumerate the characters and conduct of those who *stood up* in the perilous times that tried the souls of men: and when I bear in mind that his head, his hand and his thigh afford the strongest marks of the truth of the facts which he relates, they fill my mind with the tenderest emotions. Present, if you please, my sincerest respects and esteem to Mrs. Ruffin to Mr. and Mrs. and Miss J. R. Kirkland and accept for yourself the sincerest sentiments of gratitude and warmest wishes of health and happiness.

To Badger, Scott and Cain my respects if you please.

[Address: Hillsboro No. Carolina.]

From Richard Apperson.

LOMBARDY GROVE MECKLENBURG VA. Octr. 21st. 1817.

I have been informed that a Mr. William Woods in the vicinity of Hillsborough, is an excellent waggon maker. I want two first rate road waggons and wish you to be so obliging as to give such information to Mr. Woods as that he may state to me the terms for such Waggons—all to be of Seasoned wood and clear of nots and ironed in every part that it may be necessary. If he can supply me, I shall then pay him through you. I have been so plagued with bad waggons that I offer that as an appology to you for troubling you with so trifling an agency.

The answer of Mr. Woods will be to me and I will hereafter communicate with him except in the close, and he must garrantee the goodness of the waggons before the purchase money is paid—on the Condition alone of his warrantee do I want them and am willing to pay a price adequate on that account.

The Roanoke navigation, (about which I know you have the warmest zeal is in bright prosperity—A few feeble efforts may probably be made at the meeting of the next Legislature of your State, to prove that the

P. and Directors have some designs agt. the town of Halifax, Viz. that they will be charged with having attempted to fix the Depo at the foot of the falls Seven miles above by which H[alifa]x. will be abandoned.

But the fact is that the President and Directors have had no sort of Interest or designs in the place of depo—or have they said anything on the Subject,—they say they wish to make the River navigable as the law directs, and that mercantile men may build their houses where they please, and circumstances point out,—they have nothing to do with local Interest—nor will they mind local and Interested clamour, except to rebutt false charges made on that account.

Accept my warmest wishes for your health and prosperity
[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

From John Haywood.¹
(Confidential)

RALEIGH 29th October 1817.

Your favour of the 25th, bearing the Post Mark of the 26th Curr. at Fayetteville, was handed me last evening; and should have been acknowledged by this day's Mail, but for the hindrance occasioned by a sick Child and sleepless night.

Among your many friends, I beg you to be assured, there is not one who values the favour of a Letter from you more highly than I do; nor is there of the number any one individual who could feel greater gratification and pleasure at meeting or furthering any wish of yours than I should:—it follows then of course, My dear Sir, that instead of your feeling either difficulty or reserve in communicating with me freely and confidentially on all those occasions in which it may be supposed I have the power of being, in any way, useful to you or to yours, I shall be flattered and obliged by your commanding my best services.

I am happy to perceive from your Letter, that you and I feel and think precisely alike, with respect to removing or ousting from Office or appointment:—the present Incumbent of the place you mention, has unfortunately but too often rendered himself liable to the unpleasant animadversions of his Employers; and has, I apprehend, fallen under the displeasure of some of them: but the issue of the business depends, I am persuaded, very much upon his future Conduct, or rather punctuality, in making the necessary Returns etc.—as it has been principally, and perhaps solely, owing to inattention and remissness in that particular, that he has been called in question, and his continuance of office, rendered doubtful. Thinking favourably of Mr. R. as a man, and deprecating the Consequences inseperable from a Removal from Office,

¹"Treasurer" John Haywood.

I have uniformly endeavoured to excuse and apologize for his remissness; and to appease and conciliate the Board, on all those occasions when he has been most called in question:—of the friendship and kindness of my conduct towards him in this regard, that Gentleman has, I believe, no knowledge or intimation whatever, as he and myself never corresponded. Although my feeble but well meant endeavours in this particular, may possibly have contributed somewhat towards the preventing the disastrous effects of a pending storm, for the moment; yet I very much doubt whether they have produced any lasting impression or effect:—How the business will terminate, however, time alone can determine; as both the one and the other of the Results you mention, have been spoken of here.

You cannot think more favourably nor more highly of the Gentleman you name as your friend, than I do; and I have therefore, neither difficulty nor hesitation in saying to you, that if in the course of events it shall unfortunately so happen that either of the Contingencies mentioned in your Letter shall take place, I know not the man that I should with more pleasure vote for, or see the appointment offered to:—indeed it has been for many years my determination thus to vote, in case a vote should be of necessity taken whilst I have a seat at the Board:—and thus you see, my much valued and respected friend, that we do not think alike in a solitary instance only.

You may rely on my silence with respect to the purport of your much esteemed favour above mentioned: and whether viewing me as a friend or as one of the Directors here, I am aware it is equally unnecessary that I should remind you, that there are few indeed to whom I would have written in the like unreserved and confidential manner; and that therefore you will consider this to *you* and to *yourself only*.

I wish your Circuit happily closed, and would here offer to you my Congratulations on the near approach of the time, when you will be at liberty to return to the bosom of your family.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Fayetteville N. C.]

From James Graham.

VESUVIUS FURNACE LINCOLN November the 9th 1817.

I have a convenient opportunity of writing you by our Representative Mr. Webb who will call at Hillsboro' as he goes to Raleigh. I wrote you in the month of August last time enough for the letter to have reached Hillsboro' before you commenced the autumnal circuit, as I never received an answer, I am somewhat apprehensive the letter has miscarried and you did not get it. I have attended the courts in three counties Lincoln, Iredell, and Mecklenburg; in the first I presume you know there

are but two county courts in the year at which any Jury causes are tried. Indeed a large proportion of the business in the three counties is transacted in their respective superior courts. Having attended these courts and witnessing the progress of business I am convinced of the correctness of an observation which you once made to me "that the western part of the State was not a place for a lawyer to make money"; there is not one of the profession who in this circuit makes anything more than a tolerable competency by his profession, hence several of the lawyers here, (chiefly those who have families to support,) have turned their attention, in part, towards some other pursuit and as I think where a man lives by his labour it is fair and right he should go where he can receive the greatest price for his labour I therefore have it in contemplation to explore the Mississippi State and Alabama Territory next fall or winter so as to satisfy myself respecting the advantages and inducements which that country is said to afford. The *Alabama Fever* rages here with great violence and has *carried off* vast numbers of our Citizens. I am apprehensive, if it continues to spread as it has done, it will almost depopulate the country. There is no question that this *fever* is contagious and I presume it will be so pronounced by the most celebrated political phicians [physicians?] for as soon as one neighbour visits another who has just returned from the Alabama he immediately discovers the same symptoms which are exhibited by the person who has seen the alluring Alabama. Some of our oldest and most wealthy men are offering their possessions for sale and desirous of removing to this new country. However there is a material difference between offering to sell and actually selling and therefore many will be obliged to relinquish their intentions. The Hessian Fly has commenced destructive operations this Autumn again upon our wheat and I am fearful, from their early appearance, will do much mischief in our fields. Our Cotton Crops have been assailed by a worm which is thought to be the same that frequently injures the cotton in Louisiana. I have lately read a part of my time in Lincolnton but principally at my Fathers. I hope you will write me shortly and mention what books I ought to read in order to obtain a superior court license and state, if you please, the order in which they ought to be taken up. I think it probable *now* I shall go to Hillsboro, and read a few weeks just before next July. I experience much inconvenience at present from not having an opportunity of talking with some one who is thoroughly acquainted with legal subjects and who could remove my difficulties and correct errors into which I sometimes slip. As to news in this question, we have none except the hon. D. M. Forney¹ was married a fortnight since to Miss Brevard of this county, the Major, I am informed will take his Lady on to Washington with him. I have ever since my return here in July been desirous of forming some plan by which our trade in this quarter might be diverted from the chanel through it now passes,

¹D. M. Forney, 1784-1847, a major in the War of 1812; member of Congress, 1815-1818; state senator, 1823-1826. In 1834 he moved to Alabama.

(into South Carolina) and directed to some, good market town within the limits of North Carolina in order to secure to our own State the advantages of her labour and industry In pursuance of this desirable object I have drawn up a *petition* to the Legislature Praying them to lay off and open a *main market Road* from Fayetteville to Morganton. the petition, I believe, has the cordial approbation of every one west of the Yadkin River. My Father has written a memorial to the Legislature for the purpose of reviving and perpetuating the name and fame of a man who fought and fell in defence of his country. You I presume know I allude to Genl. Lee Davidson.¹ If the Legislature do anything on this subject worthy of a greatful people, God bless them, if not, *vice versa*. Its high time I was going down to brother Webbs to deliver this clumsey letter, and I wish I could save him the trouble of Pocketing it, by going on myself, but thats out the question now, tho' I trust it will not be next summer. Present if you please my respects to Mrs. Ruffin Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland also to Cain and Badger, tell them not to *gallant* each other any longer across the bridge, down the River, but fix their affections upon some *beautiful damsel* and get married and sing, wife, children and friends. May you and your family enjoy health and happiness here and heaven hereafter is the wish of yours

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From James Campbell.

[WENTWORTH, N. C., Nov. 20, 1817]

Let me beg of you to interest yourself, by letter or otherwise, in my pretensions to the appointment of Brigadier General for this Brigade. Abm. Philips has resigned. Judge Seawell, Mr Yancy and others hinted that my name in the Legislature would bear promotion with Colonels Hunter and Bethell. I do assure you with *earnestness*, Judge, that I seek not the appointme^t. but to baffle Bethell in his career; his conduct, in my view, has always been exceptionable, but that, on a recent occasion, such, as will forever stimulate me to thwart him in all his publick views. If you are not in Raleigh during the sitting of the present session do write to a few of your friends in the Legislature. Mr. Murphey knows my thirst to oppose Bethell. If Hunter succeeds, the Brigade officers will be satisfied. If Bethell does the Field and staff will offer resignations as fast as they can be entered. Mrs. C. joins me in best respects to you, your lady, and family. Very respectfully I remain,

Wentworth

20. Novem—1817

[Address: Hillsboro]

¹General William Lee Davidson who was killed at the battle of Cowan's Ford. Davidson County, erected in 1822, was named for him.

From John MacRae.

FAYETTEVILLE 29 Nov 1817

By a letter from Hillsborough of the 20th inst I had the pleasure to hear of your safe return to your Family and Friends and at so fortunate a time. I hope your young Son and his Mother continue to do well.

Our much esteemed friend McMillan notwithstanding his favourable appearance when you sett off relapsed immediately and died on the Sunday following—a severe public loss indeed!

Since your departure I have had several conversations with my Father relative to his acceptance of the Cashiership of the Branch of the State Bank at this place.

No circumstance has had so much influence in delaying his determination to comply with the solicitations of his friends as an unwillingness to be the means or even to have the appearance of being the cause of the dismissal of so good a man as Mr. R. whose ill success in giving satisfaction he thinks as do many others proceeds not so much from a want of disposition as a constitutional failing—he has however at length signified through his friend Mr Boylan his willingness to take upon himself the duties of the office but has begged of the directors to continue his friend Mr. R. for a short time. I presume that he may have an opportunity of taking the only step which can now save his feelings the wound accompanying a removal from Office. In the event of my Fathers success I expect to discharge the duties of the Post Office.

I assure you I feel under great Obligations to you for the interest you have taken in promoting the arrangement.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Rev. Adam Empie.¹

WILMINGTON Jan'y 26, 1818.

Sir

The Episcopal Church in this State having been organized last Spring and a missionary society formed I take the liberty herewith of sending you a copy of the minutes of our convention together with some missionary circulars and I beg leave respectfully to solicit your aid and your influence in obtaining contributions for this missionary fund and if possible in organising the Episcopal Church in Hillsboro' for the purpose of sending a delegate to our next convention, which will be held in Fayetteville on the second thursday after Easter—the 2nd of April.

¹Rev. Adam Empie was a prominent Episcopal minister. He was at this time rector of St. James's Church, Wilmington. He was later president of the College of William and Mary.

I would respectfully urge this upon you and the Episcopalians around you. To be represented in, and in union with our Convention is very desirable on account of the privileges attending it. Those who are represented will have the advantage of regular visits from the Bishop of Virginia, who has taken the superintendence of the Church in this State; the advantage of our missionaries who will officiate among them, when they have not constantly a Pastor of their own, the advantage of the superintending care of the Church, to watch over their interests to consult their welfare and to supply them when destitute as well as to secure them against such impositions as they lately suffered in Salisbury.

If we will but exert ourselves as we ought, by the blessing of God, we may soon have a flourishing Church and a Bishop of our own. The Lord grant this for his mercy's sake and the Lord direct and bless you and all of us in all things that tend to promote the welfare of Zion.

A Bible Society has lately been formed in this town, and we hope soon to organize a Prayer book Society, the Constitution of both which I shall send you—I should be happy to hear that you had followed our example. If we can aid you either with bibles or Prayer books, tell us how, and we will gladly do it—and if you will form societies auxiliary to us, or contribute otherwise to our societies, we shall be happy to lend you our assistance to the utmost of our power, tho' you may perhaps find it more expedient to unite with some Bible or prayer book societies more immediately in your neighborhood.

I shall be happy Sir to hear from you on this subject and I beg you or any one that does write to me to inform, whether there are any of the above societies in your town or Section of the country—whence you generally procure your books—thro what Chànnel it is most convenient for them to come, whether bibles and prayer books are much wanted in your part of the State, and whether the Bible and Prayer book societies nearest you be in this State, So Carolina or Virginia.

I am Sir with the greatest respect

Yr very humb^e Serv^t.

A. EMPIE

Hon^{ble} Judge Ruffin.

N. B. In a small parcel accompanying this letter you will find an Advertisement in relation to our next Convention. If there is a printing office in your town I beg you to have it inserted four or five times and to request the Printer to forward his bill to me or to Mr. Loring the Printer in this place.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

Dear Friend.

HAW-RIVER, 15th February 1818.

* * * * *

I have been incessantly engaged since I saw You, and feel half broken down before my Circuit commences. I have done much business and hope before your Return home to do much more. My Prospects just now are good for the approaching Circuit.

When you return, if you do not conclude to quit the State,¹ turn your Attention a little to the Cape Fear. The time is near at hand, when the entire Condition of that Section of the State is to be changed.

* * * * *

Address: Hillsboro'.

From George E. Badger.

HILLSBOROUGH, March 10th 1818.

I left home on the Sunday after your departure and with Mr. Norwood² and Mr. Nash³ spent the night at Mr. Cameron's.⁴ We passed Flat River the next morning, though it was quite deep and rising rapidly, but found Napper Reeds Creek⁵ unpassable—So determining to follow the precept of my Lord Chesterfield on one occasion at least, we did what must be done with as good a grace as possible and turning up to Doct. Bullock's we made ourselves comfortable there until next morning. On arriving at the Court House we found Judge Daniel detained by the waters east of the C. H. had been before us but half an hour. The delay of a day kept the Court open till saturday night. On Sunday I came back as far as Mr. C's. and yesterday about dinner time dismounted at my own door.

Your friends Messrs. Henderson⁶ and Plummer⁷ were there, well and in good spirits—The former has for the present forgotten his Cancer. I made a good Court, returned, 150 dollars, better off than I went, and only wish it may be ominous of the rest of the Circuit.

¹Ruffin was at this time in very low spirits and despaired of the future in North Carolina. He was probably considering a move to the Southwest, where he had many acquaintances.

²William Norwood.

³Frederick Nash.

⁴Judge Duncan Cameron's place, "Fairntosh," in Orange County.

⁵Knap of Reeds is meant.

⁶Probably John L. Henderson of Granville.

⁷Kemp Plummer.

I saw Mrs. Ruffin today—and little Ann and Eliz who were well. Mrs. R. recd. a letter from Mrs. Dillard and informed me that she said nothing of coming to Hillsboro. I was much pleased to learn from her that you had arrived safely at Elizabeth and met with Genl. Iredell. The immense quantities of rain which had fallen here and the swollen streams had given me some fears that you might meet with some difficulties. And I did not feel altogether easy on the score of Mr. Cain's Horse, but I suppose as you are silent on that head that he had performed well.

I believe I shall not visit Salisbury this Spring. The cases in Granville Sup. Court relating to Vinkler Jones while having been removed to Franklin, and a good fee having been offered me in two other cases in the latter county, I think it better to go there. 150 dollars are more than I can expect at Rowan. But although I shall do so I do not half like the arrangement; But one circumstance, besides the profit I hope for, tends to reconcile me to it. I shall escape Judge D. If ever Heaven cursed a man with a most ungraceful utterance of most unintelligible expressions that man is D. Indeed, my dear Sir, whatever may be said of the value and importance of legal learning, I shall ever believe that the power of speaking so as to be understood, is the most important faculty either in a Judge or an Advocate. Of what avail is the clearest Judgment which arrives with the certainty of demonstration at a just conclusion, if the ability to convey that conclusion and the process of reasoning which leads to it, to the minds of the others be wanting? Whatever may be the other qualifications of J. Daniel, he is certainly most conspicuously deficient in this form of utterance. He seems to me always like a full bottle, which in emptying gurgles and sputters, drop by drop, wanting alike the clearness and smoothness of a gentle stream and the dignity and force of the dashing torrent. He never gets at the right end of his subject, and unfortunately he seems to be entirely unconscious of the difficulty under which he labors. Instead of accommodating himself to the conformation of his mind and voice by stating in as few words as possible what is essential to explain the subject of which he is speaking, he seems always laboring to make a display, begins at a distance from his subject and travels towards it in such an inconvenient gait and by such circuitous routs that he either becomes bewildered and fails to reach it at all, or reaches it at last not only wearied himself but having exhausted the patience of all who are in attendance on him. But this though in my opinion a capital blemish in him is not the only one. I set it up as a principle that a man who thinks clearly, will *sometimes* speak intelligibly. This he never does and I therefore conclude that he is deficient in that faculty which composes and distinguishes which we call *judgment*. The want of judgment makes *memory*, in him a misfortune which in most men it is considered a most happy endowment. He has collected a confused mass of desultory information on a variety of subjects. If he were a man of levity, fancy or versatile powers, he

would improve this information to embellish his conversation. If he were a man of Judgment he would make it useful at once to assist his own opinions and to carry his meaning with clearness and force by illustrations of his subject judiciously selected. But as he possesses neither, his conversation drags on with tedious difficulty, and his opinions neither attract attention by their elegance nor command respect by their wisdom. I know not whether I ought to ask your pardon for this free statement of what I conceive to be some of the capital blemishes of one of your Brethren. But when I write to you I must write what I think and what is uppermost.

Should you be in an ill-humor when you receive this or in low spirits which is next neighbor to ill humor and be disappointed that I have offered nothing to restore your temper or to raise your spirits, be good enough to recollect in my justification, that I am myself sometimes afflicted with both these diseases of the mind. And that I never felt in a better humor to cut my throat than when I commenced this letter. Recollect also that this little place is more barren of amusement more destitute of variety than is the African desert of rills or vegetation and that drafts on my own ingenuity to supply this deficit are seldom honored.

In justice to me also observe that I have done all I can for us both—to please you I have told you that your wife and children are well to relieve myself I have refunded some Sensorial power by visiting my spleen on poor Judge D. and that this has been done when a Seventy dollar fee would be ungraciously received by me if required to take the trouble of writing a receipt for it.

The ladies here have taken advantage of your absence to over power me. They have not only threatened me with the thunder and lighting of their brows and the poisoned arrows of their tongues, but have intimated that unless I shall alter my course a patriotick coat of tar and feathers will be my reward. What could I do. Could I stand singly against a multitude? I recollect Sir John Falstaff's maxim that "discretion is the better part of valor" and resolved to temporize. So that I have turned about and commenced [to be?] Eulogist. But, like Junius, I am not versed in the language of encomium, and my new profession sits awkwardly enough upon me. Cannot you send me a skeleton, a kind of memorandum of the heads of a discourse in favor of the ladies? Do try for I am in most perilous circumstances. Danger threatens me on all sides. I have not courage to be a martyr for the faith, but wish to make the best time I can by a sudden apostacy.

Thus have I commenced correspondence with you, my dear friend, which I assured you from the first would produce you neither pleasure nor profit. But if you will consent to accept this and such as I can write hereafter as the price of your answers, when your occupations of the Circuit will permit you to write, I shall be a gainer indeed.

My Mother and Fanny send their best recollection and wishes to you and for myself the best wish I can make you is that your private happiness and success as well as your professional reputation may be such as you deserve.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address:

The Honorable Thomas Ruffin
Care of Genl. James Iredell
Edenton

Via Petersburg Va. North Carolina.]

*From William Roane.*¹

MORGANTON, 28th April 1818.

Although my silence may on first glimpse appear to proceed from want of respect, yet I am convinced when you come to hear the cause it will be deemed excusable. I have at various times been down the country, and generally calculated on being in Hillsboro; yet was prevented by my business, which I well know you would not approve of my neglecting; especially when I inform you that I will if possible do myself the great Pleasure of seeing yourself Mrs. Ruffin and the little children in the summer: after next Guilford Court.

As to myself, I feign hope, I have so far passed the threshold of my profession, that with ordinary care, prudence and industry, a prosperous and safe passage may be had through life. Notwithstanding I am "a foreigner, an alien as to this country" and "a citizen of another State, one who had no right to settle here and expect to be employed and encouraged where there are so many native citizens of equal merit in the country." I say notwithstanding all this I hope there is a right for me to believe that by the year 1819 my practice in the County of Burke alone, will be sufficient to support me. (Although as yet I get but little money, it being customary, (which custom I cannot run contra to) for attorneys to trust their clients untill the determination of the cause in which they are employed.)

Being convinced that the obligation which your kindness induced you to lay me under towards yourself, proceeded from friendship and a disposition to serve me, I will only remark if I am as fortunate as I hope, I have a right to expect: I shall make an effort to discharge my contract with you the ensuing fall.

¹This is the same William Roane who served in the navy. See p. 162, *supra*. Prior to his naval service he was in the employ of Judge Murphey.

Amongst those of your acquaintances worthy of your enquiry, there is no change since you were in the circuit. Paxton is well; as inert in his movements as ever. Though as honest a man, and of as nice and correct principles of honor as any man I ever saw. Old "Brother Robt." Henry is a generous man, and so also may I say of several other Gen^lmen in the profession, but as to the younger ones, they are like men of similar standing in other districts. You know in all professions men of envious and malicious dispositions will be found. As to myself I am not popular amongst the latter class, being to independent for a Junior.

Accept Sir of my best wishes for the health and happiness of yourself and all connected with you, give my respects to Mrs. Ruffin, tell the children (some of whom remember me) how do ye for me, and remember me to Mr. Kirkland Mrs. Kirkland and family.

P. S. I hope I may be allowed to hint. I write to my friends the sentiments of the moment—if correct I wish but few to see them if incorrect none. County Court is now sitting here. 3 days ago the mountains on both sides of us were covered with snow.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From James Graham.

LINCOLNTON June the 1st. 1818.

On my return yesterday after being absent a fortnight I found your friendly letter of the 15th ult., in which you very politely invite me to partake of your new office and likewise to assist in making preparation for my approaching examination for this, as well as many other indications of friendship. I am heartily obliged to you. I am apprehensive however it will not be in my power to be in Hillsboro' before the supreme court; the county courts which I attend are just over and I have one month only left to read and the course which I have before me requires every effort which industry is capable of making. The very extraordinary anxiety which I feel on the occasion and have felt for a considerable time operates very materially to retard my exertions, would to God I could divest myself of those unpleasant feelings tho' I consider them as in some degree necessary and aposite to every one who has a proper regard for his reputation. You ask relative to my success and plans? My success has entirely equalled my expectations however I have rather considered myself as the student than the Lawyer, in the business with which I have been entrusted much care has been taken to guard against error and not without an eye to the success and interest of one whose character and hopes must depend somewhat upon the first impressions. As to my plans I have [not] fixed upon any which may not be changed by subsequent contingencies, which, by the bye, I recollect is contrary

to your advice and not at peace with my notions of business. I cannot become reconciled to this part of the country and owing to my preparatory course for application for Licence I have not been able to look around and contrast the different prospects. Judge Webb¹ and my Eldest brother set off a fortnight since to the Alabama Territory they both contemplate moving there if the country corresponds with the representations and reports which they have heard. I have not seen Judge Burton² since I came to town but I am Informed he has resigned. I think the next Legislature may take a *hint* from this which will induce them to increase the salary of the Judges and perhaps make some alteration in the Judiciary system: This is the general impression here and I believe throughout the western part of the State.

If I can, any way, get off in time I will be in Hillsboro a day or two before the supreme court tho' I am fearful I cannot. It would be of infinite service to be examined before the fiery ordeal which awaits me, as I have not at present so much as an opportunity of even asking a Law question and of course my ideas want a good deal of pruning and dressing in order to pass correctly among your honours. I have found considerable difficulty in procuring books to read and utterly impracticable to obtain some which I deemed essential as the mail hour is out and I hope to have pleasure of making a more full communication in person in few weeks I therefore must conclude.

Present my respects to Mrs. Ruffin and Mr. Kirklands Family and be assured that I remain your friend and humble Svt.

The Honourable Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

OAKLAND 10th July 1818.

I should have sent William³ down at the time you advis'd but Sally was unable to travel from improper shoeing. I regret exceedingly that the attempt to get a successor to Mr. Rogers⁴ did not succeed. I have no expectation that he will advance his scholars more this session than heretofore; his system is entirely unlike every other teacher I have ever heard of, and I cannot but be surpris'd that so much talents as there is in Hillsboro, all of which is immediately, or remotely interested in the

¹Henry Y. Webb.

²Burton had been elected to the bench a short time before, but after riding one circuit he resigned.

³William F. Ruffin, a younger brother of Thomas Ruffin.

⁴John Rogers, a graduate of Georgetown, had for some time been conducting a classical academy at Hillsboro under the direction of Rev. John Wither-spoon. He seems to have been a most successful teacher.

prosperity of that institution should suffer him to persue it. There is not one fourth of the grammar which is taught by him, and no more after twelve months reading than when they began. Can it be possible that boys not void of understanding should be justly dealt by, and only read a few chapters in one small book, and a very small part of the grammer in three whole sessions? and what is very strange to me none of you appear either to feel or care for it. I am fearful that I am not doing William justice in again committing him to the care of that man and am confident that unless he improves more than he has done it will be the last time. Are you not one of the trustees? forget not your duty; if you are not pray remind those who are of the absolute necessity of attending more to the interest of the school than they have done. My note at Bank will be due next month; inclos'd you will receive \$50.00 to renew it, it is more than the sum due, but pay it all in—Know of John when his note is payable and what is my proportion and write me in time.

I have commenced building in Leaksville, and shall be very hard push'd for Cash. Let me entreat your exertions in favour of this point for the establishment of an agency of the State Bank. The question is not whether Leaksville is to put down Milton, or visa versa, but whether both is to put down Danville and thereby bring the whole Virginia trade to No. Carolina. That some place above Danville, and not below it, is to effect this, is so evident that I am astonish'd any person or common observation should for a moment doubt. The truth is, that Danville or some higher point must ultimately succeed to a very considerable extent. Taking it for granted (and I believe there are none who question it) that the *great* place is to be at the lower end of the canal where the boats navigating Dan River will deposit their loads, it is not to be presum'd that any place as near that as Milton, can do much for any length of time; while all are making exertions for the mastery it may share with the others, particularly as it has had a good start, but depend upon it, it cannot hold out. It will be a great misfortune if so much personal wealth and exertion as is now center'd in Leaksville should be crushed for the want of some aid from the publick. Jackson is now quite out of the question, not a single lot sold on the last day appointed for that purpose; two or three of the former partners have sold out to men of no enterprize or capital, and Clay gone to the western Country. Here it is not spoken of at all. Madison and Hairstonborough has not yet come into repute, at the latter place there were three or four lots cry'd out, tho' not believed to have been sold.

The dry weather continues. I have had not rain of any consequence since you left us, still my crop is tolerably good. Enquire of John whether he has received any information of James Roane. I shall anxiously wait to hear from you. Remember us affectionately to your uncle and family.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From A. D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER 17th July 1818.

My Wife has been unwell for a Week past and is at this time too weak to ride to Hillsboro', without a change of Weather. I beg you to send up my Clothes by the Stage on Sunday—will you be good enough to ask Anne to wrap them up in a Handkerchief?

I must send my Notes to Raleigh and Fayetteville on next Week—I must entreat you to get Mr. Kirkland to indorse them, lest Something Should prevent his Coming up on Sunday. Send them to me by Mr. Hunter, or by the Mail.

Mr. Price¹ is here with his Surveyor etc. They will go on Tomorrow. I have just finished their Instructions, which I have given much in Detail, as it is out of my power to be much with them.

* * * * *

Honble.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

On Monday we broke ground and commenced the Canal on the Cape Fear.

[Address: Hillsboro']

*John L. Henderson.*²

SEPTEMBER the 15th 1818.

The office of Clerk and Master for this county will become vacant next court. Permit me to recommend Alfred Macay to your notice as a candidate to fill that vacancy.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Thomas T. Armstrong.

GERMANTON

21st Sept, 1818.

Agreeably to my expectations when I saw you, Genl. Williams resigned his office at our last Court. Mr. Matthew Moore and I were the only candidates to fill the vacancy, and Mr. Moore was elected.

Upon informing the Justices that I had been to you for the purpose of resigning my office, the opposite party, who are famous for intrigue

¹Jonathan Price of New Bern was in charge of the surveys then being made for the proposed internal improvements in the State.

²John Lawson Henderson, 1778-1844, a son of Judge Richard Henderson.

suggested that I had gone to you for the purpose of making an arrangement to have my son appointed to succeed me and this they industriously inculcated into the minds of the justices which turned the current against me and I lost the Election by four votes. They had no authority whatever for their assertions except their knowledge of his ability to perform the duties of the appointment and your well known friendship toward me.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

J. F. May to Thomas Ruffin.

PETERSBURG, Octo. 10. 1818.

I wrote you a hasty letter last evening to go by mail which I find left this place the day before and goes only once a week;—I have just been informed of a safe private conveyance; and therefore enclose you the copy record suit recently brought in the name of Jos. Bragg and Benjn. Jones partners etc. for my benefit. If nothing can be done, send me the record by any safe hand at your leisure.

Yrs. cordially

J. F. MAY.

Hon. Ths. C. Ruffin.

P. S. The addition of your second name is a mere mistake of the pen, growing perhaps out of old feelings and recollections. I certainly have no such spite as would induce me to put an *alias* to it, especially in N. Carolina.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Romulus M. Saunders to William Norwood.

Decr. 2nd. 1818.

* * * * *

Much local business is before us—on yesterday the Supreme Court bill, with a salary of \$2500 for the Judges passed the Senate and tomorrow it comes on in the house, where I think it will also pass. I am in hopes to get off before Christmas.

[Address:

William Norwood Esqr.

Atto at Law

Hillsborough.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

RALEIGH. 3d. Decr. 1818.

Dear Friend.

The Bill to appoint three Judges to hold the Supreme Court has passed its Second reading in both Houses. In the Senate 42 to 16. in the Commons 80 to 44. The Salary \$2500. This will surprise you as it has every one here. It will probably be read the third Time and passed in each House Tomorrow. To Night the enquiry every where is, who are to be the Judges?—I wish you were here to help our Friend Seawell.¹ I fear his Chance is not good, great efforts are making for Taylor,² and dont be surprised if he be elected. L. Henderson³ will be one, I believe. I was waited upon this evening to know whether my name should be used. I intend to be governed by circumstances. If I see my way clear, poorly qualified as I am, I shall enter the Lists. I have been confined to my room constantly and know nothing but from those, who have business with me. James Mebane tells me, that L. Henderson, Gaston⁴ and myself will be elected, if in nomination. He is well acquainted with the Members and is influential. In all this you will know how easily we may be deceived. One day more may give a different Aspect to things, and probably will.

The Salary of the Circuit Judges will be raised to \$2000, I think they will probably be located.—We have a liberal and intelligent Legislature.

When will you be down? No Nomination is yet made to fill the vacancy on the Bench. Nash,⁵ Toomer,⁶ Paxton⁷ and Miller⁸ will all be in Nomination. I can't even conjecture who will be elected.—Pray write to me. Remember me Affectionately to Anne and Cornelia, to Mr. Kirkland and his Family.

Yours Affectionately

A. D. MURPHEY.

Honble Thos. Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹Henry Seawell of Wake, 1772-1835. He had been appointed a judge in 1810 by the governor and council, but the legislature failed to confirm the appointment. He was appointed and confirmed in 1813 and resigned in 1819.

²John Louis Taylor of Cumberland, a native of Ireland, who had been a Superior Court judge since 1798. He became chief justice of the new court and held that position until his death in 1829.

³Leonard Henderson of Granville, 1772-1833, one of the ablest lawyers in the State, who had been a Superior Court judge from 1808 to 1816. He was elected to the Supreme Court and became chief justice in 1829.

⁴William Gaston of Craven, 1778-1844. His public service up to this time had been as a member of the House of Commons from the borough of New Bern for several terms and as a member of Congress from 1813 to 1817, in which latter position he established a national reputation.

⁵Frederick Nash, 1781-1858, formerly of Craven, but now of Orange. He was elected to the Superior Court at this session.

⁶John D. Toomer of Cumberland. He was also elevated to the Superior bench at this session.

⁷John Paxton, who was also chosen to the Superior bench. He died in 1826.

⁸Governor William Miller.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

RALEIGH [Dec.] 17th 1818.

The Bill relative to the Superior Courts has not been read in our House untill to day, so that I deemed it useless to write you as I could have sayed nothing on the subject, and it being now read only once I can form no certain opinion. The Bill as reported gives to the Circuit Judges the power of fixing time over circuits amongst themselves, if they can agree, if not the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is to determine. This is in principle location—as to its passage I think it problimatical. I endeavoured to ascertain the opinion of the House as well as I could, and think it likely, that should it be preposed to divide the State into two divisions—three circuits in each, that the Judges (one half) ride alternately in the circuits in each division, that it would succeed. This however is mere opinion. The Blank was not offered to be filled in one house, as it was thought best to suffer it to return to the Senate. I understand that it will there be filled with 90\$ a court. I have but little doubt that 100\$ would succeed and I am induced to believe that this will be the sum fixed on. I think so from what I have heard, and from the circumstance of almost every attempt of raising fees, succeeding—today there passed the 2nd reading the bill respecting Solicitors and the House readily consented to give to the Attorney Genl. \$100—for attending the Superior Court. Miller is in nomination for Judge.

I should have been glad to have written you to more certainty, but you know that “all things are doubtful” which have to pass the ordeal of the Legislature. I expect the bill will pass on Saturday, if so I can inform you, should you not come down before on Sunday as I expect to be in Hillsbo^h then—nothing of consequence before the house.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From James Mebane.

RALEIGH December the 18th. 1818.

Since Supper I received yours of the 16th inst. and have this moment returned from a consultation with Mr. Murphy on the subject of it. The Bill relative to the Superior Court is now before the Senate for its second reading as reported by the committee, and will I expect be taken up tomorrow but we cannot hope, however much we may desire it, that the judges will be both located and receive a salary of \$100 pr court and indeed it is very doubtful whether the salary will be more than \$80 pr court, and the riding to be regulated by the Supreme court. I think it would be well for you to come here on Monday next that you may have an opportunity to suit your course to occurences, which are as yet very uncertain.

Paxton, Nash and Toomer are the judges elect for the Superior Court. We have this day established an agricultural Society for this State and have elected you a member.

As to David Fulton I some time ago searched the muster roll and could not find his name on it, but I will notwithstanding make further search and if I can find anything that will be of use to him I will take every necessary step in the business. I remain respectfully your friend etc.
[Address: Hillsboro.]

From George E. Badger.

RALEIGH Dec.—18, 1818.

A balloting this morning took place for three Circuit Judges—Messrs. Toomer Paxton and Nash and Miller were in nomination. The three first were elected. Toomer 160 Paxton 136 and Nash 106. Miller 60.

The Bill to raise the salaries has not yet been acted on. It was reported with the sum *Blank* to the Senate,—2000 dolls is spoken of and it is expected it will be taken up on Monday. There is no provision for locating the Judges nor have I heard that plan spoken of.

My information is not much on the subject and in great haste
Hon T. Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From James S. Smith.¹

WASHINGTON CITY, January 27, 1819.

I have inclosed you six seed of the wild Olive. It is a beautiful evergreen that grows rapidly and to the height of 40 feet and the trunk is in some instances two feet through it has a dark green leaf smooth on the surface with the edges a little serrated.

Mr. Crawford the Secretary of the Treasury presented me about an hundred they grew in his garden in Georgia. He planted the seed about twelve years since and he informed me that the Tree is now about 8 inches through and twenty feet high the seed must be planted where you wish the Tree to stand as all the evergreens are difficult to transplant. The seed should be planted 2½ or 3 inches deep and in light rich earth the sooner these seeds are planted the better as the season for vegetation is fast approaching.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹Member of Congress from the Orange district.

*From Gabriel Holmes.*¹

[Feb. 7, 1819.]

Without ceremony I have sent my son Lucian to Hillsborough with the pleasing expectation that you will take him under your care and patronage and permit him to read Law in your office untill you may think him amply prepared to take a License for the bar. Should you have it in your power to gratify my hopeful wishes and expectations in fitting my son for a license you will greatly oblige Dr. Sir yours

Thos. Ruffin Esquire

February 7th 1819.

[Address: Hillsboro'

Orange County N. C.]

*From Montford Stokes.*²

WASHINGTON February 17th, 1819.

I am this moment favored with yours from Pittsburg.³ If I did not suppose that your immediate Representative constantly corresponded with, and sent you the public documents before Congress, I should not soon forgive myself for neglecting to do so myself:—For be assured there is no man in North Carolina for whom I entertain a more sincere esteem than yourself. But it has grown into a kind of agreement here, that the Representatives from the different districts send the public papers of importance to their respective Constituents; and the Senators send them to the different Departments of the State Government. Under this impression, I have totally neglected many of my friends, who had a just claim to my attention, and by whom I hope not to be forgotten.

I am sorry to be informed by you, in addition to the information from others that Judge Seawell was treated unfairly as well as ungenerously at the last Assembly at Raleigh. But after the treatment I myself received at the same place upon a similar occasion, I cannot be surprised at the degrading and disgraceful conduct of some men who foist themselves into that body. It is not known to many, (because I have long been taught the folly of complaining,) that I was shamefully and clandestinely defrauded out of my Election as Senator on the first balloting that took place for the six years. And the fraud was exultingly acknowledged in my presence. The circumstance being known to a few

¹Gabriel Holmes of Sampson, state senator, 1807; governor, 1821; member of Congress, 1825-1829.

²Montford Stokes of Wilkes, 1760-1842, United States senator, 1816-1823; governor, 1831-1833.

³This spelling for Pittsboro was not unusual at this time.

of my friends, it rivited them more strongly to my pretensions, and I was ultimately successful. This success prevented me from carrying the matter further. I had gained my object, and felt no disposition to dirty my hands with the blood of scoundrels.

In the particular case of Judge Seawell I can only say that I am proud that so many of our distinguished Citizens besides yourself have given me their Opinions which perfectly accord with my own as to the merits and just pretensions of Judge Seawell. You may rely on it that I shall not omit any opportunity which may occur, to promote him as far as my feeble efforts extend.¹ I will however state to you, that although the Bill for appointing nine Circuit Judges has passed the Senate, it is very uncertain whether it will pass in the H. Rep. We have just passed finally a Bill which increases the salaries of the present circuit Judges, and I expect this is as far as Congress will go at this session.

I voted against the first mentioned Bill for the 9 Circuits; not because I had any objections to the Bill or the principle; but merely because, as regarded the state of N. Carolina, and some of the adjoining states, the situation of the Docket did not require such a change.

With respect to other business before Congress, we are progressing slowly. The H. Rep. have spent two weeks debating the question on the Seminole War; and by the time they get through the Bank question, the Session will be nearly at an end.

I know not your opinion on the affair of Genl. Jackson, but for myself, although I admit he went to the extent of his authority, I cannot say he has deserved the censure of the Government. Much pains being taken by some of our Representatives to circulate the speech of Mr. Clay censuring the conduct of Genl. Jackson, I take, the liberty of enclosing you Genl. Smyth's² speech in opposition. You will judge for yourself.

I have not written to Judge Seawell nor he to me, since I have been here. If you fall in with him, be so good as present my respects.

Tho. Ruffin Esqr.

From James Graham.

LINCOLN VESUVIUS FURNACE March the 1st, 1819.

Having waited a considerable time to write you by Judge Paxton and at last disappointed as we have recently been informed he would ride the Morganton circuit instead of Hillsboro' I am now determined not to omit or delay any longer. I have just finished my county court circuit

¹Through the influence of Stokes, Judge Seawell in 1820 was appointed one of the commissioners, under the treaty of Ghent, to award damages for slaves taken away by the British in the war of 1812.

²Alexander Smyth, a member of Congress from Virginia.

at Mecklenburg last week and am on the return to Lincolnton; since July last I have added Burke and Rutherford to the counties in which I before practiced and have been favoured with Judge Paxton's business in the county and superior courts of Rutherford. Much murmuring pervades this riding in consequence of Paxton's presiding here this spring and should not be surprised if the western member in the next general Assembly show his Excellency that their suffrage will not be given to a man who, to say the least, overlooks them. We have just been informed of the resignation of Judge Seawell and are at a loss to know who will be appointed in his room all that we are certain about it, is that we don't want Billy Miller upon the bench. Jos. Wilson¹ has just returned from the Alabama and has purchased Land and says he thinks he will in two or three years move to the that Country tho' here where so many talk of moving we believe he will not go or any other man who does not immediately pack up and move off after his return. Webb moved on the 25 of Decm last and left his land unsold. Our brethren are marrying here quite fast Shipp,² Caldwell³ and Martin all within two moons. The Catawba company has just commenced cutting a canal round the mountain Island Falls which will be about three quarters of a mile, they expect to remove every obstruction in the River by the 1st of October next from Morganton to the South Carolina line and if the ensuing summer should be favourable I have no doubt the work will be completed.⁴ Many persons are spoken of as candidates for Congress in this district as yet however none have declared themselves, it is believed Capt. John Reid⁵ will oppose the present member, in the Mountain District Joseph M. Carson.⁶ Porter⁷ and Walker⁸ are the candidates and considerable exertions have already been made among their respective friends. Porter says he's Ball against the field and will distance the other two. I rather presume it will be a *close race* between the three. The seperate Supreme court seems to be quite popular in this section of the State and I believe the body of the people would cheerfully have paid circuit Judges *at least* two thousand dollars per annum. I must ask the favour of your Opinion on a legal question which grows out of the following clause in a Will—"If any one of my Legatees should die

¹Joseph Wilson of Mecklenburg, a distinguished lawyer who served in the legislature and as solicitor.

²Bartlett Shipp, 1786-1869. He married Susan Forney.

³Probably D. F. Caldwell.

⁴This work was never completed.

⁵John Reid of Lincoln, state senator, 1810-1811, 1817, and 1818.

⁶Joseph M. Carson of Rutherford, member of the House of Commons, 1812-1815, 1835; state senator, 1832, 1836-1840; delegate to the convention of 1835. This was a strange slip of Graham's as he was never a member of Congress.

⁷William Porter of Rutherford, for many years a member of the House of Commons.

⁸Felix Walker of Rutherford, 1753-1828, a native of Virginia who accompanied Daniel Boone on his trip to the West in 1774. He was a member of the Commons for a number of terms, and after serving in Congress from 1817 to 1823 was defeated and moved to Mississippi.

unmarried that particular portion, hereby willed to him or her is to be equally divided amongst the rest of my Legatees: Or if any of them should marry or die without issue, that portion of property hereby vested in him or her shall by virtue of this will revert to the rest of my Legatees." Quere whether (the latter part involves the doubt) if one of the Daughters of the Testator marries and dies without Issue, is her husband or her brothers and sisters entitled to her property. Your opinion on this question and a reference to the doctrine and cases on which it is founded will very much oblige me, as there is a diversity of opinions on the question, and it is *probable* a suit may be brought to decide it. I have heard nothing from Hillsboro' since last July except once by Mr. Mangum of Salisbury who I presume *hears from the boro'* more frequently than I do, and perhaps it would be doing injustice to his feelings to say he *hears* without a palpitation *a little under the left breast*; the heat in his left side would create steam enough to propell a Seventy four. Blessed be the man who first invented "the compound of hopes and fears made of storms and deluges of Tears." I am quite sorry I did not see Dr. Webb and family when on a visit to his brother here, and I being in Lincolnton never heard of them untill they were gone. I feel a strong inclination to visit Hillsboro' in June next as it is probable shall have some business in Fayetteville about that time, whether my situation at that time will permit an excursion of that kind I am not yet certain. I regretted to hear our friend N. Smith of Chatham had left the state and also of Brother Boons' death which I fear was occasioned by intemperance; its truly lamentable that a man who has married an amiable woman, and when of course he no longer lives for himself alone, but for others, should surrender himself a sacrifice to a never ceasing thirst. Burton and Osborn B. Pickens and R. Henrie are all heavy laden with *the essance of rye*, so much so that their vessels are a good deal crippled and weather beaten. I should thank you to write me in what counties you contemplate practicing. Present my best respects, if you please, to Mrs. Ruffin, and Mrs. Kirkland. Tell Brother Badger and wife I congratulate them on the Marriage and only regret that I am not similarly disposed of. I have understood sir you intended moveing over to Dan River if this be correct I presume you have given out our Tour through the Alabama and the country west of the Mississippi River which you talked of last summer; I am told by Jo. Wilson, the Alibama is as yet a poor country for a Lawyer. I should be glad to receive a letter from you shortly and be pleased to accept my best wishes for yourself and family.

The Honourable Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

ROCKINGHAM. 19th. March 1819:

Dear Friend.

Thus far I have had a very pleasant Circuit. The Bar and the People have been kind and polite, and we have done a good deal of plain business. If the Circuit prove as agreeable all round, I shall be a little disappointed. I have not heard from Orange since I left it. Today I set out for Mr. Roanes, and from Lumberton shall go to Fayetteville, where I hope to receive Letters.

I have been to Sneedsboro',¹ and the business there is finally arranged. It is a pretty place, and with some exertion may be made a place of considerable Commerce. About 2.000 Bales of Cotton are received there this Season. The Company get about 100 Lots, some of them well improved, and 1160 Acres of Land lying around the Town. For this Property the Price is \$38,410. Of this Sum \$10,000 are to be paid by the Company, and to be paid during this Year. For the Residue the Company are not bound. Mr. Johnson is to receive Payment out of the Proceeds of the Sales. The Stock is divided into Shares of \$1.000 each, and the fraction of a Share. You will see that each Share will have to pay less than \$300. One half of the Instalments to be paid Mr. Johnson, fall due in May, each Share having to advance about \$135. at that time, and the same amount in Nov'. Are you disposed to take an Interest in the Company? Write to me at Fayetteville, and say whether you will take any Shares, and if so, how many. Say Nothing about this business, except to Mr. Hamon. He and Coke, take 2 Shares. God bless You.

[Address: Pittsborough.]

From George McNeill.

FAYETTEVILLE 30th Mar. 1819.

I have recd. your esteem^d. favor dated yesterday and I shall attend to getting the mattress—but there are few opportunities of sending any thing to Hillsborough just now.

On the subject of Bank Stock it is difficult to form any correct opinion—the Banking business has been carried to its height and it must take, if it has not already taken a retrograde movement. If I had money to invest in Bank Stock I should prefer that of the United States Bank to any other. It being at all times most easily converted into money—and I think the most likely to rise in price—and it will probably pay the

¹A town in Anson County, now dead. Cf. Hoyt, ed., *The Murphey Papers*, I, p. 131.

best dividends. I have no doubt but that the dividends of the U. S. Bank will hereafter average 8 p. Cent and if so the stock will rise to at least \$133, and as I do not think that the local Banks will be able to divide more than 8 p. cent, if that, and their stock will come down to \$120 and probably lower, the relative difference in the price of stock and the dividends, I account for by the U. S. Bank having a wider field for operations consequently it will attract more the attentions of Capitalists at home and abroad.

I think Phil^a. and New York the best places to buy the stock—but how to place funds in those places I cannot advise you, unless you can get a check of the State Bank—private Dfts may be had here at 60@90 days, but that would not answer your purpose, as it is doubtful whether they would negotiate and at any rate you would have to pay a commission of 2½ p. cent for doing it,—the Stock might probably be purchased as low in Charleston and you can get funds there by giving ½@1 p. cent for checks or you can get the Charleston Notes at par. I would send the Dfts on the Genl. Post Office to Washington and direct the stock for that amount to be purchased there, but if preferable the U. S. Bank will cash the Dft—and it is probable they would give you a check on Charleston for the amount of it. If I wished to remit funds to New York or Phil^a. I would send to Charleston to do it.

Next to the U. S. Bank Stock I would [prefer] Cape Fear Stock.

Any service I can render you in the business you will please command.

* * * * *

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From Gabriel Holmes.

MONTPELLIER. [April 20, 1819]

Your letter dated at Raleigh mentioning the Receipt of mine by Lucian and your final conclusion to receive him in your office came safely to hand. Permit me to assure you that no recent Occurrence has given rise to more grateful and satisfactory emotions than that letter. Your very friendly and polite assurance of disposition to serve any member of my family is truly flattering to my pride and sensibility. But to take my son in the Character of a Student immediately under your care and patronage, contrary to your established usage, the solicitations of many gentlemen notwithstanding, is to me so imperiously obligatory that the nature and warmth of my acknowledgments can only be appreciated in that bosom that gave them existence. In a conversation with Mrs. Dillard that Most amiable Lady, as well from others, I learned the latter point of my letter. It never occurred to me to make the necessary enquiry whether you received Students or otherwise. I therefore greatly fear

my Dear Sir that my conduct has been intrusive and too familiar rather than polite and formal. Touching the time and studies of Lucian, will you do me the pleasure to regulate them after your own way, untill you think him perfectly prepared to do Justice to his client, credit to himself, and not dishonour his preceptor. Then and not till then, let him go into the world. Lucian I hope will be industrious and attentive to his studies and your candour (the sine qua non) which I most heartily beg you will never withhold from him, cannot fail to make him useful to society. Will you be so obliging as to make my unfeigned respects to Mrs. Ruffin, and believe me Yours very sincerely

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.

20th April 1819.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From John F. May.

PETERSBG. May 13th, 1819.

Your kind letter of the 5th ult. reached me at a moment when I was so much oppressed with the fatigue of business, that I could not then answer it; and the same cause has continued from that time till the day before yesterday. *I was pained*, no little, at the idea that I might possibly have done, what I dare say many wiser men have done, lost a friend for a jest. But how to suggest the idea to *you*, without giving you cause of complaint against me for that very pain, I was utterly at a loss; and in that situation I remained, till I could remain so no longer. Six months has elapsed without my hearing from, either in the way of friendship or of business; and I knew that either was sufficient, as a motive of action with you, where neither could operate so strongly as in the *case at bar*. I had no idea that you had forgotten me; for I knew that the feelings and the sympathies, by which we were bound, had begun too early, and existed too long, to have gone off in that way. I frequently heard of you and about you; and as I always heard of your well being etc, I could not account for my not hearing *from* you.

Your letter gave me much gratification in every view. The view of your feelings towards me, thus unbosomed, was gladdening; the information of your prosperous affairs was highly pleasing; and the flattering opinions expressed of me contributed their full share or influence upon my worse feelings.

I have no doubt that you acted wisely in leaving the bench: and it is with me, a very strong proof of great wisdom, to be capable of acting wisely in such a situation, for I am in the daily habit of seeing *wise* men act otherwise on such occasions.

My own appointment in the Bank was as entirely unexpected, as it was unsought, by me. I was in Richmond on the day, and had been for ten days before, the appointment took place. I had said, and had written on the very day before, that I would, on no account, be a Candidate. After being thus elected, I had made up my mind to resign the office; but the *exclusive patriots here*, would not give me time to get home, before they threatened to have me turned out next year; and thus, by the wishes of friends, and the animosities of opponents, I am remaining in office. It does not, and shall not take me from my profession; to which alone, with the blessing of Heaven, I look for a certain and ample support for me and my family, in spite of all the calumnies of malice, and prejudices of ignorance. I had become, as you probably knew, heartily tired of the country practise; and found, in my office and in the Sup. Cts. of Chancery and Appeals, as much employment as I cared for. Hence I was withdrawing from every court, holden out of this place and the Capitol, except Dinwiddie. I do not think my vocations at all incompatible: And altho' the writer to whom you perhaps allude, shewed much *wit in his anger*; and seemed to suppose, as *he had good cause very earnestly to wish*, that I would abandon my profession; yet neither I, nor my friends here, ever had an idea of *that*, as a consequence of my acceding to their wishes.

As I presume it can afford not much cause of joy to a man who has to toil at half a dozen country courts for their support and maintenance, I forbear any congratulation upon the prospect of your being blessed, as we say, with just that number of children. I have exactly half as many, and think it enough for any reasonable man. My wife's health, which during last fall and Decr. was better than it had been for many years, has been much worse than it ever was, since the birth of our last but I fondly hope she is now rallying again. My children are all fine ones, and unusually blessed with health.

I infer from your letter, as I occasionally now hear, that in these respects, you are extremely happy in your family, having, (a gang—shall I say—of) very fine healthy children; and Mrs. R. enjoying very good health. It would give me great satisfaction to see you all; and if I am ever gentleman enough to be able to leave home on visit of pure unmixed pleasure, I will see you. Will you not have some occasion to visit us soon? I think it would be well worth your while, if for no other purpose than to apprise the merchants. that you have come down to the bargain. Fare well! God bless you and yours.

Th. Ruffin esq.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

*From William Polk.*¹

[RALEIGH N. C., May 20, 1819]

After the Jury returned a verdict yesterday in the case of the Newbern Bank vs Saml. High etc. the case of some person against Jno. D. Delacy² was called, upon which Mr. Seawell observed "that Col. Polk could testify as to his Delacy's hand writing" or words to that import, and accompanied the observation with a significant laugh. It is possible I may have misconstrued the meaning Mr. S. had, in making the observation he did, and that I may be better satisfied in that respect, I ask it as a favor that you will state to me, what were your impressions at the time. I make this request of you, because I know you heard the words spoken and a reply made by me at the time, and my recollection does not serve me as to any other person who did notice the conversation.

Your answer will much oblige,

From George McNeill.

BALTIMORE—July 8th 1819.

I called to see Mr. Walker as I passed thro' Petersburg and got Va. Bank notes for the check I remitted to him on your account; Mr. Walker had been waiting, expecting to get a check from the Bank on this place, but was disappointed—the Bills which the Bank expected to derive the funds from were returned "protested"—you however have gained by the delay—the Bank has made no dividend and stock is falling—there will be some discount on the Va. notes. I have put them into the hands of Campbell, Ritchie and Co. (a very worthy concern) who will attend to the business and have the certificate stock ready here against my return from New York. The Dft on post office department has been paid. Stock is worth 89@90 in this place.

There is much distress here, but it is confined chiefly to adventuring and not to the regular merchants, but the whole community is more or less affected by them—they are of three classes—1st Speculators in U. S. Bank Stocks.

2nd. Pirates, call^d South American or patriot Privateers.

3—Traders in the African slave trade, in connection with the privateers. That infamous trafficking and plundering has been carried on to

¹Colonel William Polk, 1756-1830, a native of Mecklenburg and a colonel in the Revolution. He settled at Raleigh when the town was founded and was thereafter one of the leading men of the place.

²John Devereux Delacy, who came to North Carolina in 1813 to make surveys and organize steamship companies for Robert Fulton. Failing in this, he later entered the employment of the Neuse Navigation Company.

a great extent—most of the parties are now however reaping part of their reward, *infamy and ruin stares them in the face*—they disgrace the whole country, and the Laws should be so amended as not to be evaded with impunity.

I leave this evening for Phi^a. My best love to you and yours and our Dear friends near you.

P. S. The crops are fine, said to be better than they have, for the last 20 years—the wheat Harvest is about one-half over in this State.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

ROCKINGHAM 13th July 1819.

For a few days past I have laboured under a cold which has so affected my head that I am now (altho' much better) afraid to expose myself too much to the Sun, which prevents my coming to Caswell to see you; have therefore got James to ride down, as I am very anxious to hear from all my family, and friends, in Hillsboro, and to get an answer to my letter by William. I am well aware that the Mr. Williams's will be very much disappointed in not receiving payment from me agreeably to contract, but it will be impossible under existing circumstances, unless (as I observ'd before) Capt. Hobson should obtain payment of the money due him in Richmond, which is I think not to be expected. Perhaps in consequence of the great and unforeseen change in things, they may wish not to remove and it would suit their convenience to keep the land and give up the contract; if so, I am entirely willing even at the inconvenience of living here another year. Of this you can inform yourself without *directly* making the enquiry.

In this section of Country, we are now borne down under the extreme pressure for money, but the distress experienced now, is nothing to what will be felt ere long. Most of the dealers with the agency at Leaksville are farmers who have engaged largely in the purchase of tobo. which having almost perish'd in their hands leave them without resources to meet their payments at Bank. what they will do I know not. I have an order for what money is due Joseph Roe from your tan yard for clothing, which I mention'd to Mr. Kirkland, I wish you would receive it, and apply to my credit with you for Wms. schooling, as I suppose you have paid it, and let me know the amount that I may give his father credit for it. Let me know whether you have recd the money on Lyons notes, or what you have done with them. James by my advice, intends reading Law; he will come down about the first of Septr. He informs me that Mr. Cain has invited him to his house, which friendly offer I have advis'd him to accept of, as it would be burdensome to you to have

him and William both, and might produce some unpleasant feelings with Mr. Cain and Mary—as both of your houses are small, I propose sending down a bed, which he and William can both occupy in your office if you have no objection.

I have sent you \$130.00 to exchange for Virginia, U. S. or notes on the principle Bank at Raleigh which I shall want on thursday next. My crop is tolerably good, but we are begining to want rain. God bless you.

[Address: Caswell Ct. House N. C.]

James Walker to Nathaniel Harris.

July 17th 1819.

Sir.

I understand you mean to law me as long as you can, for takeing the lock off the Meeting House door, and I also hear your brother Mark has 100 Dollars to spend in the same way—let me give you a piece of good advice, when you pay your money to a lawyer for advice tell him the truth, the hole truth, and nothing but the truth.

1st. I suppose the House was built a free House, for and by the Neighbourhood, then in that case it belongs to the neighbourhood. 2nd. I suppose there was a deed, executed by your father (to J. Willson, J. Mefarlin, and N. Harris and their successors as Trustees for the neighbourhood) of a small tract of land including the Meeting House, then in that case the Meeting House belongs to the neighbourhood.

Now Sir notwithstanding the House being free, you being the head of the Methodical society at that place was applyed to for your consent for a Singing school to be made up and taught at that place, after a while you called your brethren to gather and went out into council, upon three things. Viz. 1st Whether there should be a singing there or not, 2nd whether Linsy should be teacher, or Haley if a singing should be made up there. 3th to say whether it should be of working days, or of Saturdays and Sundays. You returned and was ask'd, have you agreed for singing to be here? You said we have agreed that there may. You was ask'd, which man have you pick'd upon? You said we have chosen Haley. You was ask'd what days. You said Satturdays and Sundays—thus Sir if you had any right to the Meeting House, you at that time gave it away to Haley, and the Subscribers. Viz. every other Satturday and Sunday—thus Sir haveing shewn you that the House belong to the Neighbourhood originally and dose yet by Deed also—and that you Methodist gave your right of it up to Haley and the subscribers every other Saturday and Sunday, I proceed to lay before you some of your and your brother Marks improper and unkooth conduct in that affair.

J Wilson is no more. J. Mcfarlin is gone to Tennessee, and I am told carried off the Deed (and it not being recorded) so that there's but one Trustee left. Now sir what can one Trustee doe? I tell you nothing, without a majority, you have no more right without a majority than I have there must be some constituted and appointed by the neighbourhood before you can act, or do anything What right have you or any one to put a lock to that House, and lock the door against the rightful owners? it shews you want to Tyrenise over the neighbourhood, and usurp sole authority. What sort of a man must you be when you lock'd the door against Hailey and all the Scholars, when you pick'd upon the man that should Sing, the place, and time? how dare a man to brake his word especially a Christian? What sort of a man must you be when you went to that house quarreled with some of the Scholars on Sunday and told Hailey you would lock the door if he gave any intermishon? it shews plainly you wish to tyrانىise, rule and sway, and take the rights of others from them. You are not a man of your word. You shews plainly how you would vent your spleen if the Deed was made to Asbery and Hoke and there successors—ah how you would then make me smoke for taking off the lock—and it further shews you are very far from being a good man much less a Christian. I have said Hailey would have serv'd you but right when you came there quarrrling and threatening, to lock the door, and makeing disorder there, to have taken you by the Hand, lead you to the door and kicked you out. If it had been some men they would have made no bones to have done it. I hear you have been talking with a lawyer. I have not seen one, let me tell you; that you are not yet Bonapart; when in his glory. You have not yet arive to absolute sovereignty; if you have to a demanabobs sovereignty over your Society. I thought to have wrote a great deal more, but I fear this will make *Old Saton* rage in you worce than ever. I trust and hope you will see your error, and amend your life and when you depart this life be a better man than you now are.

I am yours etc,

Mr. Nathaniel Harris.

JAS. WALKER

N. B. I don't write this to make you mad. I have wrote nothing but the truth; and what I believe to be the truth.

J. W.

[Address: Mr. Nathanl Harris

Orange County.]

From William Roane.

WILKESBORO N. C. 3rd Augst. 1819.

Seldom having anything to speak of than myself is the reason of my silence, as I have an utter aversion to anything savoring of egotism. Yet am I convinced that never to communicate to you my situation and

prospects would be slighting that friendship you have always professed and exercised towards me.

My prospects in this country are as good as those of any man in the State commencing life under similar circumstances. I shall in 10 or 15 years make some property and acquire in all probability celebrity as a Lawyer and a popular standing as a citizen. This is a rational conclusion when we reflect that with the worst possible means I have in two years exceeded the most sanguine hopes of either self or friends, and am I well convinced that with the same enterprise and industry I have expended in this poor mountainous country I could have in this had I settled at St. Stevens or some other elegable place in the Southern section of the States acquired a good estate.

To give a semblance of probability to the assertion I will give my reason for believing so by an example coming to my own knowledge, Soon after I commenced the practice of the Law—I had reading with me a young man of ordinary talents little industry and dissipated habits. This young man after reading some time and finding no prospect of acquiring in a reasonable time a License here went and settled in the Alabama perhaps at the falls of the Tuscaloosa and commenced practice in the adjoining courts just before he left me I examined him and he knew nothing even of the 1st Vol Black, notwithstanding that he is doing more business than I am and has besides acquired some property in Lands whilst I who have made all the exertions my body has been capable of have only marched on in a snail's pace. This does not suit my disposition. I am always emulous to be amongst the foremost if I cannot go in front. In the foregoing statement you can see the reason of the following proposition. You once made me an offer to place funds in my hands for a speculation I did not like. I now am going to mention a project which if you and your friends will join me in I shall undertake. I will mention the whole of my plan which is this; to go to the Allabama and commence the practice of the Law—provided I can take with me 5 or 10,000\$ to lay out in Lands. I have no capital myself and so will have to resort to those who have and are willing to vest it in such property. The Terms I propose to do business on are to have one half of the profits at the end of 5 years or whatever other Terms may be agreed on.

It may be probable that you who live amongst people who rarely engage in distant speculations of Lands, have paid but little attention to the subject. I will just state to you that there are immense bodies of fertile Lands (but little known) now subject to entry at \$2 pr. acre and the last installment not due for 5 years, not inferior to such Lands as have been knocked off at the public sales at the most extravagant prices owing to the immense bodies laying in a wilderness state that have been visited only by the public surveyor wild Indian and beasts of the forest. I have a friend (Jno. Caldwell of Morganton) just returned from that country who states that in a few weeks exploring these wilds and enduring some little privation he has acquired at the moderate price of \$2 and

official fees about 2,000 acres of first rate bottom land (not inferior to such as he purchased by agent at the public sales at the most extravagant prices), and says to me you or any other enterprising young man may do the same only by using a little industry (and he thinks in 5 years the same Lands will bring a thousand per ct. so fertile, such the demand and so fast settling are said Lands). The U. S. agent for selling those Lands (J. Pickens) is a particular friend of whom I can command any information. Such being the case was I to leave here I should probably establish myself at St. Stephens where he resides and where purchasers of both large and small tracts go to market and make application to such as have made locations and can shew the Lands and such purchases considering you right certain will often give \$10, 15 or 20 pr. acre for your Location although you have made but one payment, they taking upon themselves to make the other payment and perfect the titles. You no doubt see before this what my object is therefore I have only to say if you or your friends have or can make up such a sum and give me such an interest in it as will make it an object for me to desert my present domicile, I should like to do so as the field for a Lawyer to display or is much more elegend in that country than this please write me an answer to Wentworth where I shall be on the 30 Instant. Present my best respects to Mrs. Ruffin and friends.

P. S. I hope you will see the necessity of keeping this letter a secret as my practice would be injured by its being known I have the least thought of leaving here at any time.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From James Iredell.

EDENTON Aug. 4th 1819.

I beg leave to introduce to you the bearer of this letter Mr. Samuel Follett. He will probably reside in Hillsborough during the fall for the purpose of prosecuting in a healthy part of the country the study of the Law in which he has been engaged some time. Permit me to recommend him to your attention as a young man of excellent moral character and of modest and amiable manners.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Sterling Ruffin.

ROCKINGHAM 12th Augst. 1819.

Capt. Hobson has heard nothing from his agent on the subject of money, I am much afraid there will be a disappointment; he sets off for Richmd in two or three days at furthest, whether he gets a letter or not, to endeavour to borrow if his own money should not have been recd. But there is so great a probability of his not obtaining any there, that I must request you to look about and stir yourself in my behalf, and see what can be done. Immediately on Hobsons return, (which will be by our Court,) I will inform you what he has done, and how much money I shall want. I have added unavoidably, five hundred dollars to the sum I have to pay Mr. Williams, for Corn etc., etc., which I have to pay the 15th of next month which makes me apprehend that less than \$2000, will not answer my purpose. The crops here are ruin'd! In Stokes and the adjoining Countys in Virginia they are worse; corn cannot now be engag'd at any price; and except for the plentiful crop of wheat, we should certainly be threatened with starvation next Year. My crop, altho' the dust has not been laid since the corn first began to shoot, is very good; with't an accident from now, it will be worth from \$2500 to \$3000. I made a most fortunate, and advantageous purchase of Williams, his corn not costing more than about two dollars p barrel.

Why have you not written me since Charles came up? We are quite anxious to hear of the State of your health. There are so many of you together that I ought to receive a letter from some one of you every post.

Mr. Michaux has leas'd this plantation, the terms one fourth of *every thing* made on the place, and not to graze the Land. Your Mama and myself enjoy our usual health and join in love to all our dear children. Remember us affectionately to Mr. Kirkland and family.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Gabriel Holmes.

MONTPELLIER. [Sept. 29, 1819]

Your letter of August came to hand some time this month. I should have answered it long since, but the indisposition of Mrs. Holmes has been of such a cast as to diffuse the poppy over my literary hours, she has been confined to her bed for five weeks. Your high commendations of Lucian are extremely grateful to my ear, more especially as I rely on your candour. But I fear the collouring is rather florid and partakes too much of friendship and partiality. Your wishes, my Dear Sir, relative to his continuance in study till spring term are perfectly con-

cordant with my own. If I mistake not it was to please Lucian that I consented, even for him to *consult you* on the subject, as I have placed him under your direction. I beg you will be his great *Appolo*. I trust that you will *tell* him when to *apply* for a license, howsoever anxious he may be to mount the Rostrum. Your mention^s Marie and her better health was also extremely pleasing. Accept, I pray you our acknowledgements to yourself and Mrs. Ruffin for your polite attention to her with assurances of our sincere esteem and affection.

Thos. Ruffin Esquire

29th Septr.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Joseph Gales.

RALEIGH, Oct. 7, 1819.

When we were speaking on the subject of the Election of Directors of the Bank of the U. States, the other day, it did not occur to either of us, that there was to be a general meeting of the Stockholders in Philadelphia on the 1st Monday of next month, to take into consideration the concerns of the Bank.

Since I saw you, I have recd. a letter from my Son at Washington, who is a stockholder, and a Director of the Washington Branch. He speaks of the meeting as important, and asks if we do not intend sending an Agent to represent us at it, hopes to see me in that character etc. and concludes with sayin, that if we send, no one, he shall attend the meeting, and shall be glad to act for us.

I mean, therefore, to send him my Power and those of some others here; and if you have not already commissioned my Friend Wm. T. Birch to act for you, I would propose that you send your Power to Joseph Gales jun. as he will be present at both meetings, and it would be gratifying to him, I believe, to represent us.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From William Roane.

WENTWORTH 4th NOV. 1819.

On my arrival at this place I found your friendly letter of date 14th August last and I can assert with truth that nothing can give me more satisfaction than the free and candid remarks contained in it on the subject of my Last to you and well am I convinced that when you express a doubt as to the propriety of your giving me advice, that such a doubt must be excited by modesty, for I cannot believe for one moment that it

originates from a belief excited by any part of my conduct that your admonitions will not by me be considered friendly and *Universally Thankfully recd.* On the Contra Dear Sir I assure you I consider your *advice* one of the best marks of your *Friendship* towards me, and I also am convinced that the remarks contained in your Letter are true. My observation this fall Supr. Court Circuit tends to convince me beyond the possibility of a doubt of the correctness of your position. The prospects in the west at the time of my writing the Letter alluded to were brighter than at present, and my prospects here at the same time were then less fair than at this time so that nothing but the fairest appearances of success in so doing would induce me now to give up a certainty for an uncertainty.

However I will mention to you an opinion I have entertained ever since I returned to the U. S. in 1816: That N. Carolina is not a soil calculated either to Display Genius or to make a mans fortune when compared with many parts of the U. S. (I speak confidentially) Everything both of a political and domestic nature is tinctured with Nigardiness. This Opinion (whether correct or incorrect I cannot say) has been so long by me entertained as to become almost constitutional. At that period I calculated in this way. I have not now funds sufficient to enable me so to fit out as to authorize my venturing far to sea. I must venture on a short cruise: if successful in that then a longer and more distant one. Though vain, I was fearful of relying on my own talents far from those whom I have always found to be friends. I determined to take such a course as the following one. "to wit." Go to the Mountains of N. Carolina where I hope to restore my health (should I find my Legal Talent to authorise such a plan) procure means as soon as able and Transplant myself to some of the regions of the west or southwest where real property is to be procured (for I have always considered real as the most valuable property), and there locate myself for life.

True it is that I never told you or any friend excepting A. D. Murphey Esquire my plan untill I wrote you. Yet have I for 3 years entertained the same: though from my peculiar situation I now believe it to be impossable to carry it into effect were it still desirable. I perceive from the whole tenor of your Letter that you ascribe mine to an oscillating disposition, which opinion of yours is perhaps justifiable never having heard me say I calculated on not dying a N. Carolinian when in truth I entertained the opinion before I was reading Law 6 months. In fact for the purpose of seeing the world: of learning more of mankind and for the purpose of forming a more correct oppinion of the place proper to make for myself a resting place. I say such purposes influenced me much at the time I went into the American Navy. I do not say that I have absolutely changed my opinions yet my plans from their impracticability can not be carried into effect.

I assure you it gratifies me no little to receive from you such a Letter as yours. It is characteristic of genuine and disinterested friendship,

and such Letters would be always thankfully recd. could you find idle time to write them in: Yet I am informed you have but little time to spare from the Labors of your Profession. It augurs well and I hope and have no doubt but your time is profitably employed.

I congratulate you on your return of health and Mrs. Ruffins also. Should be glad to see you all but cannot guess when I shall have a chance so to do.

Please accept my respects your self present my compliments to Mrs. Ruffin Cousin Mary your own three oldest children (who I suppose recollect me) Miss C. M. Mr. Kirkland and Family.

P. S. A. L. Erwin has several times requested me to pay you for him the amount of some Taxes you advanced on his account he appears to be uneasy about it suppose you enclose me a Little mem^a. of the amount to Morganton. Tell Cousin Mary Mamma and family have been all very sickly and I am determined to bring them to R. again.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

RALEIGH, 18th, Dec. 1819.

Mr. Boylan¹ will purchase, I believe. He came to see me last evening and told me, he had made up his mind to make a Contract with me to the Amount of eighteen or twenty thousand Dollars—in which were to be included, my Lands on the Yadkin, Crop and Stock; and the balance in Negroes—that he should go up with Mr. Frohock and Carter this evening or Tomorrow. I have a Certainty of Selling either to him or Judge Cameron.

In reviewing the situation of my Affairs and devising plans for their speedy Settlement, I am of Opinion I should change the Direction of your Generosity as to your Bank Stock. The relief which I shall get by the plan I first proposed, will not be much; and I find I can easily meet all my engagements at the U. S. Bank for the next year by my Flour and Cotton and Tobacco, and certain Other Funds which I can place at Mr. McNeil's Disposal. I must make preparations to meet certain Debts which fall due in January, to private individuals, particularly to John A. Ramsay. I want also make a Payment to Mr. Bagge.² I have received a Letter from him on the Subject. You will see the force of another reason—the fact of my Selling a Valuable Part of my estate will be known; it will render it more necessary for me to have in hand money to meet the Claims which then fall due, than if I

¹William Boylan of Wake, editor of the *Minerva*, president of the State Bank, and one of the best known business men of Raleigh.

²Charles F. Bagge, a banker and business man of Salem.

did not sell. Let me entreat you then, As you have resolved to aid me, to give your Generosity the Direction which appears to me most advisable. I wish to get the Proceeds of your Stock in Money: Out of it first pay the Small Note at Fayette; and hold the other a little Time to meet private Claims how much I may want for this purpose, I cannot now tell. This Direction will best support my Credit, and aid my endeavours to get through my difficulties. You may rely upon this, that not one cent will be misapplied. Should you agree to this, I shall have further to beg you to put in your own note; for they will not discount mine and let me take the Proceeds. I hope to pay 25 or 30,000\$, before June—and to pay the greatest Part in next Month. I begin to see my way partly clear in all things relative to my Affairs, except the removal of certain Members belonging to Branches of my Family. This I will effect, even with a Sacrifice. Dont forward the Papers to Mr. McNeil, 'till I see you. Write to me to Haw River by the next Mail. Judge Toomer has resigned—Mr. B— is talked of.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Archibald D. Murphey.¹

RALEIGH. 18th February 1820.

Dear Ruffin.

* * * * *

On Monday night I promised Mr. Jessup to be at his house on my way to the mountain. I have seen him, and he tells me that there is an Abundance of Rich Ores on what he was told was our Lands. I will get Charles Banner and examine the Lines, and do all I can to satisfy myself as to the Prospects in that Quarter. Jessup thinks there is a strong Probability that one entire Nob of the Mountain is made up of a Rock which is the Matrix of a rich Copper Ore. He shewed me a Piece of the Rock, and shewed me the Metal which he had fused from other Parts of it. I entertain a doubt whether this Nob be included within Our Lines. I shall get all the information I can, and give it to You at Hillsboro' during your Court.

* * * * *

Address: Raleigh.

¹The part of this letter omitted is printed in Hoyt, ed., *The Murphey Papers*, I, p. 157.

Nat. Cutting to James S. Smith.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
SECTION OF BOUNTY LANDS,
March 23d, 1820.

The Honble J. S. SMITH,
Sir,

The File of documents in the case of the late Lt. *Cader Parker*, now returned to you herewith, has been laying on my Desk several days to be dispatched; but the current of the business of the Office has been so pressing and prior Claims so numerous, that I have been laid under the necessity of postponing this reply till the present date.

Permit me now to State that every known Record in the Archives of the Genl. Government, which was supposed to have any bearing on the Claim, have been examined; but the Name of this original Claimant is no where found.

In the course of this investigation, we have learned that a Letter from *the Secretary of the State of North Carolina* communicates the important Fact that, in the Archives of *that State*, there exists a complete and authentic *Return, or Muster-Roll, of "the North Carolina Line on Continental Establishment"*—during the Revolutionary War: but the said Secretary adds the Remark that, having no assistant in his public Labours, he cannot undertake to send *an authentic Transcript* of the important Record for the Use of the General Government. Perhaps you may be able to effect this desirable purpose: It might be the means of establishing Claims in behalf of some of your Constituents, which the imperfect state of *Revolutionary Military Records* at the seat of Government, since the Conflagration of the War Office in the year 1800, causes to be rejected.

Inclosed herewith you will find the letter of Jos. A. Woods, which you were pleased to transmit to this Office in your communication of the 17th inst. The Authentic Copy of this Discharge which you asked for in his behalf, is folded within the Letter.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, Sir,

Your obedt. humbl. Servt.

NAT. CUTTING.

*From Charles Manly.*¹

PITTSBORO 30th March '20.

It seems some difference of opinion prevails as to a conversation held between you and myself in the presence of some gentlemen at the last County Court of Chatham in regard to the election of Judge Mangum.²

I am represented to have said that I would not hold the office of Judge Mangum under the circumstances which he did for some immense sum. That you said "then you think the office was unworthily obtained"? To which I replied "Yes I do." Or "Yes I do by God."

As a correct understanding of this conversation is of considerable importance to me I hope Sir that you will do me the favor as well as justice of stating as well as you can recollect the precise conversation. A full explanation is respectfully solicited.

I pledge myself that your statement shall be deemed confidential nor will I use your name in the matter without *your consent*.

From Duncan Cameron.

ORANGE Apl 24th, 1820.

I set out on tomorrow for the Northward, (by way of Edenton) to place my son Thomas at school in a colder climate, than that in which we live, in the fond hope that his muscular strength will be increased, and his mental faculties be invigorated. The situation of my family prevented my being at the Sepr. Court, and I regret that I leave home without seeing you.

I hope it will accord with your inclination to become a Candidate to represent the county in the house of Commons of the next Assembly. I know by doing so, you must necessarily make some sacrifice of time and pecuniary advantage—but I feel confident that such considerations will not prevent you from undertaking the duty. There is a great work on hand (the regeneration of our State Constitution)³ in the success of which I feel persuaded you feel in common with many of our friends a deep interest—although there are many well-wishers to the cause yet

¹Charles Manly, 1795-1871, at this time a practicing lawyer and secretary of the board of trustees of the University. He was later for many years clerk of the House of Commons and was elected governor in 1848.

²Willie Person Mangum of Orange, 1792-1861, one of the most distinguished political figures in North Carolina. He was a member of the House of Commons in 1818, 1819, and a state senator, 1840; judge of the Superior Court, 1819-1820, 1827, and 1828-1829; member of Congress, 1823-1826; United States senator, 1831-1837, 1841-1853; president *pro tem.*, 1841-1845.

³Judge Cameron was an ardent advocate of constitutional amendment.

the number of really efficient labourers in it in the Assembly will be but few. Allow me to say that I deem your aid of great importance in carrying the business through successfully and I flatter myself if you will not withhold it, there can be no doubt of your election, as I am entirely confident you will receive a general support in every part of the County.

I fear it will not be in my power to return home by May County Court. I shall therefore not be able to inform the People in my proper person at that time, that I am again a Candidate for the Senate. I must therefore rely on the attention of my friends to that subject, and beg the favour of you to make it known to the people and to account for my absence from court.

Write to me in answer to this. Address to me care of McE [illegible] Hale and Davidson of Philadelphia, to reach me by the middle of May, and if I can do anything for you northwardly, pray favour me with your commands.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsboro']

*From William H. Ruffin.*¹

3 June 1820.

This letter will be handed You by my Nephew John Haywood who goes to Hillsborough with a view of studying Law or Physic. Most of John's friends think he would probably make out the best in the latter profession. Should he, however, determine on reading law, and You are willing to take a student, it is preferred that he should be placed under Your direction and tuition. But should he resolve on the study of Medicine, we wish him to study with Doctor Webb of Your town; having no acquaintance myself with Doctor Webb, I use the freedom of soliciting Your aid so far as to get John in with the Doctor.

It will readily be perceived that John's primitive education is quite limited, his father, the late Doctor Henry Haywood of Tarborough, having died when he was an infant, leaving him without estate, his education was in a considerable degree neglected. If, however, for want of more education John be deemed unable to make out tolerably well in the study of either profession, he can turn into the Hillsborough Academy and learn whatever You and Doctor Webb may deem indispensably necessary to his purpose.

All debts or contracts for Board and tuition which John may make, will be accountable for, and pledge myself shall be paid without delay.

John was at one time intended for a merchant and in order to prepare him for that business he was put in the store of Mr. Larkin Newby of

¹William H. Ruffin was a first cousin of Thomas Ruffin.

Fayetteville, where he remained three Years and I understand sustained an unexceptionable character. His term of Service with Mr. Newby has expired, and he now expresses anxiety to become a student of Law or physic, but seems not to care much which.

Any advice or assistance which You may render my young kinsman in effecting the object of his visit to Hillsborough will be thankfully received by him, and confer an obligation on

Dear Sir

Your most obedient
much obliged and
very humble Servant

W. H. RUFFIN.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Benjamin Smith.¹

JUDGE MURPHEYS 5th June 1820.

Dear Sir.

Judge Murphey had only set off a few hours after dinner yesterday. I sent an Express after him but he has written to me such reasons for not returning that I should have blamed him if he had. I consider it necessary to see him before I could be properly prepared to speak to you on business I wished and therefore yield to his invitation and persuasion to meet him at Salisbury for which place I am just starting and may probably meet you at Raleigh during the Supreme Court. This reminds me of our interviews a year past which ended with thankfulness on my part but I fear with unfavorable impression on yours. When I began to converse with you I expected to receive a large sum of money. I was disappointed and being detained longer than I counted on when I left home had to borrow a small sum to defray my expenses and with an empty purse could not feel authorised to go further than I did. I requested Mr. Gastons assistance because from former payments to him I considered myself more at liberty. This explanation of a delicate nature is drawn from me and should not have been made but to rescue me from the appearance of trifling which is very far indeed from the disposition of Dr. Sir.

Yours respectfully

BENJ. SMITH.

As Raleigh will be entirely out of my course home where I was expected yesterday, I shall go across the country by Lumberton. Is the

¹Benjamin Smith of Brunswick, 1756-1826, governor, 1810-1811.

liberty (I would be pleased with your taking with me) too great to ask your Servant to call on Clifton and enquire for some Cloths I left to wash 2 shirts, a silk handkerchief, a pair of cotton stockings and to forward them by some safe opportunity to B. B. Smith at Raleigh or Mr. G. W. B. Benjamin to Wilmington. He may be expected at Hillsboro daily and I know will take them down cheerfully. Enclosed are 25 Cents which I understand is the price.

[Address: Hillsboro']

David Robertson¹ to Thomas Ruffin.

PETERSBURG 19th June 1820.

I take the liberty of introducing to your acquaintance, the bearer Mr. James R. Dodge² who having lately obtained a license to practise law goes to your State for the purpose of permanently settling therein, and pursuing his professional avocations. He has resided in this place, two or three years, first and principally in the mercantile line, during which time his conduct has been, I believe, uniformly and strictly correct, and proper. He is a native of the State of New York where his connections are highly respectable. He has not read enough on legal subjects, but as he is very industrious studious and persevering, I entertain no doubt he must succeed, and that he will become a valuable member of your society. The countenance of respectable people at this time may be of incalculable advantage to him. I therefore have recommended to him to become acquainted with you. I know the liberality of your disposition will incline you to befriend him, should it be in your power. Any civility you may think proper to shew to him, will be deemed a favor done to myself. I am sorry you never call to see me when you come to Petersburg. Mrs. Robertson and myself will be always happy to see yourself or any of your family in our house. I remain Dear Sir, with sentiments of great respect and esteem.

Honble Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Orange County N. C.]

¹David Robertson was Ruffin's law teacher in Petersburg, Va.

²James R. Dodge, 1795-1880, a native of New York, had been a soldier in the war of 1812. Settling in North Carolina he obtained a large practice at the bar and served for a time as solicitor. Later he was clerk of the Supreme Court at Morganton. He was the warm and intimate friend of Ruffin, Badger, Gaston, and Leonard Henderson.

*From John Hall.*¹

RALEIGH July 28th—1820.

According to promise, I drop you a line in relation to the time when this court will rise. We will not finish this week, but no doubt we will do so, on Monday. Judge Henderson and myself will certainly (barring accidents) leave this on tuesday next. Nothing new has happened. Raleigh is becoming very tiresome.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From James Graham.

SALISBURY August the 15th 1820

I have an opportunity of writing you by my youngest brother, William, who is going on to Hillsboro to become a student in your Academy. He has for some time past been with Mr. Muchatt² in Statesville, and we wish him to finish his education at our University and therefore have sent him to Hillsborough preparatory to his admittance on the establishment at Chapel Hill, I trust he will find no difficulty in joining your Academy from the late period of his arrival among you; which has been occasioned by a short illness of mine about the commencement of your present session: if however he should, I would thank you to endeavour to procure his admittance. My courts render it impossible for me to go on with my brother at this time, but I shall be compelled to go on to see you all in December and I wish never to be compelled to do a thing I regret less. I have recently heard of the resignation of his Honour Judge Murphy and am truly sorry the state has lost so much learning from the Bench: if something is not done by the ensuing Legislature to lighten the burden of our circuit Judges, I am apprehensive they will not last on the bench as long as the new moon. Judge Paxton talks of resigning at the expiration of the present year and before I forget let me tell you his Judgeship is busily employed in attempting to scale the walls of Fort Defiance in Wilks. When he sets out on an expedition to that Quarter he looks as trim and spruce as a youth of twenty and talks of Love as though he was wounded about the kidnies and then thinks I

"O how this Spring of love resembles,
The uncertain glory of an April day,
Which now, shews forth *all* beauty of the Sun,
And, by and by, a Cloud takes *all* away."

¹John Hall of Warren, a native of Virginia, had been a judge of the Superior Court from 1800 to 1818. He was now a judge of the Supreme Court.

²Rev. Dr. Muchatt of Statesville, who conducted a classical academy.

In Lincoln this year David Shuford¹ was elected in the Senate over Robt. Williamson and Wm. Johnston² and Daniel Conrad³ in the Comons. In Iredell Co. Connor⁴ is elected in the senate and Falls and Bell in Comons. Judge Locke⁵ and A. Henderson⁶ are both elected. I should be glad to hear from you. I have written several times but recd. no answer. Present, if you please, my respects to Mrs. Ruffin Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland and family also to Mr. Cain and wife.

The Honble. T. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

*To James F. Taylor.*⁷

COPY.

RALEIGH Oct 5. 1820.

Sir

It having been intimated to me since I came to this place, that at the last County Court of Franklin, you used Sundry expressions derogatory to my character, the duty is imposed on me of ascertaining the fact, and of vindicating my reputation. I am aware that I am under the disadvantage of not being able to specify the particular expressions used—to whom—or on what score. But this is no fault of mine. The aspersion, if any, was uttered behind my back, I am obliged therefore to resort to others for information. I have done so, and have not succeeded in obtaining absolute satisfaction on either side.

As soon as I indirectly and indistinctly understood that you had become unfriendly to me I applied to Mr. Badger and Mr. Glynn who attended that court to know whether they had heard from you any thing inimical to me. They both candidly answered in the negative. I then applied to a third gentleman, Col. Barringer,⁸ and required the like information from him. Without admitting that he heard you use offensive language, he declined saying with the others, that *he had not*. The

¹David Shuford was a well-known local politician of Lincoln County. This was his fifth and last term in the state Senate.

²The legislative journals record this name as Johnson.

³Daniel Conrad was another purely local figure. He was seven times a member of the House of Commons.

⁴Colonel Charles D. Connor was a state senator, 1817-1820. He was also a member of the Board of Internal Improvements.

⁵Francis Locke.

⁶Archibald Henderson of Rowan, 1768-1822, one of the great lawyers of his day and a member of Congress for two terms, 1799-1803, as a Federalist.

