P.S. September 1854

Nearly all my papers & letters kept during the experiment with Gas at the Newport House have been mislaid or lost, & I am therefore obliged to write what I can in relation to its termination from the best of my recollection, after a lapse of thirty six years, and in the eighty second year of my age.

I was born March 21st 1773

David Melville

When I had completed my Contract, I furnished the Collector of this Port, The venerable William Ellery Esq with a copy of my Meteorological Table & Diary, and as the Contract was made with the Collector by direction of the Secretary of Treasury, I presented to him the bills for the cost of the apparatus &c, and at the same time, I forwarded a copy of the Diary &c to the Treasury Department, — and the Collector sent the bills to the Department for approval, — The 5th Auditor of the Treasury acknowledged the receipt of the Diary, & noticed in very flattering terms the minuteness &c. of its details, and gave me to understand that the Contract was considered to have been faithfully conducted and completed; and the bills were returned to the Collector, with directions to examine them and pay them if found correct. — The Collector examined the bills without delay, and paid them immediately without objecting to a single charge, very much to my satisfaction.

Over

A few days after, a letter was received from the Secretary of the Treasury, the purport of which was to inform me that he had seen my Diary kept at the Newport Light House during the experiment with Gas, and was much pleased with the particular observations & remarks it contained, and the manner in which the contract had been conducted to the satisfaction of the Government; But owing to the opposition to the use of Gas in the Light Houses by those engaged in the Whale-fishery, and the dealers in Whale-Oil generally - and the existing contract to furnish the Light Houses with Oil for five years, having some time to run, - Gas could not at present be adopted by the United States in the Light Houses as a substitute; - and it was considered to be the duty of the Government to encourage the Whale fishery as a Nursery for Seamen for the Navy. But the Government was satisfied by the experiment that had been successfully made, that in case of War and Oil could not be obtained for the light houses of the United States, Gas could be substituted in its place, & made from materials the production of our own country, and in case of that event, the successful experiment with Gas would not be forgotten.

Such were the sentiments expressed by the Secretary of the Treasury a short time after the contract had been completed, & the bills for the cost, examined, approved & paid.