

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, October 7, 1795.

Dear Sir: Upon my return to this place from Philadelphia, about the middle of last month, I found your letter of the 1st. of September and the sum of Four hundd. and Seventy five pounds ten shillings and two pence which you had deposited in the hands of Mr. Dandridge on account of your collection of my Rents, which will be placed as desired to your credit.

I am sorry you should have been so unsuccessful in purchasing in my life leases; but if I do not misunderstand your meaning, when you say I had limited you to too long a day, viz, the first of September to make these purchases, there surely never was such a mistake as you have committed in this business, or I must have been out of my head when I wrote the letter. So far from restraining you in making purchases until the first of last month, you were told, or at least meant to be told, that if you could not apply the money which was in your hands to this purpose by a certain day (I suppose the first of Sepr.) that then, and in that case, I should call for it, as I wanted it for other uses. How this could be deemed limitting you to too long a day I have no conception, when the money was left in your hands for the sole purpose of buying in the leases. I request you to look at my letter again and inform me if it will admit of such a construction as you have given it, if I understand the meaning of yours.

What money you may yet pay, agreeably to the assurance in your letter may be deposited in the hands of Mr. Pearce or in the Bank of Alexandria, giving me an account of the sum.

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As land has risen so much, and so suddenly in its price, and my rents bear no proportion thereto; I shall insist, and beg that you will see, not only that the rents are *punctually* paid, but that *all* the covenants in

the leases, with respect to buildings, planting orchards, making meadows, reserving certain proportions of the land in wood &ca. &ca. are strictly complied with; and I further desire that in cases of life leases, where the occupant can give you no satisfactory evidence of the existence of the lives of the persons therein named, that ejectmts. may be brought in order to make *them* come forward with their proofs; for these leases will never expire if vague information is received and credited, of the lessees being in Kentucky, or the lord knows where. Another thing too I would have minutely looked into, and that is, where there has been a change in the occupants from the original Lessees to know by what authority it has happened; for if I recollect the tenure of my leases there can be no alienation of the property without the consent of land lord under his hand (and I believe) seal.

You say you have repossessed two or three lots in Frederick; and have conditionally rented out two for £35 pounds pr. Ann; but you do not say whether this is the rent for each, or for both. If the latter I should think it inadequate. If the former, I agree to, and ratify the same for the term of ten years. But when leases for that term are given you should stipulate for reasonable and proper improvements, that the tenements may be restored with some advantages. I do not recollect what the quantity of Acres in the Frederk. lots are, and therefore my opinion of the adequacy or inadequacy of the rent of £35 is mere guess work. All I want, is as much as others gets for lands of the same quantity and quality thereabouts. Whenever you make out a Rental have a column always for the quantity of acres contained in each lot. Give my love, in which your Aunt and the family join, to Mrs. Lewis and be assured of the friendship and regard of Your etc.80

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80. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

To JAMES MAURY

Wilmington, State of Delaware, October 20, 1795.

Sir: Meeting accidently at this place (as I was returning to Philadelphia from Mt. Vernon) with a Ship, passing for London, I request the favor of you to send me by the first Vessel bound to Potomack River from your port the following Articles, (Viz.). 2 Sacks, say 8 bushels of the field Pea of England.

The like quantity of the Winter Vetch, and

As much of the Succory, or Chicorium Intibus, as will Sow four Acres of Land.

You will readily perceive that the first and last, of these articles must be in this Country by the first of April to be in proper Seed time.

I have to request that none of them be put into the Ships hold. When this is the case, they get heated and the Vegitative properties of the Seed are almost invariably destroyed.

I pray you to be particular attentive in procuring *good* Seed. I shall add no more at present than that I am, etc.⁹³

***To ALEXANDER HAMILTON**

(Private and confidential)

Philadelphia, November 16, 1795.

My dear Sir: The papers herewith enclosed are so full, on the subject of my former request, that nothing more remains than to refer to them for every information I can give,

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as the ground work of the Superstructure you are to build. When you are done with them be so good as to return the whole to me again, with those sent before; together with the letters respecting young Fayette, and the result,

93. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

relative to him.

I would beg the favor of you to run your eye over the letter from Madam de Segur and let one of your young men make some enquiry into the truth of her narrative and if found just, to seal and forward my letter to her,³⁶ safely. The reason why I give you this trouble, is, that applications of the kind have been, and still are very frequent; and in more instances than one, impositions have been practiced on me. If this lady's tale be true, her case is pitiable; and I have only to regret that the frequent calls upon my private purse, renders it inconvenient for me to do more for her than the pittance I enclose to her.

With sincere, and Affectionate esteem etc.

PS. Be so good as to drop me a single line merely to say that his letter and its enclosures have got safely into your hands.³⁷

To MEMBERS OF THE DISMAL SWAMP COMPANY

Philadelphia, November 16, 1795.

Gentn: Having disposed of my share and all the interest I have in the Dismal Swamp Company, to Henry Lee Esq. I request that he may, henceforward be considered as being standing in my place. He is not only to receive the profits, which may hereafter arise from that concern, but if anything is due thereto, he is entitled to my share thereof, and is in like manner to pay all unsatisfied demands upon, me on this acct. passed and to come. With respect I am etc.³⁸

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36. The draft of Washington's letter to Madam Segur is not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

37. From the *Hamilton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To GEORGE CLINTON**

Philadelphia, November 23, 1795.

dear Sir: Your favor of the 17th. instt. has been duly received. My enquiries after your health have been constant, and my concern for the ill state of it, has been sincere.

I beg you will not suffer the business, in which I am jointly interested, give you a moments concern; for I can assure you it has never occupied a thought of mine. But in order to make the transacting of it as easy to yourself, and as convenient to others as the case is susceptible of, I will empower you to act for me in the same manner you do for yourself, if there is no incompatibility in it, and I see none. And as you know what kind of instrument is necessary to vest a power adapted to the nature of the case I will execute and return to you any one you may draw or have drawn and forwarded to me. and with the number of witnesses to it you shall advise. I pray you to present me respectfully to Mrs. Clinton and the family, in which Mrs. Washington unites, and that you would believe me to be, as I really am etc.

***To GOVERNOR JOHN JAY**

(Private)

Philadelphia, December 21, 1795.

My dear Sir: Your two letters of the 14th. instant came duly to hand.

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With respect to Mr. Pickman,68

68. A Salem (Mass.) merchant, who wished to be appointed one of the commissioners for settling the claims of British merchants under Jay's treaty.

I beg you to be persuaded, that if all things in his favor are equal, your mentioning of him will have its weight. But, in appointments of the kind he solicits, many matters must be attended to; and as I am sure we have both the same wishes respecting them, namely, to fix on characters who under all circumstances are most likely to answer the objects of their appointment and to meet general approbation, I must endeavor to be circumspect in the selection; and that I may have the greater variety to chuse from, I would thank you and my other friends for giving me the names of such Gentlemen as may occur, and are most prominent and fit for Comrs.

My information with respect to the general disposition of the people accords with yours and I have little doubt of a perfect amelioration of sentiment after the present fermentation (which is not only subsiding but changing) has evaporated a little more. The dregs, however, will always remain and the slightest motion will stir them up. With sincere esteem etc.

***To EDWARD CARRINGTON**

Philadelphia, December 23, 1795.

Dear Sir: Receive my thanks for your obliging favor of the 6th. instant, and for other unacknowledged lettrs. of antecedent date.

As, except in a single instance, they contained information only, nothing more was necessary than to know they got safe to hand:

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this they did, and I feel myself much obliged in your attention to my request; as I always shall be for such communications as you may think, interesting or satisfactory for me to know, while I remain in my present Station.

It had been expected that the Senate would not confirm the appointment of Mr.—77 and so it has happened. This induced me to delay the nomination of a Successor to Mr. Blair;⁷⁸ And as the Department of War is yet unfilled; I am waiting (expected) information to make a general arrangement, or rather distribution of these offices before I decide upon either separately. With sincere esteem etc.

To DOCTOR JAMES ANDERSON

Philadelphia, December 24, 1795.

Sir: If I was more deserving of so interesting and valuable a correspondence as yours, your letter of the 6th. of Decr. last year, would not have remained until this time unacknowledged. The truth, is so little time is at my disposal for private gratifications, that it is but rarely I put pen to paper for purposes of my own.

This is offered as an apology for what might otherwise have the appearance of neglect: and when it is accompanied with an assurance which I make with sincerity, that I highly esteem your correspondence and wish you to continue it, I hope it will be accepted.

77. John Rutledge. On December 15 the Senate declined to confirm his nomination as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

78. John Blair, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

Carrington's letter to Washington, Nov. 18, 1795, says: "Will you be so good as to pardon my presumption in offering to your consideration for a vacancy which I learn has taken place, a character lately under your contemplation for another? I allude to the resignation

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of Judge Blair, and to Colo. Innes as his successor. Genl Marshall and myself have had a private consultation on the subject of mentioning the latter Gentleman to you." Carrington's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

I am sorry you discontinued the publication of the Bee. I always thought, and still think it an entertaining and useful work; And if you should renew it in any manner whatsoever, I wish to be considered as a Subscriber, and to have it sent to me accordingly. Or if your attention is turned into another channel, as you have intimated, and the result is to be handed to the world, I should like to be a partaker of the information and pleasure it will give. The 16. 17. and 18 vols. of the Bee, have never reached me; and which is still more to be regretted in lending out the others the 12th. and 13th. are lost.

No pursuit is more congenial with my nature and gratifications, than that of agriculture; nor none I so much pant after as again to become a tiller of the Earth. Any books therefore on this subject giving the *principles* and combining practice with theory, will always be as pleasing as they must prove instructive to me; whose whole life in a manner having been little less, than a continued bustle, I must now benefit from the studies and experience of others, but a remnant of it being left to essay either myself.

Sir John Sinclair has been extremely good in sending me the agricultural Surveys of the Counties in England and Scotland. This goodness meets, as it justly merits, my warmest thanks. I have laid them by for a moment of more leisure, and when that arrives I shall read them with much pleasure.

Peat I am persuaded is rare in this Country; I do not think however that it is entirely without it, but as ages must pass away before there will be an occasion for such a substitute it would hardly attract notice, even if it was

more abundant: but the want of this substance does not render your treatise on Peatmoss less curious or acceptable.

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I have no inclination to touch, much less to dilate on politics. For in politics, as in religion my tenets are few and simple: the leading one of which, and indeed that which embraces most others, is to be honest and just ourselves, and to exact it from others; meddling as little as possible in their affairs where our own are not involved. If this maxim was generally adopted Wars would cease, and our swords would soon be converted into reap-hooks, and our harvests be more abundant, peaceful, and happy. 'Tis wonderful it should be otherwise and the earth should be moistened with human gore, instead of the refreshing streams, wch. the shedders of it might become, instruments to lead over its plains, to delight and render profitable our labours. But alas! the millenium will not I fear appear in our days. The restless mind of man can not be at peace; and when there is disorder within, it will appear without, and soon or late will shew itself in acts. So it is with Nations, whose mind is only the aggregate of those of the individuals, where the Government is Representative, and the voice of a Despot, where it is not.

The sample of the cloth which you were pleased to send me (made from the wool which grows at the bottom of the hair of the common Goat) is indeed curious. For softness nothing can exceed it, and the colour is pleasing. How it will wear I know not, and presume the manufactory is on a small scale.

I felt both gratified and obliged in the recommendation of John Bell, in your letter of the 10th of May; and endeavour'd as far

as circumstances at the time would permit to provide for him. I offered to place a farm of more than Six hundred acres, with six plows and a number of labourers under his superintendance; at the lay usually given, and to find him in provisions &c. according to the custom of the Country; but as it was in the occupation of another, whose term would not expire until the month of December, he at first hesitated and afterwards declined the offer: intimating that he would return back to Scotland, and that a number of honest and reputable farmers, were disposed to emigrate to this Country, if they could set down at *once* on *improved* farms, at a moderate rent, and for a term of years. I told him that it had

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been in my contemplation, to let, the farms around my Mansion house (four in number) provided the *whole* were taken by men of competent means, to the size of them; or, by numbers, with smaller means, if they would associate and migrate in a body; after some one in whom they *could* and would confide, should first view the premises, and report to them that they were susceptible of such divisions, as would accommodate each family, with the quantity of arable land wanted. And (as I do not mean to do it myself) that they were also to erect such buildings as would satisfy. themselves; and that in the latter case (perhaps in the former also) I would give Leases for fourteen years. I shewed him a connected plan of the several farms, with which he seemed pleased, and I intended to have had some further conversation with him on the subject; particular with

a view to impress upon him, in case he went back, not to consider anything that had passed between us, as an attempt on my part to invite emigrants who were not predisposed, or indeed who had not actually resolved to transplant themselves, to America, and might wish (if of the latter description of farmers,) to settle in a compact body, where they might have an easy and free intercourse with each other. But something, I do not now precisely recollect what, interrupted the business at that time, and I have not heard since whether he returned to Scotland, or is yet employed in the investigation of some other part of these U. States.

I have been thus particular lest if the former be the case, he may, from an unfinished and inconclusive conversation, draw deductions which might eventually embarrass himself, me, or others; and for this reason it is, as you had an agency in introducing him to me, I give you the trouble of these details. Not that I am indisposed to rent my farms in either of the ways, and on the terms which have been mentioned, if it could be unexceptionably accomplished, and mutually pleasing and advantageous to all parties: and having gone so far into an explanation of this matter, I will go further; and as a Letter written two years ago to Arthur Young Esq: on the subject, contains more information respecting my farms, the situation of them, and my motives for letting them; I shall take the liberty of enclosing you

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a copy of it; which when you have little else to do may employ half an hour. It will serve to shew too, that altho' I have taken no efficient measures, to carry this plan into

execution, that it has been some time in contemplation; and upon what terms any of your friends, or such an association as has been spoken of (if inclined to try their fortune in this Hemisphere) may be accommodated.

If I part with the farms to commence with the year 1797, the contracts, (and I would make contracts with none who, for the reasons mentioned in the letter to Mr. Young for him or themselves) must be made before the first of Septembr in the year 1796; because it is at that period we are in readiness for seeding, and must make all our arrangements for the succeeding year. It is not likely I shall enter into any engagements for these farms before August or Septr. next; but I would not be precluded by anything contained in this Letter or that to Mr. Young, from doing so, if a good offer should be made me.

Mr. Young in answer to mine, wrote me that he had no doubt numbers would gladly accept my proposals if he was at liberty to publish them; by this I presume he meant an article of printed notoriety. To this I then did, and still do object; tho' I have no objection, if it is not incompatible with any restrictions, or active policy of the british Government, to its being spoken of, and the matter explained, on fit and proper occasions; but I add again, and unequivocally, that I would not be the means of drawing any men from the British dominions, if it be repugnant to the views of its Governmt. as stated above.

Lands in this Country generally, and particularly in the vicinity of the federal City, have risen so much in their price since the date of my letter to Mr. Young, that I could not *now* consent to take less than a dollar and a half an acre rent; giving leases for the term therein mentioned: and even at that rate, nothing but the motives which lead me to adopt the

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measure (and which have been expressed) would justify the policy of it. So increasing is the property in that part of the Country, from the causes which have been mentioned, in its value. With very great esteem etc.⁷⁹

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, December 25, 1795.

My dear Sir: Your several letters relative to the state of the applications, to the Assemblies of Maryland and Virginia, on the business of the Potomack Company, with the result thereof have been duly received.

The last, dated the 21st, I directed Mr. Dandridge to shew to Mr. Myers (knowing the suspence in which he was held) and to add that, if upon the strength of the information therein, he chose to visit the Directors, I wou'd give him a line of introduction.⁸⁰ This communication produced the enclosed letter from him, but Mr. Dandridge having expressed no more than he was directed to do, there is no commitment.

I mention this because the letter of Mr. Myers seems to imply more, and as much depends upon the skill, industry, and other qualifications of an Engineer, or Person employed in such a work, that you may examine him critically yourselves; for it is proper I should observe that I have no other knowledge of Mr. Myers's fitness than is derived from his own Acct, and some papers which he has shewn, but which I had not leisure to examine correctly. The Post having

79. The draft is in the writing of Bartholomew Dandridge.

80. This "line of introduction" was addressed to Lear and dated Dec. 26, 1795. It is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

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arrived, I have only time to add, that we are all well, and join in affectionate regard to you and yours Yours always.⁸¹

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Philadelphia, December 31, 1795.

Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to you last, which, I believe, was by Mr. Strickland, I have been favored with two letters from you both bearing date the 18th. of July.⁸⁴

The one respecting Mr. Elkingtons discoveries in the Art of draining with the Extracts, and "Outlines of the 15th. Chap: on the subj. of manures" came to my hands just before the

^{81.} From a newspaper facsimile of the original in the *Washington Photostats* in the Library of Congress.

^{84.} These letters are in the *Washington Papers*.

meeting of Congress; the other enclosing the plan of an Agreement &ca. a few days ago only.

I will take an early occasion of conversing with some of the active and leading members in Congress on both subjects without any improper commitmt. of the first, and will inform you of the result; But I dare not, before hand, promise more than my own good disposition towds. these measures, as they may be checked by an unwillingness in the Legislative body to grant money generally and from some doubts of their Constitutional powers to do it for extraneous purposes however advantageous. But as I cannot make promises, so ought I not to anticipate evils.

Will you allow me to commit the packet herewith, for Doctr. Anderson, to your care, and to assure you of the high esteem etc.

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***To JOHN TRUMBULL**

Philadelphia, December 31, 1795.

Dear Sir: A few days ago I recd. your letter of the 3d. of Octr, and yesterday (in very good order) the Prints you were so obliging as to send me; which are indeed very handsome, and much admired by those who have had the opportunity of passing a judgment on them.

For this mark of your polite atten

tion to me, I pray you to accept my sincere, and cordial thanks.

When the whole are compleated they will form an elegant set; and will be much desired. I will thank you for directing the remainder of mine, to be placed in frames like those now sent (which are very handsome) and the cost shall be paid as soon as it is known to me; or if you would let me know before hand what will be the amount, the money shall be remitted to you, or your order.

I fear from your silence, with respect to your return to this Country, that we are not to expect it soon; but whether here, or elsewhere, you will always possess the sincere esteem, regard and friendship of etc.⁸²

Mrs. Washington presents her best wishes, and the compliments of the Season to you. Nelly Custis spends this winter in Virga. with her mother.⁸³

To GOVERNOR JOHN JAY

Philadelphia, January 1, 1796.

My dear Sir: The enclosed under cover from Sir John Sinclair, came to my hands a few days ago. I sincerely wish as well for the cause itself, as for the zealous supporter of it that some measure cou'd be devised to facilitate Sir John's Views. Can you suggest

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any? Aid me if you can for I am at a loss what to say in ansr. to his present plan, and the Extracts relative to Mr. Elkingtons, discoveries in the art of draining; which, I presume, were forwarded to you at the time I received them, in a letter dated the 18th. of July from Sir John. Permit me to offer you Mrs. Jay and the family, the Compliments of the season and the

82. Trumbull was then in London.

83. From a photostat of the original kindly furnished by Adolph Sutro, of San Francisco, Calif.

return of many of them, each proving more happy than the former. With affectionate regard I am etc.⁸⁸

To THOMAS MARSHALL

Philadelphia, January 2, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 12th. of August came safe to hand, and I thank you for discharging the taxes of my land, in Hardin County.⁸⁹ Your draught on me shall be paid at sight; the order has not yet been presented.

As settlers are removing fast (according to yours, and other information) towards Green River and among them, my nephew, Major George Lewis; I have determined to postpone the sale of my land on Rough Creek of that River, until he gets fixed there; and can obtain such a price, as he will be restricted to. I am not less obliged to you however, for your endeavours to dispose of it; and for the enquiries you have directed to be made, relative to the quality, of the land and other properties thereof: which when recd. I wou'd thank you for communicating to me. With very great esteem and regard I am etc.⁸⁸

***To REVEREND BRYAN, LORD FAIRFAX**

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Philadelphia, January 3, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 16th. Ult. came Safe, but not in the time which might have been expected from the date of it.

Mr. Davie's letter is here

88. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

89. Kentucky.

with returned. I do not know that more could have been done than you have attempted to do; but it is exceedingly to be regretted that villainy, chicanery, and every species of delay, should bring justice in such jeopardy, if it is not in this instance, entirely defeated by them. I shall hope however, that as long as there remains a tolerable chance of coming at it, that the suit will be prosecuted: and that Colo. Simms⁹⁰ and who ever else is employed therein, will exert themselves to the utmost.

I am of opinion that good policy dictates the propriety of assuring them a *handsome fee* or rather a certain percentage if they succeed, and nothing if they do not. Trifling fees are, thrown away upon Lawyers of any eminence for they excite no exertion and it cannot be expected that in a case which is in a manner desperate, and without any appropriate funds, that large fees can be paid from our private purses. My advances to Mrs. Savage in her life time, during the days of her distress, was pretty considerable and the Clerks and Sheriffs fees are continually adding to it. Yours I am persuaded are equal thereto, and together shew the expediency of a vigorous effort which I see no other means of making than the one I have suggested.

My respects, and the compliments. of the Season in which Mrs. Washington joins me, are offered to Mrs. Fairfax and yourself and with sincere esteem etc.

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90. Charles Simms.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Philadelphia, February 10, 1796.

Dear Sir: On Saturday last I received your letter of the 24th. Ulto.

Presuming that Mr. Keith has sent you all the attested accounts of my Executorship of the Estate of Colo. Thomas Colvill, in which the affairs of John Colvill his brother (to whom he was Executor) were involved; together with the Will of the former and the claims originating from an extraordinary devise which you will find therein, I am at a loss to know what more you require than is contained in those papers when you wish I would give you the general out lines of the business, that you may be enabled thereby to frame the Bill.

I have no Papers *now* by me except copies of the Accounts which have been settled with the Court, authentic copies of wch. I presume you have received; and having very little knowledge in Chancery proceedings I hardly know where to begin or end a story that may subserve your purpose. I will, however, attempt to detail some facts relative to the business which has involved me in much unexpected vexation and trouble in order that I may, as soon as possible, be rid of it.

You must know then that in a visit to Colo. Thos. Colvill on his death bed (an unlucky one I have ever since deemed it) he informed me, that he had appointed me one of his Exrs. I told him that my numerous engagements of a similar kind, would not permit me to discharge the duties of one. He urged; I refused; he pressed again, assuring me that *all* the trouble would be taken off my hands by his wife and Mr. Jno. West (who married his niece) that he wished only for my name, and that I would

now and then *only* inquire how matters were conducted by those first named. Unwilling to make the last moments of a worthy and respectable character uneasy, I yielded to his

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request; and having so done I would not be worse than my word and qualified accordingly: and, when it suited my convenience, occasionally assisted; until my services were required by the County in wch. I lived, to attend the State Conventions at Williamsburgh and Richmond; by these Conventions to attend the Congresses which were held in this City, and by the latter to take the command of the Army which, and my continuance with the latter comprehended a period of more than ten years. At the expiration of which and my return to private life, I found that Mrs. Colvill and Jno. West both were dead, that no final settlement of the Estate had been made. That every thing relative to it was enveloped in darkness, and that, instead of being a mere auxiliary in the business I was compelled, for my own security, to become the sole Actor.

Under these circumstances, and knowledge of Mr. Keiths fitness, from being a professional man; from having been once, a Clerk of a Court, and well acquainted with proceedings of this kind; and from his knowledge of incidents; I employed him to collect, and digest the materials, which were to be found among the papers of Mrs. Colvill and West into a final settlement: and nothing short of his assiduity and knowledge of the subject, could have exhibited the accounts in the manner they have appeared. Sure I am, that I could not have framed the accounts from the materials which were exhibited.

I ought to have mentioned in an earlier part of this detail, that one of the first acts of the Executors was to publish in the English papers an extract of the Will of Colo. Thos. Colvill making the nearest relations of his Mother, his residuary Legatees. This bequest and publication raised a host of claimants, one of whom, through the medium of General Howe, while he commanded the B: forces in America *demande*d in an open impudent and imperious letter which passed through the hands of that Officer the restitution of an Estate worth *Forty thousand* pds. which he said was the Surplus of the Estate and due to him; altho the very clause under which he claimed expressed a doubt of there being any surplus at all.

