



FIRST DRAFT, GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS, 1796

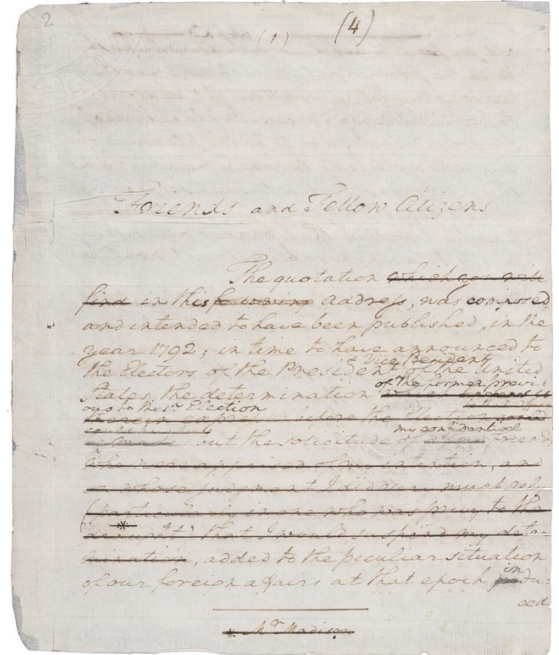
(4)
(1)

Friends and Fellow Citizens

The quotation ~~which you will find~~ in this ~~following~~ address was composed and intended to have been published in the year 1792, in time to have announced to
& Vice President
the Electors of the President ^ of the United
of the former previ=
States, the determination ~~which he had~~ [illegible]
ous to the s^{ai}d Election to that office
~~therein expressed before the Election could~~
could have [easily ?]

my confidential [sic]
[been?] Made but the solicitude of ^ a few friends
who were appraised of my intention, and
on whose judgment I did very much rely]
(particularly in one who was privy to the
*[Footnote crossed out: *Mr. Madison]
draught) that I would suspend my deter-
mination, added to the peculiar situation
in
of our foreign affairs at that epoch [pre?] ^ du
ced

*M^r Madison



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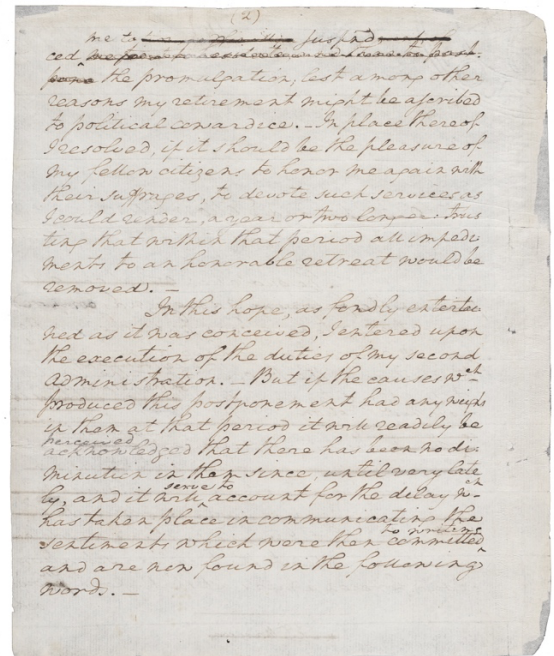
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(2)

me to [pause ?] [and?] finally susp[e]nd
[illegible/crossed out]
ced ~~me first to hesitate and then to post~~

~~pone~~ the promulgation, lest among other
reasons my retirement might be ascribed
to political cowardice. _ In place thereof
I resolved, if it should be the pleasure of
my fellow citizens to honor me again with
their suffrages, to devote such services as
I could render, a year or two longer trust=
ing that within that period all impedi=
ments to an honorable retreat would be
removed. —

In this hope, as fondly entertain=
ed as it was conceived, I entered upon
the execution of the duties of my second
administration. — But if the causes w^{[hi]c}
produced the postponement had any weight
in them at that period it will readily be
perceived
acknowledged that there has been no di=
minution in them since, until very late
serve to
ly, and it will ^ account for the delay w^{[hi]c}
has taken place in communicating the
to writing
sentiments which were then committed ^
and are now found in the following
words. —



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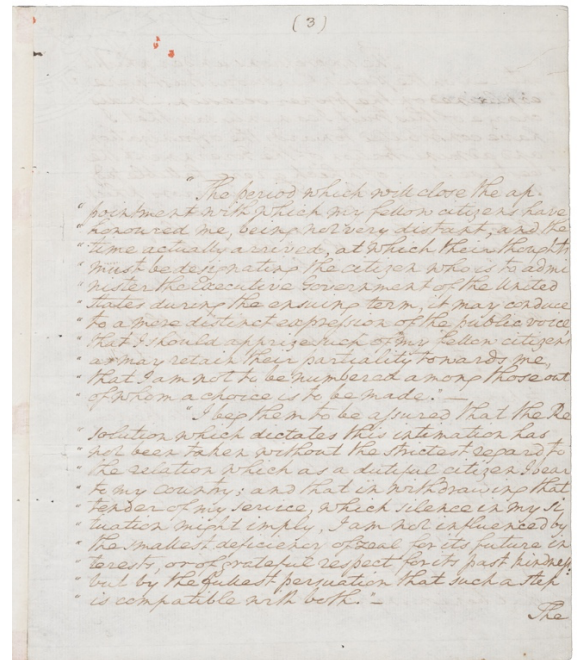