⁷James F. Taylor of Wake, 1791-1828, member of the House of Commons, 1823; attorney-general, 1825-1828.

⁸Daniel L. Barringer of Wake, member of the House of Commons, 1813, 1819-1822; member of Congress, 1826-1835. He later moved to Tennessee, where he became speaker of the House of Representatives of that State.

inference is a necessary one that you did use such language, and that it was highly offensive. I make this detailed statement, that I may not be answered by a requisition for specific words. Possessing as I will suppose you to do, those principles of a gentleman, which I am left to infer you have in your conversations unjustly denied to me I think you cannot and will not demand more precision from me, but will at once frankly avow or disavow the use of any expressions upon that occasion injurious to my feelings or character.

I am Sir

Your Obt. Servt.

(Signed) THOMAS RUFFIN.

From James F. Taylor.

RALEIGH October 6th, 1820.

Sir.

I was not a little surprised yesterday evening to learn that some *friend*, who is more influenced by a desire to embroil others in disputes than a regard for his own character, has intimated to you that at the last Franklin County Court, "Sundry expressions were used by me derogatory to your character, and injurious to your feelings." And although from the nature of your *call* upon me, it is one for *information*, rather than an *explanation* of expressions used upon a specified subject, yet I am disposed to waive all ceremony, and to come at once to the points on which information is desired. In this I feel less difficulty than might have been anticipated, for I do not recollect to have used any expressions in regard to you, at all disrespectful, except upon one occasion in a private and confidential conversation with a Gentleman upon the subject of the unpleasant misunderstanding between Mr. S*** and Mr. Seawell, in the whole of which conversation, as I understand it, there was no difference of opinion between that Gentleman and myself. I mention this however, with no other view than to satisfy you of the nature of the channels through which your *intimations* have been received.

In the course of the conversation alluded to, the part, which it was understood, you had taken in the late appointment of Clerk of Wake Superior Court, was spoken of, and I believe, I remarked that if the information which I had received on the subject was true, you had acted a part towards Mr. S*** which was unworthy of you, and which he had no right to expect from your previous offers of friendship and assistance," or something to that effect.

The information I allude to was derived from Mr. S***, and a Gentleman whose name I am not at liberty to mention. Mr. S*** had informed me, that at the County Court of Wake before the appointment of Clerk was made, you took him out, and without any solicitation on his

part, offered to promote his interest as a Candidate for that office, and promised to use the influence which you might have, for that purpose. And the other Gentleman told me, that at the *request* of Judge Paxton during the week of Wake Superior Court, you undertook to ascertain by *particular inquiry* whether the reports which had been mentioned to the judge of Mr. S***'s habits of *gambling and intemperance* were true or false; and that after you had made the enquiries, you reported unfavorably to Mr. S***.

I believe, Sir, that I have now made to you a substantial disclosure of the remarks made by me, and of the grounds upon which those remarks were predicated.

Whether the part which you acted in that affair has been fairly represented to me, I cannot pretend to say: and can only add that I received the information from a source, which justified, as I conceived, my using the remarks of you which I did, in the private way alluded to.

I am Sir

Yr. Obt. Servt.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

JAMES F. TAYLOR.

Addressed:

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.
at the Eagle Hotel

Mr. Manly.

To James F. Taylor.

RALEIGH October 6, 1820.

Sir

You judged rightly of the character of my note of yesterday. I did seek for *information* and not explanation in it; because not knowing the expressions which had been used by you on the occasion on which they were used, I could not determine whether they admitted of an explanation or not. Your answer however has been so open and frank that I now feel every disposition to come to a full explanation of the whole matter. Perhaps strictly speaking, I am not bound to offer to you any statement of my conduct relative to the appointment of the Clerk. It has certainly been misconstrued—tho' I was not aware of it until this week—as soon as I heard of it—I determined to use the first opportunity of placing it in its true light to *Mr. S*** himself*. That I owed to Mr. S*** and to myself. To third persons however I am no way accountable; and should therefore have refrained from communicating with you, in that regard, had you not in your note waived all ceremony and stated the manner in which you used the expressions to be private and confidential, the information upon which your opinion was formed and that the expressions were, in themselves *qualified* by a declaration made

at the same time "that if the information which you had received was true" etc. I therefore feel relieved from all the difficulties which formality might impose on me and am free to offer a distinct account of the agency which I had in the business alluded to.

During the last Summer Mr. Badger applied to me to recommend Mr. S*** for the appointment of Clerk. He pressed his Friend's claims strongly as he always does and at the same time stated that Dr. Hinton was a rival candidate. It is unnecessary to detail the whole conversation—but I stated in substance to him that I was not sufficiently acquainted with either of the Gentlemen to authorize me to interfere and therefore that I should be neutral. At November County Court Mr. Simon Turner made a similar application on behalf of Mr. Hinton. I told him that I had much respect for both Gentlemen as far as my slight knowledge of them extended, but declined an interference. Probably at the same Court or about that time Mr. Badger again urged me to aid Mr. S***—he represented him to be every way qualified for the appointment that he had a family and that his circumstances required the profits of such a station. In addition he stated that he had understood that Mr. Turner had for more than one circuit sounded the Judges upon the point of this appointment and that having found no Judge disposed to appoint Mr. Hinton Mr. Turner had retained the Office. I felt some indignation at such a course and stated that I should think it right to oppose the views of a man, who, not being content with the office himself, insisted upon having the selection of a successor. I determined then to recommend Mr. S***, as far as I could, and afterwards mentioned it to Mr. S*** himself. I think this occurred during the month of January while I attended the Supreme Courts—tho Mr. S*** says it was at February County Court. I will not be particular as to dates—tho' I think I am correct. I was subsequently spoken to by another person to assist in procuring the appointment of Dr. Hinton. I refused to do so and stated my reasons for preferring Mr. S***—upon which it was represented to me that Mr. S*** was addicted to the ruinous habit of gaming to such a degree as rendered it dangerous or improper that he should be Clerk. Not having any personal knowledge of him, and having no reason to doubt what I heard, I regretted that I had been entrapped by my feelings to declare my preference for Mr. S***, and being very averse to being instrumental in placing into that important office, an unfit person, I came to the conclusion of again becoming as I had been formerly, neutral between the two gentlemen. Perhaps I might have mentioned this to Mr. S***. But many considerations restrained me. I should probably wound his feelings; and I might embroil two men towards whom I entertained respect. I therefore contented myself with a Silent determination of neutrality which I think fairly preserved. Of this you will judge from what follows—I came down to the Superior Court on Monday morning and waited on Judge Paxton. He soon mentioned the Clerkship and asked me "whether I

took any part in it?" or to that effect. I told him that I did not; that I believed from information which I had received that both of the Gentlemen would make good Clerks, but that I did not *know* enough of either to take it on myself to recommend him. At that time Majr. Glynn called me out for the purpose of getting my signature to a paper in favor of Mr. S***. Restrained by the same feelings which had prevented me from explaining to Mr. S***, I did not state to Mr. Glynn my reasons for refusing to sign the paper; but simply declined doing so upon the general ground that I would have nothing to do with the appointment. I returned to Judge Paxton's room, and he mentioned that he was pleased to hear that I did not take a part in the election, as he was in some difficulty about it in the election, or he was in some difficulty about it, and wanted information from some indifferent person. He then stated that he had formerly known Mr. S*** very intimately and that he was as correct a gentleman in his habits and principles, when he knew him, as any man could be, he had therefore been pleased when he heard, that he was a Candidate for the Clerkship, as he would be glad to serve him and he then had an opportunity. He had however been informed that he *gamed* to excess. He might have said *drank* too; but that I do not recollect, and he wished me to say whether I knew any thing of it. With perfect truth I told him that I did not and that I was not sufficiently informed of the habits of either gentleman to be at liberty to take any decided part and therefore should not do so.

Judge Paxton then applied to me to make some enquiry upon the subject in town which I declined as I did not like to search into the habits of any gentleman with whom I was unconnected. There the conversation ended for that day. On the next morning the Judge renewed his application, and upon my again shewing an aversion to it, he stated that he claimed it as a right from me.

That he was disposed to appoint Mr. S*** if satisfied of the incorrectness of what he had been told about him,—But that he must be fully satisfied upon that point before he could appoint him, for he felt his duty to the public to be paramount to any private inclination of his own, and that he was a stranger here and had no acquaintance to whom he could apply, under these circumstances and urgent requests of the Judge, I told him that if I could obtain any satisfactory information for him, without making particular enquiries or injuring Mr. S***'s feelings I would. I did during the week incidentally ask two or three gentlemen whether Mr. S*** *gambled*. From one I heard that he played cards, but could not be called a gambler. From a second I understood that he personally knew nothing of his habits, as he did not mix by gaming parties, but that it was reported that he played a good deal and lost considerable sums of money so as materially to injure himself. I made these inquiries with the hope to have received such answers as would remove Judge Paxton's difficulties. Having received information of a different character, I said nothing about it, as I did not feel it to

be either my duty or to be proper to volunteer it, and therefore I remained silent until the Judge, stated on the morning of the day on which he appointed Mr. Hinton (on Friday I think) that he had been called on during the week, by several gentlemen of the city and that he had ascertained from them that the reports were true. He stated that his mind was fully satisfied, and that he should be compelled to appoint Mr. Hinton—contrary as it might be to his inclination. I made no other communication to him on the subject than by then remarking that I had only had an opportunity of speaking to two or three Gentlemen and from them I had understood that Mr. S*** frequently played and was supposed to have injured himself by it. Judge Paxton said, that the information which he had received was fully satisfactory to him and that he had made up his mind and therefore had not spoken to me again about it.

I may have omitted in this statement some circumstances or expressions, but I am sure that they are not material and could not affect its substance. The subject was never again mentioned in my presence until I heard of the correspondence between Mr. Seawell and Mr. S*** which is now publick and notorious—nor did I know that my name had been at all connected with it, until Mr. Glynn informed me on Wednesday night that Mr. Seawell had said in his letter to Judge Paxton that “I would concur with him in the statements therein made.” Mr. Seawell had no authority for such remarks, and has since stated in the presence of Mr. Glynn, that he thinks the expression in his letter is, “that he had no doubt I would concur with him in the *propriety of appointing Mr. Hinton though he had not consulted me.*” But whatever may be the expression (which I now know by the kindness of Mr. S***) he distinctly disavowed to me and Mr. Glynn that he had any reason to believe that I would recommend Mr. Hinton. On the contrary Mr. Seawell did not say a word to me about the appointment during the Superior Court, and he had before been informed that I would not use any exertions on behalf of Mr. Hinton.

Having stated in your letter that the expressions made by you were *qualified*, and having stated (beyond my demand) the grounds of them and entered into an explanation, I have considered it but candid to make known to you all the facts relative to this business, in order that our correspondence might be closed by giving you an opportunity of retracting the harsh expressions used by you, upon fuller information than you then had.

Of course the introduction of the names of third persons into our letters is to be deemed confidential, but as to any statement made concerning myself, I shall not feel a difficulty in avowing it to any person interested in it.

I am Sir your Obed Servt.

(signed) THOMAS RUFFIN.

James Taylor Esq.

From James F. Taylor.

RALEIGH Octo 7th, 1820.

Sir.

Your communication recd yesterday evening, represents your conduct, in regard to the appointment of Clerk of Wake Supr Court differently from what I had before been induced to believe was its true character, and removes the grounds upon which my remarks of you were predicated.

I have no hesitation in saying that if I had then believed your conduct to have been what I now do, it would have given rise to no remarks from me, prejudicial to your feelings or character.

I am Sir,

Your obt. Servt.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

JAMES F. TAYLOR.

From John Rogers.

BALTIMORE Feb. 10th, 1821.

Your letter of the 30th ult. was handed me at the post office yesterday where it had been lying for some time, as I go there but seldom now, to enquire if there be any thing for me, having been often disappointed in that way.

It surprised me a good deal to hear that I had been even suspected of soliciting to be released from my promise to resume the management of the school—believe me, the report is utterly unfounded. In a letter that I addressed to Mr. Sneed there was something like a complaint that Mr. Witherspoon¹ had not answered a letter of mine written soon after my arrival here, and a request that he would ascertain (for from Mr. W's supposed indifference I began to forbode the worst) whether I was by any one regarded as a burthen at home, assuring him, that if such were the case, I would easily find employment elsewhere.

In this way, probably the report originated—though it has pleased Heaven that I should be a sort of wanderer, yet I have my attachments, and being fond too, of keeping terms with my own heart, I do not care to break with it, by being faithless to my engagements I turn from the matter with pleasure for the more agreeable purpose of acknowledging the receipt of your liberal remittance—it was a favor disinterested, and conferred with the purest delicacy, circumstances that constitute a noble benefaction—time will discover, whether it has been worthily bestowed.

The compliments you have the goodness to pay me, I am not vain enough to ascribe so much to my own merits, as to the partiality of a

¹Rev. John Witherspoon of Hillsboro, a Presbyterian minister.

friend, who would hold up to my view, the delineation of a character, by which he is solicitous that I should form my own—and at this moment of genial feelings, I am almost persuaded to promise that the benevolent design shall not be frustrated.

The Medical College here is, to be sure, inferior in reputation, to that at Philadelphia, for it is comparatively of recent existence—the chemical apparatus is admitted to be the most splendid in America, and Professor Pattisons anatomical Museum, is said not to be surpassed even in Europe—at Phila. the classes visit the Hospital, and alms-houses every day, for those institutions are contiguous to the University—here they are too remote from the College to afford that advantage—but to obviate this inconvenience the students are at liberty to take part of the tickets for one season, and the remainder the next, that they may have time enough to visit the alms-house and Hospital, or if they prefer taking all the tickets the first year, they can do so, and devote the following session to private reading dissecting and visiting those Institutions—at Phila. Candidates for the Doctors Degree are required to attend the Lectures of each Professor during two courses—here the Candidates have the option just stated—upon the whole, I am satisfied that the advantages of Instruction here, are equal to those at Phila. and the expenses considerably lighter.

The Roman Catholic college here, is universally regarded as an ornament to the state—but their discipline would be terrible to a Southern constitution, for they compel their pupils to be diligent, and to behave themselves like good boys, there being no *men* among them, except those having authority—their system of studies embraces the English, French, Spanish, Latin, and Greek languages, Moral and Natural Philosophy, and every branch of Mathematics.

With respect to the other Literary Institutions in this City, I can say nothing more that they appear to be ably managed. On last Sunday I wrote to Mr. Sneed for money, but your kindness has supplied me with more than I shall need—it is to be hoped, that he had some intimation of your design, for to say nothing of the risque by mail, the possession of an additional hundred would tempt me to become extravagant. Early in March, I hope to acknowledge your munificence in person, and to renew my congratulations upon the late accession to your happiness. Please to present my respects to the young gentleman at the office, also to Mr. Cain, and Mr. Kirkland—and for yourself to accept the assurances of my being

with every sentiment of respect, and affection
your obliged friend, and Obedt. Sevt.

JOHN ROGERS.

Thomas Ruffin Esquire Hillsboro' N. C.

From James Graham.

CHARLOTTE May the 10th 1821.

Dear Sir: I received from the hand of Mr. J. Martin in Statesville last week your letter inclosing for collection a Bond on Isaac L. Ward for Four hundred and eighty Dollars and forty four cents due Wilder and Shore in Petersburg. I enquired immediately for Ward and ascertained he lived in Iredell, that he was somewhat involved, but had property in possession more than enough to satisfy the Bond I received. I therefore issued a writ against him returnable to Iredell county court on the 3d Monday in this month. It is probable I shall obtain a Judgment in August and the money in November next. Iredell however is the worst county I ever practised in to collect money as the officers of the county are remarkable only for negligence tho' I keep a vigilant eye upon them. My circuit is almost closed, and I feel a pleasure in being able to inform you I have made a very good circuit notwithstanding the hard times cramp the people *in extremis*. We have had several capital cases on the circuit and two convictions of murder. Indeed the business in our courts has grown past expectation this spring. In Iredell I cant conceive how the people are to extricate themselves from their embarrassed circumstances. . . . We have had no stir yet about members for the next Assembly. Walker¹ and Davidson² are both candidates in their old Districts for Congress. No opposition as yet known—there are a number of Families recently removed from New York to Rutherford and they speak of establishing themselves together on Broad River at some suitable place for a Manufacturing Town near the head of Navigation, they expect to be reinforced this ensuing summer by many other families. Accept sir the assurances of my regard and esteem for you and family from your sincere friend.

[P. S.] Present my respects if you please to my worthy friends in Hillsboro'

[P. S.] I wish you could make it convenient to accompany me through the alabama and to Florida next Fall.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From John Rogers.

HILLSBORO' May 19th, 1821.

Your superior judgement decided at once upon the course properest for me to pursue. I allude to the alternatives proposed by you soon after

¹Felix Walker.

²William Davidson of Mecklenburg, 1778-1857, state senator for eleven terms between 1813 and 1830; member of Congress, 1818-1821.

my return from Baltimore. Every page that I turn over in my books, serves to impress more deeply the conviction that I am doing wretchedly. The Theory is clear as light to my apprehension, but what is theory in such a Profession as mine, without practice. The circumstances under which I write, must be my excuse for being forward enough to say that I have abilities sufficient to render me respectable as a Medical man—there is something too distressing for language to convey in my situation at this time—the distress consists in my being unable to exercise those abilities to any kind of advantage in this place. My heart is set upon graduating next year. I could stay here 'till November, and accomplish that object, and be withal an indifferent Physician. It is needless to withhold the impression of my views, for you already perceive the direction of them. I wish to be in one of the Northern cities during the months of August, September, and October, in order to have the benefit of Hospital Practice. The very inconsiderable service I could render in the Academy during that time, bears no sort of proportion to the decisive turn which such a course would give to my future destiny. I know not in what light Mr. Witherspoon, or others, may view my request to be released from the Institution when they come to hear of it—but upon a full, and deliberate review of all the circumstances, I do feel most honestly convinced that justice to myself requires that I should withdraw. If some provision for my reception into the school, next year could be made, it would add very much to the solidity of my calculations about the future, to say nothing of the pleasure I should enjoy in being able still to regard Hillsboro' as my home. It would be an ignoble return for your bounty to detail the means I have in view for repaying it, as far as Money is concerned. The feeling that prompted you to offer, and me to accept it, is best acknowledged in saying that I look forward to that hour, as the most triumphant of my life, when I shall present myself before you with the well-merited honors of my Profession. I must not conceal from you the circumstance of my being attached to one of our village girls; and I mention it with a view to obviate any suspicion on your part of my being disposed to avail myself of your proffered bounty in order to further my hopes in that way, when the matter is fairly considered, I am sure you will agree with me in admitting that the consideration of your partiality for me, will have more weight in my favor, than that of the sums you are willing to advance—besides, were I to continue here next session, I should scarcely be compelled to draw upon you at all, and of course in a more independent condition to commence the world. However I have never yet thought seriously upon the subject, nor should I have mentioned it now, only I thought it might come to your hearing, and that of course, it would be best to anticipate it with a candid acknowledgement. But one thing I feel confident enough to promise, and that is, that no feeling of that kind shall have power to diminish the ambition I feel in a more important pursuit.

[P. S.] I do not look for a written answer to this, nor require that you should let me know your pleasure, before you return from Raleigh. The fact is in Matters of this nature, I have considerable diffidence in my judgment, but in yours I shall acquiesce most implicitly and cheerfully.

From William Ruffin.

RALEIGH 6 June 1821.

The enclosed letter, which I must request the favor of you to forward, will inform you of the death of Mr. Goodwin,¹ and my wishes.

Now if you think the office will suit *me*, and *I* will suit the office; I will then request of you another favor, which is, if you have no objection to the course, to interest yourself in my behalf with Gen. Holmes,² Dr. Umsted and Mr. Lacy. This you can do by letter. Perhaps you may think I am too old, too infirm, and should think of retiring to the shades of life rather than engage farther in the busy scenes of the world. You may be right, such a conclusion would correspond precisely with my feelings—but my situation will not precisely justify such an act—unless I could dispose of my establishment here.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER 10th June 1821.

Dear Ruffin

At Chapel Hill I found my Boys could not get home with their Luggage Unless I returned with them. And a Letter which I received from Maj. Kearney of the United States Corps of Engineers requesting an immediate Communication on the Subject of our Sounds and the proposed Junction of the Roanoke Tar and Neuse rivers, determined me to come on Home. Since I got back, I have been confined to the Table, to send off my Packet by the Mail of this evening. With the Packet I also send to Mr. Gales a considerable Portion of Manuscript. I wish very much to get my reports out of my way.

* * * * *

I well know my Affairs occupy much of your attention: I must beg your Attention to a few particular Views of them and request your

¹Samuel Goodwin of Cumberland, comptroller of the State since 1808.

²Gabriel Holmes, a member of the Council of State, as were also Dr. John Umstead of Orange and Theophilus Lacy.

Advice. At this time none of my property will Sell to any advantage except that which is most valuable. Perhaps my Mills and Negroes. I have had a thought of making an Offer of my Mills to Mr. Cameron. Unless you would like to own them. Would it suit your Convenience in any way to take them? I should like to sell with my Mills my Plantation in the Haw-Fields. The two establishments would Suit each other: But if I cant sell them together, I will seperate them in the sale. It is possible I may be mistaken in the Value of my Mills: but I think I am not, and that in ordinary times they will average a net Profit of \$1200 Per Year. It is true, there is the labour of making Sale of the Gains of the Mill, of procuring Flour Barrels etc. But having once established a System on this Subject, I have found not much trouble attending them. If you will take the Mills, you shall have the Use of my Miller for 18 Months or two Years. He with Mr. Jones my Manager carry on the business. The Saw Mill is rotten—new Timbers are got for two thirds of a new one. They are not yet hauled.—You may take the Mills and Plantation together or the Mills by themselves at such Price as you may put on them, and if you, upon a fair Trial, find the Price too high, I will, if able, refund to you till they stand at what you may think a fair price. The Dam has undergone a thorough repair and is much better than it ever was before, and the Mills are in complete Order. I should be very unwilling to see you make a Purchase that might possibly prove a bad one; but believing as I do that this is by far the most productive property in the County and will probably continue so, I should like for you to own it, if the purchase will not subject you to too much inconvenience.

Mr. Cameron will be this way towards the close of this week. If you be of opinion that I had better make an Offer to him, I will do so. I shall be away from home, but can leave a Letter for him. I should much prefer that you should take the Mills and Lands both—as it may be disagreeable to you to have your name in Bank, the Debt may Stand in my Name, Untill you can take it up.

If you should not like to take the Mills here, would you take the Mills on New Hope? The Dam is broken and it will probably cost \$500 to repair it substantially and set the Mills to work in good Order. These Mills are valuable. I believe there are about 400 or 450 Acres of Land, of tolerable quality only. The Lands and Seite cost A. Harden \$3800. The Mills are new—The Grist Mill is on a Small scale, having 2 pair of stones, and is intended only for County Grinding. But this Plan is most profitable in Such a Situation. It is a fine Seat for Custom.

On the Land there is the Frame of a good Dwelling House which A. Harden put up. It would be worth something to you. I advised Col. Farrar to take \$2500 for the establishment, if he could find a Purchaser. The residue of the Purchase Money amounts probably to \$2800. He is bound for most of it and executions are out.

Write to me by Henry, whom you may detain till near night for this purpose. I shall go day and night till I can sell and sink my Debts.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

“hand the enclosed to Mr. McNeil.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From John Stanly.¹

NEWBERN 12 June 1821.

Mr. George S. Attmore² who does me the favor to hand you this, is a Candidate for the profession of the law—and will I am assured stand a respectable examination. He is undetermined where to locate himself. The lawyers *here*, as perverse as the federalists of old, neither die or resign, and we are crowded. If with your knowledge of the Country you can assist Mr. Attmore in a decision, you will serve a gentleman who I know will merit and gratefully remember the friendship and you will greatly oblige

[Address: Raleigh.]

From George McNeill.

FAYETTEVILLE June 22nd 1821.

* * * * *

You are entitled to the July Dividend on the 50 shares Stock, the Books I believe are not closed before the 10th or 15th June. You may have your dividends transferred to, and made payable at any Office you may choose, by writing to the cashier of the prinl. Bank to that effect—and if Mr. West the cashr. of the Bank in this place is not mistaken, you can appoint the cashr. of the Office at which the dividends are made payable, *as Cashier*, your attorney to draw the dividends and to deposit them to your credit in the Bank, and for which service there will be no charge made. I presume this is done as a mere matter of courtesy, and not as a duty incumbent on the cashr. Perhaps you had better not write to the Cashr. of the prinl. Bank, until the dividend is declared, as the letter may possibly be overlooked. You may at once give General instructions to have all your Dividends payable in New York, untill otherwise directed and it will not be necessary to write again. A common

¹This was the famous John Stanly of Craven, 1774-1834, a Federalist leader in the State. Twelve times a member of the House of Commons from the borough of New Bern between 1798 and 1826, he was speaker in 1825 and 1826.

²Mr. Attmore settled in the end at New Bern, and became a very prominent man in later years.

power attory. acknowledged and certified by a Notary Public will I presume be sufficient. Mr. Irvin would I presume charge $\frac{1}{4}$ P cent for drawing your dividends etc., it would be well enough however to make the inquiry (not that he would charge more or less on that account) before giving the business to him, he has done a good Deal of such business for us without any charge.

Mr. Murphey's note of \$5862 $\frac{2}{3}$ in Cape Fear Bank has been reinstated this week, by paying only the discount, protest etc., but the Bank has notified us to inform the parties that it would not be renewed again without a payment of 5 P Cent. Will you mention this to Mr M., his notes at U. S. B are yet under protest.

We are owing about \$11,000 in England, which we are extremely desirous of reducing—but we find it almost impossible to make collections in time—would it in *the least* interfere with your *views*, or other arrangements to grant us the loan of your 50 shares stock for a short time? The Bank is doing little or nothing now except in Pledge Stock and business proper (which we are afraid to give)—they discount on pledge of stock at 4 mo. at par value. I would not ask this if I thought it would in the least interfere with your arrangements, and if it should let it drop. We can, I believe give our note, secured by stock without your name appearing at all and I believe that we shall be able to take up the stock when you may want it by giving a very short notice—that we would do at all hazzards, at your convenience I shall be glad to hear from you on this subject.

Mr. Strange¹ is a candidate to represent the [torn] opposition to Mr. Canning, it will be [torn] elections. I think however from present appearances that Mr. Strange will be elected. it will I think be of service to Mr. S. to have his ambitions roused a little, but it will be a dreadful mortification to Mr. C. to be left at Home.

By the mail tomorrow morning I hope to hear from Hillsborough, and that your little boy Peter Brown has recovered, and all friends well. We are all well hereabouts. Betsey joins me in love to you.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From James R. Dodge.

SALISBURY 23 Sept. 1821.

I confess myself guilty in not having communicated as frequently and freely as I promised to and as your attentions and favors shewn to me required, but can in mitigation, assign the same reason for the delinquency that you when of my standing at the bar could have assigned, that is, taking it for granted that the feelings of those similarly situated,

¹Robert Strange.

are much the same. I have had many difficulties and vexations to contend with, embarrassing as to me, but which would have made but a trifling appearance on paper, and if in some degree successful, when writing to a man of standing and experience at the Bar, and who knew me. I would not dare to attribute this casual success to merit and have too much of the pride of the profession to ascribe it to any thing else. There was then no subject but politicks in which your last advise was that I should not meddle, and a monotonous history of attendance upon courts, at this time however, I am anxious to receive advice from you. On my settlement in Stokes it was your opinion, If I remember right that it would be merely temporary and that Rowan would be the county in which I must ultimately locate myself. On a nearer acquaintance with these counties ascertaining their strength and resources, I was fully convinced of this, and was anxious to place myself so that my profession would be of the greatest advantage. I had established something of a character and business in Stokes, but as the emoluments arising from the best in the county would be limited in comparison with the best in the other, it appeared to me of more consequence to serve the noviciate, to which we are all condemned, when afterwards was to be reaped the greatest benefit. So I determined upon this county, *and came*, it has always been my rule to follow decision with action but since here am something at loss if to settle in this Town or Lexington. here I have the advantage of society, can communicate with the eminent in the profession and have no doubt of obtaining a share of business by perseverance, but I am under the shadow of more deserving men and it will require time to emerge. Now the county is as you know naturally divided into three parts, the people in Two of which are anxious for a legal division and exasperated against those of this whose interest inclines them against it. The division of which Lexington is the capital is a large and wealthy one, The inhabitants of which are almost in arms against this particular town. Now I think by going there I will take advantage of the general prejudice, may expect (as I am assured by some intelligent magistrates) a great proportion of the business, thus seizing time by the forelock, but must expect decided opposition from the inhabitants of this side and the Bar of this County, and lose the hope of improving except by reading and practice—this is with you Sir.

Another affair is this, I have a longing desire to take four dollars a day of the peoples money during the next session of the Legislature it would have a wonderful and salutary effect upon my purse, which the slightest wind might now blow away. It would in some degree revive my spirits by changing the current in which worldly dross, as to me, has generally flown. Now setting aside the difficulty of being elected (which is a mountain itself, but may be removed) these remain: should I not be elected, I lose this county court, as yet not of great value. Should I be elected, I lose this, Rockingham, and Stokes. I leave a gap in my business, or rather routine of attendance, but I put money in my pocket

as one of the engrossing clerks, besides I must visit Raleigh in the fall. Should you approve the plan I must solicit your influence. I have some cases in the Superior Court and would be pleased to know if Judge Nash would be apt to stop my mouth, should I dare to open it on this circuit, if he will I must take an affectionate farewell of one or two of the best fees I ever was offered.

[P. S.] No news. I will retain my practice in Stokes. I would not wish the Lexington plan mentioned until ready to act upon it.

[Address:

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.
at Chatham Court N. C.]

From James Graham.

CHARLOTTE November the 9th, 1821.

* * * * *

As to the occurrences of the day in this quarter we have none of public moment. We had hoped, and fondly hoped, before the last election that at the ensuing Legislature the Convention would have had many able advocates in the Legislature; but the result of the last election in the western part of the State forbid us to indulge a single hope from the next General Assembly. Our Dockets in this quarter are quite crowded, and Father Norwood¹ has thinned them very little, he is much esteemed here both as a man and as a lawyer tho' he has not done much business on the Circuit. Present my respects, if you please, to Mistress Ruffin and Mr. Kirkland, and family and Accept assurances of my respect and esteem for yourself.

[Address: Hillsboro', N. C.]

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHINGTON Decr. 15th 1821.

I have now been here only two weeks and have as yet seen nothing of legislation. We succeeded in ousting Taylor² as Speaker. The very countenance of the man indicates the meanness of his principles—altho'

¹William Norwood of Orange, 1767-1840, judge of the Superior Court, 1820-1836.

²John W. Taylor of New York, who had succeeded Clay as the speaker of the Sixteenth Congress in November, 1820. Defeated now, he was speaker of the Nineteenth Congress.

Mr. Barbour¹ is and will make a good Speaker, yet he wants dignity, and I thought it bad policy to take a Speaker from the Senate. Mr. McLane² of Delaware is a man of talents and a gentleman—he was with us on the Missouri question—yet the circumstance of his and Rodney's³ both being up operated to their defeat.—We already hear much as to our next Prest. I have seen Crawford, who is as affable in his manners as he is dignified in his deportment and gigantic in his powers, yet every lever is brought to bear against him. I find that with *great* as with little men, self is the primum mobile of their actions. I have learnt here to my surprize that yr. representative⁴ is unfriendly to Crawford. If this be a fact he ought to be put down in Hillsbo^o. I hope you will see to it, for if North Carolina equivocates, he is gone.

This is said to be an able Congress, as yet however its powers have not been displayed. There is no doubt to be much legislation, as but little has been done for sometime. Genl. Jackson has resigned, the papers have been called for in the House, with a view no doubt to an investigation into his conduct.⁵ But it seems to me that if the Spanish Government is disposed to pass over his conduct, we should not invite a scrutiny. My feelings do not lead me to take any active part in what is passing around me. I should greatly prefer being engaged in offering petitions to our County Courts at forty shillings than to be introducing them here at \$8 per day. I would to God, my friend, that I could have learnt a little of that prudence which has directed you to the care of your family, rather than to that of the republic. But I am now in, my ambition has been gratified and I must get through as well as I can.

What has been done with Mr. Murphey? or rather what has his sale done for his securities? It is important that some steps should be taken in his Western lands. This is poor Carters only chance—and I fear this is a slender one.

Yesterday we buried Colo. Trimble,⁶ Senator from Ohio. he died of wounds of the late war. But from what I have already felt of the climate, I should not be surprised if more of us are taken off. My respects to yr. family. I should be glad to hear from you, if you have time.

Yours truly

R. M. SAUNDERS.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹Phillip Pendleton Barbour of Virginia, who had been a member of Congress since 1814. He was later president of the Virginia convention of 1829-1830, United States judge in Virginia, and associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

²Louis McLane was a member of Congress, 1817-1827; senator, 1827-1829; minister to England, 1829-1831, 1845-1846; secretary of the treasury, 1831-1833; secretary of state, 1833-1834.

³Cæsar Augustus Rodney of Delaware, member of Congress, 1803-1805, 1821-1822; United States senator, 1822-1823; attorney-general during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison.

⁴Dr. James S. Smith of Orange.

⁵This was the famous Clay investigation of Jackson's conduct in Florida.

⁶William Allen Trimble, a gallant soldier of the War of 1812.

From John Rogers.

BALTIMORE Dec 16th 1821—

I have just received a letter from Mr Witherspoon informing me that it was probable Mr Hooper¹ would resign his Professorship in the University. At the same time he wishes me to have my name held up for the office in case an Election should take place. Before I say any thing further on the subject, permit me to vent my indignation at the inexcusable negligence of Post-masters. Every letter I receive from Hillsboro' is constantly kept in the office there, three days after it is put in the box—thus, a letter is delivered at the office either on monday, or thursday morning, and kept there until the next mail for Raleigh. Surely, if Cook, or his clerk had the smallest degree of reflection, he would forward it to the next office, even tho' the mail should be closed, as a Way-letter. And this all-important letter of Mr. Witherspoon's, besides being kept there three days, was detained in the office in this city, eight days before I could get a sight of it, though I had been calling there daily for a week past. After all, I do hope most earnestly that I am not too late. The office in question, is one that I have long had my heart set upon, and most happy will I be, should I succeed in obtaining it.

Before I solicit your interest, let me assure you that I am very far from presuming to think that I have any particular claim upon you, on such an occasion. Your generosity has gone greatly beyond my desert already, and surely, the exercise of your privilege as a Trustee, in favor of another candidate, shall in no respect diminish the grateful affection with which I must always remember you. Should Mr Hooper resign, and I be elected to the office, I shall leave Baltimore immediately on receiving the Intelligence. A Bachelor's degree in Medicine (and I can obtain it very easily at this time) will entitle me to that of Doctor at the expiration of three years. And to be candid with you, my solicitude to return home, is perhaps the most urgent consideration with me at this moment, for calling upon you in this abrupt way. But should another be chosen, I must remain here, and come forward in the beginning of March for the Doctor's Degree, which I have very little doubt of obtaining. Thus far, with the exception of three hours passed at the College daily, I have been almost constantly among the sick at the Alms-house. By my assiduity, I have so far gained the countenance of the attending Physician, as to have free access to every department at any hour—and among nearly two hundred patients of every age, and sex, from infancy to old age, and with the additional privilege of making up all the prescriptions, and administering them, you may judge how fine a situation

¹William Hooper, Professor of Languages in the University from 1817 to 1822, when he resigned to resume his work as an Episcopal minister. He was succeeded by Ethan Allen Andrews.

it is. Even now I have confidence enough to think that I should not be much at a loss as a Practitioner, in any disease whatever. For after all, in the practice of Medicine, there are but few well-established principles, and when these are clearly comprehended, and one has had an opportunity of observing cases that illustrated those principles, the greatest obstacle is at once removed—the subsequent career of the practitioner depends altogether upon his good sense, diligent reading, and careful observation. Should my views with regard to the Professorship not be realized, perhaps it may be better for me in the end. Had I nothing but ambition to stimulate me to exertion in the Practice of Medicine, I believe I should dislike exceedingly to be numbered in the rear of the Profession. The gentle being who has blessed me with herself, depends upon me for the continuance of that comfort, and elegance she has always been accustomed to, and believe me, I am not so degenerate as to neglect any of the measures of improvement, which are calculated to ensure an object so supremely interesting. With regard to my pecuniary wants, one hundred, and fifty dollars more will be amply sufficient, should I have to remain here till March, my expenses in travelling home included. My calculations with regard to expenditures, when I saw you in Raleigh, were too limited, and I hope I need not assure you, that I have been frugal of my little means, and that I have disposed of them to the best advantage. Present my affectionate respects to Mrs. Ruffin, Mrs Dillard, and Mrs Cain.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Hillsborough North Carolina.]

From John Witherspoon.

It was rumoured some weeks since that Mr. Hooper intended leaving the University for Fayetteville. Our friend Mr. Rogers, having expressed a great desire for a situation of that kind I gave him early intimation of it. In reply to my letter he informs he had written to you and requested your interest in the matter. I received a note from Raleigh last evening, stating that Mr. Hooper had sent in his resignation, and the writer advised me to get a recommendation in favour of Mr. R. sent down without delay, as the probability was, the appointment would be made as soon as practicable. I send you one which my brother has drawn up, with the request of your signature, and also that you would, if convenient, write to the Treasurer¹ on the subject. I wish to send the letter over to Raleigh in the morning. Mr. Rogers name I hear has already been mentioned to the Treasurer perhaps by yourself. I feel much interested for him especially as he seems so anxious to obtain the appointment.

¹John Haywood.

*From Lewis Williams.*¹

WASHINGTON December 22nd. 1821

Your letter of the 15th Inst. came duly to hand by the mail this morning. I am much obliged to you for the account you forwarded agreeably to the request contained in my letter from Raleigh.

It will at any time afford me great pleasure to give you information of such events of an interesting nature as may arise in the 10 miles square. At present we have nothing worthy of your notice, except some talk in reference to the election of the next President. It is, I think, pretty well ascertained that Pennsylvania will be faithful to her old attachments, and will support Crawford; Ohio is decided in favour of Crawford; Maine will do likewise, so that we have more strength according to present appearances than we want. It is better however that we should have a little to spare, than to have not quite enough. During the pendency of the Missouri Question, while it was doubtful whether the influence and feeling excited by it might not be carried into the next election of President, John Q Adams and his friends were very much elated. They hoped to draw off Pennsylvania, and with her assistance to carry all before them. But at this time they seem discomfited. Pennsylvania and a portion of New York resisted the election of Taylor. This proves that they are no longer to be operated upon by the Missouri question. If New York can't get her own man, I think there is little doubt of her supporting Crawford, and opposing Adams. This man cannot be supported where he is known or seen unless by such as disregard all principle, and act with a view to their own ultimate elevation or advantage. The good of the nation requires that any such looking man as Adams should be defeated in his pretension to the Presidency. To any one who has seen him this would be an all sufficient argument.

South Carolina will be somewhat an obstacle to that unanimity which ought to prevail in our section of the Union. The reason of it is that she has citizens who aspire to the same distinction. This is pretty well understood. But she will be obliged finally to submit.

It is intimated by some that the vote of North Carolina will not be so undivided as was, at one time, supposed. I think it a matter of great importance to us that we should present as solid a column as possible. I write for your self alone, and with great Respect

Thos Ruffin, Esq.

¹Lewis Williams of Surry, 1786-1842, a member of Congress from 1815 to 1842. At the time of his death he had been in Congress longer than any other member and was known as the "Father of the House."

From George E. Badger.

My dear Friend

[RALEIGH, Dec. 24, 1821]

I received your letter on the subject of your unlooked for embarrassments, and I am truly glad that it has been in my power to return in cash nearly the whole of the sum you so kindly loan'd me. Above you have a Check for one thousand dollars. I happened to have made no disposition of the price of ten shares of stock which I sold while in Newbern at par, when I heard (before receiving your letter) that you were likely to have a large sum to pay for Mr. Murphy and instantly resolved to send you that sum. I cannot but deeply regret that I have it not in my power to step forward in your necessity and open a purse to you with the same ready kindness with which yours was always open to me. It is vain to say a word of my willingness—for that I know you will give me credit and I have it not in my power to back my words by deeds—struggling as I am for existence myself. But if you will point out any mode by which I can personally serve you, it will add one to the obligations I already owe you.

With regard to the residue of the sum I owe you I expect I shall be able in a short time to send you a check for that, which I should prefer to putting another note in the Bank if it will answer your purpose, if not let me hear from you and I will immediately send the paper to you.

I should feel really mortified if I thought you could for a moment believe that your *long* letter (as you term it) could produce in me other feelings than those of the deepest interest and concern. Indeed, my dear Sir, I cannot reflect on your loss and that of my dear Mrs. Ruffin without heartfelt sorrow and the only circumstance of alleviation is, that I hope neither she nor you are of the number of those who "are without hope in the world." For my own part probable as I feel a similar result to be to myself, I thank God, that I am in some degree convinced that the only subject of real concern in this life is so to live as to obtain a place in a better and immortal existence.

Let me hear from you soon—and direct to Warrenton. Meantime offer my sincere respect and warm affection to Mrs. Ruffin and believe
most affectionately

your grateful and attached

friend and Servt.

T. Ruffin, esq.

G. E. BADGER.

Raleigh Dec 24. 1821

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From C. F. Bagge.

SALEM December 26th 1821.

Last Saturday I recd your favour of the 17th instant by mail; for which I kindly thank you; since I received it, I have deliberately considered its contents, but still am undetermined in what manner to act; The esteem I have for our worthy but unfortunate friend Judge Murphey will not allow me to take those advantages which justice and self interest would dictate in transferring his note to some friend on whose integrity I could depend, and who would agreeable to my instructions attach his lands in the Western Country and have them sold for my use for little or nothing, as I still believe that in course of time these lands if not attached by some other persons will be the means of Judge Murpheys extricating himself out of his present difficulties; The other plan you suggest to me to get the payment out of Captain Haralson¹ appears to me to be more readily accomplished, although there are several difficulties in the way which might not be so easily surmounted; the *first* is the procuring the Witnesses to the note, *secondly*, that the note is not given in the words "We or either of us"; but says "We the undersigned do promise to pay"; in this wording of the Note I am not Lawyer enough to have an opinion on which I could rely; *thirdly*, the risk I would run in sending the note for collection by mail to Mr. Dickens,² in fact I am unacquainted with the place of residence of Mr. Samuel Dickins, and *lastly* I think it would be my duty to apprise Judge Murphey previously of my intention, but I shall let the matter rest untill I have the pleasure of hearing your opinion by letter on this subject; Could I secure myself in the payment of Judge Murpheys note where Mr. Haralson and his Brother Alex. Murphey³ are security, as well as the note in which you are security, I would with pleasure indulge four or five years for the principal, provided the interest is paid punctually and the debt of both these notes secured by personal security in such a manner as to put it beyond doubt that the Money should be paid to me or my Executors after four or five years; In saying in my former letter to you, that if it was agreeable to you to send me a new Note for 4360\$ my meaning was, that it should be signed by Judge Murphey as principal and by yourself as security, but on this I do not insist, and shall with pleasure acquiesce whatever course you deem most proper to pursue;

¹Captain Herndon Haralson, 1757-1847, Murphey's brother-in-law, a native of North Carolina, but now a resident of Tennessee.

²Samuel Dickens had been a member of Congress from North Carolina in 1816 and was now Murphey's land agent in Tennessee. He was later the agent of the University of North Carolina in prosecuting its land claims in that State.

³Alexander Murphey, 1770-1822, was Murphey's older brother. He was a merchant and planter in Caswell County.

As Mr. James Martin passed through Salem on his return from Stokes County Court, he mentioned to me that he had understood there was a Company of Gentlemen in Iredell and Lincoln County who would probably purchase a quantity of land of Mr. Murphey which he owns in the Western Country, perhaps on enquiry you may be able to ascertain if any application or contract has been made with Mr. Murphey by those Gentlemen, and in the event thereof something perhaps may be done to secure the payment either to yourself or to me; this I merely mention as a report; You may confidently rely on my keeping the correspondence between you and myself a profound secret from any person whatsoever, and I beg you to receive this letter under the impression that it was written by me with a friendly intention both to yourself and Judge Murphey:

In case Genl. Graves should pay me any money after the rise of the General Assembly will it not be necessary for me to have his note in my possession?

I believe that there is nothing more in your letter to which it is necessary to recur, and I shall await your answer as soon as convenient;

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough
Orange County
North Carolina.]

From John M. Dick.¹

GREENSBORO Jany the 17th 1822.

I recd your letter some time since and waited for a private conveyance for the Copy of the answer you desired. I thought you might be disappointed if I delayed longer, and I have sent it enclosed. You will find it a long if not an able answer. I made the best I could out of the facts and I hope we will be able to *prostrate* your Cliant or at least come near it.

You inform me that our Legislature has Legislated you out of two Courts and express a hope that you are the only sufferer among your brethren. I am a fellow sufferer with you, and we are by no means alone, Mr. Little, Mr. Morehead² and several others are much injured by the changes. I am Legislated out of Orange County Court, and the Superior Court of this County will sometimes conflict with the County Court of Randolph. We ought to be under *great obligations* to our

¹John M. Dick of Guilford, state senator, 1819, 1829-1832; judge of the Superior Court, 1835-1862. He and Ruffin were close friends.

²John Motley Morehead, 1796-1866, at this time a practicing lawyer in Rockingham County. He moved to Guilford this same year.

friend Yancey for *those favours* and I hope at the next Legislature we will have his favours duly acknowledged. I am preparing materials for a suit in Equity in this County in which we are to be associated, I will have them in readiness to draw a Bill at Orange County Court.

Our Client informs me that we may expect good fees (which you know is a pleasant thing) and he is a man who altho he has many bad qualities has one good one, he pays good fees.

You gave me no information relative to your present state of health, which I hope is restored.

Thomas Ruffin, Esqr.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From Dr. Thomas Hunt.

Jy. 22^d, 1822.

Our mutual friend Judge Henderson has open^d to me fully the circumstances hint^d at this morning an injury done a friend under any circumstances should be instantly acknowledged and if possible, the necessary atonement made. I feel the injustice done you by my observation (from the explanation made to our friend). My feelings on the occasion are as they should be, should anything further be requir^d of me I am ready to do all things which you may ask for a restoration of your peace.

[Address:

Thos. Ruffin, Esqr.
Present.]

*From Elisha Mitchell.*¹

CHAPEL HILL Jany 23d. 1822.

It is growing late but as I see that I have considerable matter before me I have taken a large sheet a good part of which at least I must fill before I sleep. I have four several subjects on which to write you.

1. With regard to the books purchased from the library of the Robert Williams.² I received the kind letter you had the goodness to send me respecting them and am blameworthy in not having sooner sent you an answer. I have moreover received the volumes from Mr. Manly and they are now at C. Hill. You said nothing in your letter respecting

¹Elisha Mitchell, 1793-1857, at this time professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of North Carolina. Later he took the chair of chemistry, mineralogy, and geology.

²Probably Robert Williams of Surry.

the manner in which they were to be paid for. Mr. Manly was under the impression that the money would be drawn by a warrant from the Treasury. Please inform me whether it is so, and if not I will send it to you in Hillsborough or see that it is in Raleigh in season to meet the demands of the executors of the estate when it shall become due. You mentioned your having understood we had already a copy of Grotius commentary in the library at Chapel Hill and offered to take it off our hands in case it should be so. Now as to what you had heard, it is true we had already a copy of Grotius commentary and the reason of my requesting the purchase of this book of the deceased Gen. Williams was this. I observed that the work offered in the advertisement was "Grotii Opera." Now as this book made part of a Lawyers library was it an unnatural conclusion in an honest parson who of course would believe there was no goodness but in his own gang that these same volumes contained Grotius' work on the Law of Nations and his other tracts relating to antiquities and Jurisprudence? Under this impression I requested the purchase of the books—hastily to be sure. As to your offer of taking them off our hands I remark that I suspect you were influenced by a desire of taking an incumbrance out of our way rather than of possessing this book. If this is so you need give yourself no uneasiness as I shall be able easily to exchange it in New York for other valuable works. I see this book is marked on the New York Catalogues at 22 Dols. But if on the other hand the offer was made from pure love of divinity of the year 1630 in latin you may have these volumes and welcome though I think the work of the Rosenmullers (Father & Son—"Scolia in Fetus et Novum Testamentum" would be preferable. The talk about these books has spun out wonderfully. Within the new page we will begin a new subject.

2. With regard to my becoming instructor to your son I say as follows. I have both thought upon the subject myself and conversed about it with Mr. Olmsted.¹ The state of Mr. Olmsted's family is such as to forbid his receiving a youth into his house. Without any particle of that feeling which influenced the fox to aver respecting the grapes that they were sour I can say that I thank God I have no children. With me therefore the same obstacle does not exist as with him. When Judge Murphey applied to me a while ago to take a son of his I told him I consented with reluctance—but on the whole I don't know that I shall be unwilling to spend a portion of time every day for a year or two to come in teaching the language that I may become more thoroughly grounded in the rudiments. But before I agree to take your son or you to send him let us understand what we are both to expect. I sent for my brother in law from Yankee land and undertook to fit him for college and have since taken 3 others who could go on in a class with him and to these I devote

¹Denison Olmsted, 1791-1859, professor of chemistry and mineralogy in the University of North Carolina. He went to Yale in 1825 as professor of mathematics. He was the first state geologist of North Carolina.

one hour the day between 2 and 4 besides getting time late in the evening to cast my eye over the lesson. I received Judge Murphey's son and to him two others have since joined themselves and to these also I devote an hour every day. My brother in law also teaches them as well as he can for an hour. Now should your son come down to C. Hill to live with me I could only engage to spend an hour with him or with a class that should go on with him if there should be others whom I might receive on account of their being of the same standing every day and that my brother should do as much. For this together with his board wood washing etc. I should ask 15 dollars a Month and if he were older I should ask more. I could not even if you should conclude to send him receive him under Three months from the present time and during the vacations I should probably be away. I give it you as my opinion that if Mr. Rogers were going to stay in Hillsborough it were better for your son to stay with him and perhaps you had best do nothing about the business till that point is ascertained.

3. With respect to our salaries. According to the tenour of the communication made me by the committee of appointment I am undoubtedly entitled to about 1500 Dollars in place of the 1240 I receive. Nor was I at all consulted when the reduction was made. I must confess I was a little disturbed when I was told that the matter had been settled without so much as the compliment of "by your leave" but I learned afterwards that the Trustees had yielded the thing entirely to the representations and solicitations of Dr. Caldwell and soon satisfied myself that this excellent man whose value we shall know when he is in his grave, had not only intended but done all things well. The Trustees proceeded upon the ground that Dr. Caldwell proposed nothing which did not meet the approbation of his brethren and the Dr. himself proceeded upon the ground that we were like himself ready to yield up something for the common good and to suppose otherwise were to think very meanly of us. I do not suppose that any intimations and still less any explicit assurances were given to the Trustees as to what our views and feelings were. Yet they very naturally drew the conclusion that our assent had been given to the proposed measure. To that we have nothing to complain of on the part of the Trustees. Had been really consulted we should beyond all doubt have fallen in readily with the plan so there has been nothing irregular but the omission of an empty ceremony. But as you appear to be so sensitive upon the subject it may not be improper to say that probably the expectations which the Trustees authorized us in indulging when we left our early home have been satisfied inasmuch as the great increase in the value of money within the last two or three years has rendered our present stipend as valuable as 1500 would have been in times like those in which our contract was made. So that Adam Smith would say we had no ground for complaint even if we chose to complain—and Adam you know is no mean authority. Furthermore Mr. Olmsted enjoyed for nearly two years and I have enjoyed for a year

and a half and am to occupy in future the house in which I live—a thing not promised by the Trustees. So that if I were to give up what was promised above what I receive from the Treasury I should seem to do very little. Knowing however what are the disposable funds belonging to the University and that although you are ready to do even more than was promised yet we cannot hope to keep our professor of Rhetoric except upon the present scheme I certainly cheerfully give up from the present time all claim to more than 1240 Dolls pr. Annum. And whilst I wish these matters to be communicated in the proper way to those few persons amongst whom the subject has been talked over, I should be glad to have them after this has been done, hushed to sleep. With regard to Mr. Olmsted I will observe that up to the present time we have perhaps shared equally with myself, the liberality of the Trustees in Relation to a house but that hereafter unless the expenses I shall be obliged to incur for repairs to the building I occupy should be more than I expect, I shall, If this house is not purchased by the Trustees, have the advantage of him—he has moreover a pretty large and expensive family—and if the Trustees could find themselves able agreeably to their vote of last winter to purchase his house they would do a good kind and perhaps a just thing. After this, one thing which is not taken into account in fixing the salaries of men in our situation. Shutting ourselves up as we do like a parcel of monks, we never learn how to do business and manage money and are therefore forever imposed upon. I always think I come off grandly if when I make a bargain I am not cheated more than one third. Now that I have you as it were in my claws I will call your attention to the enclosed in presenting which I hope you will not think I am stepping out of my proper sphere.

I have not time to finish the paper referred to on the last page but may put it into your hands at some future time.

E. M.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From John Hall.

RALEIGH Jany. 30th, 1822.

I have done as you requested me with the papers and books left in my possession. We expect to finish the business of court today and leave this to morrow. I have not forgot what you requested as to my notes, but I do assure [you] upon looking over them I am of opinion they would be of no use to you, but only perplex you. Had I thought of it when I took them I would have tried to make them of some use to you.

Nothing has happened since you left this, we are all in statu quo.

I hope and believe that time with *your* diligence will carry you thro your embarrassments and restore to you your wonted spirits etc.

My respects to my friends and believe me respectfully

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Joel Strong.

GRASSY CREEK 5th Feby 1822.

I would beg leave to inform you, that I have concluded to have my name put in nomination to fill the appointment of Professor of Languages in the University, now vacant, by the resignation of Mr. Hooper.

As you have long been acquainted with me, I shall say nothing concerning my pretensions—and from your uniform friendship, I make no doubt of your support, so far, as you may think me worthy.

But I would assure you, that I have long since wished to devote the remainder of my life exclusively to literature, and my only motive, in seeking this appointment, is, to enable me to do it, and at the same time, to make myself in some measure useful to others.

Thomas C. Ruffin, Esquire.

[Address: Oxford.]

From Joseph Gales.

[RALEIGH, March 14, 1822]

We have finished all the copy sent by my Son from Hillsboro, and my Hands will be at little until we receive more.

The copy sent makes about 50 pages, so that it will require about twice as much to make up the present No.¹

If you will let us have it, the No. shall soon be out.

RALEIGH, Mar. 14, 1822.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From John Rogers.

BALTIMORE March 23d 1822.

My movements have been a little eccentric of late—but the result has been propitious. In person ere long, I shall have the pleasure of acknowledging to yourself and Dr. Webb, with how much gratitude I am [etc.,]

[P. S.] About fifteen minutes ago, I was received by the Faculty, as a Doctor of Medicine. My Thesis is yet to be written, which will employ me three or four days. The Commencement takes place next Monday week and if possible, I shall obtain permission to leave Balt. before that period, so as to be in Raleigh by the first Monday in April.

¹Reference is here made to Supreme Court Reports, Ruffin having been made reporter in 1820. His reports are to be found in 1 Hawks (8 N. C.), 1-248.

If you could only know how transcendantly delightful my feelings are, I am sure you would excuse me for the apparent negligence and haste with which this is written.

[Address:

Dr. James Webb

or

Thomas Ruffin Esquire

Hillsboro'

North Carolina.]

From John F. May.

PETERSBG. Mar. 14th, 1822.

I wrote some time ago to your Cashier Mr. Haywood, requesting him to hand you a note of Messrs Harisons, which Mr. Jones, our cashier had forwarded for insertion on my acct. Mr. Haywood has not answered my letter or Mr. Jones's; and I fear that some Bank matter may perhaps have ruffled his temper. It is a pity that corporations should have all the bad passions and feelings incident to human beings; without a Soul to answer for, if not to correct and controul them. But such I suppose must be the fact; I cannot suppose that a man so respectable, and so much a gentleman as Mr. Haywood, would decline any civility or good office, to any stranger of tolerably decent reputation; on the contrary I know that the better feelings which have characterized him thro' life, would make him take a pleasure, (a real tho' small still pleasure, in solitude after a day's business), in the reflection that he had, from the best and purest influences under which we ever act, done a service to one of his brethren, tho' a stranger; and thus contributed to extend the circle of human felicity. For what a wretched condition would ours be, without the dispositions and feelings which lead to the many little kind and civil offices, that are so necessary to our comfort our convenience, and our helplessness. But Banks can have all the feelings of resentment which an individual has, without any of those dispositions and corrections which heaven has, in its mercy, created in the human race: and thus the cashier of the Bank of N. C. will not give a civil answer to a civil question asked by the Prest. of the Bank of Va. as it was no doubt supposed—tho' in fact it was extended as a favour, asked of Mr. H. for poor me. I, by myself, I, as John Randolph said—But I am very far from the purpose with which I set out and which was anything rather than moralising. The note of which I speak was one handed to me, as agent for a most estimable woman, Mrs. Ro. Colquhoun, last fall. Mr. Harrison would have paid it, but for my neglect; and there-

fore when she, was going to Philad^a. I advanced her the money for it. It was not a negotiable note; and therefore not one which, here, (and probably in N. C.) could *stricti juris*, be collected at Bank; and was in Decr. last sent to Mr. Haywood with a request that he would cause an application to be made for the money. Some time in febr'y. I requested him to say whether the note was paid; and if not to place it in your hands. Will you do me the favour when you go to Raleigh to take charge of the matter for me? I have never heard one word from Mr. Haywood on the subject.

* * * * *

I feel anxious to learn what is your situation and what are your prospects, in relation to Murphy's affairs. I wish most earnestly that you may be extricated from this embarrassment upon better terms than you anticipated; and have several times intended to make this enquiry, but the pressure of business in the winter and spring prevents my doing any thing *but business*.

I hope that you and your good lady are in a great degree resigned to the more distressing affliction of which you apprized me last fall; and that its effects have yielded to that influence of time and those duties of life, which afford the only worthy solace to the agonies of a parents' bosom.

* * * * *

Th. C. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

To William Polk.¹

[RALEIGH N C., May 21, 1822]

At the Court House—

I have seen Mr. J * * * H * * * in the street today and conceive that he is plainly deranged; and I have some reason to believe that in his state of delusion, he meditates a personal attack upon you for some supposed recent injury—Mr Seawell detained him over an hour this morning opposite the Bank from going into the Directors room, where he had before enquired what Directors attended. I feel it my duty to communicate this matter to you and to suggest that the only way to contend effectually with a mad-man is to avoid him. I hope his friends will be able to get him to go home shortly and in the mean time, that you remain at your own house—Mr. Seawell expresses the same hope, to whom I have shewn this and who desires me to add that *he knows*, that Mr H * * * is a perfect maniac and that he has the most hostile purposes towards you. At present Dr H * * * has charge of him and will use his best endeavours to restrain and to get him off.

¹Mss. Division, Library of Congress, William Polk Papers.

From William Polk.

[RALEIGH, N. C., May 21, 1822]

I am much obliged by the Note which you sent me this morning and am thankful to you and others who have interested themselves in the business to which your Note had allusion.

I have told Dr. H * * * that I would not throw myself in J. H's way; but my dear Sir I have like other men business to perform which will call me from my house into the street and elsewhere; and I cannot consent or submit to being confined to my domicil thro' the threats of any man; and if attacked must defend myself but to avoid all this, is it not in the province of the Court to take cognizance of the matter and apply the legal preventive—to this end I enclose you an address to the Court, which I beg you to present in such way as your good judgment shall direct.

1 O'Clock 21, May, 1822.

Mr. Ruffin.

[Enclosure]

To the worshipful Court of Wake County.

Gentlemen.

I have this day been informed by high and reputable authority; that J * * * H * * * Esqr. of the county aforesaid, has declared it as his intention, to assault me, that for this purpose he carries a large Hickory stick, and has been in search of me, in divers parts of Raleigh, to carry his declarations into effect. It is not fear of Mr. H * * *, that induces me to make this communication to your Worships; but it is, that you as conservators of the peace, and guardians of the priviledges and freedom of the citizens of the County over which as a Court you preside; will take measures to secure that peace and personal freedom which is likely to be disturbed and restrained by the menaces of the said J * * * H * * * Esq if carried into execution.

I am an old Man now, with a large Family under my care; and a member of this Family is now in a situation unqualified to bear surprise or distress from whatever cause, but more particularly from an assault on me.

I pray the Court to take such order on the foregoing representation as they shall deem proper.

Your very Obt. Ser

Tuesday May 21, 1822.

WILL. POLK

*To Bartlett Yancey.*¹

RALEIGH, July 2nd, 1822.

The sale of Rose's property will be made on Monday next to a certainty I expect. I shall attend myself and hope the sale will be closed as I have had trouble enough about it, God knows, and can't think of taking more on me if avoidable.

I shall be exceeding glad to see you there and beg that you will not disappoint me. I have many things to say to you—to communicate some facts and to interchange opinions upon other points. The Republicans must rouse themselves. The public mind must be enlightened; else the Cause and the Country will go down. There is a powerful combination forming and formed against us. Don't fail to be at Person. I have no time to say more.

N. B. Come early in the day, so that we may have a long talk. I shall be obliged to get home Monday night so as to leave again on Tuesday.

From Duncan Cameron.

ORANGE Octo: 5th 1822.

* * * * *

Have you heard lately from Mr. Murphy—do you expect him back shortly—if not what detains him? Report says that he is engaged in the purchase of property. I hope not, as I fear it will prove an unprofitable speculation.

[Address: Hillsboro']

From John Haywood.

SATURDAY NIGHT, [Nov., 1827]

Your kind note of this Evening is before me:—I regret much that Business has so occupied you as well as myself, during the present week, that we have not had half an hour which might be devoted to a discussion of the meritorious claims of our absent Friend and to the placing them on such a Basis as will help promise to insure justice; by which I would be understood to mean a liberal Compensation, and one which should be graduated by the magnitude and importance of his late highly

¹This letter is in the possession of the North Carolina Historical Society and is reprinted from *The James Sprunt Historical Publications*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

valuable services to our University:¹—Needy as that Institution is and has ever been, Mr. Murphey's late Efforts in its favour, have been crowned with a degree of success which I hope and trust will prove incalculably valuable; by placing at its disposal Funds which; with prudent management, cannot fail to prove commensurate to its wants, at all future times. As there is no man in our Country who could better have achieved this meritorious work or service, so there is none among us, that I would more willingly owe the Benefits of it to, than to Mr. Murphey: and in truth, I doubt much whether there is any other man in our State, who could have effected the delicate and difficult Business of that Undertaking, with that full and complete success and address which he has.—The University owes him much, and I consider the Trustees and our Citizens at large greatly indebted to him, on that occasion:—He has neglected his own Business, as well here as in Tennessee, to attend to and accomplish ours, or rather that of the University of which we have the Care:—as a Patriot, I doubt not he feels a Reward in the reflection, that he has served this Establishment, the best hope of our Country, and one to which he has long been enthusiastically attached, efficiently and to the utmost of his power: but we all know, that whilst his invaluable time and labours have been devoted to this service his private affairs, and of course his family, have been neglected. He has laboured much and long for the public good, whilst he has accomplished less for himself and family than most other men of ability and worth among us; and it remains for the Trustees to take order, that his services to the University shall issue in a different respect.

I love Murphey as a friend and Brother, and feel indeed a deep interest in all that concerns him, or his; and on the present occasion, none among his many friends can be more anxiously desirous that he should be handsomely and liberally treated and compensated, than I am:—I wish to God it was more in my power to do justice to his worth and merit, *by publickly speaking of them*; or to place his just Claims in such light as would insure their success:—The little I can do, either in the Board or out of doors, shall not be left undone:—I wish however exceedingly that you could be here, as I am persuaded you would be highly useful now although you might not feel free or at liberty to say much on the occasion. I trust and hope with you that Mr. Murphey will rise superior to those difficulties which have latterly clouded his prospects, and depressed his Friends:—I trust his expectations in the western country will be fully realized; but in the mean while, I know you will agree with me, that his friends here ought not to be the less industrious, in advocating the just claims of which I have made mention above, however he may be able to live without them. The Trustees of our University compose a numerous Body, and among such numbers some diversity of opinion

¹Murphey had been able to secure for the University of North Carolina a compromise which had restored to it a considerable portion of its Tennessee lands which the State of Tennessee had refused to release.

may well be looked for. I wish you could attend the meetings of the Board, during a few evenings; and if it would be in your power to do so, I will not fail to advise you of the time when this Business will probably come on. I hope our country generally and the Trustees of our University in particular will shew, that they appreciate these Services of Mr. Murphey on this interesting Mission. I am willing to believe all will be grateful, but, in his circumstances that is not enough; I wish to see him rewarded—munificently rewarded—and this I trust and hope will be done.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Eagle Hotel Raleigh.]

From Gavin Hogg.¹

[CHAPEL HILL, N. C., Dec. 2, 1822]

One of the members of assembly mentioned to me that there was a Bill before the assembly to take away from the Judges of the Supreme Court, the power of appointing a Reporter, and to vest it in the Assembly who were to appoint some person to report every year with a salary for his services and asked me whether I would accept the appointment: I answered that I had no objections to report the cases but that I would do nothing that would tend to displace you: He said that your removal was determined on and that my accepting or refusing would not affect you: I then declined giving an answer to the application until my return which would be on thursday: He said He would endeavour to keep the Bill on the table until my return: I left a verbal message for Mr. Devereux authorizing him if it would not affect you and if no one else was solicitous to have the appointment to let the *member* know that I would accept: But this communication was to be made only in the event that it was necessary to decide before my return: The conversation with the member was on friday last I left Raleigh on Saturday before Mr. Devereux had returned from Johnston Court: You have friends in Raleigh who will have advised you of the Bill or Resolution for I know not which it is: You will perceive at once that it was due to the good understanding between us that you should know from me in what manner my name became concerned in the matter: I do not know now that my name will ever be mentioned to the Assembly but if it should it is proper that you should know from me that I would not consent to receive any advantage or profit at your expense.

Thos. Ruffin esqre.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹Gavin Hogg was a noted lawyer of Bertie County.

From Duncan Cameron.

RALEIGH, Dec. 25th 1822.

* * * * *

It was with great reluctance that I complied with your instructions in reporting your resignation as a Member of the Committee etc. I had fulfilled your request in that particular before the receipt of your last letter. I now regret that I did not take on myself the responsibility of withholding it.

* * * * *

The Assembly is fast drawing to a close, of which I am heartily glad—its proceedings will be found highly unprofitable to the State. an attempt was made to establish Courts of Equity in each of the present judicial circuits, to be holden by the Judges of the Supreme Co. and to create two additional circuits with two Judges both of which have failed. I will give you some information on those subjects worthy of notice when I see you. I am decidedly of opinion that the Supreme Co. as at present organized rests on a very unstable foundation, and that unless other duties than those as are performed by the members of it are assigned to and performed by them, it cannot maintain its existence many years.

I shall be gratified by hearing from you on your return from Danville, and by learning that you have gotten the business with Cabell adjusted to your satisfaction. I remain with regard

[Address: Hillsboro']

From Francis L. Hawks.¹

RALEIGH Jany 9, 1823.

In consequence of the act of 1822, the Judges of the Supreme Ct. have made me Reporter. I accepted the appointment under an assurance I had received (not however from the Judges) that you did not wish it. It is made my duty to report such cases as you have not, and I have to beg of you to furnish me with such papers as you may have, belonging to or connected with cases which you have not prepared for the press. If you can bring them with you, it will be to me an accomodation.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹Francis Lister Hawks, 1798-1866, the noted author and Episcopal minister, then a practicing lawyer.

From Francis L. Hawks.

RALEIGH Feb. 14, 1823.

I have availed myself of the privilege you gave me when here and have published your last in *my* name, adding a note that you prepared the cases. My object was to secure to you some remuneration for your trouble. I can receive pay for it and hand it over to you, had it appeared in your name nothing would have been obtained.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Thomas D. Bennehan.

STAGVILLE 15th April 1823.

* * * * *

Most sincerely do I join you in wishing that your situation was such, that you would feel willing to abandon your laborious but lucrative profession, it is only necessary for you to continue it a few years, and our wishes will be gratified, and the moment you reach this point, I as a friend advise you either to abandon your Profession or curtail your labours for your life in my opinion depends on it. I have scarcely heard one word in this section of the county about the congressional election, but this much I am confident of that our people will not submit willingly to be saddled by D. L. Barringer, if we can possibly prevail on some decent man to oppose him. Be so good as to tell Mr. Kirkland that I will write to him in a few days on the subject of Thrashing Machines.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

*From James H. Ruffin.*¹

WENTWORTH 27th May 1823.

* * * * *

We have this day had an election to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Jno. Mattock as Sheriff. There were 4 or 5 candidates and John O'Donnel has been the successful aspirant to the office. The contest was principally between Jas. Watt and him, and was very nearly equal, he succeeding by only two votes. His success is unpopular among the legal profession at this Bar.

My love to Sister and your family:—

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

Hillsborough No. Ca.

¹James Hipkins Ruffin, the younger brother of Thomas Ruffin.

From Hugh Ogleby.

SYDENHAM GEORGIA May 31st 1823.

Should it not be too great an infringement upon your professional avocations, you will confer a favour on me, by informing me of the situation of the Debts placed in your hands some time since on Jonathan Haralson. Also the result of the Suit instituted by Thos. Donoho against my Father and Doctor Garland for the Land sold the Latter. Wheather it has been tried, or wheather you think it is probable, they will ever bring it to a close. My removal to this country has presented much better prospects in life than I had in Milton, and I hope to be enabled (if I can remain *unmolested*) by Industry, and strict Economy to afford those who are dependent upon me for subsistance, all of the necessary comforts of life.

We at this time experience considerable pressure, money is scarcer here than it has been known to be for several years past. There has been some recent improvement in the price of cotton, it is brisk sale and in Demand in Augusta @ 8 to 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ cents. Politicks runs unusually high with us upon the next Presidential Election, how stands Mr. Crawford with you. Our Crops are unusually promising. Please give me an answer to this as early as may suit your Convenience. A Letter will reach me directed to Bethlehem, Oglethorpe County Ga.

[Address:

Hillsborough,
North Carolina.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER 10th June 1823.

Dear Ruffin.

* * * * *

I have been specially employed in the Case of Stokes and Wellborn vs Waugh and Findly. It is the old Moravian Cause over again, and I fear a further examination of it. It is better for the Parties to have a Continuance: I expect Stokes and Wellborn both calculate upon my paying *some* attention to it: but I have never received any direct application on the subject, and therefore am not at liberty to interfere. Gaston appears for the Complots, I believe. Continue it, if it be mutually agreeable.

If I die in Tennessee, or on the road, in due time have me brought to Orange and laid by the Side of my Children. I leave my Will with my Wife, duly attested to pass my lands in Tennessee. I have devised the whole of my Lands to yourself and my son William, in Trust to pay my Debts, in the first place, and in the next, for the Use of my Wife.

If I die and you can Sell as much of my lands as will pay my Debts, and pay you for the following Negroes, Henry, Bridget and Lucy, I wish you to convey those Negroes to my Wife. She could not in any possible way that I can conceive, get along without Henry and Bridget.

Should my Wife stand in need of any thing, I beg you to furnish it. I shall hasten back as fast as I can: But I wish to settle \$20,000 of Debts before I leave Tennessee. My mind will be much relieved, if I can effect this. I shall have a busy time, having a great Variety of Business to do for others as well as myself: But all of it will yield me a Profit, except a little Business of Mrs. Camerons.

* * * * *

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

N. B. I beg you to buy a Virgil with English Notes, in Raleigh, and send it to the Care of Mr. Johnston in Hillsborough for Umstead. He will want it before you go to Caswell Court. I have no other chance of getting him a Virgil.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Samuel Strudwick.¹

NEAR GREENSBORO, ALABAMA, [June 15, 1823]

I learn by Mr. Sd. Ashe who has but just returned from N. Carolina, that the Cape Fear N. Company have obtained a judgement on a note they held against me for \$450. which is one half of the price of a lot I purchased of them at the sale. This is the second bond; the one that became due first I discharged. Mr. Ashe also informs that in pursuance of your advice he enjoined the Cape Fear N. Company on the judgement they had against him, and that it is advisable for me to resort to the same expedient; This I would most cheerfully do, but I am entirely at a loss in what manner to do it; whether the injunction can be had in this country and forwarded; or whether it can be effected through an agent to whom I may have communicated the grounds on which the injunction is solicited. Reduced as I am to this state of incertitude I must beg you to furnish me with the earliest instructions on the subject; and if there unfortunately should not be time enough, to avail myself of an injunction, I wish you to adopt such further proceedings on my behalf as will be to my advantage. In a letter I have just written to Doctor Webb I have stated as well as I could my reasons for praying an injunction; hoping it might perhaps have the desired effect.

There is another subject to which I wish to call your attention, namely the settlement with my Fathers estate for the monies reed. from England.

¹Samuel Strudwick was a native of Orange County who had become a resident of Alabama.

A final settlement has never yet taken place, neither has there been any allowance made me for the expenses incurred in conducting this business. The accounts exhibiting the expenses referred to, were left with you, and as I am in arrears to the estate, it is of importance to me that these accounts should be passed to my credit. I am still desirous to have the question of Law relative to the distribution of this money decided by the Supreme Court, and altho' many may be disposed to impugn my motive, none have a right to do it, because none know it. The bargain you will recollect I made with you was that I would give you if successful \$200, otherwise \$50.

I should glad to hear that you had recd. of Mr. Bruce the amount of the note, for which I am security, but I am a little fearful there are no such good tidings in store for me. Suffer me to repeat the request, that you will communicate with me as soon as possible, and furnish me with the instructions relative to *this bill of injunction* I so much need. I have the happiness of being able to inform that the Carolina Colony are all well. Present my best respects to Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland and Mrs. Ruffin and accept the assurances of sincerest esteem.

P. S. I understand Reeves intends coming on here to take *or steal*, my Lynch negro; I would be very thankful to you if you would take the trouble to give me a little information on this subject,—Whether he has any right take her into possession? And what sort of right it is, I have to a piece of property that ceased to be mine as soon as I lose possession?

June 15th 1823.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From Joseph Gales.

RALEIGH 1st July 1823.

The Intendant and Commissioners of the city of Raleigh having entered into a contract with Capt. Theophilus Hunter for the purchase of his right to a certain Mill Pond on Walnut Creek and the said parties having agreed that the price to be paid for the same shall be ascertained and fixed by certain Arbitrators to be chosen by each.

I am instructed to notify you of your appointment as Arbitrator on the part of the Intendant and Comms. and to request the favor of your services on the occasion.

The other arbitrators on the part of the Board is Will. Robards Esq. and those on the part of Theo. Hunter are Will Sneed Esqr. of Granville and Henry Goodloe Esq of Franklin.

Yours respectfully

JO. GALES,
Int^t. of Police.

From Thomas Crowder Jr.

LYNCHBURG 7th July 1823.

I have long had it in contemplation to write you but in consequence of an important charge, a crowd of business and much affliction I have been let hitherto. I however at last have found the time. At the present I am recovering from a severe attack of ague and fever; the attack was more bilious than otherwise; my fevers were very high frequently producing delirium, but in all this the Lord was with me, insomuch that I could say with the great Apostle of Gentiles "for me to live is Christ; but to die is gain."

We have a very large church in this place, consisting of two hundred and forty five members—our house is a very good one and remarkably well attended. I suppose, at moderate calculation, upon an average, I preach to one thousand souls every time I hold forth. We have very precious meetings among us, though as yet, no particular revival has taken place; yet I hope we are ripening for one. I think I have seen some traces of it. May the Lord hasten it on and save the purchase of his own blood. Amen.

I will now change the subject for a while. The various kinds of trade here are dull except the tobacco trade which, by the by, is the most important. I have understood from my landlord, that upwards of ten thousand Hogsheads of tobacco have been inspected here this year; but notwithstanding this the people cry here like they do there. Hard times! Hard times! One, (and the grand) reason of so much dissatisfaction in world, is the people are seeking happiness where it is not to be found.

Now permit me to close by subjoining you an exhortation. Reflect how precious and short time is, how much is already gone to waste, the vast importance of redeeming the remainder; on the talents God has freely and mercifully given you, the awful responsibility under which you lay to him for an improvement of those talents; the evanescent nature of all things below; God's having advertised you of this and prepared and directed your mind to something well calculated to render you in part happy here and forever hereafter; and the awful thought of dwelling in the damnation of hell through interminable ages; but elating idea of dwelling in those mansions which our blessed Emanuel has prepared for them that love him, there where glory dwells in glory and light beams behind light.

Now when you have thus reflected, hasten to the Lord Jesus, the intrinsic eloquence of whose pleading once darkened the sun as midnight, clothed Phoebus in sackcloth, dimmed the stars and converted the whole earth, yea even rent the solid marble; and now prevails in your behalf: He will apply the purifying blood to your soul, hide you in the

cleft of the rock (himself) cause you to see his glory and spread over you his broad hand of power and save you forevermore. So adieu.

Give my love with both hands to Mrs. Ruffin, Catherine and all the children.

Remember me to all enquiring friends.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

Endorsed:

Rev. Thos. Crowder

July 1823.]

From B. B. Smith.

RALEIGH 12th Augt. 1823.

I have just recd from the P. M. General a copy of the letter addressed by his predecessor to you on the 24th May last, and you will find it on the other page. I am more than ever confirmed in the belief, that the *original* must have been purloined and your plan for detection discovered.

Let us however be on the alert, and try all expedients for I yet hope we shall discover the Miscreants. I have examined the northern packet several times from Hillsboro' but perceive you have not as yet made the experiment we agreed upon. You will do so doubtless whenever you find time.

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.
Hillsboro.

[On same sheet of paper]

GENL POST OFFICE

24th May 1823.

Thos. Ruffin Esq.
Hillsboro, N. C.

SIR. The project which you suggest for discovering the depredators upon the mail appears to be a good one. If you will make a remittance, taking the same precautions as you did in the letter to Robertson & Kelso, appointing the time for Mr. Smith to open the mail and repeating the experiment two or three times if necessary, If any loss is sustained It shall be reimbursed to you by this office, Your friend ought not to know it is any other than a real transaction. I have written Mr. Smith on this occasion.

Respectfully etc.

(Signd.) R. J. MEIGS.

[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

John McLean¹ to B. B. Smith.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

27 Aug. 1823.

Sir,

I have just received a letter from Judge Ruffin, with your postscript. It appears to me, that a plan somewhat different from the one proposed by the Judge, might be adopted with a better prospect of success. Suppose that you or the Judge should enclose in a letter fifteen or twenty dollars in one dollar notes, folded in such a manner, as to shew that something of value was enclosed, and direct this letter to some town to which remittances are frequently made. This letter might be mailed at an office, so as to require it to pass through the suspected offices. You or he could accompany the mail with a key to open it, and always open it just before it arrived at the suspected office, and immediately after it had passed. By this means the dishonest P. M. might be detected, and the evidence would, in all probability, lead to a conviction. It is not only desirable, that such dishonest post masters should be discovered, but that they should be punished.

If you or he will undertake this plan, your expences shall be paid, and a compensation for your time, also any loss which you may sustain by enclosing the money above stated, shall be made good. You probably have a spare key in the Office, if not, I will send you one.

This letter will authorize you or the Judge to open the mail.

I am willing to adopt any plan most likely to detect dishonesty, but I should like to see the one I have above suggested first tried.

I am very respectfully

B. B. Smith Esquire

Your obedient servant

Raleigh, N. C.

JOHN McLEAN.

[Address: Benj. B. Smith Esquire

Post Master,

Raleigh

North Carolina.]

From B. B. Smith.

POST OFFICE,

RALEIGH 2d. September

1823.

You will find enclosed a letter from the Post Master General, on the subject of your late communication. He seems disposed to try a different

¹John McLean of Ohio, 1785-1861, M. C., 1813-1816; postmaster general, 1823-1829; associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, 1829-1861.

plan from the one intimated by you, and I think it a pretty good one; but after all, it is only what we heretofore agreed upon, but never carried it into execution. Suppose therefore we make the experiment in the next mail or the mail after, and if we should not succeed, on information being given to the P. M. Genl. he will try the experiment suggested by you.

I have given Mr. Moring, the Key to hand to you; and after putting in your letters at the Post Office, you could get into the stage and ride a short distance and examine the Hillsboro packet of Letters directed "Northwardly." If all was safe, then you would be satisfied that no attempt had been made at Hillsborough to rob that mail and you might return. It would then have to pass thro' the Chapel Hill Post Office, and if at that place any violence was committed, on examining the same Northern Packet of Letters, here, it would be readily discovered if nothing was found amiss, why then I could take out your letter or letters, and return them to you by Mr. Moring. If we do not succeed the first attempt, let us continue the experiment, and I think after a while we shall be apt to entrap the miscreant.

You ought to let me know privately by Mr. Moring, the *address* of the letters you intend for the *experiment*, so that they may not pass this office.

It would I think in writing these letters, be well, to be *particular in the phraseology*, so that if they should fall into bad hands, they might *not suppose they were caught*; for in such event they might immediately make their escape by flight.

I would come up to Hillsborough myself, and consult with you further on the subject, but it being uncertain, whether I should find you at home, and as it will be in your power to do every thing that I conceive to be necessary in the business, it is not worth while for me at present to visit Hillsborough. Let me hear from you as soon as practicable. I suppose of course that the Post Master Genl. wrote to you, as well as to myself. What does he say about Cookes letters? Did he ever receive any from him on the subject of these robberies?

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

Hillsboro.

From Duncan McFayden.

FAYETTEVILLE 22d Oct. 1823.

Mr. John U. Kirkland of this place advised me to write you as one of the Trustees of the University of this State and give you an account of the family of a Mr. Gilbert MacKechnie who died at Chapel Hill in June 1821. In hopes that such will facilitate the means of recovering any little money left by said McKechnie, I beg leave to trouble you with the following particulars.

The deed was a native of the Island of Islay Argyle Shire Scotland, which place he left in October 1820 leaving then an aged mother in indigent and reduced circumstances. His only brother John MacKechnie left Scotland four years ago and is since living in the British Dominions of America. I have had a letter from him lately which I send you enclosed and from which you may see that it is his wish to send his poor mother anything that can be recovered after satisfying all demands against his brother, Gilbert McKechnes Estate. The amt. left agreeably to Mr. J. P. Sneed's statement to me, was, after defraying all expences, about Sixty seven dollars, which sum although small would now be of essential service to this poor woman for whose relief alone I have been at so much trouble and Expense. I hope therefore that you will exert your influence in recovering this little sum and on remitting it to me or Mr. John U. Kirkland. I shall forthwith send you and Mr. Sneed or either a satisfactory Bond of Indemnification. Should the enclosed letters from the mother and brother of the deceased be not sufficient to convince the Trustees of the University as to the confidence reposed in me by them, I shall beg leave to refer you to the following gentlemen for particulars respecting my character—hoping to hear from you on this subject when convenient,

References.

Angus Taylor
 Dun: Thompson
 John M. Dobbin
 John McRae.

P. S. I enclose you also .5/ to pay the postage as I cannot get into the office.

D. McF.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

[Enclosure]

John MacKechney to Duncan McFadyen.

Mr. Duncan Mc Fadyen

QUEBEC 30th June 1823.

SIR. tho I belive your are My countryman, yet I am sorry to truble you as I dont Recolect of you. I had a letter Inclosed to me from John Gillien Losset—Dunes of Islay—Argyleshire which apeared to have been sent you from Mr. James Hogg—of Chapel hill Dated 7th June 1821 Giving you a particular account of My Brother Gilbert McKechnes Death. John Gillics is a Cusen of mine—he could not give me any other acct. of Gilberts Death only this letter—which I supose you send to my Mother Catherine McIntyre Neanboss Islay I left Paisley 4 years ago and My Mother G McKechney was to follow—however it was not to be. Now the only thing I wish you to do for me, is if you can

give me any Information so as to recover his watch and seals which was my own, and formerly Belong to my Brother Malcolm McKechney Jailor, Glasgow, who Died in 1817. I was the oldest Brother—and now left alone however thank God I have a promising little Family of 4 children and Considering the bad times pretty comfortable. I suppose by the account you had from Mr. hogs that there would be very little left when all was paid. Mr. hogg behaved as a friend and a Gentleman I wish I had it in my power to make him a Recompence—he will have my poor Mothers Blesings who is now left without a child Only me—and fare from him it would be an act of Charity to send her any thing that was lift—if any it Might be sent to Petter MacEacharn Spesel Marchant Greenock, a friend of ours. I trust these lines will come to your hand and an answer will Greatly oblige

Your most Obt. Sert.

JOHN MACKECHNEY.

Armoure Ordnance Department Quebec.

N. B. there is one Malcolm MacLellon Tailor from Islay hear whom you know. Please to let me have Mr. Hogg address. J. M. K.

[Address:

Mr. Dunⁿ McFayden
at Mr. Taylors Mercht.
Fayetteville
U. S.]

From B. B. Smith.

POST OFFICE

RALEIGH 28th Octo. 1823.

Your favor under date of the 16th Inst, by Mr. Moring, was duly recd, and Agreeably to your request, I opened and particularly examined the mail myself and found that the two fictitious Letters sent in the Raleigh Packet and the one in the Petersburg Packet, were all safe, and no markes of violence appeared on any of the genuine Letters therein enclosed. They were of course forwarded. By this days mail I return you the money in two Letters of a similar character. One addressed by myself to you, covering \$17 and the other by Alexander Collins, containing \$20. I have taken down the number and description of the Bills as nigh as they could be ascertained, some of them being very ragged. I hope you will meet the stage and examine the Raleigh packet. That you may easily find and distinguish it from the other Packets I will direct it in large Letters, "*Hillsboro, Orange County No. Ca.*", and underscore the word Hillsboro. This may save you a good deal of time, and after you shall have opened it and satisfied yourself, you will be

very particular in doing it up again. If everything should be right, why then you must wait until the mail shall be opened at the Hillsboro Office, and here if your Letters are not immediately delivered you may easily know the reason—should they go safe to hand, it will be well to repeat the experiment after a while and I think we shall be pretty apt to catch the villain. Whenever you propose to try it again, drop me a line by Mr. Moring, and as before I will particularly examine the mail.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHINGTON Dec. 29th, 1823.

I have the satisfaction of acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 20th inst. Your profered "services in defending or adjusting" the demand against me, places me under additional obligations to the many other causes of friendship which I have already received at your hands—and nothing I can assure you will ever afford me more real gratification than to retain your good opinion and in some way be able to return the many favours for which I am so much your debtor.

* * * * *

Do not however let me impose upon you any labour, that may be the least injurious to your health, which I am happy to learn has so far improved, and which with care I trust will soon be entirely restored. You should certainly abstain from the 'cares of life' for a sufficient length of time to place your disorder out of the probability of returning.

It will afford me pleasure at any time whilst here to give you such information upon the passing accurrences as may interest you. We have as you will perceive many propositions for the amendment of the Constitution. One would think from the number that the Abbé Sieyes or his constitution making spirit had gotten amongst us. Mr. McDuffie¹ and Hayne² are both very zealous, the former has made a very able *report* in favour of his plan and will I understand make an elaborate argument, the latter on introducing his into the Senate claimed credit for what did not really belong to him nor his plan and that of Mr. Taylor³ last year is in principle the same—very doubtful what is to be done. Mr. Webster has offered a Greek resolution⁴ he is an able man and when it

¹George E. McDuffie, 1790-1851, member of Congress from South Carolina.

²Robert Young Hayne, 1791-1839, senator from South Carolina.

³John W. Taylor of New York.

