

Ashland 26 Dec. 1829

My dear Jon

Two letters from me which you must have received subsequent to the date of yours' of the 12th inst. will assure you, that you are not forgotten at Ashland, as you seem to apprehend. They bore melancholy tidings to you. You are constantly in our recollections and affections, and form one of the strongest ties to human life which I now feel. Your sister is now, I presume, at New Orleans; and her being thither from Tennessee has been most likely the cause of her not writing to you. Your mother and I have both lately suffered from bad colds. The rest of the family is well. I adhere to my purpose of visiting New Orleans; and in that case I shall not return until March.

On the question of the establishment of an American Institute, respecting which you consult me, I have no doubt of the utility of such an establishment. The experience of other countries demonstrates it, and the wants of our own require it. The only doubt about your project which I have is whether all the advantages of such an institution could be secured at West point. A large city in which many literary and learned men of leisure are congregated seems to be the general to be the most eligible place for its location. If the Cadets remained permanently at the point, after their graduation, it would be a suitable place. Nevertheless the association there might be of essential service to the Cadets themselves, if they can command, from their regular studies, sufficient time to attend to it, and might also be of public utility. On that condition, I would earnestly advise you