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(3)

"The period which will close the ap=
"pointment with which my fellow citizens have
"honoured me, being not very distant, and the
"time actually arrived, at which their thoughts
"must be designating the citizen who is to admi=
"nister the Executive Government of the United
"States during the ensuing term, it may conduce
"to a more distinct expression of the public voice
"that I should apprize such of "my fellow citizens"
"as may retain their partiality towards me,
"that I am not to be numbered among those out
"of whom a choice is to be made." –

"I beg them to be assured that the Re
"solution which dictates this intimation has
"not been taken without the strictest regard to
"the relation which as a dutiful citizen I bear
"to my country; and that in withdrawing that
"tender of my service, which silence in my si
"tuation might imply, I am not influenced by
"the smallest deficiency of zeal for its future in
"terests, or of grateful respect for its past kindness
"but by the fullest persuasion [persuasion] that
"such a step
"is compatible with both." –



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The

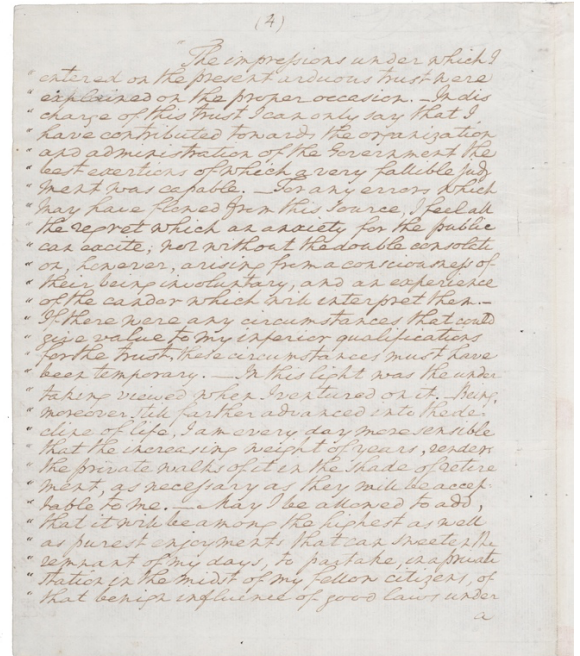


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(4)

"The impressions under which I
"entered on the present arduous trust were
"explained on the proper occasion. – In dis
"charge of this trust I can only say that I
"have contributed towards the organization
"and administration of the Government the
"best exertions of which a very fallible judg
"ment was capable. – For any errors which
"may have flowed from this source, I feel all
"the regret which an anxiety for the public
"can excite, nor without the double consolati
"on, however arising from a consciousness of
"their being involuntary, and an experience
"of the candor which will interpret them. –
"If there were any circumstances that could
"give value to my inferior qualifications
"for the trust, these circumstances must have
"been temporary. – In this light was the under
"taking viewed when I ventured on it. – Being
"moreover still farther advanced into the de
"cline of life, I am every day more sensible
"that the increasing weight of years, renders
"the private walks of it in the shade of retire
"ment, as necessary as they will be accep
"table to me. – May I be allowed to add,
"that it will be among the highest as well
"as purest enjoyments that can sweeten the
"remnant of my days, to partake, in a private
"station in the midst of my fellow citizens of
"that benign influence of good laws under

a



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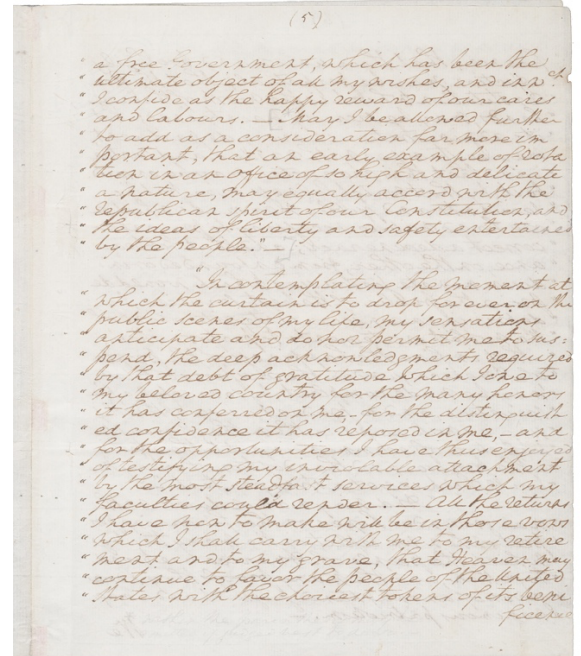


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(5)

“a free Government, which has been the
“ultimate object of all my wishes, and in w^{[hi]ch}
“I confide as the happy reward of our cares
“and labours. – May I be allowed further
“to add as a consideration far more im-
“portant, that an early example of rota-
“tion in an office of so high and delicate
“a nature, may equally accord with the
“Republican spirit of our Constitution, and
“the ideas of liberty and safety entertained
“by the people.” –