⁴Greece, now in the midst of a fierce struggle against Turkey, sought recognition from the United States. There was much feeling in the country favorable to recognition. Webster's resolution provided for the appointment of a commissioner to Greece whenever the President deemed it expedient. Webster and Clay both supported this vehemently, while President Monroe and John Quincy Adams, secretary of state, were both insistent upon neutrality. The resolution was lost partly through Randolph's opposition. It was a particularly unfavorable time for such action in view of the President's message at the opening of this session of Congress, promulgating the Monroe Doctrine.

comes up will no doubt support it with ability. The Tariff we shall again certainly have. I fear they are to get the advantage of us, tho' every resistance will be made to reject or render their burthens as light as practicable. It is rumored that the president is in possession of important communications from the British governments, in relation to the views of the Holy allies concerning the South American republics—what they are will not likely be known, before our Committee of Foreign relations shall propose something and probably not untill after it shall be known what the allies propose doing. I wish that Calhoun in his wild ambition may not induce the President to endanger our own peace by endeavouring to give consequence to the army and his extravagant plans for fortifications.

It is really a source of mortification to hear to what little petty appointments the President has condescended to prostitute himself, in order to serve the selfish views of Calhoun. I learnt a day or two since, that both the Senators and representators from Missouri recommended a man as *collector* in that State, that Mr. Crawford concurred, being an appointment properly belonging to his depart. yet the President recommended a man, a brother of little Cook's¹ of Illinois, who had voted for Calhoun in a Legislative caucus. The Senate however had the firmness to reject the nomination. It is said too that Gov. Edwards² (a man without moral character) would receive the nomination to Mexico, but for the fear of his rejection Stokes is an applicant, but poor old fellow his services in the cause of the "favorite" are too feeble to insure him success.

I agree entirely in your views in relation to certain characters and parties, and though I have strong grounds to hope for success, still there is much to fear. Adams and Calhoun evidently begin to jar, there has been one or too pieces in their papers here that evince no small degree of feeling. I think it more than likely therefore that Crawford would divide the Eastern States, should Adams be drafted. From Pennsylvania I learn the *caucus* nomination will certainly succeed—that Crawford already has the largest number in the Legislature—that Jackson's friends will certainly go for him, as they complain of the arrogance with which Calhoun's friends claim them—I find too that amongst the members here Jacksons few supporters from that State, will vote with us in caucus. New York it is confidently said, will go for the Caucus—should De Witt C. offer, this will more likely unite the republicans. But every possible exertion is now making against a caucus. Calhoun has out spies, who bring every body that can be operated upon, to his house which

¹Daniel Pope Cook, 1795-1827, M. C., 1819-1827.

²Ninian Edwards, 1775-1833, had been chief justice of Kentucky, governor of Illinois Territory for nine years, and was now United States senator. He was appointed minister to Mexico in 1824, but was recalled to answer charges. He had written a paper containing very serious charges against William H. Crawford and avowed the fact. Not being able to sustain them in any respect, he resigned. He was governor of Illinois from 1826 to 1831.

is always open to his partisans. Clay's party too begin to hawl off, they still say they greatly prefer Crawford as Second, but they know the hostility of the other candidates and that Calhoun's party will do any thing for his defeat, hence they found their calculations for the success of Clay, they do not positively refuse and I am in hopes that enough of them will go in to answer our purpose. So soon as the Legislature of New York shall meet, which will be in January, and shall again express their sentiments upon a caucus, we shall make a trial to have it. I agree with you fully as to Calhoun and I should not be greatly disappointed should he prove a second Burr. I am in hopes Mr. Macon will go into Caucus. Branch now admits that Mr. Crawford will get the vote of our State. I trust our Legislature does as handsomely in forming their electoral ticket as they did upon other points. I wish we may do as well here. I hope for the best.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

From William Ruffin and Others.

RALEIGH, 1st January, 1824

Sir,

At a public meeting of the Members of the General Assembly, favorable to the election of William H. Crawford as the next President, on the 24th of December, you were nominated as an Elector for the District in which you reside: We were appointed a Committee of Correspondence, and directed to inform you of your nomination, and enquire of you, whether you would consent to serve if elected, and vote for Mr. Crawford as President. We trust, that if you agree with us in the propriety of supporting Mr. Crawford, principles of patriotism will induce you to comply with the wishes of your friends, in consenting to place your name on the Ticket formed by those friendly to his election. You will be pleased to give us an answer on this subject, directed to William Ruffin, of Raleigh, as soon as practicable.

Very respectfully,

B. YANCY,
ROBT. STRANGE.
J. WILSON,
J. W. CLARK,
W. RUFFIN.

[Address: Thomas Ruffin, Esq.]

From Willie P. Mangum.

WASHINGTON CITY January 20th 1824.

My Dear Sir

I was surprised and indeed mortified to see announced in the Star yesterday that our friend Mr. James Mebane had consented to hold a poll for one of the electors to support the election of Mr. Calhoun. I was mortified, because the contest will inevitably destroy that harmony which is so desirable in the county, and impair that good understanding which it has been my pleasure to cultivate between him and my friends.

I have written to Mr. Mebane at great length on the Presidential election two or three times, and laboured to convince him that whatever might be the success of Mr. Calhoun in North Carolina, that he stands no chance of ultimate success, and that division in the South will very probably secure the election of Mr. Clay.

I regret to see Mr. Mebane made the organ through which that party will express their opinions, and to see him with his personal and deserved popularity endeavouring to sustain a cause that cannot but be hopeless.

The result will impair the usefulness of that very excellent man, without a prospect of advancing essentially the interests of his favorite candidate—I still hope that he will decline, and open the way to a gentleman who is ever ready to occupy the breach not where imminent perils are to be encountered but where popular favour can be wooed. Touching the result everything is in doubt and uncertainty. That Mr. Crawford is intrinsically stronger and considerably stronger than either of the candidates cannot be questioned. But that Mr. Calhoun cannot succeed I take to be equally certain. Mr. Adams is evidently on the decline. His best friends abate in their ardour, believing I presume that he cannot be carried through. Gen. Jackson is more carressed here than all them—and is rapidly gaining ground, and could without doubt get Pennsylvania, if she did not think her vote would be thrown away.

You have seen that a convention will be held in Pennsylvania, with the view of designating a ticket. It is believed here that her object is to gain time, watch the progress of events and ultimately throw her strength in favour of the rising candidate. It is believed that both New York and Pennsylvania will make it a point not to be in the minority of the General Government, and therefore I presume that any calculations at this time could not be satisfactorily relied on. If the election shall come to the House of Reps. I assure you that Mr. Clay will be a dangerous Competitor.

Since my arrival at Washington I have become more and more confirmed in the belief that the best interests of this nation require the elevation of Mr. Crawford to the Executive Chair.

You have observed the direction and progress of the present Administration and it seems to me that it cannot be doubted that the present fashionable ultra republicans have gone mad further than the sound

Federalists of the old school, and that Mr. Calhoun is at the head of the new school cannot be questioned. I do not believe that there is any intelligent Federalist in No. Ca. that upon his own principles can keep pace with the new school republicans. The new school has taken the principles of the old Federalists but press their principles much further, I mean on the subjects of internal improvement etc., and especially in a latitudinous construction of the constitution generally.

Mr. Macon informs me that even Rufus King told him that he was alarmed at the extent to which the new school were going, and that it had put him upon a reexamination of long established opinions. Mr. Webster yesterday occupied the house 2 or 3 hours on his resolution. The topic would seem to be barren, but he made it most interesting, and it is said that a more able speech has not been made in some years, in the House on the policy and views of the Holy Alliance he was most powerful, and indeed of the great men here he is the only one that in debate has yet manifested all the strength that I had attributed to him. You know that as a popular speaker Mr. Clay is perhaps unrivalled. Their excellence as you also know is very different in its kind.

Mr. Crawford is still very ill, and he has been constantly confined to his chamber since the meeting of Congress. He is now confined in a dark room on account of the inflammation of his eyes. It was thought at one time that he would lose his sight. But at this time no doubts are entertained of his recovery—he amends but slowly, tho surely.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mrs. Ruffin, Mr. and Mrs. Cain and accept for yourself assurances of my high respect.

Thos. Ruffin Esq.

W. P. MANGUM.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHINGTON Febr. 5th, 1824.

But little has as yet been done in Congress—tho' the papers will give you a full account of what has occurred—the Greeks after an animated discussion are laid upon the table without taking any vote, where it is probable the subject will rest. The subject of roads and canals has been under discussion for more than a week,—thus we talk from day to day—but I fear the next subject, the tariff will eventuate more unfortunately for us, if so we must resort to the same kind of associations that preceded the war of our revolution, if we have virtue enough.

I have just returned from Mr. Crawfords and am happy to say he is greatly mended—except his eyes he is well—these are still inflamed but much improved—he says he thinks he will be able to come out in ten days—it has operated much to his prejudices in being confined. We have determined on having a caucus on the 14th of this month—this is with a view of nominating Mr. Gallatin as Vice president, so as to

anticipate the meeting in Penna. calculating this to secure the vote of that State. Our plan is to call the caucus by getting one man from each State to sign the notice provided we can get one from the Majority of the States to sign—we think that one from fifteen States will sign and that our meeting will consist of at least ninety. We will then address a letter to such as are friendly to Crawford who refuse to go, and thus secure in his favour a majority of the republicans, which consist of about 220 in all. If we succeed as we expect, some of the New England States will go with us, and by the exertions of Gallatin I yet think Penna will come in. I fear you have formed too favorable an opinion of Clay—he is acting in a way calculated to forfeit our entire confidence—he refuses to go into caucus and has said all he wants is to get the election to the house tho' he is not very certain of getting in himself and he certainly will not if Jackson runs, and then if Crawford, Adams and Jackson come to the House the first must fail—Clay no doubt has promises from Calhouns party provided he will oppose a caucus—the anti-caucus party have secret meetings appoint one from each State to get signatures and promises against a caucus—they have I learn about sixty to their paper, they will either come in and attempt to vote us down or publish their list and swear they have a majority—we will not be voted down, even if they attempt it, tho' I do not think they will risk this, as we are resolved to go through. Macon will not go in—tho' we shall get his sanction to the recommendation—Branch I understand is in correspondence with Murphey and others upon the subject of forming a ticket in our State for Jackson. I yet hope we shall be able to beat the rascals. You must if necessary and your health permits take the field next summer against Mebane, tho' Calhouns party have no hopes here—he still holds out merely for appearances and to make the best bargain he can. I rejoice in his defeat as I think him the most dangerous man in the Government.

The Minister to Mexico not yet appointed—it is said Calhoun has become alarmed about Dallas and as he has promised so many I should not be surprised if some one should get it, that has not as yet been named. But as the President is in much difficulty about it—chance will determine it.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.

*To Catherine Ruffin.*¹

PITTSBOROUGH—February 10th 1824.

My Dearest Child—

My promised letter to you should have been written long ago, if I had not been so constantly engaged as to be unable to take the time. For I assure you it is not more my duty to you than it is a pleasure to myself

¹Catherine Ruffin, later Mrs. J. B. G. Roulhac, was Ruffin's eldest child.

to commence and continue a correspondence with you. I fear however that I shall not be so agreeable as to make you desire frequent letters from me—for I should tell you of the faults in yours and give you other advice and that is generally not very acceptable to young people. I was nevertheless gratified at your last letter to your Mother. It was quite well written in diction, pointing, and spelling and seemed to have been written at your leisure. That is a great matter in all things. You ought always so to order your time as to do what you intend or is necessary in due season and without being hurried, and you will more likely then do them properly and to your own satisfaction. Never, in particular, write carelessly and always write your best in every respect. You would soon acquire a habit of correctness and your letters would be sensible, neat and easy. I hope that you spend most of your time at home and especially your evenings and nights. You are too young to go much into company and altogether so to mix in that sort of company called *parties*. I hope you do not desire to do so and will not feel disappointed in not going to them. You know, your Parents did not acceded to your leaving them to go *visiting*—but to spend your time chiefly with your two Aunts, whose advice and attentions would restrain and improve you. I repeat the Counsel I gave you when you left us, upon that head: and if my words would have more authority as commands than as advice, you may take them in that light. You ought to be particularly careful not to go out at night for anything. Your throat has given your Mother and me a great uneasiness. It may get entirely well if you will observe a proper course this winter; though by neglecting it at your present age, you may be an invalid through life. I have therefore to beg you to avoid exposure and taking cold—keep within doors in bad weather and of evenings.

You tell your Mother that you are reading European History. That is very proper and I offer you my thanks and my congratulations for so useful and so agreeable an appropriation of your time. Our lives are only happy in proportion as they employed in acquiring knowledge and practicing virtues. But let me add, that occasional reading of a single volume, or a defective treatise upon one subject and then of another is of very little value. System and Diligence are essential to the acquisition of correct or extensive knowledge and that alone is of value. When you read therefore, read, in retirement, well selected books and devote all your thoughts to them; endeavour to impress important events upon your memory and to apply the moral considerations arising out of them, by reflection, to your own heart and improvement. But I would have [you] remember one Book above all the rest. The Book of Life,—which I trust you read daily and devoutly. The Bible is the fountain of Truth and the revealed will of God to man: In every line it contains wholesome instruction, reproof or comfort and is worthy of being studied and known of all men. But it is the surest school for those who desire to cultivate good feelings towards God and man, to learn our true nature

and destiny and to live in meekness and humility. There are all proper tempers and dispositions for a fine woman and nothing would give me more pain than to see you indifferent to them. I never knew a woman that professed Infidelity or was careless about Religion who duly felt the weight of any duty or was useful in any of the relations of life or was kind in her disposition or was happy. If my opinion be entitled to any influence with you, you will not neglect your religious duties: Remember your prayers and your Bible and fail not daily to seek for instruction in the former and to acknowledge your dependence in the latter—as you have been accustomed to observe in your excellent Mother. I wished to add other admonitions; but I must reserve them for another letter, as I have now hardly room left for communicating the tidings of home; for which I know you look in every letter from Hillsborough. Your Mama and the Children as well as all our friends are quite well. Your Sisters returned from Caswell last Saturday week, where they had spent the whole of their holidays much to their satisfaction. Anne is very hearty and full of glee as usual: Alice looks thinner than common, tho' I hope not much is the matter. William went to see his grand-mama the first Monday of the month, and, truant-like, he staid all the week and only returned on Saturday night. He is at school with Mr. Rogers and is reviewing his studies, so as to enter the Freshman class next Session at College with credit. He is also attending upon the instruction of a Mr. Moss, who teaches Elocution and Reading, in which William is very deficient. I am told that he is a remarkably correct speaker and an excellent Reader—from which I have hopes that your brother will derive much improvement. Sterling is again a pupil of his Scotch friend upon the Hill; and Peter is Company for Elizabeth and your Mama. Elizabeth begins to walk, tho' she is lazy and timid. She grows and is in fine health and pretty as ever and well worthy of your wishing to see her.

I do not know whether you stand in need of Clothes or Books; but for fear you should I enclose you Ten dollars for any little matter you may wish. I would advise you however not to consult yourself alone about your wants, for very few people make safe judges in their own matter. You have good counsellors at hand in your Aunts.

Write often to your Mama and brother and sisters—You will shew your affectionate remembrance of them by doing so, besides affording the means of improvement to yourself and the children. I need not say, that I shall expect letters myself. Offer my kind regards to all our relations; and receive, my Child, the assurances of the tender affections of your Father and Friend

THOMAS RUFFIN.

Miss Catherine Ruffin
Fayetteville.

From Henry Seawell.

WASHINGTON 12th Feby 1824.

I have been in this City ever since the 12th Ult.—we have gone through all the evidence adduced on the part of the government, and are waiting upon “our Oars” for the arrival of farther testimony, which we are notified from the department of State, is “speedily expected.” My time begins to hang heavily upon me—the novelty of scene has past away: I have been *physicked* with the expression of sympathy for the Greeks; I have attended the Supreme Court, and heard several interesting questions relative to State-rights discussed; and the right of Congress to make internal improvements, being common talk for the hackmen; I may say in truth, I am pretty well gorged with Washington, and would prefer, greatly, to be at home, or even, on my plantation at Crabtree. Congress is said to have more talent, than usually falls to her lot. I am permitted as one of the privileged order to a seat within the hall. I have attended on most occasions of interest and heard the debates. Mr. Clay, very far, surpasses any other member I have heard—he is the most eloquent man I ever have met with, and possesses a voice that would give force to any thing he might say. I have seen Genl. Jackson and heard him make a short motion. The idea of his military character and achievements, makes all who hear him, *willing* to think he makes out pretty well. The great men in the Supreme Court almost read their speeches—they have a *book* in manuscript, on *each point*, fastened together in the form of a bill in equity, and equal in length, to Murphey’s bill in behalf of Stokes and Welbourn now pending in the Supreme Court of No. Carolina. The Council in argument begin so low, as scarcely to be heard, and gradually swell until they fairly rave; then they gently subside into a soft whisper, their gesticulation is *menacing*, both to the Court and the bystanders, and an equal portion of all they say, is distributed to every part of the hall. The Constitution of the United States, appears to be acquiring in the political world what was ascribed to the philosopher’s stone in the physical regions. It is gathering by its *own growth*, the capacity of converting every thing, into exclusive Jurisdiction of Congress: for according to the construction now contended for, and what it is more than probable will be supported by the Supreme Court, the States can do nothing, what it is not in the power of Congress to *regulate*; and there is scarcely any thing they can act upon at all—the trade, or commerce, being subject to the regulation of Congress, is supposed to draw after it almost all power of regulation, and according to a definition given to the word “*Commerce*” by the Atto. Genl. that it means “*intercourse*,” I shall soon expect to learn, that our fornication laws are unconstitutional: for the favorite doctrine now is, that all the powers which congress possess are *exclusive*, and consequently the sole power of acting upon that subject is transferred to them. As

to the presidency, no man knows any thing about it. "The Holy alliance" I think, have over shot the mark. The people are obliged to see, that it is not *their* right for which so much sensibility is felt; it is a consciousness, that it requires a reunion of all the other Candidates, to out vote Crawford. Their object is to *prevent* the people from electing the president, in order that it may come to the house of Representatives, when it comes there, States may, and will be divided, in some instances equally; the very fulcrum can then be designated, upon [which] to apply the efficient lever *length* enough is all that's wanting. *little bodies* will be raised with short levers; post offices, collectorships, marshals, Judges of Territories etc., but your *huge masses*, will require more length: and as different lengths are to be found in the great political forest, he who becomes the Owner, can direct one to be cut, as easily as another—then to the longer grade, up to a *ministership*. I fear I shall not be able to get to Granville Court—I must again implore the mercy of my bretheren. I should be glad to hear from you. Accept my best wishes.

[P. S.] I cannot perform the labour of transcribing this blotted sheet. You will find out my meaning and I do not write for the press.

Mr. Ruffin,

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Henry Sewall.

RALEIGH 1st March 1824.

My Dear Sir

I returned from Washington on Saturday worn out with the fatigues of the stage, and am at this moment sick enough to be in bed. I am compelled to return by the 15th, and it is utterly impossible for me to be at Granville. I have been greatly beset by Holloway, and have heard from Mrs. Falconer—my absence is purely accidental, for under no ordinary happening of events, could I have been prevented—our Board was literally *waiting* upon the government for weeks, after having waided through the whole mass of evidence adduced by individuals, as a substitute for the evidence *general in its character* which the *government* by the Convention was to lay before the board on the question of Average value we have after repeated applications and short adjournments, been informed by the 4th of this month the evidence is to be closed, and to give full time we adjourned to the 15th. I wish I could see you to talk about the presidential election, the event depends upon circumstances, and no *probable* calculation can be made. Mr. Calhoun who was represented by his understrappers to be so popular as almost to render his election sure, "*is off.*" There is no doubt he will aid Jackson and Adams

all his power, preferring Jackson in the first instance and any body before Crawford—The Holy Alliance seem determined to put him down—Many of the friends to Clay, are for Crawford in the second instance, and there are some N. England men who are his friends, but afraid to turn out against their section. So much for politicks.

* * * * *

I write in great haste to send to town to go by those bound to Granville. I am chilled with cold—and still worse have a client at my elbow. God bless you—remember me to all my brethren in feelings of kindness, and show me all the mercy you can.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Oxford.]

[Copy]

E. Freeman¹ to H. Potter.²

NEWBERN, March 8th 1824.

No sooner did I cast my eye upon that part of a former letter of yours, informing me of your being visited (infested, I should say) by two Anti-Trinitarian Preachers—a Father and his son—than it was impressed upon my mind, *Whitaker and his son are the men!* Your letter by today's mail has confirmed my suspicion—or rather shown me my conjecture was correct. The only reason why I did not mention my suspicion to you in my last was, I could hardly believe the young man had had the impudence to become a preacher.

The character of these men I know full well. They are from New Bedford, Massachusetts, which is within 30 miles of my Father's house, and which place I have often visited, and visited this last fall. I never heard any good of them. I have heard from the best authorities much evil. Not that they were capable of doing much hurt by preaching—they were considered by all as unfit to preach—as too *immoral* even to preach socinianism,—The elder man had been settled over the anti-trinitarian Church in New Bedford a number of years and had also a school in that place, until last spring or summer. Reports of his *stealing wood* etc., whipping his wife unmercifully, and such like deeds had become so frequent, and his immoralities and infidelity so notorious, that his people (his church and congregation), tho' they had themselves no more true religion than the Hindoos, were ashamed of him, and were anxious to get rid of him. At length (his congregation having dwindled

¹Probably Edward B. Freeman of Halifax, 1795-1868, a native of Massachusetts, clerk of the Supreme Court, 1845-1868.

²Henry Potter of Craven, 1765-1857, judge of the United States District Court, 1801-1857.

away to almost his own family) and the parish wishing to have another minister, agreed to give him \$1200, if he would release them from their obligation to support him and clear out. He found this for his interest and left N. B. upon which they settled a Socinian by the name of Dewey.—The young man was considered an infidel and assisted his father in publishing a work which he edited, called the “Christian Philanthropist”—a publication of a most irreligious and immoral tendency. These two men, no doubt, finding their character gone in Mass^{ts.}, have come to these ends of the earth, hoping to impose upon the good people. The young man has probably taken up preaching since he left his native State. They may have recommendations from those who were willing to have them leave those regions, and cared not for what impositions they might practise elsewhere. Their testimonials, if they have any, may be forged. It is a pity they should be permitted to impose upon the people any where, either as preachers or Schoolmasters.—I consider them dangerous men in either occupation.

You are at liberty to show the above as far as you may think proper.

In the extract sent to Mr. Morrison (which I did not see) I understand that some of the expressions, such as *stealing wood* etc., were omitted.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHINGTON March 9th 1824.

I wrote to Mr. Yancy a few days since. I suppose you will meet at Hills[bor]o next week. We receive here such unfavourable accounts as to Gallatins¹ being run for the Vice Presidency in N. C. that I should like for you and him to have a conference upon the subject and advise me of the result. Mangum says his runing will endanger the success of Crawford in his District. You will have seen the result of the Harrisburg ticket for Jackson and Calhoun—these I understand are to be supported under the expectation of carrying the vote of N. and S. Carolina. Their nomination will certainly benefit us in the north and Eastern States. From N. York I have positive intelligence, that the Senate will reject the Electoral bill—that in the Senate there are two for one in favour of Crawford and in the other House 86—that they will in a few days hold a caucus and confirm our nomination. If they do this all will yet go right. Clay has played a desperate game and lost everything—he is much depressed at the Harrisburg views. He calculated on being named as Vice Prest. there—such is his reward for his labours upon the Tariff. Gallatin has not yet accepted the caucus nomi-

¹Gallatin, who had been nominated by the caucus for Vice President, was forced to withdraw in September in the hope of helping Crawford.

nation and as his own State has refused to support him, it is whispered that he will not. I am desirous therefore of having the views of Mr. Y. and yourself as to the effect of runing him in N. C. that I may communicate with the party here. Branch speaks in such positive terms—Mangum and Cameron as well as Lacy express such fears upon the subject, that I entertain some danger. We are still engaged upon the Tariff—on yesterday we gained an important advantage by striking out the 3rd Section of the Bill, which imposed an additional duty, equal to the amount of bounty in premiums given by any foreign power—as conflicting with the British Treaty forbidding any preference being given to other powers in preference to their exports. Upon this subject Clay was so paralyzed by the news from Penn. as to have faild completely and the friends of the Bill begin to despair and I yet think we shall reject or greatly modify it.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[P. S.] Such is Clay's state of feelings that should N. Y. come out for Crawford, I should not be surprisid at his joining Jackson nothing but a union of C. and Adams friends can prevent the election of Jackson.

From William F. Ruffin.

CHAPEL HILL, March 11th, 1824.

I have entirely recovered my health again and on my return to the Hill found my class a good ways ahead of me in my studies, but shall be able to make up all before the examination in June. We are now studying a late edition of Modern Geography by Sidney Morse in 1822, and the Atlas we get with the Geography are of no earthly use, there are but one or two principle places laid down, (I think you have a large one,) if you have, send it down to me by the first stage for it is impossible to get a lesson correct on the one I have at present. One thing I neglected to tell you when in Hillsboro last. Mr. Cain told me to tell you if you would give him the money when he goes to Petersburg that he will get better cloth for less money than you can get in Hillsborough and that he would charge me no profit, nothing but the cloth would cost in Petersburg and that it would be better on my side considerably, or if you dont do that, wait untill he comes back and get a nice piece of Blue from him as I suppose he will get some good. I Believe I can do with a waistcoat until the winter, just get a coat and pr of panterloons. Dr. Caldwell is going to set out for London in a month or two for the purpose of purchasing a Philosophical apparatus and Books for the use of the College. Give my love to Sister and the Children and accept it yourself
[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

*From John Long Jr.*¹

WASHINGTON CITY March 14th 1824.

A great deal of speculation here relative to the next President. The Legislature of N. York has refused to repeal the Electoral Law of that State from which it is inferred that the State will undoubtedly support Crawford. Calhoun has struck his flag to Gen. Jackson and I understand the managing part of Crawfords enemies in N. Ca. are very industriously engaged in transferring the whole of Calhouns friends in that State to Jackson. It is possible that the people can be so blinded by the Sound of the peoples ticket as to submit to such Bargaining and Bartering at the will of a few unprincipled Aspiring Partizans. Would it not be advisable for the people during the week of their Supr Court in their respective counties to meet and recommend Mr. Crawford to the people etc. I know the Editors of the Raleigh Register would like to publish their proceedings and many would like to read them. I have suggested the plan to several of the leading men of Chatham County (Col Jones² and others) should you think with me and be at Pittsboro Court I know you will feel interested in having it Judiciously conducted. I cannot entertain an opinion for a moment that there is any doubt but Crawford will get the vote of N. Ca., but I know that some of his enemies will not stop at any thing to carry their point and should they succeed it will afford a triumph that I should be sorry to witness. The nomination of Gallatin did not meet my approbation nor can I urge his election—indeed I was surprised at the Nomination and think it rather unfortunate and yet hope that he will refuse to accept. If he should not I think we must have our Electors in N Ca at liberty to vote for who they please as Vice President.

Should be glad to hear from you from Pittsboro.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHG. March 15th, 1824.

I have this moment received from Albany the pleasing intelligence that the *Electoral Bill*³ is rejected. New York is now safe—the mem-

¹John W. Long, Jr., of Randolph, 1785-1857, M. C., 1821-1829.

²Colonel Edmund Jones.

³The law of New York gave the choice of electors to the existing legislature. The Clinton element, against the opposition of Van Buren and his followers, attempted to secure the passage of a law providing for their choice by popular vote. The bill for that purpose was defeated, but the struggle roused so much feeling that Van Buren was unable to hold the legislature and the vote of the State was divided.

bers of the legislature will in a few days come out for the caucus candidates—all we have now to fear is a union between Adams and Clay—the former as President and the latter Vice Prest. Clay is decidedly hostile to Crawford. It is difficult to say on what account unless it be that he is resolved on being either Prest. or Vice Prest. But I yet think we will defeat their machinations.

[Address:

B. Yancy or Thos. Ruffin Esqr
Hillsborough
No. Carolina]

From Henry Seawell.

WASHINGTON 23d March 1824.

I am at this among the most distressed men, am gravely cooped up without employment, whilst I see my business at home suffering for want of my presence. When I am to be able to get off, I can form no guess. I despair of reaching home in time for Wake Supr. Court. The clients from whom I have received fees in that court, already begin the refunding system—it is ruinous to me—for the expenses of my situation, are almost equal to the emoluments. Hains, our client in Jail, wrote me a note when I was at home enquiring whether in case of failure, I woud refund what he had paid me? I have visitted him half dozen times in a loathsome dungeon; done more drudgery than I would perform for the seventy dollars he has paid me, (I think it is about that sum I have received) and now he calls on me to return that unless I go through with him. There are divers cases on the Civil docket when I have been paid—for God's sake extend to me all the clemency you can; and intercede for me with my other brethren, be assured it is perfectly accidental that I have detained so long nothing but the most ill advised course in the preparation of the evidence in relation to the preliminary point of average value coud have produced such a result. When we get over this point, then our course can be shaped according to our own convenience and I shall have abundant opportunity to attend to all my business—if I can be permitted to *finish* it, it is as far as my previous intentions have extended, but if I am compelled to refund, I shall be obliged to seek indemnity, by a more vigorous effort in the practice, than I have hitherto made—as for politicks, they are out of my range, but I occasionally hear them talked about. The tariff is making slow progress, but I think it doubtful whether it will pass, there is at least, a hope that it will not as the Presidential election. I have this moment made the enquiry, with a view of writing you something on that head. The Oracle I have consulted is Col. Hayne of the Senate from So. Carolina, a thorough *Anti-*

Crawford, Jacksonian, he tells me *Crawford* is down, and *Clay* very much on the waine, and that the contest will be close between *Jackson* and *Adams*. This Gentleman is my near neighbour, and possesses my confidence and esteem in an eminent degree. There is no labourer in the vineyard, more zealous or better disposed to promote its true interests; and there are few more sturdy, or who wield their implements to better advantage. On common topicks I consider his opinions a great degree oracular, and it is matter of great regret to me, that so able an officer should be found in the ranks opposed to *Crawford*. My own opinion is, that *Crawford* is rising, that his prospects are brightening every day, nor should I be surprised, if he should be elected by the people. If *J. Q.* should obtain no accession to the strength of *N. E.* he must inevitably fail, and in that event, I should consider *Crawford's* election as sure. but if *H. C.* should be withdrawn, I have great fears from the west—it is much to be dreaded, that, that force will be thrown into the scale of *Jackson*—it is all important therefore, that his name should be kept up—and I make no hesitation in stating to you that he is decidedly my second man—his course has been open manly and above board, his sentiments upon every subject are perfectly known, he seems to prefer that he should be understood, there is no difference of opinion upon the *Tariff* bill, with respect to *his* sentiments—the same with *Mr. Crawford*, the motion of reference to the Secretary of the treasury was opposed in the *H. Representatives*, not from any *tenderness* to *Crawford*, but because his *views and sentiments* would become *official and known* to the *community*. Great pains have been taken, as I think, to make *Clay* inimical, personally, to *Crawford*, but as I believe, without success, his course is "*erectus in curia*" as *Ch. Jus. Taylor* would say. My opinion is, that personally he is friendly and I have little doubt that if he is brought to throw his weight in the *H. R.* in the presidential election that it will be in *Crawford's* scale—it is asserted with much confidence here that *Jackson* is to get the vote of *No. Carolina*, he is without doubt a *tariff* man, though it is *possible* his objections to some of the details may induce him to vote against it. The people of our State ought to be informed that the principle of the *tariff* bill is *exclusion* or *prohibition*, and that consequently the government is to be supported not from revenue raised by import, but direct taxes, if the importations are prohibited from foreign countries, they in return, will prohibit the introduction of our products. The effect then is to cut off all markets, and whence are we to pay these taxes? And is it any consolation for all these evils brought upon us, that it was necessary to pay the debt of gratitude due to the *Hero*? I admire the soldier who has exposed his life in the service of his country. I venerate the patriot in whatever way he may have manifested his zeal for his country's good, and as an *officer*, I know no man more deservedly entitled to the confidence of the government, and who would so generally be sustained by the voices of his fellow citizens as *Jackson*, but I cannot be convinced that because

he is a good officer; because he is a patriot, and has the confidence of the people, *therefore* he is qualified to be the ruler of their civil affairs; and *therefore* his views of the true policy of the government is right.

Accept my kind wishes, remember me affectionately to all my brethren and believe me very sincerely.

Mr. Ruffin.

From Willie P. Mangum.

HOUSE OF REPR. 24th March 1824.

* * * * *

There is nothing new or important here, that is not to be seen in the papers.

I think it perfectly certain that Gen. Jackson, tho strong, cannot in any event be elected President. I should be gratified to feel as sure that Mr. Adams is not to be the man, no material however that I know of. Crawford will get at least 90 votes in the electoral college. It is believed however that no election will be made, unless by the H. of Reps—and there is the difficulty that Crawford has to encounter. If the intrigues that are on foot, I mean of the combination of the other candidates, shall succeed, he will be ultimately defeated—all indeed depends upon that and it is probable before we leave Washington, that the result may be anticipated with some certainty. Congress will not adjourn I think before 15th May, probably not before 1st June as some think.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From William F. Ruffin.

CHAPEL HILL April 1st, 1824.

I received your letter by yesterdays mail which tho greatly surprised me gave me the most considerable pleasure. Your first rate advice I shall endeavour to follow, tho I have studied harder this session than I ever have done in my life and still I shall not be first in my class. I have been second and I am a little afraid that I shall lose that, though it would undoubtedly be partiality in the highest degree. The Tutors here of late have into a plan of marking any person when he recites to stand against him in conferring the honours, their marks are 5 for the first honour, 4 second, 3 third and 2 and 1 none. We recite to Mr. Young¹ one lesson in the day and he generally gives me the first mark

¹Elisha Young, a tutor in the University.

and never below the second and we recite to Mr. Betner¹ one lesson also and he (Who it is given up by all the class that he is the most partial mean principled men on Chapel Hill, has his favourites to whom let them recite ever so badly he will give the first marks) gives me generally the second and third marks. But may be he'll repent it sometime or another. And Messrs. Andrews² and Young men who are guided as little by partiality as any two men I know will tell you how I recite and then you may at once judge impartially whether Mr. Betner is partial or not, but if his low marks exclude me from my desert, I can say with as good a face as any person and I am not the only that will say so that I have recited my lessons this session as well as and better than some of those to whom he through his partiality has given the marks of the first honour and moreover I can say that his low marks have not kept me from studying harder than I otherwise would have done or from knowing my lessons any better, but I should not be surprised if he were to knock me out completely. I expect he has taken up an idea that I am a noisy lazy fellow and that I partake in hissing and whistling at him sometimes in recitation, he gets a good deal of it some time, I assure for none but his favourites care anything more about him than for the College Servants and indeed not as much. You advised me to read not novels but useful and solid Books, but there is no more chance to read here since they have so greatly increased our Studies than it is to fly. I haven't read a half dozen Books this whole session, not even a Tragedy of *Shakespeare* as you mentioned. The members of the Senior Class speak this week their own composition, there were two as good speakers delivered on Tuesday evening as I ever heard one by James W. Bryan³ from New Bern on A Survey of Europe and Greece, and the other by Henry E. Coleman⁴ from Halifax Virginia on Should the United States united with Mexico, and we had a very interesting debate on monday evening between Jno. W. Norwood⁵ and Benjamin B. Blume⁶ of Germanton in Stokes on Should 50 Acres of land constitute A Voter, John very ably supported the negative. You mentioned that you had forgotten that Articles I asked you to send for By Mr. Moore to Petersburg. it was only to give him the money to get cloth for a suit of Clothes and hat as he can them of much better cloth there for less money than you can in Hillsboro. Ask him to get Blue as nice as possibility with the money you will give him and a Hat of which I've told him. Give my love to Uncle and his family. I have written four times to Sister M. and

¹George Shonnard Bettner of New Bern, a graduate of 1823 and a tutor in the University.

²Ethan Allen Andrews, professor of languages in the University.

³James West Bryan of Craven, 1805-1864, who was a lawyer of Carteret County in later life. He was state senator and delegate to the convention of 1835.

⁴Henry Embry Coleman of Halifax C. H., Va., graduated in 1824.

⁵John Wall Norwood of Hillsboro, who later became a prominent lawyer and was twice a member of the legislature.

⁶Benjamin Bynum Blume of Stokes, who graduated in 1824.

Catherine since I came from Hillsboro and they haven't answered one of them and I have given it up as a bad job and quit. You mentioned that you expect I have heard lately that all my relations are well in Hillsboro for your little folks were always speaking of writing to me but they never do it. I haven't received but one letter from Wm. this session and have written a dozen at least.

[Address:

Raleigh, Wake County,
N. Carolina.]

*From William H. Thompson.*¹

CHAPEL HILL April 10th 1824.

The earnestness with which you have advised and the liberal acceptance you have rendered me in acquiring an education, have induced me to call upon you again at the close of this education, for your advice with respect to my future course. Medicine is the profession I have made choice of for myself—But as I will be unable for want of funds to enter upon the studies directly after graduation I designed taking charge of some school—For this purpose I applied to Mr. Rogers to get the appointment of assistant teacher in the academy at Hillsboro. He wrote to me that he had already agreed with Mr. Jno Norwood to assist him, but mentioned that there was a vacancy in Ebenezer Academy at Leesburg, Caswell, occasioned by the dismissal of Mr Cooper, and that he would name me to the Trustees of the Academy if I requested it. He says that a salary of four or five hundred dollars may be calculated upon at first, and that there is every reason to believe that this sum will be liberally augmented as the teacher *proves* his claims to further remuneration. As this is the most favorable opportunity within my knowledge of engaging in business immediately I had thought it would be my best course to accept of the appointment if offered. However, as I regarded you as the best of friends—I considered it proper to consult you on the subject, before I had taken any definite step. I hope you will favor me with your advice in this case as soon as you can.

When I commenced writing I intended to have concluded here—But I do not consider it to be improper to subjoin a few remarks—the report of the senior class—as it has been a subject of considerable discussion, here and given rise to much unpleasant feeling and indeed some disturbance among the Dialectic members of college among whom I include myself—The chief cause of complaint to our members, was what we

¹William Henry Thompson of Chapel Hill, a graduate of the University in 1824.

conceived to be an unjust distribution of distinction by the Faculty. They appointed a member of the Philanthropic Society to deliver the latin speech, When we were all fully convinced there were four or five members of the D. S. who ought to have been preferred.

This decision of the Faculty was attributed to a partialty which we have thought, has long existed in that body. So indignant were the students when the report was first received, that a general spirit of insubordination prevailed among the other classes, and I am proud to say that its suppression was owing to the influence of the senior class, who promised to act in such a manner as would satisfy them. Accordingly the Dialectic members of the Senior class wrote a petition to the Faculty requesting to be exempted from taking any part in the exercises of commencement. This request has not, as yet, been acted upon by the faculty, and so it rests here. We have no hope that the faculty will comply with what we ask. We only wish to show by our proceedings that we disapprove of the report.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

GREENSBOROUGH 29th April 1824.

I am sorry to hear of your indisposition. You must take more Care of yourself: your Constitution is delicate and cannot bear up against the exposure and Fatigue which you have of late years suffered. Your life is too valuable for you to run any risk of your Health: it is every year becoming more so, and every day imposes upon you a new duty to take Care of it. I hope you will Soon be well again.

I did not know your Brother was going down from this place Untill the Moment he was about to start, or I Should have written to you by him. I have attended to your Business here, and shall again on tomorrow give all the satisfaction I can to your Clients. Your Absence is much regretted by the People, as well as your Brethren. We have done but little, and it is upon the whole a poor Court.

Capt. Estis¹ had the lands Surveyed by a Mr. Beck, a Deputy Surveyor. I did not reach his House untill Sunday Morning, having been detained at Lexinton by the Trial of Law for Murder. He and his Wife would have executed the Deed According to the Survey of Beck; but your Brother had gone and taken with him the papers; and Capt Estis told me, Mr. Michaux insisted upon a survey being made by Mr. Williams, the County Surveyor, He promising to get Mr. Williams to make

¹Joel Estes, formerly of North Carolina but now of Tennessee.

the survey, and I am to go to his House from Rockingham Court House on next Week, on this business; When I hope, I will get everything done that is necessary. I am very desirous of closing it.

I will have the necessary Orders made in your Suit with Holman. Mr. Hill has not been here, nor are the Costs paid. I will have an execution issued.

I received \$50 for Mr. Caven for you, and making up Money for Mr. Bagge and to pay a Debt to Elisha Mendenhall, which he called on me for, I have used it. I expect to get it again tomorrow, and if so, I will Send it to you very early on Friday Morning, with \$25. I got for you from Mr. Bray. I shall be able in a few days, I hope, to pay up to Mr. Bagge the entire Interest upon my two Bonds. He has been here and seems quite content: and says upon my paying him the Interest regularly, he will give me four or five years to begin the reduction of the principal. I have had pretty good luck thus far on the Circuit. I am trying to drive some trades for Western Lands: whether I shall Succeed, I cannot yet tell. It is probable, I shall, in Part.

I received on Monday a Letter from Mr. McLemore¹ enclosing me a Map of the great Connexion of Surveys on the Holston, and Seeing the Tracts which Mr. Hughes² had Selected for me, and containing Majr. Horkly's Description of these Tracts. Mr. McLemore writes a long Letter about these lands, and lands generally in the Western District of Tennessee. My Lands are better than I expected. I would send you Mr. McLemores letter and Majr. Horkleys Map; but I have made a Proposition to Mr. Yancy and he has the letter and map for examination: and I want them on next week at Rockingham. I will send them to you in time for you and Mr. Kirkland to examine them before Orange Court.

In my Contracts with Mr. Alston,³ Col. Farrar,⁴ George Luther and others, I have allowed them 20 per Cent upon the Amount of my Debt to them in Consideration of their taking Payment in lands. I intend to do the same with you and Mr. Kirkland: but you and he will get the best land I own. It seems from Majr. Horklys Statement that there are upwards of 4,000 Acres of first rate land in the Tract.

I am very desirous of closing our Contract, and wish by all means to do it when we meet; and in the meantime, if you can command as much time, draw up the necessary Instruments. The Idea of reestablishing Myself at the Hermitage⁵ has given me new life and vigour: I once more begin to feel like a Citizen.

¹John C. McLemore of Nashville who had formerly lived in Raleigh. He was a surveyor and, like so many of his kind, a land dealer.

²Robert Hughes, a lawyer of Jackson, Tenn., and Murphey's land agent. He married Murphey's niece.

³Probably the Alston who sued Murphey in 1819. See Hoyt ed., *The Murphey Papers*, I, 151.

⁴John Farrar of Chatham County.

⁵Murphey's home in Orange, formerly the property of his father-in-law, John Scott.

I have paid Mr. Allen¹ one half of his account for the Timbers he furnished at the Mill. I will settle, with Mr. Hinton and also Mr. Wood; but I do not expect I can pay Mr. Wood on this Week. However, if he prefers, I will make some Arrangement for his getting his money in ten days. The money for the lands I will Send you.

I pray God, Dear Ruffin, to restore you quickly to good Health, and to prolong your life, Untill you can acquire that high honor and reputation that await your Genius and honourable exertions. Remember me kindly to Anne and all the Children.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Bartlett Yancey.

CASWELL, 29th of June 1824.

* * * * *

Being at Raleigh and seeing persons from almost every part of the State, you can give me some News on the Presidential election. Inquire of Willson and others from the West: Also of the Cape Fear Country. Inquire about the Halifax and Edenton Districts, and be so good as to write me by Mr. Watlington on his return.

I see from an intimation in the National Intelligencer, of the 22d, that the Committee on Investigation have retracted nothing they have before said, and that in the subsequent investigation, the Secretary stands as fair as at first. Of this I had full confidence, because I know well, that if ever I saw an honest politician and an honest man, it was Crawford. Will not his affair have a powerful effect in favor of his election? It certainly ought, and will have an influence. In Rockingham, the upper part, they are not for Jackson: Also in the neighborhood of Leaksville. Otherwise we are doing very well. Write me fully.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

To Major John Owen.²

RALEIGH—June 30th 1824.

About 18 months ago a man by the name of Moore of Orange County brought to me by way of Consultation the bond of *James Porterfield*, of which I annex a copy on the other side. Mr. Moore is the son of the man to whom the bond was given who died in some few years after the

¹Alexander Allen.

²Major John Owen of Bladen, 1787-1841, member of the House of Commons, 1812; state senator, 1827; governor, 1828.

date of the Contract leaving his son an infant of very tender years. Major Samuel Turrentine formerly the Sheriff of Orange was the Executor or administrator of Alexander Moore and the guardian of his son and only child. Maj. Turrentine removed to Tennessee about ten years ago and now resides there. The bond, being a contract for Land, belongs to the son as heir. He seemed to know but little of Mr. Porterfield or his Estate and nothing of the nature of the contract, as he had but lately come into possession of it from his father's representative. I told him that I would enquire into the affair. I did so and learnt that Archd McBryde Esqr of Moore County had settled Mr. Porterfield's Estate. I applied to him for information as to its situation. He told me that he perfectly knew Mr. Porterfield's writing and from inspection that the bond was genuine—that he had chiefly settled the personal Estate, not as Executor or administrator but as the Agent of the person who bore that Character—that he was unable to say how it now stood and never knew any thing about the Lands; but that you and your Brother, or one of you had succeeded to the Estate as heir or devisee and that application ought to be made to you. Knowing that there was some landed connection between you and my friend Mr. Murphey, I mentioned the subject to him and requested him to speak to you when he should see you, which he promised to do. I do not know whether he did or not, but rather suppose that he forgot it from my not hearing from either of you about it, tho our conversation passed last winter. When I myself saw you here, it entirely escaped me, else I should have mentioned it. Mr. Murphey however requested me on your behalf to see my Client again and to know of him whether he insisted on having the land or would put up with money and what sum at the least. I have lately had a conversation with Moore, who is an exceedingly ignorant man as well as in humble circumstances; for each of which reasons he is averse to litigation and especially at a distance. He was hence induced upon my advice, to agree to take in money, instead of the land, the original sum advanced by his father, say £120—with Interest on it.

You will, I have no doubt, properly appreciate this letter, which let me say once for all is not intended professionally to draw you into any admission or obligation, that would subject you to pay anything that you may not now be under obligations for. My object is simply to give you notice of the demand and the nature of it and to communicate the terms to which my client will assent if you feel it your interest to accept them. I would further enquire of you, whether, supposing the bond genuine and its validity unimpaired by subsequent circumstances, Mr. Porterfield has left Western Lands to comply with it or personal Estate to make it good; and whether yourself or who else is, within your knowledge, his heir or devisee, and further, whether it would be agreeable to him or them to make the compromise as suggested or to offer any other.

As I stand in the confidential relation of Counsel for Mr. Moore, I would add, for my own sake, the expression of my wish that you should

consult a legal friend before favouring me with your answer—which I take the liberty of asking at as early a day as convenient.

The good cause of Republicanism and the good and great man, Crawford, are in a pretty good way in my county and District: *Mebane* I believe goes to pot this election. I hope your friends below continue stedfast.

[Address: Bladen County N. C.]

From John Finley.

WILKESBORO' July 9th 1824.

Genl. Lenoir¹ and myself have been thinking it would be impossible for you to be as well prepared to enter into the trial of the Moravian Cause² this term, as at the next, as the proof which you took a memorandum of while we were at Raleigh can be had at the next term, if nothing happens; and I should be glad to know if the Supreme Court could order a record to be made by that officer when he would be out of his own County with the Books at Raleigh.

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.

N. B. I presume you understand me, as I wish the above proof to be kept a profound secret, which you are apprized of, when you took notes of what could be proven.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

13th. July 1824.

Dear Ruffin.

* * * I am on the eve of seting out for the Western District. The excessive hot Weather has distressed me and delayed me. My Time is short and I have a great deal to do: More than I can possibly get done. Thus far things have gone on pretty well with me, except that my Pocket has been rifled and between one and two hundred Dollars stolen from me. This is confidential. I know the Man, and I had no more Suspicion of him than of you. I will tell you all about it when I see you, and you will be no less surprised than Myself. The Money is lost.

¹William Lenoir of Wilkes, 1751-1839, the first president of the board of trustees of the University of North Carolina. He was a man of much power and was very influential in his section of the State. He had been four times a member of the Commons and eight times of the Senate.

²The Moravian Cause had been reopened by Lenoir in 1822.

There is no news. Great apprehensions are entertained of a sickly Season about this place. Dysentery and bilious fever already prevail.

I think it probable I shall so manage as to get all the Warrants of the Trustees which I brought out, adjudicated and located before I return. We have got an Order from the Circuit Court for a Mandamus, to Mr. Graham, to adjudicate the Warrants: He has appealed to the Supreme Court, and the Case will be argued on Monday next. We are pretty confident of Success. In the Mean time I have been engaged in procuring Locations for the Warrants, And have got nearly two thirds of them secured, for Lands equal or nearly so to the Lands of the Warrants of 1822. The Warrants rejected by the last Legislature and those I brought out this Summer (the Part remaining to the Trustees) amount to 50.000 Acres and a fraction. There is a flood of Warrants collected from a strange Construction given to an Act of the last Assembly, and will be poured over the Western District in a few Weeks. However the Trustees of the Colledges here and myself have engaged from the Locators all the Locations or nearly so, that are in Readiness, And in this way, if we can get out Warrants into the Locators's hands within the next six Weeks, We shall still be safe. Our Counsel here deserve the thanks of the Board and a very large Fee:

Remember me Affectionately to Anne and all your Children, to Mr. Kirkland and Family, and to my good Friend Dr. Webb.

Address: Hillsborough.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

MILTON, July 30, 1824.

* * * * *

I should be extremely happy to see you, for since my return home I learn but little of what is passing in our own State, except what the papers inform me. I learn from Mr. Van Buren that the Governors Proclamation and the Report of the investigating committee has had a powerful effect in uniting the Republican party in N. York and that unless he is greatly deceived the Electoral law will *not* be repealed. From Penn. Mr. Lawrie writes me, that they have strong hopes of carrying the vote of the State. If we hold firm in this State I yet think the good cause will triumph. I have no fears of my own District—tho' the opposition is stronger than I could desire. I have had one meeting from the Hustings with Shepherd¹ and have no cause to regret the conflict—altho' I am informed that the Salisbury paper has published something that was said by me on that occasion.

¹Augustine H. Shepperd of Stokes, member of the House of Commons, 1822-1826; member of Congress, 1827-1839, 1841-1843, 1847-1851.

I shall spare no occasion that I can with propriety embrace to exert myself in the contest.

Will you do me the favour to present the subjoined order and accept the same as a present from your friend.

I regret to hear of your indisposition and fear unless you spare yourself more than you have done for past years it may prove fatal to your constitution.

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From George E. Badger.

WARRENTON Aug: 6th. 1824

It is so long since I wrote to you that my silence may well seem incapable either of explanation or apology. An aversion to writing increased by a long habit of self indulgence, prompted by a natural indolence of disposition, gives often to me the appearance of negligence or indifference to the kindness of my friends, and yet I may safely affirm it gives only that appearance. My heart is far from any indolence in cherishing a grateful and affectionate sense of your uniform friendship, and what has not been professed or declared has not on that account been less deeply understood or less warmly recollected. Your kind expressions in a letter to Mr. Devereux were not received by me without sensibility, coming as they did at the most trying period of my life. They would long since have been acknowledged but I hoped for the pleasure of once more seeing you this summer in the midst of your family. Until within a few days I had'nt entirely abandoned that hope. I am now however about starting to the Virginia Springs where I shall spend perhaps ten days and then hasten to the commencement of my circuit. As therefore I shall not see you again this Summer, I feel that it would ill become me again to consult my indolence and neglect acknowledging a kindness which has been to me at once the source of pleasure and the means of advantage. I have several times heard with regret that your health was feeble. I fear in your anxiety to provide for a numerous and amiable family you are tasking yourself beyond your ability to bear and I wish it were in my power to prevail with you to give yourself some relaxation. It is certain that no pecuniary advantage could compensate your family for the loss of yourself. In putting to hazard your life you are hazarding all that is valuable to them, and their claims (to say nothing of those which the publick justly have upon your learning and ability) should be a motive to proportion your labors rather to the Strength of your body than the energy of your mind. It appears to me, from the little observation I have been able to make, that this consideration is little attended to by men who have children to raise—of which Mr. Stanly and yourself are prominent examples. You are both putting

to risk lives of extraordinary usefulness without adequate motive or (if you will pardon the expression) due consideration. I should rejoice to hear that you had given your body and your mind some repose from the incessant exertion of the last six years, and the effect would probably be a renovation of your health.

In the fall of 1818 a Mr. Crittenden left in Hillsboro in my absence from home two small notes. If you recollect the time you may imagine a reason why they were not attended to then. I have shamefully neglected them, and put away in my desk they have reposed until a letter reached some time ago making some inquiries. Crittenden seems from the memorandum he left with the notes to consider the debtor's circumstances as desperate and to trust to some unexpected accession of property he had heard of by will or descent. I do not now remember if I took any steps—if I did it was nothing more than enquiry.

Will you have the goodness to ascertain if there be any such man as Norman in Orange and what can be done? Crittenden said in his mem: that he did not wish any writ issued unless he had property. Will you dispose of them as you think best by suit or putting them in the hands of a constable? Crittenden lives in Greenville District So: Carolina. I inclose you the notes.

Remember me in the kindest and most respectful terms to Mrs. Ruffin, and also to Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland and believe me dear Sir

Thos: Ruffin esq.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Lewis Williams.

SURRY COUNTY August 15th, 1824.

* * * * *

We are beginning active operations in the Presidential Election. No effort will be spared to obtain a large majority in this County and district. The public mind is however a good deal estranged at present. But I trust all things may be made straight before the Election. Our Grand Jury at May Court denounced caucuses and recommended Jackson. At the August Court last week they voted and gave 10 for Crawford and 6 for Jackson. This Shews the begining of a change. Col. David Durrett¹ who is elected for the commons from this County openly and publicly in his speeches on all occasions declared for Crawford. The other candidates declared for Jackson. In the Senate Roberts² had 440; Hampton 380:³ In the commons Durrett had 1057; Martin 848;⁴

¹David Durrett of Surry, member of the Commons, 1824-1825.

²Pleasant B. Roberts, member of the Commons, 1820-1823, 1836; state senator, 1824, 1826.

³Thomas Hampton.

⁴W. C. Martin.

Sater 68—Thus it seems Durret has been elected by a large majority although he publicly declared for Crawford. From all these circumstances it would appear that the people are not only changing but that they are not wedded to Jackson by indissoluble ties. In confirmation of this belief I have not seen a man who does not after the thing is properly explained in a personal conversation admit that Jackson ought not to be elected President. Much is to be done by exertions at the Superior Courts. Therefore as you are one of the Electors let me suggest the propriety of addressing the people at all of the Superior Courts you attend.

Let Mangum and such of the members to the Legislature as are friendly to Crawford join you and address the people at the same time. These joint addresses will come to the people like a greater weight of evidence than if only one addresses them. Franklin¹ and myself have agreed to pursue this plan in this district, and will have the aid of such County members as are friendly to Crawford. If measures of this kind are resorted to it seems to me that an entire revolution of opinion may be effected in the State. Our adversaries plume themselves upon the majority they are likely to have. But that majority depends for its existence upon the want of true information respecting the claims and qualifications of Genl. Jackson. Let one great and simultaneous effort be made throughout the State, and the vote of No. Carolina will be given to Crawford without doubt.

By letters from the City of New York and from A. Stevenson² of Richmond Va. I am informed that those great States will give an undivided vote for Crawford. I suppose you have at Hillsboro by this time some information from Albany. If New York and Virginia stand firm every thing will be safe. No delinquency should appear in the conduct of the good old North State. Every man should be at his post and do his duty.

Thos. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Hillsborough No. C.]

From J. W. Long Jr.

RANDOLPH COTY, August 20th 1824.

My hasty and unexpected departure from Pittsboro prevented me from saying something more to you concerning the peoples ticket. I want you to undertake to give the people a fair and full exposition of the invidious scheme and its Origin; thro the Hillsboro paper. I con-

¹Meshack Franklin, 1772-1839.

²Andrew Stevenson of Virginia, 1784-1857, member of Congress, 1823-1834; speaker, 1827-1834.

scientifically believe there is nothing wanting but a full and honest explanation of the thing to cause the people to denounce it as the greatest stride and most daring attempt ever made by a few to deceive and defraud the people of their right in the most important and interesting subject. I know you fully understand the subject and have no doubt you can have your communication published without being known as the Author. I think all that is necessary is to shew what it really is and where it comes from and so far from its being the peoples ticket very few if any body will acknowledge they know any thing about it. That they require Crwfd to get a Majority against the world which to say the least of it is ungenerous and something that never was expected or required of any one man before and to Warn the friends of Jackson and Adams against the Intrigue of each other and finally shew that the Electors on the peoples ticket are not bound to vote for Either of them but will feel themselves at liberty if Elected to vote for a man of their own choice be him whomsoever he may, provided he in their Estimation is most likely to Succeed against Crwfd. This is nothing short of Asking the people of No. Ca. to clothe those 15 Gentlemen (who seem so Anxious to take upon themselves the responsibility) with the power of choosing a fit person to preside over them as President without being under any other pledge to the people than to Vote and Act against Crwfd. I was at Salisbury last week found the enemies of Crfd. Seemingly in high spirits but before I left we had the information of the Adjournment of the N. York Legislature which you know was quite unpleasant to most of them. Amongst the rancour and disingenuous misrepresentation I had the satisfaction to find many of the substantial men in Rowan in favour of both Crwfd and Caucus and upon the whole I do believe the number of my friends have increased in that part of the district. But I can assure you that unprincipled W. Carolinian has had its poisonous influence in the Western part of the state where they see no other paper, and hear but little else on the Presidential question. Nor have we any chance where only that paper circulates for notwithstanding the Editors profession he will not publish communications on our side of the question satisfactorily. I find Mr. Mebane¹ and Mr. Giles² do not view the peoples ticket alike. Mr. Giles says if he is elected he will vote for Jackson unless he sees he stands no chance of being Elected in that case he will vote for some other person that is most likely to be elected against Crwfd. Mebane will vote for Jackson if he gets more votes on the peoples ticket than Adams if not he will vote for Adams. Giles seems to know nothing about the Arrangement Mebane speaks of the people to signify their preference on the back of their ticket etc. I have no doubt but they may be made to contradict each other in their views of the peoples ticket so as to throw all into confusion. I know your experi-

¹James Mebane of Orange.

²John Giles of Rowan. He was defeated in this campaign.

ence has long since shown you how liable those are who are dishonestly engaged to be thrown into confusion. Unless the people do come to understand the scheme of the peoples ticket better than at present I am of the Opinion it will prevail in the Western part of the state. That they may is my sincere desire and only hope. Should be glad to hear from you by the [word illegible].

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

From John Owen.

BLADEN Co: August 20th 1824.

I was in Elizabethtown a few days ago, and recd. from a *dram shop*, your favor of the 30th of June, and was at a loss to conceive who was the bearer of it, as it did not come by mail, but seeing it directed from Raleigh, supposed at once that either Genl. McKay¹ or Mr. Wright,² who I knew had been up in attendance on the Supreme Court—had probably brot. it down, and meeting with the Genl. soon after he told me he was the bearer.

Mr. Murphy never mentioned the subject of the bond to me in any manner as well as I recollect, indeed, I am confident he never did, as I feel assured if he had done so, I could not thus entirely have forgotten it.

No man can have a better acquaintance with the handwriting of my uncle James Porterfield than Mr. McBryde,³ who was his personal friend whilst living, and gave much assistance in the settlement of his deeply embarrassed estate after his death. James Porterfield died in the year 1795, intestate, leaving considerable real and personal estate. John Porterfield his only surviving brother administered on the estate; my father, (who married the only sister) refusing to have anything to do with it, believing the estate more in debt than it was able to pay.

John Porterfield in a few years after, (I believe in 98) died also, leaving a will and Richard Street of Moore County (his father in law) and Thomas Owen⁴ of Bladen County, my father, his Exrs, and after making provision for his widow, left the balance of his estate (all real) to my brother James Owen and myself.

Richard Street has long since been "gathered to his fathers," and I know nothing of his affairs. My father died in 1805 leaving James

¹James J. McKay of Bladen, 1793-1853, was for a time United States district attorney, was many times a member of the state senate, and was a member of Congress from 1831 to 1849, being for a number of years chairman of the ways and means committee.

²Probably Joshua G. Wright of New Hanover.

³Archibald McBryde of Moore.

⁴Thomas Owen of Bladen, 1735-1803, was a native of Pennsylvania, and was a revolutionary soldier. He was a member of the provincial congresses of 1775 and 1776, many times a member of the legislature, and for one term a member of Congress.

Moorhead of Bladen Co. and Elisha Stedman¹ of Fayetteville (who is still living) his Exrs. James Moorhead is dead, and Isaac Wright of Bladen, and Hinton James² of Wilmington are his Exrs.—“*And so endeth the first lesson.*”

You perceive that neither my brother nor myself have had anything to do in the settlement of James or John Porterfields or my fathers estate, and whether the law, which (I believe) permits only a dealing in *straight lines*, can reach us in the settlement of this bond I know not;— I mean that I do not know whether there be any *legal obligation* upon us to pay the bond, nor do I care to take the advice of any gentleman of the profession; should there not be, there may yet exist—a paramount obligation; I mean a moral, and should such a one exist, the debt shall be immediately discharged, as the means of doing so are completely within our power. Upon a statement of these facts to Mr. Peter Browne,³ if he is of opinion anything can be recovered in a court of law or equity from my brother and myself, the bond shall immediately be taken up— if he should think otherwise, it will not lessen the moral obligation, and this shall be attended to in due season.

The good cause of virtue and republicanism in my county is doing as well as I could wish, and doing well in two or three adjoining counties, and I trust in *my district* will prevail, but in all Covingtons and Legrands⁴ Country so far as I can learn it is completely prostrate— Covington is personally very unpopular, and Legrands politics have always been doubted. In my district we have a dreadful drawback in Mr. Gallatin, who notwithstanding his transcendant talents and eminent public services is a great clog to our cause. I must confess I am dreadfully afraid of the issue in this state, but the final result must be favorable.

In the counties of Robeson, Richmond, Anson, Montgy., Mecklenburg, Lincoln, Burke, Buncombe and Ashe, some Missionaries ought to be sent out, and if Covington could be prevailed on to withdraw and Jo. Picket⁵ or some other popular man put in his place, it would in my opinion add many hundred votes to the Republican ticket.

Thomas Ruffin Esqre.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹Elisha Steadman married Thomas Owen's daughter Mary.

²Hinton James was the first student to attend the University of North Carolina.

³Peter Browne was a native of Scotland and was regarded for a time as the head of the bar in North Carolina. He retired from practice in 1818 and returned to Scotland but only remained three years, returning to Raleigh to spend the rest of his life. He died in 1832. He and Ruffin were devoted friends, and Ruffin named a son for him.

⁴James Legrand of Montgomery, who was frequently a member of the legislature.

⁵Joseph Pickett of Anson, a local politician of much influence.

From John Owen.

BLADENBORO Sept. 28th, 1824.

Your very flattering letter of the 3rd inst. is duly recd. It certainly was not my intention to draw from you a compliment to the character which either my brother or myself have made with our friends in this State:—whatever that character may be, it is certainly better worth preserving than the acquisition of a little *pelf* at the expense of principle; and I trust neither of us would hesitate a moment to forego a much more imposing opportunity of enriching ourselves, than that now presented, out of a man both “ignorant and poor”—but enough of this.

James Porterfield left no personal property which ever descended in any way to my brother or myself, nor did our mother ever receive from James or John Porterfield one cent of property; you have mistaken my letter in this regard, but probably the mistake is not material. John Porterfield, the only surviving brother inherited the whole of James’s real estate, and took possession of all the personal property as Admr., and never accounted for one dollar to my mother—of John Porterfields estate (which had been *James’s*) my brother and myself as his devisees, have sold a lot of ground in Fayetteville of greater value than the amount of the bond to Moore, and we now claim 5000 acres of land on the Mississippi granted to James Porterfield, the grant for which, is now in the possession of Mr. Murphy—it was to *this grant* I had allusion in my last letter, where I stated that we had the means of satisfying the bond—and this is the only land granted to him in the now State of Tennessee. I am sorry to say that the good cause of our Country is not doing as well in our part of the State as I could wish. In Sampson County, we shall do worse than in any county in my electoral district. The Gov. (Holmes¹) and a numerous family connection are against us, and what is still worse, the Honble. William R. King² of *famous memory*, and his brother Genl. Thomas D. King,³ who formerly resided there, have spent the summer in that county, and have vast influence. *I dread the issue.*

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹Gabriel Holmes.

²William R. King, 1786-1853, after service in the legislature and as member of Congress from North Carolina, moved to Alabama. He was United States senator, 1819-1844, 1848-1853; minister to France, 1844-1846; Vice President, 1853.

³Thomas Devane King, member of the Commons, 1804-1807.

From Major William Moore.

[Oct. 21, 1824]

I have longed to see you for some time But my misfortune put it quite out of my power to Come to see you that Respecting our Elettion for the precedance I understand that you stand firm on the ground you first tucke your stand for Wm H Craford wich makes me Regoice to thinke that we have some men that ant to Bee Changed with Every wind of Ducktren that Blows know man in the world Can thinke more of general Jackson then I Do for the Feild then I Do But for god sake kee him ther and not Let him Come to the Chaire for you Can see as well as me and Beter two that thers somthing in the Clouds that hant Fell out yet I am Like the old Roman when he says that Every good general ant fite for a presedance or in words for an Emprer I am sorrow when I Com to see some of our grate men how was at the anomation fly the track I Cant See for my part what is the Reason that ther so grate Change in the people But ther minds has Been poisend som way or other I Dont know why general Jackson Should Bare all prases of our Last ware for I think general Brown and general Egell and Duburn and pery foute harder fighting to the North then Jackson Did and Number of other officers not a word about them my opion is Not for Jackson for I think Craford superer to him for that office and I hope god will Bless you for your stand I Bad at wrightin and speling But you will understand me I wuld wrot more But I Did not know whether it would pleas you—if I have Dun Rong I hop you will for give me for my Eigrance But my Love to the Rule of Right is so grat that Cant give it out as Longe I Live Sir Remain your Friend

WILLIAM MOORE

Oct. 21th 1824

[Address: Hilsborough]

From William Garnett.

25th Oct. 1824.

Our mutual avocations seem to have put an end to our epistolary intercourse. Indeed it is so long since we have had any communication of this sort, that I cannot with certainty remember which of us is the debtor on this score; though if my memory is not treacherous I think you are the delinquent. It is not however with a view of adjusting this balance that I now address you. A large and growing family admonish me to look out for a more eligible settlement for them. My object therefore is to seek cheaper lands a *healthy* country, and to avoid if possible the inconvenience of emigrating to a state of society which if I have not been greatly misinformed with regard to our new State, is but little removed from semi barbarous. I have lately had my attention directed to your State as most likely to fulfil the object I have in view and I know of no person from whom I could obtain such satisfactory informa-

tion as yurself, and I can at the same time assure you that the prospect of a renewal of our early friendship offers the strongest alleviation that I can promise myself of the pain of separation from all the friends of my youth, and I may add, the soil of my native State. But such regrets are unavailing when duty commands and they should if possible be placed out of view. To return then to my subject I wish to be informed at what price a good farm of 600 to 1000 acres could be purchased for per acre; the kind of crops that hold out the greatest inducement to cultivators—the proximity of such a settlement to market and lastly though not the least consideration the healthiness of any situation you may recommend. I do not wish to purchase an unimproved place that is in relation to buildings. My present plantation contains about a 1000 acres, for which I can get a pretty good price; and I desire if practicable to repurchase as much or nearly as much as I now own and to have a surplus to pay some debts that I owe, which I see no other prospect of paying, as the fund that I had provided for that purpose has been tied up in a chancery court for 8 or 9 years; and I presume that you are sufficiently well acquainted with these tribunals to judge what a forlorn hope this must be. It is very possible that I may have omitted many inquiries that a man in search of a settlement ought to make; I shall therefore rely upon your judgment to supply such omissions and to furnish me with all the information that you may deem requisite. Should I judge from the account I receive from you, that there is a prospect of bettering my condition in your country I shall visit it during the ensuing winter or spring. As your acquaintance must be very extensive I will thank you to make inquiries for me in other parts of the country that I may have as large a view of the subject as a man with such an object in view should take. I have only six children living which I understand is three less than your number; but from the information I recvd of you last summer at the springs from two of your countrymen Mr. Johnson and Skinner your profession promises you an ample provision for them all. This at once reminds me of another inquiry is there any opening for a lawyer at your bar? I have been reading law myself and had some idea of commencing the practice in this State, but the prospect here is very discouraging. When you write direct to Loyds Essex County Va. and the letter should be sent by the way of Richmond and Fredericksburg or as our mails are very uncertain you could meet with a safe private opportunity to Richmond Mr. Thomas Brockenborough of that place would take charge of it and forward it to me. With assurances of the most sincere and undiminished regard I remain my dear friend unalterably

[P. S.] When you see Mr. Johnson and Skinner remember me to them. I was much pleased with them both. Direct to Col. Wm. Garnett, as there is a man of my name in this county who sometimes gets my letters. Let me hear from you as early as possible.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH—October 29th 1824.

My Dearest Child!—

It makes us very happy to hear so frequently from you and both your Mother and I, as well as your brothers and sisters, return you our thanks for the remembrance of us which your letters evince. We add our hopes that you will not relax in your diligence in that respect, as we should be apt to see in it a cooling of regard. Besides frequent letters, we shall look for well written ones. I know you have candor, and intelligence enough to make both an interesting correspondent to your Parents and an instructive one to the younger branches of the family. Make us as happy as in your power: and begin to act upon the rule (which ought to be that of your life) of being as useful to your friends as possible. I do not mean to flatter you upon your capacity for correspondence. But I assure you I derive much solid pleasure in reading some of your letters—those I mean in which you have taken some pains to be correct and perspicuous. You have a turn of thought, fancy and expression, which if duly cultivated will form a pretty epistolary style. Do not spoil it in the attempt to mend it. The art of letter writing consists in being easy, polite, candid and affectionate and treating a subject as a well bred person would in a familiar, unrestrained and good humour conversation. Write therefore always as you feel. This will have two good effects: The first is, you will escape *stiffness* and the danger of pedantry: The second is, that it insensibly tends to the cultivation of good feeling in the heart. One does not like at your age to play the hypocrite for any length of time; nor is it agreeable at any age to expose ones-self even to the nearest relation by putting into the permanent form of writing bad feelings, the fruits of malicious, mean or censorious spirit, frivolity of temper, sourness, passion or any other disposition. Handsome writing therefore is not the only benefit or praise that you derive from attention to your letters and style. Desirable as that is, there is another—the improvement of the heart and moral faculties—which excels it. I have read many essays and much praise on *Candor*. But I do not remember ever to have seen, what I conceive, its chief excellence noted by any author. Candor consists in speaking ones mind truly and sincerely—without malice and without flattery. It is a most amiable trait in every one and makes many friends—But it has a very powerful tendency to make us *better* within ourselves—Even the veriest hypocrite speaks to the world the sentiments of virtue and piety. We are all ashamed to publish our own wickedness of thought as well as of deed—and here lies the moral excellence of Candor: One who speaks what she feels and is habitually candid in delivering her thoughts is of necessity obliged to cherish good feelings and cultivate useful reflection; else either the contempt or the disgust of all around follows. Of the same character is an unaffected, natural and simple style of writing. Our

letters, not the result of study, must either then be the offhand display of a good heart, filled with affection for our friends and purity of feeling, or must be unacceptable for their coarseness and other worse qualities as to make the writers ashamed of them. But how I have fallen upon these subjects for a letter I know not. When I began to write, nothing was farther from my thoughts than giving you either a moral lecture or a disquisition upon any sort of style and particularly the epistolary—for which perhaps no person is less qualified than myself. Should you however see nothing else in it, I trust you will perceive an anxious solicitude for your well fare and be farther led to the reflection, that there is no virtue or good quality that does not tend to produce others and that there no vice nor indeed fault, by which another is not engendered.

Your brother has written to you. From him more *news* can be learnt than from me; for he knows more and is more inclined to tell it. The melancholy result of poor young Mr. Walker's illness has, no doubt, been heard at Rock-Rest. His death was much regretted by all here and his funeral was numerously attended yesterday at the Church; "How unsearchable are the Judgments of God; and His ways, past finding out!" Here is a Youth in the prime of life and giving the earnest of usefulness snatched away while an aged father and a still more aged Grandmother survive to mourn over the bereavement. "If the old must die, the young may die. Neglect not therefore the all-important Duty of Piety—Cultivate a spirit of habitual devotion—Neglect not your *private* prayers and read the Scriptures daily. Give your *Heart* to God and he will reward you.

Your Mother says she will have shoes made for you next week; which with paper etc. I will bring down, when I come. I hope to be with you on tomorrow week. Let me hear that you have been *diligent* and *dutiful* and let me see the happy effects.

Your Mother unites with me in the expression of our Love for you and in the prayer for your happiness. All the children often, nay daily, speak of you and love you very much. Requite their attachment by reciprocating it.

God bless you, my dear child!

Your affectionate Father,

THOMAS RUFFIN.

[Address: Rock-Rest Chatham.]

From Weldon N. Edwards.

WARRENTON 12th NOV. 1824.

The returns for the election in this County just recd. give Crawford 489, Jackson 152 votes.

Some weeks ago a sorrel mare strayed from my plantation. She is five or six years old—goes a little lame in one hind leg—having been injured in the ancle by a plough, which tho' well is a little larger than the other. I *recollect* no white about her. She paces tolerably well—is of good sire. I understand she was raised by a Mr. Hart living near Hillsboro. Oblige me so far as to make inquiry for her of Mr. Hart, and if to be found secure her and give me early information of it.

Shall be glad to hear from you during the winter.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

*To Bartlett Yancey.*¹

HILLSBOROUGH, Decem. 3rd, 1824.

I have occasion to get a Deed here for some lands in *Virginia* and wish to know how I am to have it acknowledged by Husband and wife here, so as to be effectual there without further proof or proceedings. The Act of Assembly of that State prescribes the *very form* of the whole proceeding and is to be found in "*Leigh's Revisal*" which belongs to the Executive Office in Raleigh, under the head of "*Deeds*" as well as I remember. The Act embraces the proof of all Deeds, I think; but also specially provides the form of proof or acknowledgement before the tribunals of the Country or State in which the grantors live, when it is executed out of Virginia. That is the part I want and I shall feel greatly obliged to you for extracting those sections in *totidem verbis* and enclosing them by the return of the mail or by the first opportunity.

We have no news here but what has got cold with you. We know not yet whether Clay or Crawford get into the house. For my part I feel very indifferent about it, because Crawford has been so abused and vilified and all sides have so run at him and thro' him at the Republican party that I have no hope of his final success even if once in the house. I do not know but it is better for the good cause and the *revival of Democracy* that he should be excluded. A spring will bear a certain degree of compression beyond that it will not be forced, and then its elastic rebound is certain and often fatal to the resisting power. Thus I hope it will be with the people and their deluders. Besides, if Clay can be brought on the Turf, he will make sport, be sure of it!! His men will not go to Jackson or Adams, the Republicans would support him in preference to either of the others and he would get some States, this for instance, where neither Crawford nor his Ticket has succeeded. Besides this, I learn from Murphey (you have my author) that the West generally, including Jackson himself, will support Clay, when Jackson can not be carried.

¹This letter is in the possession of the North Carolina Historical Society. It is reprinted from *The James Sprunt Historical Publications*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

This must be the case, for the Adams men will not—nay, nobody can support him (Jackson) after he leaves the shoulders of the People. Hence I should not be surprised if Clay should be the man at last. I have no hope of Crawford. He is too honest and too good for the present day. The Republican party is down—God grant it may not *be done!*—and he has sunk with it.

Murphey told me today that he thought Crawford much the greatest and best man among them. I believe the fact to be so, but did not expect so *candid* a confession *from him*. To what sentiment or conclusion do you imagine it was the preface? “That he was opposed to him and rejoiced in his defeat, because *Virginia* was for him. He declared that he would rather have a weak President than that North Carolina and Virginia should vote together. I reminded him that in this instance Virginia came to us; we being as we were eight years ago and she having changed. He said he knew that, but if Crawford had been elected Virginia would have had all the credit of it and No. Ca. none! I asked where was our credit now? What were we to get? how to be honored, served, or rewarded? I got no answer—Time will show, and my sincere hope and confident expectation is that many an hungry expectant will gnaw his nails in bitter disappointment about the Ides of March next.

I don't ask you at Raleigh to do much good—all we can look for is that you may prevent others from doing harm, which of itself, is much with such a *gang* as you have this winter.

God bless you!

THOMAS RUFFIN.

B. Yancey, Esq., Raleigh.

From Willie P. Mangum.

WASHINGTON 15th Dec. 1824.

I have just returned from Baltimore, where I left William. He seemed never fully to realize his situation until I was about to leave him when he seemed deeply affected. Indeed every thing about St. Mary's¹ wears a melancholy appearance to one from No. Carolina.

The dresses of the Catholic teachers, the Gothic tower, the strange appearance of the halls hung with pictures calling up every sort of religious association altogether affects William in almost any other way than pleasantly. He will however I have no doubt become perfectly satisfied in a short time. There are many fine boys in the school—and some of them from the south and from protestant families.

Mr. Dampson indicates every disposition to put William in a course that will not at first tend to strengthen his dislike of his situation. The

¹An old and well-known Roman Catholic institution in Baltimore.

intercourse I should think from what I observed, is upon a more easy footing between the Teachers and the Students at St. Mary's than at Chapel Hill, and from all that I have been able to learn on the subject, I should think that it is one of the best institutions in the United States for the acquiring of the ancient and modern languages, and more especially the latter.

I presume you know that Mr. Damplon is a Parisian, that he lived and taught in Paris until he had attained a ripend manhood—and that under the troubles of Napoleon he left Paris for America with no other view than that of paying a visit to some of his friends, but contrary to his expectations was induced to become an officer in St. Marys.

I had an interview of say 2 hours with him, I left him well pleased with his affability, easy politeness, and even courteousness.

The check you handed to me was duly paid at the Bank in Baltimore.

I enclose you a prospectus which will give you more fully the information you may desire in relation to the course of study in the College.

I also enclose to you Mr. Damplon's receipt for the money paid him.

I have but a moment more to say to you, that Gen. Jackson will in all probability be the president. Everything however depends upon Mr. Clay. Crawford's friends have determined to stand upon their arms and receive the Cross forces of the enemy, that is to say Virga. No. Ca. Georgia and Delaware—for it is pretty certain that New York true to her character, will abandon Crawford in the House.

The North Ca. vote will remain firm unless under some exigency they shall move en masse, and with unanimity.

I will say more to you on these subjects before long.

Mr. Thos. Ruffin.

Address:

Thomas Ruffin Esquire
Hillsborough
North Carolina.

Endorsed:

Honble. W. P. Mangum
Decm. 1824.

From Lewis Williams.

WASHINGTON January 1st, 1825.

* * * * *

I know you feel great solicitude on the subject of the Presidential Election, and I do most sincerely wish it were in my power to give you information in any way satisfactory. The friends of Clay hold the balance in their hands, and no one can tell how they will act. Rumours

of all sorts, both strange and contradictory are circulated daily. At one time it is said Clays friends will support Jackson: Then Adams, and then again Crawford. But none of them have a just foundation I believe, for it seems to me that the friends of Clay intend to stand aloof for a while, and finally act as circumstances may require. Of one thing I have always been assured that Clay will cooperate with those with whom an association shall seem most advantageous. To ascertain this he and his friends will require time to look about and as the period for final decision has not yet arrived we of course can know nothing positively. These remarks are made to you in confidence and I hope you will receive them in that way.

Let me hear from you.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.

From W. F. Strange.

FAYETTEVILLE, [N. C.] 15th Jany 1825.

The Judges of the Supreme Court have surely forgot the promise they made to Mr. Gaston of deciding as soon as possible the propriety of admitting aliens to practise law in this state.

I have been very anxious indeed to learn the result, day after day have I gone to the Post Office expecting to have been favored with a letter from you on the subject, but none have I yet received. I trouble you with this under the impression that it will afford me some consolation to know with certainty whether they have decided the question or not, and it will moreover enable [me] to write home to my Brother, who I daresay is as anxious as myself to know the result. I wrote him some time ago saying I was afraid some objection might be taken to my practising law being an alien as a Gentleman under the same circumstances had been refused at the last session of the court.

I know you would have written me if the decision had been made, but "hope deferred, I may almost say has made my heart sick," if you can find as much time I would be glad to know if there is any probability of their coming to a decision shortly.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From George McNeill.

FAYETTEVILLE May 29th 1825.

I wrote to you a line on the 19th Inst. directed to Raleigh, but for fear you may not have recd it, I think it proper to inform you that your note at U. S. Bank will be due on Wednesday.

The U. S. Bank has adopted an important change in the manner and policy of its business with regard to the State Banks—such as will compel the State Banks to *pay specie* or cease to do business. The U. S. B. will receive the Local Bank notes and pay out only its own notes or specie, and compel the State Banks to *pay up*—the motive is avowedly to restore a sound currency. The new system is to commence on the 1. Sept. of which the State Banks have notice. I fear it will alarm the State Banks and cause them to curtail their business, thereby causing a great pressure on the community for money this summer—and particularly in this place.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Charles Manly.

RALEIGH 3rd June 1825.

Sir.

The fourth Monday of the present month has been fixed and agreed on as the day on which the Committee of Appointment for the University of No. Carolina will meet in the City of Raleigh to consider of and determine on the advisability of filling the Professorship of Rhetoric and Logic in the said Institution which has lately become vacant through the resignation of the Revd. Mr. Kollock.¹

A full meeting of this Committee is wished and expected.

I have the honor to be

Yr. Obt. Servt.

CHAS. MANLY.

Secty: Trustees.

The members of this Com.—are Gov. Burton, Badger, Haywood, Hawkes, Nash, Polk, T. Ruffin, Witherspoon.²

[Address: Hillsboro' No. Ca.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER. 5. June 1825.

I am well again, but very weak, my Attack was bilious and very Severe. I called a Physician instantly, bled and took Pukes and Cathar-

¹Shepard K. Kollock, a Presbyterian minister from New Jersey, had been professor since 1819.

²These members were Hutchins G. Burton, George E. Badger, John Haywood, Francis L. Hawks, Frederick Nash, William Polk, and John Witherspoon.

tics, Untill my System was entirely cleaned and Set aright. I hope I shall now be free from further bilious Fever during the Season.

I saw Mr. Michaux, the Claim for Insurance turns out to be a *mere* Claim, and Michaux told me it was abandoned. Old Mrs. Daniel has just died and left a large estate to Wm. W. Man, who is expected in this Month. I left his Bond with Mr. Michaux, who told me he would see him and get his Deed.

I am preparing to Set out for Tennessee. I am now trying to raise some Money. For this Purpose I must go to Guilford on Tomorrow and sell a small Tract of land. I hope to make Several Sales this Summer: and if the prospect be good, I shall run the risk of loosing part of my Circuit next Fall.

I shall go and see you before I set out. My business is so behind that I beg you to let Moreau return on Tomorrow and help me here for a week.

* * * * *

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From William Garnett.

[RICHMOND, VA. June 8, 1825]

I take the liberty of enclosing to you (and bespeaking your patronage) the prospectus of an agricultural paper about to be edited in this place. The editor is an uncommonly worthy man and he has a numerous family entirely dependant on his exertions for a support.

This to be sure is merely an appeal to the good feelings of the public; but I think I may promise that the paper will (from the talents and information engaged to contribute to it) be not unworthy of its patronage. Last fall I had it in contemplation to remove to the South and addressed some enquiries to you relative to the prospects which North Carolina might hold out to an emigrant endeavoring to better the fortunes of a large and increasing family. To this letter I never reced an answer and know not whether it ever reached you. If your avocations will permit I should be very happy occasionally to hear from you—Though long separated from you I have never ceased to feel the continued influence [of] the friendship formed between us in early youth. Many and affecting have been the various scenes through which I have passed since those days of joyous youth when scarcely a ripple occurred to agitate the smooth current of life. But these vicissitudes have only served to make me cling with increased tenacity to the remembrance of the happier days that I have passed with the friends of my youth. But I must now take my leave of you to go to the federal courts where I

have a suit of considerable importance to attend. farewell my dear friend and believe me ever yours most sincerely

RICHMOND 8th June 1825

My address is Loyds Essex County

[Address: Hillsborough North Carolina]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 11th June 1825.

Dear Ruffin/.

It is now certain that I shall not be able to go to Tennessee within this Month. Although I am free from Disease, I am weak, and my Strength returns so Slowly that I am not able at this time to make even a Short ride without much suffering. I have put off from day to day setting out for the upper Part of Guilford, Where I have some business that requires my Attention, but I still feel too weak. I have resolved to try the Road on Tomorrow. I had appointed to cross the Blue ridge on the 28th Inst; and have engagements in Tennessee for the early Part of July. Unable to go myself, I have thought it would be prudent to Send Moreau: prudent in two respects. 1. Because I can depend upon his strict attention to every thing committed to his charge, and 2nd. He will become acquainted with the Situation of my Affairs in Tennessee, and in the event of my death greatly aid you in Settling them. I am Sorry to withdraw him from his Studies: But, Perhaps, the Trip may be useful to him in teaching him something of Practical Life and of Business. I shall be glad, if you concur with me in Opinion.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Robert Strange.

FAYETTEVILLE, July 1st, 1825.

* * * * *

Concerning the vacancy in the Judiciary created by the resignation of Judge Badger would you be willing to use your influence in favor of Joseph Picket Esqr. of Wadesborough?¹ Our district is much in want of a Judge and has been much overlooked in the distribution of offices. In addition to the considerations already named I think my interest would be advanced in his promotion.

[Address: Raleigh N. Ca.]

¹Ruffin himself was chosen to succeed Badger, the council nominating him unanimously, and the legislature electing him, on November 24, 1825, without other names being brought forward.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 13th July 1825.

I heard on yesterday that you had agreed to go again on the Bench. I hope this intelligence is correct and that you will be commissioned before you leave Raleigh: I hope so, not only on your Account, but on Account of the Public. Your Constitution is wearing out, And a few years more of Fatigue will destroy it. You want rest, and the Bench is an honourable retreat. Your promotion just now, will open the way to the Bench of the Supreme Court, to which you will be appointed on the first vacancy. Your Profits may be less: but you you will be able to scuffle through your difficulties. The Public want you on the Bench. You will do business: you will give some energy to the Administration of Justice, and break down the Docket. You too will know how sadly inefficient our Judges are: they really display no Activity nor Energy, except in Sending a few poor Wretches to Jail.—This is *inter nos*, but it is true.

Since Friday last, I have felt like getting well. My system has got right although I am very weak. Making out my Dispatches for Tennessee gave me three relapses. Moreau is, I expect on today, at Murfreesborough. Mr. Irving and Mr. Holt went in company with him. Mr. McLemore informs me that the price of Lands has advanced in the Western District and that sales are more brisk than heretofore. He advises me not to sell untill the present crop of cotton is gathered in. But I sent out Instructions to Mr. Hughes and Mr. Dickens to sell as fast as possible. Mr. Dickens wrote to me that he had sold *a great deal* of land (to use his words) since I saw him and that having arranged his business and gotten it into good Train, he would accept an agency for me and aid me as far as he could in making Sales.

My friend Mr. McLemore is now at New York. I regret this very much, as Moreau could have been greatly aided by him. But in the style of that Friendship which he has evinced toward me, from the moment I saw him at Nashville, He wrote to me previous to his setting out for New York, and expecting that I would be in Tennessee during the Month, he says perhaps I might want some pecuniary assistance during the summer, and authorizes me to draw on him for any money I might want. He goes further, and tells me if any Person wishing to purchase Lands from me, should prefer any of his Lands to mine, that I may have as many tracts as I want, and he will take my Lands in exchange, and that if my Lands give out I may take as many of his Tracts as will answer my Purposes, and pay him whenever it may be convenient. Now although I have been the means of procuring thousands of acres for him as well as Col. Dickens yet this conduct of his is certainly generous and kind in the extreme. I mention his Letter and its contents, because I know you admire and esteem him.

