

Name: _____

Satirical Responses to the Mammoth Cheese

Extract of a letter from a man in Berkshire, Massachusetts to a friend in Albany, New York, Otsego Herald, August 6, 1801.

“I have nothing new or strange to tell you, excepting a Mammoth Cheese, which the Cheshire people are making to present to the Mammoth of Montecello. It is now in the press.... So patriotic were the inhabitants in bringing forward the Curd....”

Republicanus, in an article in the Republican Federalist, September 21, 1801.

“They have made a monstrous Mammoth Cheese to present to our Sovereign Lord, King Jefferson, as a testimony of ‘the homage of their highest respects,’ while we in Lenox, the Shire town too, and quite as republican as Cheshire, are offering no tribute to the man who dwells in our hearts. Cheese is, indeed, very good, but it is one of those good things, which is not good alone.... Methinks it would relish better with a good Apple-Pye. I therefore take the liberty to propose to you, to shew your patriotism, by making a great Mammoth Apple-Pye, to be presented with the Mammoth Cheese.... I ask pardon for entering thus minutely into the subject, my only object being to suggest the impropriety of sending a Cheese to the President, without a clever snug Pye to accompany it.”

Excerpt of Ode to the Mammoth Cheese, a poem published in the Republican Gazette and General Advertiser (or Bartgis’s Republican Gazette), March 10, 1802.

“Most Excellent—far fam’d and far fetch’d CHEESE!
Superior far in smell, taste, weight and size,
To any ever form’d ’neath foreign skies,
And highly honour’d—though wert made to please,
The man belov’d by all—but stop a trice,
Before he’s praised—I too must have a slice....”

“God bless the Cheese—and kindly bless the makers,
The givers—generous—good and sweet and fair,
And the receiver—great beyond compare,
All those who shall be happy as partakers;
O! May no traitor to his country’s cause
E’er have a bit of thee between his jaws....”

Name: _____

John Davis, Travels of four years and a half in the United States of America, published 1803.

Note: This is not a satirical source, but it comments on a Federalist satirist who coined the term “Mammoth Cheese.”

“During my sojournment at Baltimore, a cheese of no ordinary dimensions was landed from a vessel to be transported to Washington. It was a present from the farmers’ wives and daughters of Cheshire, in Massachusetts, to the President of the United States; and was entrusted to the pious care of one Mr. Leland, a Baptist Minister, who is said to have smoked his pipe in solemn silence the whole of his travels both by land and by water.

“I know not the weight of the ‘greatest cheese in the world,’ but it was I believe equal in circumference to the hind-most wheel of a waggon. Its extraordinary dimensions induced some wicked wag of a federalist to call it the Mammoth Cheese; and by this name it is known throughout the States of the Union.

“The curiosity of the inhabitants of Baltimore was universally excited; men, women, and children flocked to see the Mammoth Cheese. The taverns were deserted; the gravy soup cooled on the table, and the cats unrebuked revelled on the custards and cream. Even grey-bearded shop-keepers neglected their counters, and participated in the Mammoth infatuation.”