“In contemplating the moment at
“which the curtain is to drop forever on the
“public scenes of my life, my sensations
“anticipate and do not permit me to sus-
“pend, the deep acknowledgments required
“by that debt of gratitude which I owe to
“my beloved country for the many honors
“it has conferred on me, - for the distinguish-
“ed confidence it has reposed in me, - and
“for the opportunities I have thus enjoyed
“of testifying my inviolable attachment
“by the most steadfast services which my
“faculties could render. – All the returns
“I have now to make will be in those vows
“which I shall carry with me to my retire-
“ment and to my grave, that Heaven may
“continue to favor the people of the United
“States with the choicest tokens of its bene-
fice



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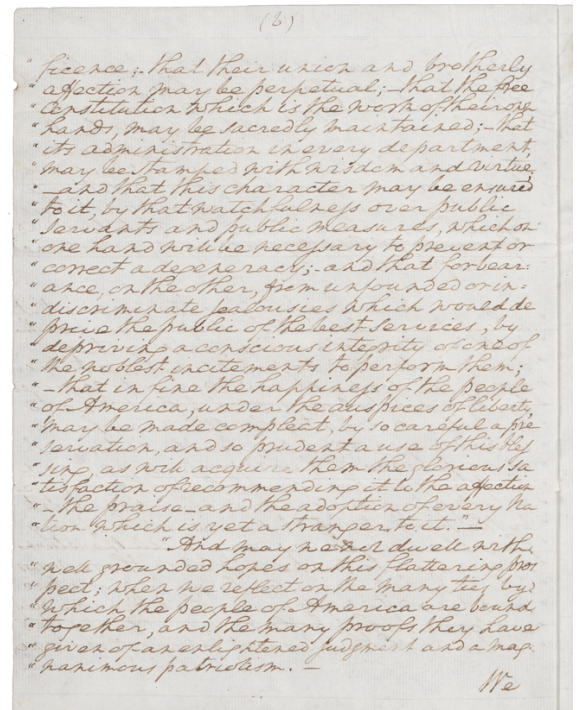
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(6)

“fidence, that their union and brotherly
“affection may be perpetual, - that the free
“Constitution which is the work of their own
“hands, may be sacredly maintained; - that
“its administration in every department,
“may be stamped with wisdom and virtue
“- and that this character may be ensured [sic]
“to it, by that watchfulness over public
“servants and public measures, which on
“one hand will be necessary to prevent or
“correct a degeneracy; - and that forbear=
“ance, on the other, from unfounded or in=
“discriminate jealousies which would de=
“prive the public of the best services, by
“depriving a conscious integrity of one of
“the noblest incitements to perform them;
“- that in fine the happiness of the people
“of America, under the auspices of liberty,
“may be made compleat [sic], by so careful a pre=
“servation, and so prudent a use of this bles=
“sing, as will acquire them the glorious sa=
“tisfaction of recommending it to the affection
“- the praise - and the adoption of every Na=
“tion which is yet a stranger to it.” -

“And may we not dwell with
“well grounded hopes on this flattering pros=
“pect; when we reflect on the many ties by
“which the people of America are bound
“together, and the many proofs they have
“given of an enlightened judgment and a mag=
“nanimous patriotism. -

We



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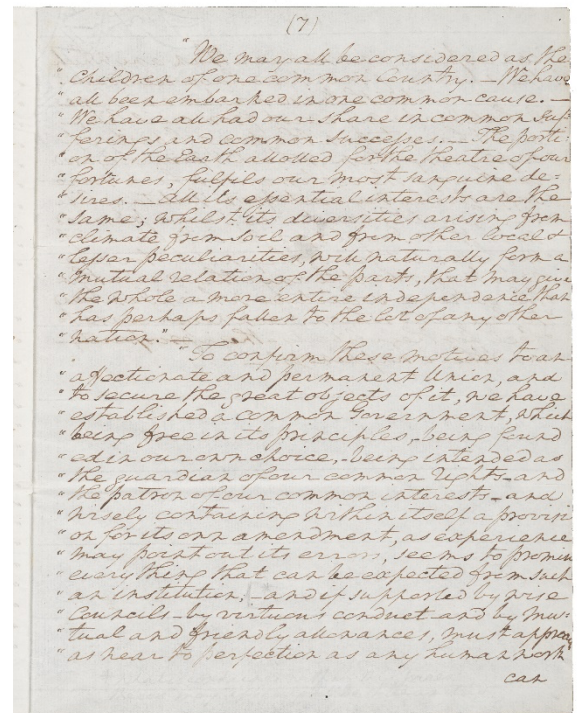


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(7)

"We may all be considered as the
"Children of one common Country. – We have
"all been embarked in one common cause. –
"We have all had our share in common suf-
"ferings and common successes. – The porti-
"on of the Earth allotted for the theatre of our
"fortunes, fulfils our most sanguine de-
"sires. – All its essential interests are the
"same; whilst its diversities arising from
"climate from soil and from other local &
"lesser peculiarities, will naturally form a
"mutual relation of the parts, that may give
"the whole a more entire independence than
"has perhaps fallen to the lot of any other
"nation." –

"To confirm these motives to an
"affectionate and permanent Union, and
"to secure the great objects of it, we have
"established a common Government, which
"being free in its principles, - being found-
"ed in our own choice, - being intended as
"the guardian of our common rights – and
"the patron of our common interests – and
"wisely containing within itself a provisi-
"on for its own amendment, and experience
"may point out its errors, seems to promise
"everything that can be expected from such
"an institution, - and if supported by wise
"councils [counsels?] – by virtuous conduct – and by mu-
"tual and friendly allowances, must approach
"as near to perfection as any human work
can



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(8)

“can aspire, and nearer than any which
“the annals of mankind have recorded.”