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If this concise account is inadequate to the purposes of a Bill, I pray you to propound specific questions, and they shall receive immediate answers. My objects are simply these; 1st, as the surplus, after paying the debt and Legacies, is now precisely ascertained; after many lawsuits and much difficulty; I wish that those who have the best right to it, may receive the benefit of the donation; and 2d, that I may know where, and in what manner to dispose of the money; not being willing to hold it, nor to have anything to do with those who may claim it. I accordingly, as I have been advised, turn the *whole* matter over to the Chancellor; who at the same time that he affords relief to me, will do Justice to others. With sincere friendship, I am Your affectionate Uncle.

PS. Since writing the foregoing letter, in a Trunk which I do not often look into, I found the bundle of Papers herewith sent. Papers which I thought were in the Possession of Mr. Keith; and doubted not, had been forwarded to you. Among them, you will find a *special* rect. to George Chalmers; who had Collected on acct. of a Bond from Sidney George £100 Maryland money, and thought he had paid it to Mr. Jno. West; but from a removal, or absence from Papers, could not prove it, tho' by guarding against the consequences, of it makes precaution on my part necessary in the *final* exhibition of my trust lest, in my own person, I become liable for what the Estate of Colvill ought to pay.

When you have got all the information which the papers now forwarded can give you, return such as may be useful to me, and let the others, if necessary, remain in the Chancery. Yours as before.

***To DOCTOR JAMES ANDERSON**

Philadelphia, February 15, 1796.

Sir: Since my last to you in December, I have been favored with your letter of the 15th. of September, on the subject of Iron Bridges.

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The invention is ingenious, and if it answers as well in practice as it appears in theory, it will be a valuable and useful discovery. I see no reason why it should not, as the construction is upon mathematical principles. I should fear,

however, if you have not been correct in your estimates and comparison, that a bridge formed of Iron must cost more than one of Stone, both having the same span. But as I have had no leisure to examine the matter accurately, this may be a very erroneous opinion of mine.

The Mechanics of these United States, are in the practice of building bridges of Wood, that are not exceeded any where, for span of Arch, convenience, appearance and cheapness. One lately erected over Piscataqua River in the State of New Hampshire, has a span of 244 feet in one Arch, but the want of durability in bridges built of such perishable materials, is a serious objection to them.

The more I have revolved the plan of renting the farms of my Mount Vernon Estate, the more inclined I am to the measure, and that my intention in this respect; as well as in the sale of certain lands which I possess on the Western Waters, may be known, I have caused a notification (as you will perceive by the enclosed hand-bills wch are copies thereof) to be inserted in some of the public gazettes of this country; but without much expectation of carrying it into effect the ensuing year.

Having taken the liberty of bringing you acquainted with the preliminary steps to this measure, I now offer the plan in a more advanced stage; but upon the same principle, and under the same restrictions contained in my last, namely, that it may be communicated (not by way of public notification, nor at all, if it militates in any degree with the declared policy of the British government) to any man, or set of men, who you may have reason to believe are disposed to migrate to this country; and would wish to avail themselves of the information there

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in contained.

As it relates to tenants, I should wish for peaceable, industrious and skilful farmers; to obtain such, I must resort to some other country than this, where little knowledge of husbandry is possessed, and less care used in the practice of it, to keep the land from a ruinous course. For many reasons, the similarity of language not least, I would prefer those of yours.

Numbers come daily, by individual families; and more from habit than any advantage I ever could discover, arrive at this City and New York. But Individuals who have not capitols equal to my undivided farms, would not answr. my views, forasmuch as it would not be convenient, or agreeable to me, to let a part, and retain a part of the same farm. With esteem &c.

PS. Enclosed also, are the terms on which I propose to give Leases.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, February 15, 1796.

My dear Sir: On thursday last I received your letter of—(now in the hands of Colo. Pickering, and date not remembered).

The business relative to the Arsenal at the Mouth of Shenandoah, has been *shamefully* neglected: and, (but under the rose I make the observation) I fear with design; for I was continually reminding the Officer whose duty it was to carry the measure into effect, of the impro

vident delay; and about a fortnight ago, finding the matter remained in Stare quo, I gave a peremptory order for the execution: and was informed since, by the Gentleman, that he had written to you on the subject. How it comes to pass that you should be ignorant

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of this, at the date of your letter, there being sufficient time for the receipt of the former, is somewhat misterious. Allowances ought, unquestionably, to be made for the multiplied duties of two Offices, which were discharged by one person; but the footing on which this business stood, and my frequent enquiries into it, ought to have produced more promptness in the Execution. I hope no change in price, will force a change of place; and that the thing will go on as if no delay had happened.

I am very glad to find that the Affairs of the Potomack Company are in so promising a train, and wish Captn. Myers may prove an acquisition in the Superintendance of them.

I pray you to let me have a statement of my account with you; and for informing me precisely, what shares I hold in the Banks of Alexandria and Columbia. My love to Fanny and the Children, and with very great esteem etc.

PS. Mr. White seems to entertain no doubt of a favorable issue to his Mission; but it goes (as everything else does) slowly on.

***To THE EARL OF BUCHAN**

Philadelphia, February 20, 1796.

My Lord: Having seen several persons from the vicinity of your estate of Dryburgh Abbey, with your Lordship's certificates of their honest and orderly deportment; (one or two of whom I have employed, and found deserving the character) I take the liberty of troubling your Lordship with the perusal of the enclosed annunciation of a design, wch. I have had in contemplation two or three years, but lately only have resolved to carry it into execution.

I accompany the information My Lord, with an unequivocal declaration that, it is not my intention to *invite* Emigrants, even if there be no prohibitory act of your Government opposed to it. My sole object is, if there are persons, on the move who may incline to

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associate and become tenants on such a plan as I offer, that being apprised of the measure, they may decide how far *their* views would be accommodated by it.

The staple produce of the part of the country in which my Mount Vernon estate lyes, being Wheat, I mean to fix the Rent in that article, as most convenient and equitable for both Landlord and tenant; and I set it at a bushel and a half for every acre contained in the lease, which will be all arable, with the priviledges detailed in the printed notification. In failure of a crop of this article, the Rent may be discharged in cash, at the price it bears in the Market.

I have but little expectation I own, of maturing this plan so as to carry it into full effect next year; nor would I wish to do it with the slovenly farmers of this country, if I had a well founded hope of obtaining this class of Men from any other (particularly from Great Britain) where husbandry is well understood, and the language similar.

Having had occasion lately, to write to Doctr. Anderson (of Col field) on other matters, I have detailed my plan much more at large than I chose to trouble your Lordship with; and have sent him a sketch of the Farms, with their relative situation to each other, and divisions into fields, Lanes, lots, &ca; from whence an idea, more accurate than can be formed from the printed notification, might be had; but it is not my wish that any man, or set of men, should engage without first, by themselves or Agents, competently qualified and instructed, viewing the premises and judging for themselves.

I pray your Lordship to present me in respectful terms, in which, Mrs. Washington unites, to Lady Bun, and that you will be persuaded of the respect and consideration with which etc.

***To WILLIAM STRICKLAND**

Philadelphia, February 20, 1796.

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Sir: Permit me to congratulate you on your safe arrival in England, from your visit to America; and to hope you have experienced no inconvenience from the voyage.

Having resolved to rent my farms at Mount Vernon, a measure which has been in contemplation two or less years, but not matured until lately, I take the liberty (as you have some knowledge of them) to trouble you with the perusal of a notification which has been published in some of the Gazettes of the United States, relative thereto.

I propose, as the most convenient and equitable mode, both for Landlord and tenant, to make Wheat (which is the staple produce in the part of the country where these farms lye) the standard value of the Rents; and one bushel and an half, the quantum for every Acre contained in the Lease; all of which will be arable, and fit for the Plough; with the priviledges which are detailed in the printed notification: And to allow, in case of failure in this crop, that the Rent may be discharged in cash, at the rate Wheat bears in the Market.

I have not, I confess, much expectation of disposing of these farms by the time limited, and necessary for the ensuing year; Nor should I be inclined to do it to the slovenly farmers of this country, if there was a well grounded hope of getting them from any other, where husbandry is better understood, and more skillfully practiced than with us. Farmers from various parts of Great Britain are daily arriving in

these United States (chiefly to this City and New York) but they come, generally, too unconnected with each other; in too small squads; or too weak handed, when single, to occupy farms as large as mine are, in their undivided state.

Having said thus much, on this subject, I must be permitted to request, that it may be unequivocally understood, that it is not the object of this letter to *invite* emigrants; it means no more, than by intimating my intentions, to put it in your power to inform such as are resolved to transplant themselves, and may incline to become tenants; and who, knowing you have travelled through a considerable part of this country may be making enquiries, to

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shew what these intentions are. For the purpose I have used the freedom of transmitting the enclosed, and announcing the Rent. With great esteem etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Philadelphia, February 20, 1796.

Sir: When I last had the honor of writing to you, I had hopes, tho' I must confess they were not of the sanguine sort, that I should have been enabled 'ere this, to have given you a more satisfactory account of the business you had been pleased to commit to me, than will be conveyed in this letter.

Doubts having arisen, from peculiar calls in the Treasury of this country for money (occasioned by the expences of our Wars with the Indians, the redemption of our captives at Algiers, obtaining peace with that Regency and Morocco, together with other demands in addition to the ordinary expenditures of government) that funds with difficulty would be provided to answer them, without imposing additional taxes, a measure wished to be avoided, I was restrained (after consulting one or two influential members, of the Legislature) from introducing your plan for a contribution: and, under these circumstances, I avoided communicating the "Extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Agriculture, respecting Mr. Elkingtons mode of draining &ca" except to one gentleman³¹ only; in whom I had entire confidence, and who I knew was always disposed to promote measures of utility. These being the grounds of my proceeding, I shall hope, altho' your expectations may be disappointed, you will receive the information as an evidence of my candour.

Agreeably to your desire I have put the "Outlines of the 15th. Chapter of the proposed general report from the Board of Agriculture, on the subject of Manures", into the hands of one of the most judicious farmers³² within my reach and when his observations thereon are received they shall be transmitted to you. I wish my own engagements would allow me time to attend, more than I do, to these agreeable, and useful pursuits but having been

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absent from what I consider my proper home (except on short occasional visits) for more than seven years; and having entered into my 65th. year, a

31. James Madison.

32. See Washington's letter to Richard Peters, Mar. 4, 1796, *post*.

period which requires tranquillity and ease, I have come to a determination to lease the farms of my Mount Vernon Estate, except the Mansion house farm, and a grazing one 3 miles off; which I shall retain in my own occupation, for amusement, whilst life and health is dispensed to me. And as many farmers from your country have emigrated to this, and many more, according to their accounts, desirous of following, if they knew before hand where and on what terms they could fix themselves compactly; in a healthy and populous country; I have taken the liberty to enclose you the copy of a notification which I have published in some of the Gazettes of the United States; that in case any farmers answering the descriptions therein contained are about to transplant themselves, to whom you might be inclined to give the information, that you may have it in your power to do so. But let me entreat you, Sir, to believe that I have no wish to its promulgation farther than I have declared. that I have no intention to *invite* emigrants, even if there are no restrictive acts against it; and if there be, that I am opposed to it altogether.

As Wheat is the staple produce of that part of the country in which this estate lyes, I shall fix the rent therein, at a bushel and half for every acre of arable land contained within the lease; to be discharged, in case of failure of that crop, at the price the article bears in the market. Two or three years ago I sent Mr. Young a sketch of the farms, with all the fields, meadows and lots, with their relative situations, laid down from actual Surveys.

I have but little expectation

that arrangement will be made by the time limited, for giving possession of the farms next year, nor should I wish to do it with such unskilful farmers as ours, if there was a prospect

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of obtaining them from any other country, where husbandry was better understood, and more advantageously practiced. It is tim however to conclude, for I feel myself ashamed at having employed so much of it in matters interesting to myself only; and I shall do it with assurances as sincere as they are warm of being, Sir your etc.

***To GEORGE CLINTON**

Philadelphia, February 28, 1796.

Dear Sir: To the enclosed, I answered in a note, that the whole of the business to which it related, was entrusted to you: from whom, if application was made, complete information might be obtained.

A few days afterwards, Mr. Cooper⁴¹ applied to me personally; intimated that the land was valuable; that he was desirous of purchasing; and would give a good price for it. I answered as before, and added that much of the land had already been disposed of. Repeating his wish to know what part remained unsold, and the terms on wch. it could be obtained, are the causes of my troubling you with this letter and its enclosure. Whatever answer you incline to give to them, let it be so framed as that it may be *shewn* to Mr. Cooper. With great esteem and regard. I am etc.

[H.L.]

41. William Cooper. He was judge of Otsego County and Member of Congress from New York.

***To GOUVERNEUR MORRIS**

(Private)

Philadelphia, March 4, 1796.

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My dear Sir: Altho' I have but little expectation (from the information which I have received from your Sister, Mrs. Ogden)⁴⁷ that this letter, with a copy of my last to you, will reach London before you will have embarked for America, I have determined, nevertheless, to take the chance of it, and accordingly have put it under cover to Mr. Pinckney.

Hitherto the business of the Session, tho' slow in its progress, has been tranquil in discussion. By some misconception of Mr. Deas, or some strange fatality attending his dispatches, the formal ratification of the Treaty by His Britannic Majesty, has never yet been received;⁴⁸ but having sufficient, and official evidence of the fact, both from Mr. Deas and the British charge des Affaires residing here; it was proclaimed on the 29th Ult. as the Law of the Land: And being before the House of Representatives, their proceedings thereon must soon appear. The conjecture is, that an attempt (how successful I am unable to inform you) will be made to censure it in several points; and for being disadvantageous to these United States on the whole; but will make provision for carrying it into effect. The debates relative to this Treaty will be, I presume, animated; and if heats are occasioned in the course of the Session, they will proceed from this source. But as it is not my intention to anticipate the debates, or the votes, I shall say nothing further, relatively thereto.

That a great change has been wrought in the public mind, with respect to this Treaty within the last two months, is apparent to every one.

47. Mrs. Samuel Ogden (Euphemia Morris).

48. This was not received until Apr. 22, 1796.

But in the body politic, as in the body natural, when one of its members are disordered (I confine it to members, because I do not believe the *whole* mass has been at all attained) it requires sometime to effect a perfect cure; especially while there remains a morbid tumour always working, and difficult to eradicate.

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If the people of this country have not abundant cause to rejoice at the happiness they enjoy, I know of no country that has. We have settled all our disputes, and are at Peace with all Nations. We supply their wants with our superfluities, and are well paid for doing so. The earth, generally, for years past, has yielded its fruits bountifully. No City, Town, Village, or even farm, but what exhibits evidences of encreasing wealth and prosperity; while Taxes are hardly known but in name. Yet by the second sight; extraordinary foresight; or some other sight, attainable by a few only, evils afar off are discovered by these, alarming to themselves; and as far as they are able to render them so, disquieting to others.

Having come to the resolutions which are implied in the enclosed printed Notification, I have taken the liberty of sending one of them to you; for no other purpose than merely to put it in your power to say (if any enquiries after such property should be made of you, or in your hearing). *See what is offered* .

My wish is to stock my farm with *good* farmers; but it is not my intention (even if there be no restrictive acts against

the emigration of this description of people) to use any means to envite foreigners to settle on mine.

The rent I propose to let mine at, is a bushel and haft of Wheat (the staple produce of the part of the country in which the estate lies) for every acre of *arable* , contained within the lease; or on failure of that crop, in cash at the price that article bears in the market. With affectionate regard etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Philadelphia, March 9, 1796.

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Dear Sir: Owing to some irregularity of the Post, your letter of the 29th Ult. did not reach my hands until 8 O'clock last Night.

I shall leave the management of the chancery business respecting Colvils estate, entirely to you; not only for the purpose of closing it speedily, but effectually also; as I want to be quieted in this business, and to be finally done with it.

Mr. Keith has, to the present stage of the business, had the *sole* management of it; and can give you more correct information than it is in my power to do, of everything relative to it. The vouchers, I presume were satisfactory, but where they are I know not; unless they were deposited with the accts; remain in the hands of Mr. Keith, or (as I believe is the case with respect to some of them) are in the bundle I sent you. If I have any of them, they must be at Mount Vernon (packed up with other papers) and not to be got at unless I was there.

But as I mean to put your letter to me, and this answer, with a flying seal under cover to Mr. Keith, he will I hope, give you *all* the information you may need, for the purpose of closing the business, before the closing of the present chancery term.

The personal Estate, as I presume you will be informed by Mr. Keith, has been all accounted for; Nor is there any thing now owing to the Estate within my knowledge. Sydney George's Acct. (which kept the matter open sometime) was the last, and the settlement of that If I mistake not, was among the Papers I sent you. the whole of *that* matter being settled, or negociated by Mr. William Tilghman. If it was not among the Papers sent you, it was left with Mr. Keith. With Affectionate regard I am etc.

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Philadelphia, March 10, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 17th. of last month did not reach my hands until the evening before last. Why so long delayed, I know not; because the passage from *you* to *me* is

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certain, after the letter is once in the line of the Posts; tho uncertain from *me* to *you* : and for that reason it has become expedient for you to let me know to whose care (since your mother⁵⁷ has left Fredericksburgh) letters for you ought to be directed. Whether through the Post Office of that place, to be lodged at Fauquier Court House, or otherwise. Your Brother⁵⁸ is so much absent from Fredericksburgh, as to render it ineligible to put letters under cover

57. Mrs. Fielding (Betty Washington) Lewis.

58. Howell(?) Lewis.

to him; of course some channel more certain must be devised.

No good reason occurs to me for the delay in paying the money that was in your hands to Mr. Pearce, or into the Bank of Alexandria, agreeably to the letter I wrote you from Mount Vernon in October last; especially as you had been advised of my wanting it. There is no propriety and less safety (from Robbery, fire and a variety of accidents) to retain the money until every Rent is received; for upon this principle I shall be unable to form any estimate of my dependence. Paying the money, and settling the Rental, are distinct things; The first may be paid at any time, and will always stand as a credit in the Rental; the latter may be delayed with less inconvenience, but here also, there ought to be a periodical Settlement; that regularity may pervade the System.

The demands upon me for money for one purpose or another, are frequent and great; for which reason, it is, at all times convenient for me to know what my resources are. for this reason also, I wish you had mentioned the amount of your collection. If a good and safe opportunity present, to lodge it in the hands of Mr. Pearce, or at the Bank of Alexandria I wish it to be done so: if not, it may remain until I come home; and the whole be accomplished at once. But, at this time, to say when that will be, is beyond my Ken; as I can form not better judgment *now* of the close of the present Session of Congress, than I was able to do at the hour of its commencement. And till that happens, and perhaps for

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some short time after, I may not have it in my power to leave the seat of Government. If you, however, will point out the mode by which my

letters to you will find a safe conveyance, it will be in my power to give you timely information of my departure from hence.

I would have you place no further dependence on what Muse has said of Colo. Simms's opinion, respecting the invalidity of my Leases, than to obtain other, and the *best* advice thereon; for which purpose send to your Cousin Bushrod Washington, one of each kind (for I think there are different forms) of the printed Leases, and request him, and General Marshall both, to consider, and give you there opinions in writing with respect to the general correctness; and more particularly with respect to my right of enforcing the Covenants, (with damages for past failures) or annulling the leases, and pay them for their opinions. I am very much mistaken, if the draught from which one, if not both, Leases were printed, was not made by a person of as much legal knowledge as Colo. Simms. If the gentlemen before named, shall be of opinion that there is no defect in the leases; and think it safe for you to proceed to enforce, or to annul them; I wish you to be governed by, and follow their advice. Hard indeed would it be upon me, to receive only five or Six pounds a hundred Acres, for Lands of a quality equal to that which is renting for five times the sum; and when I thought I had insured valuable improvements on the premises, so as to render the Tenements valuable hereafter, to be cut off from these also; and to have no redress.

Persuaded as I am, that you have rented the reposed lots for as much as you could get, I am perfectly satisfied with what you have done with mine, in Frederick and Berkley; altho' the Rent is lower than what your cousin

George Washington⁵⁹ (who is now in this City) says he rents Land at.

The waste, which has been committed on my reserved Land, is a very serious evil to the tract to which it appertained; as the quantity, originally reserved was scanty; and, under the circumstances of the case, there appears to be no remedy. If letting out the

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part cleared, does not occasion a greater diminution of the Wood and Timber, I shall have no objection to your doing it; but not if it is to involve that consequence. I perceive by the enclosed, which Mr. Airy sent me by Mr. George Washington, that another attack is commenced on the said tract. It is his business to prevent incroachment on land in which he has a Leasehold estate; especially as he has it on such advantageous terms; but it may be well for you to have an eye to the matter.

With respect to the Land on Deep run, let it remain as it is untill I see you. My love to Mrs. Lewis in wch. your Aunt joins I am etc.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, March 27, 1796.

My dear Sir: Your letters of the 21st and 23d. instant have filled us with pain and anxiety; from which, probably, we shall not be relieved before tuesday; tho' we shall hope, on that day, to hear that both Fanny and Maria are much better, if not entirely recovered.

Upon receipt of the first of the letters above mentioned, I made immediate

59. George Steptoe(?) Washington.

enquiry in what train the business respecting the Arsenal on Potomack was in, and have since been informed by the (present) Secretary of War, that he has written to you on the subject. I wish sincerely that the sickness in your family had not prevented your journey to this City and that it may not retard it much longer as the Departments at this juncture are so full of business as to require more attention, and urging in particular matters than the pressure of my own allows me to bestow. When you come we will make room for you to lodge in some manner or other as the only spare room we have will, I expect, be occupied by young Fayette and his Tutor.

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I wish devoutly, in which Mrs. Washington cordially unites, that this letter may find Fanny and Maria perfectly restored. My best regards to them and with affection. I am etc.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, March 30, 1796.

My dear Sir: Your former letters prepared us for the stroke, which that of the 25th instant announced; but it has fallen heavily notwithstanding.

It is the nature of humanity to mourn for the loss of our friends; and the more we loved them, the more poignant is our grief. It is part of the precepts of Religion and Philosophy, to consider the Dispensations of Providence as wise, immutable, uncontrollable; of course, that it is our duty to submit with as little repining, as the

sensibility of our natures is capable of to all its decrees. But nature will, notwithstanding, indulge, for a while, its sorrow's.

To say how much we loved, and esteemed our departed friend, is unnecessary. She is now no more! but she must be happy, because her virtue has a claim to it.

As you talked of coming to this place on business, let us press you to do so. The same room that serves Mr. Dandridge and Washington is large enough to receive a Bed also for you; and it is needless to add, we shall be glad of your company. The change may be serviceable to you; and if our wishes were of any avail, they would induce you to make your stay here as long as your convenience would permit.

At all times, and under all circumstances, we are, and ever shall remain, Your sincere and Affectionate friends. 5

[M.L.]

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***To GEORGE LEWIS**

Philadelphia, April 7, 1796.

Dear Sir: Tuesday's Post brought me a letter from a Mr. Andrew Parks of Fredericksburgh, covering one from your Mother; both on the subject of overtures of marriage made by the former to your cousin Harriot Washington: 20 which, it seems, depend upon my consent for consummatn.

My sister speaks of Mr. Parks as a sober, discreet man; and one who is attentive to business. Mr. Parks says of himself, that his

5. This letter is also signed "M. Washington"

20. Harriet, the youngest child of Samuel Washington and his fourth wife (Anne Steptoe Allerton), was born, Aug. 12, 1776. Andrew Parks, son of John Parks, of Baltimore, Md., lived at Fredericksburgh, Va. He and Harriet married in July, 1796, and moved to Kanawha Salines (then Virginia), now Malden, W. Va., in 1818. Harriet died at Kanawha Salines in January, 1822.