If you are ever bilious, you must have observed that when an idea or a train of thought takes possession of the mind, you can't get rid of it until the Bile be corrected. Before I was taken sick, I was engaged, whilst travelling about the Circuit, in arranging the Plan of my intended Work on North Carolina. On that Week I sketched out Part of it, and my Mind was intent upon the subject, when the Bile first assailed me—: and has continued to dwell on it incessantly ever Since, Untill a few days past. During the Time, I arranged the Plan for the Colonial History of the State, Civil, Military, Legislative and Judicial:—*Now*, my reports occupy my attention. I wish the work to be done. I am not able as yet to do more than half as much in the day, as if my Health were restored.

William is with me, and I hope he will do better. I give him encouragement, and beg you to do so, when you see him. If you go on the Bench, He ought to exert himself day and night.

My Wife is no better, her situation is disagreeable indeed during this hot Weather. I sent for Dr. Umstead this morning and will get him to stay a week with her. Her Complaint is local, but will, I fear, affect her general Health. What is the News at Court? What is done with Colquets Case, etc.?

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

From George E. Badger.

RALEIGH July 16, 1825.

Since you left us I have thought seriously and anxiously upon the subject of undertaking your business in the Counties of Orange Granville and Wake, and it would not be right towards you or just towards myself to conceal from you the result of my reflections. I left the Bench as you well know merely for the purpose of making money of which I am in great need not only for myself but for others whom I am bound to provide for by every tie sacred in morals and dear to affection. To discharge these obligations it is incumbent on me to consider the uncertainty of life and the small period, if I live, which is left me for active exertion to provide for ease and comfort in old age. Your business includes one side of every cause of importance in your Courts—and if I undertake it I shall find myself in the labor of business without its reward,—and for years shall lose the profits of my exertions in three of my best courts. The only part of your business which promises remuneration is that belonging to the collection department for which I am not qualified and should dislike to undertake. Your business in the Supreme Court shall command my best exertions and unwearied industry. But under the circumstances in which I am placed do not think me fickle or disobliging

if I yield to the paramount obligations of necessity and desire to decline your business in the other courts. Had this view of my situation distinctly presented itself to you it is probable you would not have proposed to me the undertaking.

Indeed I think you have some notions towards your clients of overstrained delicacy—you are entitled to and should retain the moneys you have received unless it may be in some few cases of extraordinary complexion. Keep your fees therefore and let your clients choose and pay their counsel as they please.

My affectionate and respectful regard to Mrs. Ruffin. Say to her for me that if she *regrets* your going on the Bench the inference will be that she desires to be a widow.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

*From Hutchins G. Burton.*¹

State of North Carolina.

To the Honble. Thomas Ruffin.

We reposing special trust and confidence, in your prudence, integrity, abilities and learning, do hereby commission you one of the judges of our Superior Courts of Law and Equity, you having been thereunto appointed by his Excellency the Govr. by and with the advice of the Council of State; and authorize you, after taking such oaths as are necessary for your qualification to enter upon and discharge the duties of said appointment and to receive and enjoy the salary thereunto annexed until the session of our next General Assembly.

[SEAL] In testimony whereof I Hutchins G. Burton, Governor, etc. have caused the Great seal of the State to be hereunto affixed and signed the same at our city of Raleigh the 18th.

July 1825.

H. G. BURTON.

By the Governor,

JNO. K. CAMPBELL, Private Secty.

From John W. Long.

ASHBOROUGH Augt. 4th 1825.

In consequence of your late appointment I fear you will not be at Chatham Court. Mr. McBryde and myself were making large calculations on the advantage your attendance there would be to me in the present contest. I have spent considerable time in Chatham with Mr.

¹Governor Burton's Letter Book, p. 19. Collections of North Carolina Historical Commission.

Giles at the different meetings and met with more encouragement than I had anticipated. From this I shall go to Forks (*Rowan*) with a view of attending a large meeting at Mocksville Saturday next then return to Davidson to attend the Election. Mr. Giles has been all the last month in Chatham and will return there, great exertions will be made by his friends. What he and them may resort to in my absence is unknown but they stop at nothing. Even Messrs. Steadman and Colton are circulating a report that I prevented the passage of a Bill when in the State Legislature to compel the Quakers to bear arms. Nothing more unfounded. I never acted on such a subject. Have you no business sufficient to cause you to go to Chatham Court? If you could be there only on Tuesday I am confident it would be of infinite service to me. Mr. Giles some times says a great deal about the formation of the Crowd. Ticket at Raleigh, this would give you a good opportunity of contending with him. He at one time denied that Jackson was in favour of the Tariff. Now he is rather denying the assertion and getting round. But if you should go to Chatham Ask the candidates of that county what he said on the subject. I know Ramsay Underwood and several others were present. I still calculate upon success but must confess when I learn the extraordinary exertions that are making and the injurious means used I can't be surprised at any thing.

Honble Thomas Ruffin.

From Thomas Ritchie.

RICHMOND, Sepr. 12th, 1825.

After an absence of 7 weeks, I returned last night to the bosom of my family. How much the deaths of my venerated friend¹ and his good son, shocked me, it is unnecessary to tell a man like you. There was no man, whom while living, I loved more—no one, whose memory I shall more piously cherish—no one, whose dying request I would more sacredly respect. But, my own duties, and those which I owe to my Sister and her family, forbid in the most peremptory terms my officiating as Trustee or Exr. under my deceased friend's will. In every respect, except the most affectionate devotion to my Sister, am I utterly disqualified for these sacred trusts. Of *law*, and particularly of that of N. Carolina, I am profoundly ignorant—of the administration of the affairs of men, few men of my age are so woefully inexperienced. This Estate too is situated at a distance from me, for, to me even a journey of 50 miles is a tiresome Enterprise. My hands are full to overflowing of my own business. It has exhausted all my time; and withered the very vitals of my own constitution. I have just returned from a pursuit of health, across

¹Ruffin's uncle, William Ruffin of Raleigh, and one of his sons had recently died.

the mountains, a little improved, it may be, but only to meet a load of business and care, which will in all probability consign me to the same infirmities from which I have so recently attempted to save myself. In this state of things, how is it possible for me to discharge the trust with satisfaction to myself or advantage to my Sister? Mr. Ruffin would not probably have selected a man in the whole world, whose whose *means* were so incompetent to his *wishes*, one, who was *more anxious* to serve, and so *little able*.

I have uniformly made it a point of solemn duty to refuse such offices. When my brother Archibald was on his death-bed, as I supposed, I came to the determination to decline any share of an administration, which he might have committed to my charge. When my venerated father-in-law sank to the grave, I was compelled to turn a deaf ear to his testamentary requests; nor was my own interest sufficient in its appeals to change the settled purpose of my own best judgment. I must equally decline it in the present instance, in spite of the powerful reasons which you have assigned, and the strong feelings which co-operate with all your Arguments.

But, may I not, my dear Sir, join my own intreaties with the wishes of our deceased friend, and beseech you, if possible, to accept of this important trust? Your office will make it your duty frequently to visit Raleigh—at other periods, you can devolve the trust upon some confidential Agent. You know the laws. You know the people. You know the situation of the Estate: and I know, you possess the unbounded Confidence of the whole family. Your character will give efficacy to all your arrangements; and confidence to all your measures.

I entreat, therefore, my dear Sir, that you would act in behalf of the family: do the best you can, and confer the greatest obligation on,
[Address: Fayetteville, N. Carolina.]

From William A. Graham.

HILLSBOROUGH Oct 5th 1825.

Agreeably to promise I now undertake to write you a few lines. With great pleasure I inform you that your family, and friends in this place, are in good health—all except little Elizabeth who (Mrs. Ruffin requests me to say) is much better than when she last wrote you. Since your departure the town has been visited by an unusual degree of sickness—no deaths however except a little daughter of Mr. Heartt and a Mr. Reeves from the lower part of the county—both of which you have no doubt heard of before. Wm. Adams has been at the very point of dissolution for several days but is now thought by his physicians to be recovering. A few cool days which we have had and one or two slight frosts have freed us from any apprehension of the continuance of bilious

fever, which has been the prevailing malady. As usual in Hillsboro' there is a scarcity of news. Were I writing to a younger friend I might have much to say on the subject of the ladies, as it is, sufficeth to say that they have extorted much of the tribute which was due to Blackstone and Coke. It is now however the eve of our gayety. Most of those who have been spending the summer here will leave during the present week, and it is to be hoped those venerable masters will then be restored to their former dominion. I suppose you have heard of the election of Prof. Olmsted to the professorship of Mathematics in Yale College. It appears to me strange that they should have offered the appointment to Mr. O. in preference to Mitchell who is certainly his superior not only as a Mathematician but in every department of science. North Carolinians however ought not to regret it as the loss to our own college is not so great as it would have been in the other event. Moreau Murphey wrote me from Nashville 22nd August. He expected at that time to set out for home about the 20th of Sept.—appears highly pleased with the country and the hospitality and kindness of its inhabitants. During the court here Judge Paxton handed me a letter from Brother James—it was written just after his discomfiture—he seems a good deal chagrined—mentioned that it was quite currently reported through the district that Walker had transferred his interest to Carson for a valuable consideration. He congratulates himself however on being freed from the care and fatigue of electioneering and expressed a determination to return with redoubled assiduity to the duties of his profession. I expect to set out for Lincoln about the middle of this month in company with Mr. Benehan who contemplates settling himself in Wilkesboro', having been advised to do so by Judge Nash. My absence will not be for a longer period than a fortnight or three weeks, as I am anxious to read a good part of Lord Coke before you return. I believe we had instituted our Moot Court before you left us. Our meetings are held weekly and confined exclusively to the discussion of questions of Law. Mr. Hawks frequently attends and delivers his opinions. It will no doubt be to us a source of much improvement if properly attended to. The Masonic fraternity of this place had a grand parade a few days since in dedicating their lodge. Mr. Green delivered an address in the Lodge on the subject of their institution after which they marched in procession to the Methodist church where Mr. Hawks as deputy grand master of the state gave us another speech of a similar nature. In haste.

Sincerely Your Friend
and Most Obedt. Servt.

Hon. Judge Ruffin.

WILL: A. GRAHAM.

[Address: Hon. Thomas Ruffin,

Fayetteville

Mail.

No. Carolina

Endorsed: Wm. A. Graham

Octo. 1825.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

FAYETTEVILLE—Novemr. 12th 1825.

My Dear Daughter!

I have received on my circuit your very affectionate Letters. They merit my thanks; of which I ought perhaps to have returned an earlier expression. The truth is however, that while my occupations leave me but little time to devote to my friends, they likewise in a great degree give to my spirits a *cast so sombre* that I am unwilling to shew myself even to my children. The long journey I have taken, hath brought me into the company of few people, to whom I should be anxious to introduce you; and dull descriptions—in my style—of places, customs and things would hardly be worth your reading. They may serve to beguile in conversation a long winter's evening when you get home; and if of sufficient interest to you to be made the subjects of enquiry, I promise then to tell you all I have seen. As a present exception however I must mention that I spent two days at *Bellville*, the seat of Mr. John Waddell, whose daughters are your school mates. They deserve every good feeling of which you are capable, if a child be under any obligation to reciprocate the good offices done to the Parent. The situation is beautiful and somewhat embellished by art; but the hospitality and kindness of most of the very worthy proprietors with their unusual urbanity of manners is the great charm of the spot, which cannot fail to attach the guest while there and excite a grateful remembrance after seperation. Mention to the young Ladies, that their Parents and friends are all well—having reached home without an accident.

I hoped and expected to have received letters here from both your Mother and yourself—But upon my arrival today I found none from either. My last accounts from home relieved me from much painful solicitude, as they advised me of the convalescence of poor Betty and the recovery of your Mother and most of the Servants. I still flatter myself that no further sickness prevents your Mama from writing, because Mr. McNeills letters from your grand-father do not contain any such intimation. Moreover Mr. McN's carriage is now at Hillsboro for his children and is daily expected back by them. I shall hear all particulars.

It would give me great pleasure to comply with your affectionate request by taking the Rock Rest¹ road home—especially as you press it on me so in both your letters. But at present, I cannot promise. My first duty you know is further on: And without doubting my regard for yourself, you will permit me to add, that, naturally I wish to be soonest where the most of those who are most dear to me are. If I leave for Fayetteville in the morning, I can reach *home* in two days by the nearest

¹Rock Rest was the Chatham County home of Colonel Edmund Jones. His wife conducted a school for young ladies there.

rou, which I *must* go. But if it be my fate to set out late, as I cannot get all the way up next day, I will call on you in the way. Don't be selfish and wish me the ill-fortune of a detention here, that will throw me upon you.

The date of this letter reminds me that on this day fifteen years I was made a Father for the first time, by *your birth*. You are now almost a woman, my child; and I trust and pray God that you have improved the precepts and principles in which your Mother has raised you, as, after her example, to be a *good Woman!* the friend of your sisters—the pride of your brothers—the comfort of your Parents and—if you should chance to be mistress of a household at a future day—the ornament and crown of a Husband. Your years lead us now to look for prudence and discretion in you,—sense and knowledge, properly mingled with good humour and fine feeling. I will not add an admonition—but simply desire you habitually to call up in your mind reflections upon questions of propriety and, in all cases in which you doubt yourself look to the aid of Mrs. Jones who is with you and consider, what your excellent Mother would herself do in your place, or would wish you to do. With their helps, it will be difficult to err. One caution take at *my* hands: The least, the very least of *Affectation* put far from you. It makes a character partly artificial, wholly so in the end. If the property or manner affected be a virtue, do not feign it, but strive to possess it in reality. If a foible or a vice, it is contemptible and indelibly stamps a reproach upon your understanding and will finally unsettle all your best feelings.

You must not play (at any rate) in your letters to persons older than yourself and particularly in those to your parents, the little trick of Romance of subscribing yourself by any other than your *true name*. By what better authority can you lay aside the baptismal appellative, than the baptismal vows? Besides, it is not respectful.

I am at Mrs. McNeill's, where I shall chiefly stay during my detention here. Tomorrow however I shall go from Church with Mr. Strange. Both of your Aunts and the children are well. I have only been here a few hours and have not had time to call on Mrs. Eccles—but your Aunt Minerva says that both she and her children were in good health a few days ago. I offer my most respectfull regards to Mrs Jones and all the family at Rock-Rest. For yourself, I renew to the Almighty the fervent prayers of, Dearest Catherine,

Your most affect. Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

P. S. The Court here will continue *two* weeks.

Miss Catherine Ruffin

Rock Rest

Chatham

[Address :

Colo. Edward Jones'

Chatham.]

From Francis L. Hawks.

HILLSBORO' WEDNESDAY MORNING. [November, 1825]

Mr. Waddell¹ handed me your note a short time since, and I take the earliest opportunity of answering it.

The expression of which you desire an explanation, I believe I can readily and I hope satisfactorily explain. As to the use of the word *publickly*.

In the conversation which I had with you, I gave you to understand that I had learned a rumour was circulating, charging me with injuring the characters of gentlemen in this place by publick imputations against them. The conversation in Mr. W's office, I did not deem publick, and tho' I freely acquit Mr. W. of any thing like a breach of confidence, yet I must repeat that I am sure, I would have not said any thing, had I supposed it could ever injure you either with the publick or the gentlemen present. This was one reason of my use of the word, but another and the principal reason was this. Before I removed to this place, during a term of the Supreme Court, on one occasion, a gentleman of the bar whose name I shall not mention, coming out of court with me, spoke of you, of an argument which you had made, complimented your talents, and adverted to what others had said of you on the score of sincerity. I had heard (to be candid with you) other gentlemen who knew you better than I did, speak of you in this particular, and I remembered too that but a short time before, I had been told of remarks of yours made about me which I confess hurt me, and I also remembered, that after hearing these remarks, we had at the same term taken a walk together in which you spoke kindly to me and professed a regard for me, and I communicated to you in confidence as a friend, for I was willing to forget what I had heard, all the particulars of an old love affair of mine; at the same time I communicated the fact of my engagement with the lady who is now my wife:—when then the gentleman Before alluded to, spoke of the opinion of others concerning you on the score of sincerity, I mentioned that I had heard such things, and coupling what had been told me, with your professions of regard, I confess the leaning of my mind was that the charge was not entirely groundless, tho' I think that then, I said nothing like it, but left it to be inferred from my remark that I had heard such things. It was long after this that I had the conversation with your brother; when I expressed what I then felt and still feel, a grateful sense of your kindness in offering me your purse when you thought me distressed, and I have mentioned also that circumstance to the very Gentleman with whom I had the former conversation, as an evidence of your benevolent feelings.

¹Hugh Waddell of Orange, 1799-1878.

The Conversation above referred to was entirely private, between two friends, neither of whom intended to do you the smallest injury, both of whom looked up to you with respect, and was never meant to be repeated; nor do I believe it has been by the other gentleman concerned, and not by me until the circumstances occurring within two or three days have rendered it necessary.

Let me go a step farther, and blame me not for my frankness and candour. I have heard such a charge made against you by others as is now imputed to me; several others:—I have heard other gentlemen say they had heard them made also; when made in my presence, I cannot call to mind any instance in which I expressed any opinion, and I know that on some occasions I changed the subject of conversation.

I believe Sir, there is no man of whom unkind things are not sometimes said, which would, on reflection, be cause of regret to the person speaking them. Such things have been said of *you*, I know they have of *me*. My wish is to be on good terms with all men, and I am sure it is as far from my design to *whisper* away your reputation, as it is to impute charges against you before the publick.

Your obdt. servt.

F. L. HAWKS.

From Francis L. Hawks.

Judge Ruffin,
Sir.

HILLSBORO—MONDAY EVENING. [November, 1825]

After leaving you this afternoon, Mr. Waddell and myself called on Mr. Rencher,¹ and tho' they differ, perhaps not very materially, yet from the statements of both, I am compelled to believe that there has been on my part an indiscretion for which as I am heartily sorry I must beg to be pardoned. Mr. Rencher states, that as nearly as he can recollect, when Mr. W. stated that he had dined with you, and your remark on Badger, that he was indolent, but you did not well know how to blame him, as you used to hate to see a client coming after dinner, I said, that I did not well know how to believe that, or I doubted that, for that when at the bar, you were as much disposed to seek popular favour as any lawyer among us. Mr. R. says that he understood me to speak of you professionally; both he and Mr. W. however were surprised for they thought I spoke with asperity, and both thought that I impeached your sincerity. Mr. R. says he thought that I doubted your *professional* sincerity, tho' at the same time, he inferred from my language and manner that I would not confide in you a great deal.

¹Abraham Rencher of Chatham, 1798-1883.

Now Sir, I can only say, that having until the conversation was mentioned, entirely forgotten that it ever took place, I cannot, at this distance of time, remember what I did say. One thing I do remember, I was hurt at the circumstance of not being invited to dine at your house with Badger, and felt a little mortified; and this probably gave to my manner the asperity of which Mr. R. and Mr. W. speak.

A general charge of insincerity against you I meant not to make nor did I intend *publicly*, to say any thing which might affect your character. In one word, Sir, so little had I of deliberate design to injure you that I had entirely forgotten the whole conversation. This Sir, is the simple fact, I have taken pains to say to Mr. W. and Mr. R. both that I regretted their misunderstanding of my words and manner, and had I supposed that what I then said would have injured you in the estimation of those gentlemen, or that the public would have ever heard it, I should have been silent, for however thoughtless I may be, I do not think I am malicious.

I have written this sir, to justify myself, for it would seem from what had passed between Mr. W. you, and myself that I had told you a falsehood before Mr. W. came up. The truth was Sir, that I did not remember the Conversation. I knew I had never spoken with Dr. Webb but once and that within ten days of any charges against me of having said things disrespectful of any one, and then this conversation in W's office was not named, and I was perfectly thunderstruck at Waddells statement.

To *you* Sir, it is of little importance, *my* opinion cannot affect your character; to *me* it is all important, for as I hinted to you, and indeed as you told me yourself, it has been industriously circulated that I have spoken ill of many respectable men; I have little to lose but reputation for as you know that is nearly my all. Of the charges brought against me, I can only say they are not true. I have not abused many respectable men:—the author of most of the rumours and the cause of them I think I know. If Sir, what I have said will be satisfactory to Mrs. Ruffin whom it grieves me to have offended, I shall be happy; if it will not Sir, I must patiently submit to the consequences of my indiscretion.

Respectfully

F. L. HAWKS.

From Lewis Williams.

WASHINGTON December 8th 1825.

The Revd. James Parks Clerk and Master in the County of Surry has lately died. His family are in reduced circumstances but honest. The appointment of a successor is a matter in which they as well as the County are interested. John P. Parks son of the old man has done the

business for his Father for several years. Permit me therefore to solicit your favourable consideration of John P. Parks who will be a candidate for the office held by his Father at the next Superior Court for Surry County in March 1826. I hope you will pardon the liberty I take and believe me your friend and Hble Servt.

Hon. Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From William H. Haywood Jr.

RALEIGH 8th Decr. 1825.

* * * * *

Our Legislature are doing little. It is whispered still that the Ch: Justice will go to Guatemala. If so you are already named as his successor to the Supreme Court bench.

I write you in haste—offer my respects to Mrs. Ruffin

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From William Robards.

RALEIGH, December 27th, 1825.

* * * * *

I should be highly gratified to see you, a few hours of social chat would afford infinite pleasure; I wish you no harm, but I trust you may be called to this place before our Court adjourns. All the Judges were in Court today, our Docket about the usual size. We shall do but little during the session. It is the opinion of many that they will adjourn Sunday or Monday. From what I have discovered no mischief will be done, and no good, to use the language of the members—they have attempted to legislate both the Sol. and Atto Genl. out of office, but the Senate on yesterday by a large vote rejected the Bill on that subject from the Commons. I am writing by candle light and my eyes admonish me to stop.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From William Robards.

WMS.BOROUGH Jany 12th, 1826.

Your friendly letter came safely to hand. I am content that you accepted of my apology and will not complain of the doubts expressed

of my indisposition. It may be that I often complain and still summon resolution to attend to my business and perhaps at times have not sufficient cause for a murmur. I wish it had been the case during the first weeks in December. I assure you, without jesting, I had a severe attack, and feel it sensibly now, but with prudence and care I think I shall be able to undergo a little more drudgery. I anxiously look forward to the time that I can withdraw, when it will arrive my prospects at present do not warrant me in saying. I think if I am spared a year or so more I will bid adieu to public life. Judging from your letter I may conclude that you will even doubt this determination.

* * * * *

We move on, very slow in Court—for ten days only two arguments—On Yesterday the Court commenced with some system. On yesterday Badger delivered two able arguments—One on the question involved in the cause from Caswell between Stamps and Graves—Whether on a promissory note given by Graves for a debt of John W. Graves it was incumbent on the Plff to prove a legal consideration, it having been contended by Seawell that on every parole contract or contract not reduced to a specialty, the onus was on the Ptff and not the defendant. Mr. Seawell was very sanguine in his opening speech, but ask'd time till today to reply—today a message was received from him that he was sick. I am inclined to say that his indisposition is something like that produced in the Tar River Navigation case this you must consider as said in confidence—although the proposition is considered plain, yet the argument of Mr. Seawell created doubts untill removed by the light given to the case by Badger—the other in answer to Wilson in a case from the West. The question involving the decision of the Court in the case of Johnson vs Martin, whether the acquittal of the defendant on a warrant is evidence of the want of probable cause in an action for a malicious prosecution, Wilson contending that the decision was erroneous. I think he (B) has shown more than his usual perspicuity, this is saying a great deal of him. Mr. Gaston has been unwell, but is now able to appear in Court.

I delivered your message to Judges Henderson and Hall, they are anxious to see you. We shall have a long Court unless the Equity causes are mostly continued.

I have given you an imperfect sketch of our proceedings for the want of other matter.

Accept my Dear Sir my sincere wishes for your welfare.

[P. S.] I have committed several mistakes having been interrupted by company. my room as usual is a lounging place for several.

*To William Polk.*¹

Dear Sir—

HILLSBOROUGH—February 6th 1826

I have been at my plantation up the country for ten days past and have just returned, in time to answer you before this morning's mail closes.

I cannot take on myself to receive the money mentioned in your letter, as it is my wish not to intermeddle with the Estate of my late Uncle in any such way as would compel me to qualify as his Executor. I am anxious however that the proceeds of the late sales should be applied to my Uncle's Bank debts for which I am surety; and I have no doubt but that his son Albert will administer with the will annexed at your next County Court. I shall then be at Raleigh myself with the view of having an administration granted and bringing about a speedy settlement of all the concerns of my Uncle.—At that time, every thing I apprehend will be done that will give you satisfaction.—

I am, Dear Sir, with much respect

Your friend & Obed^t S^{vt}

Col^o William Polk
Raleigh

THOMAS RUFFIN.

From John F. May.

RICHMD. Feby. 10th 1826.

Yours of the 3d. Jany. was duly reed, but immediately afterwards, the fire in Petersbg. in which my office was burned, threw my affairs in such a state of confusion, that I was hardly able to think of any thing. Added to this, the Courts of Chancery and of Appeals and the Legislature engrossed my whole time; and more recently I and my wife and two children have, one or the other of us, been sick in a boarding house here, for a fortnight. This is the first moment that I have had time to make the necessary inquiries, at the M. A. office; and to inform you of the result. The house you mention was regularly insured—and the policy transferred to Mr. Hunt who paid premiums for several years. He gave no notice of his transfer or sale; and neither he nor any power under him ever gave any notice of an intention to withdraw from the society. By law, the society would have been bound to pay for the house, if it had been burned, during all the period; and they had a lien, by the same law, on the house and land, for the annual quotas and interest, damages and costs. The recovery has been according to law: you are bound on your warranty to your vender; and your vender is of course bound to you. Perhaps as the quotas have been paid, without resorting to the

¹Mss. Division, Library of Congress, William Polk Papers.

property, it may be well to sue in the name of Michaux, the person ultimately liable, for money paid out etc. Of this, however, you and your counsel will judge. The country Branch of the M. A. Society being abolished, no more quotas are due; and you are clear of the company, without any act of withdrawal.

I am now, as I always have been, a republican, not according to any man's patent, but according to the principles of our constitution State and federal. I am in favour of freehold suffrage, and an independent judiciary at home, and I am opposed to caucuses, caucusmen, consolidation, dismemberment, aggrandisement of the great states, entangling alliances, and skylight houses, abroad. I was opposed to Crawford, because all the intolerant men of all parties, and all the caucusmen, were for him; because he was (at least represented alternately by his friends to be) all things to all men—to the patent republicans, the only man who could keep up the *landmarks of party*; and to those federalists who would support him, he was opposed to party animosities, He would make McLane¹ scery of the treasury or Webster Atto. Genl., or Van Rensselaer² P. M. Genl. etc. I voted for Adams as the man most likely to defeat this combination of Pickering³ and Van Buren—and as, upon the whole, the least objectionable of the candidates—I mean to oppose him when wrong; without uniting in an indiscriminate opposition to his administration; merely because we of Va. did not have any hand in electing him. I voted for Randolph⁴ for the Senate because I have more confidence in him than in Adams or any other public man. I voted against Giles,⁵ because he is embittered against almost every body—slanders everybody—would have no sort of influence any where,—and would be a bitter and malignant opponent of every man and every measure of the administration; because he has sunk himself so low, as to be compelled to swear that he cannot get a fair trial in a suit against him in his own county, as Indorser of W. C. Nicholas on a note to which he pleads usury. I leave you therefore to say whether I am any, and if any what sort of politician. I have been in hopes of getting the letter on business which you promised. I am heartily tired of legislation; and most anxious to get home; but shall be kept here for a month at least I fear.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

¹Louis McLane of Delaware.

²Probably Solomon Van Rensselaer of New York, 1774-1852, at this time postmaster of Albany.

³Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts.

⁴John Randolph of Roanoke.

⁵William B. Giles.

⁶Probably Wilson C. Nicholas, the close friend of Jefferson, member of Congress, senator, governor of Virginia.

*From Edward Graham.*¹

NEWBERN Feby. 29th 1826.

My old, and worthy, and I wish I could not add now unfortunate friend W. C. Stanly² is shortly to see you and I understand from him that he is still desirous to obtain, if it may be his chance, the solicitorship of the Edenton circuit, not certainly vacant. I could not in justice to him or myself remain silent, or unconcerned on such an occasion, and however important or unimportant may be my testimony in his behalf I beg you will excuse me for taking the liberty with you Sir of tendering it.

I have known, and intimately known, Mr. Stanly from the days of his boyhood, through his school, his college his office and his professional career. I have practiced with him upwards of 20 years, and kept up a familiar social intercourse with him and his associates, and I do with a conscientious confidence say that I know of no gentleman that has more uniformly sustained a character for the domestic social and public virtues—no one whose professional integrity is more free from imputation, he is a sound lawyer, faithful in the discharge of his business—in industry (especially when called for), above mediocrity in talent and capacity inferior to few, well grounded in criminal law, and with talents I have thought peculiarly adapted to the creditable and advantageous management of pleas of the State—with these sentiments and believing too that his situation deserves and needs assistance, I take great pleasure in speaking of him thus—but you know him and fortunately I believe for him better than I. I believe that his appointment would be universally acceptable that the State would be essentially served by his appointment, and I am not aware that any probable applicant in that event could justly complain at being postponed for him,—begging again your pardon for the liberty, I remain most respectfully

To Catherine Ruffin.

NEWBERN March 14th 1826.

My dear Child—

I had heard before receiving your letter of the improvement in Thomas' health, by the way of a friendly note from Mr. McRae. Your kind letters were however not the less acceptable; for one not only likes

¹Edward Graham, 1765-1838, a native of New York, who, after graduation from Princeton in 1785, read law with John Jay and settled in New Bern and built up a large practice.

²Wright C. Stanly was a classmate of Ruffin at Princeton.

to know that something favorable has occurred, but to be informed of all particulars, which alone give full assurance of the reality of the happy events. I acknowledge my obligation to Providence for this signal instance of his Benificence. I pray, that my dear babe may speedily and perfectly complete the deliverance from disease. With his return to health, I anticipate the restoration of his spirits and temper, which shall in comfort compensate your dear Mother for all the privations of her watching over his sickness and his convalescence.

I am pleased to hear that you have in prospect the leisure that promises a resumption of your history. I must enjoin it on you to *study* it several hours daily. I suppose you are finishing *Hume*. That done, take up Miss Aikens Memoirs of Elizabeth and James I. This course will supply you employment, if properly read, until my return—when I promise myself much pleasure in conversing with you upon the events recorded by those authors. You must allow me to hope that the time is near at hand, when I may do much of my reading *through you*, by the helps of our discussions of your studies. I hope that after the book is out of your hands, the subjects are not cast out of your mind. The true province of reading is not confined to a knowledge of the facts related in history. Reading furnishes food for reflection; and the habit is a valuable one and ought to be early formed of *thinking* and again going over in the mind the passages perused in the day. Such a practice serves the twofold purpose of impressing the facts on the memory and leading the understanding into a train of exercise necessary to its improvement and strength. It is necessary too that you should engage often in domestic employments, which will set a limit to the hours employed in reading; for that cannot be profitably pursued under frequent and irregular interruptions. But the needle or knitting form no impediments to thought or conversations; and I fear I have observed that *work* wants some charm to keep you engaged long in it. Meditation on points of history and points of character in some of its personages will furnish an employment delightful in itself and divesting labor of all its drudgery. Lively conversations with your young friends and sober and dutiful ones with your Mother would fill up all chasms and give the highest zest to both your literary and manual pursuits. Besides the solid knowledge to be acquired from history, it is my request that you undertake a course of reading for your evenings tending to enliven your fancy and chasten your imagination and likewise put into a proper train your notions of morals. For the former purpose, I suggest Select Poetry and the Spectator; Scott, Pope, Thompson, and Shakespeare are my favorite Poets. The Bible is the great fountain as well of morals as Religion and is to be best known. That I would follow up with the Spectator *again*. You see, I am a disciple of Addison. He is a young Lady's best instructor: His sentiments are all refined and chaste; his style simple, but it is elegant simplicity; his English, purely idiomatic; his religion, orthodox; his figures, perfect and his Imagination lively. There is nothing *coarse*

from beginning to end. The Spectator is a finished model of the epistolary and colloquial style. Your evening's reading, being lighter, may be *aloud*, to the family seated around the Tea Table. I am aware, that I am much wanting in my duty both to your Mother and my children in not affording them, by a large house, more privacy and more facility of study. neither retirement nor proper domestic order is completely attainable in our present establishment. I hope before long to alter that matter for the better. But in the mean time, I would not have you wholly neglect yourself. True Philosophy teaches us to improve all our present opportunities to the utmost: Make the best of what is in your power; and consume not your time in useless repinings at the absence of some desirable accomodation nor encourage a spirit of discontent by brooding over past ills. Because we might do *more* with other advantages, furnishes no excuse for not doing *much* with our present opportunities. It would afford me some satisfaction to suppose that my footsteps were weekly traced on my various journeys by my family. To think, that at the beginning of every week, you were saying, "Mama and Girls, *Here Papa is now;*" and, on friday and saturdays, "He is probably now travelling, solitary and slow, along *this* road or crossing *that* River: He is thinking of us and every time he crosses *Neuse* River he says, that he is upon his own waters and, tho fantasticaly, yet pardonably indulges in the search for a drop of our *own Spring Water* mixed with the mass of that which now sustains his boat or majestically flows by him. It is but a fancy, I allow; but it would be a pleasing thought to me if you would hang up your map of No. Ca. in the dining room and thus follow me, by the aid of an Almanac which will tell you my Courts, over the weary space from Hillsborough back again. You will perceive possibly, that this pious watching of your fathers track may beguile you into an accurate and lasting acquaintance with the charts of your native State, thereby adding to the store of your useful knowledge, while at the same time you gratify a whim of feeling in me. In that way, you can see the spot on *Shackleford's Banks* on the Sea-Shore, about fifteen miles from Beaufort and about six miles to the North-East of Old Topsail Inlet, where I was gratified last week with the sight of a *large whale*. It was killed on Tuesday night: The news soon reached us, for boats and vessels are almost as constantly at public times plying on those waters as people on horse back travel our roads: A gentleman of the place, an old seaman and an old acquaintance of mine, politely provided a boat and hands; aroused me and the gentlemen of the Bar an hour before day on Wednesday morning and got us aboard: With a fine breeze and all sails set, we put to sea and by a little after sunrise, we were on the whale's back. Our curiosity gratified, we returned with equal safety and despatch and opened Court by 11 O'Clock. I had often read descriptions well drawn by naturalists of the Whale: But I had formed no just notion of it. The failure of accomplished and scientific writers [torn] a knowledge they aimed at communicating,

admonishes me not to attempt a description here. I will make the essay however, by next month when we meet. It is a huge misshapen monster, of immense strength and full of fat. It was 55 feet long, tho' but a year old as the Mariners said. It makes about 45 Blls of oil and was worth \$750. I cut out two of the whale bones from the mouth which I shall bring you. It is now nearly dinner, which I am engaged to take with Mr. John Burgwyn, who is very polite in his attentions. I saw Miss Julia day before yesterday. She enquired about you in a very friendly manner and desired your remembrance. She is reckoned here very pretty, as I understand from Mr. Stanly, who is a batchelor and knows therefore more of these matters than I should ever find out of myself,—as I have but little taste and should make no enquiries but to gratify the Curiosity of the woman-folks of my house-hold. I wrote to your dear Mother yesterday, and shall continue to do so every week. Do me the kind offices of geting her to acknowledge my letters, to keep me in her remembrance and by a visit to Fayetteville, to give me an opportunity of paying my respects to her at Raleigh. I shall write to your brother William tonight, as it begins to be time to make arrangements for his visit to us. In the homely phrase, I add, because I am assured that you feel most concern in it, that *I am well*. I pray God to continue to me and all my dear Family a continuance of the blessing of health and all others to make our state comfortable. To his care; I commend you all, with my blessing and the assurances of the regard of your father,

THOMAS RUFFIN.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From James H. Ruffin.

CASWELL Co: Ho: April 13th 1826.

We are here in attendance upon the court, doing but little in the way of trying causes or receiving fees:—There is a lamentable falling-off of business in the Courts in this part of the country and I fear that it is to be still worse in that respect. The citizens seem so much to dread the expenses and trouble incident to them from litigation in Court that it is becoming a rarity to see, upon our dockets, either the return of an original writ or the enrolment of an appeal. Claimants seem to consider all other methods preferable, for the recovery of their claims, to a resort to the law, and defendants view, with consternation, the power of an officer of the law, deeming it, in these times of scarcity, their heaviest curse to have any business which shall take them to what (I think) are farcially called Seats of *Justice*, our County Courts:—If there be not an improvement in the business of our Courts, some of us, *honorable Attornies at Law*, will have to resign our Credentials and betake ourselves to

employment more suited to our capacities and more congenial with our dispositions, the pursuits of agriculture or the acquisition of the knowledge necessary for the performance of some *trade* which will secure to us the means of an honest livelihood:—To compare, however, small things with great, there is a tide in human affairs, in which when matters have reached either the highest or the lowest point, have got either to the best or to the worst, like the pendulum of a clock, there must be an opposite vibration. It seems to me that there cannot be a greater scarcity of business for lawyers, and therefore, I hope, that we shall, ere long begin to ascend toward the summit. I do not despair, as I hope that my business is increasing tho' but slowly: the people seem to look upon me, *now* as a Lawyer, which they have not heretofore done and I get some few more retainers than formerly. In this Court indeed, I never got any employment owing to the fact of my giving away so much counsel without having the requisite knack of asking a gratuity in return, but that *must stop*. Justice to myself and to those who are now dependent upon me require that such a state of things should cease, no more to occur, *forever*.

I was up at Dobbs'¹ last week. He has done a great deal of work this year and has the prospect of making a large and fine crop. If he, however, fails in it, I am *ruined forever* as far as agricultural matters are concerned. My plantation must necessarily be brought to the hammer, as I am depressed by a weight of debt to you, Mr. Cain, and McNeill, under which I cannot rise. I hope, however, for better things. I shall continue to struggle with additional inducements to do so, having a family now to support.

I have heard too from Gilliam—He too has done a good deal upon your plantation, having opened and cut all your ditches, and ploughed a good deal.

The farmers in this part of the country are shuddering for their tobacco plants, it being very cold with ice in abundance for the two last nights. The fruit is entirely gone for this year and there are dreadful forebodings, that this is to be the dryest and most pinching year ever known in this county: indeed so well convinced of it is your old friend Thomas McGehee of Person, that he has for several years been making provision for it.

Yancey has been offered the appointment of Charge des affaires to Peru, which he has refused and it has since been conferred upon somebody from Maryland,² the same man who gave to Adams the vote of the State in the House of Reps. I tell you this however under strictest charge of secrecy as nobody in the County knows it and he is not disposed to blazon it. He was very independent in his refusal to accept and has put a "*thorn in the King's side*."

I suppose we shall see you at the Convention.

¹James H. Ruffin's overseer.

²The appointment in fact went to James Cooley of Pennsylvania.

My mother's family, Susan and myself are all well and desire to be remembered in the most affectionate manner.

In the mean time, dear brother, I remain

Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Newbern N. C.]

From William K. Ruffin.¹

BALTIMORE April 16th, 1826.

Not long since I received your affectionate letter, which should have been answered immediately, and would have been, had I not been uncertain where to direct a letter to you. I intended waiting until the 25th of this month, but as we have a holiday I will spend a small portion of it in writing to you. In your last you enquired what way I had intended going home next Summer? if any one was going with me? the manner which you proposed is the one I intended taking. I expected until two or three days ago that I would have one of my companions as a fellow traveller, but I believe that I will not, the companion I allude to is a great friend of Mr. Randolph, and he intended going to spend the summer with him in Virginia, but Mr. Randolph is going to Europe, and expects to carry this young Gentleman with him, where he will put him to school. In yours, Dear Papa, you told me to write a long letter, but indeed I do not know what to say. The boys had holiday today because the Governor reviewed the troops. I saw them salute him, which he merely accepted with a nod, whilst they whirled their swords, and then let it fall nearly to the ground; there was a great concourse of people. I was in a house just front of the Governor and the Soldiers. I have not heard anything of Mr. Mangum in a week or two. I am almost persuaded that he is going to play me the same joke he did last year. I mean "not coming at all." It is almost time for supper, and my candle and pen are both failing, so I will bid you good night. May the Almighty protect us both this night, and raise us to our duties in the morning.

April 17th, 1826.

Dear Father.

I rise earlier than any of the boys that I may finish this, but indeed I must say something of some importance before I end; what I intend saying has been a subject of much contemplation to me of late. You suppose I intend speaking of religion; by no means: when in this I mentioned something of Mr. Randolph I had not concluded whether I would mention my desire. I will say but few words concerning it, if you approve of it, you will let me know as soon as possible for I have not more than twenty days to determine; Mr. Mangum I hope will say

¹William Kirkland Ruffin, Thomas Ruffin's eldest son.

more. I send this to him that he may read it. Mr. Randolph intended as I mentioned before to take a young gentleman to school with him in Europe, as I am well persuaded that it is much better than this, and I understand that it cost very nearly as little there as here, moreover I will see the world, and get my education at the same time. Mr. R. approves of it, and disapproves of this, he examined one of the students who was and is very diligent, he says he knows nothing of latin or English. I will be in a republic country and among good Presbyterians, and will be there prepared for any stage of life as they teach Agriculture and every thing fit for an American, he intends going to Switzerland, and if you approve of it I will go with him in May; I should like to go home of course but if I go, I will be obliged to do without it, however I will have this consolation that the one I go with will not see his relations either. Write to me as soon as you receive this, direct it to Mr. Mangum. recollect that I must determine within twenty days. Remember me to my acquaintances.

Mr. T. Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From William K. Ruffin.

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE BALTIMORE April [1826].

A circumstance occurred today which I believe has effaced all my hopes; however it is not certain and the circumstance does not prevent you from giving an answer, it is of some importance to me, and there is but two weeks remaining for your determination. My young Friends Grand Father wrote to him yesterday and informed him that he had not yet resolved whether he would go or not. I should like to go, but if you do not approve of my desire I will be perfectly contented; if you do not approve of it, tell me your reason, and show me in what respect I err. I am under your guidance. I shall always submit to the authority of one, whom I love, and whose counsel I know is excellent. Mr. Mangum wrote to me Saturday, but for want of time said nothing of my proposal; he promises to write tomorrow, for which purpose I will not send this until I know whether his is received or not, he says that I may expect him this week, I hope he will come, as I desire very much to see the one, with whom I left my old state, and with whom I entered these walls. The Panama mission has passed, I do not know what Mr. Mangum's constituents will say when they see he is outstripped in almost all his endeavours. The Students spout a great deal now, indeed there is almost as great an opposition party (as it is at present called in Washn) as there is in Congress. Some and the most genius are in favour of Jack-

son, some pretty smart fellows for Adams, and all for Mr. Crawford. I am for Jackson, and it was on this account that I became a deserter, because I saw that Mr. Crawford was neither primus nor inferius; if they do not prefer him before any let him loose it altogether. The recreations are now turned from play to disputing and arguing; Some say Adams has been serving the United States all his life, he has been a minister to nearly all the Courts of Europe, therefore he should now receive his merited reward: others say Jackson has enough sense to be president, and likewise is not coward enough to let people insult him before his face; he is likewise the choice of the People. I am quite tired Dear Father. Please answer my letter as soon as possible. I have not received Mr. Mangum's yet. Adeu Dearest of Parents, and ever believe me to be your

Affectionate Son

WM. K. RUFFIN.

[Address: Washington N. C.]

From J. Wetmore.

RALEIGH April 25th 1826.

Sir

I am instructed to inform you that a meeting of the Committee of Appointments of the University of North Carolina will be held at the Executive Office Raleigh on Monday the 15th of May next.

Your attendance is requested as many of the applicants to fill the vacancies of the two professorships live at a considerable distance, and tis deemed adviseable to make the appointments as early as possible.

I am Sir very Respectfully

Your Obt. Servt.

Honorable Thomas Ruffin
Hillsborough.

J. WETMORE Secy.

From H. B. Croom.¹

LENOIR, May 12th, 1826.

Among the candidates for the professorship of Modern Languages in our University is Mr. Clossey of the city of N. York. He will be recommended to your Committee by his excellency Dewitt Clinton, and other persons of that place; among whom are the foreign linguists, the

¹Hardy B. Croom of Lenoir County, 1798-1837, was a lawyer.

most capable judges of his qualifications as a scholar. To these testimonials I would, with humility, add, that being personally acquainted with Mr. Clossey, I can testify to his excellent character, his great moral worth, and even to his uncommon skill in the modern languages. I will only add, that, could he receive your patronage for the appointment, I should esteem it both fortunate for the University and a personal gratification to your respectful humble Servant

To the Hon.

Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

From Romulus M. Saunders.

MILTON June 21st 1826.

* * * * *

I have now my dear Sir to address you upon a subject, which has cost me the most anxious feelings of my life. In settling the business of the Milton Agency with the Bank of Newbern, there is every prospect of my being *ruined*. It is not necessary now to enter into particulars about this unfortunate business. I trust whatever may be the result my character will remain free from injury. I am resolved on freeing myself and shall dispose of as much as the whole of my property if necessary. to do so—my prospects in life are blasted so far as political views are involved. I must return to the *Bar* for a support and devote all my time to its pursuits. The prospect is rather uninviting but my family demands the effort, but for them life would be to me a burthen. I mean not to sink under my misfortunes, if I can find philosophy enough in my soul to sustain me. In this situation and with this resolution I have to throw myself in some degree upon my friends. I have so considered you and with that impression have made this communication. It is generally understood that Mr. Jones¹ will resign his appointment or that he will be ousted by the Legislature. It is my wish if the vacancy should occur to obtain it. You can be of service to me, if you think you can do so with propriety. I have consulted Mr. Yancy, who will enter with feeling in my favour—he thinks he can induce Settle² to decline and Shepherd³ and Morehead⁴ may one or both be drawn off, in order to offer for Congress. Burton⁵ and I think Iredell⁶ will support me, Stanly⁷ would if

¹Edmund Jones of Chatham, the solicitor general.

²Thomas Settle.

³Augustine H. Shepperd of Stokes.

⁴John M. Morehead.

⁵Robert H. Burton of Lincoln.

⁶James Iredell of Chowan.

⁷Wright C. Stanly.

Hawks¹ was out of the way, he has no chance—you and Badger can do much for me with Stanly and the East. Can I ask your friendly interference. I pledge my honor if my friends shall at any time think after a trial, that the public interest is not properly attended to, to resign the appointment if so fortunate as to obtain it. You will appreciate my motives in making this application. It is the first personal favour I have ever asked at the hands of my friends. I think I cannot be considered as vain, in supposing I have some claims upon those with whom I have acted politically. Necessity alone has forced upon me to make the trial. It partakes too much of the *Washington spirit* to be seeking offices before vacancies occur—yet as others are making the same calculations, I must plead their example as my apology. May I expect from you a free answer as to this request and what you think of my making the trial.

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

From George S. Attmore.

NEWBERN July 13 1826.

I hope this may find you realizing all the pleasures and enjoyments which flow from health and rest,—the last of which can be appreciated by none more truly than those who have undergone the fatigues and trials inseparably incident to our Courts. Indeed I look upon it as one of the peculiar and almost exclusive advantages of the profession that it confers such happiness on a fellow after a circuit is over and when he can look ahead to a "Millenium" of a few weeks rest and comfort.

Will you permit me to remind you that I mentioned to you when here that I had at heart somewhat, a certain suit in Pitt, in which one of your County men, who moved from here a number of years ago and who has since gone from the State was a witness. I mean John T. West, who lived about McCawley's and whom you no doubt know very well. I told you I wished to discredit him believing firmly he ought to be ranked among the great rascals of the day and would be wherever he was known, and you then promised me that when you returned home you would give me the names of one or two persons in that part of the country who knew him well. As the time approaches for thinking of these things will you allow me to trouble you to do this. I shall be the more obliged as you know every man in Orange better than any one else. We are to have a Town Meeting this afternoon to concert measures for the purpose of evincing our respect etc. for the "immortal Jefferson." Brother Bryan²

¹Francis L. Hawks.

²John Heritage Bryan, 1798-1870, state senator, 1823-1826; M. C., 1825-1829.

is to deliver a Speech and I hope all may be disposed to award at the present day to so old and tried a Servant of his Country, and patriot, due praise and thanks, for the devotion of a long life spent in her service. All your friends here are well and we frequently talk over the pleasant time we had with you on the last campaign. I yesterday heard Daves¹ say that Simpson had imported your wine and was only waiting for it to fine before he sent it. Daves says you may promise safely to give any one a first rate glass of maderia when it reaches you.

With a fond hope of seeing you this way again shortly and a very vivid recollection of our fine holiday at the Colonel's and Brother Mosely's² I remain my dear Sir, respectfully and truly yours

To the

Honble Tho. Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From Romulus M. Saunders.

MILTON Augt-8th 1826

You will readily imagine that any seeming neglect on the part of my friends is well calculated to add to that depression of spirits, which my situation necessarily forces upon me. I felt hurt at your silence and began to think myself deserted by those I most esteemed and in whom I confided in this hour of trial, but your very friendly and highly valued favour banished every thought of the kind and I reproached myself for permitting such an ungenerous feeling to have entered my breast towards you. I thank you my dear Sir, from the bottom of my heart thank you for the kind spirit it breathes and the generous sympathy it conveys, it will console me under fortunes pressure and will inspire me with renewed efforts in the discharge of my duty.

I shall go to Granville prepared as I trust to resist the unjust claim against me and to show very clearly that I deserved better treatment at the hands of the plaintiffs. Patterson's debt ought in justice *to you*, to have been paid before this, but it has not been in my power, as soon as I receive from Capt. Clay the price of the negro, I shall send on the amt. to Mr. Scott to be paid over to whoever you may leave my note with.

I acknowledge I look to the appointment of solicitor (should the vacancy happen) with much anxiety, to be reduced from a competency to want is mortifying to the feelings—yet this I could submit to with firmness, could I see a certainty of supporting my family. This appoint-

¹Probably John P. Daves.

²William D. Moseley of Lenoir, 1795-1863, member of the state senate, 1829-1836; president, 1832-1836; governor of Florida, 1845-1849.

ment with a proper exertion would render that support certain. It would give me a respectable standing in the profession and by attention to its duties, I can but flatter with success. I only know Mr. Strange from character and had been led to entertain for him the highest respect—I had flattered myself too, that in him I should find a friend and not an opponent. I still hope so. I could claim over him no advantage, except *residence* and that I should dislike to urge. My situation is worse than his—as he can support himself in his profession, as he has not been taken from it. I could expect nothing of you, should he persist and all I had any right to ask was your opinion and good wishes. This I know would avail me much. Mr. Yancy I know thinks highly of Mr. Strange and would dislike to see us in contact, he will write him as soon as he learns his determination. I flatter myself, I shall be able to induce Mr. Settle to decline in my favour. Yancy thinks Morehead of Guilford the most to be feared, he will be on the spot and as you know from his character will be “all things to all men” I understand Judge Murphy has some influence with him. If I do not succeed I am certain I shall have no cause to complain of my friends. I feel a delicacy in asking for an appointment not yet vacant, yet I plead the example of others, who say the vacancy will certainly be made. I shall write to some of my old friends, as soon as I see the result of the election, so as not to be anticipated by others.

I have already disposed of one of my farms with a part of the negroes on it, at a very fair price, my river place I am offered \$10,000 for, which I shall take if unable to do better and send off the negroes—this I hope will free me—if not I shall give up my “home” and trust to fortune for a “resting place”, for I am resolved on being once more free from debt. You will pardon me my friend for thus obtruding my private affairs upon you—if you should feel authorised, I should like to hear Mr. Stranges determination—rest assured, I shall not injure him in any way unless it be in my power to beat him and then not by any unfair means.

Should you receive any information on your circuit, that you should think might be turned to advantage, I should like to be advised of it.

Honl. Thomas Ruffin

From Robert Strange.

PITTSBOROUGH August 16th, 1826.

I received your favor of the 25th Ulto. some days ago and had intended before this to have replied; but now avail myself of Mr. Waddle's return to Hillsborough so to do.

I regret that you should be placed in any dilemma on my account, but it is not yet in my power to relieve you from it. *Ibo tutissimus in*

medio must still be your motto upon the subject of your letter if you can not consistently with your feelings take a decided part in my behalf. I am not now prepared formally to relinquish or set up any claim to the office of Solicitor of the Hillsborough district should it be vacant. If when the time of election comes I should find my chances of success equal to any other person's I will procure myself to be nominated; if I should find matters likely to eventuate unfavorably I shall endeavour to avoid committing myself. My present impressions are I freely confess that I should stand but little chance against the opposition I should probably have to encounter, but still I am unwilling at this time to commit myself upon the subject. I duly appreciate your feelings and thank you for your kindness. With respect to my course as a voter your wishes would have their due weight with me, but I must in candor acknowledge that if not a candidate myself Mr. Sanders will probably have opponents whose claims upon my own friendship could not be postponed even to your right to command me, in behalf of *another*. You will no doubt understand that this letter is intended for no eye but your own and under present circumstances *especially* you will feel the propriety of my not giving umbrage to the friend of any who may have claims to the office.

You will no doubt have heard before this reaches you of my name being before the Executive Council, quite unexpectedly, I presume to you. I should have been glad of the benefit of your advice before I committed myself had time permitted. It is now too late to say more upon the subject. My family were well when I left home. Please present my warm regards to yours. Hoping soon to hear from you I am

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Lewis Williams.

SURRY COUNTY Sep, 10th, 1826.

Business of an unexpected nature obliges me to go some distance from home this week, and consequently will deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you at Wilkesborough. I looked forward with fond anticipation to the *chat* political or otherwise which we intended to hold with each other this week. I hope however some opportunity for it will be afforded before your Circuit closes.

P. S. The old Court, or ante-relief party have prevailed in Kentucky.

The first Report which you gathered from the papers was premature and incorrect.

Hon Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Wilkesboro' N. C.]

From Wright C. Stanly.

[NEW BERN, N. C., Oct. 2, 1826]

Our friend Mr. John Stanly is willing to accept the appointment of Judge of the Superior Court.¹ You are at liberty to make such use of this information as to you may seem fit.

I hope you have enjoyed your health since I saw you and as the time is approaching when you will make the arrangements of your circuits for the next year, I hope you will not forget our district.

The people and the Bar will each rejoice, if you can come among us, and to your friends nothing could give more pleasure than once more to see you.

God bless you

W. C. STANLY

Oct. 2nd 1826

New Bern No. Ca.

[Address: Lincolnton
Lincoln County N. C.]

To William K. Ruffin.

ASHEVILLE—October 12th, 1826.

My dear Son.

I acknowledge my obligation to you for the very affectionate letter you addressed to me at this place. It gratifies me to observe you thus particular and punctual in the performance of engagements to your friends and so very minute in the detail of your occupations. This letter is the more especially acceptable to me, as I had heard nothing in any way of you from the time of writing the short note from Petersburg in which you mentioned being quite unwell. You now happily relieve my anxiety on the score of your health, and I flatter myself with the hope of your continued heartiness, as you most prudently avoided exposing yourself to infection at Norfolk, where, the Papers say, the Yellow-Fever prevails to a great extent. Should it appear in the vicinity of St. Mary's I suppose the School would immediately repair to Pidgeon Hill or some other convenient and unaffected situation. I do not omit this occasion of giving you the satisfaction of knowing, that, tho' my circuit is laborious in the extreme, both in making long journies from Court to Court over very rugged roads in the mountains and in the multitude of causes standing for trial, I have not suffered the least indisposition since I saw you and am now entirely well. I wish I had time to make you acquainted, by a particular description, with this part of your own Country. If we live to meet and you will put me

¹Very soon after this Stanly suffered a stroke of paralysis which ended his public career.

in mind of it, I will open to you many observations about it, which I shall lay up in store for your amusement and instruction. Last week I held the Court of *Haywood County*, which is the South-western corner of this State adjoining Tennessee, So. Ca. and Georgia. It is Alpine in all aspects, but the comparison ceases when the regions are regarded in any respect than the original faces of the Country. The population here is nearly equally divided between *White* and *Indians*, and the worst of all is, that the *Savage* is of the two *Castes* the more *civilised*!

This subject puts me in mind to inquire into the *Geographical* course at St. Mary's: I do not perceive that any portion of your time is employed in that useful and delightful study, nor do I remember that you have yet been engaged in it since your residence in the college. Is it not attended to with you? For my own part, I consider an extensive and accurate knowledge of Geography to be a most valuable and indeed, indispensable part of education.

I approve of the course you are engaged in, for the present. Suffer me to express my earnest wish that you will *devote* yourself to it. I am particularly solicitous that you should excel in *Greek* and *Latin*. Read with unabated attention to the structure and *idiom* of the language and the true measure, or, in other words, pronunciation and emphasis of its words. The *French* one would think you *cannot* now neglect, as I understand it to be a part of your exercises, to make that the language of conversation with your Masters and classmates during the present year. I hope you have attained such a knowledge of it, as to make it not disagreeable and perhaps easy to carry on colloquial intercourse in that dialect. I pray you not to neglect so great a profit as may be derived from these opportunities of perfecting your knowledge of the Language. The use in common speech will soon make your pronunciation of it correct and the words will be so familiar that you will e'er long form the habit of *thinking in French*, without which one can never be either a master of the idiom of any language or even command a ready use of its common words. To form your thoughts in one language and then translate them for delivery into another will be an intolerable labor which will cool all worth of imagination and dull the delicately keen edge of it, so that conversation would be a task instead of a pleasure. That you will have to encounter these difficulties *now* is to be expected. Do it and overcome them at once; for this season of *youth* is that in which impressions good and bad are easily made and made indelibly; when mistakes are to be expected and for that reason only excite the myrth of a moment in your companions, while on the instant they are corrected by those very companions or your teachers; while, on the other hand, the blunders of riper and more pretending years might turn you into a *standing jest*. I never write to you without saying, "Commit to memory Select Excerpta from the Latin and Greek Classicks." My reasons for this advice I have so often both in speech and writing communicated to you, that I do not consider it worth while to repeat them:

But I repeat the *precept* and beg you to consider it a part of every letter you receive from me.

I can not omit to take notice of a loss that, from your letter, I judge I have sustained in your institution, in your old friend Dr. Damplon. You call M. Tesier, the President: Has he deposed the Doctor and brought him to some inferior station or has my old correspondent left the college altogether? I shall almost be sorry to hear of either. I loved the Doctor's sincerity of heart and simplicity of manners as displayed in all his letters. I felt him to be my friend, when he refused to conceal your *faults* and I honored his sensibility when, notwithstanding those faults, he acknowledged your virtues and endeavoured to cherish them and loved you for them. I think you will find his value by his loss, if indeed he has retired from St. M's. At all events I shall like to know what has become of him and you must be particular in informing me. By the bye it may be possible that my letter to *him* did not reach the proper authorities of the College and if that be the case your last Bill has not been discharged, altho' I left money in the Bank at Hillsborough for the purpose. Enquire of Mr. Elder and let me know in your next; which I shall expect you to write immediately after getting this letter. Address me at *Charlotte*, Mecklenburg, No. Ca:—

From home I expect you have heard since I did; both Elizabeth and Thomas have been very ill since you and I left them; but thank God, they are now much better. Your dear Mother though is in very delicate health as she writes me; which makes my separation from her ten fold more painful to me and distressing to her. My last letter was dated the 27th Sepr., but I expect another from her next week and until then shall indulge myself in the hope of an improvement in her health. My Son, remember all her good advice and virtuous lessons: Love her and your Sisters and Brothers tenderly: They deserve your warmest affections, for you are the object of theirs. For me I only wish you to entertain such sentiments as your own conscience tells you you owe to

Your steadfast friend and affice. Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

[Address: St. Mary's College
Baltimore Maryland.]

*From M. E. Jones.*¹

ROCK REST Oct. 18th, [1826?]

My mind has been so filled with the melancholy perplexities arising from the situation of my son and Mr. Hooper the thoughts of their

¹The wife of Edward Jones, solicitor general of the State. Ruffin's daughters, Catherine and Alice, both attended her school at Rock Rest, Chatham County.

leaving home and the exertions and forebodings about Duponceau¹ in particular, that I have not only neglected answering your letter interesting and valuable as it is to me but the occasion of it seems for the time lost in my present cares and feelings. Though I would implicitly trust to the guidance of an all wise and merciful Providence my responsibilities are distressingly bewildering to me. To send Duponceau to the south or not has been rendered a formidable question to me within a week past from the opinion of Dr. Strudwick that he should go and of Dr. Webb that he should remain and the consequent belief of several of his friends that home is the best place for him. My own belief is that the winter here must be death to him from the manner in which the cold affected him last year and the excessive increase of pain it occasions is grievous for his sisters and myself to think of. We have therefore concluded it to be decidedly our duty to send him and leave the result to *Him* in whose hands we all are. The expense may be remarked by others and is assuredly felt by us but it will not cost more to support him travelling four or five months than Doctor's bills and other expenses amounted to last winter and we see no hope of his escaping the effects of climate this season should he remain here. Having saved for the purpose a donation sent by a good old Irish Aunt² of my children's we hope to defray his expenses without involving ourselves in debt.

I trouble you with these particulars because I am sure you are my friend and I wish you not to be ignorant of my motives and circumstances and if I should err, which is very probable you will know that the life or comfort of a beloved child is no slight inducement.

As to our removal little has been done since I saw Mrs. Devereux except that the gentlemen of Pittsboro have been given to understand that in case they provide a suitable house I will go. Mrs. Hill's house which is offered for the winter, is a comfortable dwelling partly furnished so that our removal will be attended with fewer inconveniences at the beginning. I think you will agree with me that I may be enabled to judge by opening a school there next session what our future prospects may be. Here even for our usual number they are discouraging as several are to leave us and we hear of but one or two to fill their places. Day scholars in Pittsboro would be something in the place of their vacancies. I hear from Mr. Hardin that as soon as he can he will ride up to shew me how prospects are brightening. In the mean time I shall consider your excellent instructions and endeavour to abide by them as nearly as I can. You have completely quieted all our thoughts of Raleigh though my friend Mrs. D. still thinks we might succeed there. As leaving this old and long loved place is no trifling consideration to me I have not as you advised rented it for the next year, indeed I considered it but prudent to reserve a home in the event of our not pros-

¹Her son, Duponceau D. Jones, had been a student at the University in 1825, but failure in health had compelled his leaving.

²Edward Jones was a native of Ireland.

pering in Pittsboro' besides that is very doubtful whether I could have rented it. I have therefore taken an overseer upon shares an active managing industrious man finding him three hands and three horses his promise of putting the meadow land in order is one among other inducements and it seems very probable that after I get Charlotte fixed with her school within two miles of P., I shall with Mr. Jones spend a great part of my time here in the warmest room I can find hoping from the industry and management of this man to profit something by the farm that has been for many years an expense which the perpetual interruptions from so large a family helped to increase. The pains and trouble you have taken to advise and direct me for the ease and welfare of myself and family has added another to the many favors I owe you, and I consider it the more because you are I know constantly press'd by business. I shall keep your letter to apply to in my engagements with the Pittsboro' Gentlemen, and those engagements will only be on the renting of a house, that they are to build, if they succeed in their subscription, giving me the privilege of purchasing on the terms you have stated. Mr. Hooper said something to me about my western land, and your advising me to entrust the direction of the business to a Mr. Dickens, but the hurry and uneasiness I felt as he was just leaving us, has left his information in so confused a manner in my wretched memory, that I do not know now how to proceed and the wet weather has prevented my sending to Chapel Hill about it, and Mr. Dickens I am afraid will be gone before I accomplish what I wish'd. You know Mr. Murphey had all the papers. And it is most likely he has left them with his agent Judge Brown. I think Mr. Hooper said I must send to Judge Murphey, to know how to proceed. Mr. Hooper I suppose left Chapel Hill this morning or I would not have troubled you again.

Charlotte takes every opportunity of exciting Alice to industry and neatness and I trust she will be rewarded by Alice's caution in turn, her feelings are so susceptible that the work cannot be done in the same positive manner we use on such occasions with many others—she is quite well and learns well and would gain our hearts independantly of her being your daughter and Catherine's sister.

Both my daughters join me in kind remembrances to you Mrs. Ruffin and your daughters,
[Address: Raleigh.]

From Romulus M. Saunders.

THE OAKS, Oct. 30th, 1826.

My dear Sir—I have been on a visit to Salisbury with a view of locating myself at that place—as I can dispose of my property where I am I have thought it best to sell at once and free myself from all difficulties.

Salisbury for practice presents a better opening than Milton and it will be the means of my being more extensively supported from the West and I should have nothing elsewhere—I regret giving up old attachments, but feeling must yield to necessity. Upon the subject of Solicitor I learnt from Mr. Yancy and Murphy as I came by Guilfd. that Jones would be forced to give way—that he had not been in a situation to attend to business since leaving Randolph, that at Stokes he was presented and would be at Guilford—unless they could get him to resign—and that he was too drunk to talk with. Mr. Yancy had thought it best for me that he should stay in another year, but he told me frankly that the sentiment was too strong against him and advised me to prepare for the contest. Settle has positively declined and will he says support me warmly. My friends had opened the subject with Shepherd at Greensb^o and I shall know his resolution at Rockingham. From what I heard Shepherd will yield to me and go to Congress himself. The contest is expected to be between Nash, Morehead and myself. I trust Strange will be out of the scrape—he *certainly* cannot succeed. I had an interview with Fisher¹—he will support me—but said he disliked opposing Morehead warmly and had promised Morehead at Court not to be active against him. It is all important for me to secure the support of Govr. Stokes, Mr. Murphy says you can assist me in that quarter. I dislike throwing myself on my friends where from their situation delicacy forbids an interfearence—but I know your discretion will direct you where to stop and beyond that I shall not expect you to go. I must under this restriction ask you to speak to Stokes, if at Iredell—and if not requiring too much that you will please to write to some member from the East, Lem Martin² or any one else, that you might feel at liberty to address. I should like this to be in terms to resist any objection on the score of qualification—your name would secure me essentially. I fear I shall tire your patience, yet when you know the difficulties that surround me with a family that deserve a better fate, I know you will pardon my anxiety.

I have no local news, but what Mr. Carter will be able to give you. The state of the political world, leaves things doubtful as between Adams and Jackson. Our friend McLean and his party have succeeded in Delaware and Van Buren, considers *himself* safe in New York, which is a great point.

I fear Mr. Murphy will not be successful in his application, I wish it was in my power to be of more service to him. I am glad to hear of your good health. The contest between Giles and Archer is warm and doubtful—you will see Giles meanness in implication Mr. Crawford with the habeas corpus business and letting Adams off. I have written to Gales and Seaton for fear it might escape others—tho' they may not publish, if they dare refuse.

¹Charles Fisher of Rowan.

²Probably Leonard Martin, member of the House of Commons from Hertford.

I should be glad to hear from you on the circuit, if time allows.

Hon Thos, Ruffin.

[P. S.] I learnt from your Brother at our Court that your Mother was a good deal indisposed but was better.

[Address: Hon. Thomas Ruffin

Mr. Carter. Iredell Court]

From William Norwood to William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH, November 6th, 1826.

Ashamed of not having returned your kind favour I come now to make atonement for my shameful negligence though you may think it a slight reparation. Indeed I am so unaccustomed to write letters, having never yet carried on a regular correspondence, that I am a stranger to that punctuality which correspondents require of each other.

I read with great pleasure your warm, rapturous manner of speaking of your college studies, they certainly are the most pleasant which you will engage in. I speak this from my own experience. When I contrast the refined and elegant classics, the beautiful effusions of Horace, the sublime epic of Virgil, the impassioned bursts of eloquence which were poured forth by the princes of Roman and Grecian oratory, and more than all the lofty flights of the father of song, with the dull, monotonous, uninteresting writings of the knights of mortar and pessel, involved in the mystical veil of science and covered by a rubbish of technical terms, I sigh to travel again on classical ground, and would almost submit to become again a school boy.

Though your letter gave me general satisfaction, there was one part which alarmed me not a little. I allude to the strain of catholic feeling which pervades the whole. no doubt you intended it all in fun, but I think I can detect in the zeal with which you speak a real attachment to the catholic church, Now I am not one of those violent, prejudiced persons who thoughtlessly and unconditionally condemn the catholicks. So far from this there are many things in their faith which I admire. I know it to be the religion of romance. I know it to be the church from which we derive the ordinances of the Apostles. But I also know that our own church possesses all its authority, all its beauties, all its advantages; without those superstitious rites, that idle parade, that ostentatious form of pomp, those absurd doctrines, in a word without those abominable and detestable corruptions which are a disgrace to any religion, an imputation upon the character of civilized men. To speak plainly, our church is just the roman catholic church purified, and cleansed from all that is objectionable in it. Choose not then the unclean instead of the clean,

but hold fast the faith of your forefathers. Let their church be your church, their religion your religion, and their heaven, your heaven.

Nunc canamus minora paulo.

As to myself, my life is of such an even tenor that there is nothing relative to my pursuits which would interest you. We hold an election tomorrow to choose a congressman to supply the place of Judge Mangum. The candidates are J. Mebane and General Barringer. It is doubtful which will be elected. In regard to matrimonials, Miss Elizabeth Fleming will be led to the sacred altar on the 16th of this month, Miss Ann Nash has plighted her troth to Mr. B. Alston, but when the joyous event will take place I cant tell. It is also reported that Mr. Cole and Miss Susan Taylor are engaged. Also Dr. Shepperd and Miss Strudwick. There are many other little reports in circulation, which are not worthy to be related. I could say more, but maybe I have already enroached too far upon your indulgent patience. Write to me soon, and accept renewed assurances of my esteem and friendship.

[Address: Mr. William K. Ruffin
St. Mary's College
Baltimore Md.]

From Charles Manly.

RALEIGH 5th Dec. 1826.

As the period for the Annual meeting of the Trustees of the University is at hand when a Report *on the Finances* will be expected of me, may I take the liberty of inquiring whether the *Moore Claim* committed to you for collection is in statu quo, or progressing, or retrograding, or how else?

Without some wind fall or God send our revenue will fall awfully short of the estimates.

The reported deficit in the revenue of the Nation will be a mere Baby to it.

Very respectfully

Yr. obt. Sevt.

[Address: Hillsboro. No. Ca.]

CHAS. MANLY.

From Romulus M. Saunders.

MILTON Decr. 6th, 1826.

I regret I did not see you on my way home. I closed my unfortunate business with the Bank, it will take *all* my property to free me.

I still feel anxious, about the solicitorship. Stanly will support me and Spaight thinks I will get the vote of the Newbern and Edenton circuits. Judge Nash out of the way and all will be safe. I submit to whatever course my friends may take. I have not been able to get the money from Capt. Clay, as he sayd the State Bank has an execution vs him. I enclose an order for \$325 at 90 days, which he promises shall be punctually paid, you will apply it to Patterson's debt and if there is anything behind I will forward it.

In great haste as I start to-day.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

UNION HOTEL, 12th Dec: 1826.

Dear Ruffin.

Mr. Anderson is looking out for a Scite on the river for his Cotten Factory. He applied to me by a Letter for information, and Among other Places, I recommend the Scite at the Mills, on the race near the Store-House.

Mr. Staley has at his request examined the river, but which place he recommended, I do not know. A few days ago, Mr. Anderson wrote to me again, asking the Price of the Mills, etc. I am answering him by giving him an account of the Annual Tolls (average) for the last ten years, telling him, they varie from 1500 to 1800 Bushels of Grain, and that the Books of the Mill might be examined for his Satisfaction—that the Carding Machine would, when kept in order, average \$150 per year,—that you, however, could give him as much information on the general Subject as I could,—that you had estimated the Mills and the Miller (Jerry) at \$6,000 when you purchased in 1821, and at the same price when I repurchased—that since the repurchase the Under Works of the Mill, had been built over and would not require any costly repairs for 12 or 15 years—that these Works had cost upwards of \$600—that all necessary repairs from time to time could be made by the Miller, Untill the Under Works rotted—I stated the Average Profits of the Mill annually at \$1000, Out of which the Superintendent was to be paid.

I do not know Whether he be seriously inclined to purchase: I hope he is. He will probably call on you, and if so, I will thank you to give him Such Information as You are in possession of. I mentioned the large Store House: but omitted the very commodious establishment for the White Man, who might be employed to manage the Mill,—I mean the Houses where Mr. Jones lives—: And I also omitted to mention the little red House on the Mill. I told him the whole establishment had cost me upwards of \$9,000, excluding the Miller Jerry.

The Mills have an Advantage as a Scite; public roads pass by them, there is a good Bridge across the river, and the place is one of Notoriety and Business.

As all the Purchase money would go to yourself, I am very desirous of making a sale. I shall be in Hillsboro', again on Sunday evening next. In the mean time, I hope Mr. Anderson will call to see you.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From John MacRae.

FAYETTEVILLE 18 Dec. 1826.

I take the liberty of enclosing an advertisement which I wish you to hand to Mr. Heart and at the same time prevail upon him to take some notice of my work in the editorial column of his paper.¹ It has become a matter of some importance to me that it should succeed as the contracts already made will involve as a large an expenditure of money as the preparations have of time and labour, if leisure and inclination serve and you would take the trouble to write a paragraph for Mr. Heart's paper it would perhaps be more to the purpose.

I design to render my application to the Legislature for assistance, although to a moderate amount, the importance of the work and the smallness of the reward I think ought to insure success to the application.

I have every confidence from the means in my power I shall be able to make a *correct* map of the State, and the improvements that have been made in this day connected with map making will enable me to make an elegant one. If you can I hope you will oblige me with your assistance in this business either by such friendly advice or suggestions as you think would be servicable or as opportunity may offer with any of the members of the Legislature.

All our friends here are well.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From A. R. Harwood.²

NEWINGTON KING AND QUEEN Decr. 29th, 1826.

Your very friendly communication of the 15th of this month has been duly recd. and would have been answered sooner, but for my absence

¹The *Hillsboro Recorder*, edited by Dennis Heartt, known familiarly as "the father of the press."

²Archibald Roane Harwood was Ruffin's first cousin. He married Martha Fautleroy.

from home, attending the funeral obsequies of my decd. father-in-law Mr. Fauntleroy; at the time of its arrival at our post office.

Permit me, now to assure you, my Dr. Sir, that I reciprocate *most heartily*, the kind expression of kindred affection, contained in your letter, and to promise on my part, to cherish such an interchange, as ought to characterize affectionate kinsmen. You do me injustice my Dr. Sir, in supposing that your leading subject, would impose on me a "troublesome commission," and might lessen the value of your correspondence—be assured the reverse is the fact, and that the zeal and affection manifested for the welfare of our dear Aunt, greatly enhances the value of your communication. As it regards the trust confided to me, I can only say, that it shall be executed with every degree of promptness in my power, and that every effort shall be made to obtain for the land the best possible price. You shall be regularly advised of every step taken, and when the sale shall be effected. I trust you will not neglect the settlement of the property as suggested in your letter. I am truly happy to learn that in adversity our Aunt sustains herself with becoming fortitude; I had ever considered her a woman of the first order, but it was in the walks of ease and affluence that I had known her, and it is in the school of adversity alone that we are to look for a true development of the human character; and to hear that in this school, her virtues, and all the traits characterizing a great mind are made to shine the brighter, is consolation indeed!

I have four children, one son and three daughters, and had the misfortune to loose a fine son 18 months old, about two years since. We are much at a loss for schools for our children having none in our vicinity and disliking extremely to board them out so young. The bloom and plumpitude of my wife, might justify a hope, that we should attain your number, if my own powers should not fail, but of this I am not so certain, altho' I am at present in fine health and weighing nearly three hundred¹—And whilst on this subject permit me to hope, that *you* may *not hang at nine*. A volatile and social disposition in early life induced me for some years to live a little ahead of my resources, and the consequence has been in these adverse times, that I have been constantly poor and pennyless, but the cares of a rising family and the inconvenience of pecuniary pressure, have taught me lessons of economy which I hope will enable me to get on better in future; and should you ever have it in your power again to visit old Newington, altho you could not be recd. in the elegance of former days, I can promise you an equal share of cordiality and friendly feeling.

My Brother Thomas² resides in Tennessee and at the rect of my last letter was quite well, he has seven or eight children and a bright prospect

¹The Roane genealogy, compiled by Bennehan Cameron, shows that his family consisted of eleven children—four sons and seven daughters.

²Thomas Roane Harwood.

for several more, he congratulates himself that they are in a fertile land where the necessaries of life are easily procured.

Your relations in this quarter are quite well and I doubt not will be much pleased to hear from you. I have been expecting Colo. Ritchie here for two days past, and hope to get his assistance in the disposal of the land. Present me I pray you to your Mother and all the family with feelings of the warmest affection, and accept for yourself assurances of my highest regard

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

To William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH, Decemr. 31st, 1826.

My Dear Son—

I feel conscious of culpably neglecting the duty I owe you of answering your letters sooner. My fault is brought directly and pointedly to my view by the receipt yesterday of the dutiful letter you wrote me on the 22nd day of the present month: So that I have determined to dedicate even this Sunday evening to you, rather than suffer another post to go empty of the tidings you are so anxious to hear from home.

I am pleased to see so much solicitude in you about your expenditures, because it argues more discretion and more prudent thought about my interests and comforts than you formerly evinced. I perceive however that you are not a very *accurate accountant*; for none of the items from your book agree with Mr. Elder's statement to me. Agreeably to your request I give you herein a copy of the latter, accompanied with the expression of my satisfaction at its reasonableness in comparison with your former Bills. Do not understand this however as my license to relax in your economy, for my circumstances more than ever require you to avoid all extravagance, to be careful of your clothes, and to purchase nothing unnecessary. I do not understand, by the way, how you come to be charged for *six* months washing and *twenty* weeks pocket money up to the 14th Decr; for you did not return to St. Mary's 'till the 8th Sept. The difference is too small for me to bring to the notice of Mr. Elder especially as it probably grew out of a natural inadvertence to the fact of your being absent for two months in the summer, but I have called *your* attention to it, because I would desire only to impress on your mind the necessity in matters of business, of being perfectly exact in making charges against others and as prompt in looking into your Accounts and detecting the errors on either side and equally punctual in demanding and making the payments at the proper and precise moment. This is a subject to which, from youth and inexperience, you have not turned your thoughts. It is one, too, on which I have often thought most

parents much in fault; as few fathers teach their sons proper lessons of prudence at an age sufficiently early to have them engrafted into the motives of their future action. I wish you not to be ignorant of the great importance, not only of carefulness and thrift in gaining and expending money, but keeping faithful, correct and fair accounts of all that passes through your hands. The greatest genius will have his affairs always in confusion who omits this slight duty, performed by even the plainest man of business, who is not wanting in integrity. He who keeps no accounts is always liable to imposition from others and frequently, before he is aware of it, is involved in difficulty from which no subsequent exertions can extricate him. My own habits have been very particular in this respect, so that it is now easy for me to shew all my dealings through life and how every dollar that came into my hands has been disposed of, of my precision you may perhaps in time have some experience yourself, which formerly I feared you would find sore to you. I keep very regular accounts against you and shall continue so to do, for the equal affection I bear all my children forbids that I should confer, much less squander on one of you an undue proportion of my small earnings. I trust however now, from the earnestness of your feelings on this point, that I shall have no further occasion to complain or, rather, that in manhood, you, yourself, will find no occasion to indulge vain regrets at the inconsiderate follies of your boyhood. I have every hope, that you think and feel properly about this matter, especially as your Uncle Alexander tells us an anecdote, much to your credit, of your refusal to accept from him a part of your Grand Father's bounty to him which passed through your hands. You did only right, my son; for you knew that I had directed you to be supplied by the college with as much money as I thought you *ought* to have. Besides that, it was generous not to diminish your Uncle's supply, which he might need at Washington, tho' upon his own liberal offer. You shewed a proper estimate of his wants and a proper pride in your own character. I do not wish you to go without your reward for so praiseworthy a forbearance and therefore request that as soon as you wish, you would provide yourself with a pair of dress-pantaloons in the place of those which you and your friend Mr. Bryan exterminated. Judging from the pleasure you seem to have anticipated from the society of your Uncle on his return to Middletown, you must have been greatly disappointed at his not making his second appearance at Baltimore. We were greatly surprised here by his arrival in last Wednesday's stage and still more distressed when he informed us that the cause was his discharge from Capn. Partridge's School. He unfortunately became involved in a broil with a fellow student at Washington, which came to a personal conflict and ended in the dismissal of both the parties. Alexander received much provocation, which certainly palliates his fault: Nevertheless, it is a serious misfortune to him, interrupts his studies and increases the expense of his education and greatly distresses your Grand Papa, whose heart was much set upon

Alexander's steadiness and studiousness. I believe there are still some hopes that he will be re-admitted and he intends to apply for a restoration. If granted, he will return without delay, in which case you may expect to see him during next month. If boys could only be made sensible, how trivial they will hereafter regard the little hardships they now encounter and how very futile they will consider the occasions and excuses for their bickerings amongst each other, they would submit cheerfully to all such occurrences rather than inflict on the bosoms of their Parents the bitter pangs of having censured and suspended Sons. My Son! I confidently rely on you to spare your Mother and Father such wretchedness.

These Christmas times have been enjoyed by your friends here in cheerful moderation by their interchange of visits and entertainments, without much shew or merriment. Our household is much thinner than usual and therefore more quiet, tho' not the less happy. Your Sister Catherine is still in Caswell keeping company with your Grand Mother during the absence of your Uncle James' wife who went to Person in November, where she has given birth to a fine son, named after its two Grand-fathers, "*James Sterling*" Your Uncle seems highly delighted and says tho' he has red hair and a freckled face, that he is a right likely Boy. Alice and Peter also spend the holidays in Caswell: They went up on the 23rd and will remain until the last of January. Annie and Sterling and the two little ones, Betty and Thomas, remain with your Mother. Sterling begins school again tomorrow; which seems quite satisfactory to him, tho' he has had a vacation of only one week and that he has chiefly spent keeping store at six pence a day for your Grand-father. All are well in Caswell, as we hear from your Uncle John, who passed there yesterday on his way home from Danville, to which place he had been, I believe, with the view of extending your connections. Whether his prospect of turning a Sweetheart into a Wife be of good or ill promise, we know not as yet. Next week he will set off to Georgia with your dear Aunt Patsy and her three little children. The season of the year is unfavorable and forebodes inclement weather; but your Aunt has been so long from her husband that she does not seem willing even for these causes to delay her journey longer.

Mr. Campbell says, he has not heard from you since you left us. I am glad to hear you say the fault is with the Post-Office and not yourself. He loves you so much and has been so kind to you and has so few comforts that grow out of friendship and the sympathies of the heart that it would be unpardonable in you to neglect him. I advise and beg you to write to him *often* and in terms of the utmost respect. Your sister Annie too says, you are her debtor for a letter, which your Mama tells me was a very pretty one and deserved an answer. I leave it to your own sense of propriety to dictate the proper terms of congratulations to your Uncle James and Aunt Susan upon the happy addition to their family and joys. I do not doubt but you will be wicked enough to wish

Uncle John "good luck" without any malicious hint from me. Your Grand-Papa is always greatly pleased at getting a letter from you: Ought you to fail in anything that would please *him*? Your Aunt Susan Kirland has been two months more at reading and speaking *French*, so that she is quite *Gallick*. If you are not afraid to encounter her, I should think a correspondence in that language would be quite agreeable and edifying to both of you. Your Uncle Alexander when your Mama scolds him for his bad conduct, revenges himself by telling her, as a set off, that you are quite a *Roman Catholic*! Your Mother does not suffer much uneasiness at what he says; for none of us believe it. If credited, it would make many long faces here, I think. For myself I do not look upon the difference of Sects amongst Christians, as of so much consequence in itself: But for that very reason, I have long considered it very proper for each person to attach himself to that persuasion which he can not only call a Church of *God*, but also, *the Church of his Fore Fathers*. The Protestant Episcopal Church is that of your family and is in itself, by its formularies, doctrines and practices, excellent, presenting strong restraints to vice and excitements to virtue as any denomination whatever.

I have written you so long a letter, that I will now only add the benediction of your Mother and also of

Your affect. Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

COPY OF YOUR ACCOUNT.

1826.			
Sepr.	8—to	Catholic Manual & binding in July last.....\$	1.25
		Spanish Dictionary \$3.50—Spans. Gram. \$2. Ex-	
		tracts, \$2.	7.50
		Le. Brune's Telemarque \$1.12½—Algebra \$1.50 Pro-	
		sody 50 cts.	3.12½
Decem	4	2 pr shoes—1 pr Boots mended & 2 pr shoes mended..	7.25
"	14	Washing & mending for 6 months, due.....	15.
		Doctors Fees \$4. Infirmary \$1. Paper & quills \$3....	8.
		Pocket Money during 20 weeks @ 25 cts \$5. Postage	
		\$2.93	7.93
		Mr. Kelly's Bill for Music.....	17.25
		Six Months board & tuition in advance beginning	
		today	115.
			<hr/>
			182.30½
		Exchange for discount on money.....	7.12
			<hr/>
			189.42½

Be sure not to complain about this Bill nor allege any improper mistake in it. I do not know that there is any; and if there is I am certain it is entirely innocent.

[Address: St. Mary's College
Baltimore Maryland.]

From William A. Graham.

RALEIGH [Jan. 6, 1827] FRIDAY MORNING 10 O'CLOCK.

I this morning waited on Judge Henderson, but owing to the non-attendance of Judges Taylor and Hall my examination has been deferred untill this evening or tomorrow morning. Your letter to Genl. Iredell I have not yet had an opportunity to deliver. Mr. Stanly I am informed by Judge Henderson is something better this morning; tho doubts of his recovery are yet entertained. He was on the floor replying to Mr. Morehead on the subject of the bill to establish courts of Equity etc., when he found his faculty of speech fail, and apologized to the house for not proceeding. A motion was then made by Fisher that the committee rise—which was agreed to and Mr. Stanly took the chair. The bill being reported to the house, a motion was made to adjourn, which he had no sooner put, than he sunk in his chair and was carried out. Genl. Iredell is chosen speaker pro tem, having arrived here yesterday just at night and it being excessively cold both then and at this time I have scarcely seen any one who could tell me any news. The last two or three days have been spent by the Legislature in discussing the bills relative to the time of meeting of the Genl. Assembly—to prevent free persons of color from coming into the state—to regulate the manumission of slaves. Mr. Murpheys memorial¹ was reported on yesterday in the house of Commons. The report professes to authorize the Prest and directors of the Literary fund to raise——dollars for the purpose of accomplishing the prayed for objects. I regret that I have not been able to hear more fully, and inform you in extenso respecting the transactions here.

P. S. I understand here that Mr. Blume late of Hillsboro, is to be married in a day or two to a rich widow in Southampton. Should a private conveyance present itself I will endeavour to give you a more satisfactory account of things here.

W. G.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From John R. Donnell.²

NEWBERN Jany: 10th, 1827.

Very soon after the vacancies on the Bench are filled, it will become necessary to think about the arrangement of the Circuits for the year. Presuming that the appointments will still leave the majority of our

¹This memorial was presented by John Scott on January 5, 1827. It was concerned with the authorization of a new lottery for preparing and publishing a history of North Carolina.

²John R. Donnell of Craven, judge of the Superior Court, 1819-1836.

Brethren in your vicinity I take the liberty of suggesting to you that I would be quite satisfied with the Edenton Riding in the Spring and the Newbern in the Fall. I would, I believe, have no objection to going to the Mountains next Fall, but presume it is a favorite Fall Riding to most of the Judges and that our Circuit will be less desirable to any other than to me.

Be pleased to let me know as early as convenient what arrangement is proposed, and accept the assurance of my esteem.

Honl. Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

From Joseph J. Daniel.

HALIFAX 15th January 1827.

