

Letter from Martha Washington to Frances Bassett Washington, June 8, 1789

New York June the 8th 1789

My dear Fanny

I have the pleasure to tell you, that we had a very agreeable journey, – I arrived in Philadelphia on Friday after I left you without the least accident to dinner we were met by the president of the state, (Gen^l Mifflin) with the city troop of Horse and conducted safe to Grays ferry, where a number of Ladies and Gentlemen came to meet me, – and after a cold collation we proceed to Town, – I went to M^{rs} Morris – the children was very well and chearfull all the way, Nelly complained very little of being sick as soon as I could I sent for the stay maker, and gave him your measure and directed him to send the stays to Col^o Biddle when done to be sent to you, – also two pairs of shoes of a new fashioned kind those with Low Heels are for you, shoe with the high heels is for M^{rs} Stuart, with a pair a piece for the two dear girls, – all which I hope has come to your hands before this

I set out on Monday with M^{rs} Morris and her two Daughters, – and was met on Wednesday morning by the President M^r Morris and Col^o H at Elizabeth town point with the fine Barge you have seen so much said off in the papers with the same oars men that carried the P. to New York dear little Washington seemed to be lost in a maze at the great parade that was made for us all the way we come the Governor of the state meet me as soon as we landed, and led me up to the House, the papers will tell you how I was complimented on my landing, – I thank god the Pr^{dt} is very well, and the Gentle men with him – are all very well, – the House he is in is a very good one and is handsomly furnished all new for the General – I have been so much engaged since I came hear that I have never opened your Box or directors but shall soon have time as most of the visits are at an end – I have not had one half hour to my self since the day of my arrival, – my first care was to get the children to a good school, – which they are both very much pleased at, – nelly shall begin Musick next week – she has made two or three attempts to write to you; but has never finished a letter – she is a little wild creature and spends her time at the windows looking at carriages, &c passing by which is new to her and very common for children to do – I wish you to take a prayer book your self and give one to Harriot the other two to be given to Betty & Patty Custis –

I am pleased to hear that the domestick concerns goe on well – sickness is to be expected and Charlot will lay her self up for as little as any one will – it was right to give them more Bread if I did not put enough in each bundle – I am truly sorry to hear of another death in the family so soon –

I shall think my self much obliged to M^{rs} Bassett for any particular notice she may take of Patty Dandridge – I have a great regard for her and wish to see her do well – When you write to your Brother remember me affectionately to them – I was very sorry that I was obliged to leve home so soon after they came to Mount Vernon – my dear Fanny remember me to all enquiring friends to M^r and M^{rs} Washington the major and give sweet little maria a thousand kisses for me – I often think of the dear little engaging child – and wish her with me to hear her little prattle – we shall get the Cotters for her before she will want them – as no other kind of cushing are worne hear but the crape cushing, or the hair draped like one I did not send one for you – all the genteel people say a crape cushing is not proper to send to you – but I think in the country where you cannot have a hair dresser they will do very well – my Hair is set and dressed every day – and I have put on white muslin Habits for the summer – you would I fear think me a good deal in the fashion if you could but see me – my dear Fanny send me by some safe convance my Black lace apron and handkerchief they are in one of my drawers in the chest of drawers in my chamber – and some thread lace or joining nett it is in one of the Baskets on the shelf in my closet they were fine net Handkerchiefs which I intended to make cap borders off – I think I showed it to you and told you I intended to make a border of them – if my black Handkerchief is not in the drawer Charlot knows where it is to be found – I should think that there could not be any impropriety in Hariots going to see her cosin when ever she desired it remember me to all and believe me your most affectionate

M Washington

Give my love to Hariott and
Send me the measure of
her foot –

Transcript Source: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History