“With these wishes and hopes

“I shall make my exist [exit] from civil life; -

“and I have taken the same liberty of

“expressing them, which I formerly used

“in offering the sentiments which were

“suggested by my exit from Military life

“ – If, in either instance, I have presumed

“more than I ought, on the indulgence of

“my fellow citizens, they will be too gene=

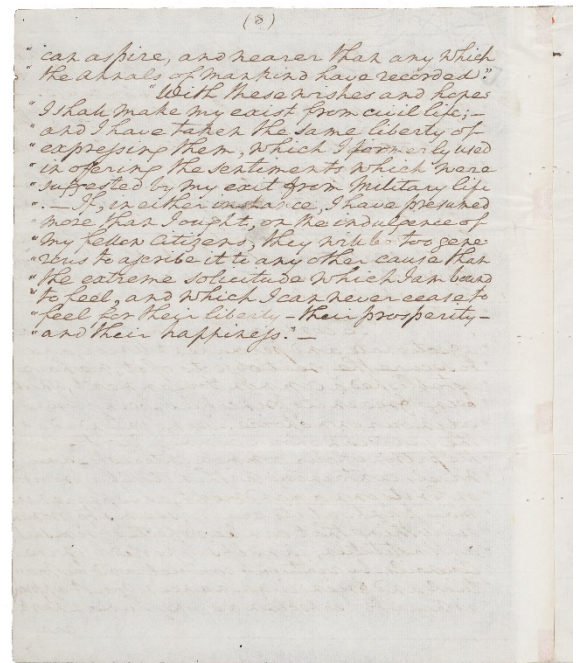
“rous to ascribe it to any other cause than

“the extreme solicitude which I am bound

“to feel, and which I can never cease to

“feel for their liberty – their prosperity –

“and their happiness.” –



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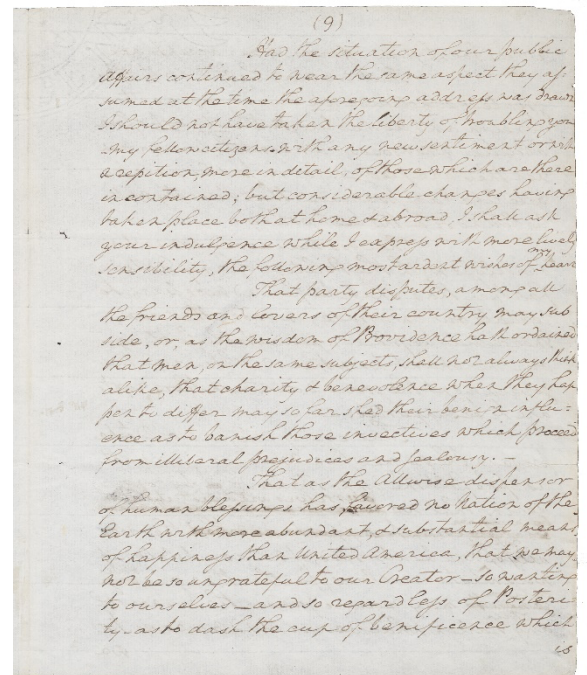
(9)

Had the situation of our public Affairs continued to wear the same aspect they assumed at the time the foregoing address was drawn I should not have taken the liberty of troubling you – my fellow citizens – with any new sentiment or with a repetition [repetition?], more in detail, of those which are there in contained; but considerable changes having taken place both at home & abroad, I shall ask your indulgence while I express with more lively
my
sensibility, the following most ardent wishes of ^
heart

That party disputes, among all the friends and lovers of their country may subside, or, as the wisdom of Providence hath ordained that men, on the same subjects, shall not always think alike, that charity & benevolence when they happen to differ may so far shed their benign influence as to banish those invectives which proceed from illiberal prejudices and jealousy. –

That as the Allwise dispenser of human blessings has favored no Nation of the Earth with more abundant, & substantial means of happiness than United America, that we may not be so ungrateful to our Creator – so wanting to ourselves – and so regardless of Posterity – as to dash the cup of beneficence which

is



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(10)

is thus bountifully offered to our acceptance.

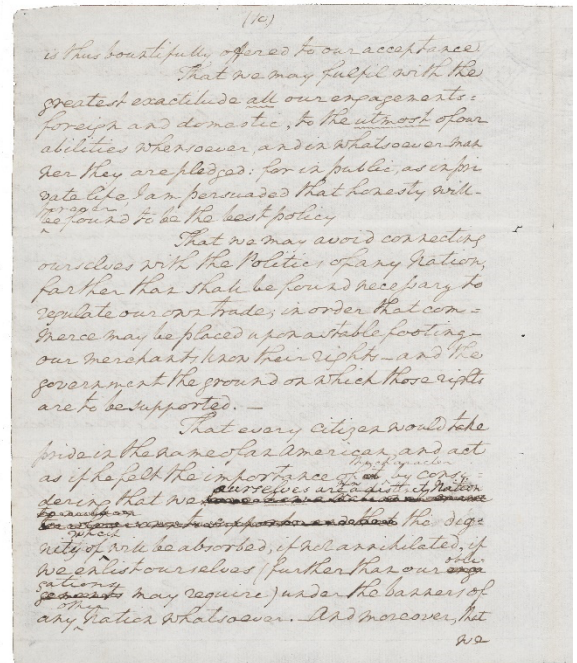
That we may fulfil with the greatest exactitude *all* our engagements = foreign and domestic, to the *utmost* of our abilities whensoever, and in whatsoever manner they are pledged; for in public, as in private life, I am persuaded that honesty will forever