I have thought of the following arrangement of the circuits for the year 1827. You will be so good as to shew it to Judge Norwood and make up your opinion on it, if you are not pleased with it, make such alterations as you think proper and have them published. You will recollect that I was on the Mountain circuit last Spring and that I was on the Edenton circuit fall before last.

SPRING	FALL.
Mountains,—Strange	Mountains—Donnell
Cape Fear,—Martin	Cape Fear Daniel
Hillsborough—Ruffin	Hillsborough Ruffin
Newbern—Norwood	Newbern Martin
Edenton—Donnell	Edenton Strange
Raleigh—Daniel	Raleigh Norwood.

I think it is as good an arrangement as I can think of. Mr. Martin practised in the Mountain and Hillsborough circuits and he ought not to be assigned to either this year.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Romulus M. Saunders.

WASHINGTON Jany 15th 1827

I had expected before this to have had the pleasure of hearing from you, but it seems you are contented with your domestic quiet, tho' I know you are not indifferent to the tempest which at present beset the vessel of state.

The intelligence from England, has been received here not with much emotion—the promptitude and the speech of the minister have given rise to some conjectures that the war may become a general one and as the fate of Cuba is important to us, the administration here may think it advisable to take some steps on the subject. The next advices however will be of a more decisive character and show how the thing is to eventuate.

As to the Inn's and the Outs, things here are made at present to depend very much upon movements at home—the Legislatures are looked to from this with feeling—the recent defeat of Mr. Randolph¹ has been received with much congratulation by the administration men and not with a good grace by the oppositionist—he was not of much weight *per se*—yet the fear is his defeat may have an effect. Tyler it is said is personally friendly to Clay. This is not exactly in character with the old dominion. But the election of McLean² and Ridgely³ from Dele^e. is of much more consequence, as it gives a majority in the Senate—should Col. Benton⁴ be re-elected—of which there now seems to be serious doubts—tho' the rumor of the day is that Ellis⁵ will beat Reed⁶—the ascendancy in the Senate is of vital importance to both parties. The prospects I consider as favorable to Jackson. Van Buren is very confident that New York will give him a majority, if so the result is certain. I acknowledge however they are not to be calculated upon with much certainty. Clay it is confidently believed will run for V. President, if he can consent to yeald his present situation.

I must now cast an eye homewards. The elections for Judges have gone against Mangum. I am sorry for him, tho' as far as I am personally concerned Martins⁷ success will aid me, as I have determined on locating at Salisbury. I am now a law student and shall be so for years, and whatever hard labor and persevering effort can do I will effect, tho' I acknowledge I look to the prospects ahead, not with the most sanguine hopes. From what I hear I expect some steps will be taken against Jones, if he is ousted I very much fear Shepperd will avail himself of feelings growing out of the recent election for Judges. Will it be possible to detach Strange from him?

¹John Randolph had just been defeated for reëlection to the Senate by John Tyler.

²Louis McLane.

³Henry M. Ridgely.

⁴Thomas Hart Benton.

⁵Powhatan Ellis of Mississippi.

⁶Thomas B. Read of Mississippi.

⁷Mangum was appointed to the bench by the governor and council in 1826 to succeed Frederick Nash. It was not a popular appointment and the legislature elected James Martin of Rowan.

From John R. Donnell.

NEWBERN Jany, 15th 1827.

Yours of the 6th inst is just received, as mine to you by the last mail will have been I trust, ere this. In that I suggested that I would like the Edenton Circuit this spring and the Newbern or Morgan in the Fall. I regret that you should have proposed the Morgan Riding for me this Spring and earnestly hope you will be able satisfactorily to yourself and our Brethren so to arrange it as to send me to Edenton this Spring. In the Fall you might give me Newbern, Morgan, Raleigh or Cape Fear either of which I would as soon have as Hillsboro but my preference would be I believe in the order named.

The Honbl. Thomas Ruffin

Ps. Be pleased to let me know as early as possible the arrangement finally adopted.

[Address: Hillsboro' N. C.]

From James Martin, Jun.

SALISBURY Jany 26th 1827.

I received your letter of the 21st and am quite obliged to you for the friendly and cordial gratulation which you express at the result of my election. It is an appointment the responsibilities of which cause me to accept with fear and trembling. It is a consolation however to me to know that in the office I shall be enabled to claim you as a brother as I always have as a man, claimed you for a friend.

The arrangement of the fall circuits is very much against my wishes. I suppose it is the very worst. To a western citizen it is appalling to be sent there in the fall season of the year. I do trust that the Legislature will make some alteration which will paleate in some measure the dangers of that circuit.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

From Robert Strange.

FAYETTEVILLE January 27th, 1827.

I received your kind friendly and flattering letter of the 21st inst. on Friday last instead of Wednesday as I should have done from its date and postmark. The arrangement made for the next two Circuits does me more than justice, having the Hillsborough Circuit for the Fall is

more than an equivalent for the extra share of difficulties which are thrown upon me in the Spring, and indeed (as I could hardly expect to ride my home Circuit) I believe all things considered that I am as well disposed of even in the *Spring* as I could have chosen for myself. The interest you express in my affairs is highly gratifying. Your advice will always be gratefully received upon all subjects; and when not followed it will not be, that it is not respected.

I was induced by a variety of considerations to meet promptly with my approbation the proposals which were made to me to suffer my name to be held up for one of the late vacancies upon the Circuit Bench although no one can be more conscious than myself of my unfitness for the station or better convinced that I owe my success entirely to the kind feelings of that portion of my Fellow Citizens who had the power of selection and not to any professional reputation possessed by me.

I will not disown entirely the influence of ambition in the matter for I do not profess to be either above or below any of the passions by which others of the race to which I belong are ordinarily moved, but I trust I am not so much under the influence of *Ambition* or any other *passion* to lose sight of those duties which I owe to myself and family. The strong inducement then with me was a belief that I could make it instrumental to the great end of relieving myself from those pecuniary difficulties which have been crowding upon me year after year ever since my outset in life and which are even now continuing to multiply. Not as you may justly conclude by holding the office many years, but by availing myself of the strong stimulus which the responsibility of the station applies to the mind, the opportunity which it affords of acquiring practical and theoretical learning in the profession of Law: of disencumbering myself with a mass of unprofitable and troublesome business which has accumulated upon my hands in the course of ten or a dozen years practice; of getting rid of many bad professional habits acquired in days of inexperience; of looking around for a more advantageous spot in which hereafter to locate myself; of casting myself loose from many trammells by which I should have continued bound so long as I remained at the Bar and thus putting myself in a better situation to avail myself of any more advantageous location which I might discover; and lastly as men are operated upon in no slight degree by the names of things by returning to the Bar somewhere or other with the professional character which the fact of having been upon the Bench *per se* bears with it.

I can not but foresee difficulties after all in changing my abode and am by no means certain that it will be even practicable; and on the other hand should I change at all I am by no means certain that the range of my selection will be co-terminous with the State. Be assured however that I am far very far from *indulging the dream of retiring from the toils of the profession*. No! a life of labor is my destiny while life itself lasts and as illy as I am qualified for *that*, I am *more* illy qualified for any other species of labor than that of the Law. I must therefore stick

to it. I wish this communication of my views confined to yourself. Perhaps I need not have said so. But it ought not to be a matter of astonishment if one who had suffered so much for the want of prudence and caution should now seem to possess an overstock of those virtues.

You are far ahead of us as in all other things in your success in "multiplying and replenishing the earth."

Hoping soon to hear from you again. I conclude by offering to Mrs. Ruffin and family in which I am joined by Jane and my little ones my most affectionate regards—and to yourself the high respect and esteem of

Yrs. Most Sincerely

ROBT. STRANGE.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Duponceau Jones to William K. Ruffin.

[PITTSBORO, Feb. 2, 1827.]

It seems as if fortune has some particular spite to me. I have again to remain from college on account of my health however I hope it will be only a few weeks before I can go again and there I intend to stay till I graduate sick or well. I hope since your heart is so much set upon it that your father will be able to educate you at St. Mary's but it would give me much more pleasure and (in my opinion) be much better for you to get your education in your own state; Indeed I think we ought to be too patriotic to owe the education of our young men to neighboring states when we have a flourishing college of our own whatever danger you might run of becoming a heretic. I have another very weighty reason for your coming to C— hill which no doubt will be influential. The brother of the "girl on the hill" will graduate in six months after which (I understand) brother and sister father and mother will bid an eternal farewell to Carolina and remove to some of our western wilds it will be five years before you leave St. Mary's seven before you can go out there and before that time alas! some other mortal may be blessed, whereas if you come to Chapel-hill besides the use you might make of the visit you would of course make to Hillsboro in 4 years you can graduate and study a profession and be at liberty to follow Miss to the end of the world. I hope my logic will not be without effect in inducing you to return to Carolina. Really I am ashamed to write so much nonsense but I have no news to entertain you with as Horace says

Dulce est desipere in loco.

I now recollect a piece of news that I might have given you. Mr. Caldwell on going to Raleigh for the salaries of the professors found the treasury of college empty. It seems the trustees appointed a com-

mittee to supply Nichols¹ the architect (employed to build a chapel) with money, this Nichols managed the business so adroitly, by applying to each member of the committee without the knowledge of the rest, that he has completely emptied the treasury to the amount of many thousands the matter is going to be examined into which greatly enrages Colonel Polk one of the committee thus the matter stands. The professors not at all contented with their empty pockets Col. Polk furious the committee in great wrath and the whole board in great perplexity.

College is not at all overstocked with men of genius indeed as you see by my last it has very few of any kind there are several very smart fellows in the class that I will join.

Do you read no modern authors William besides your College duties there is Hume—but I beg your pardon I forgot he was altogether heretical, but there is Rollin I would think you must take great pleasure in reading him especially if you can do it in french he is a Catholic and truly pious and any person may be benefited by his remarks on the wars and bloodshed which he relates and also on the sublime philosophy of some of the heathen philosophers.

I believe I have always forgotten to give you the respects of my mother and sisters they always wish to be remembered to you and whenever I do not; attribute it to my forgetfulness.

[P. S.] Elizabeth Fleming is the lady I alluded to married as you know to T. Davis.

[Address: St. Mary's College
Baltimore, Maryland.]

From John Devereux.

NEWBERN Feb. 3, 1827.

I congratulate you on having exchanged the laborious employment of soliciting Justice for the more pleasing one of Administering it. I hope occasionally to fall in with you on some of your circuits in the low Country.

Will you have the goodness to inform me what success you have met with in collecting the amount of those notes you were good enough to take charge of. I have no doubt but those Tenants who have lived forty and fifty years on the land without having as yet paid the owner a single cent (not even the Taxes on the land) will complain on being called on to pay any thing now.

I shall remain here about a fortnight where I shall be glad to hear from you.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹William Nichols, the architect of the capitol. For a full account of this matter see Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, Vol. I, p. 282.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER 8th, Feby, 1827.

I shall be at home Untill the third week in this Month, and shall be truly glad to see you. As I went to Raleigh, I had not time to send up for you, as I reached Mr. Scott's at night and left there early next morning. As I returned it was 7 O'clock at night when I got to Mr. Scotts, and a continued Succession of Company from the time I was dressed Untill 12 O'clock prevented my going up to your House. I cant walk without pain. My ankle is inflamed and the inflammation is increased by walking. The Ulcer is nearly well. Since the Weather became mild, I have mended very fast. I am getting Flesh and Strength.

Since I have been able to transact Business, I have devoted myself to it day and Night. But I am so far behind, that I do not know how I am to get my Business up.

On this morning I received the enclosed Letter from Mr. McLemore. I send it to you, as it contains some information respecting your lands in the Western District. From a Letter I lately received from Mr. Dickens I am induced to believe he will not find it necessary to call on Mr. McLemore for any of his Lands. I am very anxious to get my Business with the Bank Settled. If you and Mr Kirkland Should wish to transmit any Instructions to Mr. McLemore, you can do so by a Safe Hand. I expect to Send Mr. B. A. Rainy back to Tennessee early in March.

Judge Ruffin.

[P. S.] The Corn and Meal will be ready for you. Send up Bags. Bring up Mr. McLemore's Letter.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW-RIVER 13th Feb'y, [1827]

Mr. Forest wishes to purchase 40 Acres of land adjoining the Tract he purchased from you. These 40 Acres I purchased, I believe, from John Ray. You have Rays deed to me, and the Form of the Tract is I learn in the general Plot of Survey which Joshua Freeland made out for you. On this evening I rode over this little Tract and find that it can be taken off without injury to the Main Tract. I beg you to Send me by Moreau Rays Deed and the general Plot of Survey.

If I sell to Mr. Forest, it will be for the purpose of raising a little Money to meet Some Demands, which I am compelled to pay at our next County Court. I will indemnify you by a Lien on one or more Negroes, which I shall purchase on next Week at the Sale of my Mothers property.

Her estate is largely indebted to me, more than two thousand Dollars. She purchased at the Sale of my Father's estate in Jany 1818, \$1900 more than her distributive Share. In settling with the Grand Children, I have paid all this Debt for her, except the Share of Dr. McAdens Children, and about \$150, which is due to some Minors. Dr McAdens Share is 1/7th of the \$1900. My Mothers estate will I fear fall Short four hundred Dollars of paying the Debt and Interest; but I will attend the Sale and save myself as far as I can.

I shall as soon as possible sell the land on which my Father lived. I am by his Will directed to sell it, at my Mother's Death. This will bring \$2500 I expect. Dr. McAden¹ informs me it will bring that sum. I have paid long Since to my Brothers Children their Share of this Money, and in my Settlement with Archibald Debow, he agreed to take a Tract of Land from me in Tennessee for \$1200, which will leave him \$367 in my debt. This sum will be equal to his Share of the Land I am about to Sell. He has written to me Since the death of my Mother that he will Still take the Land at \$1200. and I am to make him a Deed on next Week. He has acted liberally and freed me from much Anxiety. When I make the Sale I can pay you twelve or fifteen hundred Dollars in Bonds, without using Funds belonging to the other Stocks of Grand Children. I begin once more to see my way, and If I live I will pay you in Cash and Bonds \$10,000 during this year.

I will bring all my Lands in Tennessee into the Market as quickly as possible and wind up my Affairs. They occupy So much of my Time and reflection, that my professional Business Suffers. And I have to pay so much Money in Tennessee every year for Taxes etc. that I am subjected to great inconvenience. I deposited in Mr. McLemore's Hands nearly \$700, and it is all gone, I expect, in payment of Drafts on him. Mr. Dickens has upwards of \$500 in his hands, and I shall have hereafter to draw on him. I hope Maj. Owen will agree to compromise the Suit with McKenzie, so that during this Year I can Settle all my Business in Tennessee.

I see that the General Assembly has authorised another Lottery² for my benefit. I hope better success may attend this than the former one; but I shall make no Calculations on it.

I shall expect you towards the end of the Week.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

¹Probably Dr. Henry McAden of Caswell.

²This lottery was to enable Murphey to write his proposed history of the State.

From Henry Webb to William K. Ruffin.

MILITARY ACADEMY MIDDLETOWN February 27th 1827.

I received your obliging letter on the 25th and now undertake to answer it in the best manner I can. I have received only one letter from home since I left there and that had no news at all in it, Alexander received one also about a week ago, and there was hardly any news of any consequence in it as he said, but there was one thing that I think that blasts all your prospects for Miss F sent her best respects to Wm. Strudwick, you must keep a pretty sharp look out or he will supplant you for the buttons have played the wild in Hillsborough, for I understand that all the girls sent their hearts on a wild goose chase after them. Since I began this letter some of the Cadets have kicked up a d—l of a row, so I thought that I would wait and see how it ended before I finished this letter, there were about twenty five entered into an agreement to go down to the Commons at 11 oclock and break up the tables crockery etc. with a view of making the Steward give us better fare so at the appointed time they all repaired to the place of rendezvous with axes clubs and such like things, marched in a body to the commons and commenced operation, and when they had committed sufficient depredation they gave the word to retreat when they all started back for the quarters but just as the last were coming out of the door one of the Instructors who was sitting up with a sick cadet came to the door and seized one of the conspirators by the hair who immediately seized him also and gave him a few small taps that made him let go pretty quick but as he went out of the gate he caught him by the arm upon which the cadet cried for help when a great large fellow came up and gave the Instructor a lick or two over the back which made him let go the Cadet and take to his heels for safety, but next morning while we were at breakfast, a Constable came into the hall and wanted to take one of them to carry to Jail but all of the cadets rose up in a body and were about to pitch him out of the window when Capt. Partridge who was present told the Constable that he would answer for his appearance at Court, but by Paying the damages and cost they stopped the prosecution which has stopped the noise so far, we had the melancholy duty of burying one of our own number on tuesday last who died on Saturday his name was Heay from New York City. It is the most solemn thing I ever saw to see a body of young following their companion to his grave. I expect you will get tired reading this letter for it miserably written but you must excuse me for I have been Cutting wood lately and my hand is so agitated that I Cannot write at all fit to be seen. J. Syme says that you must write him and also sends his best respects.

[Address:

Mr. Wm. Ruffin
Student St. Marys College
Baltimore Md.]

To William K. Ruffin.¹

GREENVILLE, PITT COUNTY, March 5th 1827.

My Dear Son!

I am now on my Spring Circuit; for which I left home on Friday week. Your Mother and the family were in good health; but in such spirits as you might expect from my absence on so long a tour, rendered the more severe from my being very unwell when I came away. I have not since heard from home; but I hope the accounts I have sent them of the relief, I have experienced from my malady (a dreadful cough and stricture in the breast) will have reconciled them to the separation and restored them all to a calm equanimity about me. I am now perfectly recovered.

Before I came away, I received the note you appended to the Proposals for a Spanish Grammar by *Sign. Lubi*. I have no objection to your becoming a subscriber for a Copy. I wish, my son, you had always been as circumspect touching your conduct and expenditures in other things, as to ask my advice and permission. It is easily done; and one would think it a cheap enough price to be given for any bounty. I never deny those supplies, that will be useful to you or rather, such as I consider useful; and I should suppose that even you would admit me to be the better judge of the two upon that point. These observations, you will anticipate, are made in reference to your general expenses and particularly to the sum taken up by you from *Mr. Williams* last summer. I should long ago have answered the letter in which you mentioned that circumstance, but the real truth is, that I was so very seriously distressed and cruelly mortified at it, that I knew not how to advert to it in proper terms and I could not wholly omit to notice it. My son, My son! You are not aware how deeply and in how tender a point you have wounded a Father's bosom. I regret, to be sure, the careless thoughtlessness which would permit you to waste in idle dissipations on your way home so much time and so much money: I fear they could only have been consumed in follies that exposed you or vices unbefitting your years, and degrading to all ages. I cannot imagine, how else you could employ the sums you had; and the painful inference is the stronger from the fact of concealing your application to *Mr. Williams*. But it is that concealment which goes nearer my heart than anything besides. I think, I asked you in direct terms, whether you had taken up anything there and received your reply in the negative. Of that however I am not sure: But the difference is very trifling, for the distinction between an affirmation of a falsehood and the suppression of the truth from one having a just right to demand it, is a refinement in an unsound system of Ethics, which I neither comprehend, act on nor allow. I had thought, and it was

¹In connection with this letter, read Thomas Ruffin to W. K. Ruffin, April 3, 1827.

sweet to my very soul, that if there was any one principle which I had successfully impressed on my Children, it was such a love and devotion to Truth, as would effectually lead them to an open and candid avowal of all their thoughts and admission of their faults. I have endeavoured so to breed you all up, as to make you consider your Parents the best and safest depositories of your Confidence; and did hope, that, however disagreeable it might be to confess one error, it would be more so to redouble it by a denial or concealment. You say, you were restrained by the fear of my displeasure. That shows the safety of a cordial confidence in your Father. If the fear of my dissatisfaction induced you to hide from me the fault, the acknowledgement of it, founded upon a just principle, would have been a check to a repetition of the fault. But, my dear boy, why should such an apprehension of the effect on me have produced such a consequence in your mind? In every conflict between duty and inclination, between virtue and vice, are the former to yield, because their dictations are, for the present, the less agreeable and the latter to triumph, because they may afford some temporary respite from reproof or pain? If it were always safe, and pleasant to do what is right, who would ever err! It is the part of a good man to sustain his uprightness through every adversity, and maintain truth at every peril of present opposition or future pain. In fact however, the wise order of Providence makes the retribution for such aberrations certain, and the more criminal the act, the more terrible is the condemnation. In this very instance, I appeal to yourself to say if every step has not increased your default and aggravated your distress and punishment. I ask you, if the painful consciousness of a heinous fault hath not recurred day by day and nightly to your mind; and whether at each renovation it hath not been presented in some new and more serious aspect? It began with the idle extravagance of taking money that you had no use for and ought not to have entrusted yourself with. That was, in comparison, venial. The possession of the money was a temptation to some criminal expenditure: the temptation was yielded to—then the fear of my anger and reproof followed; under which gave way your firmness and which striped your visit to your Home and your Family of the better part of its purest pleasures. You left the whole a secret. How often have you since thought, “I am doing Mr. Williams injustice and staining my Father’s honor. The former generously made the loan I asked and ought to be repaid: The latter is bound to return the boon of his friend and may suffer and does suffer in his friends opinion for not doing it. I know, that it is not his fault, the debt remains unpaid; but Mr. Williams supposes it is, for he suspects not that I have suppressed the fact from my own Father. Yet, *I can not tell him*; I might at first, but *now I can not!* But, woe is me! Concealment much longer is impossible; for Mr. Williams will at length, make known his demand and then—my poor father, what distress will he feel! How criminal shall I seem!” If you possess half the sensibility I give you credit for, such reflections have been yours

a thousand times since last July. What mine have been since the receipt of your letter, I can not venture to describe. I have taken care promptly to restore Mr. Williams to his rights, but my face has been suffused with shame, that they were so long withheld from him. Would I could as easily reinstate yourself in your Innocence and my good opinion and your own! I have suffered very much, my son! My *good will* you have: I have a Father's heart: It can forgive and does forgive. But wring it not again thus severely—thus cruelly. Deal with me in sincerity; with all men with candor. Let Justice and Truth be fixed principles with you and never depart from them. I mean Justice in its enlarged sense, without hardness and rigor; and Truth with all its attributes, without suppression or equivocation. Receive with reverence a parent's admonition and be guided by them. But if in an unguarded moment they be forgotten and violated, suffer not coward fear of the powers of man to plunge you into the deeper crime of Falsehood; which is more single, but is the deceptive covering or companion of all other vices. I can not but love my children. I am a Father and Nature is strong within me and makes even a vicious or a thankless child dear to me. Yet such an one is an envenomed tooth rankling in an agonized bosom and not the object of a composed, confiding heart, I love my offspring and would prune away their faults and rear them in virtue and to usefulness. I do not doat, so as to see perfection, in impurity, and imagine excellence, where there is nothing but disgusting deformities. I would cherish the warmest affection for you, and desire to be the object of your reverence and make you that of my just pride. But do not expect me to confide, where I shall have been twice betrayed; to entertain for you a respect, which you do not cherish for yourself. By Nature, I am your *Parent*; It is in your power to make me, by your conduct, your *Friend*: But esteem and friendship live not in company with guile and fly from deception. Risk not again so great a trial of my paternal regards O but treat me with the tenderness of an affectionate son and be firm enough to rely on me as an undoubted and undoubting friend. This letter, William, I have postponed writing for some weeks, that I might command a temper and words appropriate to the effort strongly to impress on you the imperishable obligations of *perfect and exact* truth, without being betrayed into harshness of censure of your past dereliction. I would not wound, but to cure you; I would not admonish, but to improve you; I would not mortify you now, but to enable you to escape henceforth, deeper and more lasting shame. Nevertheless, shame for this act, you must take to yourself; for it was a cruel unkindness thus to treat me; and a disingenuous prevarication that must bring a burning blush to your cheeks. Beware of the repetition. Think of the disgracefulness of such a vice to yourself and pity a fond Father, whose heart would sooner yield up its last drop of blood than see that of a beloved son the Seat of degrading depravities and filial ingratitude. Let then my words be strongly impressed on your mind: Forget not the lessons they contain

and improve by them. Make yourself worthy of the love I bear you and reward me by encreasing worth for the labors I perform for your service and support. By diligence in your studies, qualify yourself to minister to the necessities which decayed age or misfortune may bring on me; but, above all, by integrity of principle and moral uprightness preserve such a purity of heart, that your Father may accept a boon from it without the suspicion of its flowing from a *tainted source!*

Master Wm. K. Ruffin

St. Mary's College
Baltimore.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW-RIVER, 7th March 1827.

Dear Sir.

On reaching Mr. Kirklands from Caswell I was informed of your ill-Health. Since you left home, Several People have had the same Complaint. At first it was Supposed to be an Influenza; but it turns out to be only a bad Cold, which distresses Patients for a few days and then gradually wears off. Nearly all my Family have had it. I hope you are by this time entirely well, and I pray that you may continue in good Health.

I found that Dr. McAden had not taken out Letters of Administration, on my Mothers estate. I was in error as to the Time of Caswell County Court. He cannot administer Untill the Second Week in April. And we have appointed the Friday of Caswell Superior Court for the Sale. The perishable Part of my Mothers estate was Sold, and I have a Strong Hope, the whole of her Property will pay the debt which She owed to my Fathers Executors.

I offered the Land at \$4 Per Acre, upon a Credit of one and two Years, the Purchase Money bearing Interest. I did not get a bid. I then gave Dr. McAden Authority to contract for the sale of it privately, and Sent an Advertisement to this effect to the Editor of the Milton Gazette. The Dr. thinks, the Neighbours whom the Land joins will come to an Understanding as to the Part which each wants, and that he can effect a Sale. If he cannot, I shall offer the land Again on the day when the Negroes are to be Sold. From this Sale you may calculate upon getting Bonds to the Amount of \$2,000.

Archibald Debow settled with me honourably. I conveyed him a tract of Land, and in this way paid him nearly \$400 of his Share of future Sales. He is better in Health, And Some Hope is entertained that he may get well. If he lives I shall get Something from his Father.

My Leg is not yet well: Indeed it is rather worse than when I saw you last, And I have come home from Orange County Court to nurse it. The Ulcer has been rather indolent for two Weeks past. Dr. Umstead thinks it is now healing Again. I shall have a disagreeable Circuit, if it does not get better.

Mr. Rainey, whom I sent two Weeks ago, to Maj. Owens, has not yet returned. He had Some Horses to Sell,—When he returns, I will inform you of the course which we Shall take with respect to the Suits in Tennessee. I shall Start Mr. Rainey to Tennessee, as Soon as he can get ready.

On next Week I will write to you Again. In the mean time and at all times, believe me to be

Yours very affectionately

A. D. MURPHEY.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Tarborough N. C.]

From James H. Ruffin.

PERSON, March 21st, 1827.

I regret exceedingly that you left home before I had an opportunity of seeing you. Had I not been in hopes that you would have effected the desired exchange of circuits with Judge Donnell, I should certainly have been at your house before your departure. I wished to consult you upon a contemplated alteration in my pursuits of a livelihood from that of my present profession to one of a more pleasing, and to me, under present appearances, more profitable nature, that of agriculture. Upon so material a change in my avocation, I wish not to decide hastily nor resolve unadvisedly and, as in all the important concerns of my former life I have been disposed to seek your opinion and to rely upon your deliberate judgment, so in this, not of minor importance I am solicitous to receive instruction, lest, the course which I am little disposed to adopt (that of rash and premature decision) may be unwillingly followed:—My own private opinion, formed upon *some* reflection is that it will be to my pecuniary advantage and that opinion is founded upon the following consideration. In the first place I *always abhorred* the profession from the first moment I entered upon its study. My first entry into your office as a student of Law was made with a distaste of its pursuits which all my future efforts have not been able to surmount and though I was willing at the earnest request of our departed father to resign my own private wishes and inclinations, which would have led me to the study and practise of medicine, yet I did it with reluctance because, in the exchange of theretofore contemplated pursuits I was not cheered by the

remotest prospects of professional eminence. Do not from this understand me as uttering reproaches against the memory of my father, because never was the memory of a father more fondly cherished, yet I cannot help thinking that he mistook my qualifications for the study and practice of the profession to which his will and advice consigned me. In the second place and as a consequence of the first I have never followed the duties of my profession with that zeal and ardor without which neither eminence has been attained nor profits realized, but on the contrary have been most miserably deficient in even the commonest attention to the ordinary duties of a lawyer—while I make this mortifying confession, I am compelled further to acknowledge that, instead of improvements, the pursuit of my profession becomes daily more irksome and, I awfully fear, that my distaste has been progressing until it has become irremediable. In the third I am said to be deficient in that urbanity of manners which is necessary to make a man a favorite. I am said to be a haughty, austere, forbidding man. This is the more unfortunate, because it is a fault of which I am utterly unconscious and therefore incapable of amending. If there be a man on earth, who is less disposed, than myself, to keep aloof from his friends and acquaintances or even from those who have no claim to either of those titles, the commonest strangers, I know him not; on the contrary, there *can* be no man who thinks more humbly of me than I do of myself:—Such being the case, I know not in which possible way I can have acquired the epithet of proud and cannot but think in my own particular instance it is misapplied. Be that as it may, as it is a fault of which I know not the existence, it is of course beyond my power to remedy it. Last tho' not least this man Dobbs will *ruin* and *beggar* me if he is not more closely watched than he has heretofore been. He is a man in my opinion totally devoid of principle and without the smallest regard to my interest when his own is not also consulted. He has under his management and control every thing I am worth to use or to abuse it according to his own will and pleasure. It is a game which I am no longer willing to play as the cards are at present shuffled: and will either shuffle them myself or pry more closely into the tricks and schemes which he is playing. My own interest and the interest of my creditors require that some other eye than his should watch over my concerns. At the rate matters now go on, the interest upon the debts which I owe will destroy the substance of every thing out of which the principal is to be paid.

You will receive this letter at Hillsborough, from which place let me hear fully and candidly your opinion upon the subjects mentioned in it:—Be not cautious of giving offence as none will be taken.

[P. S.] You will of course be secret as to the contents of this letter as no one else knows as yet of my intentions.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From John MacRae.

FAYETTEVILLE 31 March 1827.

The Legislature at its last session was good enough to grant me a loan of \$5000 to aid in the publication of my map of the State the repayment to be received to the satisfaction of the Treasurer and the bonds to be renewed every four months. Owing [to] the peculiar state of feeling with some of my friends upon the subject of securityship and the embarrassed condition of others of them I find some difficulty in giving security in the way which seems to have been contemplated by the framers of the resolution. I have offered the Treasurer to make the repayment of the money secure by the pledge of property in this place and he has very politely and in a very friendly manner expressed himself satisfied with that course but is desirous to consult the Attorney General now if it would not be asking too much I would request your influence with that officer with whom you are well acquainted to get him to accede to my wishes in this matter,—provided you think it can be done in accordance with the resolution of the Legislature.

I have a fine prospect of making a good speculation out of the map the County Courts are generally ordering surveys for my accommodation, if this is done in all the counties the aggregate amount will be something like \$15000, this will be the actual cost of the manuscript copy and ought to be the value of it at least. I have no doubt of making a correct as well as an elegant map of the State.

All our friends here are well. Mr. Kirkland is still with us and will remain until Wednesday, we hear regularly from Mr. Strange his health and spirits are both good and I have the satisfaction to say that from a source to be relied upon (a letter from Mr. John P. Carter) we learn that his conduct upon the Bench at the several courts he has held has given the most decided satisfaction.

* * * * *

[Address: Raleigh.]

To William K. Ruffin.

RALEIGH—April 3rd. 1827

My Dear Son—

From Johnston Court, I went last Saturday up to Hillsborough and had the pleasure of spending an evening with my dear family; all of whom I found well. You may judge of their perfectly good health and of the good spirits I am now in, when I mention to you, that, after some persuasion, I succeeded in an effort to get your Mother to accompany

me to this place and remain during the week I am holding Court here. She is so confined at home by the charge of her large family and the many domestic duties it imposes on her, that it now makes her reluctant to leave her own house at all: Which makes me the more solicitous, that she should occasionally visit her friends and leave those cares for a while behind her; for habits, good or bad, are apt to become inveterate and even the best may, by being carried too far, lead to error. You know there may be too much even of a good thing. For myself, I must profess to be under the greatest obligations to her; for I am sure nothing but my earnest entreaties and an unwillingness on her part to refuse a request so pressed by *me* could have prevailed over her doubts and difficulties on the score of letting our young ones go wild at home for a whole week. My hope however is that they will keep their words and be very good children, that I may on future occasions, not be deprived of the great pleasure, I now enjoy, of having your Mother's Society sometimes when I go from home.

We are here with your Aunt Catherine, who is very well and treats us with all hospitality and affection. I suppose you have heard of the death of Mrs Ruffin, the widow of my Uncle William. She died the latter part of February at the home of her son Albert near Richmond in Virginia. The family is now all dispersed and most of them dead: The Survivors, from imprudence, idleness and extravagance are reduced almost entirely to poverty and some of them to want. Such will always be the result of vicious propensities or even of indulged Indolence of disposition. What little success I have had in life or what reputation I enjoy, I owe to no merit but that of being early sensible of the value and effects of Industry and constantly practicing an unremitting exertion. I trust that I have impressed upon your mind that lesson, which was so scrupulously taught me by my Father; and that your feelings are so strongly imbued with a great ambition of adding to the repute of your family and *distinguishing your name* by high deserts, that, in future life, to the moral disposition to do good, you will be found to have added every other qualification growing out of Strength of understanding and mental acquirements. To bring so desirable a thing to pass, "Industry and Perseverance" and "Keep trying" should be your constant mottoes. May I lay to my heart, the flattering hope, that they will be?

I found your long letter here, according to my appointment, It is not written with your usual pains—I mean, with regard to the neatness of the hand-writing. You ought not to send to your friends and particularly your elderly ones, hastily written and blotted letters. Such carelessness will fall into a custom; and, besides, it is disrespectful to your correspondents. Your letter has nevertheless been read by both of your Parents several times with great interest. I am truly gratified, my son, to find that you did not obtain from Mr Williams the supply of money in Petersburg. The apprehension that you did, gave me great uneasiness, in as much as I could not imagine any innocent disbursement of it.

It was, indeed, very wrong to have taken it in Baltimore, for you know that the College would supply all you ought to take up or that I thought you ought. And it was still a greater error *not to communicate the fact to me*; from whom you ought to conceal nothing—for the very concealment showed the consciousness of a fault. But not doubting the heartiness of your penitence and confiding in the sincerity of your promises, never to repeat the transgression, I freely extend you the forgiveness you so warmly entreat. You ought however to be aware, that this is a boon extended to you by paternal fondness and that such aberrations from propriety and uprightness are never pardoned by the world nor forgotten by foes, of whom every person will find, by sad experience, that he has more than enough. Above all, my Son, I would advise you to *stand well with yourself*: Have the approbation of your own conscience in all things and never do an act which shall forfeit your own self-respect, without which there is no just lease of character nor true estimate of reputation, both of which are indispensibly requisite to dignity of demeanor and that moral courage, which will carry one through the discharge of painful duties or sustain one under adversities.

I shall expect you to gain as many distinctions in your classes as diligence can make you worthy of. I regret to observe the intimations you give of a distaste for Algebra: The difficulties you hint at are only the consequences of the *abstract* nature of the Science. That is the very property, which renders the study of Mathematics so useful in the system of general education. It teaches the art of pure reasoning and induction, with the least possible connection with sensible objects. I am not now speaking of the application of its principles to mechanics or the practical arts—in which its utility for the ordinary purposes of life consists. But I allude to the *pure* Mathematics, which are altogether mental, except so far as the use of arbitrary figures and characters is invoked to enable one mind to impart its course of reasoning and conclusion to another—If I judge rightly of the kind of mind you have, an intense application to this line of study is exactly that best suited to supply your defects and impart to it the quality of closeness of reasoning, in which I fear you are deficient. Nothing can be gained without strictest attention—so as to bring yourself to comprehend and to master these abstractions: When once you are the Master of a few of the leading principles, the rest will be easy. You must not rely only upon Memory, which is unequal to the burdens of carrying in it such diversified operations and rules. The understanding alone is the faculty exercised, improved and employed in this Science; which instructs us in thinking and reasoning. Judge, then, its value and exert yourself to progress in it proportionally.

You have my permission to get a flute, provided it do not exceed the price formerly mentioned by you, viz \$20—or \$25. I also enclose five Dollars for your Easter indulgencies—which, however, you are allowed by me to use only upon the approbation of your Masters and in the

manner which they may sanction. I do not countenance any uncandid concealments from them. Your Mother and I bestow on you our blessing and bid you merit the warm affection cherished for you in the hearts of, Dear William, Your Parents and true friends—

THOMAS RUFFIN

“Master William K Ruffin
St. Mary’s College
Baltimore”

To William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH—May 16th 1827.

My dear Son.

I have for the last ten days been in the enjoyment of repose in the midst of my family. My circuit terminated at Northampton County, whence I reached home on Sunday, the 6th day of this month; since which time, I have scarcely been off my own premises, except to pay my respects to your Grand-father and mother and a few other particular friends. The world has few charms for me, beyond the immediate circle of my own fire side and those near relatives and tried friends to whom I have long been attached by the ties obligations and esteem mutually interchanged. Your absence alone makes a vacancy in our domestic *Coterie*: Nevertheless you are not forgotten, for we often talk of you—the young ones, always with affection of that earnest indiscriminating kind that takes for granted that you are all, in perfection, the world could demand or they themselves hope for: Your Parents, less confident in expectation, but more deeply solicitous in wishes, think of you and talk of you, as a son of good promise in whom their hearts have a deep stake, but at the same time as a Youth of thoughtless temperament and *heady* disposition, from whose inconsiderate imprudence and self-willed-ness much is to be feared. Perhaps the old and the young are alike, tho not equally, in error. If your Mother and I are too much alive to your faults or see or think we see defects, where there are none, you are not to regard us as doing you an injury and insensible to any merits possessed by you. Far from it. A parent’s heart is so delicately sensible of aught—however minute—of good or evil, pertaining to a son and an eldest son, that nothing can be done by him that in itself is meritorious or tends to his future merits, which does not give the most intense pleasure. The same love that is thus highly gratified by good deserts, is changed into a chill that freezes up the very heart, upon discovering in the son either an indifference to his education, or impatience under the authority and necessary restraints of his elders and superiors; and,

above all, the slightest evidence of a want of that thorough reverence and dutiful submission to the Counsel and will of the Parent which is emphatically called *Filial Duty*, shocks all the good feelings of the father and still more the single-heartedness of a Mother. A refusal to obey, and, not less, a reluctant and surly obedience to parental advice, or command, argue so strongly a loss of that innocency of the infantile years which every parent must well remember in every child or evinces such a perversion of the understanding by the strength of misguided and misguiding passions, as for the moment, to leave but slight hopes in the parent's bosom of future comfort in such a child. We often see the corrupting influences of the world corrode and canker the best principles implanted by the utmost care of instructors and parents: But scarcely is an instance to be found of a youth of ill-promise, undutiful in demeanor towards Parents regardless of their approbation or seeking it upon other grounds than his virtues, as by relying for indulgencies upon the strength of *their* natural affections—refusing or failing to act upon their opinions and wishes, *merely as theirs*, I say, hardly can one such child be found, who disappoints expectations on the favorable side and becomes a better man or woman than before were exhibited in the boy or girl. You will not be surprised then, if the Sensibilities of your Mother and myself to such fearful results, should occasionally be alarmed; and that while we talk of you often and always with love towards you, we should some times be conscious of that secret distrust of your future well-doing and communicate it to each other, which naturally springs from some of the faults of character which you have occasionally exhibited and which I have not been so unjust as to conceal from you. It is my part to watch over your years of tenderness and inexperience and to point out the rocks, upon which you may wreck: It is a part of it to shew you those you have passed, that you may in future escape such risks. These duties I have endeavoured to perform. They are often disagreeable to me; I fear always distasteful to yourself. But I should consider myself as but doing much less than the half I owe you, did I only place you where you might be taught the elements of scholastic learning or even acquire a perfect mastery of human Science, did I not strive, likewise to make you a good son, a close and affectionate brother, a discreet friend and a *good man*. Hence I have not spared your opinions or your wrong feelings; but have often and often plainly pointed out to you, your errors, candidly corrected them and endeavoured to recall you when straying from the paths of rectitude. May you, my Son, profit by my efforts! May you be all in mind, manners and morals, that from your opportunities and the anxieties of your parents, you may and ought to be! May you never have occasion in future life to look back with regret and repinning on the counsel of your father neglected and dispised in your youth! It would be the bitterest pang that could sting your bosom—the reflection in a manhood of inanity or viciousness, that you would not then be thus, had you but done as a father of

tender affections for you, one that knew well what was good for you and desired you to do nothing that was not good, told and desired you!

The wish to have you nearer to me and the necessity I am under from a diminished income to curtail the expenditures of my family concur to determine me to bring you home at the expiration of the time for which you are now entered at St. Mary's. At Chapel Hill I hope your collegiate course can now be prosecuted as successfully as at any other seminary: I am sure at least, that it is at *your choice* to produce that result—The charges here are much lower; and especially, you can at that place *oftener* have the pleasure and the advantage of personally taking the opinions and instructions of your Mother and myself upon many points of doubtful propriety. The next session will begin in August. I wish you to be at home a fortnight or so before hand; which can easily be done, if you should remain at Baltimore until the Examination and commencement in July. It is my desire that you should so remain standing your regular examination and receiving the appropriate awards of censure or approval, provided the authorities of the College will permit a continuance for that period upon payment of the usual charges for the period itself,—and so, I have written to Dr. Damplon, by this mail. Your present time expires about the middle of June and if you cannot be allowed to remain until July without further charges than for the additional month itself, you must leave St. Mary's at the end of your engagement in June. You will therefore apply to Dr. Damplon and be governed by his instructions. At whichever time you may depart, you will be supplied with the necessary funds for the journey, by the College, which I have requested to have added to your Bill, as also the price of any necessary apparel and other things you may get. I shall wish you to come on without any avoidable delays after you once leave the College—taking the rout by the Steamboat down the Chesapeake, that you came last year. Make immediate application to Dr. Damplon upon getting this letter and let me know what he says, that we may be apprised here of your plans and that I may again write you any further instructions that I may think proper for you.

We are all well and desire you to cultivate for each member of this Household those kindly regards, which they all merit by their affection for you—not less than any of them, they are claimed for myself, by

Dear William,

Your affec^t Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

P. S. I hope you will not diminish your observances of respect, but encrease them daily towards your Masters at St. Mary's to the last moment of your residence with them: They deserve your highest gratitude!

[Address:

St. Mary's College
Baltimore Maryland.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HERMITAGE 21st May 1827.

On reaching home last evening I found here the Letters of Mr. McLemore, which I send you. McKenzie met me at Lenox Castle on the Sunday following Rockingham Superior Court. He went on to Caswell with me, and there we entered into an Agreement of Compromise, respecting the Suits in Tennessee. Maj. Owen had come to Hillsboro' at the Superior Court to See me on the Same Subject, and gave me full Power to act in the Business as I might think best, and also agreed that I might appropriate to my own Use all I would make over and above \$10,000. We appointed Mr. McLemore our Agent to compromise, Sell the Lands, receive the Monies etc. The Compromise which I have made with McKenzie renders it necessary for me to get a Deed duly executed, proved and certified, from Maj. Owen, his brother, Sister and Mother, and have it registered in Maury County, Tennessee, during the Summer: And for this Purpose, I must Send down immediately to them. I must try to get Moreau to go; and have written to him to come up this evening or early in the Morning, for the Deed must be found in a *Court of records*. And as Orange County Court Sits on next Week, he can return by the end of the Week and prove the Deed.

The success of this Compromise depends upon the Secrecy and Skill with which it shall be managed. We have a very large Claim for rents and Profits which we wish to adjust in the first place. Maj. Owen has made two Contracts for Parts of the Land, which I wish to get rescinded or modified. All would be defeated, if a Suspicion were afloat that a Compromise was made.

When Mr. Rainy set off in March I directed him to return by the 1st June, expecting that I might be able to go to Tennessee in that Month. Mr. McLemore has prevailed on him to remain and wait for my Instructions. This renders it necessary that I should get the Deed from the Messrs. Owens and forward it with my Instructions, without delay. Mr. Russell will Set out for Tennessee about the Time Moreau will return from Wilmington, and by him I can forward the Papers.

I am sorry to tell you that my Ankle is very little better. It has twice been nearly well in appearance, Since I saw you, and twice broken out, and exhibited as bad appearances as ever. It now looks like being well in a few weeks: Yet I have no Hope that it will get well for many months. My foot has been swelling for five weeks; it is highly inflamed, and Matter is forming in it. This may relieve my Ankle, but an Ulcer on the foot will be as troublesome as one on my ankle. I have suffered Severely from the Rheumatism, for the last ten days. My right arm is much affected and frequently I can Scarcely write. I lost all my Circuit except Orange, Rockingham, Caswell and Person, and in these counties, the impression being so strong that I could not attend the Courts regu-

larly, I had no Applications or new Business, except in this way, *that if I could attend Court, I was to be employed.*

Have I acted wisely or foolishly in becoming a Candidate for Congress?¹ Notwithstanding many Solicitations, I had not the Slightest Idea of becoming a Candidate, Untill I saw Dr. Webb at Person. He advised me to be a Candidate Saying that he knew the Condition of my Constitution well; that it was greatly shattered and could not be restored, amidst the Labours of the Bar, that a Seat in Congress would give me rest, which I must have, before I can get well. Yancy Stated to me what might possibly be Saved in the Money way, And I thought that I could not do better than become a Candidate. How it may turn out, I cant tell. It may all do pretty well, if my Friend Mr. McLemore can turn the McKenzie business to good Account. I find, that one thing is lamentably true: Altho I feel and look to be in as good health as ever I have no strength, a little exertion exhausts me.

How are you? Will you be at home next Week? My wife has been much indisposed ever since I left home. My love to Anne and the Family.
Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

To William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH—June 6th 1827.

My Dear Son.

I received last week a letter from Dr. Dampson and one from yourself. I am sorry to hear of the misfortune which has befallen your ankle; but we entertain a hope that the injury is not serious and will not be lasting, which hope is much strengthened by your remarks in the letter your Mother got from you by today's stage. Dr. Dampson expresses for you the most earnest solicitude—nay, the warmest affection. I am pleased to say and you ought to be proud to hear, that he mentions your progress and attention to your studies with much commendation and expresses so much pleasure in being your Instructor that he grieves at parting from you. He says, your future course at College and in active life will be most correct and prosperous, if his prayers for you can avail aught: In a word, his feelings towards you seem to be entirely paternal and claim a return of profound reverence on your part and that affection which ought to characterise the conduct and fill the bosom of every youth, who is a lover of learning, towards his attached and successful Teachers. I trust you will not omit any opportunities of testifying towards Dr. Dampson and all and every of your other Masters the good will I speak of and a due sense of the obligation you are under to them. Little as thoughtless persons might regard such offerings of the heart,

¹Murphey was defeated for Congress by D. L. Barringer, the sitting member.

they will be highly appreciated and your motives properly estimated by those under whose care you have so long been and the advantage of whose precepts and examples you are about losing. Besides, the absence of those qualities of the heart which would prompt such deportment would do you more discredit than to witness it would be painful to the teachers. An ungrateful Pupil is next in the scale of demerit to the thankless son!

I am about setting off in the morning on a long journey of business to South Carolina, which will keep me from home nearly four weeks, I fear. This makes it necessary that I should reply immediately to your letters.

I have received the assent of Dr. Damplon, that you should remain at College until the Commencement. It is my particular wish that you should, inasmuch as the Exercises upon that occasion and preparatory to it are of much importance, as well as all the other parts of the Collegiate regulations—I desire that you may be irregular in nothing, but patiently and duly perform all the functions incident to your Station. Dr. Damplon accords with me. Even had I differed from him, deference to his opinion would induce me to decline yielding to your request to leave Baltimore at an earlier day. I think it best for you to stay and therefore must request you to do so.

I should have no objection, but for the *delay* to your coming through Washington City and Richmond, should you be able to put yourself under the charge of some gentleman of discretion, that would accompany you as far as Petersburg. But as you will be at home for only a short time at any rate and the expense and danger of traveling by Land, will be much greater, especially with your trunks of Clothing and books, I should prefer the Steam boat down the Bay. If however you can get on your baggage by Land safely and without charge and can engage a pilot, I would not positively refuse my permission. I leave it therefore to your own wishes, under the foregoing provisoes and conditions; and I shall expect you to comply with them.

You are at liberty to get such additions to your Wardrobe, as will be required for Commencement and the present summer. You grow too fast to think of laying in apparel for the future. Besides I have no money now to spare.

I will not do you the injustice of omitting the remark, that your last three or four letters to the family have been written in a *worse hand* than usual; which denotes a carelessness and hurry, that are reprehensible. You must not call this *harshness*: What would you have me do? Should I praise your *faults*? It would neither be candid nor affectionate; and I should little deserve the name of Father, much less of a good Father, were I so wanting in my duty as to keep my son ignorant or blind to his defects and fail to point out the way of amendment. It is for you to profit from the lessons, it is my part, to impart them. If obeyed, they

will render us both happy; if disregarded, the consequences will be baneful to each of us, but assuredly, most ruinous to yourself.

I fasten the fondest hopes of enjoying in your conversation and the goodness of your heart, much very much of the purest pleasure: Do not disappoint us; but come home to your Parents such as they picture you to themselves and such as you will believe they desire their son to be. Then you will entitle yourself to the Esteem as well as fondness of,
Dear William,

Your father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

P. S. I hope to be back by the first of July. I shall then expect letters from you, explaining all your plans etc., etc.—So that I can answer them and express my opinions of them. Besides one to me, you will of course, keep up your correspondence with the other members of the family.

Present to Dr. Damplon the warmest expressions of my respect and of the obligations I am under to him.

Poor little Betty, who talks a great deal about her Brother Willey and the pretty frock you brought her, has been very sick with a fever and *Reumatism*: She is better today; and your Mother and I hope will soon recover: she is still very poorly—Your poor Mother has a sad time of it; for Betty is fretful and your Mama has a dreadful bile on her arm, which makes nursing extremely painful—What do all children owe to a good Mother! I trust Betty will never forget how many laborious hours and sleepless nights she has caused her Mother and will reward her for all her Vigils and sufferings by a dutiful filial piety. Do you retain any traces in your memory of any debt you ever contracted to your Parents or do you consider them paid?

[Address: St. Mary's College
Baltimore Maryland.]

From Weldon N. Edwards.

WARREN 10th June 1827.

Some weeks ago I met with a waggoner from Orange by the name, I think, of George Loyall, who said he would be willing to be employed about here. The waggoner employed to haul my corn from Weldon has disappointed me. Will you do me the favor to know from Mr. Loyall if he would come down in about a fortnight, and undertake the Job, on the following terms.—He to find himself and Team every thing—to make two trips or loads in 6 or seven days—haul 14 or 15 Barrels of shell'd corn a Load—and to receive as compensation at the rates of one hundred dollars for thirty days. These were the terms stated to him.

The distance is about forty miles, certainly not much over—if any,—the quantity to be hauled 70 or 80 Barrels. Should Mr. Loyall not be convenient, any other waggoner would answer. You will oblige by informing me as soon *as possible* of the likelihood of obtaining a waggoner.

This not being in the line of your pursuits, perhaps my old acquaintance Mr. Kirkland would attend to it for me. With my Respects to him, you will please make this request, if not altogether convenient to yourself.

I beg you will excuse the liberty I take, and accept as an apology the scarcity of waggons and still greater scarcity of corn.

Please present my kind regards to Mrs. R. and be assured of my continued good will and Esteem

[Address: Hillsboro, Orange Cty.]

To William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH—July 5th 1827.

My dear Son—

Yesterday your letter written on the 29th of June was received by me. I am gratified that you have been exerting yourself to stand for high distinctions upon the Greek and Latin Classicks. I hope, your competition will be successful and that you will thus have an opportunity of retiring from St. Mary's with an honorable reputation. I do not perceive a reason why you should not have made a similar effort in the French Class. I have been sorry to observe for some months past, that nothing or very little dropt from you in your letters upon the subject of that language and the acquirement of a knowledge of it by you. I shall forever regret your supineness in this respect, if it exist; for you will never have so good an opportunity in future of learning it, either in its grammar or pure pronunciation, as you have had. It has become a necessary part of polite as well as Scientific education and ought not to have been neglected by you. You will the more especially experience the mortification of being imperfect in this Study, because there is now a Professorship of it at Chapel-Hill, so that your proficiency will soon be tested there and should it be found inadequate to the reputation of your present school or your own capacity, the reproach will be correspondently severe. I shall therefore be anxious on this score, until upon our meeting you can, by the result of your examination, dispel my apprehension. I am desirous that your admission at our University should be honorable and your standing while there, continually good. But I have no wish to push you into a Class for which you are not prepared, as my object is not to get you through the College, but that you should perfectly acquire and thoroughly understand all the subjects there taught. I shall therefore leave to the judgment of the Masters there the disposition to be made

of you—praying you, whatever it may be, to avail yourself of all its advantages by diligent Study and deliberate reflection.

There are parts of your letter which afford me but little pleasure, other than that derived from the opportunity afforded to me by them of preventing you falling into any improper errors. You will here see, how true the advice I have often given you, is—that it is better to inform your friends before hand of your views than leave it to time or accident to disclose to them your actions—which, *perhaps* may merit and receive their approbation and, if so, will—but may, on the other hand, justly expose you to reprehension and, *if so,—then you can't help it.* You will at once be conscious that these remarks have allusion to your project of giving to your young friends a Dinner at *Barnum's*. I feel indeed some satisfaction that you have referred this plan of yours to my judgment; and since you have done so, I shall expect you very implicitly to abide by it. I have no hesitation in directly expressing myself entirely against it. It is unusual, imprudent and highly improper. I am far from wishing my children to be deficient in reciprocating the kind attentions of their friends or to be so penurious in expenditures, at proper ages, as to expose themselves to the imputation of meanness. But I would wish them to avoid, likewise, temptations to profusions and all the allurements to pleasures unbecoming their ages and situation in life. You may owe your friends much for the politeness they and their friends have shown you and I hope you deeply appreciate their kindness, will long remember it and cherish a regard for them. Is this the way to repay it? Surely not. A Second thought will convince even yourself of it. Suppose I were myself to visit Baltimore, be kindly received and politely entertained by gentlemen of the City: Would it be expected or tolerated that I was to cancel or to meet their civilities by the offer of a Tavern entertainment? Such a thing was never heard of, and, upon the repetition of my visit, I should be properly neglected for entertaining such poor notions of the Hospitality of Gentlemen and making such ignoble returns for it. The true sense of their regard for me would best be shewn by serving them whenever in my power and, should an opportunity ever offer, by opening to them *my House* and making them wellcome to *my Home*. If this is a just view in regard to *me*, how much stronger it is, when applied to yourself, a student and a boy of less than fifteen! Taverns, my Son, are dangerous places: They afford no Mentor to advise you against evil: They contain every temptation to dangerous excesses, inflaming the blood and mind and inciting to riots, broils, and sinful dissipation: The Publican cherishes not prudence in his Guest, even his young one, indeed he lives and thrives not more upon your necessities, than your imprudence and hence, is always ready to pander to all youthful follies. Beware through life of such haunts: At all events, while under my care, you shall not be destitute of either my advice or my authority, as far as my situation will enable me to enforce it, to restrain you from such resorts. I condemn therefore the whole scheme, in per-

empty terms and command you to think no more of it. Treat your friends with cordiality, invite them to consider you, should they ever be thrown into your part of the Country as their sure friend and help and part from them with emotions of regret and tenderness,—but do not debase the sacred name of friendship by a Tavern Row nor degrade yourself by grovelling dissipation.

Had I not received your letter, I should today have written to you upon the subject of your *Rout* home. I think upon reflection, that you had better come directly home by the way of the Steam-boat down the Bay. It is more expeditious, safer and cheaper and will allow you to keep the charge of your own baggage. Besides these considerations, it will enable you most probably to fall in with your Sister *Catherine*, who has accompanied Mrs. *Anderson* on a journey to the Northward this summer. Mrs. *Anderson's* health is not good and she is advised to Sea-bathing. She will spend a few days at Old Point Comfort, thence proceed by Baltimore and pass the balance of her time at Philadelphia. They left us the day before yesterday and hope to be in Baltimore by the day of your Commencement. If they fail in this, however, you must not wait as their movements are uncertain and they may not be there in some days afterwards. I wished to afford to your Sister the protection of so good and fine a Woman as Mrs. *Anderson* on this trip, that she might now see something of the best parts of her Country and most improved society, as she might never again have another opportunity to which your Mother and I would willingly trust her. I hope you and she will meet.

I hope you will make no unnecessary stops on the road, but come on with as much expedition as necessary Rest will admit of; as we shall all be on tip toe to see you and, at most, but a few days will be allowed you at home.

Dr. *Damplon* will supply [you] with the money necessary and defray your travelling expenses. I send herein Twenty Dolls more to clear you of Mr. *Kelly* and other creditors and get such little presents for those at home as you may think may make your coming more acceptable to our small fry. Do not buy many clothes; for a late regulation at Chapel Hill establishes a plain uniformity of cheap apparrell for the Boys there and will make an extensive wardrobe useless.

I shall write to Dr. *Damplon*, towards whom I entertain sentiments of respect and gratitude, in which, I hope, you join. Treat him with the utmost deference, for I am sure you owe it to him.

Betty's health is improved and improving. The rest of the family is tolerably well. We all cherish for you the tenderest regard and pray that you may experience the Choicest of the Divine Blessings.

[Address: St. Mary's College
Baltimore Maryland.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH—July 25th 1827.

My Dearest Child—

We have had no tidings of your party since the letter written by Mrs. Anderson to Walker¹ the morning you left Petersburg. Your own letter, written the day before, I am your debtor for. I thank you for it and shall endeavour to square the account with you. I can't but express my regret, that you did not visit Mrs. May and get acquainted with her husband. I am sure you would have been well rewarded by her very polite hospitality and by his kind, sincere and intelligent conversation. Besides, Mr. May is one of my earliest, most attached, most tried and valued friends: and the Good Book somewhere says "My friend and my father's friend will I never forget." I hope upon your return, you will find an opportunity or make an occasion to be at their house. I wish it as well because I am certain it will be an agreeable visit to you, as because I regard such respect shewn to the old intimates of one's parents as a sort of pious duty in itself, in no small degree partaking of that which consists in honoring the Father and the Mother.

Today I saw Mr. Richard Alexander, of Salisbury, for a moment, while the stage was changing horses. He is just from a long trip to New England. By him we learn that you were well and safely arrived in Philadelphia and that your Brother William was deposited in good health in Raleigh. Mr. Alexander says that he did not get acquainted with you, but that he saw Mrs. Anderson and her young Ladies in Philadelphia. They were pointed out to him walking in the Street. He was however hurried home and could not call on you. He fell in with your Brother and was accompanied by him to our Metropolis, where he was detained by Judge Badger, in order that he might come up in our Carriage when it carried his Mother down. The old Lady guarded by Susan and Moreau, took up the line of march at day-break today; so that we look for William Friday evening at furthest. I hope you and he met, so as to exchange greetings and that by him we shall be informed of the impressions wrought on you by all the interesting persons and novel spectacles encountered by you in this your first and perhaps last long travel.

Our Family affairs are much as usual. The health of all the household is good—that of myself being much improved within a few days. I hope you always felt a sincere concern in the welfare of your neighbours; but now, I am sure that with the present distance between you and us, nothing relating to anybody in Hillsborough can be indifferent to

¹Walker Anderson, 1805-1852, a graduate of the University in the class of 1819, was at the head of a girls' school in Hillsboro. He became a professor in the University in 1833. Studying law, he moved to Florida, where he became chief justice of the Supreme Court. He was an intimate friend of the family.

you. As far as I can recollect therefore I detail the news. There is, in the first place, no serious illness amongst us. Mrs. Walker Anderson is not very well, as her husband told us at Church a Sunday, but I do not suppose she labors under very material indisposition, because the Ladies visit her and meet with her accustomed hospitable attentions. . . . One of Mr. Duncan Cameron's men was at Mr. Kirkland lately and said they were all well there. Mr. Bennehan will pass here in three or four days on his way to South Carolina. My worthy friend and pupil Mr. P. Winston¹ hath been sorely afflicted by a bilious attack for nearly ten days. He is very much reduced, is weak and looks badly. He is now out of danger and goes about a little between our house and your grandpa's, where he chiefly spends his time. To gossip to the full length, I must not omit that Sally Nash hath another Cousin in a young daughter of her Aunt Witherspoon, who is pretty well, tho' she hath been extremely ill. *The schools* are extremely full and additions are almost daily making to one or the other of them. Mr. Green's² edifices in Thomas' "Woods" are in rapid progress. I expect he will be well settled in them by winter. He left us in the stage this morning for Salisbury by order of the Bishop whom he is to meet there in the discharge of the holy function of Consecrating a new church for Mr. Wright about a dozen miles off in the Country. Tell Mrs. Anderson, I wish she would without delay remit to Walker her positive injunctions to resume the office of Lay reader in our Church; and in case she refuse, then I assume the judicial authority of imposing on her my command that she forthwith *teach* her Son's Successor, *how to read*. Last Sunday morning was my first attendance upon this gentleman: He had selected a sermon of which I could just comprehend enough to convince me it was well conceived and well written, so as to make my regret complete, that I could not understand the whole of so excellent a discourse: But I could only catch indistinctly a part of, maybe every other sentence. We all consider ourselves happy in having prayer books before us—so that we *can't* lose the morning service! Don't understand any part of this in an illnated way. I have not the least harm against this young Candidate for orders; nor hath a person living in the place. I merely mean to express the opinion that a gentleman ought to read *tolerably* before he undertakes to do so to a large assemblage and periodically; and the hope, that some of our friends, who can make free with this gentleman, will use some arguments to induce vigorous attempts, on his part, at *improvement*.

We look for large arrivals of gay people from the East—that is, it is said so, by some hoped, and by others feared. Mrs. Washington (late Miss Bond) and her sister and Miss Mary and Miss Betsy Ashe came up the other day—the first has gone back, the others remain. Today the elder Mr. Hawks and Miss Hawks came in the stage from Newbern:

¹Patrick Henry Winston of Rockingham County, later reporter of the Supreme Court.

²Rev. William Mercer Green, rector of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church.

We have just heard—and, on my part, with sincere lamentation of the death of Mrs. Francis L. Hawks. I suppose the news of it hath already reached you.

Sally Nash and Margaret Burgwyn came up last week, to inquire whether we had heard from you and how you were. I sent some messages to you by Sally; but she said, indeed she didn't intend to write to you, before she got a letter herself—that she did not know where to address you and that if she did, you were so poor a correspondent that she should not expect an answer and therefore she intended to make sure by waiting for the first letter. Knowing you so well, I commended Sally highly. I always thought very well of her; but now I am pleased to see that to intelligence and sweetness of temper she adds a just pride of character and prudence in laying out her favors. I think, in plain words, that you ought by your frequent letters to your young friends here to shew them that your regard for them at home was not mere profession and that new faces and strange sights can't make you forget old friends.

Write often to us at home, at all events. Your last letter needed no apologies, tho' I dont pretend to say it might not have been better. Nevertheless, I had rather the space filled up by the excuses should be occupied by any other matter. Indeed with a little attention and *such industry* as will induce you to *begin letters in time to finish without hurry*, you *would* write (as you *could*, from a like cause, do other things) very prettily.

I need not inform you how much you owe Mrs. Anderson nor how much she is regarded by your Mother and me. I am sure you cannot treat her but with filial attention, deference and duty. We send our love to her and our kindest remembrance to Mr. William and Miss Mary Ann: For yourself, my dear Catherine, receive the affectionate blessing of a Mother and of

Your Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

Miss Catherine Ruffin
Philadelphia.

From B. McLaughlen to William K. Ruffin.

BALTIMORE August 20th 1827.

In looking over the paper perchance I cast my eye over a list of the letters remaining in the post office, uncalled for. On calling for it, I was in haste to open it, and in doing so, I found far above my most sanguine expectation, that it was from you, because thinking of the old saying "*Omnia tempus Habent*, I did not expect to have received any news from you until the usual salutation of your friends was over which I supposed would not be finished for at least two weeks after your return home. Your gallantry among the ladies, I hope, will prove of some service to you as ladies company generally improves a gentleman, and

at the same time corrects the lewdness of their disposition. Since you left us I have not been often in their company, but still the few visits which I have paid them have been of essential benefit to me. You say that "I must be satisfied with a short letter" one word itself would have been sufficient to have let me know that you had not forgotten me. The Adams convention has laid before the public one of the most elegant pieces of composition that has been presented for a great lapse of time, it was written by R. H. Goldsborough¹ an inhabitant of Frederick county Maryland. If you recollect, there was a letter which Carter Beverly Esqr. brought before the public a few months ago, as an *affirmative proof* of the Coalition of Adams and Clay, he mentioned that Genl. Jackson would produce his authority should it be required; the Gen. has now come before the public and said that he *only thought* Mr. Clay was at the Head of it. His authority he has produced and it appears that it is a Mr. Buchanan a representative in Congress from the State of Pennsylvania, a warm friend of Genl. Jackson. This Mr. Buch. has denied positively that he ever held any such conversation with him and at the same time produced before the public the only conversation that he ever held with the Gen. on the subject of the presidential elections. Should you see the letter of Mr. Buchs you will no longer trouble yourself about the Election of Jackson, his Cause is bad his Friends are deserting him, and during another 4 years the Hermitage will be Honoured with the company of the *disappointed Hero of Orleans*, and as our Friend Tom Bryan says, in speaking of Adams in a letter which he addressed to me some time since "his sinking cause needs assistance." These words though made suitable to Adams, are far more applicable to Jackson whose ground is fast falling away in our City. This question with your permission, I will resume in my next. Your Health I hope still remains the same as when you left here for home. We are all well here. Tom sends his love to you and wishes to hear from you very much. Answer this letter as soon as you receive it and you will satisfy the anxiety of your
 much respected friend,

[Address: Chapel Hill University
 N. Carolina.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 20th Augt. 1827.

* * * * *

When will you leave home for your Circuit? If you will be at home, I propose to go to Hillsboro on Saturday next or early on Sunday Morning, So as to spend a few Hours with you. I do not recollect your Circuit, but believe it is the Cape Fear.

¹Robert H. Goldsborough of Maryland, 1779-1836.

I hope my Health is so far reestablished that I can resume the Labours of my Profession. The exercise during the late Canvass has certainly improved my Health. If I should be able to undergo the Fatigues of the Bar, I shall regard the Loss of my Election as fortunate. I regret the Loss on Account of my Friends, who Selected me to beat Genl. Baringer. I am truly sorry at their Disappointment. But it would not, perhaps, please them to know that were it not for their Account, I should prefer my present Situation. I have already ceased to think of the election, and have turned my attention to my Business. But I am worn out and so is my poor Wife, by a Crowd of People ever since I came home. We seldom sit down to eat or lie down to Sleep, without having at least half a dozen. I shall rest, work, go to Court, and She to See Cornelia, who is very unwell and has been for Six Weeks past.

Since the change of the Weather 48 Hours ago, the Rheumatism has visited all my joints. I feel stiff, but do not suffer much pain. I pray to God that I may not Suffer more.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

From M. C. Jenkins to William K. Ruffin.

BALTIMORE Sept 11th, 1827.

* * * * *

Now let me say a word or two of the Election. It is my firm impression that the cause of the hero is daily gaining ground in Baltimore and that his majority in the city will be a triumphant one. We have got up a grand barbecue to be given on the memorable 12th of September and to be called the Jackson Barbecue. It is to be conducted with the strictest decorum. There are to be 700 marshals on horseback. The Honorable and venerable Alexander McKim a member of congress from Baltimore during the late war is to preside. A gun is to be fired to notify the commencement of the festival immediately after which the venerable president is to give the health of Genl. Jackson. Then come 3 cheers for the old general from the collected multitude who will at the same time quaff their bumpers to his health. An oration is then to be delivered, it is said By McMahan which is to be followed by a song sung by a stout, brazen-lunged Stentorian journeyman. The name of the song is "Hickory wood." Thus much have I heard from the officious tongue of Rumour as also that the famous Harris' letter is to be read at least so much of it as relates to the 12th of September. Then comes the repast. Taney, Heath, some very respectable visitors from Frederick and all the respectable portion of the resident Jacksonians will be on the ground! indeed the whole body of the people will be there and that day I think will seal the fate of Adams in this city. So much for politics. I was exceedingly delighted with the address of your uncle's of which

you were pleased to send me a copy. It displayed profound historical research and he was peculiarly happy in varying his description of the distinguished characters of your state. He seems to have studied all the different shades of their respective intellects and while he clearly points out the difference of their mental endowments we scarcely know (when with him we have summed up their intellectual powers) which one if it were in our power, we would prefer being. Accept my best thanks for the pamphlet. I certainly regretted the loss of Judge Murphey's election, as much as you could, for I had always heard of him as being talented and patriotic and these are the qualifications which should characterize every representative of a free nation. I am unwillingly constrained to close my communication. There are 2 girls up stairs with peaches for sale and to save my life I cant get rid of them as fast as they go out Tiernan entices them back and sets them on me says I am very religious just for the sake of having me vexed by these lewd wenches. I am sorry that I could not sooner answer your truly well-come favour. I have given you as early a reply as it was possible for me to give and I suppose you ask no more of me who no matter how long he might neglect writing, would not the less on that account cherish the memory of one of his fondest school-mates, a school-mate on whom I never think with other sensations than those of delight. believe me My dear Ruffin

Your most devoted and inviolable friend

[Address: Chapel Hill N. C.]

From B. McLaughlen to William K. Ruffin.

Sept 18th 1827.

Supposing that you might require an acknowledgement for the pamphlet which you sent me I commence though with no other topick than that afforded by the present. There is certainly a great deal of history contained in the oration and that too of the most important class, the rise and progress of the North Carolinian literature, and also the Characters and reputations of some of your ablest Lawyers, in the description of all of which, the orator displays a deep research into the history of his own state. I would, however, say that before an assemblage of young persons, his thoughts might have been expressed in more elegant language, though it contains a sufficiency of conciseness and intelligibility. I hope you are pleased with your change it may perhaps tend to your own happiness, your health I hope is good. . . . We are all well here and every thing is going on very tranquilly and peacably, the college has met with the anticipated change and in all probability it will

benefit the institution. Messrs. Wheeler Eccleston Church Larkin L'homme Randarme Elder and Kelly are in the house and all the old folks have gone over into the Seminary.

Wheeler president
Eccleston vice-
Larkin }
Lhomme } prefects

Elder Book Keeper
Randarme Jimmy More.

I have been promoted in every thing this year my classes $8\frac{1}{2}$ 2nd Greek, $9\frac{1}{2}$ Geometry, $10\frac{1}{2}$ 1st french, 3 1st Latin. My desk in the study room is your old one, My bell in the domitory is David Barry's, My seat at Prayers on the first Settee, my place in the refectory the one I had last year, and I have also the same place in Church. My health is as usual very good. The boys here are all well and request to be remembered to their old friend. I must now close hoping that your next may be equally as long as this, give me an account of all your transactions at College.

[Address: Chapel Hill N. C.]

From José Farrés to William K. Ruffin.

BALTIMORE Sept: 18th, 1827.

During this long interval my affections for you have almost vanished. In commencing to write you, I have scarcely nothing to discuss, as you know that the boys here, hear very little from town. The only subject of conversation now, is the same old tale, the presidential election, and that you know, I never talk about; however, I would say that they had a barbacue on the 12th of Sept. on which occasion his honour G. Winchester Esq. and Mr. McMahon pronounced orations relating to the presidential election on the Jackson side. At 3 o'clock on the same day the visitors partook of the sweets of 5 bulocks which were prepared by the College butcher.

[Address: Chapel Hill University
North Carolina.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

ROCKINGHAM—September 25th 1827.

My dearest Child—

The dutiful regards which prompted your kind and first letter, which I received last week at Anson, should not have been thus long unacknowledged, had my official engagements there allowed me more leisure

than just sufficed for the writing of a letter to your Mother. That is an office of preeminent obligation, which I do not permit anything to prevent the performance of. Judging her by myself, I am flattered by the hope that, when absent, nothing is so consolatory to her feelings as to receive letters from me—the testimonials of affectionate remembrance and regards. I know you will not think hard of your claims on me being postponed in deference to hers. Nevertheless I would have you assure yourself that I do not willingly evince toward any one of my family, not even the youngest of the little ones, any neglect that shall tend to create the belief in their minds of my indifference towards them nor lay the foundation of a plausible pretext on their parts for habits of carelessness and inattention to their friends.

I am glad that Mr. Rencher gave so good an account of me at home. All I regret about it is, that my bosom responds, in experience, so little to the reality of the picture exhibited by him. I am *not* happy and cannot be so, from home and with so long a separation from its dear inmates, before me. I try indeed to be so and as seldom despond as I can help. But with all my efforts I often sink under the sense of present privation or gloomy anticipations. It is a common effort of the unhappy to be restless, merry and, sometimes boisterous. They know little of the human heart, who can not distinguish between a happy heart and a merry mood. I doubt whether they are seldom found together. *Cheerfulness* is the characteristic of the secure possession of those enjoyments which satisfy us: a cheerful and a *contented* mind are expressions mostly synonymous, while it is almost certain that he who is "in the cellar" this hour remains there until by a tremendous leap he places himself in the next, on the pinnacle of the house. To these inequalities of temper, humour or by what other term it may be properly designated, I have been all my life more or less subject. I fear that age has not diminished the infirmity and that experience, instead of correcting, serves to encrease it by adding the despair of amendment. One thing I sometimes dwell on with all the fond hopes, of which my heart is capable; and while it possesses my mind, I feel indeed happy. It is, the trust that my children, with feelings better attuned than mine, will by the cultivation of good tempers, and the possession of a steady sobriety of purpose in the paths of usefulness and religion, become themselves happy and supply to me all those consolations, of which the consciousness of my own deficiencies bereaves me—In certain parts of my duties I do not feel that I am wanting. I trust that I have a good conscience, so far as relates to the claims on me of my family: I am sure that my children have no just right to complain that I do not love them as I ought or that I have failed in any reasonable endeavour to provide for them as I ought. My complaint is with myself, for leaving my mind so little time for its cultivation and to my heart so small a period to soften it by devotion and enlarge in its charities. In return for all my labors for them, I only ask of my children to become useful and happy. In that, my happiness and your Mothers are essen-

tially involved. Here allow me to remark, that I cannot learn from your letter a single thing you have been engaged in since your return home. I do not doubt but your time has been usefully occupied; but I like to see that fondness for ones pursuits which produces a constant dwelling of the mind on them and makes one in all one says and does drop hints or signs of the things that engage the attention. Thus: that by a figure or a casual quotation one can, as by accident, discover what book you have been reading, or what good company you have been in—not omitting some sign of *work*, that one may see whether you are *earning* your daily bread—It is now time, my dear daughter, that you were framing to yourself some rules of regular employment and laying down a system by which your time can be employed beneficially as well to your own mind, as to the relief of the drudgery and domestic cares that have so long engrossed every moment of your Mother's life. By such means, you will become sensible of the true ends of our existence here, of the best modes of engaging our minds and of qualifying yourself for the relations in life which future events may create for you. Your own experience must by this time have suggested doubts of the propriety of some former habits and therefore I spare myself the pain of setting them down. The counsel of your own bosom, if attended to, will be far more salutary, than one of my ungainly lectures or stern admonitions. All I ask of you is, to listen to the voice of the monitor within and upon the footing of filial deference and docility, request, in cases of doubt, the opinion of a mother, always candid, always faithful. For *Rules*, I prescribe only, *Rise early—Never be idle*: “Why sit ye here idle, all the day long”? is a solemn question, that was asked by one of authority. The excuse, as in all cases from the time of the fall of man, was then ready “because no man will hire us.” It was false then, as it is now and ever will be. There is always something useful to be done. The method of doing it too, the same good book prescribes: “Whatever your hands find to do, that do ye with all your might”! The meaning is, devote yourself, engaged with all your attention and affections in whatever employments your circumstances make necessary or your promises impose on you: Duty imposes diligence and our own happiness is the fruit—for unless we make our pursuits agreeable under the sense of duty, all labor is irksome. I did not intend a lecture this time; but find my old habit inveterate. I am sorry for it for I fear, it will scare off one of my correspondents at home; which would be truly a loss to me. They are few enough now, considering that I have no solid pleasure on the Circuit, but that derived from reading letters from my family. A single one from any one of you is worth a dozen *Highland Fiddlers* and one from your Mother is a treasure far above the Straspeys and Reels, that ever Scotch Fiddle, or bag-pipe played or highland mon or queen lass jumped after. For news: There was an *Assise-ball* last week at Wadesborough; to which I was, of course invited and, of course like-

wise, did not go. It ended pleasantly enough, I learn—that is to say, with half a dozen bloody noses and black eyes!

One sight I have really seen worth a long ride: A spare day at Montgomery enabled me to visit *the Narrows of the Yadkin*: I do not attempt a description of it, at which I have not very graphic powers; but I mention it now, that you may not let me forget, when I get home, to describe it to you to the best of my ability. In the meantime you will find in Mr. Jefferson's notes on Virginia his delineation of the passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge—to which this Phenomenon in No. Ca. is not dissimilar.

I shall endeavour to visit Fayetteville on Saturday on my way to Robeson Court. I wish very much to see your Aunt; and shall also write to your dear Mother from thence, a thing which I scarcely know whether to designate as my chief duty in present circumstances, or highest pleasure: it is so much of both. Embrace and kiss her for me and bless all your brethren—write to me all they do and especially, all they say about me. Such things go to the bottom of my heart. I am entirely well and learn that the Country is generally healthy. God bless you, my dear child and cherish you in all goodness!

Miss Catherine Ruffin

Hillsborough No. Ca.

From Henry M. Miller.

RALEIGH October 28th 1827.

My Dear Sir.

* * * * *

I neglected to inform you after the sale in July that I had purchased old Aunt Eve for you. I was conscious of your wishes to accomodate the old lady for her faithful services and was consequently induced to bid more for her than her value. Archey bid for her and she had told me of her unwillingness to live with him and I myself felt a very strong disposition to see her comfortably settled for the few remaining years, and acting under that excitement may have given more than you would have done had you been present (\$50). I am therefore perfectly willing to pay any portion towards the purchase you may name. She has called on me this evening and desired me to beg of you to take her home before the commencement of the Session.

I will take the liberty before I close to mention to you my intention to become a candidate for the vacancy occasioned by the death of Genl. Covington¹ late principal Clerk to the Senate and ask of you to mention

¹Benjamin H. Covington of Richmond had been a member of the House of Commons in 1785 and 1786, and had been continuously clerk of the Senate since 1821. Miller did not succeed him, the position falling to James W. Clark.

it, while on your Circuit, in the manner you may think best calculated to promote my election. The appointment being one which from its nature must be made very soon after the meeting of the Legislature, it seems to me to be a matter of much importance that my intention should be made known before-hand, and yet I feel some delicacy in mentioning it by letter direct to the members themselves. It is therefore that I make the request of you If not incompatible with your duties I shall esteem it a favour to have your assistance in the attainment of this object. In hopes of hearing from you as soon as convenient I am with sentiments of much regard

Your friend and obt

H. M. MILLER.

[Address: Wilmington N. C.]

From John R. Buie.

LAUREL HILL RICHMOND COUNTY, No. CA., [November, 1827]

Judge Ruffin

My Dear Sir.

The object of this Letter is to inform your Honour that I am a Candidate for the office of Clerk of the Superior Court of this County, vacant by the death of Genl. B. H. Covington:¹—I will briefly state to you some of the principal reasons that has been the means of Preventing me from getting a stronger recommendation from the Bar of my County—in the first Place I was not apprised that there was a vacancy untill It was told to me on Tuesday after the Generals death when on my way to Rockingham to attend the Session of the County Court. On my arrival there I understood that E. Love,² J. B. Long, J. P. Leak, Col. Stephen Wall³ and John MacAlister⁴ Senr. were candidates to fill the vacancy and that some of them had sent expresses in every direction to procure the Recommendation of the Bar etc. You will bear in mind that there are no Jury Causes in any County Court, so there were but three of the Bar there say W. F. Leak who lives there and J. Gilchrist and A. Little.⁵ A very short time after my arrival and before I saw either of them Col. Wall and J. P. Leak set off to see your Honour on the

¹Judge Ruffin received a very large number of letters in connection with this appointment. Only a few characteristic ones are printed, but the rest, containing many names, are in the possession of the North Carolina Historical Commission.

²Erasmus Love was a member of the Senate at this time.

³Stephen Wall was a member of the state Senate from 1822-1824.

⁴John McAlister was a member of the House of Commons in 1791 and 1793.

⁵Alexander Little was quite a prominent lawyer of Anson County. He was at this time a member of the House of Commons. He served again in 1831, and as a member of the Senate from 1834 to 1836.

subject of the vacancy and the other persons named (I was told) sent on letters by Messrs Wall and Leak. I was urged and solicited by some of the most respectable citizens of the County to become a candidate for the appointment. I told them it was entirely unnecessary until it would be known what course your Honour would think most advisable to pursue when made known to him by those applicants that there was a vacancy etc. I wish your Honour Distinctly to understand that my business was such that I could not leave the Court House in time to arrive where you were as soon as Messrs Wall and Leak and after mature reflection and Deliberation concluded not to make any Pretensions until it well known what course had been pursued as stated etc. Saturday evening after Court I saw Colo. Wall and Mr. Leak when on their way Home. Colo. Wall told me that your Honour would not make the appointment until Monday of Fayetteville Superior Court and that he requested that that fact should be made known throughout the County and he further stated that he who had the best recommendation from the Bar and the Justices of the Peace of the county etc. would get the appointment. It was then late Saturday evening and a number of them had been some days in nomination and before I could Convey Letters by Mail to the Gentlemen of the Bar Solicitations had reached them from a number of the applicants and it is a fact well known to your Honour that the first application when the person is of a fair character commonly succeeds. I got a recommendation drawn up by one of the most respectable Citizens Col. John Blue,¹ who served a Tour as Capt. During the late war and for a length of time was a Justice of the Peace for this county and a representative to the State Legislature. I got a number of the most respectable Citizens to assign it in this end of the County say at least Two Doz, which you will find among the Recommendatory Documents and of that number there are six Justices of the Peace out of eight in this section of the County (say myself and John Graham). Mr. G. I did not see or of course could have had his name. I mention this fact to show the General Character of the Persons from my Immediate neighbourhood who have been good enough to recommend me. Some of my best friends who would have given me the preference as Members of the Bar Loaned their names to some of the other applicants. Mr. Little did as he informed me (and which I was apprised of ere I was in nomination) gave his name to Mr Love but would *prefer me*. Mr. Kelly says he was under *obligations* to the *Leak family* for past favours and could not without a *Direct Breach of gratitude* refuse his name to Mr. Leak, but considered me well qualified to discharge the Duties [torn] and was sorry that he could not serve me. John A. McRae² says very shortly after the return of the first applicants from Columbus he with a Majority of the Bar of Wadesboro gave their names to J. P. Leak but as merit alone should

¹John Blue had been a member of the Commons in 1811.

²John A. McRae of Anson was a lawyer of some prominence who served in the lower house from 1835 to 1838.

govern he felt but little Interest which of us should succeed. Mr. John Gilchrist I did not receive a Letter from but saw him and he stated that he had written me although his letter miscarried and that he had promised Mr. Leak his support before he went to see your Honour, If he should require it after his return.

Mr. Leak has a strong and influential train of Relatives and connexions and among that number there are two of the Principal atteyes at our Bar. Col. Joseph Pickett of Anson and W. F. Leak of this County his Brother. I think I have given a Train of circumstantial facts which will I trust at once show that it was not in the Power of any Person However meritorious to procure the [torn] recommendation of certain members of the [torn] time circumstances and relative Influence [torn] to prevent it. I hope and trust that I have Presented Documents from Different Persons Members of the Bar and others to shew the estimation in which I have been held where best known. If your Honour should think proper to confer the appointment on me, It will be my Pride and bounden duty to Discharge the Duties of the office with fidelity and zeal and my feeble abilities will be exerted to discharge it to the satisfaction of the Bench Bar and Citizens of the County Generally and also shall expect to give Bond and approved Security for my faithful performance of the Duties of the office according to Law. Permit me now to state one fact. The situation of my Family has been such that I did not leave home since I became a candidate—my wife has been confined to bed ever since I became a candidate with an inflamed Breast and were it not for other urgent business that I have to Fayetteville I would not nor could I consistently leave home at this time and I can further state that no other person Rode or Traveled one step for me to procure the recommendation of any one. I lived in Fayetteville from 1816 to the latter part of 1824 and from Sept 1817 to Decr. 1821 lived with Mr. John N. Dobbin and acted in the Capacity of Counting House Clerk. Mr George McNeill of Fayetteville is well acquainted with my Capacity and General Character and should you think his recommendation not sufficiently strong I beg leave to refer you to those Gentlemen as also to the Gentlemen of the Bar of Fayetteville who do not practice at our court or at least the most eminent of them say Judge Toomer and Messrs. Hewes and Hooper. Perhaps I may have it in my power to have an interview with you before you make the appointment

[Address: Fayetteville N. C.]

*From John D. Eccles.*¹

FAYETTEVILLE November 1827.

Sir,

Mr. Erasmus Love, one of the Candidates for the vacant Clerkship of Richmond Superior Court, informs me that in addition to the Credentials, which he brings from home, he desires some statement from me concerning his qualifications for that Office. Without desiring or intending to advocate the claims of either of the applicants, (with the appointment of any one of the respectable gentlemen whose names are in nomination, I should be well satisfied as a member of Bar,) I feel satisfied that Mr. Love is competent to the discharge of the duties of the Office; and from his having acted as Clerk and Master in that County, I should suppose that he has attained such an acquaintance with business, as to give additional reason to believe that the details of proceedings in Court would be familiar to him.

Thos. Ruffin Esquire.

[Address: Fayetteville]

From John D. Eccles.

FAYETTEVILLE November 1827

To His Honor, JUDGE RUFFIN,—

Sir,—

Mr. James Pickett Leak of Richmond County informed me that he is a candidate for the Clerkship of that County, vacant by the death of Genl. Covington and wishes me as a member of the Bar practising in that Court to give to your Honor some testimonials of his qualifications for the discharge of the duties of that Office.—

Although my personal acquaintance with Mr. Leak is very limited and on that account it is not in my power to speak as from my own knowledge or observation, of his qualifications: yet it gives me pleasure to state from the information received from others on the subject, and on whose statements I place entire reliance that he is every way qualified for the Office, and would discharge the duties of it to the satisfaction of suitors, and gentlemen of the Bar.

[Address: Fayetteville]

¹John D. Eccles was a practicing attorney of Fayetteville, who was at this time, and for two years more, a member of the Commons from the borough. The editor cannot refrain from calling attention to the tact and political wisdom displayed in this letter and the three which follow.

From John D. Eccles.

FAYETTEVILLE November 1827.

Sir,

Mr. John R. Buie of Richmond County is a Candidate for the vacant Clerkship of the Superior Court of that County, and in addition to the testimonials which he brings to support his pretensions, requests me to furnish him with a letter to your Honor, containing my views of his fitness for the Office. This request he informs me is founded on an intimation which he understands was made by you to some of the candidates at a personal interview, that in making the appointment you would not consider as obtrusive the communications of gentlemen of the Bar to you, on the subject. I accordly comply very readily with the request of Mr. Buie, and in justice to him and without any disparagement to the claims of the other candidates state that he is in my opinion well qualified to succeed to the vacant office. Mr. Buie is an active and intelligent magistrate of that County, and possesses in a high degree the respect and confidence of his fellow-citizens.—Besides being an excellent accountant and writing an uncommonly fine hand, he would bring to the situation, correct and business like habits, which would hardly fail to secure a faithful discharge of the duties of the Office. From a long and somewhat intimate acquaintance with Mr. Buie, I am well satisfied that he is in every respect competent to the faithful and correct discharge of the duties of the Office, and think that his appointment would be satisfactory to the County.

