

Litchfield Jan^y 28 1818_

My dear father_

I hope you have passed a pleasant Christmas & have entered on a new year which will continue & end happily__ I have expected a letter with some anxiety, but I flatter myself that you are all well & haven't anything which you think equal to the trouble of the communication_ But let me entreat you, my dear father, to relieve my attitude & let me hear from you at least once a month_ I have written several letters to my friends in Greenville, and altho' I have been absent near two months, have not rec.^d a single line_ but I hope for the best & am resolved to be patient_ my situation becomes the more delightful, the more I become acquainted with the advantages we enjoy_ Exclusive of the great benefit arising from attending the lectures (which are really the most masterly productions) we enjoy a decided advantage over any place which I have ever visited, in the situation of our chambers_ They are perfectly retired_ Each student has a room, to lodge & study in, alone & is never liable to interruption insomuch that there are many young Gentlemen in the office who read & write 14 hours of the 24_ Edm.^d Wilkins & myself are the only ~~two~~ Virginians in the office at present_ the character of our state has not stood very high here until very recently _ Those gentlemen who have hitherto attended the lectures have been so remarkable for their dissipation and irreligion_ that in this land of steady habits, they identify with a Virginian, the idea of a contempt of every thing holy & sacred, and habits of the most abandoned profligacy But our landlady tells us that those opinions are undergoing a serious revolution, & condescendingly informs us that V^a has not been so well represented for many years as it is at present_ We believe her of course [P 2]

The situation of this place is beautiful & romantic_ It stands on the top of a hill, commanding an extensive prospect, in which are some of the finest & best cultivated farms I ever saw_ which are finely contrasted by two lakes of considerable size, on which the gentlemen have rare sport in skating when the snow will permit them_ The health of the inhabitants is astonishing the office has been established for 35 years, and every year has seen a respectable number of students, amongst whom have been some of the hardest students perhaps in the state, and there never has been but one instance of mortality_ The reason, no doubt is, that in addition to salubrity of the climate, there are so few inducements to dissipation_ We have all the necessaries of life & very few of the enervating luxuries_ The neatness of the houses, the regularity with which the people attend church on the sabbath and the universal & undeviating devotion, with which the Sabbath is observed, are strongly contrasted with the manners of Virginia_ every parish has a church and Every man in the parish pays a tax to support the minister_ & in case of delinquency in attending church, a fine is imposed which is appropriated to some charitable purpose__ The political complexion of the state is undergoing a rapid change_ The Democrats, or as they stile themselves, the Toleration men are daily [inercaring?] and already have a Republican governor, and lower house & it is expected

will have a senate of the same principles the next winter_ The history of this revolution is quite amusing_ The state [torn] here for a long time under the religious and political direction of the Federal presbyterians, who have committed some of the most shameless acts of oppression and injustice toward the other sects which ever disgraced a despot_ The first event in the order of time, which shook their long established power, was the meeting of the Hartford Convention: which so far from being the dictate of the people's wishes, was the result of the vile ambition of some demagogues who to use an expression which was once applied to Mr. Randolph, had rather reign in H__L than serve in Heaven
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the people regarded it as a bare forgery of their names and were [torn] ripe for any event which might expose those pretended representatives [torn] the Episcopalians were as violently opp^d to it as the Presbyterians loved [torn] it _ & shortly afterwards applied for an act to incorporate a bank & agreed to give the legislature \$60,000 as a bonus_ their wishes were complied with_ they then requested that as Yale College is wholly presbyterian the legis^r would grant them an act to incorporate a college, & this bonus asp^t of their funds. this was rep^d and regarded as a great hardship_ since much more had been granted to Yale Col. [torn] fact but a short time after \$40,000 were granted in addition to the former [torn] funds of that Col. While the Episcopalians were thus burning with resentment, [torn] democrats stepped in and promised that if they assist them up the ladder of [torn potential?] power, they would extend the hand of assistance as well to Episc. Baptists & Methodists as Presbyterians- in a word they would tolerate all religions & they have succeeded in revolutionizing the state_ The Present Governor (Mr. Wolcott) tho' a man of family & distinction, having been Sec^y of the U.S. Treasury, is possessed of ordinary talents_ He resides in this town & is remarked for his politeness & gentlemanly deportment toward the students The Winter has been as yet very mild, (so they say here) I have however found my surtout so feeble protector that I have purchased a plaid Cloak, which is very comfortable _ Edm^d Wilkins sends his best respects to yourself & mama and requests that when you see his father you would inform him that he is well & would be glad to hear from [torn] as neither of us has rec^d a letter since my arrival_ Limbrey has just left us, having spent part of his vacation here I never saw such a huge [torn] as he is he weighs 185 and [torn] of Billy Maclun_ I hope to hear from you soon_ Where are the [torn] What resolution has Brother James made relative to the Western Country? Tell George if he can read when I come home, I shan't forget his boots_ Kiss Mrs. Coon, & tell her the old schoolmaster frequently catches himself with tears in his eyes when he thinks of the distance which separates him from her sweet little self_ remember me to my friends, and give my best love to Mama & Aunt Nancy & believe me as ever your affec^e son JnoYMason
[Cover]

Edmunds Mason Esq^r
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via Washington city
and Petersburg

John Young Mason dated January 18, 1818, Litchfield Law School, to Edmunds Mason in Greenville County, Virginia (Mss2 M3812 a3) VA Historical Society