

Letter from George Washington to Henry Knox, April 1, 1789

Mount Vernon April 1st. 1789

My dear Sir;

The Mail of the 30th. brought me your favor the 23^d. – For which, & the regular information you have had the goodness to transmit of the state of things in New York, I feel myself very much obliged, and thank you accordingly. –

I feel for those Members of the new Congress, who, hitherto, have given an unavailing attendance at the theatre of business: – For myself, the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I can assure you with the world it would obtain little credit – that my movements to the chair of Government will be accompanied with feelings not unlike those of a culprit who is going to the place of his execution: so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares to quit a peaceful abode for an Ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill – abilities & inclination which is necessary to manage the helm. – I am sensible, that I am embarking the voice of my Countrymen and a good name of my own, on this voyage, but what returns will be made for them – Heaven alone can foretell. – Integrity & firmness is all I can promise – these, be the voyage long or short, never shall forsake me although I may be deserted by all men. – For of the consolations which are to be derived from these (under any circumstances) the world cannot deprive me. – With best wishes for M^{rs}. Knox, & sincere friendship for yourself – I remain

Your Affectionate

G^o: Washington

The Hon^{ble}

Maj^r Gen^l Knox

Transcript Source: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History