

[p 68] Saturday 12th. November 1803.

The Board met pursuant to Notice.

Present, Mr. President Meigs, Messrs. Twiggs, Mounger, Clarke, Hull, Cunningham, Carnes, McNeil, O'Neal,

The President of the University made the following communication, viz.

“Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees,”

“When I left Athens, which was on the sixth day of this Month, the outside walls of the collegiate Building in that place were finished; and the Masons were employed in carrying up the partition walls, which, I believe, will be finished within ten days. – The Carpenter began to raise the frame of the Roof on Monday last – he has finished the window sashes, the Doors, and the shingles for the Roof – he has his plank ready and well seasoned for flooring, and every other article requisite to the complete execution of his contract.

Three dwelling houses, three stores, and a number of other valuable Buildings I believe are contracted for, and numerous applications have been made to me for lots on the street which it has been contemplated to lay out on the North of, and parallel to Front- Street.

The Students and the Citizens and the inhabitants of Athens, [p 69] and its vicinity, have been remarkably healthy during this year, as they were in the year 1802. – The Spring in the neighborhood of the college has at least not failed as to the quantity of water; and I have reasons to believe it has increased.

The number of Students this year has been between thirty and Forty five.

My Object has been to organize the four classes which usually constitute the Collegiate family in our literary institutions in the United States, and in those of Europe.-

Twelve young Gentlemen compose the Senior Class: they are pursuing with laudable ambition and singular industry, a course of reading, study and academic exercises, which it has been expected would terminate by the first of May next, at which time it is believed they will merit the honour of the first degree, usually conferred in all regular collegiate establishments.

The students of the Senior Class have been subjected to peculiar inconveniences and embarrassments in their progress, from the want of Books and Instruments, as have also the students of the inferior Classes, tho' in a less degree.

It is probable, from the information I have received, that the Philosophical apparatus, and a valuable though small selection of Books, are now on the passage from London to Savannah. This apparatus I am confident will be at least equal in real utility, to any one belonging to any literary institution in the United States.

Such is the actual state of things, won which it is proper you should receive information.

I hope the Board will be able to proceed without delay to the completion and finishing of the interior of the Building; as well as to execution, on their part of existing contracts; But, [p 70] for this purpose, it is well Known that they have need of more active property, than is now at their disposal.

Since the period of the American Revolution numerous attempts have been made in various parts of the Union, and particularly in the middle and southern States to found and establish colleges; most of which have unfortunately proved abortive – It would be a subject of deep regret to every lover of his fellow men, if such should be the fate of the institution which it is in a peculiar manner entrusted to your care. – You have in less than two Years done much, if you compare the effects of your labours with those of the directors of the ancient similar institutions of William and Mary in Virginia, Cambridge in Massachusetts, and Yale in Connecticut – none of those College have more than 200 students, though they have been in existence from 100 to 170 years.

I regret that so little attention has been paid to the support and encouragement of the different County Academies. Their situation demands attention. On very many accounts it is to be wished that they may be furnished with teachers able to qualify the Youth of the State (by teaching particularly the learned languages) for admission into the Collegiate family at Athens.

Permit me to suggest whether a union of the funds and resources of two, three or more counties, might not produce a respectable academy in such United District.

I have also to request your attention to the importance [p 71] of erecting a Building at Athens for the purpose of public worship, and the public exercises of the students.

Such a Building should be spacious enough to accommodate on the lower floor as large an assembly as usually meets for public worship, and on the upper floor it should contain

apartments for the Library – for Philosophical and Mathematical apparatus, - for the meetings of the Board of Visitors and Trustees, and for the preservation of their papers and Records.

It would probably be the best oeconomy to erect such a Building of Brick, since there is a fair prospect of a waggon Road through the Western Country to South West Point, which will enable you to procure lime at a moderate expense in comparison with that which has already incurred for that necessary article.

The activity and industry of the Directors of literary institutions in the other states – the immense Country opening to our view between us and the Pacific Ocean – the want of Education for the bare purpose of reducing new Countries to pleasant fields – and particularly the absolute and indispensable necessity of the diffusion of learning and science among any people who wish to be either politically or religiously free; concur in inciting you to perseverance in that laudable progress you have already made in the execution of the important trust committed to your wisdom and prudence.

I am, Gentlemen  
Very respectfully yours  
J. Meigs.