

Thomas Jefferson to George Washington, October 17, 1793, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES J. MSS.

Monticello Oct. 17. 1793.

Dear Sir, —I was the day before yesterday honored with your favor of the 7th inst. by post and yesterday I received that of the 11th by express from Colo. Carrington. I will take care to be at Germantown by the 1st of the month. As the ploughing thro the roads of the month of January would be disagreeable with my own horses, I shall send them back from Fredericksburg, for which place I will set out to-morrow (Friday) sennight, in order to take the stage from thence of Monday the 28th. This of course will deprive me of the honor of waiting on you at Mount Vernon, but perhaps I may have that of seeing you on the road.

I have carefully considered the question Whether the President may call Congress to any other place than that to which they have adjourned themselves, and think he cannot have such a right unless it has been given him by the constitution or the laws, & that neither of these has given it. The only circumstance which he can alter, as to their meeting, is that of *time* by calling them at an *earlier day* than that to which they stand adjourned, but no power to change the place is given. Mr. Madison happened to come here yesterday after the receipt of your letter. I proposed the question to him, and he thinks there was particular caution intended & used in the diction of the Constitution to avoid giving the President any power over the place of meeting; lest he

should exercise it with local partialities.

Library of Congress

With respect to the Executive, the Residence law has fixed our offices at Philadelphia till the year 1800, & therefore it seems necessary that we should get as near them as we may with safety.

As to the place of meeting for the legislature, were we authorized to decide that question I should think it right to have it in some place in Pennsylvania, in consideration of the principles of the Residence bill, & that we might furnish no pretext to that state to infringe them hereafter. I am quite unacquainted with Reading, & it's means of accommodation. It's situation is perhaps as little objectionable as that of Lancaster, & less so than Trenton or perhaps Wilmington. However I think we have nothing to do with the question, & that Congress must meet in Philadelphia even if it be in the open fields, to adjourn themselves to some other place.—I am extremely afraid something has happened to mr. Bankson, on whom I relied for continuance at my office. For two posts past I have not received any letter from him, nor dispatches of any kind. This involves new fears for the duplicates of those to mr. Morris. I have the honor to be with sentiments of the most perfect esteem & attachment,

P.S. Mr. Randolph's, and mr. Trumbul's letters are returned.