New York, Aug. 24th, 1805

My dear Sir:

After an excursion of a week to Litchfield I have received your favour of the 10th instant. The sight of your handwriting makes me blush at recollecting that an excellent letter from you dated Dec. 3rd remains unanswered. I have kept this letter constantly in my writing desk and have formed frequent determinations that I would reply to it, but have always been prevented by some occurrence, or by a series of cares and anxieties of a domestic nature, from which I pray God you may always be exempted.

Your plan of preparation for the scene of public business on which you are about to engage, is the only one which in my opinion can enable any man to be very useful or greatly distinguished. Talents, learning and eloquence, never of themselves made a statesman. There are but few axioms in politics and these are more useful in enabling men to avoid what is wrong, than in directing them to the course which is right. In public affairs, every measure is related to other measures; an accurate knowledge of facts is therefore indispensable, to which if possible, there ought to be added a knowledge of at least their proximate causes. When a Legislator can say with that his Laws are the best which the People can bear, he has pronounced in their favour the highest possible eulogism.

I am confident that the annual statements of Receipts and Expenditures to a much later period than 1795 were sent to the Historical Society - also the amounts of Imports and Exports and a variety of other documents which you will find very useful. I would advise you to examine all the papers, which I am persuaded will add much to your stock - the next resource will be to look