"fortune at present, does not much exceed £3000, but with industry and œconomy, he has every expectation of rapidly improving his condition" being concerned with his brother in law, Mr. McElderry of Baltimore, in Mercantile business.

As I am an entire stranger to Mr. Parks; to his family connexions, or his connexions in trade; to his mode of living; his habits, and to his prospects in trade; I should be glad if you wd. ascertain them with as much precision as you can, and write me with as little delay as you can well avoid.

Harriot having little or no fortune of her own, has no right to expect a great one in the man she marrys: but it is desirable she should marry a gentleman; one who is well connected,

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and can support her decently, in the line she has always moved, otherwise she would not find matrimony with a large family and little means, so eligible as she may have conceived it to be. I am etc.

This letter will be accompanied by one to my Sister which I pray you to receive from the Post Office and send to her.

[H.S.P.]

To ANDREW PARKS

Philadelphia, April 7, 1796.

Sir: Your letter of the first instt has been duly received. The subject on which it is written is a serious one, and it shall meet, as it deserves, a serious consideration.

My niece Harriot Washington having very little fortune of her own, neither

she, nor her friends, have a right to make *that* (however desirable it might be) a primary consideration in a matrimonial connexion. But there are other requisites which are equally desirable, and which ought to be attended to in a union of so much importance; without therefore expressing at this moment, either assent, or dissent, to the proposal you have made, it is necessary for me to pause.

My wish is to see my niece happy; one step towards which, is for her to be united with a gentleman of respectable connexions; and of good dispositions; with one who is more in the habit (by fair and honorable pursuits) of making than [in] spending money; and who can support her in the way she has always lived.

As you propose being in Baltimore in the course of a few weeks, I shall not object to the receipt of any further details on this subject, which you may be disposed to give from that place: which when received may enable me to write more decisively from hence, or from

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Virginia when I get there: which will happen, I expect as soon as Congress shall have closed its session. I am etc. 21

21. This draft, or copy, is in the writing of Martha Washington. The word in brackets is in the writing of Washington.

***To ELIZABETH WASHINGTON LEWIS**

Philadelphia, April 7, 1796.

My dear Sister: Your letter of the 27th. Ult. was enclosed to me by Mr. Parks, in one from himself, dated the 1st instt. on the same subject.

Harriot having very little fortune herself, has no *right* property to expect a great one in the man she marry's; but if he has not a competency to support her in the way she has lived, in the circle of her friends, she will not find the matrimonial state so comfortable as she may have expected when a family is looking up to her and but scanty means to support it.

Altho' she has no right to expect a man of fortune, she certainly has just pretensions to expect one whose connexions are respectable, and whose relations she could have no objection to associate with. How far this is, or is not the case with Mr. Parks, I know not, for neither his own letter, or yours give any acct. of his family nor whether he is a native or a foreigner; and we have his own word only for his possessing *any* property at all altho' he estimates his fortune at £3000. A precarious dependence this when applied to a man in Trade.

I do not wish to thwart Harriots inclination if her affects. are placed on Mr. Park and if upon the enquiries I shall make or cause to be made into his family and connexions, there shall be found nothing exceptionable in them; that he is, as you say "very much respected by all his acquaintance, sober, sedate, and attentive to business;" and is moreover in good business; I shall throw no impedimt. in the way of their Marriage: altho' I should have

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preferred, if a *good* match had not offer'd in the meanwhile that she shd. have remained single until I was once

more settled at Mt. Vernon and she a resident there which, if life is spared to us, will certainly happen to me in ten or eleven Months; because then she would have been in the way of seeing much company, and would have had a much fairer prospect of matching respectably than with one who is little known, and of whose circumstances few or none can know much about.

Having had no business to write to you upon, and being very much occupied by my public duties, are the only reasons why I have been silent. I am persuaded you will enjoy more ease and quiet, and meet with fewer vexations where you now are, than where you did live. It is my sincere wish that you should do so and that your days may be happy; in these Mrs. Washington joins with Your most Affecte. Brother 19

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, March 13, 1796.

My dear Sir: Your letters of the 26th. Ulto62 and 2d. Instant, came safe to hand, after some delay. The first, with the Will of Harper, has been put in the hands of the Attorney Genl. to aid him in the conveyances. To such parts of the second, as require it, I am about to reply; first expressing my satisfaction at the happy termination of the business which you undertook, in behalf of the Public.

Having no doubt of the correctness of the account, which was transmitted in the last mentioned letter; I have only to beg that you would favor me with the numbers, or other designation or description of all the Shares I

19. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

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62. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

now hold in the Banks of Alexandria and Columbia, by your purchases. and to request if you wish to part with any of the twenty shares you purchased in the Potomac Navigation, that you would appropriate the Balance due me, by your account, in as many as it will command; first paying up the Instalment on the old; called for I perceive to be paid for on the first of the present month. If my *present* purposes and gratifications could be answered by prospects of *future* emolument, I would devote all the money I could command to this Investiture but for the few years I have to remain here the enjoyment of less, with ease and certainty, will be more convenient and desirable.

If my resources were adequate to the purchase of the Lot and houses which are offered for Sale in Alexandria, I would clearly have been the purchaser of them; on the terms mentioned in your letter of the 2d. instr.; but as these depend upon contingencies, which may baffle calculation, I chuse to tread on sure ground in all my engagements; being as unwilling to embarrass others, by uncertain contracts, as I am to be deceived myself in my expectations, from the assurances which I receive of promised payment.

From the enquiries which have already been made of you, relatively to my Farms at Mount Vernon, I take the liberty of enclosing you the terms on which I mean to lease them. My expectation of disposing of them at the Rents therein mentioned, to such Tenants as I should chuse, is not very sanguine; nor would I

incline to do it to the slovenly farmers of this Country, if I had a tolerable well founded hope of getting them from any other; where husbandry is better understd. and more rationally practiced; the mention of which to some of your Acquaintance, as you may chance to fall in with them (particularly English and Scotch, the latter more especially) might be a means perhaps of suggesting it to others in the land they came from.

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It is not my intention, at least at the present moment, to let the Negroes go with the Land; but if enquiries on this head should be repeated, it would be useful to me, to learn on what terms, these and the lands conjointly, could be disposed of. Remember me kindly to Fanny and the Children and be assured of the Sincere friendship of Your etc.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, March 21, 1796.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 14th Instant did not get to my hands before Saturday. Mine dated the 13th. acknowledging the receipt of your favors of the 26th. Ult. and 2d Inst. must, I presume, have been received in due course of the Post, and therefore to repeat the contents of it is unnecessary.

A Mr. Summers⁶⁴ of Alexandria, is very desirous of purchasing my vacant lot in that Town; and having been told that nothing short of a high price would induce me to sell it, makes the offer contained

64. William Summers.

in the enclosed letters.⁶⁵ Whether this offer is high, or otherwise, depends upon comparison; the means of doing which is not within my reach, but through the medium of another, and therefore I give you the trouble of making some enquiry into the matter at any time when you are in Alexandria. I have no wish to part with the lot unless I can do it upon advantageous terms, and can dispose of the Money in a more productive manner. I had thoughts of building on it, but this would be attended with trouble, and perhaps a good deal of imposition; as it could not be properly attended to in the execution of the work. And besides workmens wages and materials are very high at this time.

A thought has run through my mind (since I began this letter) whether, as I have a prospect, from the high price of flour, of raising five or six thousand dollars from the sale

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of it; it might not be eligible with that sum, and the sale of the vacant lot (to Summers) to make the purchase suggested in one of your former letters to me? If that property is in an eligible place (and I wish to know where it lies) or whether or not, if it would bring ten pr. Cent on the purchase money, it would certainly be more immediately advantageous to me, than to let a part of the sum, necessary to command it, lay dead in a vacant lot; which when built on, would only be to let.

65. On March 21 Bartholomew Dandridge wrote Summers that the President declined his offer of \$3,000 for the lot in question, and referred him to Tobias Lear “for any further information or negotiation respecting the same.” A copy of this letter is in the Toner Transcripts in the Library of Congress.

Mr. Dandridges answer to Mr. Summer's, enclosed, is left open for your perusal, and may be delivered to him, or not, and at any time you may find convenient.

As the Post hour is at hand, and I have many letters to close, and prepare for the Mail I hardly know what I have written, or whether you will be able, fully to comprehend my meaning. My love in which Mrs. Washington unites, is presented to fanny and the Children, and I am etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Philadelphia, March 21, 1796.

Dear Sir: Presuming that you have received my last, sent thro' the hands of Mr. Keith, with such aids as he was able to afford you respecting my Administration of Colo. Colvils estate, and supposing, as the Chancery term is closed or about to close, that the enclosed letter from that Gentleman would not get to your hands in time to influence your measures I resolved at *first* not to send it. But upon second thoughts have changed my mind, leaving it to chance, and your own judgment to give it the best effect of which the information is susceptible.

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My best wishes attend you and Mrs. Washington. And with sincere regard and friendship I am etc.

***To PRESLEY NEVILLE 28**

Philadelphia, April 16, 1796.

Dear Sir: I have as you probably may have heard, sold my land on Millers run to Colo. Richie. This land was to be resurveyed; and to be paid for by the acre, agreeably to what it shall *actually* measure. This resurvey was to have been made by Mr. Charles Morgan, of whose death I have just heard, from Mr. Ross 29 (one of your Senators) who has advised me to commit this business to you.

May I then request the favor of you to make, or cause to be made by some accurate artist, this Survey, at as convenient a moment as it can be executed. The cost of the Survey, and incident expences I will pay or cause to be paid, upon demand.

The courses and distances of the tract (copied from the Patent) are enclosed; as also the quantity therein mentioned: but having good reasons to believe that the *real*, will exceed the *nominal* amount, I preferred selling by the former. I am etc.

28. Then living in Pittsburgh, Pa.

29. James Ross, Senator from Pennsylvania.

***To BURWELL BASSETT**

Philadelphia, April 24, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 17th. inst: was received yesterday. With you, I sincerely regret the death of your amiable Sister; 33 but as it is one of those events which is dispensed by an All-wise and uncontroulable Providence; and as I believe no person could be better

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prepared to meet it, it is the duty of her relatives to submit, with as little repining as the Sensibility of our Natures is capable of.

Mr. Lear is now in this City, and before the receipt of your letter we had had some conversation respecting the disposition of the children. At first, he seemed unwilling to part with any of them, but upon more mature reflection yielded to the propriety of your having Maria. And as he has engaged a tutor, and was on the point of taking his own Son 34 home, it was concluded that the boys should remain with him until my re-establishment (next March) at Mount Vernon; when some New arrangement might be made.

It was always my intention, as you probably may have understood, to take Fayette 35 under my immediate care, but as they are now bereft of father and mother it would be best, I conceive, and more grateful to *their* feelings to keep them together, in whatsoever situation they may be placed, for this reason as I have mentioned

33. Mrs. Tobias Lear.

34. Benjamin Lincoln Lear.

35. George Fayette, son of George Augustine Washington.

before, the ultimate decision relative to them may be postponed until I bid adieu to public life; when I will advise with you and Mr. Lear on their future destination and shall readily acquiesce in any plan which shall appear most conducive to their permanent interest, and advantage. With compliments to Mrs. Bassett and esteem and regard for yourself I am etc.

The Children at present are all at Mount Vernon. 36

To TOBIAS LEAR

Philadelphia, April 29, 1796.

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My dear Sir: Yesterdays mail brought me letters which had arrived in the Commerce, Capt. Tuttell; enclosing invoice and Bill of lading for the long expected Seeds which by the by have cost me at least four times as much as I expected. The Invoice and bill of lading (lest difficulty or delay should arise from the want of them, on acct. of the duties) are now sent to you, with an earnest request that the packages may be forwarded without delay to Mr. Pearce, the Season for Sowing the peas and Succory being already far advanced. The winter Vetch cannot be sown 'till Autumn.

If you have a mind to try some of these seeds, at your place, you are very welcome to part of each kind. When the purposes for which Mr. Murrays letter Invoice and Bill of lading are sent, are answered, be so good as to return them to Dear Sir Your etc.

PS. If the seeds before the arrival of this should have been sent to Mr. Vernon, I pray you to contrive this letter to Mr. P. 38

36. From the original draft in the possession of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union.

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To EDWARD CARRINGTON**

(Private)

Philadelphia, May 1, 1796.

Dear Sir: With much pleasure I received your letter of the 22d. ulto.; and if the sense of the great body of Citizens in Virginia, should be expressed in the manner you seem to expect, it would give me, and I believe I might add, every friend to order and good government throughout the United States, very great satisfaction: More so than similar sentiments from any other State in the Union; for people living at a distance from it know not how to believe

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it possible, that its Representatives, both in the General and State Legislatures can speak a language which is repugnant to the Sense of their Constituents; especially too, as they seem to give the tone to all the States south of them.

Whatever my own opinion may be on this, or any other subject, interesting to the Community at large, it always has been, and will continue to be, my earnest desire to learn, and to comply, as far as is consistent, with the public sentiment; but it is on *great occasions only*, and after time has been given for cool and deliberate reflection, that the *real* voice of the people can be known.

The present, however, is one of those great occasions, than which, none more important has occurred, or probably may occur again to call forth their decision. And to them the appeal is now made. For no candid man in the least degree acquainted with the progress of this business, will believe for a moment that the *ostensible* dispute, was about papers, or that the British

Treaty was a *good* one, or a *bad* one; but whether there *should be a Treaty at all* without the concurrence of the house of Representatives. which was striking at once, and boldly too, at the fundamental principles of the Constitution; and if it were established, would render the Treaty making Power not only a nullity, but such an absolute absurdity as to reflect disgrace on the framers of it: for will any one suppose, that they who framed, or those who adopted that Instrument, ever intended to give the power to the President and Senate to make Treaties (and declaring that when made and ratified, they should be the Supreme law of the land) wd. in the same breath place it in the powers of the house of Representatives to fix their Veto on them? unless apparent marks of fraud or corruption (which in equity would set aside any contract) accompanied the measure, or such striking evidence of National injury attended their adoption as to make a War, or any other evil preferable? Every unbiassed Mind will answer in the negative.

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Whence the source, and what the object of all this struggle is, I submit to my fellow citizens. Charity would lead one to hope that the motives to it have been pure. Suspicions, however, speak a different language; and my tongue, for the present, shall be silent. Such further information on this head (or any other similarly important) which may come to your knowledge, and which your leisure and inclination may enable you to give, will be very acceptable to Dear Sir Your &c.

To CHARLES CARROLL, OF CARROLLTON

(Private)

Philadelphia, May 1, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 23d. Ult. has been duly received. With respect to the application of Mr. Freeman, 39 I shall do, as I always have done on similar occasions, and that I am sure you will approve of, namely to lay the recommendations of Applicants by, untill the hour comes when nominations are to be made, and then after reference to them; and an attention to other circumstances (which is often essential) prefer those who seem to have the greatest fitness for the Office.

Accompanying the information of the Election of Mr. Sprigg, 40 the Instructions with which he was charged, you propound several interesting questions, such as I am persuaded your own good sense, after a resort to the debates of the important points which have been discussed, we leave you at no loss to Solve. Few however I believe acquainted with the proceedings in the House of Representatives, conceive that the *real* question was whether the Treaty with Great Britain was a *good* or *bad* one; but whether there should be a *Treaty at all* without the concurrence of that House, and taking advantage of the partialities in favor of one nation, and of the prejudices against that of Another, with the aid of such unfavorable Interpretations, as they were disposed to give to some parts of the Treaty it was conceived, that no occasion more suitable might ever occur, to establish the principle

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and enlarge the power they aimed at. On this ground therefore it was resolved to attempt at every hazard

39. Thomas Freeman. He had applied for the appointment of surveyor to ascertain the western limits of the United States under the new treaties. His application, dated May 13, 1796, is in the *Applications for office under Washington* in the Library of Congress.

40. Thomas Sprigg, Representative from Maryland.

to render the Treaty making power a nullity without their consent; nay worse, to make it an absolute absurdity, Such as could not fail to reflect disgrace upon the understanding and wisdom not only of those who framed, but on those also who adopted the constitution, from the inconsistency of giving a power to the president and Senate to make Treaties (and when made and ratified, declaring them to be the Supreme law of the land) and in the same instrument to vest a power in the house of Representatives to fix their Veto upon it, unless bribery and fraud was apparent in the transaction (which in equity annul any contract) or ruin was so self evident as to make war or any evil preferable to the Execution.

With respect to the motives wch. have led to these measures, and wch have not only brought the Constitution, to the brink of a precipice, but the peace happiness and prosperity of the Country, into eminent danger, I shall say nothing. charity tells us they ought to be good; but suspicions say they must be bad. At Present my tongue shall be silent.

Every true friend to this Country must see and *feel* that the policy of it is not to embroil ourselves, with any nation whatever; but to avoid their disputes and their politics; and if they will harrass one another, to avail ourselves of the neutral conduct we have adopted. Twenty years peace with such an increase of population and resources as we have a right to expect; added to our remote situation from the jarring power, will in all probability

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enable us in a just cause, to bid defiance to any power on earth. Why then should we prematurely embarrass 41 (for the attainment of trifles comparatively speaking) in hostilities the issue of which is *never* certain, always expensive, and beneficial to a few only (the least deserving perhaps) whilst it must be distressing and ruinous to the great mass of our Citizens. But enough of this, the people must decide for themselves, and probably will do so notwithstanding, the vote has gone in favor of the appropriations by a majority of 51 to 48, 42 as the *principle* and *assumption of power* which has been contended for remain, although the Consequences by the present decision, probably will be avoided. With esteem etc. 43

***To GOVERNOR JOHN JAY**

Philadelphia, May 8, 1796.

My dear Sir: You judged very right when in your letter of the 18th Ult. you observe, I “can have very little time for private letter-writing” but if my friends will put up with the hasty and indigested ones I can write under such circumstances, there are a few (among whom permit me the gratification to place you) with whom I should feel very happy to correspond; and while I hold my present office, to learn their sentiments upon any of the important measures wch come before the Executive of the U. States.

I am *Sure* the Mass of Citizens in these United States *mean well* , and I firmly believe

41. Embark ourselves(?).

42. See note 13, page 12, *ante*.

43. From the “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers*.

they will always *act well* , whenever they can obtain a right understanding of matters; but in some parts of the Union, where the sentiments of their delegates and leaders are

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adverse to the Govent. and great pains are taken to inculcate a belief that their rights are assailed, and their liberties endangered, it is not easy to accomplish this; especially, as is the case invariably, when the Inventors, and abettors of pernicious measures use infinitely more industry in dissiminating the poison, than the well disposed part of the Community to furnish the antidote. To this source all our discontents may be traced and from it our embarrassments proceed. Hence serious misfortunes originating in misrepresentation frequently flow and spread before they can be dissipated by truth.

These things do, as you have supposed, fill my mind with much concern and with serious anxiety. Indeed, the trouble and perplexities which they occasion, added to the weight of years which have passed over me have worn away my mind more than my body; and renders ease and retirement indispensably necessary to both during the short time I have to stay here. It would be uncandid therefore and would discover a want of friendship and confidence (as you have expressed a solicitude for my at least, riding out the storm) not to add that nothing short of events, or such imperious circumstances (as I hope and trust will not happen) and might render a retreat dishonorable, will prevent the public annunciation of it in time

to obviate a waste, or misapplication of votes at the Election of President and Vice-President of the United States in december next, upon myself.

I congratulate you on the tranquil Session, just closed in your State, and upon the good dispositions, generally, which I am informed prevail among the Citizens therein, with most friendly sentiments I remain &c.

***To WILLIAM DEAKINS, JUNIOR**

Philadelphia, June 6, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 27th. Ult. has been duly received. Before I knew or had heard of any movement in the Federal City, among the proprietors thereof, I had in answering

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some dispatches from the Commissioners, given it to them as my clear and decided opinion, that those who were entrusted, with the affairs of the City, ought to be residents thereof. It is and has always been my Opinion. It was the principle upon which the new Establishment, and compensation took place; and what I have always expected, would happen; as soon as accommodations could be provided. To assign all the reasons for this opinion, which have weight in my mind; would run me into prolixity, unnecessarily; as few of them can have escaped a reflecting man. One however, I brought to your view upon a former occasion; when you

suggested a Resident of George Town for a Commissioner. although that case may not apply *quite* as strongly to any of the present Commissioners, yet it *does* apply, and in that degree is injurious; as you see by the effects, and the complaints.

The time in which a great deal is to be done, is short; In the discussion of the Guarantee Bill, all the Faupaus, which have been committed, all the neglect, inattentions and want of close and constant instructions to those to whom the business was intrusted have undergone severe animadversions, It has been said, that if the Commissioners, and those who had been receiving compensations from the public, had been on the spot, the abuses which the principal buildings had sustained could not have happened; that they would have perceived the errors in their origin, and would have correct'd them as fast as they arose. In a word, that there can be no œconomy without a close inspection, nor a close inspection by men at a distance &ca, &ca. Knowing these things as I do; and how much depends upon exertion, it behoves me, while I have any thing to do in the business, to attend to measures and not merely to the conveniencies of those who are to execute them. If the two can be blended, it is well; but the first is, and must be, the primary consideration.

Nothing, pointing directly to yourself (Office I mean) has been said further, than while the Agents, and principal Officers of the City,

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reside out of it and in G Town, the attraction is where it *ought not to be*, were the Interest of the former, and the accommodation of Congress (when the Government moves to it) as they ought, to be the primary object. I write in haste, the Post hour being at hand, but can assure you that I am etc.

To HENRY KNOX

Philadelphia, June 8, 1796.

My dear Sir: I wou'd not let Mr. Bingham (who says he is about to Visit you) depart without acknowledging the receipt of several letters from you; and offering Mrs. Knox and yourself, my sincere condolence on your late heavy loss. Great and trying, as it must be to your sensibility, I am persuaded after the first severe pangs are over you both possess fortitude enough to view the event, as the dispensation of providence, and will submit to its decrees, with philosophical resignation.

The footing on which you placed the non-acceptance of the Commission for ascertaining the true St. Croix, was such, as to leave no hope of your embarking in that undertaking. After the arrival of the Commissioners from Great Britain, and his readiness to proceed therein was announced. I therefore nominated; and Mr. Howell 90 (of Rhode Island) by the advice and consent of the Senate, is nominated in your place and Mr. Sullivan 91 [designated to prepare the business for them.

Mr. Bingham is so well versed in the Politics of this place, and South of it.

90. David Howell.

91. James Sullivan, of Massachusetts. He was United States agent for managing affairs under the 5th Article of Jay's Treaty.

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and so well acquainted with the movements in both houses of Congress, that it would be a Work of Supererogation in me, to give you the details. To him then I refer you for such relations as are interesting.

On Monday next, if not prevented by occurrences yet unforeseen, I shall commence my Journey for Mr. Vernon; but shall myself be returned to this City again before the first of September; not chusing to be longer absent from the Seat of Government. My best wishes, in which Mrs. Washington unites, are tendered to Mrs. Knox, your self and family; and with sincere friendship and affectionate regard I am etc.] 92

To JAMES ROSS

Philadelphia, June 11, 1796.

Dear Sir: I should not have given you the trouble of receiving a letter from me, at this time but for the purpose of correcting a mistake which in a degree implicates you.

Two or three days ago a person, (whose name I did not ask) called upon me, at the request he said of Mr. Shreve [with] £100 on account of the Land he had purchased of me. I told him I would not receive money from that Gentleman in driblets; that nothing less than the whole of the Second payment which was £600, and Interest wou'd be received, and that if I was thus trifled with by Colo. Shreve, I would have recause to other means to obtain a more punctual Compliance with our bargain.

This reply produced a further

92. The part within brackets is from a photostat of the incompleated press copy of the original, which is in the writing of Washington, in the Chicago Historical Society The first part is supplied from the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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offer, to the amount I think in the whole sum of £300 but conceiving as I did at that moment, that the *whole* second Installment was due, I refused this sum also. Nor was it before this morning it occurred to me, that in April last you paid me Eleven hundred and sixty Dollars, in part of this Installment.