To Thomas Ruffin Esquire.

I have long known Mr. Buie and most heartily concur in the facts and opinions herein expressed.

LOUIS D. HENRY.

From John D. Eccles.

FAYETTEVILLE November 1827.

Sir,

Col. Stephen Wall of Richmond County informs me that he is a Candidate for the Clerkship of the Superior Court of that County vacant by the death of Gen. Covington; and requests me to impart to your Honor such information respecting his qualifications as my acquaintance with him will enable me to furnish. In testifying to the fitness of Col. Wall for the appointment which he seeks, any statement which I can make will add nothing I presume to the knowledge possessed by you, of the standing, and character of the gentleman, as derived from general reputation, or founded on a personal acquaintance. Without therefore expecting to communicate any information not already known to your

Honor; but as Col. Wall is pleased to attach some importance to my recommendation, I do very cheerfully state, as a member of the Bar practising in that Court, that he is well qualified for the discharge of the duties of the office, and that in my opinion he would execute the trust reposed in him by the appointment with credit to himself, and acceptance to the public.

To Thomas Ruffin Esquire.

[Address: Fayetteville.]

To William K. Ruffin.

SAMPSON COURT HOUSE, NOVEM 5th 1827.

My Dear Son!

I received your last letter at Wilmington and shall endeavour to make my answer, by its enclosure, more satisfactory to you than I can say yours was to me. You will receive herein the sum of twenty Dollars, asked for by you. I must call your attention to the Law of the college requiring a deposit with Mr. Taylor; of which I, of course, require the observance. You will take his receipt for it and have the whole entered in your accounts, so that the disbursements may be subject alike to the supervision of the Faculty and myself.

There is nothing that my circuit presents of interest to a youth in your situation. I derive therefore from the scenes thro' which I pass no theme for a correspondence with you. Nevertheless I am never at a loss for materials for a letter to your dear Mother or one of our beloved children. My heart is always full towards them and it is both easy and delightful to express to them the deep solicitude I entertain for their welfare and the sincere and tender love I bear them all. For yourself, my son, I entertain the warmest affection, which I trust will encrease with the encrease of your years: That you will by your merits as a Scholar and your purity in morals convert the partiality of the Parent into the just esteem of the friend and finally obtain that perfect confidence of a Father's heart which only the high deserts of a Son, excelling in all that can make a Father proud, can claim or attain. I shall endeavour to devote an hour or two to an interview with you on my journey home. You must not expect more—for, remember every moment you detain me will be a robbery of your Mother, and, much more, will rob me of the comfort of her greetings and company. Nevertheless I shall anxiously listen to the detail from your own mouth of your employments, associations, friendships, progress and standing in class and college. I approve of the rule that seems to have been adopted by you, of preferring a diligent attention to your *Studies* to general readings. My opinion has always been that it was the most improving and safest for boys to make themselves Masters, in the first instance, of the Sciences

in which their Schools instruct. If they have spare time, it will be well indeed to employ that in extending their knowledge by reading History or improve their taste by a perusal of the Standard authors in *Belle Letters* and the best Poets. But nothing will excuse bad scholarship in Class; and general reading to the neglect of the prescribed studies is but a pretence to conceal idleness or an expedient to evade the just imputation of dullness. I likewise advocate the line of reading you have adopted. History and particularly English History is my favorite mental employment. It is immediately connected with all *our* political and civil institutions and connects us directly with all that is great in Science, Literature, Law and Politics in that greatest and most free and virtuous of European Nations. I have not myself read *Dr. Lingood's* Work, but I see it is most favorably spoken of by our most distinguished critics and is very fit to be read (particularly for the sake of the difference in their religious persuasions), either before or after Hume—whose clearness of style, philosophic temper and depth of thought and knowledge of the human character render him, in my opinion, the first of Historians, notwithstanding the tinge of scepticism on the one hand and his attachments to the despotic house of Stewart on the other which may in no slight degree tarnish the repute he would otherwise unqualifiedly enjoyed. Let me conclude by expressing the hope that tho' interruptions may cause you to *lose*, you will not willingly again "*loose*" (the word you use) the thread of *Dr. Lingood*: What you study or read, study or read with close attention—skim over nothing. Dive to the bottom, but never dip merely. I have so often said this to you, that you may well suppose I attach to this rule of study as much importance as Demosthenes did to "Action" in Oratory. You judge right, and I shall continue to impress the same lesson as long as I may think it necessary to offer you my Counsel at all. Upon this head *Monui, Moneo, and iterum, iterum que monebo*.

This letter I shall forward to Fayetteville in the morning by a private hand to be mailed there. I hope it will reach you safely on Saturday—I intend likewise writing home, as I never permit a week to pass without supplying them with a token that I have not forgotten them and desire also to have myself kept in their minds: Nevertheless your Mother knows that I am perfectly well and hope to see her on next thursday fortnight. I offer to Mr. and Mrs. Hooper, thro' you, my most respectful regards and beg you to make Mr. Mitchell sensible that he is everything but indifferent to me.

I am, Dearest William,
Your friend and father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

[Address: Chapel Hill N. C.]

From George E. Spruill.

GREENWOOD [HALIFAX COUNTY]—Nov. 6. 1827.

I have for some time been of opinion that the Laws relating to the Execution and administration requires revision. There has probably not been a session of the Legislature for ten years, in which there have not been several attempts to remedy by separate enactments the real or supposed defects, now existing in this branch of the Law. The ablest and most experienced members, have generally admitted the necessity of many and great alterations in the law on this subject, but have deemed it unwise to attempt the accomplishment of *that*, in one session or rather in a small part of it, which would require the undivided attention of the most learned jurist for many months, if not years. Partial Legislation would but serve to increase the confusion—and augment the uncertainty which are already experienced. It has therefore happened more than once, that some gentleman of eminence has been *requested* to revise the law on this subject. As yet nothing has been accomplished whether from the want of time or inclination in the person requested—or from the loose and indefinite manner in which the subject has been presented—it being impossible to ascertain the *object* of the Legislature or the degree of revision intended from any resolution I have ever seen on the subject.

I have had it in contemplation to make one more effort—and for that purpose, to introduce a Bill, appointing one or more commissioners, with an adequate compensation, to revise the Law on this subject and suggesting as explicitly as possible the *nature* and *degree* of revision intended, as at present advised. The commissioner, I would say, should be authorised to reduce into one statute all the statutes now in force, suggesting the repeal of such parts as might be objectionable, and stating such alterations, additions and improvements as the statute Law might require—and that he be authorised and requested to suggest and state at length such alterations and amendments in the *common law*, so far as it is connected with this subject, as the altered situation and circumstances of our country require. The object would be to have something like a code on the subject not intending that you shall understand me as a *Jeremy Bentham Codifier*. I am a *codifier* only to a limited extent—but I really think a code on this subject might be attempted and executed with great benefit to the public.

I believe there would be no great difficulty in obtaining the assent of the Legislature to a Bill on the plan I have started, if the compensation was not too large. The greatest difficulty I apprehend, will be to obtain the consent of a person properly qualified to undertake the task, for any compensation which may be offered. I have therefore taken the liberty of troubling you with this long letter—in the first place, to learn your opinion of the wisdom and policy of the measure I have suggested—and to know whether you will consent to become Commissioner—if anything shall be attempted and succeed.

I need not say how much your consent to act as commissioner will tend to the success of the measure before the Legislature.

I shall be very glad to hear from you at length on my arrival at Raleigh—and to state whether you think the task can be accomplished as well by one as by two or more—and if you shall refuse yourself (which I sincerely hope you will not do) to name one or more persons that you think would be suitable. Whatever passes between us will be considered as confidential if you wish it.

I hope you have returned from your circuit in good health.

P. S. I shall reach Raleigh the 19 inst.

T. Ruffin Esq.

From William A. Graham.

HILLSBORO'

Novr. 7th, 1827,

Although I am late in writing you I shall endeavour to acquit myself of neglecting your request entirely. It affords me pleasure to state that your family, and friends here are all in good health. You have doubtless heard of the accident which befell Judge Strange's eldest son two or three weeks since. He is thought to be recovering the use of his leg as fast as could be expected, but is extremely cross and irritable from confinement. Hillsboro' has been usually healthy and unusually gay during the present season. Love has had many more votaries than Law. One marriage has been solemnized and divers others are said to be in contract. Others still might have been, had all the overtures been accepted. Most of the visitors from the low country have now left us, and all will probably be gone in a few days more. Of course the reign of frolic and fashion is drawing to a close. It will be prolonged somewhat however by a wedding on this day week, which has been gotten up in great haste and much to the surprise of the *corps* of observers. And to which Dr. Strudwick and Miss Ann Nash are parties. Brother Barringer has gone on a visit to Cabarrus (report says) to endeavour, after the manner of novel heroics to dissipate his thoughts and recover his feelings from the shock which they sustained by the departure of Miss Simpson. Moreau Murphey some time since doffed the gown and assumed the sword, made an expedition through the neighboring counties as Aid de camp to Genl. Bird in reviewing the Militia. He has recently gone home to reside during the absence of his father; who is to set out next week for Tennessee accompanied by his son Wm. Wm. Anderson¹ has been too much overpowered by Cupid and Hymen to have been punctual in his attention to my Lord Coke. Rumour says his hopes are to be

¹William Edward Anderson of Hillsboro, 1805-1852.

realized in Jany. Mr. Bingham¹ and Miss Eliza Norwood (it is said) are to unite their destinies in Decr.

Mr. Swain² and lady were here a week ago on their way to Raleigh. He has been detained in Buncombe by the illness of his father and himself so as not to be able to attend any of the courts in his Eastern circuit. It is probable that he will resign his office as Solicitor. He mentioned to me that the Honourable Saml. Carson³ and his competitor Dr. Vance⁴ were to have met at the So. Carolina line on yesterday, for the purpose of drawing off some of the hot blood which was generated during the late electioneering campaign. I was also much surprised to learn from him that — — (whom you perhaps know), one of the wealthiest men west of the Yadkin was convicted at the last Term of the superior court for that county of forging a note on a neighbor for the paltry sum of thirty dollars. This is worse if possible than the similar offence of the celebrated Dr. Dodd, of England. He has appealed to the Supreme court but I am told without any prospect of a different determination.

We understand that Judge Martin has enjoyed uninterrupted health on the Edenton riding this fall and is more vigorous than he has been for several years. Of course he is highly pleased. By the last advices from Raleigh Treasurer Haywood is said to be in a very precarious situation. It is thought he will not survive many weeks.

My Landlord Mr. Scott has given notice to the stockholders of the Hotel that he intends to leave on the 1st Jany. Who will be employed to succeed him is not yet known. He will remove to Lenox Castle and prepare for the accomodation of visitors to the Springs next summer.

Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Fayetteville N. C.]

From J. Macalister.

Honor'd Sir.

[Nov. 8, 1827.]

Nothing short of the necessity of trying to Justify my pretentions to the clerkship of Richmond County could induce me to trouble you with the reading of this letter, as I had informed you that I was a candidate for that office by one of the Gentlemen (James Pickett Leak) that went to see you to Columbus Court. On Saturday last I saw Mr. Wall who

¹William James Bingham, 1802-1866, a graduate of the University in the class of 1825, head of the Bingham School, 1826-1863.

²David L. Swain of Buncombe, 1801-1868, at this time solicitor for one of the eastern districts. He was just entering upon his remarkable career which was to make him judge, governor, and president of the University.

³Samuel Carson of Burke, 1798-1840, was a member of Congress from 1825 to 1833. He served in the convention of 1835 and immediately moved to Texas, where he served in the convention which formed the constitution of the republic. He was its first secretary of state, and was commissioner to the United States to secure annexation.

⁴Dr. Robert Brank Vance, member of Congress, 1823-1827. In the duel referred to, which occurred at Saluda Gap, he was killed.

told me he would be plain with me that I stood no chance since I was not recommended. This conversation had but little weight on my mind knowing that your Honor knew me, and was a better Judge of my qualifications than many that might recommend me. I knew great pains would be taken immediately after the death of the former Clerk to procure subscribers before I thought that any would apply particularly then and the names of some of my best friends were to a recommendation before they knew that I was a candidate for that office. I believe that even a number of gentlemen of the Barr would have recommended me if I had applied to them first. Mr. Alexander would for one Mr. Gilchrist Colo Pickett would also if Mr. Leak was not his relation Mr. Kelly I know would subscribe to my recommendation and [in] the community at large I believe if it answered any purpose I could have an equal share with my competitors. I have lived 52 years next January in the county of Richmond and have served the people as a weak Justice of the Peace for 39 years. Yet when there was an office of profit It was managed by designing persons so that it was out of my reach. Colo. Clark was appointed clerk of the Superior Court by Judge Lowery. When he could not write his name in a legible manner he sold the office to Benja. H. Covington who kept it untill he died. The county court clerk, William Love, when he died, a Mr. Terry of Anson (Originally) lived in Rockingham offered. Thos. H. Williams¹ who is now Senator from some one of the s. western States in Congress. I was also a candidate. But was persuaded to withdraw my name, and let my friends vote for Terry, and that I would be his deputy and get part of the profit. I did so, but my part of the profits were small. The office was sold by Terry's son to Wm. P. Leak² and continued by him untill Jury causes were taken to the Superior Court, then he resigned and the Rev. Martin Crawford was appointed, they have enjoyed all the profits and I have been only surveyor and that when worth nothing.

Novr. 8th 1827.

[Address: Fayetteville.]

*From Alfred Dockery.*³

RICHMOND COUNTY NOV. 8th, 1827.

To the Honorable THOMAS RUFFIN

Sir I beg to be permitted to make known to your honour the conduct of certain Gentlemen about Rockingham at the time of Genl. Benjamin

¹Thomas Hill Williams, a native of North Carolina, who was senator from Mississippi from 1817 to 1831.

²William P. Leak had been a member of the House of Commons in 1812.

³Alfred Dockery of Richmond County, 1797-1873, member of the House of Commons, 1822; state Senate, 1836-1845, 1860; M. C., 1845-1847, 1851-1853; delegate to the conventions of 1835 and 1865.

H. Covington's death, and the very great effort made by a large and influential connection to effect their purpose; on the evening previous to the death of the General in the morning it was discovered by every person who saw him that he would die the three Mr. Leaks all brothers together with their Father assembled in the counting room of William Leak dead. to determine which of the brothers should become a candidate for the clerkship that was made vacant by the death of the Genl. and determined that James Pickett Leak should be considered the candidate (here I speak from high and respectable authority) and accordingly proceeded to procure recommendations to your honour for the appointment; and did succeed as I am creditably informed, in procuring a recommendation from his immediate and near relations in Rockingham; and likewise an application to his near relation, Col. Joseph Pickett of Wadesborough succeeded in procuring his recommendation together with the Cols Son in law John Bates, A. McRae and a Mr. Hall, here I will take the liberty to inform your honor that neither McRae nor Hall never had the management of a case in the courts of our county. I am of opinion that nether of the two last named persons would know Pickett Leak if they were to see him and must therefore have recommended him from their Great regard to his relation Col. Pickett. Erasmus Love made application to the Col. first for a recommendation but the Col. declined Giving him one, Martin Pickett wrote immediately to Walter Leak stating that his brother Joseph expected some one of his brothers would be a candidate for the appointment and would therefore withhold his Signature from all other persons. it is not my intention to detract from the reputation of any Gentlemen named in this letter but only to show to your honour the anxiety evinced for the vacancy to occur and the extent of their connection and influence there are several applicants for the office of clerk of our Superior court all of whome I presume will be well recommended.

I claim nothing to myself but a plain citizen of the county aforesaid, who feel a deep interest in having all the offices of our court fild by men of abillity and firmness therefore from a long and intimate acquaintance with Col. Stephen Wall do earnestly recommend him to your honour as a man of business integerty and industry and in every respect well qualified to discharge the business of Clerk and do conseanciously believe his appointment would be highly satisfactory to the bar and the people generally.

[Address: Fayetteville.]

From John R. Buie.

FAYETTEVILLE, Nov. 12th 1827.

My Dear Sir.

Permit me to tender you my acknowledgements for the very flattering terms in which you have been pleased to express of my capacity as a Clerk etc. I feel highly pleased at the course your Honour thought proper to pursue in filling the vacancy of Clerk of the Superior Court of Richmond County and have the fullest assurance that in the Selection made that the incumbent will discharge the duties of said office with ability Integrity and skill. I will also add that there is no mans good opinion I more Highly value than that of Your Honour and although the appointment could not be given to the person who is now addressing you yet he feels fully satisfied at the selection made in filling the vacancy.

The Hon. Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Fayetteville.]

From John Louis Taylor.

RALEIGH 16th Novr. 1827.

Your favor of the 13th reached me last evening probably from my having been absent two days from town, and no messenger being sent to the post office.

On the subject of your enquiry I am able to state, that the practise has been invariable when two licenses have been granted, to require a tax of £5 for a county court license, and an additional tax of £10 for a general license. I know too that it was a principal motive with Judge Haywood in giving a general license at first to save to poor young men the additional tax.

I cannot call to mind a single exception to the practise first stated; and you remember the Judges until a few years ago, were accustomed to collect the tax, and account for it to the comptroller. We always received £5 for a county court license and £10 for a superior Court one. I remember too having paid both taxes.

P. S. That incomparable man the Treasurer is only not dead—He will scarcely live through the day. Mrs. Foster, the daughter of Mr. Gales is also expiring of a long continued liver complaint.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Wright C. Stanly.

[RALEIGH, N. C., Nov. 20, 1827.]

I am here a Candidate for the Office of Soli^r. of the Edeⁿ. Dist. If it will not make you too dizzy to cast your eyes so low, on a subject of to you so little moment, you can materially serve one devotedly attached

to you, by exerting your influence to promote his views in the matter. See or write your friends on the subject, it will help me much.

God bless you

The Hon. Tho. Ruffin

Hillsboro

P. S. Do you know one Henry H. J. J. Ruffin of Franklin?

From Joseph J. Daniel.

HALIFAX, NOV. 27th, 1827.

I enclose you the subjoined list of an arrangement of the Judges for the year 1828. I never was on the mountain circuit in the fall and should like to be there once in my life in that season: I was on the Edenton circuit in the Fall 1825. I think it nothing but right that each of the judges should bare an equal service in this district as it is not a very healthy one. I have been on that circuit three falls since I was a Judge and I think I have a right to be exempt the insuing year. You will be so good as to confer with Judge Norwood and write to the other Judges. I think the sooner the arrangement is made the better.

SPRING.		FALL 1828.
Edenton	Norwood	Strange
Raleigh	Strange	Norwood
Newbern	Ruffin	Martin
Willmington	Daniel	Donnell
Hillsborough	Donnell	Ruffin
Morganton	Martin	Daniel.

From John R. Donnell.

NEWBERN Decr. 11th 1827.

On my return from Raleigh (where I had hoped to have met you and Judge Strange) I found your favour of the 24th ult. I have not forgotten my promise to you last spring, that I would cheerfully acquiesce in any arrangement you might propose for this year. Much therefore as I dislike the mountains in the Spring you have my entire concurrence in the arrangement proposed. I had hoped you might be able to keep me entirely in the Eastern Circuits, which I should much prefer, even at the expense of a little health in the Fall. My respects to Judges Norwood and Strange and believe me

The Honbl. Thomas Ruffin

Hillsboro N. C.

From John McRae.

FAYETTEVILLE 27 Dec. 1827.

We have received a letter from my Brother Cameron¹ at West Point complaining that he labours under great disadvantages in consequence of having been put into a class of young men many of them graduates from other Institutions and all of them much farther advanced than himself and that he is afraid he will not be able to stand an examination with them so as to obtain full admittance into the institution. His friends regard it as a matter so important to his future prospects that he should not be rejected that I have been advised to go on to Washington and make interest with the Secy of war to allow him under the peculiar circumstances of the case to be excused on such studies as he had prosecuted before going to west Point or to defer his examination until August either of which course is admissable by the regulations of the Academy. I shall set off tomorrow and will be greatly obliged if you can give me a letter to any acquaintance of yours in the City who will be likely to render me any aid in the prosecution of my business. Our friends here are all well.

(Direct to me at Washington City)

Tho. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

AT MR. WEBSTER'S NEAR COLUMBIA, TEN

31st. Dec: 1827.

I reached here on yesterday week, and being received and treated with all the Kindness and Attention any man could require, and a fine room fitted up for me, I believe I shall not move out Untill the Winter breaks up. I am here within an hundred yards of the Owen Tract of Land; nearly all the people that I have any thing to do with, live in the Neighborhood, and I have no Occasion to go out except to take exercise. And after the painful Trip which I had from Orange to this Place, I feel no disposition to go out Again. How I ever got here, God only Knows. I suffered Pain enough to kill any human Being, the Rheumatism having been Severe in *my Head* all the way out; frequently So Severe that I actually became Silly. It latterly fell on my Bowels and in ten days destroyed the Tone both of my Stomach and Bowels. It is now translated to the Head and Shoulders, and I am recovering a little Strength.

¹Cameron McRae, after leaving West Point, became an Episcopal minister and was rector of a parish in Philadelphia until the outbreak of the Civil War when he came South. He died about 1867.

I find it necessary to Stay in the House, and by using Caution for a Week past, I am much better, and begin to be able to transact Business. It is excessively painful to my Head, for me *to write*. I can read but little, and I talk as little as possible. I am preparing myself for the Business that brought me out: And I assure you that Although I risked my life in Coming, it is fortunate that I came, this Business would never have been Settled if I had not come. I have Some how acquired a good name here and the People are unwilling to have any thing to do with any other Person in any part of the Business relating to the Land. From all appearances I shall be Successful in bringing Part of it to a close. Jerry McKenzie is about: he has gone to Mississippi to get Reynolds Deed for me. He is expected back on this Week. When he returns, he and his Father and myself will probably make a Settlement in a little Time. As to the rents, there is no Prospect, I think, of getting you a thousand Dollars. The Tenants are generally poor, miserable Devils, not able to pay ten dollars a piece. I shall not waste time with them, except to get them off, and prepare the Land for Sale. I hope to effect one or two sales immediately After I get in McKenzie's Title. The land is Still very valuable, notwithstanding the Waste that has been committed. As this is a rich Boon to me, I shall remain as long as necessary and make the most of it.

On the day I left Nashville for this place, your Letter reached the Post Office there and was handed to me immediately. It covered the three Bonds of Solomon Debow, each for \$2,000, dated 23d Jany. 1821, and payable 1st Jany, 1827, 1828, 1829, with Interest. William having concluded to return home towards the latter Part of January, Mr. Carter agreed to go to New Orleans. I delivered to him the Bonds, and I expect he will be in Tuscaloosa on today. He will go thence to Mobile. I directed him to offer them to Debow in the first place at \$5,000: if he could not take them up at that price, to offer them at 60 per cent Discount: and if he failed to take them up, to try them in the Market, and if he could get 50 Per Cent, to take it. He seemed very Sanguine in his expectations, as he had heard a great deal of Debow at Nashville and And other places, and always heard him well spoken of. I gave him your Letter and requested him to be governed by the Instructions contained in it.

I hope I said nothing in my Letter to you which amounted to Advice to move to Nashville. If I did, it was unintentional. Things have changed much since I was here in 1824. Society is out of Debt, and there is but little Litigation. The Profits of the Nashville Bar have greatly diminished. Let me give you a View of the whole Ground.

1. As to Business and Competition—there is no Lawyer in Nashville able to contend with you. Mr. Carter, who has been attending the Circuit here for a Week and has heard them all, Says, even Judge Brown can't grapple with you. I am of the Same Opinion. None are equal to you either in Intellect, or in legal Knowledge. Several are certainly

respectable, and the Bar on the whole is a very Agreeable one. You would stand in Public Opinion at the Head of the Bar here in twelve Months: And from your Habits, you would have more business than any Lawyer at the Bar.

2d. As to the Profits—Your Profits would vary from three to five thousand Dollars, if your Constitution enabled to bear the Fatigues of the Circuit. If confined to Nashville, they would average \$3 or 4,000.

3d. As to expenses of Living—they are enormous. Your House rent including an Office would amount to \$500. Your Water \$40 or 50, for it is all delivered in Casks. The expenses of Your Family I can't estimate; but Mr. Craighead told me he tried it for three years, and his Family was Small, and he Saw only so much Company as enabled him to Save Appearances: his *Cash expenses* for Family Purposes exceeded \$2500 Annually. Nashville is the most extravagant place I ever Saw: and its extravagance has driven out of it every eminent Lawyer, except Mr. Fogg, who is a Yankee and Sees no Company. All the great Lawyers have gone into the Country, being unable to bear the expenses of the town.

4th. As to the Society—It is very different from ours. Col. Burton told me to Say to you, if the Moral education of your Children be a primary Consideration don't bring them to Tennessee.

These Views I have taken of the Subject. Perhaps I may be in an error in Some Things; but generally they will be found correct.

Remember me Affectionately to Anne and all your Family: Also to Mr. Kirkland and Family, and to Dr. Webb.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough, N. C.]

From James Martin, Jr.

SALISBURY Jan'y 5th 1828.

Your letter relative to the arrangement of the circuits I received some time ago and although I dread another fall tour in the low country I see no other alternative than to acquiesce. I was so fortunate last year as to loose no court by sickness, but was attacked at Currituck with the ague and started home with that disease upon me. Should I live to discharge the duties assigned to me this fall I will have for two successive falls rode in the most sickly parts of the State. This I think if any thing like reciprocity takes place in the distribution will ensure my exemption from again going in that part of the State in that season of the year for some time to come.

I esteem it as a mark of your friendship which I prize very highly that you communicated to me the public sentiment as to the manner in

which I discharged my duties. To perform them in the best manner that I am capable of, is the settled determination of my mind and while I am upon this principle I trust that I shall be sustained not only by my own consciousness but by a liberal public.

* * * * *

Having but a slight acquaintance with Mr. Kirkland, I beg the favour to mention to you, to acquaint him, that my nephew James Hunter¹ of Chapel Hill is desirous to place himself in the store of Mr. Kirkland to learn the business of merchandising. He is now about nineteen. I believe he would be faithful, and if he wishes a store boy James would stay with him for two years without wages. I would agree to be bound in any way for the faithful performance of his duty by the young man. He has progressed in the usual course at Chapel Hill to the Junior class half advanced. Will you be kind enough to mention it to Mr. Kirkland and write to me about it.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

*From Henry S. Clark.*²

LOGHOUSE LANDING BEAUFORT CO. N. C.

8th Janr. 1828.

Having never enjoyed the pleasure of a mutual acquaintance although well acquainted with you by sight and as a public man, I must request that you would pardon a momentary trespass upon your time and employment. As it is right and also customary for those who are about to commence the business of this life, to devise some plan by which their work can be effected in the easiest way or with the most honor to themselves and as in this respect I form no exception to the general rule, my thoughts and reflections have for some time past, been concentrated upon this point. And they have resulted in a determination to enter upon that course of study in which you have gathered so much honor and distinction and in which you have enjoyed an opportunity of exhibiting those principles of uprightness and candour, which could not fail to claim the attention and merit the confidence of your friends and acquaintances. And if in the prosecution of that part of science which has been selected for me, I could but have the benefit of your tuition and direction, it would afford me, no inconsiderable degree of pleasure and satisfaction. And my chief or sole object in writing at this time is for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not you were willing that I should commence the study of Law, under your immediate care and attention,

¹Probably James A. Hunter of Rockingham.

²Henry Selby Clark of Beaufort, 1809-1869, a graduate of the University in 1828; member of the House of Commons, 1834-1836; solicitor, 1842; member of Congress, 1845-1847.

and if so, what would be your charges for a course of two years. Moreover if your determination should prove to be a favourable one on my part, you would confer a favour on me by ascertaining at what price, board can be had. Boarding with some private family of respectability would be preferred, but for the want of this, board at some good tavern, must suffice. If you will please to inform me, as soon as within your power, upon the particulars before mentioned, you will confer a favour which will ever be acknowledged By

Yours most respectfully
HENRY S. CLARK.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From James Iredell.

RALEIGH Jany 9th, 1828.

When the Judges shall have arranged their circuits for this year, will you be pleased to attend to the requisitions of the Law which requires that such arrangement shall be reported to the Executive office by the 1st of February. I mention this to you *privately*, not *officially*—I would not have mentioned it but that I am about to depart from Raleigh and shall not return until the 15th or 20th of Feby. and Mr. Campbell, the late Governor's Secretary, tells me he has never seen such a notification in the Executive office.

I am in great haste, endeavoring to finish all my business that I may leave here to morrow morning on my return home.

Accept the sincere assurances of my regard and esteem.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From William M. Green.¹

[HILLSBORO, N. C.] Jan 11th 1828.

I send you the enclosed letter for your perusal, as you have been kindly remembered in it.

I have forborne for a long time to press the subject of confirmation upon you, preferring rather to leave you to your own thoughts; and being well aware that there are some minds that arrive the sooner at right conclusions, the less they are bothered with the opinions of others, especially those of inferior judgment to themselves.

Were arguments necessary to convince you of the propriety of yr becoming without delay a subject of the ordinance and of that, to which this is preparatory, they might be drawn from the many interesting

¹William Mercer Green, 1798-1887, graduate of the University, 1818; professor, 1833-1849; bishop of Mississippi, 1849-1887.

relations in which you stand to your family, yr Country, the Church, and the Social Circle to which you belong, without including that most solemn relation which constitutes you, an accountable, and daily admonishes you of yr. entire dependance upon the sparing mercy of a long-suffering God.

And need I add to this the assurance of the great gratification which it would give me personally to see you altogether a Christian, and to be the least instrumental in contributing to so desirable an end.

As I leave home early in the morning I take the liberty of sending with this, a small treatise on the subject of confirmation.

In sincerity and truth

Yr. Friend and Pastor

Judge Ruffin.

W. M. GREEN.

To William K. Ruffin.

HILLSBOROUGH, January 17th, 1828.

My Dear Son—

My preference for Mr. Hooper's Family is so strong, that I do not consider the difference in the price of boarding in it as at all material in the determination of a question of the propriety of a change. The regularity of the family, its respectability, the solidity and good taste of his conversation and, above all, the value of Mrs Hooper as a female friend, far, very far, more than compensate for the difference of pecuniary outlay. You thus see, my son, that it is not a selfish love of mere pelf that prompts me to impress on you and, indeed, all my children the propriety of a regardful carefulness of the things for you, economy in expenditure and a redeeming employment of the present time. It is necessity, that induces me to stint you in all unnecessary desires. It is from a wish to promote your own good and to be enabled, by judicious restraints of the elder, to do equal justice, in the way of education, to the younger offspring with whom God hath entrusted and blessed me, that I have so often explained to you the true extent or rather restraint of my ability in the things of this world and endeavoured to inculcate the lesson and belief that it was your duty to aid me in the purpose, I foster, of conferring on all my Sons opportunities of acquiring good Educations—a purpose, only to be executed by rigid restriction, on my part, on myself and my family and, on theirs, of a cheerful co-operation with me. The very motive however which lies at the foundation of all my conduct towards my children and which creates all my hopes of them and in them, would be defeated by lessening their advantages and opportunities of moral and intellectual instruction to a great extent, for the sake of the very trifling diminution of \$15 or 20 in the annual expenditures. Be at ease therefore on that head; and, since you express likewise a predilec-

tion for a residence with Mr. Hooper, excepting only in a prudential point of view, it gives me much pleasure to be able to gratify you in that particular under the full conviction that, in so doing, I am not indulging you in an improper waste of my scant means, but promoting your true and best interests by a moderate and necessary disbursement.

As far as *my* profit is concerned, I do not see that I have any reason for quarrel about the account to which this excess is to be charged: If to my own, it is gone in the very act of charging it: If to yours, I do not very clearly perceive the difference; for I fear, you will never be either able or willing to *pay me*. However, I can not say but that your tenacity upon that subject pleased me and that, not a little. The first step towards straight affairs and true uprightness in our dealing with the world, is the insisting upon doing right and having right done to us upon all occasions and *keeping exact accounts*. I should therefore unhesitatingly yield to your demand, if *it* were founded upon justice. But it is not—a little reflection will convince you of it. I do not charge you with what you spend, solely because you might not have spent it. I charge you because I wish you to see both the real advantage of which I have or shall have been to you and the follies practiced by you, which by retrenchment in expenditure, may be corrected. I feel it to be my duty too to do the like part for your brethren. What you really therefore, require, I supply and charge it to you, because it is my duty to supply your *necessities*: What your own inconsiderateness lavishes away, beyond my approbation, or the spirit of destruction wastes in tearing without wearing and in losing without using, is justly chargeable to your own follies; and I set that down to your account, because your carelessness is entitled to no advantage over your brother's carefulness. It is true that I pronounce the judgment upon each item, whether it be an useful employment or an idle and foolish waste of money: But whether it be the one or the other, it is equally an expenditure and by yourself or for you; and, consequently, a just debit against you.

Whilst I admire your promptness in asserting your real or supposed rights, I cannot speak in as exalted terms of the correctness of your arithmetic. You say, you have paid \$9 for wood, bed and washing and then you say you have not. I do not understand this. Setting those items aside, I should make your accounts stand thus:

Cash given you.....	\$ 110.
Balance of last Session's deposit.....	2.
cr.	112.
By board	\$ 55.
J. Barbee	3.
J. Lewis	3.
Society	14.
	<hr/> 75
Balance which <i>ought</i> to have been deposited with Mr. Taylor....	\$37.

State it again and let me know in your next, how it is—I will remark that the Laws of the College *must* be observed. You must deposit *all* your money. Your duty and promise demands it. My duty as a Parent and Trustee enforces it. You must be a bad member of Society, to incur \$4 fine in a single Session. I hope your brother members will deal with you more efficiently than by appeals to your purse, should your defaults again run up so long a string.

I am not as faint-hearted about the fate of the University as you seem to be. The true cause of the diminution of students is the poverty of Fathers and the extravagance of Sons. The young gentlemen have the remedy against the decay of their *Alma Mater* in their own hand: Be studious, be moral, be careful and saving—set examples of steadiness and economy and other Institutions will have their Halls emptied to fill yours. The course of instruction and the Ability of the Faculty and the patronage of the State and the paternal anxieties of the Trustees cannot be disparaged nor called in question. You delight me by the declaration of *your* intentions. William, my Son! you little know the difference between the sensations of a Father's and Mother's hearts, when embracing a Son returning to them, improved in and loving knowledge and clothed with literary honors, and one who looks on college as a prison, lives in it in idleness and leaves it at vacation undistinguished: It is the discharge from the Bar of Criminal tribunal of one known, but not proved, to be guilty—he goes, an *acquitted Felon*—The honors merely I should not care so much for: But the merit that deserves and obtains them, is what I long for and beg you to make your own. The honors are the *signs* of that merit: With them, you bear about you evidences of your ability, diligence, acquirements; without them, you must content yourself to sit down without the credit of genius and without [torn] that of industry or possessing that of love of knowledge. My heart will repay you amply for making good to the letter, your cherished promise.

Our good Bishop¹ is here: Tomorrow and next day there will be service in our church and Sermons by him. I wish you could hear him. Your Sister Catherine was well at the wedding day at Mr. Burgwyns. The return of the party is expected early next week. Your uncle John is discharged by the Lady whose slave he has so long professed himself: He intends to be well content. Not so, your sister and Aunt Susan. They, more honest, show their displeasure, and let fly all sorts of verbal missiles! Judge Strange is up and will carry your Aunt Jane home next week, as poor James has improved so fast lately that they think it quite safe now to leave him. Tom, Grand-Father and Mother and their family are all in good health; as are also all your friends at Mr. Cains and those who tenant the spot you call so dear, your Home. The children all talk of you and love you, as do likewise, Dear William, YOUR PARENTS

Mr. Wm. K. Ruffin

Chapel Hill.

¹John Stark Ravenscroft, 1772-1830, first bishop of North Carolina.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

AT MR. WEBSTER'S, NEAR COLUMBIA, TEN. 20th Jany 1828

Your Letter of the 8th Dec. reached me on Yesterday. I had acknowledged Some time ago the receipt of your other Letter covering Dr. Debow's Bonds. If the weather and the State of my Health permit, I will go over to the Western District and See Dr. Holt: But the Rain has continued here for Six Weeks: Such Weather I never Saw before. It has Suspended Business for nearly a Month. Mine is completely at a Stand. on today the Sun Shines and we all hope that good Weather is to follow. I have not yet completed the Compromise. Jno. McKenzie is still about, but I have everything in a good train, and hope that before the end of this Month I shall have every title and Claim, and that I can prove them to make some Sales. My Health is much improved Since I wrote to you last, and I hope it will be good before I get ready to return. It is entirely uncertain when this will be. I must take home Some Money, and I must stay here to get it.

If I can't go to the Western District, I will write to Dr. Holt on the Subject of a Lien on his Negroes, and of making Mr, Dickens the Trustee. Mr. Dickens will no doubt accept the Trust. I have the Deed prepared.

* * * * *

God bless you! My Love to all your family, Mr. Kirkland, and Dr. Webb.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

By Richmond Virga.

From Walter F. Leak.¹

ROCKINGHAM, February 13th 1828.

Your esteemed favour, reached me by the last mail, pointing my attention to the act of 1820, as exonerating my Client, (the owner of Nat) from the costs which accrued at Robeson superior County, which act I was in possession of at the Trial, but unfortunately for young Chambers, the legislature of 1821 repealed the act of 1820, (which you will find in the acts of 21 ch. 28) which repeal, brought into effective operation the act of 93 by which, your Honor disposed of the costs which accrued in Richmond making each party pay his own costs; The subject of costs was not made a question at Robertson, [sic] from the belief, that your Honor had virtually decided the case, by your Richmond decision.

I join with you in deprecating the evils which result, and unavoidably must result from such a rapid succession of statutes, and for my own

¹Walter F. Leak of Richmond County, 1799-1879.

part, I should be extremely glad, that the pruning knife could be applied to this *excess* of liberty, (*viz*), (the too frequent meetings of our State legislature), If such an expression is allowable, which can only be done by a *convention*, for I really am inclined to the opinion, that we would do much better with biannual, than annual sessions. Accept Sir my sincere thanks for the attention shown me, in directing me to the act of 1820.

[P. S.] When I had the pleasure of seeing you last at Robeson, I promised to meet you at Fayetteville, at which place I would receive a list of such books as you thought most advisable for me to read, being prevented from attending I must take the liberty of your sending me by letter a list of such as you think most advisable, promising to your Honor, that I have read inattentively a good many, but understand very few, if any as I should.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From George E. Badger.

RALEIGH Feby. 16, 1828.

A report has reached here that Mr. Swain has really resigned his solicitorship of the Edenton Circuit. Whether this be true or not must be matter of more doubt after the occurrences of last fall and winter than reports of that kind usually involve, but I take the liberty of reminding you, if the office be indeed vacant or should become so, of our friend W. C. Stanly. His qualifications, you know and his recent misfortunes in the sale of his estate to pay his Debts make the office more than ever desirable to him.

The letter you wrote me last summer stating a case on which you desired my opinion found me engaged in the business of reporting, and consequently (as you well know) in the midst of perplexity and distraction. Thinking the matter might admit of some doubt I laid the letter aside intending at a moment of more leisure to advert to it again and give you the result of my examination—but the circuits supervened long before any leisure was found and it was not until the close of the Fall circuit that the more convenient season to which I had postponed the enquiry arrived. When that arrived—you know my habits of inaction and want of system in the arrangement of my business and allotment of my time. I suffered myself to be occupied in empty nothings until the Assembly which kept me engaged in worse than empty nothings to the commencement of the Supreme Court which brought real business to engross my days with evil sufficient for each. Still as ever and anon my conscience reproached me for the delay I resolved and re-resolved and still delayed. In the meantime the letter became involved in a mass

of letters and papers which had been accumulating upon my table and in my chairs into a frightful confusion of disordered heaps and I am now solacing myself with the hope that the day is not far distant when I shall do that which I flatter myself (as usual with all patronizers of procrastination) is better late than never.

We occupied a week during the Court in discussing the Moravian Cause and I think the Judges will not be able to refrain from reversing the decree—The grounds on which the defendant's case rest, especially the defense from the Stat. of Liens, became so clear in the course of the argument, and our foundation upon the closest investigation was found to be so sound, that were the case one of hearing instead of re-hearing, I should not entertain a doubt of the result. It is, in my judgment, one of the clearest cases I have ever been concerned with.

* * * * *

I hope when you start on your Circuit you will take Raleigh in your way, and I particularly request that you will do me the favor to drive up to my door and spend a night with us. You shall find food and lodging for yourself and what is more to the purpose perhaps, a hearty welcome and what is more important even than either—a plenty of good provender for your horse.

Offer my very respectful and hearty good wishes to Mrs. Ruffin and say I hope to have the pleasure of taunting her after the old fashion upon your absence from home, and her comfortable widowhood during the spring circuit.

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsboro.]

From A. M. Gatlin and Others.

EDENTON [Feb] 1828.

Sir

The office of the clk of Chowan Superior Court being vacant, by the appointment of the late incumbent to the office of Collector of the Port of Edenton, under the laws of the U. States, permit us to recommend to your Notice for the vacancy, Mr. James Wells of Edenton. He is no doubt well acquainted with the duties of the office, having been much in the office of the late Henry Wills Clk of the County Court of Chowan. He is a young gentleman of character, on whose punctuality and attention to the duties of the office we have full confidence.

A. M. GATLIN
WILL: B. SHEPARD
J. N. LAMB
G. W. BURNEY
NAT. HAUGHTON
T. B. HAUGHTON

From James Iredell Tredwell.

[EDENTON, Feb. 18, 1828.]

The Office of Clerk of our Superior Court being vacant by the appointment of Mr. McDonald to the collector of the Customs for this post I offer myself as a candidate to fill it and refer you to my brother in Law (Mr. Iredell) Mr. Hogg and F. B. Haughton for my qualifications.

EDENTON Feby 18th, 1828.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

Via Petersburg.

From Wright C. Stanly.

NEW BERN February 20th, 1828.

I have just learned (thro W. F. Hawks who arrived here yesterday from Raleigh) that Mr. Swain has, in consequence of the continued indisposition of his father, sent to the Governor his resignation of sol^r. for the Edenton District. I am still an applicant for the appointment and hope that I may from our former friendship value on you for the same. Last winter it was desirable, now it is necessary. Circumstances, (which I will at large communicate when next I see you) have placed me in reduced circumstances and makes the appointment desirable and necessary. I know not that one of your independence of character and intelligence capable of bearing you out in your independence requires any apology or justification for yielding to your wishes which may promote the interest of the State, if you should I can bring to you a bundle of recommendations and you have my permission to say I am or intend to be a resident in the district. At all events I am if I can receive the appt. of Sol^r.

Your attention to this letter by the *return* mail will reach me on Wednesday before Tyrrell Supr. Court. It is desirable that I should be apprized of your views previous to the commencement of a Circuit of ten weeks length.

[Address: Hillsboro, N. C.]

From E. Pettigrew.¹

BONARVA ON LAKE PHELPS Feb 22, 1828.

I have at last succeeded in geting made, the spades which you requested, and have sent this day six to the care of Messrs Th. and W. A.

¹Ebenezer Pettigrew of Tyrrell County, a noted farmer. He was a state senator, 1809-1810; member of Congress, 1835-1837. He was the father of General James Johnston Pettigrew, C. S. A.

Turner, with a request to cause them to be conveyed to you by the safest and most expeditious rout, I hope they will arrive in due time. They appear to be pretty well made, except rather long. I think all they are more than a foot long, is that too much.

Since my corn was hilled I have dug a six feet ditch one and a half miles in the Savanna in a southeastern direction from the improvement which I carried you to in it. I find below the surface from one to two feet, Cypress, Black gum, and Laurel stumps, and at three feet, clay, in various places as deep as I dig say four feet, burned earth and wood. Considering the extreme dryness of the season the corn I planted in that improvement or place of experiment gives a favourable opinion of the land, but it will be such a work of time for its decomposition that the experiment will in all probability not be fully tested until I shall be no more. I have just compleated an arduous work in the creek at the mouth of my canal. The mud machine which was making when I had the pleasure of your company answers my fullest expectations. Four men and a boy will remove to the bank, on a flat, in between five and eight feet water, one thousand cubic feet of mud in twelve hours.

Mrs. Pettigrew and family have enjoyed so far this fall unexampled good health; on the 4th of July I had an accession to it of another son. I have been unwell the greater part of the summer, but am tolerable now. My gouty affection did not long continue. I suppose it would be superfluous to wish good health to a resident of Hillsborough. Please to accept the sentiments of Esteem from your Obdt. Sevt.

Hon. Judge Ruffin.

N. B. I hope when you ride this circuit again you will give me the pleasure of your company all the space between the rise of one and the siting of the other.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From M. C. Jenkins to William K. Ruffin.

February 22d, 1828 BALTIMORE.

I thought it a pity that such a day as this should be devoted either to ordinary occupations or exclusively to frolic and idleness. Jollification is not worth a fig unless we have a friend to partake of it, wherefore I thought I could do nothing better than commune with you ere I sought out the few the very few in Baltimore whom I can even term intimate acquaintances. Why I should have selected a *debtor* in preference to a faithful correspondent (who at one of the extreme ends of the United States sends me two letters where you send one) may well require an explanation. He, (Legendre of Louisiana) will I'm sure remember me today in the conivial cup as I will him and Ruffin and (dearer than all)

a fair Carolinian. But what can I say for you? Must your thoughts of me be estimated by your punctuality in writing? If that be the standard I am forgotten. Considerations like these made you uppermost in my brain and determined me to write to *you*. This is only a friendly drubbing, but such a one as your remissness deserves. Let's shake hands and chat on. As old Gloucester in Henry 6th says to his termagant wife, "Nay be not angry I am pleased again." To trace out the conceptions which crowd upon me on a day like this exceeds my power. Whenever I think extravagantly I speak feebly. This is but other words, I think, for an idea which you had of me in my last, speaking of the subject nearest to my heart. Days like the one before me make me bring together in imagination all that my heart cherishes, my friends encircle me in gaiety and hilarity, the soft smile of love throws its enchantments over me. The visionary scene is succeeded by reality. I see my friends scattered to the extremities of my country, the few or rather the two that attract me to St. Mary's will soon be far from me. The object of my adoration is far off. I cast a longing, lingering, desponding sigh to Carolina blessed with the most amiable and beautiful of heaven's works. Had I a few hundreds at my disposal before this would I have feasted on the sight of her. I'd face as many difficulties to reach her as Tom Moore's Epicurean to reach the priestess of the moon. I wish to heaven I was half or ten thousandth part as devoted to study as I am to that consummate charm. I am sure I would arrive at some eminence. In study I'm like a river whose course is forcibly altered; In thinking of her I'm like the same stream rushing gladly back to its natural bed. But I forget, it is the birthday of our deliverer. The sound of the drum is striking on my ear, the yeomen are out in military pomp, a soldier's memory is sanctified. Washington the saviour of his country, "Proud to be useful scorning to be more" This was the praise the Irish Methodist gave him and is exactly the praise which does honour to a republican those few contain the definition of a republican. Jackson the "Julium Sidus" as Randolph styled him of the late war the defender of the rights which Washington established, on a day like this we may proudly associate their names. Having equalled the "father of our country" in the field, futurity will disclose whether Jackson can wear the toga with parallel dignity. In spite of the slanders of his enemies, whom I have often heard in social dispute, express a wish that he may prove all they have represented him to be a brutal despot, as Randolph says "a raw head and bloody bones." In spite of all this and more I think his administration will be among the ablest our country has witnessed. To give you a little Baltimore news must be my next lookout. A good many challenges have passed between the young bloods in this section of the country since you left. The first was early in October: It resulted in a meeting between McMahon and Tyson. After two shots had been exchanged they were arrested by the peace officers and bound over. The next duel was between Martin and Carr in which the former

was sent to his long home instantaneously upon the first fire, the latter escaping unhurt. A challenge also passed from young Pinckney the editor of an Adams paper in Baltimore called the *Marylander* to Mr. Simpson editor of the *Philadelphia Mercury*. But Simpson had him bound over. I believe I can give no more domestic news of any interest unless it is that the boys at St. Mary's are all well and many of them frequently enquire after you more particularly Tom Bryan who speaks of you with a warmth which friendship alone can dictate. This is a long enough letter for Washington's birth-day. I'll go hunt up a crony or two.

[Address: Chapel Hill, N. C.
Forward to Hillsboro.]

From William Gaston.

NEWBERN Feb'y. 29th. 1828.

Dear Sir

The Newspapers announce that Mr. Swain has resigned his office of Solicitor for the first judicial circuit, and my friend Mr. Wright C. Stanly informs me that he purposes to make application for the vacant appointment. Permit me to take the liberty of recommending Mr. Stanly as well qualified to discharge the duties of the office. I have known him from his infancy and known him intimately. He has talents, legal knowledge, the principles, habits, and manners of a gentleman.—Although not a married man he has a large and helpless family—the family of a widowed sister—with the support and education of which he has charged himself, and some late misfortunes have occasioned him pecuniary embarrassments which render a close application to professional duties indispensable. I have no doubt that Mr. Stanly, should he receive the office, will acquit himself of its obligations with benefit to the State and credit to himself.

Believe me with sentiments of great respect

Your most obed^t. Serv^t.

Judge Ruffin

WILL: GASTON

[Address: Currituck County.]

From Gavin Hogg.

[March 1, 1828]

I recd. your letter from Mr. Taylor asking my advice as to the appointment of a Solicitor for the Edenton Circuit—I have always thought it was a duty from the members of the profession to aid the Judge with

advice in the appointments to be made by him. Some of the Judges heretofore have allowed so little might to the unanimous recommendation of the Bar that I had determined I would never again be forward in giving advice. For reasons however that I need not mention it will give me pleasure if any information I may have can be useful to you. It is I can assure you no Very pleasant task you will have to perform and it is an absolutely painful one for me to compare the merits and demerits of those wishing to have the appointment. I am I may say on good terms with all certainly at enmity with none of them: I must in Candour say that in my Judgement there is not any person in the district or as far as I have heard any applicant from any other part of the State who is in all respects a fit person to fill it.

Mr. J * * * of Windsor is in point of attainments very well qualified for the office of solicitor but it gives me pain to say that his moral character in general estimation and in my individual opinion is not such as to entitle him to a publick trust—I understand that the expression of this opinion when he was before the legislature in reply to enquiries propounded to me has given him deep offence but a sense of what is due to truth after a careful examination of myself obliges [me] to adhere to the opinion and the expression of it on this occasion. All the other Gentlemen have as far as I know unexceptionable moral characters: They are Mr Lloyd of Tarboro who practises in Bertie only, Mr White of Bertie, Mr. Bailey¹ of Pasquotank. These are all Gentlemen whom I believe to be entitled to respect and esteem and whom I hold in due regard. The two first are best known to me—they are all very young men of not much professional knowledge or experience and (as every thing here must be sacrificed to truth) of not very much talent. Mr. Long is a man also of great probity of more experience than the others; and of like intellectual character: Mr Wilson I do not so well know. He has done some plain business for me as executor of Mr. Blount very much to my satisfaction. I have heard him spoken of by Mr. Iredell as an honest energetick man; but as a very selfish one; his intellectual character I think is not superior to that of the other Gentlemen. From some of the above I think the selection must be made. Neither Mr Barney nor Mr Sawyer in the district nor Mr Stanly or Mr Bryan from Newbern out of it would fill the appointment so respectably as either Mr Bailey, Mr Lloyd, Mr White, Mr Long, or Mr Wilson. I cannot say which you should appoint because I do not know. If it were matter of favour, Messrs. Long, Lloyd, White, and Bailey would stand first and equal with me and I mention this to put you in possession of what favour I have that you may allow for it. As a duty if Mr Bailey on enquiry (from those who living below know him better than I do) should answer the opinion I have formed of him I should appoint him.

Judge Ruffin

¹John L. Bailey of Pasquotank, 1795-1877, judge of the Superior Court, 1837-1863.

[P. S.] None of the Gentlemen mentioned in the preceding letter have communicated with me on the subject of the appointment; the vacancy I think is not publicly known—I suppose they will be candidates before you; because some of them were avowed candidates on the appointment of Mr Swain and others openly solicited support from me last legislature when it was expected there would be a vacancy and others were ready to be nominated by their friends as soon as the Resignation of Mr Swain should have been handed in:

[Address: Care of Tho Turner esqr. Plymo.]

From John Gray Blount.

WASHINGTON March 1st. 1828.

I understand that Mr. Swain has resigned the appointment of Solicitor of the Edenton District and W. C. Stanly Esquire informs me that he intends to make application for the appointment. My desire to serve a Gentleman I have long known will I hope be a sufficient apology for my taking the liberty of addressing you on the subject and to assure you that from his long practice in our Court I have full confidence in both his abilities and integrity to qualify him for the able and faithful discharge of the duties of that appointment.

From James Iredell Tredwell.

I wrote you on the 18th offering as a candidate to fill the vacancy, in the Clerks Office occasioned by the appointment of Mr. McDonald as collector etc. In this I was, perhaps, a little hasty. I then understood that the appointment had [not] been made, but have since learned that it has *probably* been made and will be confirmed, of which I have no doubt; When the vacancy does occur I hope you will consider my application.

EDENTON 1st March 1828.

[Address: Tyrell Court.]

From Victor M. Murphey.¹

HILLSBORO' 17th March, 1828.

The principle object of my visit to Hillsboro' on the day previous to your leaving home, was to see you, and ask your friendly advice upon

¹Victor Moreau Murphey, 1805-1862, Judge Murphey's second son. He carried out his intention and became a physician.

a subject in which I am the only one personally interested and although I have come to a determination, as to the course I shall pursue, I was reluctant to do so before consulting you. I was not aware that you would leave Hillsboro so soon until meeting with you, and the pressure of business which required your individual attention, and the company which I found constantly at your House, prevented my disclosing to you at that time the object of my visit.

The frequent interruptions which have been my constant attendants during my prosecuting the study of the Law, have produced such a delay in my acquiring the necessary proficiency in the Science to insure me success, that I have resolved to abandon the profession, and in doing so, hope you will not consider me wanting in inclination to pursue the course which you so kindly pointed out to me. You will know my situation and that my means of support are exceedingly limited. I have arrived at that period of life when it becomes necessary to look for some employment by which I may be enabled to enjoy the ordinary comforts of life, and upon which to establish an honourable reputation. I would certainly prefer greatly being an able advocate at the Bar, than being distinguished in any other avocation and shall never cease to think that the brightest ornaments of the Bar are the brightest ornaments of Human Nature. But under present circumstances, I like many others, wish to pursue a profession which I must at present think more lucrative. When I first left college, my intention was to study medicine but my Father expressed a wish that I should study Law, and at that time and ever since felt disposed to gratify his wishes. I am of opinion that my prospects of success in the practice of medicine are more flattering than that of the Law. This change I hope, you will not attribute to my fickleness, it is the result of much deliberation on my part. The Study of Medicine is generally considered the dernier resort of all Blockheads. I had not despaired altogether of success at the Bar, but the the disadvantages to which many young men are subjected, when making their first appearance in public life, prevented their entering into business for many years during which time they labour under many difficulties and some which I should find myself unable to support. As to the respectability of the profession—You know much more than myself. The Law in this respect has the ascendancy, but I must suppose there is no character more truly Honorable and certainly no vocation more highly beneficial than the Physician. I have often heard it said that he who is good at making *excuses* is good for *nothing else*, and in excusing myself for abandoning the Law, I have probably said enough to make the censure contained in the remark applicable to myself. Yet hope when taking into consideration my situation you will countenance the course I have adopted, and be assured that you can not for a moment doubt my sincere attachment for yourself and every member of your Worthy Family, both on the score of personal respect and gratitude which it will never be my disposition to forget, though it may not be in my power to

return, but this is a subject which I should never exhaust and will stop for the present, Knowing that if I have not convinced, I have at least tired you with my own affairs.

* * * * *

Cousin Anne and all your family are very well and all your Friends in this place. William Ruffin, I believe writes to you today. Should you find time to write more letters than are necessary, the receipt of even a short one would afford me much pleasure. I heard from my Father a few days ago. His health was still improving.

Honble Thomas Ruffin.

[Address: Edenton N. C.
via Petersburg Va.]

From Daniel M. Barringer.¹

HILLSBORO' April 7th—1828.

I now sit down to perform my promise to you. Nothing remarkable has occurred since your departure. Against the "hardness of the times" there is still the same clamour. If there be any alteration at all—it is that the complaints are increasing. To say that *provisions* are in abundance, and *money* in great scarcity would perhaps be as good a description of the State of the Country as could be given. And were there no debts to pay, no embarrassments among the people, this would perhaps be as favourable a view of their situation as a patriot could desire. But from some cause or other, this is unhappily not the case, and the means of extrication are not within the reach of those to whom they are so indispensable. The pressure upon the people seems to be greatest, when their ability to diminish it is least. Whether this distress proceed from "unwise legislation" or our own want of enterprize, and foresight, it is to be hoped that it cannot long continue. If it does—if the "Southern contagion" spreads and there be no prospect of relief—we have reason to fear it will lead to consequences very much to be deprecated. It may be that the "partnership" will be in danger of dissolution—And that the most strenuous efforts of every lover of the Union may be called into requisition to preserve its integrity,—and avert the dreadful consequences of such an event. The fact is, this matter is too much talked about already, there is too much calculation about the "value of the Union". The people are oppressed with a burthen of whose origin they are ignorant, and disposed to attribute it to any cause, to have some pretext for the expression of their discontent. Such a state of feeling is always

¹Daniel Moreau Barringer, 1806-1873, a nephew of Daniel L. Barringer, after his graduation at the University in 1826, studied law under Ruffin at Hillsboro. He was later prominent in politics and served in the legislature and in Congress and as minister to Spain. He and Ruffin were colleagues in the Peace Conference in 1861.

the precursor of a more fearful species of opposition. May it never be experienced in this nation! About the "all-important" (as some say) question—who is to be the next President?—We go on as usual. The Adams men say their party is becoming more numerous, and the Jacksonites claim the same for themselves. There is no certainty in the matter, except, I suppose, that the "Hero" of Orleans (—ergo—would be president) will receive the vote of this State. The truth is—the present state of parties is enough to disgust any but demagogues, with politics. The indiscriminate abuse, of talents and virtue, on both sides, is really shameful. I dislike the disposition which cannot admire merit, whether in friend or foe, but which must sacrifice to an inordinate ambition all the better feelings of our nature, utter charges without truth, and misrepresent without decency. This I think is one of the principal features of the present contest ——— But I forget—I reckon you care as little about these matters as I do myself. And would rather learn whether your family are well etc., than that either Jackson or Adams is elected President of the U. S. ——— *They are all well*—and the town is about as healthy as usual. We had *snow* on yesterday after one of the mildest winters that has ever been experienced here—so say the old men. The frosts have proved injurious, especially to gardeners, and the fruit, which has probably been nearly altogether destroyed.

Mr. Murphy has returned from the West—his health in about the same state as when he left N. C. ——— Nothing more—I am uncertain whether this will reach you or not, as Mrs. Ruffin informed me that you had received none of hers altho' several had been written. I address however as you requested. I shall be extremely happy to hear from you in answer as soon as you receive it, and shall always be so in giving the strongest assurance of my regard.

N. B.—William has gone to Caswell in expectation of studying to more advantage than he could here—Whom have you appointed Solicitor?—I am much pleased with Powell and Newland on Contracts—

D. M. B.

[Address: Edenton N. C.
Via Petersburg Va.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

PERQUIMANS COUNTY—April 14th 1828.

So little comes under my observation on my circuits, that can excite or gratify a laudible curiosity of my dear daughter, that I have it seldom in my power to write anything that ought to be satisfactory to you or myself. It is nevertheless a high gratification *to me* to hold intercourse with any member of my beloved family; and especially, my spirits depend so much upon hearing from home, that I willingly write every week, if it be but for the sake of purchasing an answer. I have however,

now, to acknowledge that I already owe you for two kind and dutiful letters, which I have already received from you. They give me the pleasant tidings, that you are all well—which is the chief and indeed almost the only substantial enjoyment I experience during my long separations from your dear Mother and our beloved children. A similar account I shall hope to get again the last of this week, when I shall arrive at Elizabeth City.

I remained at Edenton until this morning—It is my usual custom on the circuit to go to the Court-house on the Saturday or Sunday before the Court, that I may avoid bad weather and be sure to be at my post in due season. I was induced to depart from my rule in this instance, by the double pleasure of sharing the hospitality of my friend Mr. Skinner¹ and of hearing the Service and an excellent sermon from my good friend Mr. Avery on yesterday. I thought I could safely allow myself those indulgencies as the distance between Edenton and this place is only twelve miles along an excellent road. I came over, accordingly, this morning, I do not regret my plan, tho' I have paid tolerably for not abiding by an old habit; for we have had here a cold, raw, drizzle, with a North-east wind, which make up an unpleasant ride. A *northeaster* is bad enough as high up as our hills, but really we know nothing there of one of those dampers, of the low Country. Here it goes thro and thro' one of a sudden and the spirit of the most mercurial constitution sinks as surely and as quickly as the fluid of a thermometer plunged in August into an ice house. An east wind here, forthwith from the sea, saturated with salt and moisture, sweeping over this level region composed of large bays and rivers or land almost as low and quite as smooth as the waters, is a blast the hardest frame cannot well resist. It is so keen and so depressing, that in a few minutes only it would extinguish all the fire of the roughest, stoutest, and toughest mountaineer—much less can my thin carcase and unsteady temperament support it. It seems to me, that I could tell a north-east wind of our *Banks*, were I corked up in a demijohn—Hah! It makes me shiver and shudder now to look out of my windows tho' I am sitting by a warm fire in a tight room. Tho' I am old enough to be your father, yet you know I am still a child in some points: for instance, I sometimes get vexed for trifles; and I am always put into high spirits by the falling of snow. There is so much beauty and purity in the untainted and unspotted vesture with which nature clothes the earth in that operation and the contrast between the sufferings of animals exposed to the severities of the storm and the comforts for man and the beasts domesticated and taken care of by man, is so striking that the earliest dawning of infant reason perceives it and teaches the heart to rejoice in and be thankful for the intelligence which qualifies man to be thus provident for himself and his dependents. In my breast this feeling has

¹Joseph B. Skinner of Chowan, 1780-1851, a noted lawyer and the intimate friend of Ruffin. His skill as a farmer may have stimulated Ruffin to the close study which he gave to agriculture during the latter half of his life.

so long and so powerfully predominated that even in our open, straitened, rotten and inconvenient habitation and with our family larger than the house will hold, there is always an irrepressible sensation of exulting pleasure at beholding a fall of snow; and the more rapid, thick and deeper the fall, the greater is my delight. Now just the *reverse of all this* is an east wind on the Sea Shore: If anybody can laugh, or meditate or love or eat or drink, with an East wind of the Atlantic Coast in the month of April blowing on him, his nerves, muscles, skin, mind, stomach, and heart must be different from mine, in all and every particular; Even the Lilly of your face would become purple and the Rose sky-blue! I am apt to think from the signs of the Seasons here, that with you there must be now or lately snow or severe frost enough to arrest all horticulture and save us from all the fruit-eating diseases of the next summer. Corn and irish potatoes are killed in all the low country and wheat essentially injured. I have been apprehensive that my little patch of *Rye* was so forward as to be geting into head and if so, that it will be killed. I do not suppose the Corn has yet come up. If it should be destroyed by being bitten down by the frost or rotting in the ground, tell Cupid to have it replanted early—indeed, as soon as he can ascertain that it will be necessary. I am afraid too that your Mama's Yams may have been frost bitten. If this be so, I would advise her to get Mr. Moring or his stage driver to buy her a bushel in Raleigh and to have them buried immediately. I shall be very sorry to lose the crop of them; for I make so much of my winter's living of them, that the want of potatoes would be worse than the want of bread. Ask her also, if her Irishmen should appear to her likely to prove deficient either for want of quantity or keeping, to speak to your grand-father to procure a barrel of Northern ones by the last of May for late planting. I left orders with Henry to plough all the Hillside below Mr. Cain's and our garden in which rye was not sowed. After the corn is planted he can do so; and I suppose the present a convenient time for it. So tell him, if he hath not already done it.

I shall expect to hear again from you after you get this letter. Let me know the health, employments and enjoyments of every member of the family. I confide to you the task and honorable trust of assisting your most excellent Mother in all her domestic cares and labors—of supplying my place in soothing her spirits in all her times of troubles, amusing her mind by returning for her admonitions and parental sollicitudes reverence and docility and affection for affection, to make her happy. She merits all this from you. For if you should ever be useful or happy in future life, you will owe it mainly to your Mother's lessons and example. Her industry and economy, the purity and singleness of her heart and the firmness and uprightness of her principles make her worthy of emulous imitation by man or woman. Most of my self-command and much of the best of my few virtues I am indebted for either to her counsels or the reflections which the observations of her

actions hath excited. I speak therefore from experience, when I assure you of the utility of studying her characteristics and making her actions and opinions the model of your own. Above all, my dearest daughter, let nothing escape you that can justly lead a Mother to suspect or to feel that you are a thankless child and that her society and conversation is less agreeable to you than those of *any other* person.

Pray, have you no art to make your brother a student? Can you not invent some cunning device to make him in love with his name, that he may strive to *make to himself a name* that shall be in future days honorable in the land? Has he really no ambition or have we only failed to touch the string that will rouse it? Have you or will you try your powers to reach and excite his sensibility? I leave him to the experiments of your Mother and his sisters. My little boys must remember me and be good. Say so, from me; and say further that children can only be good by serving God and loving and honoring their Parents and obeying their teachers and governors. To them and your sisters as well as to yourself I send my blessing. May God protect you and keep you innocent, and in his grace and peace! I do not forget my sweet Betty, darling name-sake of that charmer, Miss Polly, Kiss them all and tell them that I am coming before long,—make Miss Polly call me daily at the door and give her a flower for *me* every morning. Remember me to your grandfather and Mother and all the family there and at Mr. Cain's—in no wise omitting my daughter *Sally* and her father's household. Beg your Mother to write to me and particularly to say all about herself and her health. For its preservation and her perfect happiness in herself her husband and her children, daily prayers have been constantly and will be offered by your Father

THOMAS RUFFIN.

Miss Catherine Ruffin
Hillsborough No. Ca.

From Augustus Moore and Others.

[EDENTON, N. C., April, 1828]

The Office of Clerk of the Superior Court having become vacant by the appointment of Genl. D McDonald to the office of Collector of this Port, permit us to recommend to your Honor Mr. James Wills to fill that vacancy as we have no doubt of his ability to discharge the duties of that office.

AUGUSTUS MOORE

JESSE WILSON

C. R. KINNEY

J. L. BAILEY

JOS. B. SKINNER.

[Endorsed:

James Wills' Recommendation,
April 1828.]

From William Robards.

RALEIGH Jun 11th 1828

Your kind letter containing yr ten Certificates and Clerks bonds was handed to me by Mr Haywood. I thank you for the frank and candid manner in which you always write and speak on subjects that materially concern me, I assure you I want some one, to talk freely with. I am surrounded by a set of strange beings, men whose course of conduct is so different from what I heretofore thought, that I am under great restraint, and cant advise with but few, when I need counsel. The doings in our Bank would astonish you, to say the least of the Conduct of the Cashier. He has forfeited the good opinion, he was thought to have acquired; some think he has acted criminally. The Bank is in a ruinous state by his conduct, great profits must have been made by individuals at the expense of the Bank. While in Office he so managed as to enable some to keep at all times a constant supply of Northern funds, grinding and shaving the dealers in the Bank at an exorbitant rate, men too without funds in ordinary times. I might add at this time without *Northern*. I am sorry to believe, that men who have occupied so high standing in society should forfeit it for a little gain. We are endeavouring to have things right and to have business done in Bank as it ought to have been done for years. It will take some time to redeem the credit of our paper, we are resolved to put it at par, let the sacrifice be what it may, at this time our funds are low, the immense sum demanded within 90 days has nearly exhausted the specie or its equivalent. I heard to day we have paid within that time upwards of \$100,000 in specie and U. S. notes. As soon as I rec^d yr letter I made known your situation to the President. He assured me you should be accommodated, less [sic] it should not be granted I mentioned it to the board of Directors—the same desire evidenced and I was flattered with the prospect of getting the amount you wanted, untill this morning. I am now told that it can not be had until funds can be procured, and then principal notes each be required. I have therefore drawn the amount of your Certificates and enclosed it. If you can get the principal notes and can do without the Northern money for a few weeks I think you may get it. I regret this disappointment, but I have done all in my power. I should be pleased to spend a little time with you.

Judge Ruffin

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Thomas P. Devereux.¹

I have this morning received yours of the 23d and would with pleasure send you the opinions you request but as yet I have only one and I understand all their honors deliver one. I have been so very pressing for the opinions as to make me fear I may have been thought obtrusive. I flatter myself however that there will be no need of sending you a manuscript copy as I have made such arrangements I hope, as will enable me to give each of the circuit Judges a copy of the *law* cases by the time they commence their circuits. I am morally certain of being able to give them to you at Granville, no accident but severe indisposition can prevent my sending them to you at Chatham—this you and your brethren may depend upon in future.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Peter Browne.²

[RALEIGH, N. C., Aug. 7, 1828.]

I am glad that you have come to a resolution which I am confident will promote the interest and happiness of you and your family.

I agree, more or less, with everything you state in your letter, except as to the value you seem to set on a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court. I consider it no very desirable object *for you*, whether it is viewed as to Honor or Distinction—Emolument—or Permanency.

Honor or Distinction—I neither see nor feel it; nor, I believe, is it much seen or felt generally. I can tell the names of eminent lawyers in many of the States; but the names of judges of the Supreme Court in hardly any one.

Emolument—If you live here and attend the courts which sit here and in Orange County, and no other, I believe you can make more than the salary.

Permanency—I am surprized that the Legislature has not been tinkering before now, and fully convinced that the first alterations, either for the better or worse, will be followed by others, until they amount to actual or virtual annihilation. For example, if the plan you state succeeds, and one Judge has to go a circuit,—Why not two?—Why not all? Why not come to a Court of Conference? That I think would be the final result.

As to selling your U. S. Bank Stock, or any part of it, I will only state some facts and leave you to draw your own conclusion. The depreciation of our currency cannot possibly continue: in fact it is now gradu-

¹Thomas Pollock Devereux, reporter of the Supreme Court of North Carolina.

²Ruffin had evidently written Browne concerning the offer which had been made to him shortly before to accept the presidency of the Bank of the State.

ally appreciating. The last sales of U. S. Bank Stock, of which I have heard has been at 121; so that it has not rose much on account of the rise in the dividend. The charter expires in March 1836, and if it is not renewed the \$21. prem. will be lost: if it is renewed (which I expect) there will be a bonus, etc. more or less sweating. Yet I prefer that stock on account of my peculiar situation, there being a very extensive and pretty steady market for it. I believe the affairs of that Bank to be exceedingly well managed. By the bye, they have raised the salary of Mr. Huske to \$1500 a year, to commence from the 1st of June last. This I suppose to be very proper, as he is a most valuable officer.

Steps have been taken to prevent any difficulty in abstaining from appointing an Atto. for the state Bank till the end of the year; but I understand several are aiming at it, which I can readily believe as I am told the legal fees amount to \$1,000 a year.

Offer my respects to Mrs. Ruffin. I shall be glad to have her for a neighbour. You will no doubt take the proper steps for her accommodation here.

My respects to Mr. Kirkland. I say to him, and you too, there is danger in being security for a man in business who keeps one standing debt of \$18,000 or \$20,000. Times must always be hard with such men. Interest must eat them up.

RALEIGH Aug. 7, 1828.

Honble. T. Ruffin, esq.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From Thomas Turner.

PLYMO[UTH], N. C. Sep. 25, 1828.

Yesterday Mr. Pettigrew sent to me for you, a box of 6 spades, (I have not opened it;) and today I fall in with a cart belonging in Rockingham—and the owner Mr. Robert Mullins, has kindly said, he will take the box and deliver it to you—and I have sent it by him. So, that I, partake of your good luck in this instance.

Alas! Sir—We have all to lament that you are not on our Circuit again—; but I more than any other. For the first time within my knowledge, I have, in the course of my duty as clerk at the desk, given offense to the presiding judge! or if I ever offended before, they (the judges) have ever been so kind, as not to let it be known to me, nor, as I believe, to others. On the contrary, I have ever until now been flattered by them. But for once it is not so. Having said this much, I will take the further liberty to give you the facts.

A poor old man, one day in term time, came into Court and stood near the door. He was drunk, and his son, a fool, was indicted as a common liar. The old man sustains the opposite character, and felt, no doubt, as he ought to feel on the occasion. The old man, drunk, sat

near the door, and kept up a muttering like one talking to himself, and dwelling upon his griefs. The Judge ordered him taken out. It was done without the least confusion; but still, it interrupted the proceedings of the Court while it was about, that is, there was a waiting for the thing to be done. In this moment of suspense, I, fearing the shf. or rather the D. shf, a harsh little man, might hurt the old man, or handle him too roughly, said from the Desk, "Dont hurt him Mr. Shf." I spoke before I thought and from feeling, and was instantly ashamed that I had spoken; but I thought the motive of my speaking would be seen and understood, and so I reconciled myself to it and as it was painful to think of it, tried to forget it.

Again; I as agent for A. M. Slade, had to defend a suit. It was taken up late in the day and lasted until 10 in the night, The verdict was against me. My attorney as well as myself thought there was error of law in the charge. A rule was obtained for new trial and discharged and appeal prayed. My attorney had never known anything of the facts until the suit was called for trial. The other attorney on my side had now left the Court. I took the opportunity while an Indictment for perjury was trying, and after all the witnesses were sworn and seperated, and while they were examining the witnesses, and when I had nothing to do as clerk at the Desk, to make out a case for the Supreme Court, in which I stated the evidence as it was given in and the charge of the judge on the point on which the objection was taken. This I did as a memorandum or brief for my attorney, to whom alone I gave it. The judge on the bench, sitting above me, inspected as it seems what I was writing. I did not know it. If I had known it, I should have written as I did, not dreaming it was wrong or offensive to him to do so.

Again: On the Equity docket. Mr. Haughton my atto. was sick. He at the Bar asked me at the desk, what I would have done with Mr. Armisteads suit then called. (It had been previously stated by the judge that nothing could be done on the Equity docket) and I answered, from the desk, for I had but a word to say, "Let it be continued under former order." It was done. Again, Mr. Jones my atto, in another suit wherein Mr. Armistead and other (myself tho' not named on the judges docket) were defendant, asked me what I would have done in that case. I answered, as you had left the suit, "Let the rule for hearing be stricken out and leave for defendants to take testimony." The judge said I had an attorney in Court. I excused myself for speaking, by stating mildly, "I was defendant in that suit and that my atto had called upon me." Nothing was said in reply, and I spoke no more. It was now sunset Saturday. The Judge went out of the Court, stating he would make up that case and another for the Supreme Court in his room.

I was not apprized, I had not the least suspicion that I had offended the judge. On the contrary I was of opinion that if he had any feeling for me at all and were to express it, it would flatter and please me. I am sure he had not displeased me. To be sure, I soon saw that he was

not Judge Ruffin; but in this he was like so many men, that that did not displease me. The truth is, that I liked him pretty much. I thought he had a favorable opinion of me, acquired some years ago at Raleigh, and that now I had improved it. I felt, and I am sure, he never before saw so much work done at a clks. desk. I never sat down while the court was in session. I write pretty fast and am tolerably acquainted with what I have to do. My court papers are in the best order imaginable. What I had to do was done quickly, yet gently and rightly, and there was no waiting for me or for a paper. The judge worked hard and quick and a little fractiously all the week, a great deal was done; the judge himself said, as he left the bench, that it had been a hard weeks work. I really thought I had done nothing but what was handsome. But it was not so, as the judge thought.

For at night Mr. Jones, my atto, called upon him in his room to see to the making out the case for the Supreme Court. I did not go. There were several in the room. Mr. Jones looked at the case which the judge had made out. After reading it, he stated in his mild and modest manner, as I have been told, that he wished the case to state a point or two which was not in it, and to refer to one or more papers, to neither of which it did refer. I have been told that the judge replied angrily to him, and amongst other things said "that Mr. Jones knew that *that* for which he then contended has had no more effect upon the jury than the chattering of a mocking; that he disliked to burden the case with such nonsense, and having reference to the case which he saw me making out, said, although Mr. Jones told him it was not designed for the judge but for my attorney, that he had had a great mind to fine and imprison me and call another man to the desk; He stated he saw me, that he overlooked me as I made out the case—and has since said he never saw so troublesome a clerk; that I had pestered him very much. I understand that Jones felt himself very considerably insulted; that he felt the insult the more severely as it was in the Judge's own room and while he was sitting as a judge.

I cant pretend to repeat the judges words—nor all the substance of what I have been told they imported, except to the fining and imprisonment of me.

Since I got this information, I have duly considered and reflected upon my conduct as Clerk, and I cannot, if my life were at stake and to be redeemed by it, call to mind any conduct more offensive, or so much so, as that which I have stated in the foregoing lines. I am sure I have stated all that could *possibly* offend.

But why pester you with this recital? Simply, I am so full of it: It has excited me so much, that I cant help it. I work for praise, not for the fees. I am disappointed and mortified, and have no help, no means, of redress; no way by which to explain and show him that he has wronged me and get him to confess it, or make him do it.

When he went to Windsor—The first thing he spoke of to a friend of mine was the very troublesome clerk he had had to deal with in the last week, and added, if he were again in the legislature, he would pass a law if he could, forbidding clerks to be agents for others in the Courts wherein they are clerks. He was told that it was believed, I had ever given the judges great satisfaction. When I heard this, I could but say that such a law would prevent clks. from acting as Commission merchants and Trustees in deed etc, and that a better law would be one that should regulate the making up of cases for the Supreme Court; that should present no parties to the record, but the parties really litigant, and that should prevent the Judges pride of opinion from making him, in that respect, a party there.

Pray my Dear Sir; write me something on this subject. If you censure, I will take it as coming from one "whose frowns are but the graver sort of love," and I will amend in those points that may not please you. But if you censure not, but approve, it will relieve my feelings some; tho not wholly, for I must still know that the judge moves in some circles where I am not known and that in these I must ever be misunderstood.

P. S. There is one shade in this letter which I must correct. The judge, when speaking of the law he would have made concerning clerks, did not allege that it was necessary, to correct any evil practices in their office. On the contrary, He said, the law should not affect them in their own suits in their courts, but that it should restrain them from being agent in suits for others, as before said. I am not aware that he has complained of any unfairness on my part in office, but that I was perhaps insubordinate; speaking when I should not speak; and attempting to dictate to him in making out that Case!!!

T. T.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

To Catherine Ruffin.

GREENSBOROUGH—Octo 22nd, 1828.

My dearest Child.

I wrote to you Sunday night and enclosed the letter in one to Mr. Cook, in which I requested him to send yours up to you as soon as it came to his hands—I hope you received it; but for fear that you might not, I now write again by Mr. Adams, who promises as soon as he gets home to give it to you.

In my last, I mentioned that from the State of the business in this Court, I found it would be impossible for me to do my duty here and go home too. I shall not be able to finish by Saturday night; I am now well convinced. Being extremely anxious to see you all, I cannot but regret my condition very sincerely. But I must honestly confess that I

would rather pay my respects to *your Mother* than to my other friends; and therefore in the present state of affairs, I wrote to you, explaining my situation and desiring that, instead of returning home on saturday next to meet me, she would remain at Lenox Castle (where Anne said she would go on thursday or friday) until I could get there on Saturday night or Sunday morning—as there will be no other probable opportunity of a meeting between us. I desired you to send up that letter to her, that she might be truly informed of my situation. I now repeat my request, for an acquaintance of another day with my business here confirms me in the opinion that it will detain me the whole week. I am really grieved at it; because, besides the privation I suffer by not seeing my children, I had rather spend an hour with your Mother *at home* than almost a day elsewhere. But her Society anywhere is a great delight to me and as I shall be deprived of it altogether for three weeks more to come, should she not wait my coming at the Springs, I hope she will consent to do so. By Jesse, send me two pair of yarn stockings and my new shoes that are hanging up in the office and request your Mama to take them to your Uncle's with her.

I am sorry that you are so inexperienced in farming and gardening matters, else I would trouble you with some messages. As it is, let me mention, that the sweet potatoes ought to have a good shelter made over them to keep off the rain; and this you must tell Cupid. From Jesse I will learn how other things are and get the favor of your Mother's attention to them on her return.

I was a good deal surprised at being told by Mr. Graham, that your Cousin Moreau was to go yesterday to Philadelphia, as I had heard nothing of it before. His Father informs me however that he is still with you, but will depart in the next Stage. I am gratified to learn that he is well enough advanced in his profession to attend the Lectures at the University. Offer him my regards and best wishes for his improvement and for his success in life. Tell him, I hope he will not forget us. I should be pleased to hear from him frequently.

* * * * *

Write to me Wednesday Morning by the Stage and say whether you have received my letters and when Jesse goes up to Caswell. The Stage leaves Hillsboro at breakfast; so you must set about to finish your letter as soon as you get this,

Tell Anne and Alice and the boys to be upon their best behavior, while their Mother is away, upon the pain of my displeasure: I am sure Betty and Thomas *will* be good. I suppose Miss Polly is with your Mama, so that I hope to kiss her soon.

You do not say a word about Uncle John and his Beauty: Are they off or on, or just as they were and how was that?

Give my love to your Aunt Mary and her children and to all the young ones at Ayrmount and my duty and reverence to your Grand-Parents.

I wish I could see you all; but what can not be must be borne and submitted to with what grace we can.

God bless and preserve you all, my dear children, and keep your hearts and minds in the ways of his laws and the works of his commandments, prays

Your father and good friend

THOMAS RUFFIN.

P. S. Send this letter by Jesse too.

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Thomas Turner.

PLYMO N. C. Oct. 26, 1828.

In the making of one explanation, and a few remarks, I beg you to indulge me.

I did not know when I wrote you last, but have learnt it since, that you and Judge . . . are allied by marriage. Of course, my letter, was not, and could not have been designed, to be disagreeable to you.

I make no other explanation; and as for excuse, I have none to offer. I am not sensible of my error in that letter, except perhaps the error of indiscretion; the writing of it, being perhaps, unnecessary.

I, however, do not conceive it to have been unnecessary: For those that have heard, and shall hear of the Judges' reproaches, so unkindly and unfairly heaped upon me, have a thousand tongues. I have but one. Defense is due to myself. They speak of these reproaches, some from malice, others for entertainment, and many to gratify that hungry propensity in man which it is hard to satiate, the natural food of which is defamation—and the pulling down of others. Of these, a few only abstain from speaking, until the subject matter shall be incidentally and naturally introduced; For most of them tug it in neck and heels together without regard to time, place, circumstance, conversation or company. The judge himself, I am inclined to think, lugged it in thus at Windsor. And rumor has spread it wide, and will continue to spread it wider; and has seldom told it right, and will still continue to tell it wrong.

Under these circumstances, my letter, cannot, I think, have been wholly unnecessary. For what am I to do? I regard a stain as I do an injury. As the injury threatened, if executed, would have been an outrage; so the reproach is outrageous.

I have no defense, but also to lug the subject matter neck and heels into my conversation and correspondence, as I did to you, and shall continue to do to others. Even then, I am but a poor match for the 1000; for besides their numbers, there are many amongst them who

cannot, and many who can and will not tell the story right; while I, for my own sake, must restrain myself to the facts (which thank God) are satisfactory to me; and also to a language not more reproachful than that the treatment I received was not only unkind, but unjust also; and that it was the more unkind and unjust, not only because it was unprovoked and undeserved, but because (*as I am persuaded*) the same conduct on my part, would have met, not only no reproach from, but the commendation of every other Judge on the bench.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From James H. Ruffin.

RALEIGH, NOV. 16th, 1828.

I have only time to write you a few lines:—I have learnt since my arrival that Jackson has in New York, 21 votes and Adams 18.—Report also says that Ohio and Kentucky have both gone for the *Hickory tree*:—One thing respecting Maryland,—Jackson has *five* votes in that State:—this is certain, but of the other reports, a good deal is uncertainty:—

I understood that C. J. Marshall says that there is no doubt of Jackson's having a majority of 60. in the electoral college:—

[Address: Hillsboro]

From Frederick Nash.

RALEIGH the 17th Nov. [1828]

Your brother wrote you this morning and I address you at this time, for the purpose of apprising you of the fact of Mr. Macon's resignation. Col. Robards informed this evening it was in town in the hands of the Senator from Warren,¹ who will I presume present it as soon as the Senate is organized. Taking it for granted that after proving deaf to the solicitations of your *fair* Petitioners, that your mind is settled on the subject, application will be made to Cameron to suffer his name to be put in nomination, it is tho't he can be elected.

Ohio and Kentucky have both declared for Jackson, the business is *too* complete. I could have wished poor Adams had made a better run. Judge Marshal has no doubt Jackson will be elected by a majority of sixty votes. . . .

[P. S.] Louisiana and Indiana also for Jackson. Jo. Gales has Wm. B. Giles down, his thumbs in both eyes—and his fingers twisted

¹Richard Davis.

in his hair. I never saw a nicer trap laid, and never did poor gull run more heedlessly into it—the Gov. is done up, for the future he must confine his gall to his own bosom.¹

[Address: Hillsboro]

From George E. Badger.

[Nov. 18, 1828.]

Above you have “Monsieur Tonson come again” and if you are only half so tired of seeing him as I am, a more unwelcome visitor could scarce arrive. So by way of disapprobation put your mark upon him and send him back.

Mr. Potter² of Granville has today opened the ball in the house of Commons with a proposition [for the?] honor and relief of the Judges of the Supreme and Superior Courts and of all other officers. To the first class of Judges the bill allots \$1500 pr an: and to the latter 60. pr Court. To the Treasurer 1200 a year without any allowance for a clerk, to the Comptroller 800. etc., etc. Should this bill pass you Judges will no longer get fat with high living large salaries and indolent lives as heretofore, but you will get the money that you earn and earn the money that you get. If measures such as these shall open the road to popular favor, how can we rationally expect any permanent good or enviable fame for the State.

I hope you have had an agreeable circuit. The opening of mine was unfavorable—pleasure and profit being with me nearly of the same signification when applied to Courts. At Granville \$80—at Hillsboro 65. was a bad prospect and although Nash rose to \$233 yet Johnson sunk me again—think of an ex Judge at a Superior Court four days and receiving \$10. At this you may be sure I was low spirited enough and began to envy the snug *ticket* of a Judge, but the remaining five courts returned me again to life and animation by bringing me together the additional sum of \$1220.

I have been employed for some days past in the Circuit Co: of U. S. where brother Gaston is all in all—and though I have heard much and seen a little of *leaning* yet never saw I, or heard I of such complete

¹William B. Giles of Virginia had been attacking President John Quincy Adams very bitterly, and the *National Intelligencer*, the Gales paper in Washington, had just published a series of letters from Giles to Adams which put the writer in a rather uncomfortable position.

²Robert Potter of Halifax and Granville, one of the most interesting figures in North Carolina history. His career in brief was as follows: midshipman, U. S. N., 1815-1821; member of the House of Commons, 1828, 1834; member of Congress, 1829-1831; delegate to the constitutional convention of Texas, 1836; secretary of the navy of Texas; senator. He was killed in 1842. At a later day his conduct in respect to the banking institutions of North Carolina, in spite of the odium which has been heaped upon him ever since, seems to a large extent justified by conditions. He represented a type of progress all too rare in the State.

supporting upon a lawyer as of the Ch. J.¹ upon Gaston. The Ch. J. seems to be but his echo, though he is not aware of it, for his integrity is certainly pure.

We lost Plummer's Suit which has gone to the Supreme Court upon a decision of opinion on the bench and as Gaston drew the statement and I had but five minutes to examine it, I feel sure the *Case* as it was has not been hurt.

Such is the outline of my official pursuits, and I have no other.