^ be found to be the best policy

That we may avoid connecting ourselves with the Politics of any Nation, farther than shall be found necessary to regulate our own trade, in order that commerce may be placed upon a stable footing – our merchants know their rights – and the government the ground on which those rights are to be supported. –

That every citizen would take pride in the name of an American, and act the character as if he felt the importance of it ^ by considering that we [several words crossed out] ourselves are a distinct Nation [several words crossed out] the dignity of which will be absorbed, if not annihilated, if we enlist ourselves (further than our ^{own} ~~own~~ ^{national} ~~national~~ ^{interests} ~~interests~~ may require) under the banners of any ^ nation whatsoever. – And moreover, that

we enlist ourselves (further than our [organisations
[word crossed out] may require) under the banners of other any ^ nation whatsoever. – And moreover, that



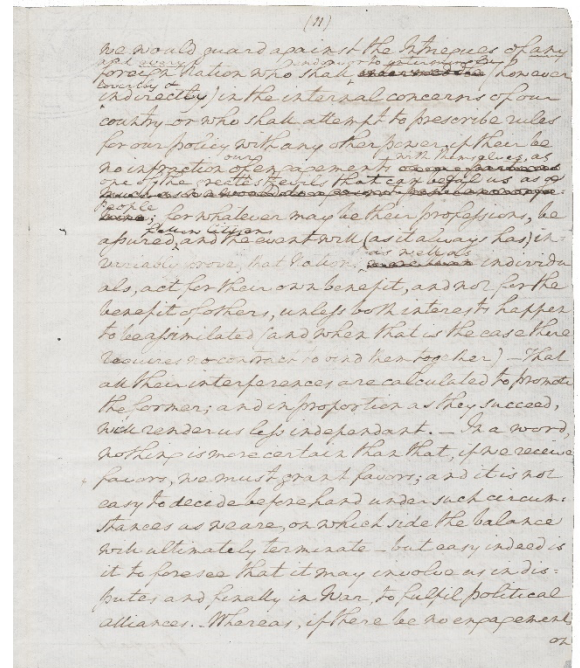
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(11)

we would guard against the Intregues [Intrigues] of any
and every endeavor to intermingle
foreign Nation who shall ^ [illegible – crossed out]
(however
covertly &
^ indirectly”) in the internal concerns of our
country – or who shall attempt to prescribe rules
for our policy with any other power, if their [sic] be
our with themselves as
no infraction of engagements [several words crossed out; illegible]
one of the greatest of evils that can befall [sic] us as a
[entire line crossed out; illegible]
people
[word crossed out; illegible]; for whatever may be their
professions, be
fellow citizens
assured ^ and the event will (as it always has) in=
as well as
variably prove, that Nations ^ [words crossed; illegible]
individu
als, act for their own benefit, and not for the
benefit of others, unless both interests happen
to be assimilated (and when that is the case there
requires no contract to bind them together) – That
all their interferences are calculated to promote
the former; and in proportion as they succeed,
will render us less independant [sic]. – In a word,
nothing is more certain than that, if we receive
favors, we must grant favors; and it is not
easy to decide beforehand under such circum=
stances as we are, on which side the balance
will ultimately terminate – but easy indeed is
it to foresee that it may involve as in dis=
putes and finally in War, to fulfil political
alliances. – Whereas, if there be no engagements
on



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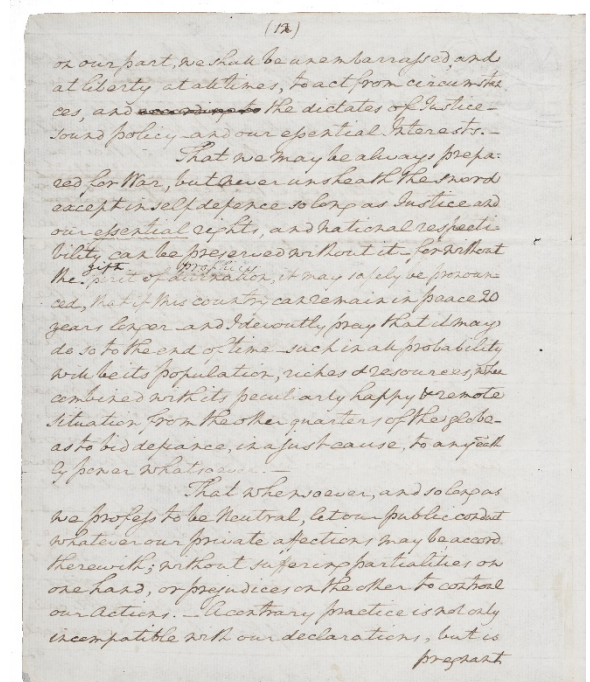
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(12)

on our part, we shall be unembarrassed, and at liberty at all times, to act from circumstances, and according to the dictates of Justice – sound policy – and our essential Interests. –