Having made this discovery too late, to rectify it with the person who was charged with a paymt. by Colo. Shreve, and having authorised that person [to] inform him that nothing short of the whole sum due, would content me, I feel it incumbent on me to give you this explanation of the matter; and through you if an occasion should present of making it to Colo. Shreve.

I think it not improbable, that the person I allude to (not knowing his name,) with the aid of the 1160 dollars, recd. from you, would have paid the whole sum due on the Second instalment, with interest agreeable to the Articles; for he is a purchaser from Shreve, of part of the Tract at a price very considerably advanced.

Not knowing whether Mr. Charles Morgan is living or dead, or what has been done relatively to the Rents, which was due on the Land, will you permit me to request the favor of you, to ask him (if in being) or Colo. Shreve when I am to receive it. I am in the same predicament with respect to the Rents of the land on millers Run and shall be equally obliged to your enquiries concerning it. With very Great esteem etc.

P.S. For the government of those who may have

business to transact with me, I add, that on monday next I shall leave this City for Virginia; that I shall return to it again before the 1st. Septr. and shall remain here untill the middle of the month. 98

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Philadelphia, June 12, 1796.

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Sir: A long, and interesting Session of Congress which did not close untill the first day of this month, and the Laws which required to be carried into execution promptly, will I am persuaded be admitted a reasonable excuse for my not writing to you since the 20th. of Feby. last, agreeably to assurances then given. But what apology can I offer *now*, that I am about to give you the result of the enquiries you requested me to make, when it will be found to fall so far short of what you might have expected from the time which has been taken to obtain them.

Your wishes on this head I have committed to Richard Peters Esqr who is one of the most intelligent and best, practical as well as theoretical farmers we have; with a desire that he wou'd advise with others, and condense their observations in a summary Statement. Why this was done; and why *he* could do no more, you will find in his own, original letter, with the questions and answers therein enclosed.

To Mr. Peters experience with respect to Gypsum as a manure, let me add the

98. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

following as an unequivocal evidence, that it has no effect on stiff, heavy land, that does not absorb or permit the water on the surface, occasioned by superabundant falls of Rain or Snow, to penetrate quickly; which is the case, generally, with the Soil of my Estate, at Mount Vernon. The experiments I made and proofs which I allude, to were made Eight or nine years ago; at the rate of from one to twenty bushels of the Plaster of Paris to the acre (among other things, to ascertain the just quantum used). I spread it on, grass grounds, and on ploughed land. On the latter, part of it was ploughed in; part harrowed in; part scratched in with a light bush, while another part lay undisturb'd on the surface. All with Oats, in the Spring. But it had no more effect in *any* instance, *then* or *since*, than so much of the earth it was spread over would have had, if it had been taken up and spread again.

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If any thing should hereafter occur on this, or any other subject, which I may think worthy your attention, in this interesting branch of your pursuits, I shall not fail to communicate them to you; being with very great esteem, respect and consideration Sir, Your etc. 1

1. The press copy in the *Washington Papers* is nearly illegible and the text has been completed from the facsimile in *Letters on Agriculture... to Arthur Young... and Sir John Sinclair...*(Washington: 1847).

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, June 29, 1796.

Dear Bushrod: You have not informed me what or whether any thing has been done in the Court of Chancery (in this State) for bringing the accts. of my Administration of Colo. Colvills Estate to a close, that my hands may be entirely clear, of it. I therefore give you the trouble of this enquiry; as I am extremely anxious to be acquitted. The balance due from me, (and at present lodged in the Bank of Alexandria) is ready to be applied in any manner and at any moment to the Chancellors order.

I drew a prize in Colo. Byrds lottery, of a half acre lot, No. 265. I believe in the Town of Manchester, and I have a lot in some Town that was established on James River (below Richmd.) by a certain John Wood for which I have a deed (but it is in Philadelphia) if these are to be found and worth your acceptance, I will give them to you. I am entitled also in partnership with, or the Heirs of Peyton Randolph, Richard Randolph, Mr. Fitzhugh of Chatham, George Wythe, Richard Kidder Meade, Lewis Burwell, John Wales, Nathaniel Harrison, Junr., and Thomson Mason, to a tenth part of two or three half Acre lots; and 200 Acre lots in the aforesaid lottery. But as Thomson Mason (with or without authority) sold this property and never to me at least accounted, for an iota of the amount little I presume is to be expected from this concern but if you think or find it otherwise upon enquiry, I give

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you all the Interest I have therein and you may act accordingly. With Sincere friendship I remain etc. 23

23. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JUDGE ALEXANDER ADDISON

Mount Vernon, July 8, 1796.

Sir: Your favor of the 4th. Instant came to my hand by last Post.

When I inform you that Mr. Ross (who on my behalf disposed of the Land I held on Millers run, to Mr. Ritchie) is authorised to do all that is necessary on my part, toward carrying the bargain into complete effect; it almost supercedes the necessity of giving answers, in detail, to the queries you have propounded. I shall however inform you.

That three thousand dollars has been received by me, on that account.

That I executed a deed conveying the Estate in fee Simple with a relinquishment of Dower, to Mr. Ritchie; and left it in trust with Mr. Ross, to be delivered when the requisites on the part of Mr. Ritchie were complied with.

That if Mr. Ritchie should be disposed to pay a greater sum, not less than a third *more* than the Installment becoming due, it shall be received, provided notice thereof is given on or before the first day of April in each year. and

That, a decisive answer has already been given (through Mr. Ross) of my expectation of Interest from the first of January.

With respect to the Rents of the Land on Millers run, not knowing when, by agreement, they become due; and in truth, being very little acquainted with the circumstances attending them, it would be imprudent in me to say anything definitely concerning them:

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whatever, therefore, Mr. Ross may do in this regard, I will abide by; as I seek justice only, on liberal principles.

The money due on account of interest to the first of June, may be deposited with the Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Wolcott and, as it was in Philadelphia soon after that period, I require no interest thereon subsequent thereto. I believe it would be best also, at this time, not to receive money on any other account: lest it should militate with arrangements under a power given to Mr. Ross. I have no doubt but that a judgment Bond executed by Mr. Ritchie and yourself will be perfectly satisfactory, but every thing of this sort is already in the hands of Mr. Ross to arrange.

The Survey has been returned to me, and the quantity I believe (not having it at hand) is as you say, 2955 Acres. I am etc. 64

[H.L.]

To JOHN DANDRIDGE

Mount Vernon, July 11, 1796.

Dear Sir: I have received, at this place your letter of the 23d Ulto; but long after the date of it. Whether occasioned by neglect in the Post Offices or by its having made a journey to Philadelphia and back, I know not.

With respect to the negroes, Frederick, George, Burwell and Pleasant, I have no objection to your taking them with you to your new habitation, Provided you can arrange matters with your mother, to her entire satisfaction. I shall set no price on them, because it is not probable I shall

64. This copy, in the writing of George Washington Craik, is indorsed by Washington.

ever avail myself, or heirs, of that property in your mothers possession.

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Your brother Bart 69 conduct is too enigmatical for me to develope; I have conjecture only to resort to, for a solution of it: and as that might prove erroneous I shall say nothing concerning the causes, further than that I have no charges to make against his honesty or fidelity, and that his sudden and abrupt departure, was not occasioned by any difference between us, and further that I had no more suspicion of his intention to leave me, (until he was gone and left a line informing me thereof) than you had. His first letter to me, (four days after he had left the family) requested I would harbour no unfavorable opinion of him, intimating that when he was more composed, he would write me more fully, and give some explanation of his conduct. A second and a third letter has been recd. from him since (dates at Green bryer Ct House) without doing this, but expressing an inclination to return to his former station, which cannot be as another Genre. has taken his place. If however I can render him any service I shall do it chearfully, as I always entertained and continue to entertain a favourable opinion of his integrity and abilities.

With best regard to your mother and other friends I am etc.

PS. Since closing this letter your brother Bar has arrived here, as he is writing to you or some other of his friends, I shall refer you to his own explanations which ought to be the most accurate. 70

69. Bartholomew Dandridge.

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To JAMES KEITH

Mount Vernon, July 17, 1796.

Dear Sir: You will perceive by the enclosed letter from Mr. Bushrod Washington to me, what is enjoined by the High Court of Chancery of this Commonwealth.

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By Mr. George W. Craik, I send in Bank Notes of the United States, the Sum required to be deposited in the Bank of Alexandria, by the decree. Had I known of this decree before I left Philadelphia I could, and would have drawn the Specie for this purpose; and I think, to avoid any cavil hereafter, the receipt from the Bank of Alexandria ought to be expressed in such a manner as to imply this, or rather not to imply the contrary; and this it may well do, for the presumption is, that this Sum will remain there *long* before the proper claimants are ascertained.

As Mr. Craik is young in business, you would do me a favor by accompanying him to the Bank (in Alexandria) for the purpose of arranging this matter properly, at that place; thereby placing me on secure ground. I have directed Mr. Craik to take a copy of the Decree; on the back of which it may be best, perhaps, to take the receipt from the Bank.

Not having the Will of Colo. Thos. Colville by me; not recollecting distinctly where the relations of his Mother were said to reside, and being unacquainted with characters in Alexandria who would have it most in their power to cause the notification required by

the Decree, to be inserted in "some public paper in the Kingdom of Great Britain for two Months" thereby serving the parties, and fulfilling the intention of the Court; let me ask the favor of you to engage, if you can hit upon a suitable person for this purpose, the doing it. Mr. Hodgden some years ago, presented claims in behalf of *some* who conceived themselves *entitled* under the Will of Colo. Thos. Colville: and if in Alexandria, may be as eligible a character to apply to as any. With very great Esteem etc. 77

***To RUFUS KING**

(Private)

Philadelphia, August 25, 1796.

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Dear Sir: Will you do me the favor to cause the enclosed notification to be inserted in some public Paper, agreeably to the Decree of the High Court of Chancery in Virginia, annexed thereto. It has been a long, troublesome and vexatious business to me; and I wish to close it *finally* and *effectually* in the manner designated. One part of which (depositing of the money) I have already complied with, and wish to do the same by the other part, namely, the Publication in England.

The Persons interested (if any of them are in existence) lives, most probably, at or near Newcastle in Northumberland County England. Whether it would be best therefore to send it there in the

77. In the writing of George Washington Craik.

first instance for publication, or to publish it in the Metropolis (London) with a request that it may be re-published there I leave to your better judgment in these matters. What ever expence is incured be pleased either to charge in your public account, or send me a note of it, and the amount shall in either case be paid to the Secretary of State here.

I am sorry, and almost ashamed to give you trouble in so trifling (though to me, interesting a business) but as I conceived it would be the most effectual mode of executing it, I rely on your goodness to excuse it; and to send me one of the Papers containing the publication of the notice.

I hope you and family had a short and pleasant passage. Present me if you please to Mrs. King, and be assured of the esteem and regard etc.

[N.Y.H.S]

To THE JUSTICES OF THE COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1796.

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Gentlemen: Having been named an Executor to the Will of the late Major George Augustine Washington of Fairfax County, decd. my avocations made it necessary for me to decline Acting in that Capacity and his Widow who was also named executrix, took upon her the Execution of the trust. Her decease makes it proper that some other person should be empower'd to settle and manage the business of the Estate of the late Major Washington, as the causes which first led me to decline the execution still exist. I therefore

request you will authorise Tobias Lear to act as Administrator to the Estate above mentioned. I am etc. 90

To LANDON CARTER

Mount Vernon, October 17, 1796.

Sir: The letter with which you have favoured me, dated the 28th ult. came duly to hand.

A few months more will put an end to my political existence and place me in the shades of Mount Vernon under my Vine and Fig Tree; where at all times I should be glad to see you.

It is true (as you have heard) that to be a cultivator of Land has been my favorite amusement; but it is equally true that I have made very little proficiency in acquiring knowledge either in the principles or practice of Husbandry. My employments through life, have been so diversified, my absences from home have been so frequent, and so long at a time, as to have prevented me from bestowing the attention, and from making the experiments which are necessary to establish facts in the Science of Agriculture. And now, though I may amuse myself in that way for the short time I may remain on this Theatre, it is too late in the day for *me* to commence a scientific course of experiments.

Your thoughts on the mode of cultivating Indian corn, appeared to me, to be founded in reason, and a judicious management of the Soil for different purposes, is as highly interesting to, as it has

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90. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

been neglected by, the People of this Country; to the consequent destruction of much valuable land.

How to restore it to its original fruitfulness; and to increase the means by Stercoraries etc.; to preserve it in that or an improving state; what rotation in crops is best adapted to soils, of different qualities, in order to keep our fields in health and vigour, and at the same time to derive *immediate* profit from them, are the great desiderata of the Husbandman.

It is what the People of the interior parts of our country must come to soon, or emigrate to the exterior parts of it for subsistence on more productive Soil.

Nothing has contributed, nor will any thing contribute more to effect these desirable purposes than the establishment of Agricultural Societies in this, as they have been in other countries: that the community may derive advantages from the experiments and discoveries of the more intelligent communicator through such channels. Besides the numerous local Societies which are to be found in all parts of Great Britain and Ireland, a national one is now established under the auspices of the government of those countries; which will, I conceive, be found among the most useful and beneficial institutions in them, if it is prosecuted with as much assiduity as it has commenced, under Presidency of Sir Jno Sinclair.

I shall always feel myself obliged by your communicating any useful discovery in Agriculture; and for the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to express for me, I pray you to accept the thanks of Sir, Your etc. 7

7. From the printed text in M.D. Conway's *George Washington and Mount Vernon*, Long Island Historical Society Memoirs (vol. 4).

***To LANDON CARTER**

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Philadelphia, November 8, 1796.

Sir: The letter you have been so good as to favor me with, dated the 27th. Ulto. found me in this City immersed in papers, and preparing for the approaching Session, and busy Scenes with Congress. Let this be my apology then for doing little more, at present, than to give your letter, and its enclosure, an acknowledgment. A time will soon come, I hope, when I can do more; and be in a situation to profit from the relatns. you may give me of your further experiments. Permit me in the meanwhile, to ask your solution of the following questions being a warm frd. myself to green in preferance to naked fallows.

1st. Have you continued the alternate growth of Pease and Wheat, since the year 1794, in the field referred to in your printed letter of the 29th of January of that year?

2dly In that case what has been the product of your Crops in it since?

3dly. Has the field received any other aid than what you supposed it had derived from the leguminous crop and mode of cultivating it?

4th. If not, what is the present condition of the field? Is it improving, or otherwise?

5th Would the Pease have yielded as well on a stiff Loam, or clay, as on such light or Sandy land as you have described yours to be?

6th. Did you drop them by hand, or by means of a drill Plough?

7th. As there is a great variety in the tribe of Indian Pease, which kind of them have you cultivated? Some run, and extend their vines so fax as soon to impede the operations of a Plough.

8th. Is there always a ready sale of them? and at what price?

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9th. Could as many be bought *now* , or in the course of the ensuing *winter* as would sow, or plant, at the distances, and in the manner you recommend, a field of about 70 acres?

10th. At what period would you *choose* the Pease should be planted or Sown?

11th. In that case when would they be suffly. ripe to harvest? or, in other words, how long do they usually remain on the ground?

12th. By your sketch and the letter also it is not expressed whether more than one plowing is given after the Pease are planted, and there is a disagreeemt. betwn. the two; the 1st. throwing the mould *to* , and the 2d. *from* the Pease. Is one Plowg. sufficient (especially if the season is moist) to prevent the ground from being foul with grass, and hard as well as with large weeds, thereby rendering it unfit for the reception of Wheat?

13th. What is meant in the 4th. paragraph of the sketch, by the words “about the time of its sunning”? and when does this Sunning happen?

14 As by the rotation wch. is here contemplated the fields may be always in Culture, what *propn* . of Pasture or graising grd. wd. you give to the Farm of any given size?

I will make no apology, Sir, for giving you the trouble of answering these queries. The Gazette containing your printed letter to the Agricultural Society in Culpeper, is returned; with my thanks to you for giving me the perusal of it. If the experiment, mentioned in the

sketch, has been continued on the *same* field, as successfully as it appears to have been commenced, there can be no rotation more simple; no dressing (if it is efficient) so cheap; nor any profit from *field* cultivation greater if progressive as you conceive it to be. With much esteem etc.

***To JAMES ROSS**

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Philadelphia, November 12, 1796.

Dear Sir: A few months will put a period to my political existence, and a few days afterwards to my residence in this City; which I never expect to see again.

May I ask the favor of you therefore (if this letter should reach your hands in time, and opportunities should present themselves) to request, and even to press Colonels Shreve and Cannon, and Mr. Charles Morgan to settle and pay to you, before your departure for Congress, the balances respectively due from them, to me. Or, if the money cannot be obtained from all, or any of them, that I may at least know what is due to me, and what it is I have to expect from them before I leave this City; after which their communications with me would be circuitous, if not hazardous.

I have so often made apologies for the trouble I have given you in my Western concerns, that I will avoid doing it on this occasion, but if the above named Gentlemen would do as they ought, I could do more, and that is, to promise I will give you no further

trouble in this business unless occasions should arise which may call for professional aid, and you would receive compensation for the Services rendered me. With very great esteem etc. 25

***To FRANCIS DEAKINS**

Philadelphia, November 13, 1796.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 12th. Ult. did not get to my hands until I had been arrived in this City, sometime, or it should have received an earlier acknowledgment.

It would have been pleasing to me, as much on acct. of the esteem I feel for you, as for the satisfaction of viewing my land with more accuracy, to have found you at home. As the case happened, I took only a hasty and superficial view of parts of the Tract. 26

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I am very much obliged to you, for the trouble you have taken to obtain a settlement with Mr. Jones for the Rents of the above Land: and as it is not in my way to do it, and besides, as I am entirely unacquainted with the circumstances attending the Tenants, in short as I know not what is due from either of them, or from Mr. Jones himself, it would render me a very acceptable Service if you would be so obliging as to bring past transactions to a close; and advise me what had best be done in future, relatively to the Rents, the Tenants; and even the Land. 27 With very great esteem etc.

25. From a photostat of the original in Princeton University.

26. "Woodstock," in Maryland.

27. The management of these rentals was transferred from Jones to Hezekiah Veatch.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, November 16, 1796.

My dear Sir: I hardly know what apology to make for the positive manner, in which I declared the Certificate for the hundred shares in the Bank of Columbia, had never been in my hands. The fact is otherwise, and I delay no time to correct my error.

I found it last night, and account for it thus. Given to me, I suppose, (for I have not the most obscure recollection of the circumstance) at a time when my mind was occupied on, or immediately called to some other Object, I put it *loose* in my travelling Chaise-box, where Papers (frequently wanted at Mount Vernon) *always* remained; intending, I presume, to file it with the other certificates, in the *same* box; but not doing it then, and forgetting to do it afterwards, and every recollection of having seen it, it might have remained there 'till doomsday undiscovered, if I had not, for another purpose, examined every paper therein *seperately* ; and by that means found the certificate which has puzzled both you and me, to know what had become of it.

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Mr. Dandridge (as I presume he has informed you) applied, without encouragement, to the Revd. Mr. Medor of this City (one of the Moravian Clergy) for the Speedy admission of Maria 34 into the S[c]hool for young Ladies, at Bethlehem. Since then, I have written to the Principal of that School, The Revd. Mr. Venvleck, 35 but have not received his answer. When it comes I will forward it to you.

34. Anna Maria, daughter of George Augustine Washington.

35. Rev. Jacob Van Vleck.

Mr. Smith of Alexandria, to whom my flour was sold, is craving, earnestly, a prolongation of payment, ninety days. This I do not like for two reasons, 1. because it carries long with it, distrust of his circumstances; and 2. because the doing of it, would be inconvenient, and a derangement of my own measures. I have however, not wanting to distress him, placed the matter upon the following ground. Pay Mr. Pearce the aggregate of his estimate of the Sums necessary to pay his own wages; the Overseers, and other incidental expences of the Estate, on or before the 24th. of next month, and I will wait until the first day of March next for the balance, provided he can, and will give indubitable surety that these shall be done.

As Mr. Pearce may not be well acquainted with business of this sort, or indeed with the adequacy of the Security which may be offered: Personal or Real, I have taken the liberty of mentioning the matter to you, praying, if you should go down to your farm, that you would aid him with your advice.

Washington Custis has got settled at Princeton College, and I think under favourable auspices, but the change from his former habits is so great and sudden; and his hours for study so much increased beyond what he has been accustomed to, that though he promises to be attentive, it is easy to be perceived he is not at all reconciled to it yet.

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That of getting up an hour before day,

to commence them, is, I will venture to pronounce not the least irksome to him, at present.

Offer my respects to Mrs. Lear, and love to the Children, in which Mrs. Washington unites. and be assured of the sincere esteem etc.

***To JAMES MAURY**

Philadelphia, December 5, 1796.

Sir: I have received several letters from you in the course of this year, but as none of them required a particular acknowledgement, and as my time is generally very much occupied I have been silent until now.

The object of my writing to you now, is to request that the balance of £105.8.7 due to me, as appears by your account current dated the 23d. of February in the present year may be remitted in the articles contained in the Invoice enclosed herewith.

I pray you to send them (Insured) by the first good opportunity to Alexandria or George Town on Potomac. Accept my thanks for the Tarriers you had the goodness to send me by Captn. Butts who took great care of them, and delivered them in good order. With esteem, etc.

Invoice of Goods to be Shipped for and consigned to, the Subscriber at Mount Vernon in Virginia by James Maury Esqr. and sent by the first Vessel bound to the Port of Alexandria,

or George Town on Potok.

300 wt. of White lead ground in Oil

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2 pieces of very fine Cambrick

2 Ditto Irish linnen a 4/. pt. yd. Sterlg.

2 Ditto Do Do 3/. Do. Do.

4 Ditto Do Do 2/.

1 Dosay 60 yds. 5/4. Sheeting, fine

6 large and handsome Table cloths. All to be of the samesize, finess, and figure.

2 dozn. handsome Napkins to suit Ditto.

The surplus of the balance of £105.8.7 due to me, pr. your acct. current after Commission and charges, freight and Insurance on the above Goods are added to the cost thereof, is to be sent to me in good British Oznabrigs.

***To REVEREND JACOB VAN VLECK**

Philadelphia, December 7, 1796.

Revd. Sir: The letter you were pleased to favour me with, relative to my (grand) niece Maria Washington, was (a copy of it) sent to Mr. Lear, who married her mother, and is her guardian, with a request that he would ascertain the precise time for her entering the School for young Ladies, under your auspices, at Bethlehem.

Enclosed you have his answer, and you have to decide whether the first of April, or an earlier day will suit your purposes best, to receive the child. She is fatherless and motherless; to have with her therefore the

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daughter 66 of Colo. Ball, who is the daughter of her father's Sister also, would be very pleasing to the two girls, if it could be made convenient to the School.

Your answer to these requests, if put under cover to me, shall be immediately forwarded to Mr. Lear, for his government. Before I conclude, I pray you to accept my thanks for your ready consent to admit the child, in whose behalf I first applied; and for the favourable Sentiments you have been pleased to express for Revd. Sir Your etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Philadelphia, December 10, 1796.

Sir: Since I had the honor of writing to you in June last, I have been favoured with your letters of the 14th. and 30th of May and 10th. of September; accompanying the additional appendix to the chapter on manures; your address to the Board of Agriculture; and other valuable productions relative to that important subject.

For your goodness in sending them to me, I pray your to accept my best thanks, and regrets at the sametime for the inflammation in your eyes; which, to a man as actively, and as usefully employed in one of the most interesting pursuits that can occupy a rational mind as you are must be doubly afflictive. If my wishes could contribute to a removal of the malady, they would be offered with much Sincerity.

66. The name is not given in Lear's letter of Dec. 2, 1706, but she was Mildred Thornton Ball.

The result of the experiments entrusted to the care of Doctr. Fordyce, 67 must be as curious as they may prove interesting to the Science of Husbandry. Not less so will be, an intelligent solution of those queries relative to live Stock, which are handed to the public.