Offer my sincere and affectionate regards to Mrs. Ruffin and Catherine.
[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From Frederick Nash.

RALEIGH the 21st Nov. [1828]

I have but a moment in which to write to you. You will perceive by the papers that I am Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, with not a very hopeful set to aid me. I shall however prefer bringing my Bill² before the Legislature thro' the sanction of the committee. I think I have upon it a majority favourable to my views. So far as I have made enquiries my hopes are very much strengthened of a favourable result. I have not mentioned it to an individual member but Mr. Gaston who does not approve it—and he does not appear disposed to oppose it with any zeal.

You shall hear from me again next week.

[Address: Hillsboro N. C.]

From Frederick Nash.

RALEIGH the 22d Nov. [1828]

I have read your communication with feelings more easy to be felt than expressed.³ For the sentiments of kindness towards me and mine, contained in it, accept my grateful acknowledgements. I had indeed hoped that our children would have been permitted to cherish and con-

¹Chief Justice John Marshall.

²Nash's judicial bill which he introduced and which was never allowed to reach its third reading in the House of Commons, of which he was a member at this session, provided for an additional judge of the Supreme Court. It also provided that future vacancies in the Superior Court judges should not be filled, but that the judges of the Supreme Court should in turn ride those circuits.

³Ruffin had evidently written to Nash telling him of the offer just made to him of the presidency of the Bank of the State.

tinue the friendship that has subsisted between their parents. To poor Sally the separation will be truly distressing. Your house is the only one, except her uncles and her sisters, where she ever visits and Catherine, she has always regarded and loved as a sister. To lose the society of Catherine will be a sore distress to her. But these are considerations not of importance sufficient to turn you from your course, 'tho' they will embarrass and embitter it,—I mean the discomfort which the step will bring not only to your own family but to your friends. My dear Sir wherever you go—may a kind Providence go with you and bless you in your person and in your family.

The advantages of a pecuniary nature offered by a residence here, under the circumstances attending your removal, do not allow me to say a word. I do most deeply regret as a citizen of the Country that you will be lost to the Bench. I had looked forward with eagerness to your being placed in the Supreme Court. I mean no idle compliment when I say they need you there—and your brethren of the Bar have I believe with one voice named you as the individual who was next to be there and your succession was without question. I say *was*—for I owe it to you to say that I greatly apprehend the effects of a resignation upon your judicial prospects. I had on yesterday a long and interesting conversation with Mr. Mears¹—he is sincerely your friend—and tho' I did not show him your letter, I communicated very freely with him upon its contents—your position and prospects. He enters warmly into my views as they respect the Supreme Court, and yourself. I am sanguine in the belief that we shall succeed and if you could postpone your determination, untill the fate of my Bill can be tried, I am very certain you will not desert old Hillsboro. Mears told me to assure you he was heart and hand in the cause. You will not I hope consider my communications to him as in any way violating the confidence you have reposed in me, As to your contemplated resignation and removal to this place. I found it common talk when I came here.

I have not yet introduced my Bill—but shall on Monday and probably before your arrival I shall have tried its strength. I shall introduce it without the alteration suggested by you—having talked very freely about it and particularly that feature, I could not omit it without being called on for for an explanation it might embarrass me to give. Wher [torn] the reason which I shall assign for it, when your resignation does arrive—if ever—it will be easy to strike it out—the reason for retaining it no longer existing. Whether you are on the Bench or off, if the Bill passes, your name shall be run, unless it should appear to be improper, and you need not fear on their parts any indiscreet use of it.

The houses have agreed to ballot on Monday, for a Senator. Mr. Branch alone in nomination. I think however it will be postponed. Wilson, Stokes, Forney and Franklin are spoken of to supply Mr. Macons

¹William B. Meares of New Hanover, 1787-1841, a prominent lawyer and planter.

place—either you or myself I believe could have united the West. I question if any one else can. A kind of caucus was held yesterday. I was not present. Wilson 10. Fisher 6. Stokes 2. and Forney one.

* * * * *

[Address: Hillsboro]

From James H. Ruffin.

RALEIGH, NOV. 24th, 1828.

Your letter to Govr. Branch I shall forward on to Washington, as it is now too late to reach Enfield before his departure from home.

Upon the subject of Potter's *Retrenchment Bill*, (as it is called here) I have no earthly apprehensions of its passage, as there seems to be an individual voice of disapprobation, or, I may say, ridicule of its provisions. He seems to have gone completely beside himself upon that and upon the other great subject which has been agitating the people of this State for the last summer; I mean the all-absorbing subject of the depreciation of the currency of No. Ca. and the *bad*, not to say *Mis*-management of the Directors of our Banks. He has introduced a resolution into the lower House the object of which is to obtain authority to send for persons and papers for the purpose of going into a complete and radical examination of the affairs of these institutions: this authority has *been granted by the House*, and the work of *confiscation* is to be carried on unless he should be restrained by the good sense of the Committee:—Thank Heaven! the trust is not entirely upon a fragile reed, inasmuch as the Committee on the part of the House of Commons consists of Spruill, Swain, Graham, Mendenhall¹ and others, who if not banking men, are at least guided by prudence and moderation. I hope and trust that the investigation will result beneficially to the community.

Branch has been reelected without opposition by 153 Votes. We ballot in a few days for another. Genl. Stokes² is in nomination without any earthly probability of success. He has been run by very few men in the West, who cannot settle upon any one man. Genl. Stokes will not be put down, the consequence of which obstinacy is that the West is disposed to take up Gov. Iredell. I wish and expect that such will be the result. It is generally understood here thro' me that you will not accept, tho' you can get the appointment with great ease, as there exists a great disposition to bestow upon you the office:—However all views of that kind are done away with according to your directions to me.

¹These were George E. Spruill of Halifax, David L. Swain, George C. Mendenhall of Gullford, and James Graham of Rutherford. Their report was the opposite of what Potter desired, but his minority report was defeated only by the casting vote of Thomas Settle, speaker of the House of Commons.

²Montford Stokes.

On next Friday we ballot for Atto. Genl, Sanders,¹ Manly,² Blackledge³ (Tom) P. H. Mangum⁴ and Devereux⁵ in nomination. I think we shall elect Sanders easily tho' not at the first ballot.

Your friend Bailey is elected Solicitor upon the first ballot against Willson, Sawyer, Palmer and Jones. Bailey recd. 99 votes being a majority of the whole legislature.

I shall be glad to see you in Raleigh, cannot you come down sooner than you mention? I wish you would as I want your advice and opinion upon some of my legislative duties.

Tell Catherine that I shall be much pleased to hear from her *at any and at all times*.

Give my best love to every member of your family, to Mr. Cain and my Sister, and accept for yourself assurances that I

Am most sincerely Your friend and brother

[Address: Hillsborough N. C.]

From John Branch.

ENFIELD NOV. 27th 1828.

I am much indebted to you for your two letters of the 9th and 22nd Instant and owe you many apologies for not having answered the first sooner. But such have been my engagements both from home and at home that I *more* from accident than anything else have failed to do what I fully intended to have done in a full and ample manner. Even now I have taken up my pen barely to say to you that as soon after reaching Washington as practicable I will deal as frankly with you as you have with me (and for which I thank you for I am an advocate for a free and unrestrained interchange of sentiment between friends.

There is much that you have said that I highly approve and but little that I dissent from.

Your apprehensions in regard to some expressions in your first letter are unfounded. I perfectly understood you. I hope you will exercise the same charity for me when I unbosom myself in detail to you that you claim for yourself.

Accept my friendly assurances and best wishes.

[Address: Hillsborough North Carolina.]

¹Romulus M. Saunders.

²Matthias E. Manly of Craven, 1801-1881, judge Superior Court, 1840-1859; judge Supreme Court, 1860-1865; member convention of 1865; speaker of the Senate, 1866; elected to United States Senate, 1866, but not seated.

³Thomas Wharton Blackledge of Craven.

⁴Priestley Hinton Mangum of Orange.

⁵Thomas P. Devereux.

From Frederick Nash.

RALEIGH the 27th Novr.

Yesterday morning I bro't my Bill to the notice of the committee—and found them as I tho't with the exception of Mr. Gaston for it. The Bill will be altered to meet your ideas. You have made a great secret of your views as to the Bank—they are known here commonly. Gaston mentioned them on the Committee. Should my Bill pass you are the man—on or off the Bench. Today we elect Iredell Senator—to his ruin.
[Address: Hillsboro.]

From Bedford Brown.¹

[HILLSBORO, N. C., Nov. 27, 1828.]

Dr. Sir—Having understood that the legislature will elect a Senator to Congress probably some time during this week, to supply the place of Mr. Macon, I take the liberty to ask permission to have your name in nomination for that appointment. I am entirely dissatisfied with those who are spoken of. We want other and a different kind of men at this crisis. Should you agree for your name to be brought forward, I cannot doubt for a moment, the issue of the contest; even if made known, only an hour before the balloting. You will please inform me of your determination.

HILLSBORO' 27th Nov. 28.

From Major Adam Lockhart.²

[SMITHFIELD, N. C., Dec. 10, 1828.]

Dear Judge. I am now at Smithfield on Nuse River on my way home to Anson. I expect Judge you will be surpris'd for me thus to address you, and had I not have seen what I this moment saw, delicacy would have stopt me, tis your resigning your Judgement Seat. I hope Sir you will pardon me when I tell you there never was a man that occupied that bench that I had a greater respect for and never was the bench resigned by a man, or Judge that was by me more regretted, tho believe the acceptation you have made of the presidency of the Bank is a Judicious one, as such I am pleased that you will have less trouble and will receive

¹Bedford Brown, 1795-1870, at this time a member of the Senate from Caswell. He was later to be often a member of the legislature, United States senator, and member of the conventions of 1861 and 1865.

²Major Adam Lockhart, a member of the House of Commons from Anson in 1804.

as great rewards. I expect Judge you will now be located for life. I am fare advanced in my 64th year of age. and am fast waring down, as Such I never expect to see you again. Should it be the case I wish you a long and happy life, and at its termination a glorious eternity. Judge there is no deception in the above, it is the very essence of my heart.

Decr. 10th 1828.

From John Louis Taylor.

[RALEIGH, N. C., Dec. 16, 1828.]

I write you according to promise, but cannot add any thing more satisfactory to the conversation we had on the subject of renting my house. I still remain in the disposition to live in the country, provided the legislature makes no material alteration in my situation, and on this subject things remain much in the condition they were when you left town. A reduction of the salary simply to \$2000 would not change my resolution. A reduction below that sum would unavoidably make an entire change in my life, and no longer leave me master of my possessions. Any alteration of the system which would keep me long from home would render it unsafe to keep my numerous and helpless family in a retired place without a male protector. I speak this in reference to the projected partition of the Supreme Court, of the probability of which I cannot judge.

We have scarcely done anything as yet owing to the necessary attendance of the gentlemen of the law in the house, so that unless the business is continued by consent it is utterly impossible to adjourn before the 1st of February.

RALEIGH 16th Decr. 1828.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From John M. Dick.

GREENSBORO Decr. the 17th 1828.

I have observed in the public papers that you have resigned your Appointment as Judge and therefore presume from the conversation we had in Hillsboro that you will practise in the Supreme Court. The Case of Abel Sheppard vs Isaac Lane which went up from Randolph on the last Circuit, I feel interested in;—It will probably require the attention of some Gentleman of the Bar; Will you oblige me so far as to attend to it? and if it is not in your power to do so be so good as to speak to Mr. Badger and desire him to attend to it.

As to a fee, the case is this, the plaintiffs agent assigned \$50 of the Judgt. to me and I told him I would have it attended to in the Supreme Court. This sum is at your service—I could not conscientiously require of him more than \$50—for this Judgt is his all. He was an orphan boy and Garner was his Guardian. This Claim is his whole estate.

On the receipt of this please to write me on the subject. I would have written to Mr. Badger some time since—But Mr. Morehead told me that he would attend to the case in the Supreme Court or get Mr. Badger to do so. He informed me on yesterday that he had wholly neglected to do either.

I have seen with regret the fate of Mr. Nash's Bill proposing a reorganization of the Supreme Court. The time has come when every friend to North Carolina ought to contribute his exertions and talents to change the Complexion of affairs. While other states of the Union are making rapid strides in the March of Improvement, North Carolina is actually regrograding.

I will be in the next legislature (If the people of Guilford will permit me) and altho I am not vain enough to suppose that my exertions could materially alter the course of legislation that has been heretofore persued, yet I would add one more to the numerical strength of those who are disposed to do what they believe to be right regardless of consequences.

I will not despair of the republic.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

To Joseph B. G. Roulhac.¹

STATE BANK OF NO. CA.

RALEIGH—Decem. 23rd. 1828.

Dear Sir!

Your friendly and valuable letter under date of the 16th Inst. has been received and read with much pleasure. For the expressions of regards personal to myself and of confidence in my fidelity I return my thanks and my assurance that every effort shall be made to prevent a forfeiture of your good opinion. Whether success will attend us depends much upon the aid we may receive at the Branches. The great *desiderata* now are, to *secure* our existing debt, gradually to *collect* it until one issue of Notes shall not be more than equal to the demand for circulation, and, upon that event, (should it ever happen) the new business done shall not be on long accomodation but on real paper payable absolutely or in two or three instalments. At present, we ought to do no business of any sort, except only in *good* Bills that will turn out *specie* funds at the North. For that paper we must risk our own Notes; because we have no other

¹Joseph Blount Grégoire Roulhac, a merchant of Windsor, Bertie County, 1795-1856, already a close friend of Ruffin and later to be his son-in-law.

method of commanding funds that are indispensable to the liquidation of demands now existing against us. It is obvious however that this mode of trading will of itself encrease the number of Bills and especially of fictitious Bills not drawn on funds or the reasonable expectation of them. For needy men, who cannot get discounts of any other sort of paper, will resort to the desperate expedient of drawing bills and incurring the damages. Damages are not our object, but the funds. Every precaution therefore ought to be used to detect and refuse *wind-bills*. I should suppose, that, considering the well known fact that all the Banks anxiously take all good bills, the circumstance that a man goes from home to sell his bill, would so discredit it as to prevent the distant Branch from purchasing. To make matter of suspicion matter of certainty in future, we have availed ourselves of your valuable suggestion and directed the Cashiers at Edenton, Newbern and Tarborough to interchange accounts with each other monthly of all the Bills of Exchange held by them, with the names of the Drawer, Acceptor and endorsers and when to fall due or, if unpaid, when they fell due. I presume the practise you allude to grows out of our regulation prohibiting the *renewal of Bills*, and so the party must find from home a purchaser who is ignorant that the Bill offered is to take up one previously drawn. I have already mentioned the importance of *securing* debts: It is now a primary object and every general regulation must yield to a necessity arising out of the jeopardy of a debt. Thus, smaller instalments or even indulgence for the whole are admissible, when the debt can be saved or better secured by it. We supposed that would be well understood and acted on. Our rules for curtailment etc. are intended to prevent the making of a new debt or the indulgence of those *now able* to pay and particularly directors themselves. From the State of the debts at Edenton as understood by us, we suppose every facility arising out of the discretion to act according to circumstances in every particular case is as necessary for our *Security* as at any point of the Institution. We rely much on the known capacity for business of yourself and several others of the Directors there to administer the affairs better in future than they have been. I hope you will find it often in your power to attend the Board and that you will not want the inclination when you have the power. I do not doubt Mr. Stone's¹ becoming a valuable officer as he is surely a faithful one. I am much gratified by the terms in which you mention him; as they confirm the very favorable impression made upon our minds here, by the particular detail and perspicuity of his correspondence. As for unpopularity, I hope and believe he heeds it not, when it follows the discharge of a duty or what he conceives to be a duty. In that respect as well as some others, I think I see much of that firmness and determination of purpose, which made his Father so remarkable a man.

¹David W. Stone of Bertie County, the son of Judge David Stone, and an officer of one of the branch banks.

We hope the enquiry will be kept up for the former Teller's Bond. Surely young Mr. Blount will not refuse to deliver it, if in his possession, or disclose his knowledge of what has become of it.

Mr. Iredell proposes to pay \$1500: every 90 days on the debt of himself, Mr. Tredwell deceased, and Mr. J. J. Tredwell. Can he do it? He says, that personal security is out of the question: Will the debt be bettered or made worse by suspending it now by way of experiment of their exertions to make payment, or will other creditors get judgments or encumbrances before us, if we lay by? I should be glad of your opinion on this subject with as little delay as possible, as we wish to make some answer to him. Could I do any good towards securing the debt by meeting Mr. Iredell at Chowan March County Court?

Pray, make as few new debts on notes as possible. We are not able to keep up our business, much less to enlarge it, unless upon some special terms of getting early payments in the sort of money that suits us.

I am, Dear Sir, with much respect

Your Obt. Svt. and friend

THOMAS RUFFIN.

To Joseph B. G. Roulhac Esq.
Windsor No. Ca.

From Lewis Williams.

WASHINGTON December 29th 1828.

In a conversation with you at Salisbury last fall on the subject of the grant which had been made by the government of the U. States to North Carolina of \$22,000, you remarked to me that much information respecting that matter was to [be] derived from certain books etc. you named, but which I now forget. Permit me to request that you will write to me and mention again the books to be consulted on that subject.

We have no news here except many speculations about the persons who are to compose the new Cabinet—Tazwell,¹ Van Buren, Crawford, and Gallatin are spoken for the State department—Cheves,² McLane of Delaware, and the post master General³ for the Treasury—Drayton,⁴ Benton,⁵ Hamilton⁶ and the post master General again for the war de-

¹Littleton W. Tazewell of Virginia, 1774-1860, at the time United States senator.

²Langdon Cheves of South Carolina, 1776-1857, who had been speaker of the House of Representatives but was now in private life.

³John McLean.

⁴William Drayton of South Carolina, 1776-1846, at this time a member of Congress.

⁵Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, 1782-1858, now senator.

⁶James Hamilton of South Carolina, 1789-1857, at this time a member of Congress. He was a close personal friend of Jackson, was offered the secretaryship of war, and declined it.

partment—Hayne¹ of S. Carolina, and Woodberry² of New Hampshire for the Navy. White³ of Tennessee, Baldwin⁴ of Pennsylvania, and McDuffie⁵ for Attorney-General. This is the talk of the day, but what the result will be none can tell.

The Jackson men as yet deport themselves very well. Whether the present peace is a presage of future storms I know not. Adams and Clay have both improved in health since last spring and appear to bear their defeat very well. Calhoun, Van Buren and the post master General are spoken of as Candidates for the presidency four years hence. I know not why every State in the union may not with equal propriety bring forward a candidate, for in every State I apprehend men of equal claims and pretensions can be found.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

From Joseph B. Skinner.⁶

EDENTON 29th December 1828.

I was much pleased to hear of your acceptance of the office of President of the State Bank⁷ (altho I think the salary too low) both on account of your domestic enjoyments and the welfare of the institution. It would have afforded me no little satisfaction to have cooperated with *you* so far as regards the affairs of this Branch but for the reasons given in my letter of resignation. I assure you it was not for the reason hinted at by Mr. Browne in his letter to me, for altho I cannot agree with him that the special operations of this Branch should be directed absolutely by the Cashier making in effect the President to use his own terms "a mere dog to bay the moon" I assure you it did not influence my decision. The Principal Directors cannot be more convinced of the necessity of the energetic and vigorous measures to sustain the Bank than I am and no one would have more heartily sustained you in the general policy as

¹Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, at this time a member of the Senate.

²Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, 1789-1851, at this time a member of the Senate.

³Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee, 1773-1840, at this time a member of the Senate.

⁴Henry Baldwin, 1779-1844, a distinguished lawyer whom Jackson later appointed to the Supreme Court.

⁵George McDuffie of South Carolina, 1788-1851, at this time a member of Congress.

⁶Joseph B. Skinner had been president of the Edenton branch of the State Bank.

⁷On December 1, 1828, at the urgent solicitation of the stockholders, chief of whom were William Polk, Peter Browne, and Duncan Cameron, Ruffin accepted the presidency of the Bank of the State. Its affairs were in great embarrassment and there was reason to fear that on account of public hostility it might lose its charter and be forced into liquidation. In the existing condition of affairs that would have been ruinous to the stockholders and injurious to the public at large. The salary paid him was good for the time—\$2,500, and he was allowed to practice law in Raleigh.

fully and explicitly laid down in your communication to the President here. So far as my influence may extend your President here shall have it whenever he may think proper if I am in reach. I am much pleased with the conduct and course of the Cashier, and have no doubt when he becomes a little more conversant in the details of business will be a most valuable acquisition to this Branch. He has had some severe trials, and embarrassments which he got through with very well. But I did not set down to write to you about the Bank. My Brother Benjamin sent to my house some time ago a half barrel of white clover seed as a present to you. What am I to do with it? They have lost your direction. We have had no chance to Petersburg since you were here or you and my friend Nash would have had your fish long ago, nor will there be any before the 1st of May, too late for this season. You know however that age does not injure clover seed and if you cannot get by February you will loose a year. I want your instructions. I write in considerable haste. . . .

[Address: Raleigh]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

Dear Sir.

HAW-RIVER. 24th January 1829.

* * * * *

I shall commence my Operations at the Gold Mine in a few days, and will keep you apprised of the Results. Part of my Works is completed. If I had a little Capital, I have no doubt, of being able to make a great deal of Money.

Lately I have had a further Search made on the Lands of the Hermitage, and have found several Localities of Gold, the Richest is on the Hill near your former Tobacco Barn, and in the Orchard east of the Fayetteville Road. I have seen no Place where there are stronger Indications of a rich and extensive Deposit of Gold. I have had some of the Gravel pulverised and washed, collected at different Places in the Orchard, and it all contains Gold. As soon as I get a Mill to work for grinding the Gravel, I will have a Cart Load of it taken up to Mr. Anthony's, and ascertain the Value of it. From the Trials I have made, it will yield 80 or 100 Cents to the Bushel, I think.

Farewell! I pray God to bless you and your Family.

Address: Raleigh.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 28th Janry. 1829.

Dear Sir.

* * * * *

I wrote to you that I had had some further Searches made upon the Lands of the Hermitage, and that Several Localities of Gold had been found: The richest of which were on the Hill near your former Tobacco Barn, and in the Orchard East of the Fayetteville road. The Indications are as promising at those Places as any where that I have seen. When I can spare the time I will have such an examination made as will enable me to say whether collecting Gold at either of those Places would be a profitable Business. The Ground will, I think, yield from 80 to 100 Cents Per Bushel.

My Prospects at Anthony's mine are good. My fixments are not completed, but I shall have two Washers in Operation on this Week, and they will enable me to determine what the Top Dirt is worth, and what the Gravel. We shall open one of the Veins on next Week. I intend to keep you regularly apprised of my Operations and their results.

Should Judge Taylor continue ill, so that your removal be delayed, I beg you to drop me a Line to Cornelia, telling her to Stop the Waggon Untill the further time you may appoint. . . .

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Hillsborough.]

From John L. Henderson.

RALEIGH January the 30th 1829.

Judge Taylor died on yesterday between Sundown and dark, and strange to tell he had requested his wife to shroud him. In compliance with that request she performed the unpleasant duty or what she conceived to be a duty. You may conceive it premature at this time to speak of a successor to the Chief Justice but as a choice is soon to be made, I can see no impropriety in speaking of it at this time.

I think you owe it to the State and to the respectability of the Supreme Court to accept that appointment if it should be offered you, of which there can be no doubt. In my part of the State you have always been looked to as the proper person to fill the vacancy whenever it should occur.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER—3^d Feby. 1829.

My Waggon was on the Point of Starting to Hillsborough on this Morning, when William came over and informed me of Judge Taylor^s death, and delivered me a Message from Mr. Kirkland not to send the Waggon Untill I should hear from you. Will the death of Judge Taylor change your Views? If neither yourself nor Mr. Gaston should wish the appointment, I should be glad to get it. Mr. Gaston, Mr. Badger and Yourself are the only Persons at the Bar, qualified for the Appointment. If the Way be open, I ask you as a Friend whether I ought to feel any Solicitude upon the subject. It is probable that by your Influence with the Governor and Council, I might in Such event, Succeed. But you will understand me as having no Wishes for the Appointment contrary or in opposition to yours. Mr. Badger will, I expect, get an Appointment from Genl. Jackson.¹ I have learned from various sources that the Genl. intends to bring into notice Some of our Citizens; and from his Friendship for Col. Polk, and the talents of Mr. Badger, I have calculated upon his Selecting Mr. Badger for the Office of Attorney-General or for a foreign mission. When will the Governor be in Raleigh? Write to me fully and freely

Judge Ruffin.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From William Gaston.

RALEIGH Feby. 5th 1829

My dear Sir

The melancholy event which has brought me to this place will I fear occasion you some embarrassment.² The Chief Justice had conveyed his house and adjoining possessions in trust to secure the payment of his bank debts. A sale will necessarily take place, but at what time I can not at present tell. Should I become the purchaser (and this I do not purpose to do except to prevent a sacrifice) I shall take pleasure, if you desire to occupy the place, to make an arrangement with you for that purpose. I should hope however that you might make it convenient to buy. I am sure that you can do so on most advantageous terms.

¹It was the confident expectation of the State that Badger would be made attorney-general in Jackson's cabinet.

²Upon his removal to Raleigh, Ruffin had rented the home of Chief Justice Taylor who had moved to the country outside of the town.

I shall probably remain here a week or more, and shall be happy to hear from you before I return home

Believe me with great regard

Truly your's

WILL: GASTON.

[Address: Hillsborough]

From Patrick Henry Winston.

PITTSBORO' Feby 10th. [1829]

With the candour which you desire I shall state my opinion, as far as I can form any of the probability of your being chosen to succeed the late Chief Justice. The members of the Bar whom I have heard speak on that subject (and it has been a very frequent topic of conversation among them), express a strong desire that you should be elected a Judge of the Supreme Court: some of them saying that they did not suppose that there was a lawyer in this Circuit who did not desire it. Indeed from the opinion all the lawyers of my acquaintance have always expressed of your professional abilities there could have been no doubt with me of their wishes to see you elevated to the highest judicial office and their conviction of your high judicial qualifications was strengthened and enlivened by your conduct during the last Circuit: they then frequently expressed their wishes and hopes that you would be preferred to a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court. You may be assured that the lawyers of this Circuit and they suppose that the same feeling pervades the Profession throughout the State would hail such an event as equally agreeable to their own inclinations and beneficial to their Country. I do not suspect myself of being misled in this matter by my own esteem and reverence for you (I speak plainly as is proper on this occasion) because these feelings and opinions have been and are so frequently decidedly and spontaneously declared that it is impossible to mistake either their sincerity or their import. The Profession as far as I am acquainted with it, will be disappointed if you be not nominated to the Council.

As to the question whether the Public would accept your services, some gentlemen who are members of the Legislature and others who had opportunities of observing their disposition at their last session say that though you were the most popular man in the State at its commencement you incurred so much odium by accepting your office in the Bank that you became as unpopular as before you were popular:¹ but they all concurred in thinking that these unfavourable impressions rather I

¹So great was the unpopularity of the bank that Ruffin's acceptance of the presidency was the signal for an outburst of indignation, in part, it must be supposed, coming from those who desired nothing so much as the failure of the bank and who saw in Ruffin's acceptance an obstacle to their hopes.

should say *anger* (*Ira brevis furor*) *might* pass away before the next session of the Legislature: differing much about the degree of probability of such an issue, some thinking it barely possible, others expecting it with strong hope. You know that I have little confidence in the wisdom of the executive or the Legislature of our State and the very warmth of my good wishes for the fulfillment of your desires, being the result of my opinion of your merit, would induce me to doubt of your success. This doubt has been confirmed by the opinions of others above mentioned: from which I should infer that your appointment by the Governors and council is doubtfull very doubtfull and the confirmation of that appointment by the Legislature still less perhaps to be expected unless there be a considerable change of public sentiment. I speak thus plainly, Sir, without hesitation because I know that my opinions will have no more than their due effect upon the determination you shall make, that is, their effect will be proportioned to their degree of truth.

On the one hand it would be a subject of deep and unceasing regret if the State should not enjoy the benefit of your judicial services merely because you would not signify your willingness to render them. On the other hand your friends as well as yourself would be deeply mortified by a rejection of those services when offered.

Thos. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From John M. Dick.

LEXINGTON Feby the 12th 1829.

From the conversation we had in Hillsboro at November Court last, I understand that you would prefer a place on the Supreme Court bench to the office you now hold. And presuming that your wishes have not changed on that subject, I have endeavoured to ascertain the opinion of the Gentlemen of the Bar with whom I have associated since I heard of the death of Judge Taylor. I find they are uniform in their preference for you in opposition to any man in the State. I suggested to Mr. R. Alexander (with whom I met here) the propriety of the Gentlemen of the Bar in Salisbury addressing a memorial to the Governor and Counsel respectfully recommending you to fill the vacancy. He seemed pleased with the idea and said he would consult them next week on the subject.

I met with Genl. Alexander Gray¹ here today and had a conversation with him about the vacancy on the Supreme Court Bench.

Knowing the Genl. thoroughly I cautiously concealed my own preference until I ascertained his, I was much gratified to find that he has a

¹Alexander Gray of Randolph, a member of the council of state in 1829 and state senator, 1798-1799, 1804-1807, 1812, 1823, 1826-1829.

decided preference for you to any man in the State, and have no doubt he will warmly support you. If the other members of the Counsel should be as decided as the Genl there would be nothing to fear. Everything the members of the Bar can do in this Section of Country will be done. At Guilford next week I shall meet with Messrs. Murphey Nash and Little and if they should think it advisable a memorial will be sent to the Governor. If the Governor and Counsel should appoint you as I hope and believe they will, I think you will have nothing to fear from the legislature; altho I understand you gave offence to some of the members of the last Legislature by accepting the office you now hold.

It sometimes happens that the zeal of friends does more injury than the malice of enemies—and that may be my case. If however the course I have pursued and propose to persue should not meet with your approbation you have only to advise me of it. As a citizen of N. C. I feel interested in your elevation to that office, and I am anxious to persue the course best calculated to effect it. I hope (with the permission of the good people of Guilford) to be in a situation next winter where I can at least count one. Perhaps I have indulged in a freedom of remark not justified by our acquaintance, if so, I hope you will ascribe it to the proper motive, a wish to serve you and a still higher wish to serve my native State in the hour of her utmost need.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Frederick Nash.

PITTSBORO the 12th of Feby., [1829]

I comply with my promise of writing you from this place. The Barr here is not as you know very crowded—with nearly all I have conversed upon the subject of the vacancy on the bench of the Supreme Court. The opinion generally expressed is that Seawell will receive the appointment from the Govr. and council,—but that he stands no chance of being confirmed by the Legislature. It has been a subject of doubt here, whether it will be to your interest, to appear before the council, as a candidate—whether you will not come before the Legislature with better prospect of success if not previously beaten before the council. This seems to be Mr. McBrides¹ opinion. My own is different. It is true the appointments heretofore made by the Gov. have not been much regarded by the Legislature—but it is to be feared if the vacancy is filled ad interim, by a gentleman legally or otherwise popular, that it may add considerably to the difficulty of beating him—as it will be the first instance of the kind under the present organization of the Court. I do not think it so certain Mr. Seawell will receive the council appointment.

¹Archibald McBryde of Moore.

The following is I learn the calculation on his part. Three of the council, to wit Mr. Alston,¹ Mr Kenan² and Mr. Jeffers,³ are his relations and it is tho't the influence of the first named gentlemen will secure one more vote, which will carry the appointment. As to Mr. A. and Mr. K. I know nothing—but should doubt Mr. Jeffer's devotion to him. It is however on my part altogether conjecture, and you are far better able to form an opinion than I am. Should the council appoint you, I do not think you need fear the result before the Legislature. I confess however this is not the opinion of all your friends—it is mine upon much reflection. I can not but believe that a sounder state of feeling and opinion will exist in the next Assembly, than was found in the last—the Bank fear will be allayed—in a great measure by the embarrassments of the people being lessened—and being in the office—it will not be difficult to revive the feelings of confidence and attachment in your old friends. I have conversed with Winston⁴ since being here, he suggested the idea of your legal friends expressing to the Gov. Their wishes on the subject. I do not approve it—the effect might prove highly injurious before the council and I am satisfied would have that effect before the Legislature they are already sufficiently jealous of the influence of the Bar and I am satisfied it would destroy any man to go before them with a set formal recommendation—it would not do. Mr. McBride gave me to understand that Mr. Murphy was desirous to be a candidate but not, if you were—and that he would be his choice—tho' he should vote for you from a sense of duty. I know he has written to Haralson that he is in better health than he has been in five years—if you are not before the council he will be, I suspect. I do not think he stands any chance either with the council or Legislature—but if appointed by the former—your prospect would be at an end for the present. I have heard nothing further as to Wilson's⁵ being in the Legislature—but if there or whether there or not, the opinion is pretty general, that he will be a dangerous man. It is said Toomer will [torn] and I should think that Owen will be glad of an [torn] to do the honor to Cape-Fear. I know nothing however certain—doubtless other names will be spoken of—but you are at head quarters—the focus of news, dignities and offices—and it is carrying coals to Newmarket to tell news to a Raleighan—At Orange Court I trust we shall meet when we can at more leisure discover all the pros and cons.

[Address: Raleigh.]

¹Gideon Alston of Halifax, a member of the council, 1807-1831.

²Thomas Kenan of Duplin, a member of the council, 1828-1830.

³George Washington Jeffreys, a member of the council, 1824-1834.

⁴P. H. Winston of Rockingham.

⁵Joseph M. Wilson of Mecklenburg.

From James Iredell.

WASHINGTON Feby 16th, 1829.

The official letter which you mention you had written to me has never been received. I have received however your two very friendly letters of a subsequent date and I assure you you could not have given me a more satisfactory proof of real friendship than these afford. I only regret that some of my other friends, in whom I have been long in the habit of reposing the utmost confidence, mistaking my disposition, should have been restrained by delicacy, by a fear of offending my pride from speaking to me as freely as you have done. On the other hand I have felt that if I laid my situation before them, they might suppose it [was] intended as an application for pecuniary aid. I have a pride, I trust a proper one, which would at any time revolt from *dictation*, from whatever source it might proceed or in whatever form it might appear; but there is no man who will receive with more grateful sensibility than myself the advice and counsel of his friends on any occasion. I know my weaknesses and the frequent need I have of the assistance of others, and in nothing more than the management of my pecuniary affairs, about which I have always been too indifferent but of which a severe tho' useful lesson has taught me the importance. I thank you for having estimated my disposition more correctly, and I give you the best proof of my grateful feelings for your kindness by following your advice.

I have written to James to have the sale of our property fixed and advertised for some day in the latter part of March. I cannot be at Edenton before that time as the Senate will probably not adjourn until about the 8th or 10th and I must spend a few days with my family at Raleigh. I regret on many accounts that I cannot be at Edenton during the sitting of our County Court, but it is impossible without deserting my public duties. I presume the Bank at Edenton for their own interest will permit the property so far as they are concerned to be sold on the same terms as Mr. Bond's. If there should be any deficiency in the product of the sale so as to leave debts unpaid, I hope in a few years, if I live, by an industrious application to my profession to supply it. At present I cannot with propriety resign my seat in the Senate, but at the expiration of my term of service I shall devote my whole time to the acquisition of that sweetest of all possessions—*independence*.

* * * * *

I can give you very little political news, but what you may find in the newspapers. I have seen Genl. Jackson and am much pleased with his manners and address. They are decidedly those of a *well-bred gentleman* and I do not know that I could give them a higher character. Nothing is yet disclosed as to his cabinet. It is however generally believed that Mr. Tazewell will be one. It is only conjecture, for one of his warmest and most intimate friends declared to day that not one even of the Tennessee delegation knew his intentions. Baldwin of Penn. is

spoken of as Attorney General. He is here in person. In fact there is a host of office-Hunters. There are a hundred rumors afloat, which I have not time to relate and which are perhaps unworthy of a moment's consideration. Among the office hunters not the least conspicuous are the Editors of Newspapers. We have here Noah¹, Hill² of N. Hampshire, Kendall³ of Kentucky and many others of inferior note. Hill, I am told, claims as his reward, *only*, the office of Post-Master General—McLean, the present Post-Master wishes the situation of Secretary of the Treasury. Van Buren is strongly spoken of for Secy. of State. The contest is believed to be between him and Tazewell. Woodbury is most generally assigned to the Navy Department. Berrien,⁴ Baldwin and McDuffie are thought to be the most prominent for Attorney General. McDuffie is also talked of for the Treasury Department and by some as the War Minister. The appointment to the Treasury which I believe from what I learnt in No. Carolina and what I have understood since I have been here, that would be most acceptable to men of all the parties, that compose the heterogeneous Jackson ranks, not only in our State but throughout the Union would be that of McLane of Delaware. He is one of the finest men I have ever seen; open, candid, independent as he is able and diligent in the discharge of his duties. There is a powerful influence here in his favor, but I fear there is a counter-influence which will prevent his appointment. I say, *I fear*, because I have no other authority than rumor and certain secret consultations, to which if nothing had been intended but the general good or the good of the party, I ought to have been privy. In short I fear there is a disposition among some who never could and never did thrive but in the hot bed of party and who are most forward in their attentions and their advice to Genl. Jackson to proscribe all the old federalists and as far as they dare to go all the friends of Mr. Crawford. This is to be confined to yourself and to a *very few* of our friends, as it rests only on rumor and perhaps that rumor founded on conjecture. I have great confidence however in the firmness and independence of Genl. Jackson.

Tho' my letter is long I must mention one anecdote which I have heard to day. You know the conspicuous part Buchanan was called to play last summer. The friends of Genl. Jackson say he faltered in his publication, and it was with some difficulty the Genl. was prevented from exposing him. Buck, as he is here familiarly called, and who, as a facetious acquaintance of mine says, has been studying the Spanish Grammar for the last three months to qualify himself for a mission to Spain, never waited on the Genl. until to day, altho' he has been in the

¹Mordecai M. Noah of New York, 1785-1851, a noted editor and playwright who dabbled in politics and already had been a consul.

²Isaac Hill, 1788-1851, comptroller of the treasury, 1829-1830.

³Amos Kendall, 1789-1869, whom Jackson appointed fourth auditor of the treasury, and who became the chief of his "Kitchen Cabinet."

⁴John McPherson Berrien of Georgia, 1781-1856, at this time a member of the Senate.

City since last Wednesday. An Acquaintance of mine happened to be present. He says the Genl. received him with cold and formal politeness, asked him to be seated and spoke to him no more during the time my informant was there, which was ten or fifteen minutes. Buck's dreams of honors under the next administration are with the things that have been. He is a man of more than ordinary talents, but he has an unfortunate obliquity of vision and you know Judge Henderson's opinion upon that subject. I wish you could know all our great men. But it would take a volume to describe all, even, that I know and to tell you all I have heard of some of them. This subject shall form the theme of some pleasant evenings when I shall meet you Mr. Brown, Col. Robards, Mr. Boylan and some others in Raleigh.

I beg you to present my kind remembrance to them and my other friends in Raleigh whom you may meet and to believe me

Very sincerely

Yours

J. A. IREDELL.

You see I have written in haste but it is too late at night to copy my letter or correct blunders. Show the political part of my letter only to a few friends.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Robert W. Brown.¹

WILMINGTON, NO. CARO. 28th Feby, 1829.

* * * * *

Anxious as a father and in order to make timely arrangements, I intrude upon you the subject of my elder Son,² who is now on the last half year, in the Senr. Class, at Chapel Hill, with Doct. Caldwell, from those in whom I have confidence, from their experience and better judgment and for whom I entertain very great respect, I would respectfully ask a free and candid expression of opinion as to the proper course to pursue, when and how. In placing John first at the Hill I found it, absolutely necessary to fix his boarding and lodging at some respectable place other than a public house. Mr. and Mrs. Caldwell were kind enough to take him in and as I was so fortunate in that matter we have felt satisfied that his moral character would be well guarded and that from the society with them he would be greatly benefitted. I shall never regret that expense and acknowledge ourselves much favor'd besides. At a distance it is hardly possible for a parent to know or find out all the foibles and improprieties of a Child—if he has been guilty when out of

¹A merchant of Wilmington.

²John Potts Brown, later a merchant in New York.

their sight I hope it has been but Seldom—but, I flatter myself that he has thro'out conducted himself in a becoming manner. In Wilmington I can never think of training him, the examples of youth, here, will not do,—and my great desire is to place him out of the reach of dissipation and everything like frolic and show—he is inclined to study Law if I can make an arrangement with yourself mutually agreeable, it would afford us great satisfaction. I would ask, first, if you will take my Son, and at what place or situation wou'd he live—whether in your *own* family or not and with the whole condition and terms? Raleigh itself may be too gay and lively to expect a youth to be as studious as necessary and to be elsewhere, not under your immediate direction, instruction and care would be worse. *Example and society*, for the time being, it appears to me, is fully one half, if, then the twig is properly inclined he may rise and prosper.

My object is to obtain the best situation and opportunities the country affords—regardless of expense when judiciously bestowed. I boldly hasten this letter to you under the belief that you will take me to be as sincere as I presume to write and to draw such a reply and remarks from your kind pen, on a subject, as one like myself is so little experienced in.

Should it not be agreeable to your family and self to take John, where would you recommend me? He was 18 yrs. old on 5th Jany. past, do you think it necessary that he should commence his studies soon after quitting College or should he apply himself to any other reading? I am very desirous that he should become as perfect as possible in the french and spanish languages and thought if by the advice of friends, it would be no disadvantage that I should avail myself of leisure the ensuing summer and go North with him that he may first see a little of his own country and people—manners and customs.

[P. S.] Having a vessel just in from Liverpool I have put on board the boat part of an English Cheese directed to you and sent to care Mr. McNeill at Fayetteville which please to accept and furnish Mr. Boylan with a piece of it.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From William Polk.

[RALEIGH, N. C., Feb. 28, 1829.]

The enclosed containing the shrieking of “one of the people” was sent me by Thos. G. Polk¹—and rec^d. on Tuesday last—with a request that I would send it to you.

¹Thomas G. Polk of Rowan was a man of considerable political influence. He was a member of the House of Commons, 1829-1833; of the Senate, 1835-1838.

THURSDAY 29th. 1829

I presume *Fisher*¹ is the author; tho' Thomas says nothing in that respect, *it* ought to be answered, with as much personality as the piece will admit.

[Endorsed in Ruffin's hand]:

—No! No!!—The attack is undeserved and not worth answering, come from whom it may: News-papers *cannot* slander a man of the least character. They have said and are wellcome to say all they can and all they please of me.—

[ENCLOSURE]

[*From the Yadkin and Catawba Journal of Feb. 10, 1829.*]

The Legislature of the State has adjourned, contrary to general expectation, without doing anything respecting the Banks, either to bring those guilty institutions to justice, or to arrest the harsh and unfeeling measures of the State Bank. Was this well done? For one, I say, honor and re-election to that portion of the Legislature who stood firm as the friends of the people and the law,—but distrust and rejection to those who shrunk from their duty on that important occasion.

As the Legislature has broke up, and left the people to the mercy of the merciless, seriously does it behoove them to look well into the matter. During the coming summer, much havoc will be committed by the corporate tyrants of the State; but let the people be of good cheer; let them prove but true to themselves, and the day of retribution is near at hand. The gallows which the rich and haughty Haman erected for the offending Israelite, was the instrument of Haman's own destruction:—the measures adopted by the Nabobs at Raleigh to ruin the State, like Haman's gallows, will at last accomplish the ends of justice;—they will arouse the sleeping lion in his liar, and woe betide the wretches that have awakened his fury.

History teaches us that in all popular governments there is a constant struggle going on between the people on the one hand and the spirits of aristocracy on the other. The struggle is most imperceptible to common observation, as it is always disguised under various forms; but ever and anon it breaks out into open contest. If in these contests the people can be sufficiently aroused to see their danger, their triumph is certain, and the cause of liberty stands reassured; but should the day arrive when the people have become so drugged by the opiates of subtle aristocracy, as not to take the alarm, then the knell of liberty may toll, the genius of freedom will take her departure and Lords will soon drive in their gilded chariots, where freemen now walk.

¹Charles Fisher of Rowan. 1789-1849, member of the state Senate, 1818; member of Congress, 1819, 1821, 1839-1841; member of the House of Commons, 1822-1823, 1833, 1836; delegate to the convention of 1835.

Such is the struggle now commenced in North Carolina.

By arts the most designing, the legislature and the people of the State, for the past ten years, have been held under the spell-bound influence of the banks; and particularly of that bank misnamed—the State Bank. So great has been this influence, that when a few years since the Governor of the State had the firmness to call their conduct in question, the Directors at Raleigh boldly stepped out and hurled the gauntlet of defiance at the Governor and the Legislature; and all the newspapers in the State sung out—“long live the king.” The number of stockholders in the State Bank we have seen elsewhere stated to be 495; and of these, it may be said, that at least two-thirds have been ignorant of the proceedings, and innocent of the practice of the Bank. The other one-third say 150 stockholders, owning more than *one million dollars* worth of stock are the men who managed, directed and controlled the affairs of that institution. These compose the real aristocracy of the land; and of all aristocracies, the most dangerous is a monied aristocracy. Mammon is their God—self-interest their polar star. These are the men who are now at work to ruin the State, and the contest is with them. Nothing should be done, nothing will be done to affect the innocent; but let the unrighteous Felix tremble in the seat of power.

These Lordly stockholders, dividing a million among 150 of themselves, have been so long reaping a rich harvest of gains out of the people of North-Carolina, that they are now dissatisfied with moderate profits. Times are changed, and they can no longer divide 8 per cent. with occasionally bonuses of 10 to 35 per cent; and they have come to the conclusion to call in their debts without any regard to the condition of the community, but only looking to their own sordid interest. Let us wind up, say they, at once; let us call in our debts and get the money into our own hands:—we can make more than 5 per cent. out of it by shaving notes and by buying up property at sheriff sales. But, says a whispering spirit, “the people!—you will ruin the people.” Mammon answers—“What are the people to us!—we must look to our own interest.”* It is better that the people should suffer; it is better that the poor man, with his wife and his helpless children, should be turned out of doors; it is better that we should swell the tide of emigration to the west—than that *we* should get only 5 per cent. on our money! Therefore, let us call in our debts, and get the capital into our own hands.

People of North-Carolina! never have the times gone by, since you have been a people, that called more loudly than the present for you to be up and doing. The enemy is in the field,—not the open foe, that meets you on the beach, and risks his life for victory; but the secret enemy of your rights, who plots in darkness—who comes like the thief at

*This is the oft-repeated answer of the late president of the State Bank; and the present incumbent seems to be a worthy successor, for the first act of his “administration” plainly speaks that language of Shylock the Jew: give me the pound of flesh, said the Jew; . . . give us our money . . . pay us up in ten equal installments, says the new president. [This note is part of the original article.—Ed.]

night—who has already made a lodgement in your castles and homesteads:—this is the enemy that you must grapple, or he will grapple you. You will see him at the polls in August next; meet him there, and put him down. No pains will be spared by the Banks to bring into the next legislature men that will advocate their cause, and defend their conduct; let the people then, require of every man who is a candidate, a declaration of his sentiments; let them vote for men who will do something to protect their rights; who will preserve the rights of the innocent stockholders, but will bring to justice the guilty agents. It is not enough that they should be exposed;—the honor and character of the State require that they should be *punished*. When in the City of New York frauds were detected in the agents of the chemical bank, they were prosecuted, convicted and put in the State-prison:—why should the agents of similar frauds in the State Bank escape with impunity?

This is plain language, but the times require it:—and why, Mr. Editor, I would ask, do you and the other Editors in the State sleep on your posts? Are the watchmen asleep in the watch-tower?—or are they, like thousands of others, under the influence of the banks? If they sleep, the writer hereof will try occasionally to disturb their slumbers.

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

*From Nicholas M. Hentz.*¹

CHAPEL HILL, March 1st, 1829

Accept my very sincere thanks for your kind services to me, and for the willingness expressed in your letter to oblige us. I long for an opportunity to manifest my gratitude.

I have inquired more particularly about Mr. Allsbrook's inn as a boarding place for the students; and have been confirmed in my previous opinion on that subject. The *house* and the *man* are decent enough, and I have heard nothing particularly unfavourable of either. I would select that place as soon as any other; but the company which your son finds there is not in every respect as unexceptionable as might be desired. Some of the young gentlemen who board there are not distinguished for studiousness nor for the purest morality.

This, however, is by no means the most important subject of consideration. I am convinced that the intercourse which the young men have there, and the danger of dissipation or corruption are not so great as in the College buildings. A lady, in the boarding house, usually presides at the table, and a check therefore is put to any licentious conversation. The meals are, as far as I know, always ready at the appointed

¹Nicholas Marcellus Hentz, 1797-1856, a native of France, professor of modern languages at the University, 1826-1831.

hour, so that very little or no time is ever lost in waiting. The young gentlemen sit a very short time at their meals; I have often thought *much too short* for health or perhaps good manners. In one word I really think that as much mischief may be created in the recitation room, under our own eyes, by private intercourse which we cannot forbid, as in the worst boarding house.

It is chiefly at night, and that at the latest hours that corruption finds its way in college. No regulation short of one which should make all the Professors inhabit the buildings, and watch the greatest part of the night, can have any effect in preventing mischief. Those young men who are engaged in any unlawful pursuit are always informed of our approach when we visit the buildings, and the chief result of those visitations is the ducking of a Professor's hat, with the addition now and then of a stone or brickbat. It is on that account that I regret with you that Mr. Hooper could not this session give boarding and *lodging* particularly to your son.

I think it highly desirable that he should if possible be placed in a situation similar to that which he enjoyed heretofore. Could he not be accomodated at Dr. Caldwell's? I sincerely regret that I am not able to make the offer to you myself. I would do it with readiness, as I own to you with frankness I think your son is in some danger now, I may say in considerable danger. If you could pass through Chapel Hill when your business calls you to Hillsborough it might be well for you to inquire into that subject. But if you cannot, and you think I may be of any service to you in this or any other case, command me, and you will find me ready to do all that is in my power to fulfil your wishes.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From David F. Caldwell.¹

ROCKFORD March 2nd 1829.

I received yours of the 20th on Saturday night last and seize this as the first leisure moment to answer it. I had anticipated your wishes, tho' I have not made my intentions public.

I had been urged to become a candidate by several persons at home and in the neighboring counties, but was rather inclined to continue in my humble private station, and attend to the affairs of my own household, until I discovered that efforts were making to exclude me from the legislature, This same Mr. Fisher being then author and active instigator. I ascertained the fact at Mecklenburg County Court, and resolved at once that if I were excluded, it should cost him and his confederates a struggle. This determination is known to a very few of my friends, but will be made known in due time. I do not wish it made known, until I

¹David F. Caldwell of Iredell, 1790-1859, member of the Commons, 1816-1820; state senator from Rowan, 1829-1831; speaker, 1831; judge of the Superior Court, 1844-1859.

proclaim it myself which will be in a short time. I did intend to attend Ash Sup: Court, but have resolved to return to Salisbury from Wilkes, for the purpose of organizing my friends. The contest will be violent and one that no man ought to court, but I made up mind promptly not to be driven off the ground without a contest, and to that resolution I shall adhere. I have not meddled in the politicks of Town or County;—I was pushed into the Legislature in 1825 against my wishes;—I am very much disposed to remain at my own fireside, but I cannot consent to be run over by an arch intriguing demagogue. I am not as strong in opposition to a man, who will adopt every stratagem however mean, leave no stone unturned and no lie untold, as Mr. Sneed supposed. The chances are in my favor, but not certain. He is already a declared candidate. Some of my friends think he will back out when he ascertains that I am a candidate. I do not think so. On the contrary I anticipate an angry vindictive struggle, the more so as all Borough elections are.

I think you have been misinformed as to the Bank excitement. It has a very limited operation as yet. This said Mr. F. is doing every thing in his power and thro' his few tools to rush the storm. A friend of mine will be a candidate for the Senate who I know will be firm to his purpose in defiance of public clamour. His election I look upon as entirely safe.

I must again express my regret at Mr. Sneed's absence. He is doing injustice to himself and to the Bank. When in Bank I adhere strictly to the rule laid down subject to the exceptions mentioned in your last letter. I so understood the rule at first. I tell you in strict confidence, that I have a timid inefficient set to back me with one exception. They are afraid of a shadow. Very good men and very good neighbors, but they are afraid of loosing a customer on the sale of a paper of pins or pound of Sugar.

If I had better paper I would write you more at length. This letter must be cast into the fire.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Adam Lockhart.

March 3rd. 1829—

I am soliciting Beverly Daniel¹ Esquire for the appointment, to take the next census, in Anson County, he honoured me with the appointment in 1810, for which I have ever been thankful. I am still needy, and wish the appointment again, and in this way Judge, most humbly solicit you, if it is consistent with your standing, to intercede with the Marshal on my behalf.

¹Beverly Daniel was for a great many years United States marshal for North Carolina.

Judge I hope you will excuse me, in making thus free with you, there is no man living in Raleigh, that have manifested, to me, themselves, the friend as plain as yourself, and independent to that, there is no man living, that I would sooner rely on, Judge if you have no objection. I hope the time is not far distant when you will take that ascending step, that was by me predicted 10. years past which to see, would be very gratifying to me, Sir the kind letter you wrote me, in consequence of the one I wrote hastily to you from Smithfield, has confirmed, my long standing opinion of you, he that acts the man, tho never so poor, is the man for you.

Judge if the Marshal should favour me with the appointment and I should live to complete my numbers, I shall expect to make my returns at Raleigh in person, where, if you are living, I shall be truly gratified to see you, and shake your hand once more.

The citizens of Anson are Generally well—my sincere prayer to heaven is, that you may live, and enjoy the good things of the world in every respect, as long as it is consistent with heaven, and after alls at an end in this world, go where peace and plenty will be enjoyed by you through a long eternity—the sweets of heaven.

[P. S.] Judge, I have wrote to the Marshal, by this mail a letter of the same date and day of yours, if agreeable to you I wish you to see him immediately on the reception of this.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From John L. Henderson.

SALISBURY March the 6th—1829

Since my return to this place I have endeavoured to ascertain as far as I could the wish of the Barr in this part of the State as to your pretensions to a seat on the Supreme Court Bench. I believe I can say there is an anxious and unanimous wish that your engagements with the State Bank may not be of such a character as to prevent your acceptance of that appointment. Charles Fisher is the only person of any influence who is opposed to your pretensions, and I am confident that his opposition will be of no avail. He is to be a candidate for the Borough, but I am pretty sure he will be very easily beaten by Mr Caldwell¹ who has consented to be the opposing candidate. If you should consent to be a candidate I calculate to a certainty of your success before the council. I have pretty accurately ascertained that the three Western Gentlemen will Support you. Genl Gray, Jeffers and MacBryde, and I did understand before I left Raleigh that Mr Lockhart² would not under any circumstances Support Mr Seawell there being a personal dislike. But

¹Caldwell was elected as predicted.

²William B. Lockhart of Northampton, a member of the council, 1826-1829.

Mr Sneed who arrived here on yesterday, informed me it was reported in Raleigh that he would support Mr Seawell. I can scarcely credit it. But even if it should be so, three certain votes, with a chance of one of the remaining four, which added to the great probability of all not attending renders your appointment certain. Though it is to be regretted that the acceptance of your late appointment has rendered you somewhat unpopular, Yet among the reflecting and intelligent it has made no change, and it is to be hoped before the meeting of the next Legislature it will all blow over. But even if the prejudice should continue against you, Still you stand on much higher ground than your opponent Mr Seawell who has the unhappy talent of making so many enemies, and whose unpopularity has been proverbial for years. I should be glad to hear from you soon—I am extremely anxious for your success.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Henry T. Garnett.

WASHINGTON CITY 8th March 1829.

As a relation I desire to trespass a little upon your time, in requesting your attention to matters in which you have no interest any further than you may be disposed to be of service to me. Ever since I left Carolina, in consequence of the change of times and the embarrassment of my father, I have been in straightened circumstances. I married in 1822 and being unpracticed in the management of agricultural concerns I suffered a plantation of tolerable fertility on the Potomac River to involve me in debt instead of bettering my condition. I have been struggling for the last 2 years unsuccessfully as yet to disengage myself from this burden. My farm lies on the river below this place about 80 miles, and various considerations have induced me to move to this place; the weightiest however, is that I may be enabled on the spot to attend to the lumber and wood business which I carry on from the farm to considerable extent and to superintend the deposit of these articles for the winter market which necessarily is best. This business however occupies but a small portion of my time and I am anxious to obtain a situation in one of the public offices as a clerk in order that my personal services may be more effective to my family. Our relation Jno. Roane the member of Congress from the King and Queen district offers me his best services with the new Administration, Mr. Taliaferro¹ the member from the District in which my property lies and from which I have this winter removed is my particular friend in this matter, but being unacquainted to any extent with the members of the cabinet I fear he will be without sufficient influences to benefit me. I therefore solicit your services in introducing me to Mr. Branch the Secretary of the Navy, if dis-

¹John Taliaferro, 1768-1852, M. C., 1801-1803, 1811-1813, 1824-1831, 1835-1843.

posed to befriend me; which from your great kindness to me when in Carolina I have no right to doubt. It is to due to you on this occasion to say that the circumstances of embarrassment alluded to above have prevented me from discharging a debt due to your brother-in-law Mr. Cain of small amount; and consequently of suffering in reputation with that gentleman as well as with Cousin James. Through you I desire to say to them both that necessity alone has prevented me hitherto; but during this year it shall be paid with interest. Untill little more than a year past I was wild, extravagant and dissipated in my habits. I mean by dissipation, fondness for gaming, not intemperance, as I never was addicted to strong drink. It pleased God at the period referred to, to open my eyes, and to discover unto me my lost and ruined condition by nature. I thank him that I was not disobedient to the call of his holy Spirit, that I turned my attention seriously to the subject of Religion and shortly I trust found the pearl of great price and cast in my lot with the poor despised Nazarenes called Methodists of which denomination of God's people I am yet an unworthy member and hope to continue with them on earth and to join with them in heaven. From the time of the change untill now I have been endeavouring to undo all the wrong I ever did so far as in my power to repair every act of injustice—to pay every just debt and place myself in a situation in which I shall "owe no man anything" but good will which is the utmost of my wishes, except the genteel support of my family consisting now of a wife (also a methodist) and two little boys. I shall shortly be able to accomplish this desideratum I believe and then I hope my good friends and relatives in Carolina will forgive me for anything that has been wrong in my conduct towards them as I know it is. If you have any hesitation in assisting me on this occasion (which I know a correspondence between you and Mr. B. would do) in consequence of our long separation and your ignorance of my present character, I will upon such an intimation satisfy you by letters from individuals known to you and by a recommending certificate from the member of Congress, the members of the legislature and all the justices of the county in which I reside, of which latter body I was a member for the last six years preceeding my removal. I can say no more, only that by the blessing of God, you shall never have cause to blush for any exertions you may think proper to use to serve your relation.

P. S. Be kind enough to remember me to your family and the rest of my relations. Our Va. friends were well a few days since. If you ansr. this, direct (with any letter yr. kindness may prompt, enclosed) to this place. The sooner if favourably disposed towards me I hear from you the better it will be for me as the situations will be filling up shortly. I write in great haste and have endeavoured to be frank. Excuse my inaccuracies.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From David L. Swain.

ASHEVILLE 13 Mar. 1829.

I believe I promised to write to you from Salisbury on my way home, and if so owe you an apology for not having done so.

The truth is that I was so completely put out, in all my calculations, by ascertaining from Col. Polk, that he had transmitted the name of Mr. Wilson to the Governor, as a candidate for the vacancy on the bench, that I knew not what to say. It occurred to me that it would be useless to communicate the bare fact, that Mr. W. would be in nomination, since the intelligence would reach you just as soon in another way.

Mr. Caldwell with whom I conversed on the subject seemed to entertain the opinion that Mr. Wilsons name would be ultimately withdrawn, and I cannot be induced to believe that if unsuccessful before the Counsel, as he must be, he will compete for it in the Legislature. He is as you well know a favorite with the bar, in the extreme West, and would command a strong support from that portion of the Legislature representing his own circuit. If however your circumstances will admit of your succeeding the Chief Justice, and you are disposed to do so, I can not believe that very strong opposition can be gotten up against you, and if Mr. Wilson should ultimately decline, your elevation would meet with no opposition, so far as my information extends. My circuit will convene in a fortnight and should a more extended intercourse change my opinions I shall not fail to communicate it frankly and fully.

I mentioned to you while in Raleigh the wish of a friend of mine to obtain a loan from the Bank of \$2000, on the condition of his repaying it in U. S. Paper in ten instalments of \$200 each. At his request I renew the application. He receives regularly from the government \$300 quarterly in U. S. paper, it would be to him a matter of great convenience to anticipate his receipts, and he is anxious to obtain \$1800, payable in six instalments of \$300 at every ninety days. He is a worthy man, is entirely good for his contracts, and can give any security that may be required.

I have no doubt you have many applications where equally strong motives are urged to obtain accomodations, and that expectations created in this way are not unfrequently disappointed. I am very confident however, that such would not be the case in the present instance. If you entertain the opinion that Mr. Colemans application upon the terms I have proposed would be successful, I will thank you to advise me as early as convenient.

Thos. Ruffin esq.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From Frederick Nash.

PITTSBORO the 20th March, [1829]

By the special direction of our old friend Mann Patterson, I enclose you a Petition to be laid before the Governor with a request on his part, that you will give to it such weight as you may deem yourself at liberty [to] exert. You will perceive the names of many respectable individuals, influenced no doubt by a wish to smooth to the old man as far as they can his last few expiring moments.

Immersed as you are in *cent per cent* you have I suspect no time to think of things less interesting. Has the vacancy on the Supreme Court Bench lost for you all importance, or has it become stale? Have you heard that Jeffers will vote for you before the council? I very much judge that you at this time care very little about it.

I hope Mrs. Ruffin has by this time begun to feel herself at home. I have no *hope* that she will permitt her new friends to supercede her old ones. Catherine is young—her feelings elastic—and by this time doubtless she is reconciled to the change. Present me respectfully if you please to the former—to the latter give my love. I long to see her happy, sunny face.

[Address: Raleigh]

From John M. Dick.

GREENSBORO March the 21st 1829.

As you have so far honoured me with your confidence, as to let me know that you would accept an appointment to the Supreme Court Bench if tendered to you by the Governor and Council, I take a pleasure in Communicating to you some information I have this morning had from J. M. Morehead Esqr. Genl. Gray was at his house a few days since on his way to Philadelphia with his wife. The Genl lately had a conversation with Govr. Owen in Fayetteville. He said the Governor seemed anxious to make an appointment that would probably be confirmed by the Legislature. The Governor further informed him that he would put off calling the Counsel for some time as he was desirous to ascertain if posseable the choice of the Community at large. The Genl. further stated it to be his opinion that the Governor was in favour of your appointment. The Genl. is not only decidedly for you, but said to Mr. M. if the Counsel should be called before he returned he would come on to Raleigh (if the health of his wife would admit), and attend the meeting of the Counsel. I hope he will get home before the Counsel meets. Mr. M. says if he does not, he will write to the Genl. and insist on his coming to Raleigh to attend the meeting. In this part of the

State we are unanimous for you. Mr. Morehead will write to Govr. Owen and inform him of the wishes of the profession and also of the people in this Section.

I understand a report is in circulation that you will not accept the executive appointment if it is offered to you, and that the Directors of the Bank will not consent for you to leave the Bank.

This report I presume is wholly unfounded and has been got up for the purpose of injuring you.

I fancy the Governor understands that you will not refuse the appointment if tendered to you, and if he is really anxious to make an appointment that will be confirmed by the Legislature, he will not be in favour of appointing Mr. Seawell.

I hope all will yet be as your friends here wish it.

It is now settled that I will be a candidate in the Senate and probably without opposition—as Jonathan¹ told me yesterday that he would be off if I would offer. I hope Mendenhall² and Simpson³ will be my Colleagues as they can always be relied on.

Be pleased to tender my respects to your family.

Thomas Ruffin Esquire.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From James S. Smith.

HILLSBORO March 22, 1829.

I have addressed by this days mail, at the request of Genl. Gray one of the executive council, a letter to Gov. Owen. The Genl. passed here on thursday, in company with his wife, on his way to Philadelphia, to procure the assistance of Dr. Physick. . . .

The Genl.s stay was short, but whilst he was here, I had a conversation with him on the subject of filling the vacancy on the supreme court bench. He concured with me intirely on the importance of the appointment and the great necessity of filling it with the best legal talent of the State. As I had no authority to give any but my own opinions and impressions, I gave no other. But on my own responsibility alone, I took the liberty of introducing your name, and was glad to find that it intirely met the views of the General. He was very desirous to know whether you would except the apointment if offered to you. To which I replied, that recently appointed to a very important station, and having excepted the appointment I thought it probable that you were placed in a delicate situation, and and that it would deter you in all probability from soliciting the office of Judge of the Supreme Court; But that I thot that I was war-

¹Jonathan Parker of Guilford, member of the Commons, 1800-1805; Senate, 1807-1809, 1811-1816.

²George C. Mendenhall.

³Francis L. Simpson, a member of the Commons from 1825 to 1830.

ranted in saying that all your predilections were in favor of your professional pursuits, and that the only way to place you at liberty from your present engagements, was to appoint you to the office, and that would place you at liberty to determine whether a Bank corporation, whose life was to be but short, or the interests of all the people of N. C. had the highest claim on you, that I thought I could determine which side would preponderate.

He then requested me to write to Gov. Owen on his behalf, and inform him of his visit to Philadelphia, and the pressing necessity which gives rise to it. Also to inform him of the great interest which he felt in the appointment of a Judge, and his regret at being absent, and farther requested the Gov. to defer the convention of the Council to the most remote day, which might be consistent with the interest of the public, and that if Mrs. Gray was not so far convalescent, as to be able to travel, he would leave her, and come on to Raleigh, vote and return.

I have made you the communication to enable you to make your calculations. That you might know that the Genl. is your friend, and that if you thought it right and proper to do so, you could through those in whom you could confide, influence the Gov. to delay to the latest Period the meeting of his council. In my letter to the Governor, I took the liberty to give my own opinion, and that of the country in which I live, of the importance of the office, and the necessity that existed, to fill it with the first order of legal talent, such as would meet public expectation; But I did not in the remotest degree, hint at any name, or person.

I feel much interest in this matter, first from my own good wishes to you individually, and secondly from a desire to see the Bench of the Supreme Court, such as will confer credit on the State, and insure Justice in the last resort to its citizens.

Thos. Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From David Clark.

ALBIN 28th March 1829.

I have received your Letter of the 17th Inst. I will communicate to Mrs. Hall your opinion so far as she is interested; as respects myself—I have felt but little concern in the business—if anything comes at a future day well—I have so great an aversion to strife in words or deeds; particularly where law has to be resorted to; I have uniformly avoided touching any business, that probably might produce it, Tho' it has fallen to my lot to have abundance of it. Could I have foreseen what I should have to encounter by residing here and taking upon myself heavy business; wherein the interests of others was so much involved and so complicated—I would have sooner removed hundreds of miles. If any reasonable amount at commencement would have purchased permanent

peace and quiet, I should have paid it—but I found too many with whom I unfortunately had to act for and come in contact—had no bounds to their ill feeling and avarice; doubtful whether they would been quiet as the Algerines by annual tribute—the more I yielded, harder they pressed. I now believe if I had acted the Porcupine at commencement I should have had much less strife,—this I did not foresee—nor my disposition and feelings of the nature of strife and bearly enough of opposition—I forbear too much. I hope you will be able to get the Bank affairs in a situation to enable those immediately interested to settle all at a short period. I prefer having control of my own Stock—that I may say it is mine. That I may not be fleeced out of it by demagogues and those exercising their latent vices brought forward under the countenance and support of outrageous acts of the more hardened and bold, the greater the outrage the cleverer the fellow—equity and character not worth their notice—no check to them.

I thank God as yet; there has been virtue enough in our Country to keep and support a Judiciary—there I place my best Bower—my confidence and reliance for the protection of character life and property—good order and equity in all matters touching the good of our country. Only let us have good and able Men on the seat of Justice, duly supported and protected; we may rest in full faith, that we shall not be fleeced. Monied institutions are of importance to the community, at least their effects—sometimes produces good—often evils. Of course creates debtors, then insolvents and then generally very restless and bad citizens; not only ungrateful, but harsh and violent against character and property and everything like order or morality. I would not vote for Banks, unless in a dense population and large commercial transactions.

We should have our attention, constantly to the maintenance of the Judiciary; yielding minor objects, particularly little matters of temporary interest, such as Banks—whether 2½ or 5 pr ct. on which I consider something like toys when compared with an enlightened and faithful Judiciary. I may err in my Judgment as I often do and allow it and my feelings to carry me too far, whenever a shadow of matter touches civil authority.

I lament the situation of our friend—I recollect when I heard his birth announced—it was hailed with joy in the company I enjoyed. I was long acquainted with both his Father and Mother they were most worthy persons. The Father and Mother of his Lady were much my friends.

* * * * *

I am aware of the very great weight of business you have had on you for months past—tho' familiar to you. Miss Anne and myself had some feeling of complaint against you but as you could not hear us, we did not think it fair to use it. We as we should have done, made allowance. I hope it is unnecessary for me to say, I should be very glad to see you at my House and to have more than one night of your company.

I expect to be at home until the 7th I hope—then leave to meet the Directors of the R. N. Co. at Weldon—and return perhaps the 10th Apl. I am a witness at our S. Court, may leave home on Monday Evening or Tuesday Morning of Court Week. I wish Mr. Browne would come with you. The Stock Holders should be greatly pleased with the late transactions of the Principal Bank.

Please present my best respects to Mrs. Ruffin, Miss Catherine and Miss Anne. The Stage has arrived, adieu

[P. S.] I was so engaged with Mr. Pollock last night and getting Colin off for Phila and elsewhere in search of health and of William to Maryland to school—where he preferred to go I have not taken time enough to write you—tho' I have scrawled a Lengthy Epistle—given better for worse.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From David F. Caldwell.

SALISBURY March 30th 1829.

Your letter mailed from Morganton and received at that place would have been answered as requested, but one from this place mailed today will reach you as soon as one from that place. I assure and without affectation, that I have always viewed myself as moving in an humble sphere, and my opinions upon matters of moment as entitled to but little weight. Such however as they are, you shall have them in that spirit of candor you are pleased to ascribe to me. In relation to your connection with the Bank and your obligation to continue, if such it can be called, it is a difficulty I have regretted most seriously ever since the vacancy on the bench of the Supreme Court occurred and I cannot affirm that I have made up an opinion even satisfactory to myself. I should regret the loss of your services to the Banks, but I should regret much more the loss of them on the Bench of the Supreme Court. It does seem to me that you could be elected by the Legislature, in opposition to any of the candidates named, tho' another might fill the temporary appointment. By the meeting of the Legislature the condition of the Bank will be more prosperous, the excitement I hope and believe will have in some measure subsided, and the stockholders will not be so loth to part with you, but if the Governor and Council should confer the appointment on you without solicitation on your part, I am of opinion you ought to accept. If the Stockholders were to view the subject as citizens, and apart from their immediate interest, they ought not to hesitate to absolve you, even supposing an emplyed obligation to exist. They ought to know, that the present period more especially demands, that the best talents of the State should be sought for and placed on the supreme court Bench. They ought further to reflect, and to know that it is the strong arm of the Judiciary, that is one day or the other to protect her the people from the

misrule made ambition and reckless efforts of a victorious faction, composed of desperate designing and unprincipled men, and unless the Supreme Court be composed of talent firmness and integrity it will not be the shield contemplated by our ancestors. I have already said that in my opinion you can be elected by the Legislature, and in answer to your inquiry as to your strength here, I answer that your support from the Bar will be nearly unanimous, perhaps entirely so. I learn from Judge Mangum that Wilson is not a candidate. I have not approached him myself for two reasons; first I could not support him in preference to yourself and secondly he might suppose that I was seeking his promotion to the end that I might fill his present appointment. He cannot unite the Bar and that is saying enough. I fear that efforts are making on the circuit, I will not say by whom, to rally a party against the Bank. I pray God that I may be forgiven for my conjectures, but appearances are strong against those, who ought to abhor such a course. Seeing and hearing these things I could not be indifferent, and as far as my influence extends, tho' not far, I have stimulated my friends in private to come forth. I done nothing in Surry because I had not heard and did not perceive what was going on. In Wilkes and Ash they are all safe. At Burke Court, I urged Robt. Burton and Col. Avery and they have both intimated that they would offer for their respective counties. I will again write them and reiterate the necessity. I expect to see Phifer¹ and Barringer² in a few days both of whom are hostile to the proceedings of the last Legislature and I am not without hope that one or both of them can be got out. Neither shall I be indifferent to old Iredell. True that county for several years has been ruled by demagogues, but I am not without some hope even there. This letter ought to be sealed to a Millstone and cast into the sea.

If my wishes are to be consulted, Doctor Torrence would be my choice, to fill the vacancy in the Board.

From John M. Dick.

GREENSBORO April 5th 1829.

Agreeable to my promise I now write you on the subject I feel a deep and unending interest in (to wit) Your elevation to the Supreme Court Bench. I had a conversation with R. Alexander also with John Giles, Richmond Pearson³ etc.

¹Probably John Phifer of Cabarrus.

²Daniel M. Barringer began his public career in the legislature of 1829.

³Richmond Pearson of Rowan, 1805-1879, entered public life as a member of the House of Commons in 1829. He was elected judge of the Superior Court in 1836, elevated to the Supreme Court in 1848, and became chief justice in 1858.

Mr. Alexander is still for you but says in the event Mr. Wilson is a candidate (which he doubts) he cannot say much. Mr. Giles is very warmly in your interest and informed me that the members of the Bar in Montgomery and Anson were decidedly for you without exception. He further remarked that he waited at home a day longer than he intended to see Mr. Caldwell but failed to do so, from him he expected to learn the wishes of the profession in the West. Mr. Giles and Mr. Pearson are both of Opinion that the profession in the West will be very far from supporting Mr. Wilson for the appointment generally. Mr. Pearson will probably be in the Assembly from Rowan and it is hoped and believed that Mr. Caldwell will be out for Salisbury. Mr. Morehead informed me that he had written to the Governor from Randolph and also to Mr. Bailey the Solicitor of the Edenton Circuit. If the members of the profession are for you in the East as I expect they are I can see no possible reason why you should not be appointed by the Legislature, at least. I understand that John B. Kelly¹ Esqr will be a Candidate in Moore County, and he says that a principal object in going to the Legislature is to vote for you. As I before remarked to you, I am very desirous that the Govr. and Counsel would appoint you as it will certainly have the effect to remove the only possible objection that can be urged against you (to wit) your connection with the Bank.

If I could know when the Counsel would meet I would write to Genl. Gray and would get Mr. Morehead to do so likewise and insist on his attending the meeting. I would be much gratified to hear from you, and to know what are the present prospects.

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From William J. Alexander.²

SALISBURY April 11th 1829.

I have understood that your name would probably be brought before the Governor and Counsel to fill the vacancy on the supreme court bench. I hope that you will not permit any private consideration to withhold you from accepting the appointment should it be tendered. I believe it to be the wish of every lawyer in the State that you should fill that station and have no doubt that the appointment will be confirmed by the legislature. Mr. Wilson has since he has been on the circuit, withdrawn his name and what is quite strange speaks of being a candidate to supply Branch' place. How this may be I cannot tell. Marshall Polk who left him at Burke brought the information. I hope you will let me hear from you.

[Address: Raleigh]

¹John B. Kelly had been a member of the state Senate in 1818.

²William Julius Alexander of Mecklenburg, member of the House of Commons, 1826-1828; speaker, 1827.

*From William Bethell.*¹

OAK HALL April the 16th, 1829.

Dear Sir. I drop you a few lines which will inform you I am well and family. hoping you and your family is well, I have nothing very strange to communicate to you, only our neighbour^d is very much alarmed respecting the small pox, which was brought on from Washington a few weeks ago, by some Indians. Mr. Hopkins family near the old Iron Works, has got it vary bad one of the family is *Dead* Whend I left Raleigh I did not expect to be a Candidate for this year, but finding some of my old friends vary anektious I should offer and if I do I shall decline speculation. I have come to the Conclusion provided it shall meet with your approbation, to purchase your River track of Land, for I am willing to give up all I did of trade and Settle my self down as a Rockingham farmer. I will give you Eight thousand Dollars for your land. I will pay you as follows. Two thousand Dollars down whend you give me possession and Six thousand Dollars, in three Instalments. Two thousand dollars in 1829. Two thousand dollars in 1830, the same in 1831, the same in 1832, which notes shall be on Interest until paid. you have nothing more to do only say wheather you will exceed to my proposal, write to me and I will meat you in Hillsborough any time within Twenty days, except our Superior Court Weeks. Please drop me a few lines in answer wheather you feel disposed to sell of not. I should be vary glad to hear from you, you may be well assured if you feel disposed to sell there will be no disapointment on my part, for I will comply with my promise in every sense of the word.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

*From James C. Johnston.*²

Dear Sir

HAYES, 18th April 1829.

I have made a small collection, as you observed when here, of Portraits of distinguished men in our State and shall perhaps extend it to the U. S.

I have a great veneration for enlarged mental endowments, but still more for strict moral rectitude, both of these united with a firm, decided

¹William Bethell of Rockingham County, state Senate, 1817-1821; member of the House of Commons, 1829.

²James Cathcart Johnston of "Hayes," Chowan County, a son of Governor Samuel Johnston, was one of the richest men in the State. He was a man of great culture and collected a considerable part of the valuable library which is still at Hayes. His asking Ruffin to sit for a portrait was a great compliment coming from him since he declined to admit to his collection the likeness of any one who was not a Federalist or, later, a Whig.

independent spirit to do what is *right*, regardless of the consequences, constitute in my opinion the truly great and perfect man. Wealth and fame popular applause and public honors are *due* to such a character, most certainly they add nothing intrinsically to it.

The object of this note is to ask the favor of you to sit for your Portrait, to the Painter at Raleigh whom you spoke of when here, but whose name I have forgotten. If you can spare the time I shall take it as a great favor. I have written to my friend Hogg, on this subject among other matters.

With great respect,

Yrs.

J. A. C. JOHNSTON.

[Address: Thomas Ruffin, Esquire
Edenton.]

*From Emmanuel Shober.*¹

SALEM April 24, 1829.

Since I had the pleasure to see you in this place, I have convened with most of the Gentlemen of the Bar, on this circuit, touching the vacancy on the Supreme Court Bench, and their opinion is unanimous that you should fill it. As far as regards the Stockholders in the State Bank on the other hand, they would certainly regret to lose your services as President of that institution for we anticipate much from your judicious and energetic management, and many of them think you should not leave them, because they acceded to every thing you demanded of them e'er you accepted the appointment, and but for the reason that at the crisis it may be of infinitely more advantage to the state, and to the best rights of the Citizens to have a man of undoubted legal acquirement and unyielding integrity on the Supreme Court Bench than to see such a character a president of a Bank merely. I as a Stockholder should think so too; under such impression and although those interested may consider you pledged for a year at least they should in my estimation not hesitate a moment to give you up and suffer you without a murmur to receive the appointment from the Governor and Council; it is very true if the next General Assembly happens to be composed of the same material as last year, there may be fear as to your success finally, for men who are willing to trample upon private rights and to rend asunder social order, would certainly prefer a kindred spirit in that station, it is to be hoped however, that there is a redeeming spirit in the State, and that the party will not be as strong next session as it was the last. My own opinion is, and I offer it to you in sincerity, that if the Office is offered to you by the Governor and Council, you should receive it but for obvious reasons you

¹Emmanuel Shober was a well-known business man of Salem. He was a member of the state Senate, 1824-1825, 1827-1828.

should not seek it if it is not offered to you, your pretensions are such, that there is but little doubt you will have friends enough in the Legislature to present you with the appointment.

As far as regards the important questions to be heard at the ensuing meeting of the Stockholders, there is a considerable division in opinion amongst those interested here, as far as I can ascertain however, they are opposed to an Assignment to Trustees without regarding its sure tendency of inflaming passions already turbulent, such a step could not but greatly impair the value of the paper and jeopardize the soundness of the debt, the Bank it appears to us should do every thing not too inconsistent with its own interests, to allay the violent temper and not brave it, which as it appears to us from our present view of the subject, an assignment would do, for the alarm would immediately sound from the Dismal Swamp to the mountains, that the Bank for the purpose of avoiding something tries to skulk, and the anti Bank gentry would lay their fingers on the property in the hands of the Trustees, with no less scruple, and with as much *propriety at least* as in the hands of the corporation, it is true in either case the result of an investigation before the proper tribunal, if tested upon correct principles, could not but be favourable, yet it would be one of those games, counting the expense, trouble and hazard, in which the winner would be looser.

No fresh hold therefore should be given to that party. Many of the Stockholders think that the affairs of the Bank should be wound up under the present organization of the Bank, curtailing expenses and simplifying the machinery by degrees, to a remnant, and then assign such remnant for the purpose of a more speedy close, to Trustees etc. Others of the Stockholders think and of this class I am one, that it would be safest all round, in the steps to be taken at the meeting to have an eye to a renewal of the Charter either seperately or on some consolidation principle, for in one shape or the other the State will have Banks, in such a measure the Corporation should meet the Legislature *half way* but no farther, in this way, probably a compromise could be effected advantageous to both parties, in any such attempt however it is evident that the State should not exact any bonus or privilidge and the Capital should be reduced one third at least, which it would seem could be but affected by the Bank, in extinguishing part of the Stock by purchase. These however are but crude notions. We have been trying to pitch upon someone from here, to represent us at the meeting there are but few Stockholders here however who would answer the purpose, and who from various causes cannot attend:—several of my friends had a wish that I should go one, but as they want me to offer for the Legislature and believing that some steps will be taken at the meeting which may create an alarm, and which as one of the meeting might affect my prospects, they do not urge it upon me,—the reason is certainly not without foundation—at the same time professional business on other matters renders it expedient that I should stay at home.

Thus selected we have no alternative but to appoint some one as our proxy near you, with certain general instruction, and for that purpose we extend to you a power to two jointly and severally, perhaps, in order that if one should not agree with our views, the other probably will, under such a view our choice has fallen upon yourself and Mr. Cameron, you will be good enough to advise us without much delay whether it will be agreeable to you, to act, we should be very glad if you would, as far as we have learned, your views and our own pretty well agree. We do not know what Judge Camerons views are upon the whole we want a proxy who is not for measures too rank. Advise us fully as to man and measures if you please in time to arrange matters it shall all be sub rosa.
Hon. T. Ruffin.

From Andrew Joyner.¹

WELDON 25th April 1829.

Since I had the pleasure of seeing [you] in Raleigh, I have had free and frequent conversations with gentlemen of the bar in this and the neighbouring counties, and it affords me much gratification to be able to state that you are most decidedly preferred by them to fill the vacant seat on the supreme court bench. If Mr. Gaston was a candidate, I find there would be considerable difference of opinion among them, as to which of you ought to be selected to fill the appointment, but it is now generally understood that he positively declines. I mentioned to several of them that although the office if tendered to you would probably be willingly accepted, yet I apprehended you would not move in the matter to obtain it. In this they united with me in opinion that you are wrong, if the determination should prevent you from conforming to the established usage of signifying to the Governor in writing or otherwise, your willingness to accept the office, if it be conferred upon you. They apprehend it is the only way according to present usage, from which the Govr. may not think proper to depart, in which your name can come before the council, and that no feelings of delicacy ought to prevent you from yielding to it. I was informed a few days ago by a friend entirely to be relied upon, that Col. Lockhart had stated to him he should vote for you, if nominated, provided he attended at the meeting of the council, but he did not think it would be in his power to be there. Mr. Alston will probably vote for Mr. Seawell, but I have no authority for saying so.

Judge Ruffin

Raleigh.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

¹Andrew Joyner of Halifax, 1786-1856, a colonel of the War of 1812, had been a member of the Commons from Martin, 1811-1813. From 1835 to 1852 he was senator from Halifax, and in 1838, 1840, and 1846 was speaker. He was a noted man of affairs in his section of the State.

From Frederick Nash.

HILLSBORO the 27th of April, [1829]

* * * * *

My Supr. Court circuit terminated last week, to me in a way, as to *money*, entirely satisfactory—to you however it would have been but poor gleanings. The prospects of the profession are truly discouraging at Rowan there was but *one* return. Chatham three Randolph abt. 20, Davidson, Stokes, and Guilford averaged I think about 10. Have you no vacant clerkship or runner-ship in the Bank, that you can bestow upon a friend. What think you of the gold business, or have you ever tho't about it. I am convinced a very valuable business may be done in that way—in Davidson particularly, the mines in that country are tho't to be more valuable, from the greater abundance of the metal and its superior fineness. I have joined a company, there, so that if the Bank should need any of the precious metal to pluck its drowning honor from the deep, you will know where to apply.

Joseph Wilson is not a candidate for the vacancy on the Bench but *is* for that in the Senate of the United States. Judge Martin I understood will be before the Legislature for the former. From what I can gather from different quarters, there is no doubt of your success before the Legislature. Caldwell is a candidate for the Senate in Rowan and *without* opposition. R. Pearson and Col. Polk for the Commons, the election of the former is certain. I am in hopes that both Robt. Williamson and R. Benton will be in from Lincoln. I understand it was their intention and wrote to the latter urging it upon him. Jas. Graham it is said intends declining that must be prevented.

I found my family well and trust yours is in like condition—has Mrs. Ruffin yet become reconciled to great folks and great manners.

[Address: Raleigh]

From Wright C. Stanly.

[NEW BERN, N. C., May 6, 1829.]

I this moment learnt from Mr. Roberts that he leaves here in the morning for Wilmington where he expects to meet you on your Bank expedition. He also informs me that you will in a few weeks visit Newbern. You know how glad I shall be to see you. Let me therefore apprise you that I am at home during the residue of this and the whole of next week. On the third Monday in May I must be at Wayne C. C. and the ensuing week at Duplin. I return from Duplin probably on Saturday and am then at home for some time. With this information before you, I hope you will so time your visit that I may have the pleasure of seeing

you. Permit me to reassure you how glad I shall be to have you with me. I have already given my sister notice to have a room prepared under the firm hope that while you are in town you will abide with me.

I am this morning hesitating how I shall direct this letter. I am inclined to address you the Hon. Thos. R. Judge of the *Supreme Court of Law of N. Ca.* but I will defer the title till next Saturday when we shall be informed of the decision of the Council.

Surely they cant they will not hesitate—the interest of the State the permanency of the present system calls for your appointment and acceptance.

God bless you

W. C. STANLY.

[Address: Wilmington N. C.]

From Joseph B. Skinner.

PLANTATION HOUSE 16th May 1829.

* * * * *

We have not as yet heard who is appointed Judge. You can let me know. It is at all times, but particularly at this vastly important to the State of N. C. who the individual may be, for legal attainments, are not the only qualification.

We cannot ascertain here when the Stockholders are to meet. If it is not in our harvest either Mr. Collins or myself will attend. I hope he may be prevailed on.

My dear sir this with my other letter I am fearful will break you down. I will now only request the favor of you to detain Eden in Raleigh until you and Mr. Devereux can send answers on the subject referred to you, for which you will lay me under high obligations not to be forgotten.

Be so good as to make my best respects to Mrs. Ruffin and Miss Catherine and believe me dear Sir,

[Address: Raleigh.]

From John Owen to Thomas Ruffin, and George E. Badger.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

No. CAROLINA May 22nd. 1829.

To Thomas Ruffin and Geo. E. Badger Esqrs.

Gentlemen,

Permit me to call your attention to an act passed at the last meeting of the General Assembly of this State, Chapter 38, authorising the

Governor to appoint two Commissioners to revise, digest, alter and amend all the statute and Common law in force in this State, relating to Executors and administrators; and also to revise, digest, alter and amend so much of the statute and common law, concerning heirs, devisees, and creditors of deceased persons estates, as shall be properly connected in the opinion of said commissioners with the law relating to Executors and administrators, so far as to form a code or system on the title of Executors and administrators, which shall be founded on principles of Justice, and suited to the true policy and present situation of the people of this State, etc.