That we may be always prepared for War, but never unsheath the sword except in self defence so long as Justice and our essential rights, and national respectability can be preserved without it – for without gift prophecy the spirit of divination, it may safely be pronounced, that if this country can remain in peace 20 years longer – and I devoutly pray that it may do so to the end of time – such in all probability will be its population, riches & resources, when combined with its peculiarly happy & remote situation from the other quarters of the globe – as to bid defiance, in a just cause, to any [illegible] by [?] pen or whatsoever. –

That whensoever, and so long as we profess to be Neutral, let our public conduct whatever our private affection may be accord therewith; without suffering partialities on one hand, or prejudices on the other to control our actions. – A contrary practice is not only incompatible with our declaration, but is pregnant



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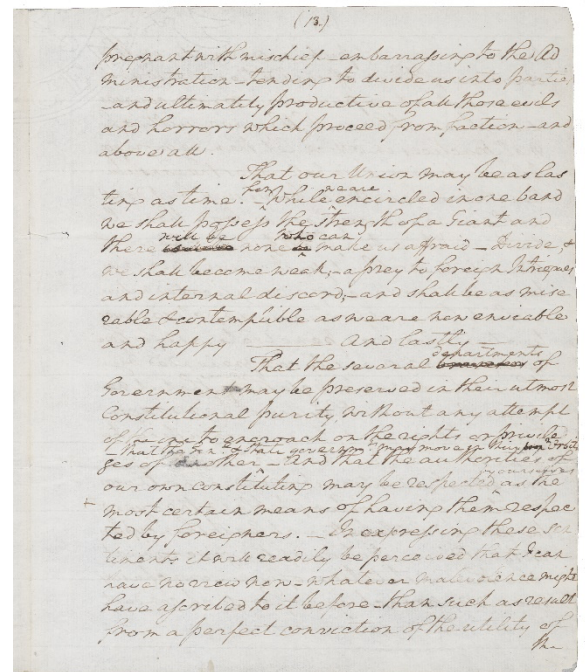
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(13)

pregnant with mischief – embarrassing to the Administration – tending to divide us into parties – and ultimately productive of all those evils and horrors which proceed from faction – and above all.

That our Union may be as lasting as time. – ^ while ^ encircled in one band we shall possess the strength of a Giant and will be who can there [word(s) crossed out] none ^ [word crossed out] make us afraid [sic] – Divide, & we shall become weak; - a prey to foreign Intrigues and internal discord; - and shall be as miserable & contemptible as we are now enviable and happy ----- And lastly – departments

That the several [word crossed out; illegible] of Government may be preserved in their utmost Constitutional purity, without any attempt of the one to encroach on the rights or privilege of the other – that the Gen^l [General?] & state govern^{[men]ts} may move in their [prop^{[e]r}?] Orbits ges of [ink blotch: an?] other – And that the authorities of by ourselves our own constitution may be respected ^ as the most certain means of having them respected by foreigners. – In expressing these sentiments it will readily be perceived that I can have no view now – whatever malevolence might have ascribed to it before – than such as result from a perfect conviction of the utility of the



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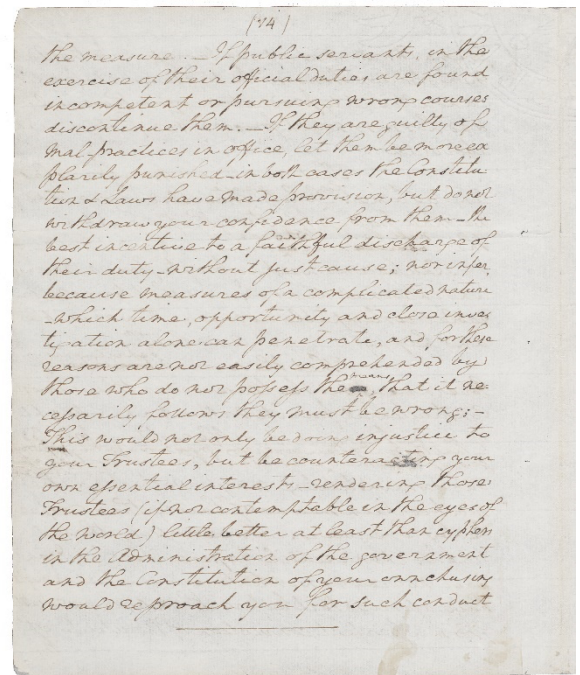


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(14)

the measure. – If public servants, in the exercise of their official duties are found incompetent or pursuing wrong courses discontinue them. – If they are guilty of malpractices in office, let them be more exemplarily [exemplarily?] punished – in both cases the Constitu=

tion & Laws have made provision, but do not withdraw your confidence from them – the best incentive to a faithful discharge of their duty – without just cause; nor infer because measures of a complicated nature – which time, opportunity and close investigation alone can penetrate, and for these reasons are not easily comprehended by those who do not possess the means that it necessarily follows they must be wrong; – This would not only be doing injustice to your Trustees, but be counteracting your own essential interests – rendering those Trustees (if not contemptible in the eyes of the world) little better at least than cyphers in the Administration of the government and the Constitution of your conclusions would reproach you for such conduct