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A few months more, say the third of March next, and the scenes of my political life will close, and leave me in the shades of retirement; when, if a few years are allowed me to enjoy it (many I cannot expect, being upon the verge of Sixty five), and health is continued to me, I shall peruse with pleasure and edification, the fruits of your meritorious labours, for the improvement of Agriculture; and shall have leizure, I trust, to realize some of the useful discoveries which have been made in the science of Husbandry, Patronised by you, so much for the interest of mankind, and your own honor.

Until the above period shall have arrived, and particularly during the present Session of Congress, which commenced the 5th. instant; I can give but little attention to matters out of the line of my immediate avocations: I did not, however, omit the occasion at the opening of the Session, to call the attention of that body to the importance of Agriculture. What will be the result I know not at present, but if it should be favourable, the hints which you will have it in your power to give, cannot fail of being gratefully received by the members who may constitute the Board.

The articles entrusted to the care

67. Dr. George(?) Fordyce.

of Doctr. Edwards 68 came safe, and while all of them are curious; and entitled to my particular acknowledgments, none deserve to be held in higher estimation than the heads of the Egyptian Wheat. They came much too late however for our usual seed time, but I delayed not a moment in sending them to my Manager at Mount Vernon, with particular directions how to dispose of them to the best advantage; reserving one head as a resource, in case of failure from late Sowing.

Certainly no good reason can be assigned why the Hemp of New Zealand should not thrive with us, as that country lyes in about the same Southern latitude that our middle

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States do in the Northern. The Hemp of the East Indies grows well here (from my own experience) and I have no doubt of the Tea plant succeeding in So. Carolina and Georgia.

The Gentlemen whose names you have mentioned in your letter of the 10th of September, will, I am persuaded, be gratified for your civilities. The true policy of this country is to live in peace and amity with all the World; and I am sure it is the wish of the government that it should do so, as long as is consistent with the respect that is due to itself.

I cannot conclude without requesting your acceptance of my grateful acknowledgments, for the expression of your wishes to see me in Great Britain, and under your hospitable roof; But I believe there are few things more certain than that after

68. Dr. Sydenham Teak(?) Edwards.

I have retired to Mount Vernon, I shall never go twenty miles beyond the limits of it; unless perchance, I should visit some landed property (under leases) at the distance of about Seventy miles from it. With very great esteem etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

(Private)

Philadelphia, December 11, 1796.

Sir: The near view which you have of the Revolution in France, and of the political state of things in Europe, especially those of Great Britain, has enabled you to form a judgment with so much more accuracy than I could do, of the probable result of the perturbed state of the countries which compose that quarter of the globe, and of the principal actors on that theatre, that it wd. be presumption in me, at the distance of 3000 miles, to give an opinion relatively to either men, or measures; and therefore, I will proceed to the

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information required in your private letter of the 11th of September, wch I will give from the best knowledge I possess, and with the candour you have a right to expect from me.

The United States, as you well know, are very extensive, more than 1500 miles between the North Eastern, and So. Western extremities; all parts of which, from the Seaboard to the Apalachian Mountains, (which divide the Eastern from the Western waters) are entirely settled; though not as compactly as they are susceptible of; and settlements are progressing rapidly beyond them.

Within so great a space, you are not to be told, that there are a great variety of climates; and you will readily suppose too that, there are all sorts of land, differently improved, and of various prices, according to the quality of the Soil; its contiguity to, or remoteness from Navigation; the nature of the improvements, and other local circumstances. These however, are only sufficient for the formation of a *general* opinion, for there are material deviations, as I shall mention hereafter.

In the New England States, and to Pennsylvania inclusively, landed property is more divided than it is in the States South of them. The farms are smaller, the buildings and other improvements, generally, better; and, of consequence, the population is greater: But then, the climate, especially to the Eastward of Hudsons river, is cold, the winter long, consuming a great part of the Summers labour in support of their Stocks, during the Winter: nevertheless, it is a country abounding in grass, and furnishes much fine Beef, besides exporting many horses to the West Indies. A Milldew or blight (I am speaking now of the New England

States particularly) prevents them from raising Wheat adequate to their own consumption; and of other grains they export little or none: Fish being their Staple. They live well notwithstanding, and are a happy People. Their numbers are not augmented by foreign Emigrants; yet, from their circumscribed limits, compact situation, and natural population,

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they are filling the western parts of the State of New York, and the country on the Ohio with their own surplusage.

New Jersey is a small state, and all parts of it, except the Southwestern, are pleasant, healthy, and productive of all kinds of grain, &ca. Being surrounded on two sides by New York, and on the other two by Delaware River and the Atlantic, it has no land of its own to supply the surplus of its population, of course their emigrations are principally towards the Ohio.

Pennsylvania is a large state, and from the policy of its founder, and of the government since; and especially from the celebrity of Philadelphia, has become the general receptacle of foreigners from all countries, and of all descriptions; many of whom soon take an active part in the politics of the State; and coming over full of prejudices against their own governments, some against all government, you will be enabled, without any comment of mine, to draw your own inference of their conduct.

Delaware is a very small

State, the greater part of which lyes low, and is supposed to be unhealthy. The Eastern Shore of Maryland is similiar thereto. The lands in both, however, are good.

But the Western parts of the last mentioned State, and of Virginia, quite to the line of No. Carolina, above tide water, and more especially above the Blue Mountains are similar to those of Pennsylvania between the Susquehanna and Potomac Rivers, in Soil, climate and productions; and in my opinion will be considered, if it is not considered so already, as the Garden of America; forasmuch as it lyes between the two extremes of heat and cold, partaking in a degree of the advantages of both, without feeling much, the inconveniences of either: and with truth it may be said, is among the most fertile lands in America, East of the Apalachian Mountains.

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The uplands of North and So. Carolina, and Georgia, are not dissimilar in *Soil* ; but as they approach the lower latitudes, are less congenial to Wheat, and are supposed to be proportionably more unhealthy. Towards the Seaboard of all the Southern States (and further South the more so) the country is low, Sandy and unhealthy; for which reason I shall say little concerning them; for as I should not chuse to be an inhabitant of them myself, I ought not to say any thing that would induce others to be so.

This general description is furnished, that you may be enabled to form an idea of the *part* of the United States which would be most congenial to your inclination. To pronounce with any degree of precision what lands could be obtained for in the parts I have enumerated, is next to impossible, for the reasons I have before assigned; but upon pretty good data it may be said, that those in Pennsylvania are higher than those in Maryland (and I believe in any other State) declining in price as you go southerly, until the Rice Swamps of So. Carolina and Georgia are met with, and these are as much above the medium in price, as they are below it in health. I understand however, that from 30 to 40 dollars pt. Acre (I fix on dollars because they apply equally to *all* the States, and because their relative value to sterling is well understood) may be denominated the medium price in the vicinity of the Susquehanna, in the State of Pennsylvania: from 20 to 30 on the Potomac, both in what is called the Valley, that is, lying between the Blue Mountains and North Mountain and wch. are the richest lands we have. and less, as I have noticed before, as you proceed Southerly. But what may appear singular, and was alluded to in the former part of this letter, the lands in the parts of which I am now speaking, on, and contiguous to, tide water (with local exceptions) are in lower estimation than those which are above, and more remote from Navigation. The causes however are apparent: 1. the land is

better. 2. higher and more healthy. 3. they are chiefly (if not altogether, in the occupation of Farmers; and 4. from a combination of all them, purchasers are attracted, and of consequence the prices rise in proportion to the demand.

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The rise in the value of landed property, in this country, has been progressive, ever since my attention has been turned to the subject (now more than 40 years); but for the last three or four of that period, it has increased beyond all calculation, owing in part to the attachment to, and the confidence which the people are beginning to place in, their form of Government; and to the prosperity of the country from a variety of concurring causes, none more than to the late high prices of its produce.

From what I have said, you will have perceived that the present prices of Land in Pennsylvania are higher than they are in Maryland and Virginia, although they are not of Superior quality. Two reasons have already been assigned for this, first, that in the settled part of it, the land is divided into smaller farms, and more improved; and 2dly being, in a greater degree than any other, the receptacle of emigrants, these receive their first impressions in Philadelphia, and rarely look beyond the limits of the State; but

besides these, two other causes not a little operative may be added; namely, that until Congress passed general Laws relative to naturalization and citizenship, foreigners found it easier to obtain the priviledges annexed to them in this State than elsewhere; and because there are Laws here for the gradual abolition of Slavery, which neither of the two States above mentioned have, at present, but which nothing is more certain than that they must have, and at a period not remote.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, and although I may incur the charge of partiality in hazarding such an opinion at *this time* , I do not hesitate to pronounce that, the Lands on the Waters of Potomack will, in a few years, be in greater demand, and in higher estimation than in any other part of the United States. But as I ought not to advance this doctrine without assigning reasons for it, I will request you to examine a general Map of the United States, and the following facts will strike you at first view. that they lye in the most temperate latitude of the United States; that the main River runs in a *direct* course to the expanded parts of the Western Country, and approximates nearer to the principal

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branches of the Ohio than any other Eastern water, and of course must become a great, if not (under all circumstances) the best highway into that Region; That the upper

Sea port of the Potomac is considerably nearer to a large portion of the State of Pennsylvania than that portion is to Philadelphia, besides accommodating the settlers thereof with inland navigation for more than 200 miles. that the amazing extent of tide navigation afforded by the Bay and Rivers of Chesepeake has scarcely a parallel. When to these are added, that a site at the junction of the inland, and tide navigations of that river is chosen for the permanent Seat of the general government, and is in rapid preparation for its reception. that the inland Navigation of the River is nearly completed to the extent above mentioned, and that its lateral branches are capable of great improvement, at a small expence through the most fertile parts of Virginia, in a Southerly direction, and crossing Maryland and extending into Pennsylvania in a northerly one; thro' which (independent of what may come from the Western country) an immensity of produce will be water borne, thereby making the Federal City the great emporium of the United States. I say, when these things are taken into consideration, I am under no apprehension of having the opinion I have given relative to the value of land on Potomac, controverted by impartial men.

There are farms always, and every where for Sale; if therefore, events should induce you to cast an eye towards America, there need be no apprehension of your being accommodated to your liking; and if I could be made useful to you therein, you might command my services with the greatest freedom.

Within full view of Mount Vernon, seperated therefrom by Water only, is one of the most beautiful seats on the River, for sale; but of greater magnitude than you seem to have contemplated. It is called Belvoir, and did belong to George William Fairfax Esqr.; who, was he living, would now be Baron of Cameron, as his younger brother in this country (he George William dying without issue) at present is, though he does not take upon himself the title. This seat was the residence of the above named Gentleman before he went

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to England, and was accommodated with very good buildings, which were burnt soon after he left them. There are near 2000 Acres of land belonging to the tract, surrounded in a manner by water. The Mansion house stood on high and commanding ground: the soil is not of the first quality, but a considerable part of it lying level may with proper management, be profitably cultivated. There are some small tenements on the Estate, but the greater part thereof is in wood. At present it belongs to Thomas Fairfax, Son of Bryan Fairfax, the Gentleman who will not, as I said before, take upon himself the title of Baron of Cameron. A year or two ago the price he fixed on the land was (as I have been informed) 33 # dollars pr. Acre; whether not getting that sum, or whether he is no longer disposed to sell it, I am unable, with precision to say, for I have heard nothing concerning his intentions lately.

With respect to the tenements

I have offered to let, appertaining to my Mount Vernon Estate, I can give no better description of them, and of their appurtenances, than what is contained in the printed Advertisement herewith enclosed: but that you may have a more distinct view of the farms, and their relative situation to the Mansion House, a sketch from actual Survey is also enclosed; annexed to which, I have given you from memory, the relative situation, and form of the Seat at Belvoir.

The terms on which I had authorised the Superintendent of my concerns at Mount Vernon, to lease the farms there, are also enclosed; which, with the other papers, and the general information herein detailed, will throw all the light I am enabled to give you, upon the subject of your enquiry. To have such a tenant as Sir John Sinclair, however desirable it might be, is an honor I dare not hope for; and to alienate any part of the Fee simple estate of Mount Vernon is a measure I am not inclined to, as all the Farms are connected, and are parts of a whole.

With very great esteem etc.

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P.S. As I shall have an opportunity in the course of the present Session of Congress to converse with the Members thereof from different States, and from different parts of each State, I will write you a

supplimentary account if essential information should be obtained in addition to, or corrective of, what is given to you in the foregoing sheets. 70

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, December 14, 1796.

My dear Sir: Immediately upon the receipt of your letter of the 2d. instant, I sent a transcript of so much of it as related to Maria, and the daughter of Colo. Ball, to Mr. Van Vleck; with a request that he would answer the queries which were propounded therein, under a cover to me. Enclosed is his answer, and of course you will inform Colo. Ball thereof.

As I *know* that many unsuccessful applications had been made for admission into the young Ladies School at Bethlehem, about the time I wrote to Mr. Van Vleck, the reception of Maria and her Cousin must be considered as a particular favour, and Colo. Ball should make a point of it to be exact in complying with the requisitions that are enumerated in the Directors Letter.

A treatise, on the improvement of Canal Navigation, came into my hands by Doctr. Edwards as a present from the Author, a few days ago. As I shall have no time to look into it while I remain in this City, I make a deposit of it with you, until I return to Mount Vernon.

70. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N.J.

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According to Doctr. Edwards' account, Fultons System is putting *Lock Navigation* out of Vogue. I have not read a page in the Book, but if the Potomack company can extract any thing useful from it, I shall feel happy in having sent it to you. We are all well, except having bad colds, and join in best wishes for yourself and family. I am etc.

PS. Pray procure me 200 weight of good butter against our arrival at Mount Vernon which in all likelihood will be by the middle of March.

***To ROBERT FULTON**

Philadelphia, December 14, 1796.

Sir: By the hands of Doctr. Edwards, I was favoured with your Treatise on the improvement of Canal navigation. For your goodness in sending it to me, I pray you to accept my best thanks.

The subject is interesting, and I dare presume is well treated; but as the Book came to me in the midst of busy preparatory scenes for Congress, I have not had leisure yet to give it the perusal which the importance of such a work would merit. I shall do it, with pleasure I am persuaded, when I have. With esteem etc. 76

76. Washington's copy of Fulton's *Treatise* is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. "December 17. At noon the [Pennsylvania] Assembly went to the Presbyterian church on Market Street, where Dr. Rush, a member of the Philosophical Society, pronounced an eulogium in memory of their late president, David Rittenhouse. The church was crowded, President Washington and lady, with members of Congress being present."— *Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer* (Philadelphia: 1893).

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Philadelphia, December 19, 1796.

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Dear Sir: A day or two ago I received your letter of the 4th. instant.

As it is more than probable that my Tenants on Goose Creek must have resolved, 'eer this, to go or stay; any opinion I can now give with respect to the terms, will have arrived too late. If the case however should be otherwise, get the best Rent you can from them for the ensuing year, or even let them remain on the old rent; as I am not disposed to give leases for *more* than Seven years, and wish for more time, and leizure, to consider the nature of my landed property, than I have been able to do for some years back, before I even grant them for that term. But if you find any difficulty in procuring tenants in the manner I have mentioned, you may in that case, adopt the mode which you yourself have suggested, in your letter of the above date; and confine the tenants to the fulfilment of the conditions therein mentioned with respect to cultivation, &ca. &ca.

I have not here, nor do I possess any where, I believe, a single paper relative to the Land on Deep run.⁷⁸ It was originally taken up by my *father* and uncle; in doing which, One Warner who was the Surveyor, contrived to leave out about 170 Acres for himself, as was afterwards discovered, and recovered. My Uncle gave his part to Warner Washington, and my father left his part to my brother Samuel and myself.

78. *Scribner's Magazine* for May, 1877, prints the text of brief conveyance by Washington to Robert Lewis, dated Aug. 13, 1796, of the lands on Deep Run.

The first division took place during my nonage; the subdivision I left to my Brother Samuel to make; who had, as I have always understood, disposed of his property therein to Mr. Lawrence Washington of Chotanck. In what manner the latter was accomplished I know not, not being able to attend to the matter myself. The 170 Acre Tract became mine, but by what means I am unable at this time, to give any distinct account of, but *think*, my elder brother Lawrence who was the acting Executor of my fathers will, recovered it from Warner (the Surveyor) and gave it to me.

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The original Patent for the large Tract was for 5000 Acres; the half of which, as has been observed, came to my brother Samuel and me, by a devise in my father's Will; it was him, not me that sold to Mr. Lawe. Washington of Chotanck. I never parted with a foot of mine until I gave it to you. Who Warner Washington sold to I know not.

This is the best, indeed the only account I have it in my power to give, relative to the Lands on Deep run. You did well therefore, in my opinion, to compromise for the small tract, in preference to letigious investigation of Rights. And you must make the most you can of the other. Your Aunt unites with me in best wishes for yourself, Mrs. Lewis and the family, and I am etc.

***To COUNT RUMFORD 81**

Philadelphia, December 22, 1796.

Sir: In the month of November, I had the honor to receive your letter, and a few days since, that of the first Vol: of your Essays, Political Economical and Philosophical. For these marks of your polite attention to me, I pray you to accept my best thanks.

Congress being in Session, and my time, consequently much occupied with the business of it, will allow me no leisure until the close thereof to give the work an attentive perusal; the doing of which will, I am persuaded, afford both pleasure and edification to Sir Your etc.

***To RUFUS KING**

Philadelphia, December 22, 1796.

Dear Sir: The enclosed is a copy of a letter I took the liberty of writing to you agreeably to its date. 80

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Permit me to take the further liberty of entrusting the letters herewith sent, to your care. That to Count Rumford, is in answer to one without date or place, accompanying the first volume of his Essays, Political, Economical and Philosophical. This mark of his politeness required an acknowledgment on my part, but in truth

80. This inclosure seems to have been a copy of the formal diplomatic letter of credence for Rufus King to the King of England, June 7, 1796, a typed copy of which was kindly supplied by James Gore King, of New York.

81. Formerly Col. Benjamin Thompson, of the King's American Dragoons, British Provincial Troops.

I know not where to direct to him. His Essays are dedicated to the Elector, Palatine, reigning Duke of Bavaria, and dated in London, in July last, hence, I conclude he is now there.

My best respects attend Mrs. King, and with very great esteem etc.

***To JOHN CAREY 88**

Philadelphia, December 30, 1796.

Sir: I have received your letters of the 8th. and 9th. of September and first of October. 89

I am much indebted to you for the interest you feel, to have the imposition that has been attempted upon the public, detected. With great truth you pronounced it such. I shall leave something on this subject, to be used when I shall be permitted to enjoy peace and repose.

In the mean while I pray you to accept of my thanks for your present, and believe me to be Sir etc.

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88. Of London.

89. Carey's letters of September 8 and October 1 are in the *Washington Papers*. The latter is indorsed by Washington: "with the Critical review for September 1796." This issue contained a review of the 1796 reprint of the Spurious Letters: (*Epistles Domestic, Confidential, and Official, from General Washington*) which was unsparing in its castigation of the forgeries.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Philadelphia, January 13, 1797.

My dear Sir: It is nearly, if not quite a month, since I enclosed you a letter from the Revd. Mr. Van Vleck, agreeing to take Colo. Ball's daughter, along with Maria.

In that letter, he mentioned his terms; his wishes to know their exact ages; and informed you what necessaries they ought to come provided with. To these I *added*, that knowing many unsuccessful attempts had been made to get girls admitted to that School,

the reception of Maria and her Cousin ought to be considered as a favor; and hoped that Colo. Ball would be pointed in complying with the terms, and requisitions. I requested too, that you would write Mr. Van Vleck (I think I added under cover to me) the precise time the girls were to enter. Since then I have heard nothing from you, on this subject.

That letter was accompanied with Fulton's treatise (quarto) on the improvement of Canal Navigation, which I meant to deposit in your hands until my return to Mount Vernon. No acknowledgement of this neither, leads me to apprehend a miscarriage of them; and is the cause of these details.

Another subject indeed, has stimulated the present address. I have been asked, with a degree of solicitude from the War Office, to what cause is to be ascribed the non-

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execution, or not coming forward of the Deeds for the land, on which the Arsenal on Shanondoah is to be erected, as these were promised in a letter from you, dated early in August; since which, nothing has been communicated, and is embarrassing to that Department; as the necessary items, and information, cannot accompany the accounts of it, in the manner that is expected. On many accounts, I hope this matter will come forward without delay and particularly for the reasons I have mentioned. With sincere esteem etc.

***To JOHN TRUMBULL**

Philadelphia, January 13, 1797.

Dear Sir: Enclosed you will receive Mrs. Washington's thanks for the many marks of politeness she has received from you; permit me to say, that she has expressed my sentiments fully; and to add, that you will do me a favour in causing the letter, herewith, to be sent to its address. It will always give me pleasure to hear of your welfare, for I am truly, and sincerely, etc. 2

***To GEORGE DUNNINGTON**

Philadelphia, January 15, 1797.

Sir: I have waited (perhaps with more forbearance than I ought) to see, if without an application on my part, you would come forward with the Rents you owe me.

As you have not done this, and no intimation of your intention to do it; and as it is not unfair to conclude from hence, that you mean to postpone the payment of them until the price of Tobo. is at a low ebb, and then to discharge the whole in *that* article, or at the price it bears in the Market; a practice not to be justified under *any* circumstances, much less in yours, who pay a Rent quite inadequate to the use of the land. I am constrained, tho' reluctantly, to inform you, that if you do not pay *all* that is due to me up to the

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2. Martha Washington's letter (January 12) is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*. It thanked Trumbull for "a proof print, engraved from the whole length portrait of the President."

commencement of the present year to Doctr. Jenifer of Port Tobacco (who will receive the same, and give a discharge therefor on my behalf) I shall take the most efficacious, and summary method, allowed by the Laws of Maryland, to obtain justice. I wd. fain avoid this appeal, but If I am obliged to resort to it, remember that it is brought upon you by your own default. I am etc.

***To GEORGE BALL**

Philadelphia, February 1, 1797.

Sir: Your letter of the 16th. Ulto. has been reed.

If Mr. George Fitzhugh has given up the idea of purchasing my land in Gloucester County, I am willing that you should have it on the terms it has been offered to him. which are, for the nett sum it cost me, with interest thereon, from the date of my purchase to the date of my conveyance: one fourth of which to be paid at the signing of the Deed, the other three fourths in three annual payments, with interest.

Although the latter payments would be most agreeable to me, I should have no material objection to wait two years for the second fourth, and annually for the other two fourths; but in either case interest (in order to make myself whole) will be expected.

If, Sir, you are desirous of closing the matter in a purchase it must not

be delayed as others are expressing their wishes to deal for it. If nothing unforeseen prevents it, I shall certainly be at my Seat in Virga. by the 20th. of March, I expect to be there sooner, but would not calculate upon it. I am etc.

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P.S. After the first payment, I have no objection to the Land as Security for the payment of the remaining three fourths.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Philadelphia, February 1, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th. Ult. was received by yesterday's Post, and for the information it contains I pray you to accept my thanks; As I do also of the kind offer you have made me of enquiring into the quality and value of the land I hold on rough creek in the State of Kentucky which I readily accept.

I have heard through other channels, that the above mentioned Land is possessed of valuable properties; and I authorised Major George Lewis to buy the small tract adjoining; belonging to Mr. Wodrow, on my account, but it is not within my recollection, at this moment, what the final result has been. Let me ask you, therefore, to converse with him on this subject, and to pursue such measures respecting it, in my behalf, as you two

shall conclude will be beneficial for me. I will follow your advice, and not dispose of the land until I receive your report respecting it, if that shall happen in any reasonable time.

Upon examination, I find I have not General Lee's Conveyances of the Land to me, at this place, of course I cannot possess you of them: nor do I believe it is necessary, as Colo. Thomas Marshall, of Kentucky, has, on my behalf, paid the taxes of those lands from the first assessment of them (as I have accounts to shew) to a certain period; and was requested to do it regularly onwards, which I am persuaded he has done or is ready to do. I will request the favor of you, however, while you are in that country; to enquire into the matter and see that I have justice done me; as there has been no remissness on my part, or intention to withhold the Tax, from the State.