In the performance of that part of my duty growing out of this act, I desire to offer you the commission.

If it is important that this work be done at all, it is of the first importance that it be done well, and by those, in whose professional skill and attainments, the next Legislature will have confidence; and I certainly hazard nothing in saying, there are no gentlemen of the profession in the State, from whose hands such a work would be by them better received, and more freely and fully compensated.

I ask the favor of an answer as soon as convenient, and subscribe myself.

Most respectfully

Your obdt. servt.

JNO. OWEN.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From William Gaston.

NEWBERN May 22d, 1829.

My principal difficulty in giving you an opinion on the question whether the State Bank ought to close its concern, arises from my inability to form one with which I am entirely satisfied. I entertain no doubt but that there is a great and very injurious excess of banking capital in the State, and I see no prospect of the removal of the tremendous evils which it has occasioned to the community but by a diminution of that capital. The withdrawal of one of the Banks from banking operations effects this object, and so far seems to be beneficial. The wild and wicked spirit which was shewn in our last Legislature, and which it is to be feared is not allayed, renders it very desirable that the property of your stockholders should be placed beyond the reach of confiscation. Besides, while all the existing banks continue, there is little probability that the excessive indebtedness of the People will be materially lessened. These are very obvious views of the subject, but on that account not the less weighty. They had induced me to believe that the proposed measure was salutary, and this opinion I expressed at the last Assembly. But it is exceedingly dangerous to decide on any proposition

without a full understanding of *the mode* in which it is to be executed. If on an assignment collections are pressed with vigour, there must be wide-spread distress. The other Banks must then follow your example in order to save themselves. The U. S. Bank must press the local banks with a view to its security, and a state of things must arise presenting temptations for the most desperate remedies. I am uninformed how in the event of an assignment it is designed to make collections. Are the assignees to receive partial payments, or are they to renew the paper of the debtors? If the latter course be adopted, the assignees will be in fact managers of the Bank, and must have almost as many Clerks etc. as the Bank now has. Is it designed that the Assignees should take judgment, and then collect by instalments? Such a course would produce a general panic among all the Creditors—and certainly with the remaining banks; and debtors and property would be sacrificed. How is it proposed that you shall pay your deposits and your notes? Unless some scheme is adopted which may inspire confidence, the paper of the Bank will lose currency and this loss would be almost equivalent to a total withdrawal of that amount from circulation. Before I can venture to express an opinion on the proposition that is to be before the Stockholders I must have an opportunity of seeing its details and endeavouring to trace its practical consequences.

On the other point mentioned in your letter I can not, my dear Sir, presume to give you counsel. The responsibility of the Assignee or Assignees will be vast indeed and there is no individual in the State more fitted to discharge the duties to which this responsibility is attached than yourself. But whether you ought to undertake them, is a question involving so many considerations which can be known to yourself only, that you alone can with propriety decide it.

I fear that what I have written will not aid you in coming to a conclusion on either of the points mentioned in your note. But I could not forbear from answering your call on me as far as I was able, and thus manifesting my disposition at least to comply with every request of your's.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.
[Address: Raleigh.]

From David F. Caldwell.

CHARLOTTE May 26th 1829.

I look forward with a good deal of interest, to the resolves of the Stockholders at their approaching meeting. If I might be permitted to offer

an opinion on the subject of the future operations of the Bank, I would say in most decided terms, as matters are now going on smoothly, it would be injudicious to hazard any material change. Nor ought the Stockholders to adopt any resolutions, as regards the installments to be paid by the debtors. This matter ought to be confided to the President and Directors, who ought best to know the exigencies of the Bank and the condition of the people. I can only speak as to this section of the State, and I say confidently, that the Bank will receive more by exacting fines, than by exacting ten per cent. It does seem to me that it would conduce to the interest of the Bank as well as the Directors themselves if they were required to pay some amount in addition to the interest. It would operate as a gradual extinguishment of their debts which would be desirable, and would be bringing more funds into the Bank.

I hope also to be excused for expressing a decided opinion against assigning the effects of the Bank to a Trustee. Would such a measure produce any good result and would it not be ascribed to the worst of motives? Besides the effect and the object would not be understood and the demagogues of the day would seize upon it to influence the public mind. Those who wish to sit on the high seats in the synagogues, are looking forward to the meeting of the Stockholders with the hope that something will be done, that in the end will aid their views. The Bank furor is subsiding and that you know will not answer these purposes.

It is matter of surprise, that Governor Owen has displayed so much want of good sense in his letter to Judge Toomer.¹ Does he suppose

¹The letter referred to follows:

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

To the Honorable

John D. Toomer—Greeting,

We reposing special trust and confidence in your prudence, integrity, abilities, and learning in the Law; do commission you Judge of the Supreme Court, of this State, you having been thereunto recommended by the Council of State: and authorize you, after taking such oath or oaths, as are necessary for your qualification, to enter upon said office, exercise and perform its authorities and duties, and to receive and enjoy the salary thereunto annexed until the end of the next General Assembly.

In testimony whereof I John Owen, Governor Captain General and Commander in Chief, have caused the great seal of the State to be hereunto affixed and have signed the same at the City of Raleigh on the 8th day of May A. D. 1829 and of the Independence of the United States the 53rd.

JNO. OWEN.

By the Governor

JNO. B. MUSE P. Sec'y.

N. B. The above commission was inclosed to Judge Toomer in the following letter:

My Dear Sir

RALEIGH May 8th 1829

The Council of State have unanimously elected you to fill the vacancy on the Bench of the Supreme Court, occasioned by the death of the late Ch: Justice Taylor. This event was of course not anticipated by you, as no one was authorized, either by yourself or your friends, to place your name before that body,—nor was it done: but after several ineffectual ballotings, between the

that the appointment will be confirmed merely because he has expressed such an opinion. We admire Judge Toomer as a man, but I do not believe he will be supported in this quarter as a Judge.

It is well understood here, that the field is open and was intended to be left open by the council.¹ My friends Nash and J. Graham will explain to you fully my reasons for declining to run for the Boro'. Your trip to Salisbury on official business was seized upon and averred to be for political purposes. This raised a ferment that would have defeated Genl. Jackson himself. What they will do with me in the County, I can't well say. Their man has not yet avowed himself. Every effort was made during our County Court, to feel the public pulse and ascertain what force they could rally against me. I think they are waiting to hear from Raleigh. The man who has to contend with the lowest intrigue, the meanest hypocisy and the prejudices excited against the Bank, must be on the alert. If I should have opposition I pray you to think of me during the hot days of June, July and August. In pursuance of notice heretofore given I enclose my resignation, as President of the Salisbury Branch. I would not do so, were it not, that Mr. Chambers is now a member of the Board who is well qualified, is deeply interested and has leisure to attend to the duties of the office. I have little hesitation in saying, under his management we will keep even with the U. States Bank. If my resignation has any effect publically speaking it will be against me, as the debtors would rather see me at the head of that Branch. I cannot discharge the duties, it is therefore my my duty to resign.

N. B. Take care how you talk to a man from my neighborhood.
[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

candidates, the Council with one accord, made a communication to the Executive, proposing to fill the vacancy, by granting to you the temporary Commission; and I trust it is not necessary to assure you, how much pleasure it afforded that department of the Government to carry their wishes into execution. And permit me among your many friends, to congratulate you on this distinction, which your well established character, so richly merits, and to express a wish that you will accept the commission at the hands of the Council, not entertaining a doubt, but that it will be confirmed by the next Legislature.

I have the honor to be
With the highest regard
Your Obed Servt and friend
JNO. OWEN.

Jno. D. Toomer Esquire.

[From Governor Owen's Letter Book, pages 49 and 50.]

¹When the council met in May, there was a bare quorum present, and the result of several ballots was a tie between Ruffin and Seawell. Judge Toomer's name was then put in nomination and he was unanimously elected, but few people thought that the matter was settled by the temporary appointment.

From William J. Bingham.

HILLSBORO'—June 2nd, 1829.

Sterling has got along as usual during the session just ended; that is, he has made moderate but regular advancement,—as much as is ordinarily to be expected of his years. Of this however, you will prefer to be your own judge, after you have examined him.

Duncan¹ is a *nondescript*. I never taught a little fellow with as much pleasure. If he should not get his *growth too soon*, he is destined to be an intellectual giant; and he does not seem to me to have the usual marks of precocity. But I can't speak of Duncan without some enthusiasm.

Please remember me respectfully and affectionately to Mrs. R. and Miss Catherine.

Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Cadwallader Jones.

HILLSBORO' June 12th 1829.

I was in Guilford a few days since examining the gold mines in that county; there are three which I visited of very great value, Hodgsons, seven miles south of Greensboro', Clements and Co's three miles north west on the Salem road and Davie's two miles below Jamestown, either of these if properly managed would yield a better income to the number of hands employed than any estate in N. Carolina, but they are in the hands of those who so far know the value of them as to be altogether indisposed to part with them; there are many others in that neighbourhood now worked and they are daily discovering new veins.

(Inter nos) Whilst in Guilford I had a long conversation with Mr. Dick of Greensboro' on the subject of the vacancy on the Supreme court bench, he informs me that Guilford and all the adjoining counties are extremely favourable to your wishes in relation to this subject; he also told me he had a conversation with Judge Mangum on his return from the western circuit, who informed him that the west was decidedly favourable to your appointment. It is probable however that Judge Mangum expresses the opinion of that section as it existed previously to the appointment of judge Toomer, whether this event will affect their views as to the permanent appointment or not, you are better able to determine than I am. Mr. Dick expressed an opinion, that it will be a point of policy with Mr. Wilson (who you know is a candidate for the U. S.

¹Duncan Kirkland MacRae, the son of John McRae of Fayetteville, and the nephew of Mrs. Ruffin. After the death of his mother he lived with his aunt for some years.

Senate) and his friends, to have a good understanding with your friends and to act with them if possible in both elections. If Wilson holds on, Fisher must withdraw; the most extravagant egotism cannot blind him so far as he should not perceive the impossibility of success; his influence I understand is inconsiderable whatever it may be, his withdrawal will take away any inducement to dispose of it to your prejudice, as he will no longer have any personal object to accomplish and will probably consolidate the west for Wilson and for you. I hold Dr. Smith's pretensions for the Senate as nothing as an Adams man and a tariff man, can't be thought of.

I have seen the report of the bank committee and am altogether pleased with the course adopted by the stockholders, tho' I was somewhat disappointed and Mrs. Jones's and my own selfish views considerably thwarted, for Mr. Benchan had induced us to believe that an assignment would certainly be made and that you would as certainly return to Hillsboro'. But he is a miserable creature who cannot find pleasure in the aggrandisement of his friend tho' it should cost him much of personal gratification, such is our feeling on the present occasion and we wait with what patience we may for the coincidence of your interest and our pleasure which we hope will be in conjunction before the winter solstice. Becky desires to be affectionately remembered to Mrs. Ruffin and thanks her for the potatoes which she says was a most acceptable present; I should say a pretious one, for she doles them out to us two or three at a time for a month at least. Please make my best respects to her and be assured of the sincere regard of

CADR. JONES.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From James A. Vaughan.

RICHMOND COUNTY June 27th. [1829]

Dear Sir—I hope you will forgive me for presuming so much on the attention you paid me in my more youthful days as to request you to lay before the Navy department my name for the appointment of Midshipman U. S. N. should any vacancy occur. I have long entertained a desire to join the Naval Service and understanding that the choice of a profession is in my own power and that my future pursuit in life will depend on my own discretion I am anxious to leave no honourable means unattempted to accomplish my wishes. A mere Communication to the Secretary without any recommendation on special claims to notice would be apt to remain unanswered on the files of his office. I am therefore solicitous for you to make known my desire to Governor Branch, leaving you to state such particulars of my character as may be desired or you may judge proper to make. I am in my Seventeenth year, and of my

qualifications you are better acquainted than I can be. Should you choose to assist me in this affair I shall gratefully remember your kindnesses. If not I hope I shall not have given you any offence or committed any impropriety in making this communication and that you will not attribute to a spirit of presumption what is dictated by a belief I am pursuing the only honourable course I know of to advance my favourite inclination. I have been formerly acquainted with Sec. Branch but by this time he has probably forgotten me and would lay aside my application with the Numerous herd of unknown applicants. Should I not be successful However in obtaining a station in this arduous yet honourable and useful profession I would most certainly be consoled by the 9th beatification added to Christ's sermon the mount, "Blessed is he that expects nothing for he shall never be disappointed," and that no avaricious or dishonourable motives have actuated my application.

Hon. T. Ruffin.

N. B. I shall make no apology for the defects of this communication, for confined to daily Labour as I have been for the last 6 months I cannot be expected to have much literary leisure, the requisite "otium cum dignitate" for Epistolary Compositions. Besides, to borrow a suggestion from Pope or Swift in their correspondence, I am now suffering under a dreadful embargo excluding the Importation of good paper, good pens or good Ink.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Henry T. Garnett.

WASHINGTON CITY 28th July 1829

Having intimated in your kind letter enclosing an introduction to Mr. Branch, a desire to hear from me again I can no longer delay a compliance with that request. I can never sufficiently thank you for your kindness in complying so promptly with my application, and although no benefit has accrued to me from your services on that occasion, yet I shall ever esteem you as you are in reality a *relation* and one disposed to serve me if in your power. Notwithstanding your caution to me as to the use to be made of your intriductory letter, such was my confidence, (from my knowledge of your influence in N. C.) in its recommendation, that I unhesitatingly presented it with some others of like character from other influential friends to Mr. Branch. After giving him some time to deliberate on my application and qualifications, I called on him to hear his determination thereon; and you may judge I was not a little mortified when I heard him close a handsome eulogium on you and my other friends, by the commonplace (tho often as in this case, false) assertion, that there was no situation in the department under his control to which he could invite me; and my mortification was still increased when he

refused, upon an interrogatory to that effect, to say my claims should be considered provided vacancies occurred. The true reason of my failure I believe is to be found in the clause of your letter to me, upon party politics. Had you been a violent partizan of the present powers, no difficulties would have been discovered in the way and I should have been placed in some of the vacancies then existing or subsequently made. Perhaps it is well for me, that success has not crowned this effort, as I may have to rely more upon my own labours and energies, and ultimately succeed better than I might have done here. Had you been here on the spot or had you have written direct to Mr. Branch without my intervention I believe success would have attended the application; but the secretaries are so frequently presented with introductory letters by the applicants themselves, that they place less dependance on them than they should do; and moreover they find it a much easier matter to deny the applicants than they do their influential friends.

There is very little confidence to be placed in the weight of character of the writer of any letter unless the writer is near at hand to second the same by a personal proposition of such recommended friend to the notice of the secretary. I have learned all this however too late or I would have applied through some member of Congress immediately the names of the Cabinet were given to the public. From my own experience of the ways and conduct of different individuals in elevated situations at this place, I am almost induced to deprecate the elevation of a friend to places of honour and high trust; lest the poisonous miasm which floats so thickly in these departments here, should settle on his heart and infect and disease his entire moral system—It really seems falsehood and dissimulation have an official resting place here, and whilst slight improprieties and errors in the management of some of our fiscal concerns are blazoned forth to the world as crimes of deepest hue, the corrupt influences of the heart as evinced daily in many of the actions of our official characters are so twisted by the political ingenuity of partizan editors and others as to impose on the credulity of the world and pass current for virtue. Pleased as I should be to see you this winter in the Senate of the nation on many a/cs. yet I should fear even you would suffer in some respects from coming in contact, with iniquity dressed in such influential apparel or what is still worse "spiritual wickedness in high places" (there being some of the great ones here strict attendants at Church etc.

I turn now from this loathsome subject, (for truly it is so to one conversant with this little world of Washington) to one which in every point of view is engaging and important. The christian religion is so totally different from any thing in the world, that nothing short of the faith it teaches would induce me to believe, it will still advance and progress in opposition to every enemy, untill its triumphs and influences shall be witnessed from "the rivers to the ends of the earth," and all descriptions of intelligent beings, from the least unto the greatest, shall participate in its blessings—Holding the above opinion, you need not

think it strange that I was not much surprised at the information contained in your letter, of your espousing this good and glorious cause. My dear Sir, when I reflect upon what the good being has done I trust is doing for me, I can only say I am astonished that any should be left out—that all men do not enter immediately into his service; for surely one so merciful as to suffer me to experience the benefits of the atonement, never will reject any who come unto him. I sincerely praise God, for your present deliverance and hope you will join me in the devout prayer of my soul, that, sooner than either of us should deny him by our conduct,—bring a reproach on his cause, or turn aside from the holy commandments delivered to us, he would take us from the world suddenly and cut short his work in righteousness. So few, however of your profession, become pious or in any beneficial manner engage in the service of our heavenly master, that I confess more than ordinary surprize and satisfaction was created in my bosom by this information, more particularly as it was my impression (erroneous perhaps) while in Carolina, that you possessed infidel sentiments, or at any rate viewed religion merely as a good system of ethics and as of no necessity in the salvation of the soul, Our relations are all delighted with the happy intelligence (I mean the religious ones) although some of the old ones are bigoted, and uncharitable towards the Church you have joined. I am glad to inform you that a great change has taken place with the Episcopal Church in Virginia during the last 8 or 10 years, and it is so far as my acquaintance extends, blessed with much greater spirituality in ministry and membership than formerly. Our object I trust is to get to heaven and we need not dispute about the road to be travelled. Faith, Hope Charity, perseverance in well doing, self-denial and the like graces and mercy I trust will land us both with our families and friends there.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

To William Boylan.

[July 1, (circa) 1829]

Dear Sir!

I am most unexpectedly called off from my important duties here to attend the sick bed of my aged *Mother*. An express has arrived tonight from my brother to let me know, that she lies at the point of death.¹ Filial duty can never be justifiably neglected under any circumstances; and however important my presence here at this juncture may be considered or in fact be, the demands of business must yield to those of affection and filial offices. I shall therefore set off at Moon rise in the morning. This event makes it necessary and my motives for going embolden me to ask the particular attention of the other members of the

¹Alice Roane Ruffin died July 7, 1829, aged sixty-one. Her husband had died April 17, 1822, aged fifty-four.

Committee to making an abstract of the Reports of Bad Debts, Depreciation of Real Estate, Damages and Interest now accrued on good debts, so as to shew the actual value of the Assets of the Bank, including the Surplus appearing upon our accounts of Profit and Loss. As for the *Deficiencies and Differences of account*, I suppose it is unnecessary to trouble the *Stockholders* with them, except such of them as may be considered lost, as for example the Fayetteville Difference; because for nearly all of them the officers will be responsible. Mr. Browne says he will be at the Bank at 8 o'clock in the morning and Col. Robards has promised me to aid you with his opinion and pen.

If you and the other *Stockholders* who are in favor of an Assignment, should fail in carrying that measure, it may be useful to attempt some other preparatory to winding up the Institution. Without any real interest in the Bank, except that of feeling and of duty, to do my best faithfully to serve it for my salary, I have thought it at least indelicate to express an opinion about assigning and therefore have not done so: nor can I judge of the likelihood of the result of the discussions on that question. But none, I think, can doubt of the propriety of adopting *some* measure tending to a final close at the expiration of the Charter. It has occurred to me, that closing a Branch at a time might not be unacceptable to any of the parties—the debtors, creditors, and Legislature. It would make the operation gradual: It has the merit of removing the doubts seriously entertained by many of a great depreciation of the notes: It would prevent *general* distress and would lessen the expenses: And by withdrawing the Branches located immediately in the neighborhood of other Banks many debtors would suffer no inconvenience but that of changing their place of business. Upon the ultimate assignment the difficulties would then be much less than perhaps now. These are views which I have not long taken, for it is but lately that I have turned my thoughts to the subject; and they may be fallacious. But I have considered it my duty to suggest them for consideration, in case your first plan should be defeated, which I think not improbable. I had forgotten a material advantage that might arise out of this project, namely, that time will thereby be gained for the creation of another Bank, whose operations would facilitate much the collection of debts to this Bank. Should any of these reasons be satisfactory to you, upon reflection, might it not be well to bring the matter before the meeting. If so and the Gentlemen who represent the State or the Treasurer should think with you, would it be likely to obtain more favor from the Public or the Legislature, if it appeared to be *their* measure, by inducing one of them to bring it forward? I am sure each of them would act upon his own conviction after consideration.

Mr. Browne intimates a wish still, that I should be one of the Assignees. My absence, if nothing else, would prevent that, as I cannot execute the Deeds: But I have thought long and anxiously upon the employment and should prefer declining it. I am not sufficiently satis-

fied as to the consequences of the Measure to be willing to act in it. And without the interest of a real Stockholder, I think I ought not to undertake a Trust so great, responsible and difficult and especially since my motives would be so liable to be misunderstood. Professional service I should willingly perform for the Assignees; but the Real Owners, it seems to me, ought to control and manage the Trust. The undertaking is too great and arduous for me; and the event which now calls me away warns me, that my career might be cut short in the midst of the business, to the ruin of my fortune and family and with a blot on my name, a result, even while contingent, not to be risked for money. Yet I hope that this purpose on my part will not be mentioned in a way to influence the discussion or decision of the question of assigning and that it will not so influence them. Others can perform all the duties of mere assignees as well as I can and I doubt not better. If an assignment should be carried, it will then be in due time to consider of the persons to be Assignees; and I hope there will be no difficulty in getting proper, able and honest men to act. These sentiments I would gladly have communicated at large in conversation: But a providential affliction deprives me of the opportunity and I must therefore be content to hint them in this imperfect manner. I sincerely wish that the meeting will calmly consider and wisely determine all the matters before them, providing alike for the security of their property, the satisfaction of their creditors, lenity to their debtors, the appreciation of the notes and the satisfaction of the reasonable, prudent and just part of the Community.

I am Dear Sir your friend and obdt. Svt.

THOMAS RUFFIN.

[Address: Wm. Boylan Esq.
Raleigh.]

From William A. Graham.

VEUVIUS FURNACE, Aug. 10th 1829.

I arrived here from Caswell C. H. about the middle of last month, and had the pleasure to find my father and family in their usually good health. Nothing occurred on my passage worthy of narration, and I have heard of scarce any thing since my arrival except Gold. Nothing before, has ever so completely engrossed the attention of all classes of the community in this section, since my earliest recollection. New discoveries are made every day in this and all the adjoining counties except Iredell, Mecklenburg and Burke however seem to be the localities of the richest mines. The discoveries have indeed, in many instances almost wrought miracles. Those who have been esteemed prudent and cautious, embark in speculation with the greatest enthusiasm—bankrupts have

been restored to affluence, and paupers turned to nabobs. Le Sage's maxim however is observed to be equally true here as in his own country—"All beggars who have leapt into large fortunes either turn misers or prodigals." The latter and perhaps the less censurable extreme appears to be preferred by the favourites of fortune here.

I have availed myself of my recent opportunities in endeavouring to ascertain the public sentiment in regard to the election of a Judge of the Supr. Court, and it affords me pleasure to add that I have conversed with no individual since I left Hillsboro' who did not spontaneously declare his preference for you. At Salisbury I saw H. Giles who expressed a good deal of solicitude on the subject and said it was desired by all the members of the bar there. On the third week of July I was at Lincoln Court, where I saw my brother Jas. and all the other gentlemen of the bar who usually attend there; I understood they all concurred in wishing you elected. Mr. Roberts from Macon informed me there was no doubt but, all the trans-montane members were of the same disposition, with a single exception McDowell¹ of Buncombe. My brother thinks you will not lose a vote west of the Yadkin river except Fisher, that McDowell's objections are not insuperable. I went last week to visit my friends in Mecklenburg and spent a day in Charlotte, did not see Julius Alexander but his intimate friend W. Morrison² Esq. stated without doubt that he would go for you. The above declaration of my brother is made without any qualification as to the result of the elections. For although there will be close contests in many of the counties there is no difference among the candidates in that matter.

James is again a candidate for Rutherford, says he had determined not to be, but that Jas. Carson had announced himself among his friends before the July court and avowed his partiality for the bank bill which was rejected last winter. He spoke moderately in his address to the populace but declared that something should be done against the banks. His object being perceived, he was called on to state *what* should be done, and he was totally at a loss. His election is extremely doubtful. Jas. appears quite certain of his own.³ He has returned to Rutherford and will attend several large popular meetings before the election.

In this county Robt. Burton is a candidate for the Senate and opposed by Danl. Hoke.⁴ There is much difference of opinion as to the result. Burton complains that he had consulted all the men of influence in the county and among others Mr. H. and was requested to offer by all—that the opposition therefore was quite unexpected and surprising. Shipp and Conrad⁵ will probably be returned in the commons. The elections seem to excite but little interest in any of the counties since I left Orange. No measure of any public importance divides the candidates. From

¹Probably John McDowell of Rutherford.

²Washington Morrison of Mecklenburg.

³Carson was elected as was Graham.

⁴Daniel Hoke of Lincoln was a member of the Senate from 1829 to 1834.

⁵Bartlett Shipp and Daniel Conrad. Shipp was a candidate and was elected.

inquiries made in passing through the Salisbury congressional district I think Mr. Giles will be elected.¹ There no doubt but Mr. Williams² will beat Mr. King by a large majority. I don't think Mr. Wilson can unite the western votes in the election for Senator, and Fisher is out of the question. Should Mr. Burton be elected to the Legislature I incline to think he will be run. I shall set out for Hillsboro in time to reach Guilford Co. Court on 3rd Monday.

To. Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From James H. Ruffin.

CASWELL. August 16th, 1829.

As I anticipated, my election has been lost by unfair voting and by the too great confidence of my friends. Wilson³ and Rue obtained each 100 single votes from the great anxiety of their supporters without any intention of leaving me at home. The result of the election has dissatisfied a great majority of the Citizens of the County, to whom it is a matter of surprise and indignation, and who appeared thunderstruck when it was ascertained. It is however too late to remedy the evil and thus terminates my political course. It was with great reluctance I engaged in the contest this year at all, with still more regret that I pursued it and with great joy that I thus come out of it.

I have not yet had it in my power to visit Rockingham since you left here. I go there today and while up shall go to the river and see how your matters stand there.

About the affairs of the sale and division of property here, your convenience may now be consulted entirely as mine is now out of the question. These things however can be arranged between us when I see you, which I expect, will be about the 1st Septemr.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Emmanuel Shober.

SALEM Aug 16th 1829.

The election is over and I am defeated by a considerable majority, by Gabriel T. Moore, last year of the House of Commons. I mainly

¹Giles was elected, but his health was so poor that he resigned before taking his seat.

²Lewis Williams.

³John Wilson.

regret this on account of the vacancy on the Supreme Court Bench, to be filled the next session, in which election I was anxious to have a vote.

The Bank question was the bone of contention, yet the more abstract question, I could have gotten over very easily, but being unhappily possessed of a little stock, and having been a member of the Committee appointed by the stockholders last December with Mr. Brown (that wealthy and proud aristocrat as he is politely termed by *littel politicians*) at our heels, these proved unpardonable offences: independant of all this, being a Moravian, who do not bear arms as the saying is forms another great bug bear; whenever I run gainst opposition, my old rival Hill¹ I could have beaten very easily, my opponents knew this hence it was an object with them to bring out a new hand, and one that would if possible divide my former friends, which they effected in bringing out Moore, the most of his relations having formerly supported me.

Although I am beaten yet the principle as far as regards the Banks is not defeated, or the Court John Banner and John Buttner being elected the Comms, who will prove orthodox as well in relation to the Banks, as on the question who shall be supreme court Judge—from the adjoining counties you will have heard from e'er this line reaches you.

* * * * *

Honle Thomas Ruffin.
[Address: Raleigh.]

From Hugh Waddell.

HILLSBORO', Augst. 18th—29.

You are the good Samaritan:—the wounds inflicted by these thieves have been cured by the oil and wine of your letter. In first becoming a Candidate last year I yielded to the reasons of some friends, which seemed at least plausible. They said I should render myself service in the way of my profession, by extending my acquaintance. This year I was bound I thought to tender my services to those who so willingly and kindly honoured me the last year:—besides, the struggle on this Bank question, put my blood up and I thought I should be deserting the Bottom in which every thing dear to us was embarked, were I to flinch. These were the reasons on which I acted and not from any belief in the *extraordinary wisdom* of the people or even in their disposition to do right when it was made plain to them, for I have too long known the overwhelming power of Demagogues:—But it would not all do:—You are right in supposing Nash's speech had some effect, though if he thought so poor fellow, he would regret it greatly.

¹John Hill, member of the House of Commons, 1819-1822; senator, 1823, 1825, 1830-1831.

The true reason of my defeat was a combination of Montgomery,¹ Stockard's² friends and Tayloe.³ I say Stockard's friends for I believe him to be honest and above low artifice; the rest are capable of any business with which the records of Newgate are acquainted:—They all hung together and wrote to different parts of the County detailing *lies* of all manner of Hues.

I join you in deploring the situation of N. C. and fully believe that a certain Bladen Genl is capable of the course attributed to him,—the Blackguard is so *ingrained* in him that he cannot get it out—if elected he will be a much more dangerous man than Potter.

I feel the great force My dear Sir of your reasoning and not less of your kindness, in shewing me the utter futility of all Legislative fame when compared with the more *enduring* and *profitable* reputation arising from close application to business. You are indeed right and Susan begs to thank you for this part of the letter more than any other, as it “jumps with her own humour”, she being hugely against all unnecessary absence from home, such as Legislation would require.

I regret my absence from Raleigh only on one account; but if every thing is to be cut loose it would have been unnecessary:—

Nothing shall be repeated of yours though the facts are many of them of common report:

Your wish as to the peaches shall be attended to with pleasure so far as it is possible, but I think there are not 50 peaches (Kennedy) on the farm:—Whatever there are shall be carefully saved for you.

We moved to Town yesterday—Since writing the above, Jesse⁴ informs me his business here is anticipated!!! Thank God for this; pray present me to the stranger,

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From John Giles.

SALISBURY 31. August 1829.

I have taken the liberty, (which, I hope your goodness will pardon) to ask you in confidence and in friendship one question?—at the time, four years since, when application was made to me to offer for Congress, the first objection that I had, was the belief that I would have to resign my office—on enquiry, and after taking the opinion of Judge Murphey through Mr. Fisher, I was induced to believe that I could hold my office as Clerk—and shortly after, I noticed that a case precisely in point

¹William Montgomery, a physician of Orange County, member of the Senate, 1824-1828, 1829-1835; member of Congress, 1835-1841.

²John Stockard, member of the House of Commons, 1826-1831, 1833-1839, 1842-1844.

³Thomas H. Taylor, member of the House of Commons, 1829.

⁴A favorite negro servant of Ruffin's.

occurred in one of the New England States. When, I had the pleasure of seeing you, you asked me, if I should have to resign. I answered no—I thought no more of it, untill Saturday evening, when I returned from Charlotte, I was informed that Judge Martin was of the opinion, I could not hold my office. I understand his opinion is founded on the act of perhaps 90—which speaks of State appointments—can there be an appointment, called a State appointment, unless the appointment be made by the Legislature—can the State act in any other way. Will you do me the great and singular favour; and never to be forgotten to give me your opinion. I write for yourself—our friend Jos. Wilson of Charlotte after being up Town on Monday was taken with a chill that day, and died on Thursday evening about 8 oclk. The Doctrs. said fever—a few minutes before his death he walked across his room.

P. S. Probably it would suit your convenience to write by Mr. Caldwell.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From John L. Henderson.

SALISBURY September the 5th 1829.

I have lately understood that you had some thoughts of visiting this place and Burke shortly on business relating to the Bank. I as a friend would advise you to decline it for the present unless the business should be indispensable. It might by some of your enemies be attributed to improper motives. Your great rival¹ arrived here a few days ago under the pretence, that his visit to this part of the State was to secure a gold mine. But the artifice is too shallow not to be seen through by the most common observer. A seat on the Supreme Court Bench is the mine he wishes to secure. He has left here for Mecklenburg Burke Rutherford, and I believe most of the Western counties. His constant theme is the Supreme Court, and abuse of the Bank. It wont do. He made no impression here and I am pretty confident that will be the result in all the Western counties.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From William K. Ruffin.

CHAPEL HILL Sep. 8th, 1829.

I have been occupied since I left home in preparing myself for the profession I shall probably (with your consent and advice) pursue in life. You are aware of my having often said to you that it was my wish

¹Judge Sewell.

to turn my attention to medicine—as I think myself naturally incapable of becoming eminent in any other profession—and a large family and misfortunes have rendered you unable to give me a patrimony sufficient to maintain me, I had intended when in Raleigh to have spoken to you at large on this head—to have asked your advice and to have assured you of my wish to submit myself to your parental guardianship and abide by your kind counsel, but your time seemed so much taken up by business, and you appeared rather averse to enter into any conversation with me, that I was silent on the subject. I now think it a duty I owe to you and myself to request your opinion upon it. I wish to lead an honourable, a retired and virtuous life—my ambition carries me to desire nothing more than domestic happiness and peace—and I do not think happiness to consist in the acquisition of honor, power and riches. In all my waking dreams and musings I have never desired this world's honors, but have ever thought myself a private person respected and beloved for my virtues by a small circle of friends—this is my ambition—it will be my sole aim to obtain means by which I can with ease retire into private life, associating with a few friends and endeavoring to make them and myself happy.

I have heard you oftentimes speaking of the life of a farmer you said that it was the most innocent the most independent, and the most useful occupation of man. I should prefer that of all other means of gaining a livelihood, but besides your not being able to bestow on me property sufficient for agricultural pursuits I should be unwilling to support myself alone but should wish to assist you in the maintenance of my younger brothers and sisters. For Law I am as you well know little calculated—I cannot with ease express my sentiments—wrap myself in thoughts upon one single abstruse point of Law, nor could I ever become skilled in the arts of chicanery.

I have a taste for literary pursuits, and I believe I could devote my whole life to study—I never could however communicate my knowledge to any one else, but should only study to render myself happy—to gain employment for the mind—to afford me matter for speculation and reflection.

Medicine, I think, is my last resource. I regret that it is so. I have a distaste for it. Of its being an useful, in fact necessary and respectable profession there can be no doubt, but the practice is disagreeable, and onerous. It is a science upon which the lives of men depends, and by a slight mistake in the administering of medicines a Physician may deprive a fellow-being of his existence. How much study, then, and attention should be devoted to it in order to prepare one for healing the diseases of the human frame, the most delicate in its construction, as well as the most beautiful of Nature's works. I hope you will give me your advice. I shall in this, as well as in all other circumstances of life commit myself to your guardianship.

I shall shortly commence my Senior speech.¹ Will you be so good as to suggest to me some ideas upon the subject which I have selected, viz: the probability of S. America's organizing a Republican government. I think that without some great political and moral reformation such an event is not likely to take place, for these reasons to wit; The Catholic Religion from its tenets and government will prove a great obstacle as also the motely population, and the manners and customs, and received opinions, imbibed naturally by a Colony from the Mother Country. I have read nothing upon the subject—as it has been little canvassed by authors—but these objections from the little reflection I have been able to give it appear to be convincing arguments. I am afraid however that I shall not be able to make my audience entertain the same sentiments with myself.

The injunctions contained in your last letter shall be strictly obeyed. I perceive that Mr. Hoskins has declined being Cashier at Salisbury. There is considerable heat displayed by the other students with regard to the Creecy affair. Mr. Blair has few followers. Will you write soon and often? I know that your time is chiefly occupied in Bank business—but a letter from you is a source of such pure delight that I cannot but request you to write me a line occasionally. In my next I shall speak of my studies. This is written in haste. I pray you to excuse it and to answer it as soon as you have leisure.

Kiss my Mother and the children for me.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From John M. Dick.

GREENSBORO Sept 9th 1829.

I recd your kind letter of the 22nd ult by Mr. Haywood. I had learned the fate of the case of Sheppard vs Lane from the public papers before I read your letter. Whether Sheppard could carry up the case is doubtful, he is poor and probably could not give Security—there is another case of the same kind where the plaintiff is able to give Security, I will endeavour to have it carried up. I sincerely join with you in regret that Shober, Waddell, your brother and others of our friends are left out of the Assembly and I fear we shall have our hands full to preserve the integrity of the republic at the next session. I will not, however, despair of the State as long as there is a plank left.

If we can please you, when your friends wish and can preserve the Supreme Court as it now is I shall be much gratified, even if the Legislature should run wild on some other subjects of minor importance. And that we will succeed in this, I have not yet doubted for a moment. I saw Mr. Graham at our Court on his return from the West and he in-

¹William K. Ruffin entered the University of North Carolina in the autumn of 1827 and graduated with the class of 1830.

formed me that so far as he could learn you would not loose a vote in the West unless you lost Charles Fisher. It is possible that either Fisher or Genl. Stokes may attempt an union with the friends of Mr. Toomer and in that way carry off some of your votes in the West. But I think your friends in this part of the State will be so unanimous that when united with your friends elsewhere they will form a phalanx that neither Charly nor the Genl. will be willing to encounter.

In the Counties adjoining to this I think you have nothing to fear unless it is in Orange. Guilford is safe beyond doubt. Randolph I think will go right. Col. Brower¹ the Senator is an intimate friend of mine and I have but little doubt I can carry him—he will carry his relation A. Brower.² As for Cunningham³ the other commoner he has always been a Client of mine, and a warm friend. When I go over to the Superior Court I will set them right if they are not already so. In Davidson Mr. Morehead will probably have more influence than I have, and he will not fail to exercise it—for you have not a more devoted friend any where than he is. Rowan will go right. As for Stokes, I have just had a conversation with Mr. Shepperd who is now here—he says the commoners will certainly vote for you. The Senator is not so certain. He says he will have a conversation with him. Rockingham Mr. Little says will be right. I submit to you the propriety of writing a Letter. You know the man, and knowing him as you do, you cannot fail to see the necessity of a little attention to him. As to Caswell possibly Little could render you some service. Person I know nothing. As for Orange I know not how the Doctor⁴ will be—he was not at the county court. I shall see him next week at Hillsboro and shall have a fair opportunity of finding out how he will go. I think I can have some influence with him. We were raised in the same neighbourhood and have always been on good terms. I will not fail to bring him over if possible. All the profession in this section of the Country are in your interest and I believe nothing will be left undone to secure you the entire vote of the surrounding Counties. John Giles Esqr. and Mendenhall will do what they can in those counties they attend in the Cape Fear Circuit. I shall be able to give you more correct information in a few weeks.

You desire to know who my opponent is? His name is John Gordon, by profession a miller and a thorough going Parker man, a Hickory Quaker, a member of the Manumission Society and withal a vulgar blackguard. He was elected from this County in the Commons in 1821. Several causes conspired to run him as high as he got—there being two Lawyers candidates was one. The sickness in the North Western part of the County. I lost 50 votes at one election (Braces Cross roads) from the last mentioned cause. And the most of the Quakers of his Own

¹Abraham Brower, member of the Senate from Randolph, 1829.

²Abraham Brower, member of the House of Commons from Randolph, 1829.

³Alexander Cunningham, member of the House of Commons, 1829, 1831-1832.

⁴Dr. William Montgomery.

description (to wit Hickory) voted for him. I must do Parker the Justice to say that I believe he neither brought Gordon out or supported him afterwards. Parker was entirely neutral.

Mendenhall was shamefully slandered during the Contest but triumphed over all their falsehoods and now stands on firmer ground than he ever did.

I should be happy to hear from you occasionally, particularly as to your prospects in other parts of the State. All your communications shall be considered strictly confidential, now and at all times hereafter.

Be pleased to tender my respects to your family

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From Frederick Nash.

OXFORD the 12th Sept. [1829]

* * * * *

The death of poor Wilson¹ vacates another important office. I presume Mr. Alexander will fill it. As to the vacancy on the bench I hear the West is very nearly united on you. I fear Genl Stokes—he comes down to take one more race for the Senate of the United States, and will I suspect not be very choice in the use of means.

Present me respectfully to Mrs. Ruffin and the young ladies.

[P. S.] Did you receive a letter from me by Mr. Devereux. I should be glad to have it in my power to communicate to Mrs. Jones when I see her, your opinion upon her difficulties, unless you have communicated them to her, directly.

Poor fees and few of them!!!

[Address: Raleigh.

Endorsed: Fred^k. Nash

Sepr. 1829.]

From John Giles.

WADESBORO 22d. Sept. 1829.

Your friendly and most acceptable letter of the 16 instant was handed me on my arrival at this place. The view you have taken of my situation; and the friendly spirit in which it is expressed has placed me under great obligations. I do assure you, that it is no common place, when, I say, that I am by words unable to make you a suitable return. In my letter from Salisbury, it was my intention to give you a view of the whole

¹Joseph M. Wilson at the time of his death was solicitor.

ground; but the starting of the mail prevented it. For no man on earth is more anxious than myself to stand at all times straight in the sight of my friends. The course that I had determined to take was one founded upon the most careful and at the same time, most painful examination of the circumstances. My determination was in a great measure formed before my first letter. Now I will give you a plain and at the same time an honest view of my situation. I began the world poor and so far, I have in a great measure lived not for myself—But from my care, prudence and industry I have been able to get on, in a way that I was satisfied, and to gratify my friends, I was willing to give up a part of my time to their service without material injury to my own little affairs. One thing in particular has made me pause. It is the opinion of my brother, that a winter residence in Washington will be at the peril of my life. Since I returned home, I have had a violent attack of my old complaint which continues, and the only prospect to remove it, is for me to under go a regular course of medicine, which will necessarily leave me more weak and thin than I am. I therefore concluded that, if I had to surrender my office, and go to Washington and have my health so impaired as to render me incapable of attending to business, that it might render me unable to do justice to my family. I have a considerable charge on my hands, and a prospect of an increased charge, and I am unable to meet the expence without my own labour. I therefore came to the determination that it would be proper for me to withdraw from the political world. That the only suitable return that I could make my District was to give immediate information of my determination. I knew that the only loss the people would sustain, would be the inconvenience of meeting at the polls to make a second choice. I knew that there were many Gentlemen in the District better qualified than myself who might be prevailed on to offer. I might go on to Washington, and be unable to attend to business. Sir I sensibly feel the embarrassed situation in which I am placed, but I am induced to believe that after the excitement which will necessarily attend my course, will have subsided, that I shall be justified in the sight of my friends. If I go into the political world, my family have every thing to loose, If I withdraw, the people can loose little or nothing. If the Governor can issue a writ of election, a second choice can be made in time for the meeting of Congress. What is your opinion as to his power to issue a writ? for really I do not know. Your letter shall not be seen by any one. With regard to the second subject mentioned in it, I have taken the same view with yourself. I have spoken of it, and shall speak of it, in the same light, Placing it up[on] the sure and solid foundation of qualification. May I ask you to answer this letter at an early date. I have mentioned the subject to Mr. Caldwell, and to him only—He is opposed to my determination;

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From James T. Morehead.¹

LEXINGTON N. C. October 6th, 1829.

* * * * *

We have but little of interest in Rockingham. It has been more sickly this season among us than I recollect ever to have known it; some of your old acquaintances are dead, others yet low, we have had a little frost which I hope will purify the country.

I never wanted to be a member of the Legislature before, I ought to have been a candidate, although I was not yoked to the triumphant car of the *General*, I expect much management the next Session, and some perhaps not very Honorable. I think I could act my part as well as the *far famed William Douglas*, did when he told his Honorable friend General Bethall, that he had met him upon the principle of Villany, and had vanquished him upon the same grounds. Your Dan river friends were well a few days since.

Thomas Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From William K. Ruffin.

CHAPEL HILL October 12th 1829.

Your kind letter dated 4th inst. was duly received. I return you my sincere thanks for it. If you were awake how exquisite is the pleasure which I feel when I hear from you, when I converse with you—learn your opinions upon matters that concern my own welfare and your pleasure—you would write more frequently. I know how your time is occupied. It is a source of pleasure and of pain to contemplate you labouring for us. It is at once a testimony of the love you bear us, and a reproof for my want of exertion. A large collection of your letters, replete as they are, with maxims of good sense and with parental advice, by which If I were only to regulate my conduct future happiness would be ensured is a legacy which above all others I desire. I find *now* the highest enjoyment in perusing them and not only enjoyment but improvement, for I never read them, without learning some useful lesson or without entering on my studies with greater energy. But should I survive you, what a source of pleasure will they prove to be after you are no more? They will serve to cheer me in the rugged paths of life, and to give me resolution in the practice of virtue—and when you are slumbering in the cold grave I shall still have you before me advising and directing me. Your last letter I have read often and with attention. I should feel no less pleasure than yourself did I possess the talents requisite for a lawyer.

¹James Turner Morehead of Rockingham County, a lawyer who was a member of Congress from 1851 to 1853.

I have three inducements to study law, which render me unable to relinquish altogether the hope that by hard and close application I might become at least respectable in that profession. 1st. your society and conversation would then be a source of greater enjoyment, as our habits and studies would be the same and I would find in you not only a father, but also a friend and companion. 2ndly. Because the members of that profession are alone capable in this country of arriving at any eminence. 3rdly. There prevails among the members of the Bar so much good feeling and harmony. I do not however think that I am calculated for Law. Yet I may underrate my talents or at least may not be conscious of what exertion might render me capable of doing. I have thought that it would be the best plan to read with you a year or two after I leave college. I possess advantages in having you for a father, which few young men can boast of. I am young, and the knowledge I may acquire by remaining with you such a length of time will certainly be of use to me in whatever business I engage. Being under your eye, you will have the opportunity of knowing whether I am capable of becoming a Lawyer. Be pleased to write to me and Let me know whether the plan I have proposed meets your approbation. Should you remain in Raleigh I may be of assistance to you and at the same time acquire regular and industrious habits. Should the Legislature confer on you the office of Judge, you will have more time to devote to the instruction of us all. Let me assure you, in the meantime, that I resign myself into your hands, confident that you know best what I ought to do, and that you will not mislead me. I am engaged in the following studies, viz: Natural Philosophy—embracing chemistry. Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Metaphysics, Astronomy and French. Mr. Mitchell has not the opportunity of making us proficient in his branch. The College is not supplied with apparatus sufficient to render the studies as interesting as they would otherwise be; and moreover we have no good Text Book. It is true that he reads us lectures. But we cannot become masters of them, from merely hearing them read or having them in our hands for an hour.

Brown's Philosophy is a good work but not adapted to the use of students. In order that one should recite well on such a subject, it is necessary that it should be divided into different heads or propositions and demonstrated as clearly as possible, which is not the case with the present work.

Dr. Caldwell takes great pains in rendering us good astronomers. He explains everything and takes for granted that we know nothing. I am highly pleased with his mode of teaching as well as his character. He has just received some apparatus which he purchased last summer. It will serve to make Mathematicks a little more interesting a study. The Doctor I understand, expended \$700 on it. For this he deserves credit, as it proves how great are his exertions to render the college course improving and agreeable to the students. Among other things, is a very fine electrical machine. A piece of apparatus, the want of which I have

felt. You have no doubt witnessed the experiments performed by means of this machine. I think that it elucidates some of the greatest phenomena in nature, and Galvinism by means of it becomes an exceedingly agreeable study. Every American should feel an interest in this study not only because it is intrinsically valuable but because Dr. Franklin was the first who sufficiently explained its phenomena.

I went to Hillsboro' last week contrary to your orders. I have this apology to offer for so doing. Dr. C. and Mr. Hooper were both absent from the Hill and I of course lost but few unimportant recitations, and the temptation to partake of some of the amusements of the place, as well as the pleasure of seeing my friends there was too great to resist.

Tell My Dear Mother that I will write her before long. Kiss her and the children for me. Let me conclude My Dear Pa, by assuring you of my unabated attachment and sincere affection for you.

Hon. Thos. Ruffin.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From William H. Brodnax.

RICHMOND, Octr. 19th, 1829.

* * * * *

I have to make my unfeigned acknowledgements for that portion of your letter (which unconnected with the business portion of it) relates to our pending convention. I was the more gratified at receiving the statement of your views and opinions, from their exact coincidence with my own, and I assure you that when a comparatively young man like myself is surrounded by members for whose ability he cannot but entertain respect, but a *majority* of whom entertain views and are attempting projects precisely the reverse of his own, it is no small consolation to obtain the countenance of those at a distance whom he supposes from their situation and experience, eminently qualified to judge correctly. It so happens that of the various questions and principles which you incidentally touch, there is not one for which I had not already here expressed my approbation. And I do regard it as one of the very strongest reasons why these modern Goths and Vandals should not overturn those beautiful structures reared by the wisdom and virtue of our ancestors, that an immense majority of the native Virginians (as far as my information extends) no matter how much they may have been dissatisfied with the existing order of things while they lived here have on moving to other states, and witnessing these newfangled improvements, expressed their decided preference for those of the old dominion.

I took the liberty of shewing that part of your letter to a few of the most prominent of my friends in this Convention, and all of them seemed much pleased at the evidence of approbation of what had previously been their own sentiments which it contained.

Mr. Randolph informs me that he has recd. letters very lately on the same subject from emigrant Virginians in five or six different States whose institutions are most dissimilar from our own, and with one accord they all cry out against our giving up the freehold suffrage, the basis of representation which holds property in *some* regard, and the *viva voca* vote. Mr. Gallatin says that even in Europe the characteristic high minded chivalrous, liberal peculiarities of the Virginia character are ascribed to those very peculiarities in her form of government which we are now here for the purpose of tearing up by the roots. It is however, I fear useless to grieve over the wreck, or even scuffle to save a plank of it. The *reformers*, as they call themselves or *abusers*, as I fear they will turn out to be, possess, I think a numerical majority—against this you know there is no arguing—they have the means of attaining their ends, and are disposed to avail of them. The disparity in numbers is however not so great as you seem to have supposed from the vote on Mr. Tazwell's motion to amend the report of the Comn. of 26. I deemed his plan much the best and gave my voice for it but several with us on the main questions, who did not regard this as a test, but as indicating merely a mode of proceeding, and not approving it, voted otherwise. The real difference I think will be only 5 or 6 against us.

Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe are both I infer from different conversations with them, tho' they have not in so many words said so, disposed to occupy any ground which happens to be in the middle between contending parties. This milk and water course will obviously do our side no good. The prospect ahead is gloomy but I pray the Almighty to overrule all for the best.

[Address:

Thos. Ruffin Esq.
 Prest. of the State
 Bank of No. Ca.
 Raleigh.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

GREENSBOROUGH, 7th Nov: 1829.

My Health gets better. I am nearly free from Pain. Indeed I cannot look back to a Time Since I was first taken Sick, when I suffered less. Providence may intend my confinement¹ for a better Purpose than Disenthralment from debt. I shall certainly strive to make my confinement Subsर्वient to a restoration of Health. As to any moral effect it may produce, I cannot speak. As yet, my Spirits are good, and I labour to

¹Judge Murphey was at the time in prison for debt.

exhibit an uniform cheerfulness. My Friends visit me from Morning 'til Bed-time, and I have thus far got on pretty well.—The Ladies have begun to visit me, and every one Seems interested for me. God bless the good People! When I fell among thieves they bound up my Wounds and gave me Comfort.

It is impossible to say to you what will be my Pursuit After my enlargement. I had intended to be a Candidate for the Appointment of Senator,¹ and had written Several Letters on the Subject. My confinement will induce many to look upon me as degraded, and I have no Hope of being appointed. Altho' I am not quite So bad off as Livingston of Louisiana, who a few days before his last election had ten Ca Sa^s. Served on him in one day.—Farewell! My love to Anne and all the Family

Thomas Ruffin esqr.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From James H. Ruffin.

CASWELL, November 14th, 1829.

I enclose you my note for \$360.00 for renewal in the U. S. Bank. My last note was given *90 days after the 8th of September* and Mr. McNeill writes me that "*the one for this renewal must be in Fayetteville on the Tuesday of the week in which the last day of grace happens to be.*" The note now sent is blank as to the time at which it becomes payable; of course it is desirable to me that I should know the manner in which the blank is filled that I might not again mistake the day of renewal, and once more suffer the mortification and expense of being dishonored at Bank. Will you, therefore, do me the favor of requesting Mr. McNeill to inform me particularly as to these facts and to send me a statement of everything necessary for me to know relative to the matter. Having now for the first time to transact with *banks*, I must confess my utter ignorance at the manner in which that business is to be done, it seems to me, that I never should learn, as the more I attempt to comprehend it, the farther am I off from correct conclusions. Would to Heaven that I had never been reduced to the necessity of having personal communication with them. However, as my hand is in the "*lion's mouth*," I must get it out with as little damage as possible. If I can weather the storm likely to arise from having two notes in Bank, and get a little indulgence from my other creditors, I have no doubt but that by industry and rigid economy I may be enabled to save my land and other property from the clutches of my creditors and the hammer of the auctioneer. That, however, depends upon their possessing the heavenly attribute of mercy, of which, so far as it respects the desire of gain, the world of mankind

¹When the legislature met Murphey was a candidate for the Senate, but Bedford Brown was chosen on the fifteenth ballot.

seems to be most wofully deficient. I hope however, that with proper management and the smiles of Heaven upon the efforts of the husbandman to have it in my power to *demand from the world the full measure of justice* and to be above the necessity of being an *humble petitioner for the exercise of mercy*. Grant this, Oh Merciful Heaven! or if not, grant me patience under suffering and an humble submission to thy righteous dispensations.

You did not, when you were with us, express any desire as to what you would have done with the articles of furniture you purchased at the sale; whether you would have them packed up and sent to Hillsboro', by Mr. Cain's waggon, or whether they were to be packed up and left here, or whether anything was to be done with them or not? I entirely forgot to mention the subject to you when I saw you; however it is not too late to express your wishes upon the matter, and, if possible, those wishes shall be gratified. You likewise omitted to mention to me the disposition to be made of your part of the pork to be fattened here; I suppose that there will be 8 or 900 lbs. apiece. I shall want all mine and more too, and should be glad to purchase yours if you have no use for it or have enough without it. I do not wish you, however, to incommode yourself by disposing of it to me as, by pinching and stinting I may be enabled to get through the year with what I shall have here and at Oakland. Mention to me your wishes upon these two subjects and they shall be cheerfully complied with as far as our ability will carry us.

I suppose, that by the time this reaches you, the subject of the vacancy on the Supreme Court Bench and the choice of a successor to C. J. Taylor will have been much agitated in the Legislature. From all I can learn I do not think you will have any cause of anxiety as to the result. Public opinion is very decidedly in your favor and a majority of the General Assembly, though they may at first be a little coy upon the subject of the station you at present occupy, will ultimately settle down upon you as decidedly preferable either to Toomer, Seawell, or *Daniel even*, who to my utter astonishment, will, as I learn, certainly be a candidate. I wish you, most heartily, success in the ballot, and would willingly be there to assist your friends in the struggle, as you have resolved not to assist yourself.

Mention me most respectfully to Mr. Gaston and say to him that I should like much to see him succeed the Honble. Secretary of the Navy in the Senate of the U. S., but that I fear there is not sufficient liberality and forgiveness of error in the last political *horse-race* to be found among the *wise men* of No. Ca. to bestow upon him an honor so well merited by the qualities of his head and heart.

Say also to my friend James Graham that I should, with infinite pleasure, see him beat Alexander for the Western Solicitorship and hope that such will be the result of that contest, as I cannot think the latter entitled to the support of the liberal part of the Legislature, seeing his conduct of the last Session was so very objectionable and *suspicious*.

To Mendenhall, Dick, Capt. Barry and the others of the last legislature to whom I was attached, remember me in the most friendly terms. To my Sister and all your family give my best love and affection.
 [Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Walker Anderson.

GREENSBORO' NOV: 15th 1829.

In complying with your request I am happy to have it in my power to give you a good report respecting our friend Judge Murphey. I spend almost every evening with him and his health is certainly not worse, but I think rather better than it was previous to his confinement. He has sometimes a bad night and has been bled twice since you left him, but his involuntary abstinence from exposure has certainly made him freer from his rheumatick complaints. His spirits are just as I have ever known them, serenely cheerful and he enjoys the company of his friends (of which he has quite enough) with the same apparent pleasure, as if he received them in his own drawing room. One of his sons is generally with him and Mr. Scott has paid him two visits.

My wife who is still with me but returns to H. in a day or two, joins me in affectionate regards to Mrs. R. and the young ladies.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From William K. Ruffin.

CHAPEL HILL NOV. 16th 1829.

I should have answered your last kind letter before this, had it not been for *your* trip to Caswell and *my* inability to fill up a sheet with any thing agreeable to you. I think that the Trustees were imprudent in their choice of a site for the University. Instead of situating it in a town where there is good society or at least respectable people with whom the students might have intercourse, they picked upon a spot at the time almost uninhabited and entirely destitute of persons with whom a gentleman *ought* to have intercourse. In the one place the Students would have felt emulation to excell in their studies and ambition to appear as gentlemen, and would have acted as young men establishing a character which they would retain through life. In the other they have nothing to excite them to behave well or to endeavour to be eminent in their scholarship. It is true that you have appointed a public examination and commencement and the faculty are directed to apprise the parents of a son's deficiency in his studies or in moral rectitude. But this commencement occurs but once in the year, and the interval is so long and the

day when merit is awarded so distant, that it proves to be but little excitement to exertion. And the endeavour to behave well arising from the fear of our misdeeds reaching the ears of our parents is not equal to that which we would make when under the eye of a society for which we feel respect and whose censure we fear to encounter. Chapel Hill especially was an unfortunate Situation. It not only has *not* the advantages of *good* but has also the disadvantages of *bad* society. The Trustees chose the spot where young men were to be trained up in the paths of science and morality, but left it open for vagabonds. If they wished a retired place aloof from the world, secluded from all intercourse with men—they should have permitted no one to settle on it. Whereas they have let all come who wished until finally half the villians in the state have congregated and fixed upon this place as one in which they can spend their time idly and at their ease. But I had not intended to write this much about the situation of the college. No doubt what I have said has often occurred to you and this also, that one who is really desirous of acquiring information is capable of doing it in the midst of revelry and dissipation as well as in the depth of a forest. I only intend this as an excuse for dull and uninteresting letters.

You requested me in a former epistle to send you my production after I had spoken it. *I did not speak*. What will my Dear Father say to this? He will be surprised to hear it and will say that I am a fool. I should have been no less surprised the day before the speaking came on. The truth is, that I am so constituted that I cannot appear before a public audience. I cannot explain the cause of it any more than that I am nervous and have no presence of mind. I feel that it is folly; but how can I overcome it? I have used my best endeavours but it is invincible. I laugh at myself and at the same time know that it is not my fault but that of Dame Nature. The present is a remarkable instance of my singular weakness. I wrote my discourse and began to memorize it with an inconceivable ardour, muttered and incessantly repeated the same phrases while endeavouring to cram them in my head. I hoped at length to remember what I had written and on the eve of the day appointed I had it by rote and recited it fluently without missing a single word. I had it in my head all night; in the morning I had forgotten it—hesitated at every word, thought myself on the stage, became confused, stammered and lost my presence of mind. I perceived at once that it would be uselessly exposing myself if I appeared on the stage and I therefore communicated my situation to Dr. Caldwell, who has previously had frequent opportunities of witnessing this singular circumstance in my constitution. He very kindly exempted me from the performance of it. Should I ever be able to conquer this difficulty I shall perform a wonder far from being equalled by the anecdote related of Demosthenes.

I was much disappointed in not seeing you and my Mother when you were up. I went to Hillsboro last Sunday with the expectation of meet-

ing you but learned to my sorrow that you had left there the morning before. I hope by this time the health of my little Sister is perfectly restored.

This session ends exactly four weeks hence. How shall I get to Raleigh. I think that it would be the best at least the most economical plan to hire a horse here. I can get one for \$8. And as I wish to pay a visit to my Aunt in Fayetteville and have a most bitter antipathy to your horses it would save Stage-fare. I leave it however to your better judgement. Uncle John got me a pair of pantaloons the other day. I got them without your permission because I really needed them—did not intend going to Hillsboro and wished to purchase all my apparel from Grandpa. About another article of dress I ask your permission beforehand, viz a cloak or overcoat. I have a cloak but it is too small and otherwise unfit for use. I shall be obliged to you for one.

Will you please ask my Mother if she can find room to lodge my young friend McCain¹ who goes to Raleigh this winter. I think it is what is due to him from me, as I have been so hospitably treated by his family. He stays but a day or two. Write soon My Dear Father, if it be but a line. Let me conclude by desiring to be affectionately remembered to my mother and the children and by wishing to you health and happiness and success this week.

[P. S.] We have just learnt that our your young friend and former talented fellow student Rufus Yancey² is dead. Poor Fellow! he needed prudence and reflection, but he was kind in his disposition, honourable in his intercourse, with us and promised to stand well in the world. How uncertain is life.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From James Somevell.

WARRENTON, Nov. 23, 1829.

I received yours in due time and was much gratified with the contents. You have probably conjectured if you thought upon the subject, that as I intended to see you at Raleigh on Monday next, it was unnecessary to subject my business to the risk of the mail.

I earnestly hope that you will continue at the Head of the Bank—unless you think your duty to your family should be imperious in calling you to a situation more agreeable and more profitable. I regret to see it stated that Col. Robards intends to decline a reelection to the office of Treasurer.

T. Ruffin Esq.

[Address: Raleigh.]

¹Nathaniel Henry McCain of Rockingham, a graduate of 1830.

²Rufus Augustus Yancey, son of Bartlett Yancey, a graduate of the University in the class of 1829.

From Henry Branson.¹

FAYETTEVILLE, 28th November 1829.

I am happy to hear of your Election² to fill one of the most Important offices in the State because I believe you to be better qualified to fill that Important office than any other man in the State.

And if you Can by any fair means assist my worthy and honourable friend to be Elected Senator to Congress I will not aske any further favours of the present General Assembly.

If it was in my power to render him any assistance Either by Day or Knight it should be done with pleasure. My feelings are Doubled to what they were before I heard of the ungreatfull proceedings against him. I hope I shall always feald for the oppressed. I have wrote to some of my friends on the subject who I hope will Join us in favour of our worthy and Honourable Friend.

* * * * *

Thomas Ruffin Esqr.

[Address: Raleigh, N. C.]

From Thomas Turner.

[PLYMOUTH, N. C., Nov. 30, 1829.]

I lay down the paper (the Ral: Star of the 26th instant) to say "that I was never so glad of anything in my life, as to read that you are one of the judges of the Supreme Court" I could not read another line until I had said this much.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Adam Lockhart.

ANSON COUNTY N. C. Decr. 1st, 1829.

Well, my Dear Judge,

I am truly gratified that I have lived to see the day, that you have the Power, at will, to accept one of the most honourable and illustrious appointment the state can bestow. Judge I have not capacity to express my mind on this pleasing event, tho' hope you will truely understand me. I did intend to have been at Raleigh early in the session, tho' was prevented through the indisposition of my family.

¹A merchant of Fayetteville and president of the Cape Fear Navigation Company.

²On November 24, 1829, Ruffin was chosen judge of the Supreme Court, over Judges Toomer, Seawell, and Daniel; he was elected on the third ballot, Seawell and Daniels having been withdrawn.

Judge I wrote you last winter expressive of a wish to get the appointment from the Marshal to take the next census in my County. Your friendly answer was soon recd. the contents of which shall never be forgotten, they appeared as they were from a true friend.

I still wish the appointment, feeling, tho' I am old, like I could execute the business as well as ever, it perhaps might be premature to address the Marshal again on that subject, at least in me, several Gentlemen of my County have expressed a desire for me etc., perhaps some of these Gentlemen may address the Marshal on my behalf.

Judge you now sustain a station, in my opinion, the most honourable in the State, but sir let me tell you, that your course is not limited, it will, if you will admit it, no doubt soon be enlarged, there are courts without the limits of this State, as is also without the Limits of the united states. Judge I have no claims to prophecy, nor am I much of a Jester, it hath long been my opinion on certain occasions, if person cannot speak their minds they had better say nothing. I therefore now say, that I have long since thought, and often said, a man possessing the faculty that you etc. could not stand still long, meaning etc. Judge there is no flattery here, it is my way of expressing myself to a Gentleman or friend, of which I view you etc.

Judge please to let me here from you once more, after which I will not intrude on your time. I herewith, Judge subscribe my name to you with my hearty and sincere wishes for your good health, and prosperity here and hereafter, while I remain yours most sincerely

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From William R. Norcum.

EDENTON 10 Dec. 1829.

A matter of difference has occurred at our Board of Directors; (it is this) What No. when five are present is sufficient to carry a resolution or effect a discount, is not three sufficient, or are they not considered a majority sufficiently large to come within the meaning of the article of our By-Law saying that $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of the No. present etc. It has until lately been considered, that when only 5 were present 3 was sufficient to carry any point, but at this time it is not so, two can prevent any resolution or prevent any discount from passing, for my part I do not believe that it was ever so meant, or intended, that 2 should rule 3, in matters of this kind, and therefore hope that the matter may be named to the Principal Directors (if you should think proper) in order that we may have their opinion on the subject.

It was with great pleasure I learned of the recent appointment conferred on you by our Legislature, tho' I was sorry to lose your assistance in managing our Banking institutions, yet I do sincerely hope, what is our loss, will be your gain, therefore feel perfectly satisfied.

I should have written you before this, had you remained at the head of the institution, but as you are [no] longer so, I do not feel (or did not feel) bound to comply with my promise made you, as you were on the eve of leaving this place, that was made in *confidence*—and had I written you, it would have been in the same way. I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again, when the whys and wherefores will be given.

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Charles F. Bagge.

SALEM December 19th, 1829

It afforded me much pleasure when I read in the Papers that you had been elected a Judge of the Supreme Court, to supply the place of the late Chief Justice Taylor, as I believe it was congenial to your own wishes and those of your friends, it also gave me much satisfaction to find that Judge Cameron succeeds you as President of the State bank; As it is of some interest to me to know as early as may be, if the Newbern Bank has declared any Dividend for the last six Months you will confer a favour on me to make the enquiry and inform me as early as convenient by Mail; I am Dear Sir, respectfully

Thomas Ruffin Esqr

Raleigh

Pray what is your friend Murphey doing? I have received neither *letter* or *money* from him since I saw you last.

From Thomas Turner.

PLYMO Dec. 22, 1829.

I received yesterday your very kind letter of the 8, and have to tender to you my sincere thanks for entering the Plea of "non est factum" in that suit. The suit, as you correctly supposed, had not been neglected by me. I had employd Wm. H. Haywood Junr. Esqr. to plead the plea you have entered. How it was that he did not attend to it, I am not informed: But I am satisfied it was not for want of kindness toward me, nor intention to neglect it. At the time of my receiving notice of the writ, I was in correspondence with Mr. Haywood, on other subjects, and I therefore asked him to defend that suit. The service of that writ on me excited at first as you may suppose a little surprize, and I could not but make a jest of their taking me for one with whose name \$100,000 could be, for a moment, associated with gravity. I wrote Mr. Haywood so, and asked him to enquire of the Attorneys whose names were marked on the writ for the Plf, and also if Mr. Robards, in whose hand writing

was *kindly* indorsed on the writ "no bail required," wherefore the writ issued? Upon what cause of action? And if it were not designed for "a certain" Thomas Turner son of the late Governor, instead of our friend of that name? Assuring him that our friend had never in his life become liable to such a suit. I need for answer, that however jestingly I might regard the writ, the Plfs were in serious earnest, for that Col. Robards informed him I was one of the sureties of his Dear old uncle's official bond dated in Nov. 1820. This letter increased my surprize greatly and also my disposition to treat the suit with levity. My surprize was greater, because I thot Col. Robard's knew my writing, and while he aver'd I had signed that bond I averred that I had not! Could any thing be more surprizing? Or anything more ridiculous than to sue me for \$100,000! Let us see how much it is. Units, tens, hundreds, ten's of thousands, millions: Indeed sir, I cant enumerate it; and you may see from this that such a sum is not at all of my acquaintance, and never was I dont believe I could take it by descent, so great is the repugnancy of that sum and me. Well! Mr. Haywood said he would plead "non est factum," and I afterwards wrote him not to run any risk of his health nor of accidents, lest these might prevent him, but to engage some other attorney to plead it in case of his absence—and not long after the return term, he wrote me that the plea was entered, and added "he had no doubt it was a true one, for that that opinion began now to prevail in Raleigh," or words to this effect. And without the least disposition to find fault with friend Haywood, I have to thank you too much for entering that plea—and the more especially since your interference in my behalf was as well influenced by kindness to me as to prevent injustice being done to a citizen.

As to the letter which I wrote you upon your recent appointment to the Bench of the Supreme Court; I wrote it in a moment of warmth and hurry—and tho' it came "from the heart and was faithful to its fires," Still since then; since I have cooled and reflected upon it, I have thought it had perhaps been better, if I had withheld the expression of those feelings. I am afraid my letter made a strange appearance and was not only singular, but such as I ought not to have written. You will please not mistake me. I do not regret the feelings, nor are they changed, but fear it was not altogether proper, for me to express them. They are however expressed; and if they be considered simply and abstractedly, from everything else, as indeed they are; then I have no reason, nor can any reason be givn why I should not have expressed them as I did. I had no ulterior views other than what I shall express in this letter, none upon your friendship: none that ought to be restrained. If I had had such other views, views that ought to be restrained, I should never have expected to have had them gratified by you. Simply this, I was highly gratified, and in a paroxism of pleasure, I threw down the paper and wrote you that letter.

I confess Sir, as you suggest *but not to the extent* of your suggestion that you do owe (no, not owe; that you are entitled) to those feelings

and the expression of them to my partiality for you; but this partiality is well bottomed. It is not for nothing as father loves a Son, that I have this partiality—But for the best reasons as you shall see.

Errors of the Supreme Court.

In this case—Henry Norman made two wills, one dated 12, the other 14 feby 1804. The will of the 12 was proved in Tyrrel County Court May 1804: no executor qualified. It remained so. In Oct. 1804 the will of the 14th was offered for probate—probate was contested, and the will of the 14 was established several years after in Edenton District Superior Court. Executors qualified and the estate was administered under the will of the 14th. It happened that Henry N. Jasper was interested in the will of the 12th, and was an Infant, and had no notice of the probate of the will of the 14th. He came of age in some 14 or 15 years after, and filed his petition to have the will of the 14th reproved as to him. Upon the hearing or trial, the court ordered a reprobate of the will of the 14. This was the Superior Court of Chowan. Here the matter rested for some months. Jasper claimed under the will of the 12th which had been proved and the probate thereof was now valid. He commenced actions of detinue and perhaps other actions under the will of the 12th to recover his estate. At length John Mariner, who was interested in the will of the 14th filed his petition in *Tyrell County Court*, and offered the will of the 14, for reprobate. Henry N. Jasper was made party defendant to this suit—The suit by removal came to superior Court of this County, was tried, and verdict that the paper writing purporting to be the will of Henry Norman of the 14, was *not* his will,—appeal to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court decide that the County Court of Tyrrel and Superior Court of Washington had not jurisdiction—and order that the suit be dismissed at the Cost of the *Petitioner Jasper*. Now the error is that Jasper was not the petitioner. The costs amount to about \$400 for which execution issues against him.

Again, Rob Pike filed his Bill of Injunction, in Washington Court of Equity agt Stark Armistead admr. of David Goodman (who was trustee of Joel Thorp under a deed of trust, to pay Stark Armistead Thomas Turner, Henry Shelters and Jacob N. Gordon certain sums of money each) to injoin him from collecting a sum of money for which David Goodman's Admr. had recovered of him a judgment, in Chowan Superior Court amount \$800 or thereabouts. Pike charged in his Bill that he loaned Thorp 10 May 1820 \$700, and took mortgage for his security on 3 negroes, that it was agreed at the time, that the negroes should remain with Thorp who had always possessed them, and that his mortgage should be kept secret, and this for fear of injuring Thorps credit. He states that Thorp was embarrassed by debt yet he thot him solvent; and that the mortgage and loan was kept secret. That in the last of November following more than 6 months after the date of the mortgage, he became uneasy at Thorps embarrassment, and the unregistered state of his mortgage, and that he confidentially asked me, whether it would be

safe for him to let his mortgage remain unregistered. This he says was the first time, I knew of his mortgage, for he had kept it secret. Afterwards the Deed of Trust under which Goodman claimed was executed, and registered in 8 days after the execution of it and published, and *after this* Pike registered his mortgage. The Bill of Injunction states the facts so. It also states as well as I can remember, that I advised him not to register. But I deny this in my answer, and state that I told him, as well as I knew the risks he would be liable to if he did not register, and the extent of his security if he did, and also the probable injury to Thorp if he did. Thorp was his Uncle and had raised him and they were ever friendly and intimate: Thorpe had married my Aunt,—we were friendly and intimate, and I state, that I would not agree to take upon myself the responsibility of advising Pike to Register or not to Register, but told him frankly and candidly the consequences of either course, and left him, in seamans phrase to “row his own Boat.” It is stated in the Bill and answer that after the Registration of the Deed of Trust to Goodman, Pike seized upon the negroes, ran them off and sold them. That suit was brought against him and the judgment recovered which he would enjoin. It was pleaded in the answer that the suit at law was a bar to the complaint in his Bill, as his rights were there fully entered into discussed heard and decided. The error of the Supreme Court extends to all they said in this case. Their judgment is wrong throughout, Most especially is it wrong in saying that Armistead and myself were cognizant of Pikes mortgage at the date of it. Pike does not say this himself, on the contrary he says it was kept secret and not made known to me until latter end of November following the date of it on 10 May 1820, which is more than 6 months. Most especially is it wrong in this, that Pike’s communications to me on Novmvr purges that transaction of fraud, which by law had been a fraud for 6 months before.

In conclusion, I am persuaded my dear Sir, that your Industry and vigilance, would have prevented these errors; and therefore, for this reason if no other, I am heartily glad of your appointment to that Bench.

I refer you to the Transcript of these suits in the office of Clerk of the Supreme Court. and to the Reports of the Supreme Court, for any support which my statements may need.

But I will not conclude here. I will go on and state a practice that prevails in the Supreme Court which ought to be stopped, and that is the issuing executions against the party cast for the costs of that Court. I give you at bottom extracts from the Bills of Costs on two executions that issue now against me—and I affirm there is no law to justify these issues. I have refused to pay them, and intend to institute suit if the money is collected of me. I have so informed the clerk by letters to Henry M. Miller Esqr his deputy.

I asked Mr. Miller to put his finger on the law that gave such fees and hand it to me. He referred me to the acts of 1810 latter clause of 7 Section and of 1818 and 1825.

He said that in July 1811 the judges had the act of 1810 before them (page 1169) and conceiving themselves authorized to do so, they fixed upon the fees which should be adjudged and taxed against the party Cast in that Court. That the act of 1818 provides the same compensation for the clerk of that Court which had been already provided and that the act of 1825 recognizes the taxing costs of the Supreme Court: and not doubting that this would satisfy me, he requested and did not doubt, I would remit the money forthwith.

But, "Flees are not lobsters damn their souls" and I proved as obstinate as they. Judging that no man can be deprived of his property but by the law of the land, and I do not think he had turned me to such law to justify his demand, I still refused to pay. I asked him to send me a certified and formal Copy under seal of the court of the fee bill which had been fixed and adopted by the Judges under the act of 1810, and stated that I should expect to find it, not a piece of paper with a few fees written down upon it, but a formal resolution of the Judges that certain fees be taxed to the Clk Shf and attorneys for services in that Court; for I did not think it could be any thing less than this, seeing that he claimed for it all the authority of a published and solemn act of the Genl. Assembly—altho', it had not received the same publication. And what do you think he sent me? I will bet my life you could not guess in 50 years! He sent me extracts from his execution docket of July 1811 of the fees that had been charged on two executions thus issued from the Supreme Court!! He said he could send no minutes on the records where the Judges had fixed upon those fees and adopted them for the officers of the Supreme Court, and for which execution should issue against the party cast. This he could not find. He did not know whether it should have been so formally adopted, as I conceived it should have been. But he was authorized to say, that the Judges had so adopted and fixed upon these fees as aforesaid under the act of 1810, page 1169. That he had sent me a Copy of what he had, and that in office, he had conformed to the practice and customs which he found prevailing when he went into office. He added that the Clk. of the Supreme and himself wished nothing wrong (I believe them) and he proposed that I give them notice that I should move the Supreme Court to set aside these executions on the ground that they issued without authority of law; and stated that the question could be tried without cost to either party. But I declined his proposition and for why? Because I do not wish to engage in a suit until I am injured. Because I care not to trouble myself to try the rights of others. Because, I do not wish to be concerned in trying so plain a question—a question that every body can solve who will look into it. Because, whatever he may do, I cant try the question without cost. Because, I hold the demand upon me to be obviously wrong, and ought to be withdrawn—and that it will be not only absurd but outrageous to insist upon it. I have other reasons—but I will stop here. Now; I do think it is absurd to pretend that the act of 1810 authorized

the Judges to say what fees should be paid to the officers of the Supreme Court by the party Cast: or that the Judges ever pretended to exercise such authority; or that the execution docket furnishes the fee bill which they adopted; or that for want of a formal resolution to this effect, parol evidence can be made to answer. But allowing all this; still it cannot be pretended that such a fee bill so adopted and evidenced, and so unpublished is "the law of the land."

To conclude—The Supreme Court is a Court without Cost to the parties litigant, unless they choose to employ an attorney—and even in this case no execution can issue for his fee, but the payment of it depends like all other sums upon contract. The Clk and shfs have salaries allowed them and these are paid by the state. There is no fee Bill for them or the attorneys practising in that court to be found in all the law.

Now, I am persuaded that your vigilance and other qualities, (not to be named by me just at this time) will correct errors of this kind; and here is another reason why I am glad, heartily glad, you are appointed to that Bench.

I am heartily glad that we have a Supreme Court, that the Judges have a good salary, that their duties are not so numerous as to make the execution of them anything but a pleasure and an honor, and that their office is for life, and that they are exempted from circuit riding and trying the causes in the Superior Courts. But the Supreme Court should at least commit no blunders which are so obvious as to be discovered by men, who like me have no pretensions to a knowledge of the law.

You will please not mistake me. I have the greatest respect and esteem for the gentlemen whose errors I have been speaking of. I am far from suspecting them of any dishonorable motives. All men we see are liable to error, or surely these had been exempt. You will understand me however as having a greater confidence in your industry, and capacity and in your habits of business, examining everything for yourself, than I have in most men. Hence one ground of my partiality and esteem, for these qualities assure us all of *fair* treatment. Your humanity and politeness assure us of *kind* treatment; and this is the other ground of my esteem. I could go on but stay; I am not now to write your epitaph and eulogy. Judge then, the pleasure, and the sincerity with which I expressed it, and also of the intelligence of it, what I felt upon reading your appointment.

I stop here; lest in the next 15 minutes, I write you to death.

P. S. You will see that altho I write without malice or any other bad motive; and that altho all I have said can be supported; still that its circulation is calculated to make enemies for

Your friend

[Address: Raleigh N. C.]

From Joseph B. Skinner.

EDENTON 29th Decr. 1829.

I congratulate you and our common country upon your elevation to the Supreme Court Bench. It is indeed consolatory to me that something like sobriety and cool determination has marked this Legislature compared to the faction and disorganization which ran through the whole of the last. But Bedford Brown of ridiculous memory is elected our Senator. Has he acquired intellectual merit since the days in which I knew him, so that the State is not dishonored, or has it resulted from party juggling? I am too remote from the scene of action to hear often, and I am not worth the attention of my immediate representatives.

My nephew T. S. Hoskins¹ has given me very short notice of his immediate departure for Raleigh to make application for a County Court License, and I must therefore not throw away my time upon matters which I cannot control, and of which thank God you are in one sense independent. Mr. Hoskins is a young Gentleman a Graduate of our University of excellent morals, modest and unassuming. He studied Law awhile with Judge Henderson, and for the last 15 or 18 mos. attended the Law School in New Haven Connt. He returned with me this autumn. Judge Daggett and Mr. Hitchcock spoke in high terms of him, but I fear he cannot acquire that tact in his profession, so necessary to get along with successfully. You will do him as well as myself a favor to give him an examination and decide his fate as soon as you may find it convenient.

I understand (casually) that you intend leaving Hillsboro and residing on your estate on the Dan. Is it so? I suspect Mrs. Ruffin, Miss Catharine, Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland and the whole host of your Hillsboro friends will most vehemently oppose you. Be pleased my dear Sir to make my kind respects to Mrs. Ruffin and Miss Catharine, and to my old and worthy friends Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland. Excuse my haste.

If Judges Henderson and Hall have not forgotten me be so good as to remember me to them respectfully

J. B. S.

[Address: Raleigh.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 13th January, 1830.

Dear Sir:—

Mr. Christmas wishes to know whether you will hire Cesar. He offers him at \$50. He is worth this sum, and Jerry cannot do without him, or some other person. The Mill is thronged and Jerry will soon break down

¹Thomas S. Hoskins was a member of the House of Commons in 1835.

without help. Cesar is a pretty good miller, and when not wanted in the Mill can work on the plantation. Mr. Christmas begs you to inform him immediately whether you will take him.

I received your letter on today. I think I can arrange the Debt with Dr. Webb. I will try and give you notice. To me it is a matter of the last importance to save the Library.

If you knew or had any idea of my afflicted condition, you would not deny my request as to Bridget. When you were here last, I was oppressed by sad reflections and overwhelmed with melancholy feelings. I did not mention the subject to you then: I thought you knew my wishes. I cannot expect Cornelia to remain with me long, and when she is gone I shall be left dependent upon those who know not how to nurse me, or take care of me in my sufferings. I appeal to your generosity on this subject, and to your sympathy for a human Being, who has suffered and is probably long doomed to suffer the extreme of human wretchedness.

If our Friendship does not entitle me to this small Boon at your Hands, let my affliction prefer its claim. I declare to you that I had rather be dead than to be deprived of all chance of good nursing in my sufferings. One thing is certain, I should quickly die. Let me therefore entreat you not to deprive me of Bridget, if I can make out to pay you for her. I think I can pay you with certainty, at the time mentioned in my last Letter. Write to me, if you can by the return Mail.

Honble. Thomas Ruffin.

From V. M. Murphey.

HAW RIVER 10th Feby. 1830.

My Dear Sir:—

I had been in Greensboro. assisting my Father in moving for nearly a week before I received your Letter, but immediately upon my return, turned my attention to your business. On today Mr. Moore left here for Hillsboro. with the wagon for your Pork. Old Cupid is not here as you expected. He came down early in January expecting you had purchased pork in the neighbourhood, but finding that you had not, he returned to Caswell again. However when Mr. Moore returns I will have the pork carefully hung up and smoked. I went to see Jerry respecting the Flour. He informs me there is wheat enough in the Mill to make 28 or 30 Barrels of flour and that the flour can be made at any time when the barrels are ready. Mr. Moore was disappointed in getting barrels from persons who some time since had promised to supply him.

The house will be vacated on Tomorrow. Cornelia and the children will start to Greensboro. My Father is already there. My Grandmother appeared to be so much distressed at parting with her, at once we thought

it prudent that Cornelia should remain a few days longer than my Father, who was compelled to go up early in the last week.

* * * * *

Upon the subject of the Library I suspect my Father will write you by the Mail of Tomorrow. I apprehend there will be no difficulty about it. . . .

Hon. Thomas Ruffin. .

From V. M. Murphey.

HAW RIVER, 25th July 1830.

My Dear Sir.

* * * * *

My Neighbourhood has lately been visited with some sickness. The Fever has broken out in some few families, and as far as my practice has extended I find it of a much more malignant character than that of last year.

Our candidates are making much noise about their election, particularly those for the Senate, and I have never known such perfect indifference about an election, and I regret to say that there exists a prospect for the election of *your* worthy Friend Dr. Craig in the Commons. William mentioned that he had written to you today and that the Family were all well.

[Address: Raleigh, No. Ca.]

From Archibald D. Murphey.

GREENSBOROUGH 31st August 1830.

Dear Sir:—

I send down Tom for some Flour and Corn and Corn Meal. Being detained all day on yesterday in giving my deposition in the Cape Fear Navigation Cases, I don't know whether I can write intelligently this morning. However you will probably understand me.

1st When you went to Raleigh I sent you 4 Bbbs. of Flour. I agreed to take 4 Bbbs. in return out of the Mill. When I moved to this place Jerry made 2 Bbbs. for me: and I was supplied with Flour from the Mill from the time of my arrest here in Nov. last untill I moved. The Books of the Mill will shew how much I got, and you can then tell how much Flour is yet coming to me to make up the 4 Bbbs. Whatever there be, I beg you to have it prepared and send up by Tom.

2'd. Send me Corn and Corn Meal to the amount of the enclosed Bill.

3'd. Mr. Worth and myself wish to make a contract with you for 120 Bbbs. of Corn and 10 Bbbs. of Flour—with the Liberty of extending the

Contract to 150 Bbls. of Corn and 15 Bbls. of Flour. We will take the Corn and Flour at the Mill from Time to Time as we may want them, and we shall want one half, perhaps more, of the Corn ground. We will give you \$4 per Bbl. for flour, and \$2 for Corn, and make payment as follows: for all we get up to the 1st December we pay the money as we get the Corn and Flour. On the 1st Dec. next, we will pay you in advance \$60. On 1st March next, \$60. On 20th May next 150. And if we should extend the Contract to 150 Bbls. of Corn and 15 Bbls. of Flour, we will pay you \$80 in June next. We wish to engage Corn and Flour for our Families and also for the Gold Mine at Gibson. We will take sometimes 3, sometimes 8 Bbls. at a time, of Corn. We wish to get it at the Mill as we may want it—and more than half, I expect, we shall want ground.

If you will make this Contract with us, I wish you to send a Bbl. of Flour and 1 and $\frac{1}{2}$ Bbls. of Corn ground into Meal, by Tom, to the Gold Mine. Whilst he is gone, Jerry can prepare my Flour and Meal for Tom to bring up. Mr. Worth will be at the Mine on next week and will send you the money for the Flour and Corn. If you decline letting us have Flour and Corn on the terms proposed, you need not send any to the Mine: Tom may come on home as soon as he can get his Flour etc.

Some of the people of this place will wait for Tom's return, to hear upon what terms they can get Flour and Corn at your Mill. They can buy Corn here at \$2.50 and haul it; and Flour is offered in the streets at \$2.50 per Hun'd. But those who have Carts prefer sending to your Mill if they can get Flour at \$2 per Hun'd—and Corn at \$2 per Bbl.

I am better and hope to see you as I go on to Orange Sup'r. Court.

From Archibald D. Murphey.

GREENSBOROUGH 2'd Sep. 1830.

Dear Sir:—

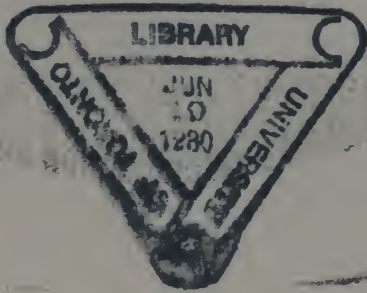
Having to send Tom down to the Mine on this morning with some Potatoes etc. for the Hands, I have directed him to go on with the Cart to the Mill and bring up the Corn Meal for the Mine. He tells me two Bags of it are at the Mill—, and I wish you to send up to the Mine by him 200 lbs. of Flour. You offer it at the price which Mr. Worth expected. Common Flour will answer as well as any.

I saw Mr. Worth on yesterday. He said he expected you would not take \$2. for corn; and authorised me to offer you \$2 $\frac{1}{2}$ for an hundred Barrels. But I suppose you will make no contract until you see Mr. Stith.

If you will wait with me for the money until the latter part of Orange Superior Court, I will thank you to send me 200 Lbs. of Flour and a

Barrel of Corn ground into Meal. I should be glad to get them now, as Tom and the Cart are now idle and will be so for three or four days, furnishing a good opportunity of collecting in a few supplies. If you will not wait, tell him to come on directly home from the Mine: if you will wait, tell him to return from the Mine and get the Flour and Corn.

Mr. Worth will not be at the Mine untill the week after next, nor shall I see him untill my return from Hillsborough. He will either write to you or go to see you. I expect we will take 20 Bbls. of Flour.



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