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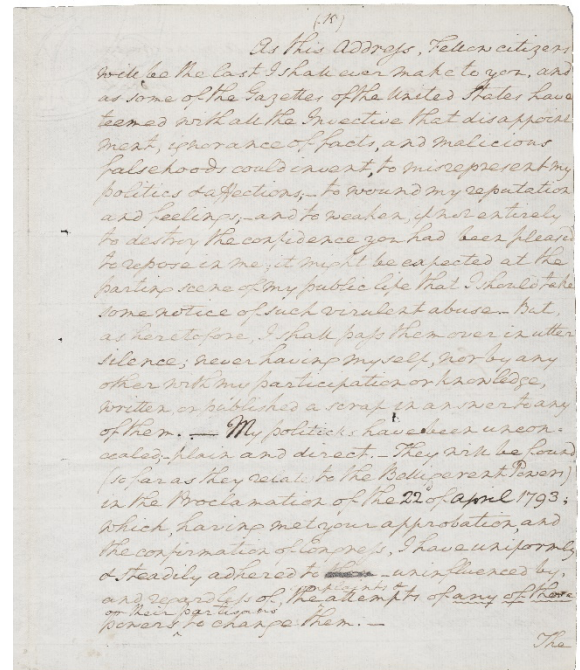


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(15)

As this Address, Fellow citizens will be the last I shall ever make to you, and as some of the Gazettes of the United States have teemed with all the Invective that disappointment, ignorant of facts, and malicious falsehoods could invent, to misrepresent my politics & affections; - to wound my reputation and feelings; - and to weaken, if not entirely to destroy the confidence you had been pleased to repose in me; it might be expected at the parting scene of my public life that I should take some notice of such virulent abuse. - But, as heretofore, I shall pass them over in utter silence; never having myself, nor by any other with my participation or knowledge, written, or published a scrap in answer to any of them. - My politicks have been uncon= cealed; - plain and direct. - They will be found (so far as they relate to the belligerent Powers) in the Proclamation of the 22^d of April 1793; which, having met your approbation, and the confirmation of Congress, I have uniformly & steadily adhered to ~~them~~ - uninfluenced by, complaints & and regardless of the attempts of *any of those* or their partisans powers ^ to change them. -

The



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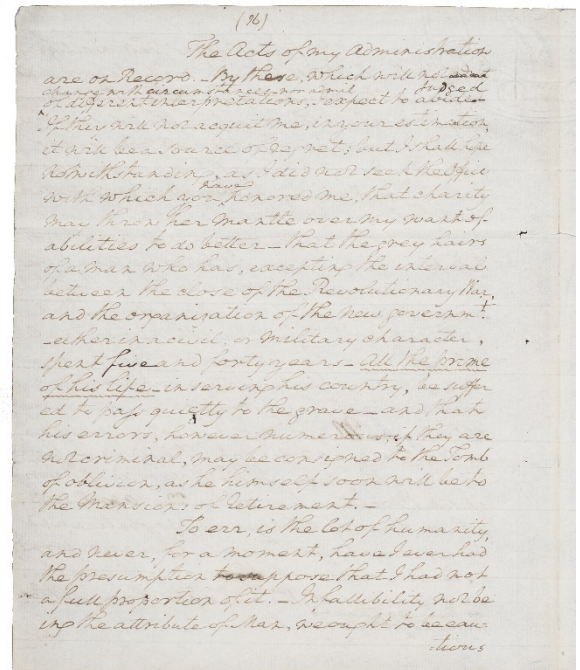


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(16)

The Acts of my Administration
are on Record; - By these, which will not [crossed
out/illegible]
change with circumstances – nor admit [be?] judged
^ of different interpretations; - I expect to abide
If they will not acquit me, in your estimation,
it will be a source of regret; but I shall hope
notwithstanding, as I did not seek the Office
have
with which you ^ honored me, that Charity
may throw her Mantle over my want of
abilities to do better. That the grey hairs [?]
of a man who has, excepting the interval
between the close of the Revolutionary War,
and the organization of the new Govern^{en}t
– either in a civil, or Military character,
spent five and forty years – *All the prime
of his life* – in serving his country, be suffer
ed to pass quietly to the grave – and that
his errors, however numerous, if they are
not criminal, may be consigned to the Tomb
of oblivion, as he himself soon will be to
the Mansions of Retirement. –

To err, is the lot of humanity,
and never, for a moment, have I ever had
the presumption to suppose that I had not
a full proportion of it. – Infallibility not be
ing the attribute of Man, we ought to be cau=
=tious