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I sincerely wish you a pleasant journey to Kentucky, and a safe return; and with the best regards of Mrs. Washington united to my own, for Mrs. Spotswood and the family I am etc.

***To JOSEPH FAY**

Philadelphia, February 19, 1797.

Sir: Your favor of the 7th. instant came duly to hand, but a pressure of business, has retarded the acknowledgement of it.

My lands on the Ohio and great Kanhawa Rivers are not yet disposed of; nor do I incline to offer them for sale in Europe; where land jobbing is in much disgrace.

For some part of them (possessed of no peculiar advantages) I have refused eight dollars an acre, but have offered the *whole* of what I own on those two rivers at that price; a large proportion of which is of superior quality, and inferior in no other respect to those for which the offer was made.

The publication enclosed with this letter, gives a correct general description of the several tracts, where, and how situated. The quality, and value of them are so well known, that a more particular account might be had from any person who has ever been on the Ohio; and I had rather it should be derived from others, or from an ocular view, than from any details of mine.

The price, as before mentioned, being Eight dollars, the printed notification designates the mode of payment and security thereof. I am etc.

***To GEORGE CLINTON**

Philadelphia, February 28, 1797.

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My dear Sir: Your favour of the 14th. instt. with a Postscript of the 24th. came to my hands yesterday: and I hereby acknow

ledge the receipt of Mr. Wilkes's draught on the Cashier of the Bank of Pennsylvania for the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars on account of our joint concern in the lotts in Coxburgh, and which, as appears by the items of an account enclosed overpays my dividend of the receipts £26.0.1½ York Currency.

Whenever it shall suit your convenience I would thank you for informing me what lotts remain unsold, and at what price you think it probable they will sell, and when. No injury, I am persuaded, has been sustained hitherto, but the contrary by delay in the Sale; but whether a further postponement will be advantageous, or not, your means (greater than mine) will enable you to decide.

Future payments may be made by draughts on the Bank of Alexandria or Columbia; in Post notes; or (which is less desirable because more hazardous) in Bank Notes of the United States by the Mail.

I have been constant in my enquiries after your health and with sincere pleasure heard, latterly, that it was well restored. As early in next week as I can make arrangements for it, my journey for Mount Vernon will commence. Twenty miles from which I think it is not likely I shall ever be again. But if business, inclination, or any other cause should ever induce you to visit that hemisphere, I can assure you

with much truth, that I shall be extremely happy to see you under the shade of my vine and fig tree. Mrs. Washington unites cordially with me in every good wish for you, Mrs. Clinton and family, and with sincere esteem and affectionate regard I am etc.

***To ELIZABETH GRAEME FERGUSON**

Philadelphia, March 5, 1797.

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Madam: The multiplicity of business which occurred in the course of the last Session, particularly in the latter part of it, placed it entirely out of my power to attend to matters of private concern. This reason, I hope, you will have the goodness to accept as an apology for my delay in acknowledging the receipt of your very polite and obliging favour of the 16th. of January, 49 at an earlier period, and even now, being not less occupied in preparing to leave this City, I perceive the necessity of asking further forgiveness for this laconic epistle. I have, however, conversed freely on the subject of your letter with our mutual friend Mr. Boudinot, who will inform you fully of the circumstances under which I find myself relative to your request. To his information therefore, I beg leave to refer you.

I cannot conclude however, without offering you my sincere thanks for the honor you intended me; for the enclosures accompanying your letter; and for the favourable and flattering sentiments which you have expressed for me

49. Not now found in the *Washington Papers*.

Near the end of his administration Washington drew up several lists of the articles in the President's house, preparatory to moving to Mount Vernon. These lists are in the *Washington Papers* at the end of February, 1797, and are those of "Household furniture" under which are listed the "Plates" and "Plated Ware"; "Japan Ware"; "Looking Glasses "; "Knives and Forks "; "Andirons "; "Fenders "; "Shovels and Tongs"; "Clock"; "Upholstry"; "Counterparos"; "Rugs and Blankets"; "Lustres"; "Gerandoles"; "Sconces"; "Lamps"; "Cabinet Work"; and "Stoves." "Nothing herein has been said relatively to the Table Linnen, Sheeting, China and Glass-ware which was furnished at the expence of the United States; because they have been worn out, broken, stolen and replaced (at private expence) over and over again. Nor has any account been taken of the Kitchen furniture, as that also, except a few of the most durable articles, which will be left, has been broke, burned out, and otherwise reduced as above. The Carpets also are entirely worn out. all on the floors, at present, have been purchased on private account." Another list gives "Articles in the Green drawing Room which *will* be sold" and "Articles in the above Room

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which may be purchased although the sale of them is not desired." The last list is of "Prints purchased; and at what prices. Size of the impression" and "Size within the impression."

A copy of a conveyance dated Apr. 10, 1797, of 400 acres of land in the "City of Gloucester," Va., from Washington to George Ball, for £200. Virginia currency, is in the Toner Transcripts in the Library of Congress. On Nov. 3, 1805, Ball indorsed a memorandum, on the original, consenting that this land which was "intended to be conveyed to me by the within contract" be sold and transferred by the executors of the late General Washington to Burwell Bassett.

therein. To which permit me to add assurances of the high esteem etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Philadelphia, March 6, 1797.

Sir: On the 11th of Decr. I wrote you a long letter; and intended before the close of the last Session of Congress (which ended on the third instant, conformably to the Constitution) to have addressed you again; but oppressed as I was with the various occurrences incident thereto, especially in the latter part of it, it has not been in my power to do so during its continuance; and now, the arrangements necessary to my departure from this City, for a more tranquil theatre, and for the indulgence of rural pursuits, will oblige me to suspend my purpose until I am fixed at Mount Vernon, where I expect soon to be; having resigned the Chair of government to Mr. Jno. Adams on Friday last; the day on which I completed my Second four years Administration.

Under the circumstances here mentioned, I should not have troubled you, at this time, with so short a letter, but for the purpose of accompanying it with two or three Pamphlets on the subjects of Agriculture; one of which treats more extensively on Gypsum as a manure than

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any I have seen before. The other two will only serve to shew that essays of a similar kind are making in this infant country.

I am sorry to add, that nothing *final*, in Congress, has been decided respecting the institution of a National board of Agriculture, recommended by me at the opening of the Session. But this did not, I believe, proceed from any disinclination to the measure, but from their limited setting, and a pressure of what they conceived, more important business. I think it highly probable that next Session will bring this matter to maturity. With the highest esteem etc.

***To CALEB GIBBS**

Philadelphia, March 6, 1797.

Dear Sir: I will turn over your letter of the 13th. instant to the President of the United States. You may be assured that I have not been wanting in disposition to serve you in anything that was consistent with my duty as a public Officer: but permit me to add that you seem to have lost sight of three things: 1st. that there are a number of very deserving men to be provided for, whose situation during the War, was, by no comparison, harder than yours. 2d. that offices cannot be created for men. and 3d. that you have estimated the emoluments of the one you have had at two low a rate.

Eight hundred dollars, or £240 lawful money per ann, added to the private resources of a man without adding a fraction, necessarily, to his expences is by no means a dispisable thing, but as it is no longer in my power to nominate men to offices these observations might have been spared.

I heartily thank you for your good wishes, and reciprocate them sincerely to you, and yours, being etc.

***To GEORGE BALL**

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Philadelphia, March 6, 1797.

Sir: Enclosed is the copy of a letter I wrote to you in answer to yours from Lancaster, and to that place directed it supposing your residence to be in that County. This letter will be directed to the care of the Postmaster in Fredericksburgh; but as you are not particular in designating the place at which you are to be found, it may not, anymore than the former, find its way to you.

The receipt of your letter of the 16th Ult. should have had an earlier acknowledgment, had not the business of the Session pressed heavily upon me towards the close of it. I am etc.

***To CHIEF JUSTICE OLIVER ELLSWORTH**

Philadelphia, March 8, 1797.

Dear Sir: Before I leave this City, which will be within less than twenty four hours; permit me in acknowledging the receipt of your kind and affectionate note of the 6th, to offer you the thanks of a grateful heart for the Sentiments, you have expressed in my favor, and for those attentions with which you have always honoured me. In return, I pray you to accept all my good wishes for the perfect restoration of your health, and for all the happiness this life can afford. As your Official duty will necessarily call you to the Southward, I will take the liberty of adding that it will always give me pleasure to see you at Mount Vernon as you pass and repass. With unfeigned esteem and regard, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, I am etc.

To BARTHOLOMEW DANDRIDGE

Philadelphia, March 8, 1797.

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My Dear Sir' Your conduct during a six years residence in my family having been such as to meet my full approbation and believing that a declaration to this effect would be satisfactory to yourself and justice requiring it from me, I make it with pleasure. And in full confidence that those principles of honor, integrity and benevolence which I have reason to believe have hitherto guided your steps will still continue to

mark your conduct, I have only to add a wish that you may lose no opportunity of making such advances in useful acquirements, as may benefit yourself, your friends and mankind. And I am led to anticipate an accomplishment of this wish when I consider the manner in which you have hitherto improved such occasions as have offered themselves to you.

The career of life on which you are now entering will present new Scenes and frequent opportunities for the improvement of a mind desirous of obtaining useful knowledge; but I am sure you will never forget, that, without Virtue and without integrity the finest talents of the most brilliant accomplishments can never gain the respect or conciliate the esteem of the truly valuable part of mankind.

Wishing you health happiness and prosperity, in all your laudable undertakings I remain
etc. 51

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Mount Vernon, March 26, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 22d. instant has been received, by which I find you have fixed the commencement of your journey to Kentucky to the 3d of next month. Although some passages in your letter lead me to conclude that mine to you of the first of Feby. had got to hand, yet, as you have not

51. The draft is in the writing of George Washington Craik.

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On March 9 Washington left Philadelphia for Mount Vernon. He dined at Chester, lodged at Wilmington, and reached Baltimore on March 12, where he received and answered an address from the mayor and council, which is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

acknowledged the receipt of it, I am left in doubt, and having a press copy thereof by me, I forward duplicate from that.

To the sentiments contained therein, relative to my land on rough Creek, I have nothing to add. I thank you sincerely for your kind congratulations on my return to this place; and with every good wish, in which Mrs. Washington unites for your prosperous journey and safe return; and with best regards for Mrs. Spotswood and the family I am etc.

To REED & FORD

Mount Vernon, March 31, 1796 [1797].

Gentn: The time for transferring to me seventy shares in the Bank of Columbia, agreeably to your obligation dated the 24th of February, having elapsed, I have to request a compliance therewith, which I presume will immediately take place; especially as I received these shares at forty dollars each, to accommodate Genl. Lee in a payment which he was to have made to me, when the same may be bought for 33 dollars Cash.

Your early attention to this business and immediate answer to this will oblige Gentn. Yr. etc. 56

56. The draft is in the writing of Tobias Lear, who has inadvertently dated it 1796.

To HENRY LEE

Mount Vernon, April 2, 1797.

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Dear Sir: If this letter should happen to find you in Philadelphia the intention of it is to bring you acquainted with the situation of Messrs. Reed and Ford's engagement to transfer (after the 28th of Mch) Seventy shares in the Bank of Columbia on your Account for my benefit.

On my way home I placed their Obligation in the hands of a Gentleman within the District of Columbia for the purpose of having this Transfer made. The following extract of his letter to me was received on Friday last but not in time to forward it by the Post of next morning, altho I instantly wrote and took the chance, of a letter getting to Messrs. Reed and Ford by the mail, of that day; and now enclosed a duplicate open for your perusal before it is delivered.

Inclosed is Reed and Fords obligation wch you left with me but on Application to one of the Officers in the Bank, to Transfer to you the Shares in question, he informed me it could not be done without a power of Attorney from them to some person in this Town to make the transfer. It is suspected by some persons here they have failed, and today I was told by a Director they had no shares in the Bank of Columbia; Perhaps you may think it advisable to write on immediately that you may secure yourself in this business.

This business you will recollect my, good Sir, was not of my seeking;

that it was not agreeable to me to be paid in that way (because it was the money I wanted) and that it was to accommodate you, under strong assurances that the obligation of Reed and Ford, was as good as the Bank &ca. &ca., that I yielded to the measure. How far this assertion was well founded, may while you are on the spot, be worthy of enquiry, as my confidence in and disposition to oblige you, has involved this result.

I would fain hope that that part of the extract which relates to the *failure* is without foundation; and for the honor of honest men and his dealing, I also hope it will not be found that they have been Selling property to which they had no right and of which they

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were not possessed. At any rate I shall lose what I ought not and what I should not, if the money had been properly paid, for from my unacquaintedness in these matters and from the motives mentioned before, have allowed 40 dollars a share when, at the time and now, the money (If I had been disposed to apply it so) would have procured these Shares, at 33 dollars each by which means in 28 hundred dollars, I sustain a loss of 490, besides losing the Interest on the former sum from the 24th of Feby. until the Transfer is made. I am etc.
59

59. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BARTHOLOMEW DANDRIDGE

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: Mr. Lear informs me that the president 60 has declined, finally to take any part of the furniture in the Green drawing room and that you were requested to have the lustre in the middle of it packed up and sent round to this place.

If the latter should not have taken place before this letter reaches your hands let it be sent to Mrs. Morris, who I beg will receive it as a present; and to whom I will write so soon as you inform of its having happened assigning the reason why it was not done before. Let me know the result of this direction as soon as you can.

I wish you a pleasant passage in which your aunt joins and the full fruition of all your reasonable and proper wishes; being your Sincere friend and affectionate Servt. 61

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

(Private)

Mount Vernon, April 3, 1797.

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Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th. Ultmo. has been duly received, and I thank you for the information given in it: Let me pray you to have the goodness to communicate to me, occasionally, such matters as are interesting, and not contrary to the rules of your official duty to disclose. We get so many details in the Gazettes, and of such different complexions that it is impossible to know what credence to give to any of them.

60. John Adams.

61. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The conduct of the French government is so much beyond calculation, and so unaccountable upon any principle of justice or even of that sort of policy wch. is familiar to plain understanding that I shall not *now* puzzle my brains in attempting to develop their motives to it. 63

We got home without accident, and found the Roads drier, and better than I ever travelled them at that Season of the year. The attentions we met with on our journey were very flattering, and to some whose minds are differently formed from mine would have been highly relished, but I avoided in every instance where I had any previous knowledge of the intention, and cd. by earnest entreaties prevail, all parade, or escorts. Mrs. Washington took a violent cold in Philadelphia, which hangs upon her still but not as bad as it did.

I find myself in the situation, nearly, of a young beginner; for although I have not houses to build (except one, which I must erect for the accommodation and security of my Military, Civil and private Papers which are voluminous, and may be interestg) yet I have not one or scarcely anything else about me that does not require considerable repairs. In a word I am already surrounded by Joiners, Masons, Painters &ca &ca. and such is my anxiety to get out of their hands, that I have scarcely a room to put a friend into or to set in myself, without the Music of hammers, or the odoriferous smell of Paint.

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I will make no apology for putting the enclosed under cover to you.

63. The French Directory refused to receive Pinckney as Minister from the United States. James Monroe had been given a public audience at the end of December, at which the general feeling had been strongly shown. In February, 1797, Pinckney was told by the Directory to leave France. This became known in America the latter part of March.

On April 3 Washington replied to an address from the General Assembly of Rhode Island. This reply is entered in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

If General Lee should have left Philadelphia, let me request the favor of you to open the letter to him and cause the one under *that* cover to be delivered to Messrs. Reed & Ford by a person who you can inform me *certainly has done so*, that I may know to what cause to ascribe (should it happen) any delay in their answer, and add, if you please, whether there be any cause to suspect a failure in these Gentlemen.

You will readily perceive that what is said of them, and what I write to Genl. Lee is of a private nature, and not to be mentioned unless the reports respecting Reed & Ford are facts of notariety. Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis thanks you for your kind remembrance of them and joins in best regards for Mrs. McHenry and yourself with Dear Sir etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To DOCTOR JAMES ANDERSON**

Mount Vernon, April 7, 1797.

Sir: A few days since, through the Channel of our Minister in London, I was favoured with the receipt of your third Volume of Essays relating to Agriculture and Rural Affairs; for which I pray you to accept my best thanks.

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I am once more seated under my own Vine and fig tree, and hope to spend the remainder of my days, which in the ordinary course of things (being in my Sixty sixth year) cannot be many, in peaceful retirement, making political pursuits yield to the more rational amusement of cultivating the Earth.

To do this in the *small* way, I find I shall need a Gardener in October next, the time of the one I now have terminating the 10th of that month and no inclination on my part to employ him any longer. You have not only skilful persons of this profession in Scotland, but generally speaking, they are more orderly and industrious than those of most other nations, and besides the dissimilitude of climate between the Southern and middle parts of Scotland, and the middle States of this Country, is not great. These considerations have induced me to turn my eyes that way; presuming that the emigration of men in that line are not under governmental restraints.

My present manager (Mr. James Anderson, an honest, industrious and judicious Scotchman five years since from the county of Fife) has written to a Mr. Foreman and to a Mr. Harper, (whose places of residences and professions, together with what was formerly his own, are to be found in his memorandum enclosed), to procure, and send me a Gardener. He thinks it is much in the power of Mr. Harper, who according to his account has been several years principal Gardener to Lord Murray, to do this; but I have desired *him* , to request *them* , to consult and advise with you on this Subject before any agreement is entered into, as I shall place more confidence in a Gardener who is approved by you,

than by them alone, without this check. For taking the liberty of requesting this favor of you, and for the trouble it must necessarily give I shall rely on your goodness and usual complaisance for a pardon.

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I would prefer a single man to a married one, but shall not object to the latter if he has no children, or not more than one, or at most two; and his wife would undertake to superintend my Spinners, and if required a Small dairy at the Mansion house (where the Gardens are). The man ought to be a good Kitchen and Nursery Gardener; to have some knowledge of a Green house and hot house, and how to raise things in hot beds. He would have two or three labourers under him, but not placed there with a view to exempt him from manual labour. He would be furnished with a good apartment, convenient to his work, to reside in; and would have an ample allowance of good Provisions with fuel; and if a single man, with his washing also.

My Manager conceives that such a character, with the assurances here given, might be had for twenty guineas pr. Annum: but if he should be mistaken in this, and a well recommended Gardener could be engaged for twenty five guineas a year, I would allow the latter sum and pay his or their passage (as the case may be) provided he (or they) would enter into articles with you (or some other in my behalf) to remain with me three years, four would be still better, without which, that is for a single year only, I would not encounter the expence of the passage, and run the hazard of being left to seek another at the

end of it. Both of us would be placed on surer ground by the longest term; while one, or the other, perhaps both ultimately might be incommoded by the shorter.

You would do me a particular favor by acknowledging the receipt of this letter as soon as convenient after it gets to your hands informing me of the prospect of succeeding, for I shall be without a Gardener in October, and cannot engage one here permanently until I know the result of my application with you. With great esteem etc.

PS. Upon second thoughts, It appears best that the letters of my Manager to Messrs. Foreman 64 and Harper shd pass under cover with this letter open to you that you may know precisely what is requested of them and give your advice accordingly.

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***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, April 10, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 5th. instt. with its enclosures, and also one of prior date, forwarding (at the request of Doctr. Edwards) a Pamphlet from Sir John Sinclair have come duly to hand. For your kindness in sending these, and particularly for the information given in your letter of the 5th. I feel myself very much obliged.

The conduct of the French Directory towards General Pinckney is I believe, unexampled, of course has baffled all calculation: how far it has come *up to* , or *exceeded* the expecta

64. The following memorandum, in the writing of Washington, is in the possession of E. Francis Riggs, of Hyattsville, Md.: "Mr. James Anderson, to Mr. Jno. Foreman dated 7th. April. 1797. To cause Mr. Richmond, or any other Nursery man of character to put up 20,000 Thorns of 4 yrs. old; one half; and the other half of 3 years old; closely packed in Boxes with fog and some little earth. Also to have gathered 12 firlots of the best kind of Haws from the real white thorn. 3 plows Invented and made by James Small. All to be sent to London to the care of on whom draw for the amount of cost. Also a Gardener who understands the Nursery, Kitchen and flower Garden; and who understands the Hot and Green house, and raising early things under glasses."

tion of their partisans *among* us remains to be developed, and the approaching Session of Congress will make the discovery. The good humour, and friendly disposition of the Dey of Algiers, arc pleasing circumstances; and if of duration, would be very fortunate ones for the Commerce of these United States. My compliments. (in wch. Mrs. Washington unites) are offered to Mrs. Pickering and the family, and with sincerity and truth I am etc.

P.S. The Buckles 67 of which you make mention are from Colo. Humphreys to me.

To GUSTAVUS SCOTT

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Mount Vernon, April 22, 1797.

Dear Sir: I should not have taken the liberty of giving you the trouble wch the enclosures must occasion but for the request of Genl. Lee who left this yesterday and is implicated in the business to which they relate.

Messrs. Reed & Fords obligation, paid me by Genl. Lee to discharge in part a debt he owed me, the letter of the latter with Mr. Lingans note (all of which are enclosed) will be sufficient I presume, to enable you to obtain the transfer promised by Messrs. Lingan & Smith of 41 Shares; but it may not be amiss notwithstanding to add that as there seems to be delay and difficulty on the part of Messrs. Reed & Ford in a matter where in my opinion none ought to exist; it excite suspicions not very favourable for those Gentlemen, which makes me anxious to know what I have to depend upon, especially as I requested them immediately after the 28th of March to fulfil their Obligation without even having reed. an acknowledgment of my letter except in a verbal message (which I did

67. A pair of knee buckles and a pair of shoe buckles; but no further description is given.

not understand,) through Genl. Lee; I will not however add more on this Subject at present, than to beg the favor of hearing from you relative to the transfer of the 41 Shares. With great Esteem and regard I am etc. 70

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, April 28, 1797.

Dear Sir: Owing to my not sending to the Post Office in Alexandria with the regularity I used to do whilst I was in exercise of Public duties I did not receive your favor of the 21st. instr. until yesterday. Nor have I before, acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 11th which also came safe.

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Not expecting to have much business to transact in Philadelphia I appointed no Agent there; and if Colo. Shreve would do as he ought, it would give me, and others, less trouble than is occasioned by his drib'ling payments. He was to pay for the lands purchased of me (after the first advance) by Instalments; one of which becomes due the first day of June next and by his obligation the money was to have been paid into the Bank of Pennsylvania not expecting any part before I had made no arrangements. therefor, and I see nothing better under the circumstances you have mentd. than for the Jersey man to pay the money into that Bank and send me the evidence of it, as I expect on that day, a payment at the same place by Colo. Ritchie to whom I sold other land.

As the Jersey man may be, as I

70. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

certainly am, unacquainted with Bank transactions your advice in the matter might do both of us a kindness. and information given to me relative thereto would much oblige Dear Sir
Your etc.

PS. Colo. Biddie used to do all my business in Phila. after the War, until my residence at the Seat of Government rendered it unnecessary; and this he did much to my satisfaction. If he is free from the embarrassments under which he laboured sometime ago and safe I should be glad to employ him again. Will you be so good as to inform me, in confidence, how this matter is with him.

***To MARY WHITE MORRIS 72**

Mount Vernon, May 1, 1797.

My dear Madam: The lustre which stood suspended in our large Drawing Room in Philadelphia, I pray you to accept from Mrs. Washington and me, as a small testimony of our Affectionate regard for you, Mr. Morris and family.

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To bring it from Philadelphia, and then to send it back, carries with it an appearance so singular, as to require explanation, the following will give it tho' it may be uninteresting and tedious to receive.

It was intimated to me, that if the President took the house in wch I lived that he would (in case I was disposed to part with it) be glad to take the furniture of the two large Rooms also. Part of both I had intended to sell; the residue, in my own mind I had designated for other purposes; but to cull the best, and offer him the rest would I conceived be indelicate and therefore with the exception of the Pictures, all of which were fancy pieces of my own choosing, I made a tender of the whole; at such reduced prices as he, or any other, should adjudge them to be the worse for ware. The expectation of his taking them, and the pressure of many matters previous to my departure caused me to leave the City without giving any precise directions relative to the disposition of the furniture of these Rooms beyond the offer that had been made of them to the President; of course, when in the last moment, he declined taking them, it rested on the judgment of Mr. Lear and Mr. Dandridge to dispose of them in the manner they conceived best; and the

72. Mrs. Robert Morris, sister of Bishop William White.

lustre was accordingly packed up to be sent to this place.

The moment the acct. of it reached me, I wrote to Mr. Dandridge to stop the shipment, and to send it to your house as the harbinger of this letter; but the Vessel, unluckily had sailed a day or two before the order reached him. I hope however, from the external appearance of the Package (for I have not opened it) it will be received without damage.

Mrs. Washington unites with me in every good wish for you, Mr. Morris and the family; and we beg to be presented in respectful terms to Doer. White and his family. Nelly Custis and her brother are in the Federal City, or they would, I am sure, join us cordially in offering

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their best regards. With sentiments of the most perfect esteem and attachment, I have the honor etc.

PS. The Case with the Lustre will go round by Captn. Elwood, who is, I am informed, now in the Port of Alexa. 73

***To DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER**

Mount Vernon, May [June] 7, 1797. 86

Dear Sir: A person by the name of Perry called upon me yesterday the, exchange mentioned in the enclosed letter, and seemed very desirous of effecting it.

I told him that whatever Mr Craik had done, or should do respecting it, I would abide by; or as his return from Congress

73. A photostat of a memorandum in the writing of Washington, dated May 6, 1797, in the *Washington Photostats*, shows the following clothing on that date: "1 Full Suit of Regimentals; 1 Ditto Do half—Ditto; 1 Ditto Do Spanish Cloth; 1 Ditto do Olive colour; 1 Ditto do dark brown; 1 Ditto do lighter Do; 1 Do Do half mourning; 1 Do Do Raven grey; 1 Do Do Black—Velvet, Silk, and Cassimer: 1 full Suit—Velvet; 1 Do Do Uncut Do."

86. The press copy is indorsed by Washington: "should be 7th. June."

must be uncertain as to time, if you were acquainted with the circumstances of this case (which indeed is more than I am) and would take the trouble of acting the part of a mutual friend between us, seeing that the equivalent proposed by him was just, I was equally disposed to leave the matter to your decision; and now take the liberty of repeating it to you, according to the promise I made him, being willing to oblige Mr. Perry if it can be done without injury to myself.

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I thought too, that as you would probably have occasion to see Mr. Dunnington (concerning the rents he owes me) who must be well acquainted with the lands and all the circumstances relative to the proposed exchange that the two things might be accomplished at the sametime, and therefore I had less reluctance in making this request. With esteem etc.

***To GEORGE BALL**

Mount Vernon, May 7, 1797.

Sir: By the Post of friday I received, with no small degree of surprise, your letter dated the 24th. Ulto. with a Post mark on the back dated Lancaster Court house the 29th.

Had not the matter you complain of been discussed and explained, at the time our bargain was closed for the Gloucester Land their might, in appearance, have been more cause for the observations you have been pleased to make than

you have ground for at present. But, in turn, let me observe that there are some views of the subject which seem to have escaped you altogether.

First then I never did, or could, (unless I was so hurried or distracted with business at the time as not to know what I wrote, and have entirely forgot since what I did write) offer the Land to Mr. Fitzhugh with an interest on the Cost of *5 pr Ct* . or the *legal* Interest of Virginia, because I was a resident of a State where the *legal* Interest is 6 pr Ct., and because the Interest of the U. States by which all my money transactions have been regulated in 6 pr Ct. also.

Secondly, for argument sake, admit, that I did, *in explicit terms* offer it to Mr. Fitzhugh for £800 with an interest expressed of 5 pr Ct. from August 1789 until it was conveyed $\frac{1}{4}$ of the money to be paid down, and the other $\frac{3}{4}$ ths in annual instalments, and moreover, that upon his declining to take it, it was tendered to you on the same terms. What followed?

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Did I not inform you upon your applying to me on this business that I should certainly be at home by the 20th. of March when the bargain might be completed? Did you not promise to be there by that time? Yes. Did you come? No. Did you not then write me that you would certainly be here by the first of April, hoping I would not dispose of the land to another? Did you come at that time? No. Does the latter, under the circumstances of your own failures, prove that you thought me bound by the offer I had made? was it reasonable that I should be tied and you left at liberty to come at this, or that

time, or not at all as it might suit your convenience? I am mistaken indeed in my principles of justice and ideas of propriety, if I was not as much at liberty the day you came here to make a new bargain for the land as I was to offer it in the first instance; having however settled the terms in my own mind I was not disposed to take any advantage of your then seeming solicitude to avail yourself of the purchase.

But, thirdly, I will go further, and for argument sake, put all these matters aside, and then ask, how far *you* have acted up to what I had a right to expect from the purchaser, according to *your* own ideas of the proffer made to Mr. Fitzhugh? £800 with an interest of 5 pr Ct. from August 1789 until April 1797 would have amounted to about £1150. the fourth of which wd. have exceeded £287. How much of this did you Pay me? the receipt will answer £197.

There is a strong insinuation in your letter, though you scorn to take advantage of it, you add, that I have brought myself under the lash of the Law. If you think so Sir, and feel the least disposed to inflict the penalty, spare me not, try it. I believe you would soon be convinced that there is a material difference between fixing a price on land for Sale wch may be purchased or not and receiving an interest of 6 pr Ct. on a Bond, or other debts which is due and must be pd. I had resolved in my own mind (and if I am not mistaken I told you so) that if I parted with the land at all, I would have the sum I paid for it with an interest of 6 pr Ct. as compensation for lying out of my money (more than 8 years) and for some incidental expenses which

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have been incurred. When then a Gentleman at the distance of 2 or 300 [miles] applied by letter to know if I would sell, and on what terms; and when I knew that this way of transacting the business might be attended with delay I conceived the most eligible mode to place both parties on a certainty was to declare what it cost and that I expected interest until it was paid. To have named a gross sum would if the bargain had been long in negotiation, have defeated my own views, or if interest thereon at the close was added it might have been considered as an imposition by the purchaser. How, in the name of common sense, a case of this sort could be brought under the Statute of Usury is beyond my comprehension.

All this however, is to shew that I have acted no unfair or inconsistent part in this business, and to convince you more fully of this, if you do not like the terms of Sale, return me my receipt on, or before the first day of June next (which is allowing you ample time, as you have yourself informed me where you will expect my answer which goes by the first Post after your letter was recd.) and your money shall be returned, and an end put to any further difficulty on the subject. I am etc. 74

***To THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY**

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1797.

Dear Sir: I thank you for the information contained in your letter of the 19th. Ulto; and infer from it, with pleasure, that you must be better, if not quite recovered of the indisposition of which you complained, by your being enabled to write.

74. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

To know this however would give me satisfaction, as I entertain an affectionate regard for you.

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Various conjectures have been formed relatively to the causes which have induced the President to convene the Congress at this season of the year; among others, that of laying an embargo, is supposed by *some* to be in contemplation: whether with, or without foundation, you who are acting on the great theatre have the best means of judging. For myself, having turned aside from the broad walks of political, into the narrow paths of private life I shall leave it with those whose duty it is, to consider subjects of this sort; and (as every good citizen ought to do) conform to whatsoever the ruling Powers shall decide. To make, and sell a little flour annually; to repair houses (going fast to ruin), to build one for the security of my Papers of a public nature, and to amuse myself in Agricultural and rural pursuits will constitute employment for the few years I have to remain on this terrestrial Globe. If to these I could now and then meet the friends I esteem, it would fill the measure and add zest to my enjoyments but if ever this happens it must be under my own Vine and Fig tree as I do not think it probable that I shall go beyond the radius of 20 miles from them.

To detail matters of private concern, would be as improper as it would be uninteresting; and therefore, upon the principle I have adopted, it will never be in my power to make adequate returns for your kind communications; which I wish may be continued when you are at

leisure, and at liberty; for there is so little dependence on Newspaper publications which take whatever complexion the Editors please to give them, that persons at a distance, and who have no other means of information, are oftentimes at a loss to form an opinion on the most important occurrences. Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis unite with me in cordial remembrance of Mrs Wolcott and yourself and with much sincerity I remain Affectly yours.

To REED & FORD

Mount Vernon, May 19, 1797.

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Gentn: Your letter of the 20th Ulto. came duly to hand and through the medium of a friend in George Town to whom I sent it and who made application to Mr. Walter Smith for the fulfilment of your obligation, I have obtained the following result.

“I have seen Mr. Smith and had conversation with him respecting Messrs. Reed & Ford and the probability of their producing the residue of the shares due to you. They intimate in their correspondence no idea of obtaining them any other way than by their funds in this place, due 11 or 12 months hence. How far their earlier necessities may compel them to part with these I know not; but Merchantile men who depend upon such distant resources for immediate purchases, cannot I think be much in cash; or they have no just ideas of Merchantile punctuality.”

Let me hope Gentn. that the

case is otherwise, in a word let me find that you do not mean to trifle with me in this business. I had no Idea that I was buying Shares in the Bank of Columbia (contrary too to my wishes) of which you were not possessed, I have as I informed you in my former letter, sustained a loss by receiving these Shares ni payment of 490 Dollars, in the receipt of 2800, for the 70 Shares you obligated yourself to transfer, a greater, I cannot submit to willingly, nor to the withholding of the remaining 29 Shares any longer.

Yours Ansr. as soon as convenient letting me know in decisive terms what I am to expect will oblige Gentn. Your etc. 76

***To WILLIAM HEATH**

Mount Vernon, May 20, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your kind and friendly letter of the 17th. Ulto. has been duly received and I beg you to accept my sincere thanks for the affectionate sentiments you have been pleas'd to express for me, therein.

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I can assure you, Sir, I never ascribed a motive to the letter you wrote me, on my Election to the Chair of Government, so unworthy of you as to suppose it was written with a view of "Pressing yourself into notice, or seeking for a Place." On the contrary, I was led to believe that domestic enjoyments in rural pursuits, had more charms for you, and were more congenial to your inclination, than any appoint

76. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

ment that would draw you from home.

I hope, as you do, that, notwithstanding our Political horizon is much overcast, the wisdom, temper and firmness of the Government (supported by the great mass of the People) will dispel the threatenng clouds, and that all will end without any shedding of Blood. To me, [this is so demonstrable that not a particle of doubt would dwell on my mind relative thereto if our Citizens would advocate their own cause instead of that of any other Nation under the Sun; that is instead of being Frenchmen, or Englishmen, in Politics, they would be Americans; indignant at every attempt of either, or any other power to establish an influence in our Councils, or that should presume to sow the seeds of distrust or disunion among ourselves. No policy, in my opinion, can be more clearly demonstrated, than that we should do justice to *all* but have no political connexions with *any* of the European Powers, beyond those which result from and serve to regulate our Commerce with them. Our own experience (if it has not already had this effect) will soon convince us that *disinterested* favours, or friendship from any Nation whatever, is too novel to be calculated on; and there will always be found a wide difference between the words and actions of any of them.

It gives me great pleasure to hear from yourself, that you are writing *Memoirs 77* of those transactions which passed under your notice during the Revolution war. Having always understood, that you were exact and copious

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77. Heath's *Memoirs* were first published in Boston in 1798. They have been republished several times.

in noting occurrences at the time they happened, a work of this kind will, from the candour and ability with which I am persuaded they were taken, be uncommonly correct and interesting. Whether you mean to publish them at your own expence, or by Subscription, is not intimated in yr. letter. If the latter, I pray you to consider me as a subscriber. and in any event as a purchaser of your production. That you may enjoy health to complete the work to your entire satisfaction, I devoutly pray, and that you may live afterwards to hear it applauded (as I doubt not it will be) I as sincerely wish. If I should live to see it published, I shall read it with great avidity. Retired from noise myself, and the responsibility attached to public employment my hours will glide smoothly on. My best wishes however for the prosperity of our country will always have the first place in my affections, while to repair buildings (gone much to ruin) and to cultivate my farms (which require close attention) will occupy the few years (perhaps days) I may be a sojourner here, as I am now in the Sixty sixth year of my peregrination through life.] Mrs. Washington is very thankful for your kind remembrance of her, and joins cordially with me in a tender of best regards for you. With assurances of great esteem etc. 78

78. From a facsimile (partial) in Thomas F. Madigan's *Word Shadows of the Great* (New York: 1930). The portion in brackets is supplied from the autograph draft in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THOMAS PINCKNEY**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1797.

My dear Sir: I rely more upon your goodness than upon any excuse I can make, for not having given an earlier acknowledgment to the receipt of your obliging letters of the 10th. of January and 12th. of Feby.

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The truth is, they were rather long on their passage; but a more weighty reason than this is, they arrived towards the closing scenes of my public life, when every moment of my time was occupied either in the discharge of official duties, or in preparing for the change which was about to take place; and for these causes, were laid aside, under an idea that when I got seated under my Vine and Fig tree, I should have little else to do than to discharge all my obligations of an epistolary nature. But so far otherwise has the case been, that upon examining the state of my buildings, and other matters of private concern, which had only been transiently viewed for the eight years preceding, I found so much occasion to attend to workmen of different descriptions, and to such other diversified employments, as that at no period have I been more engaged than in the two months I have been at home.

This account is due to friendship, and to that respect which I have always entertained for your character.

Now let me congratulate you, my dear Sir, on your safe return to your native Country and friends, after the important

services you have rendered to the former; and to thank you, as I most cordially do, for the favourable sentiments which you have been pleased to express for me, and of my public conduct. The approbation you have given of the latter, be assured, is highly pleasing to me. To receive testimonies of this kind from the good and virtuous, more especially from those who are competent to judge, and have had the means of judging from the best sources of information, stamps a value which renders them peculiarly grateful to one's sensibility.

It remains to be seen whether our country will stand upon Independent ground, or be directed in its political concerns by any other Nation. A little time will shew who are its true friends, or what is synonymous, who are true Americans; those who are stimulating a foreign nation to unfriendly acts, repugnant to our rights and dignity, and advocating all

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its measures, or those whose only aim has been to maintain a strict Neutrality, to keep the United States out of the vortex of European Politics, and to preserve them in Peace.

The Presidents Speech 81 will, I conceive, draw forth mediately or immediately, an expression of the Public mind; and as it is the right of the People that this should be carried into effect, their sentiments *ought* to be unequivocally known, that the principles on which the government has acted, and which from the Presidents Speech, are likely to be continued, may either be changed, or the opposition that is endeavouring to embarrass every

81. Made to Congress on convening the special session, May 16, 1797, to consider the affairs with France.

measure of the Executive, may meet effectual discountenance. Things cannot, ought not to remain any longer in their present disagreeable state. Nor should the idea that the Government and the People have different views, be suffered any longer to prevail, at home or abroad; for it is not only injurious to us, but disgraceful also, that a government constituted as ours is, should be Administered contrary to their Interest and will, if the fact be so.

But, as I did not begin this letter with an intention of running into any political disquisition, I will stop where I am, and only add, that with sincere and affectionate regard I am &c.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1797.

Dear Sir: The business I shall have to transact in Philadelphia will, more than probable, be of so pidling and trifling a nature as to produce more trouble, than profit from the Commission, to whomsoever undertakes it.

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Notwithstanding (this being premised) as it has always been done by you, while I was not myself in Philadelphia as a *Resident* I could not think of applying to another without first enquiring whether it would be agreeable to you to engage in it on the usual terms, or not.

If you answer in the affirmative,

the first thing I should require of you would be to receive the Interest of my certificates at the Treasury, or Bank of the United States, amounting to about one hundred dollars pr. quarter; one of which became due the 31st of Mar: last, and the rest will be so in succession: and (as I am not acquainted with the form) that you would send a Power of Attorney for me to execute, thereby enabling you to do this. From this fund I would then ask you to send the things mentioned in the enclosed Memorandum. I am etc.

SUNDRIES TO BE SENT TO WASHINGTON BY COLO. BIDDLE

19 Gilded frames for Pictures (which I have by me) of the following dimensions, viz:

1. 14½ by 16½ Inches In the clear, that is to shew so much of the Picture within the frame

10. 15 by 19 Do

3. 22 by 18

1. 24 — 18

2. 24 — 20

2. 30 — 18

—

19 in all

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19 Glasses (one to each frame) suited thereto. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that these glasses must be as much larger as the rabbit is, into which they are to go to, to answer. A quantity of Paper of a proper size and sort to cover the backs of the Pictures when (with the glasses) they are in the frames.

I do not want high price frames. Such as wd. cost from 3 to 5/. Pensa. Curry. a foot runng. measure will answer my purpose.

Morse's Gazetteer of America, if published. Smiths 82 comparative view of the Constitutions. Unguent Dalamere—4 dollars worth pr. Memm.

To THE SECRETARY OF WAR

Mount Vernon, May 29, 1797.

Dear Sir: I am indebted to you for several unacknowledged letters; but ne'er mind that; go on as if you had them. You are at the source of information, and can find many things to relate; while I have nothing to say, that could either inform or amuse a Secretary of War in Philadelphia.

I might tell him that I begin my diurnal course with the Sun; that if my hirelings are not in their places at that time I send them messages expressive of my sorrow for their indisposition; then having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further; and the more they are probed, the deeper I find the wounds are which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after seven O'clock, about the time I presume you are taking leave of Mrs. McHenry) is ready. This over, I mount my horse and ride round my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner; at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces; come, as they say, out of respect to me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer

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82. William Loughton Smith. His *Comparative View, etc.*, was published in 1796.

as well? and how different this, from having a few social friends at a cheerful board? The usual time of sitting at Table; a walk, and Tea, brings me within the dawn of Candlelight; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve, that, as soon as the glimmering taper, supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing Table and acknowledge the letters I have received; but when the lights are brought, I feel tired, and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as well: the next comes and with it the same causes for postponement, and effect, and so on.

This will account for *your* letter remaining so long unacknowledged; and having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year; and I am persuaded you will not require a second edition of it: but it may strike you, that in this detail no mention is made of any portion of time allotted for reading; the remark would be just, for I have not looked into a book since I came home, nor shall I be able to do it until I have discharged my Workmen; probably not before the nights grow longer; when possibly, I may be looking in doomsday book. On the score of the plated ware in your possession I will say something in a future letter. At present I shall only add, that I am always and affectionately yours.

***To THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY**

Mount Vernon, May 29, 1797.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 18th. instant with its enclosures, and thank you for both. The President has, in my opinion, placed matters upon their true ground in his speech to Congress. The crisis calls for an unequivocal expression of the public mind, and the Speech will, mediately, or immediately, bring this about. Things ought not, indeed cannot remain longer in their present State; and it is time the People should be thoroughly acquainted with the political Situation of this Country, and the causes which have produced it, that they may either give active and effectual support to those

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to whom they have entrusted the Administration of the government (if they approve the principles on which they have acted); or sanction the conduct of their opponents, who have endeavoured to bring about a change, by embarrassing all its measures; not even short of foreign means.

We are waiting with no small degree of solicitude for the answer of the House of Representatives, that an opinion may be formed from its complexion, of the temper of *that* body since its renovation.

Thus much for our own affairs, which, maugre the dessolating scenes of Europe, might continue in the most happy, flourishing and prosperous train, if the harmony of the Union was not endangered by the internal disturbers of its Peace. With respect to the Nations of Europe, their situation appears so awful, that nothing

short of Omnipotence can predict the issue, although every humane mind must feel for the miseries they endure. Our course is plain; they who run may read it. Theirs is so bewildered and dark, so entangled and embarrassed, and so obviously under the influence of Intrigue, that one would suppose, if any thing could open the eyes of our misled citizens, the deplorable situation of those people could not fail to accomplish it.

On the first of next month, there ought to be deposited in the Bank of Pennsylv. on my acct, for the land I sold to Colo. Matthew Ritchie, the Sum of 3469 20/100. Dollars; and for other land sold Colo. Israel Shreve £720 Pennsa. Curry. Of the latter sum £200 I presume is actually paid into that Bank, as Colo. Pickering was kind enough to inform me that some Jersey man (who had bought part of the Land from Shreve) was enquiring of him, if I had any Agent in Philada. authorised to receive money; In answer, I requested he might be directed to Deposit the same in the aforementioned Bank.

And now, my good Sir, let me ask, if these sums should be lodged there, agreeably to contract, whether in the course of business you could make it convenient to the Treasury, to receive them at *that* Bank, and give me a draught on the Bank of Alexandria, or on

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the Collector of that Port for the amount thereof? If you answer in the affirmative, let me request the further favour of asking you for the form of such an order on the Bank of Pennsa. as would enable you to effect this Exchange.

With sincere and affecte. regard I am etc.

[C.H.S.]

***To ST. GEORGE TUCKER**

Mount Vernon, May 30, 1797.

Sir: Your favor of the 24th. Ulto, from Winchester, came duly to but presuming you were on a Circuit, I have allowed time for the completion, to offer you my acknowledgment of its receipt.

My Sollicitude for the establishment of a National University in this Country, has been great, and unceasing; but as the Sentiments of the Legislature have not been in unison therewith, I had postponed the further consideration of the subject to a moment of more leizure (than has lately been my lot) to see if I could devise some Plan by which my wishes could be carried into effect.

In this situation your Essay found me, and as every aid, in a measure so interesting and important, will be thankfully received, your thoughts could not fail of being acceptable to Sir, Your, etc. 83

***To THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY**

Mount Vernon, [June] 85 7, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 31st Ulto. enclosing draughts on the Collector of the Port of Alexandria for Three thousand four hundred and sixty nine dollars and 20 cents, came to

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hand by the Post of Monday; and for so convenient and agreeable an accomodation, for the money received by you from Mr. Ross on my account, I pray you to accept my best thanks.

Enclosed is a receipt for the above Sum, with a certificate of its endorsation on the Bond

83. From the original through the kindness of Forest H. Sweet, of Battle Creek, Mich.

85. Misdated by Washington, May.

of Matthew Ritchie Esqr., to be delivered to Mr. Ross; to whom I pray you to present my best respects, and thanks for his Agency in this business.

I must, moreover, ask the favor of Mr. Ross (if there be no in the Bank of Pennsylvania previous to his leaving the City) to inform Colonel Shreve in *decisive terms*, that I cannot submit to his trifling conduct. He has sold a part of the land for nearly double of what he was to give me, and yet, instead of paying me according to the Instalments, he sends the money (always short) by such driblets, and in such manner as to be of no real use to me. I shall be obliged, contrary to my wishes, to put his Judgment Bond in suit, to obtain justice. And this (the Bond I mean) I would transmit to Mr. Ross before the close of the Session, if he should advise the measure. Remember us in the kindest manner to Mrs. Wolcott, and be assured, always, of the esteem and affectionate regard of, Dear Sir Your etc.

[C.H.S.]

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, June 8, 1797.

Dear Sir: Enclosed is the Power of Attorney (you sent me) Executed before, and authenticated by a Notary public in Alexandria.

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Let me requ[est the favor] of you to inform Mr. [Aitkens Cabinet] maker in Chestnut Street, [that no Key] came for the upper part of [the Secreta]ry (writing desk) he sent me[; and that] part of one of

the side Tables [also] wanted a key. Whether it is in hi[s] power now to remedy this neglect, [I] know not; but this omission render[s] each piece of furniture less value[able,] at the same time that it makes t[he] part of the side board (wanting the key) useless as it cannot be opened.

Mrs. Washington presents her Compliments and thanks to Mrs. Biddle for her kind offer, and I am etc. 87

87. The press copy is mutilated and the portions in brackets are supplied from the "Letter Book," in which is also a copy of the power of attorney, dated June 8, appointing Biddle to receive "as well the Interest as the Dividends, which are or shall be payable according to Law on the whole of the funded debt of the United States wch. is or may be stock standing in my Name in the Books of the Treasury of the United States."

***To DOCTOR CHARLES L. CARTER**

Mount Vernon, June 10, 1797.