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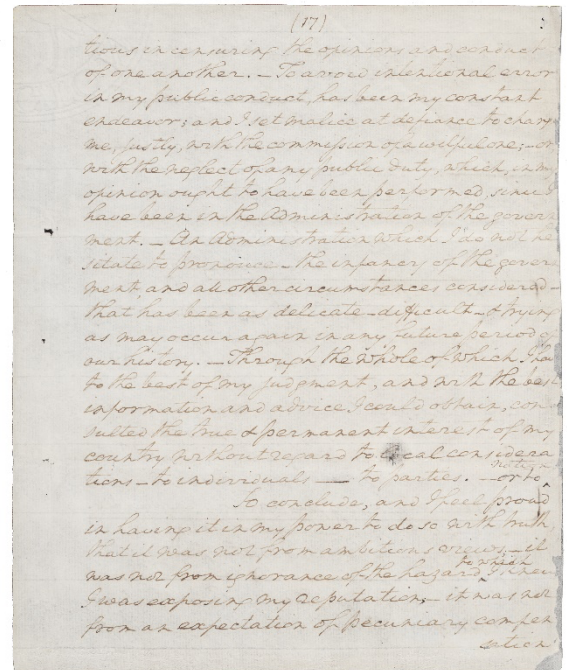
(17)

tious in censuring the opinions and conduct of one another. – To avow intentional error in my public conduct has been my constant endeavor; and I set malice at defiance to charge me, justly, with the commission of a wilful one; - or with the neglect of any public duty, which, in my opinion ought to have been performed, since I have seen in the Administration of the government. – An Administration which I do not hesitate to pr[illegible] – The infancy of the government and all other circumstances considered – that has been as delicate – difficult - & trying as may occur again in any future period of our history. – Through the whole of which I have to the best of my judgment, and with the best information and advice I could obtain, consulted the true & permanent interest of my country without regard to local considera

Nations

tions – to individuals – to parties – or to ^

To conclude, and I feel proud in having it in my power to do so with truth that it was not from ambitious views; – it to which was not from ignorance of the hazard ^ I knew I was exposing my reputation; - it was not from an expectation of pecuniary compensation



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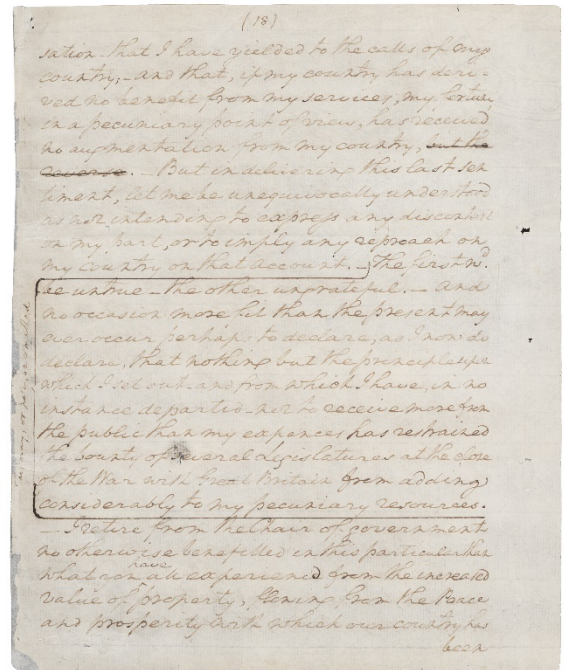


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(18)

sation – that I have yielded to the calls of my country; - and that, if my country has derived no benefit from my services, my fortune in a pecuniary point of view, has received no augmentation from my country, ~~but the reverse~~. – But in delivering this last sentiment, let me be unequivocally understood and not intending to express any discontent on my part, or to imply any reproach on my country on that account. - The first w^{ould} be untrue – the other ungrateful. – And no occasion more fit than the present may ever occur perhaps to declare, as I now do declare, that nothing but the principle upon which I set out- and from which I have, in no instance departed – not to receive more from the public than my expences has restrained the bounty of several Legislatures at the close of the War with Great Britain from adding considerably to my pecuniary resources.

I retire from the Chair of government
no otherwise benefitted in this particular than
have
what you ^ all experienced from the increased
value of property, flowing from the Peace
and prosperity with which our country has
been



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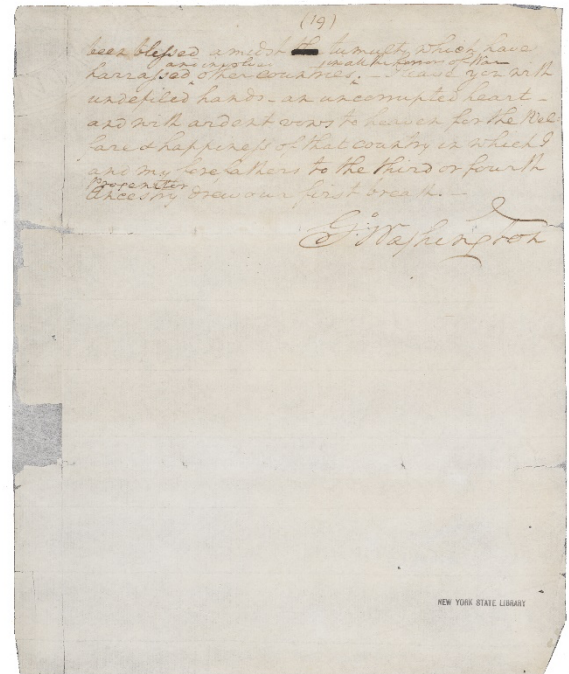
This may or may not be omitted.



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(19)

been blessed amidst [word crossed out] tumults which have
and involved in all the horrors of
War
harassed ^ other countries ^ . I leave you with
undefiled hands – an uncorrupted heart –
and with ardent vows to heaven for the Wel=
fare & happiness of that country in which I
and my forefathers to the third or fourth
progenitor
Ancestry drew our first breath.
G Washington



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