Dear Sir: By Majr. George Lew[is, I re]ceived your letter of the 2d. ins[tant, toge]ther with two hundred and t[wenty six Dol]lars; being the principal [and Interest] of two hundred dollars l[ent you in the year] 1791.

The latter, that is [the Interest I] return as it was not from p[ecuniary] motives I advanced the money. [If the] loan of that small sum has been [atten]ded with any pecuniary advantag[es] to yourself, my object in lending of [it] will have been fully answered.

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My best respects in which [Mrs.] Washington unites are offered to your good mother, and I am etc. 88

88. The press copy is mutilated. The portions in brackets are supplied from the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

***To GUSTAVUS SCOTT**

Mount Vernon, June 12, 1797.

Dear Sir: Encouraged by you[r former] kindness, I take the liberty of se[nding you] another letter of Messrs. Reed [& Ford] on the subject of the Shares[, due from them] to me, in the Bank of Co[lumbia; and to re]quest the favour of you to [enquire of Mr.] Smith, or at the said Bank, [if any effici]ent measures are in train [for trans]ferring the remaining twenty n[ine shares] to me agreeably to their obligation.

Your information on this head when you are at leizure will much oblige, Dear Sir, Your etc. 92

To THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mount Vernon, June 12, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 6th instant came by the last post; and find by my unacknowledged letters, that I am undebted to you also for your letters of the 27th Apl. and 16th. Ult.

For the mellon and other seeds you were so obliging as to send me I thank you; and when the Barbary wheat is recd. much attention shall be given to the cultivation of it. The buckles sent by Colo. Humphreys, were delivered safe by Mrs. Harrison; and in a little time I shall take the liberty of committing to your care, to be forwarded to Europe, a few letters in Ansr. to those, you have had the goodness to send me, under your Covers; The

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paper herewith sent, I now request the favor of you to present, with my best respects to the President of

92. The press copy is mutilated. The portions in brackets are supplied from the "Letter Book."

the United States. it belongs to the files of his Office; and is the Original. of what you put the seal of your Office to; at my request, since I left Philadelphia.

I had some *hopes* that the late conduct of our great and magnanimous Allies, 89 would have produced but one sentiment in the Representatives of the people I could not be otherwise than disappointed therefore (in a degree, for there are some, I fear who under all Circumstances, are resolved to support their measures) at the opposition by so great a minority to the Reported Address. 90 But so it has been; and, so it will be, whilst men are actuated by different motives and views. It is to be hoped notwithstanding, that even those who are so tenacious of the honor, dignity and Interest of our good friends, will not be averse from guarding against their enmity by the Adoption of such means as will enable the Executive to defend the Country, against a continuation of the Outrages it has sustained on our Commerce. This being the most effective if not the only means to obtain their friendship, or forbearance. If Justice is lacking we ought to render it. On the other hand let our rights be claimed, and maintain'd with a dignified firmness. No *just offence* can be taken at this, by France whilst it must be approved by all the rest of the World. Mrs. Washington joins me in best regards to Mrs. Pickering and yourself, and with very Great Esteem etc. 91

89. France.

90. Of President Adams to Congress, on the condition of affairs with France.

91. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

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***To GUSTAVUS SCOTT**

Mount Vernon, June 19, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of th[e 16th. Inst.] enclosing the letter of Mr. Walt[er Smith,] to you has been received. [If Messrs. Reed] and Ford trifle much lo[n]ger with me,] in the transfer of the [deficient shares,] their conduct shall [be exposed in the light] it deserves.

Nothing I more [wish than to] improve the Breed of my Ca[ttle and Sheep;] and to effect the former, had [caused en]quiry to be made of Mr. Gough [if he had] any young Bulls (of his English [breed]) for Sale: the result was, that he ha[d] only one (except calves) of about eight [months] old; for wch. he asked 200 dollars. Thinking this high, for one so young, [I have] authorised Mr. Peter to buy Mr. Thre[lkalds] at £75, as he is of sufficient age.

I thank you for your i[n]timati]on to Colo. Lloyd (and since to his s[on] of what you] supposed my wishes we[r]e; but not] knowing on what terms th[ey proposed to] supply me, I am at a los[s for the prelimi]nary steps on my part. If these Gen[tle]men intended the Calf as a present [wch.] costs my feelings more, always th[an any] sum would do my purse; writ[ing to Colo.] Ramsay (whom I should prefer [to the other] Gentleman you have named) [wou'd have] the appearance of a sti[mula, which I] should wish to avoid: [And on the other] hand, if I am to poss[ess him as a Common] purchaser, I should li[ke to know before]hand what sum I am to [pay. If you can] give me further inform[ation on this] head it would oblige, Dear Sir Your etc. 94

94. The press copy is mutilated. The portions in brackets are supplied from the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

To REVEREND JEDIDIAH MORSE

Mount Vernon, June 20, 1797.

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Dear Sir: The last Eastern mail brought me your favor of the 8th Inst., accompanied by a Copy of the American Gazetteer; for the latter I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments, and the assurance of my belief that it will be found a most useful and valuable work; as evidence of this belief, I had just before the receipt of your letter, requested my Correspondent in Philadelphia (where I found they were to be had) to send me a copy. and for the kind and flattering Sentiments which you have expressed for me and Mrs. Washington in the former, I offer you my grateful thanks, being with much Esteem etc. 95

To GUILLAUME MATHIEU, COMTE DUMAS 96

Mount Vernon, June 24, 1797.

Sir: Through the medium of General Pinckney I was honoured with your letter, of the 24th. of January accompanying your Pamphlet on the military and Political situation of France. for both I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments and thanks. That you should have given me a place in your remembrance is equally flattering, and grateful to my feelings; as I could not but Esteem you while I had an opportunity of being acquainted with your merits in our Revolutionary War.

For want of a Competent knowledge

95. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

96. He had been aide-de-camp to Rochambeau in America.

of the French language, I cannot, in reading your Treatise, on the above Subjects, do complete justice to the sentiments it Contains; but I know enough to be persuaded of its merits, and to wish that they may contribute to the restoration of that peace and harmony whatever the motives may be for carrying on the War, which is so congenial to the feelings of humanity.

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That it may (if not sooner accomplished) be the means of restoring our mutual friend Fayette, and his family to their liberty, health and the confidence of their Country, is my ardent wish; as it also is, that all his friends would exert themselves to effect it: the first if no more. His Son (with a Mr. Frestel who appears to have been his Mentor) are, and have been residents in my family since their arrival in this Country, except in the first moments of it, and a modest sensible and well disposed Youth he is.

I am very glad to hear, that my old friend and acquaintance Genl. Rochambeau is alive and in the enjoyment of Tolerable good health. It is some years since I had the honor to receive a letter from him; but, if it shou'd fall in your way at any time to recall me to his remembrance, by the presentation of my best regards to him, which I pray you to accept also yourself it would oblige me.

This letter will be presented to you by Genl. Marshall, one of our compatriots in the American war, and now a joint Envoy wth.

Genl. Pinckney and Mr. Gerry, (all of whom I beg leave to introduce to your acquaintance as men of honor and worth) appointed for the purpose of adjusting the difference which exist unfortunately, between our two Nations; which no man more sincerely regrets than I do, or who more devoutly wishes to have them accommodated upon principles of Equity and justice. I have the honor &c. 97

***To GUSTAVUS SCOTT**

Mount Vernon, June 24, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favor of 22d. Inst. was received by the Post of last night, and by Mondays Mail I will request the favour of Colo. Ramsay to receive, and notify me, of the arrival of any Calf Mr. Lloyd may be so good as to forward to Baltimore, on my Account.

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By the last letter of Reed and Ford, to me, I had an assurance, that under *any circumstance* the deficient shares should be transferred by *this* time; if then, before you set out for Philadelphia it should be convenient for you to know whether they have taken effectual measures for this purpose, it would oblige me. If this is done, the matter, as it respects them, will be closed; on the contrary, if you will be so good while in Philadelphia to let those Gentlemen know that their obligation is in your hands and that I can not let the matter rest upon the event of their buying the shares under the Market price, and that

97. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

I must do myself justice if they will not, it would add to the obligations you have already conferred on me in this business. With great esteem etc.

***To CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY**

Mount Vernon, June 24, 1797.

My dear Sir: To learn from your favor of the 25th of January that you were well, gave me singular pleasure; but as I had left Philadelphia before your letters dated in Paris had been received at the Secretary of States Office, and not having seen Mr. Horry 98 yet, I have only such accounts as have been given to the Public, of the treatment you met with from the French Directory. So extraordinary indeed it is, as to require no comment; nor shall I add any thing more on the subject than that your conduct on the occasion is universally approved: that it deserves to be so, is my decided opinion.

I had nothing more in view by giving you a genuine copy of the intercepted letter from me to Gouv'r, Morris than to enable you, if a spurious one should be exhibited for insidious purposes, to place the correspondence in its true light. If the matter sleeps, I have no wish to awaken it. Should it, however, be brought before the public, it will *prima faciæ* carry

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along with it the mark of private intercourse; but if the case were otherwise, there is no sentiment expressed, that

98. Peter Horry.

I have a disposition to retract.

I am much obliged to General Dumas for the Pamphlet he had the goodness to send, and for his kind remembrance of me. I recollect him well, as an Officer of high estimation in the French Army, that served in this country, and hope he, and others, friends to the oppressed, and distressed Fayette, will use their exertions to obtain the release of him, and his family, from the ignominious treatment which has been inflicted with so much rigour on the one hand, and borne with so much fortitude on the other.

From the proper Department you will, no doubt, be informed of every matter that is interesting for you, as a public character, to know, and from your friends and connections to the Southward you will I am persuaded, receive all such as concern you as a private one. As for myself I am now seated in the shade of my Vine and Fig tree, and altho' I look with regret on many transactions which do not comport with my ideas, I shall, notwithstanding "view them in the calm lights of mild philosophy", persuaded, if any great crisis should occur, to require it, that the good sense and Spirit of the Major part of the people of this country, will direct them properly.

The occupation of my time, unimportant indeed to all but myself, is not spent in idleness; for an absence of eight years (except short occasional visits which allowed me no leizure to inspect matters accurately) has so deranged my private

concerns, and committed such depredations on my buildings, and all around them, that I have found as much occasion for workmen of various kinds, and as close employment in looking after them as if I had commenced a new establishment altogether.

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This letter will be handed to you by Genl. Marshall, who with Mr. Dana of Massachusetts was appointed joint Envoys with yourself, to try if the differences with France can be amicably adjusted. You will find him well worthy of your friendship and confidence. He is a firm friend, upon true principles to his Country, sensible and discreet.

I pray you to present my best respects to Mrs. and Miss Pinckney, in which Mrs. Washington joins me, and that you would be assured, always, of the sincere esteem and affectionate regard of etc.

***To LOUIS PHILIPPE, COMTE DE SÉGUR**

Mount Vernon, June 24, 1797.

Sir: Apologies at best, are but indifferent things, although at times they are necessary. That is the case with me at present: for having your obliging favor of the 4th of August last to remain so long unacknowledged, it is incumbent on me to assign the reasons for it now.

The truth is, it was long on its passage, and arrived at a time when my official duties engrossed all my attention, to prepare for the Session of Congress which was then about to be held; and which, as was intended, closed the

scene of my political career. That Session being an interesting one, occupied during the whole of it, all my time. Accordingly, matters of private concern were suspended until a moment of more leisure shd. arrive; and this I presumed would certainly happen so soon as I should get seated in retirement: but in this also I found myself mistaken; for an absence of eight years from home (except occasional short visits for a few days) had so deranged my private concerns, and has committed such depredations on my buildings, and every thing around them, that at no period have I been more engaged than in the last three months, to re-establish myself comfortably, under my Vine and Fig tree.

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This apology, Sir, for not having acknowledged the receipt of your letter at an earlier period, is due to your politeness, and to the friendship with which you have been pleased to honour me.

Young La Fayette, to whom your letter was delivered immediately upon the receipt of it, has, together with Mr. Frestal his friend, been living with me since his arrival in this Country, except in the first moments thereof. He is a modest, sensible, and deserving youth; deserving of the parents who gave him being. Much, very much indeed to be regretted, is the rigorous fate they have met with.

Everything in my power, as a private man (and in a public character, I could not commit myself, or rather the government entrusted to me) has been essayed to effect his enlargement, as you possibly may have heard: these endeavours have been warm and unremitting, but hitherto in vain: but I hope, notwithstanding, that a period is

arrived when the joint efforts of Mr. La Fayette's friends will be able to accomplish what neither my wishes, nor exertions have been able to do.

To see, or even to hear that his health is restored, that he is in possession of his liberty, and again enjoying the confidence of his Country, would add pleasure to the days I have to live; and would be grateful to the feelings of humanity, which are deeply wounded in the unjust and rigorous treatment which has been inflicted on him.

I would, before I conclude, take the liberty of introducing to your civility the bearer of this, General Marshall, one of our compatriot in arms in the American Revolution and now joint envoy with General Pinckney and Mr. Dana, for the purpose of adjusting the unhappy differences between your country and mine, and which no man can regret more sincerely than I do. He is a man of great worth, and of the best disposition. With great consideration and respect etc.

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***To RUFUS KING**

Mount Vernon, June 25, 1797.

Dear Sir: I have been honoured with your letters of the 12th. of Novr. of the last, and 6th of Feby. and 26th of April in the present year; and feel myself much obliged by your kind and prompt attention to the publication of the Decree of the High Court of Chancery, of the State of Virginia: 99 the evidence of which you were pleased to forward in the London Gazettes.

As you will have the Political Situation of this country transmitted to you from the proper Department; and, no doubt, will be informed of the causes wch. have produced it, and which create a continual opposition to the Administration, detailed with more accuracy by such of your friends as are at, or near, the fountain of intelligence, than I could do, I shall say but little more on the subject of Politics, than that matters are pretty much in the train you left them; and that it is my firm belief, that *no* occurrence or event of whatsoever kind or nature it may be, will change the sentiments, or (which perhaps would be more correct) the conduct of some characters amongst us. However much to be regretted this is, by those who think differently, yet, having taken my seat in the shade of my Vine and Fig tree, I shall endeavour to view things in the "Calm lights of mild Philosophy." Persuaded that if ever a crisis should arise to call forth the good sense and spirit of the People, no dificiency in either, will be found.

For the interesting details you have had the goodness to communicate in your several letters, I pray you to accept my thanks. It is reported, and with a confidence which gives it a currency, that the preliminaries of Peace between France and Austria are actually signed. For the sake of humanity, I hope it is true, but it is an accom

99. In the Colvill estate matter.

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modation of the differences between the former and Great Britain that is to produce harmony in this Country; for nothing short of that, while there is a Party determined to advocate French measures under *all* circumstances, and to withdraw this country from that strict neutrality which its policy adopted, and the Administration has adhered to, can effect this purpose.

Let me ask the favor of you to present me in respectful terms to Mrs. King, and that you would be assured of the great esteem etc.

PS. The expence of publishing the Decree has not been transmitted; but shall be paid whenever it is made known to.

[N.Y.H.S.]

***To JOHN QUINCY ADAMS**

Mount Vernon, June 25, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 11th of Feb: and a duplicate thereof, have been duly received; and I pray you to accept my best thanks for the trouble you have had in tracing to its origin, the history of the Sword which came to my hands last year, in the manner communicated in a former letter. As it is more than probable you will have left Holland before this letter can be received, I shall give you no further trouble in the affair than merely to inform you that I have never seen, or heard more of Alte than the account given of him in your letter of the above mentioned date.

I am now, as you supposed the case would be when you then wrote, seated under my Vine and Fig-tree; where, while I am permitted to enjoy the shade of it, my vows will be continually offered for the welfare and prosperity of our country; and for the support, ease and honor of the Gentleman to whom the Administration of its concerns are entrusted. I

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have expressed to him my sentiments, and wishes, that you may be induced to continue in the Diplomatic line; and these sentiments and wishes, are the result of the surest conviction of its utility, as it relates to the public interest.

For the kind expressions you have extended to me, and the approbation of those sentiments, I took the liberty of submitting to my countrymen, in my late Valedictory, I have a grateful sense; and thank you for communicating them, and the approbation of good and Virtuous Men, is the most pleasing reward my mind is susceptible of, for any Service it has been in my power to render my Country.

With great truth etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To RICHARD PETERS**

Mount Vernon, June 26, 1797.

Dear Sir: Until last week, I had no suspicion that the Hessian fly was among my Wheat; but upon examination I found there were many. They have come too late, *this year*, however, to do me much damage; but as I view them as the harbingers of those who will visit me next year, I would guard, as far as it may be in my power, against the threatened evil.

Permit me therefore to ask, if from

your own experience, or from that of others on whom you can rely, it is ascertained whether Rye or Barley (winter or Summer) is liable to this calamity? In the country above me, the Wheat, I am informed, is entirely destroyed (in places) by this fly; and from the appearances of them among mine, It is but too probable it would be the case with me next

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year, if I do not substitute other grain in its place. But What grain is the important question. Are Oats affected by these flies?

Where this calamity has not visited the Wheat, the grain is remarkably fine, and the quantity not to be complained of. Present me, if you please, in respectful terms to Mrs. Peters, and add thereto the compliments of Mrs. Washington. With great esteem etc.

P.S. Is there any truth in the observation that the yellow bearded Wheat will resist the injury which the common wheat sustains from the above named fly?

[H.S.P.]

***To DAVID HUMPHREYS**

Mount Vernon, June 26, 1797.

My dear Humphreys: Since I did myself the pleasure of writing to you by Captain O'Brian, I have been favoured with your letters of the first of Jany. and 18th. of Feby. The last in date was the first received; but neither came to hand until long after I had left the chair of Government, and was seated in the shade of my own Vine and Fig-tree.

The testimony of your politeness and friendship to Mrs. Washington and myself, which accompanied the latter, are accepted with the same cordiality and chearfulness with which I am sure they were presented. Presents however, to me, are

of all things the most painful; but when I am so well satisfied of the motives which dictated yours, my scruples are removed; and I receive the Buckles (which are indeed very elegant) as a token of your regard and attachment; and will keep, and wear them occasionally for your sake.

As the Gazettes of this Country are transmitted from the Department of State to all our Diplomatic characters abroad, you will, of course, have perceived that the measure

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advised by you, relative to the disavowal of the forged letters (attempted to be imposed on the public, as written by me in 1776) had been previously adopted; without any of the accompaniments contained in your draught, wch was received long after the publication of it.

I am clearly in sentiment with you, that every man who is in the vigor of life, ought to serve his country, in whatsoever line it requires, and he is fit for; it was not my intention therefore to persuade you to withdraw your Services whilst inclination, and the calls of your country demanded your service. but the desire of a companion in my latter days, in whom I could confide, might have induced me to express myself too strongly on the occasion. The change however, which I presume has 'ere this taken place in your domestic concerns, would of itself, have annihilated every hope of having you as an inmate if the circumstance had been known at the time.

On this event, which I persuade myself will be fortunate and happy for you, I offer my congratula

tions, with all the sincerity and warmth you can desire; and if ever you should bring Mrs. Humphreys 2 to the U. States, no roof will afford her and you a more welcome reception than this, while we are the Inhabitants of it.

To the Department of State, and the Gazettes which will be transmitted from thence, I shall refer you for the political State of our affair,; but in one word I might have added, that nothing short of a general Peace in Europe will produce tranquillity in this country, for reasons which are obvious to every well informed, observant man, among us. I have a confidence, however, in that Providence, which has shielded the U. States from the Evils which have threatened them hitherto: and as I believe the major part of the people of this country are well affected to the Constitution and government of it, I rest satisfied that if ever a crisis should arise to call forth the sense of the Community it will be strong in support of the honor and dignity of the Nation. Therefore, however much I regret

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the opposition which has for its object the embarrassment of the Administration, I shall view things in the "Calm light of mild Philosophy" and endeavour to finish my course in retirement and ease.

An absence from home of eight years, except short occasional visits to it (which allowed no time to investigate or look into the real state of my private concerns) has very much deranged them; and occasioned such depredations upon buildings, and all things around them, as

2. Ann Frances Bulkeley.

to make the expence of repairs almost as great, and the employment of attending to Workmen almost as much, as if I had commenced an entire new establishment.

The Public buildings in the Federal City go on well: one wing of the Capitol (with which Congress might make a very good shift) and the Presidents house, will be covered in this autumn, or to speak more correctly perhaps, the latter is *now* receiving its cover, and the former will be ready for it by that epoch. An elegant bridge is thrown over the Potomack at the little Falls, and the navigation of the River above will be completed, nearly, this season; through which an immensity of Produce must flow to the Shipping Ports thereon.

Alexandria you would scarcely know; so much has it increased since you was there; two entire Streets where Shallops then laded and unladed are extended into the River, and some of the best buildings in the Town erected on them. What were the Commons, are now all inclosed, and many good houses placed on them.

As my circle is *now small* , my information will be, of course, contracted; as Alexandria and the federal City will, probably, be the extent of my perambulations. If you have entered the Matrimonial list, I pray you to present me in respectful terms to your lady, and at all times, and under all circumstances, that you would believe me to be, as I really am, etc. 3

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3. A draft of a letter from Martha Washington to David Humphreys, thanking him for a gold chain, and making personal mention of Mrs. Stuart and others, is in the writing of Washington. This letter is in the *Washington Papers* under date of June 26, 1796.

***To JAMES ROSS**

Mount Vernon, July 2, 1797.

Dear Sir: I have been in continual expectation of hearing that Colo. Shreve had deposited the amount of his second instalment in the Bank of Pennsylvania, agreeably to contract; but as a month has elapsed since it ought to have been done and no account of a payment there, and as it has been usual with him to offer these in driblets, by any body, at any time, and in any manner, regardless of his obligation thereby depriving me of the advantage of counting upon the money at the period when it becomes due which was a principal inducement to the Sale I have enclosed you his Bond with a request that you would put it suit, or take such measures to obtain payment, at his cost as you shall deem expedient. Below is the sums which have actually been recd., of the Instalments. My best respects are presented to Mrs. Ross, and with very great esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY**

Mount Vernon, July 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: Not believing that Congress would adjourn as soon as some expected; and hoping that Colo. Shreve would not lay me under the necessity of putting his Judgment Bond in suit, I have forborne until now, to send it to Mr. Ross for that purpose. But as I believe he is one of that description of men who have very little idea of punctuality; and as my wants require all my resources, I have now forwarded under cover to you: but request that you would be so good before the letter which encloses it is handed to Mr. Ross, to

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enquire at the Bank of Pennsylvania if Shreve, or any one in his behalf, has desposited therein for my use the sum of about two thousand dollars. In case this is done, I pray you to return to me my letter to Mr. Ross. If there be no deposit, then to give, or send it to that Gentleman by a safe conveyance.

By the public Gazettes, two things seem to be certain: Preliminaries between France and Austria of Peace, and a dangerous Crisis in England. A third however is necessary to give tranquillity to this country, and that is *actual* peace, between the latter and France. Whether that would produce harmony is at least problematical, for I am sure the views of some among us would not be promoted by such an event.

The letter for Colo. Biddle I would thank you for sending to him, present me, and the family to Mrs. Wolcott, and be assured always of the esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, July 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: I presume my letter, enclosing the Power of Attorney, had reached your hands before your favor of the 20th Ult. was dispatched, altho' the rect. thereof was not acknowledged; and that the latter has enabled you to draw the interest of my Certificates in the Bank. Presuming on this, the letter to Mr. McAlphan 6 is sent, and open for yr. perusal.

Mr. Morse having sent me his American Gazetteer, superceds the necessity of your purchasing one for me. The Keys sent by Mr. Aikens 7 are returned, being too large, and of course useless to me, although they may be otherwise to him. With esteem etc.

PS when McAlpins acct. is paid be so good as to send it to me.

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6. James McAlpin.

7. Robert Aiken.

***To DAVID HENLEY**

Mount Vernon, July 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 11th Ult. from Knoxville has been duly received, and for the kind and affectionate sentiments expressed therein towards Mrs. Washington and myself, we pray you to accept our best acknowledgements, and an assurance of our esteem and regard for you. Should you ever pass, or repass this road, we should be glad to have an opportunity of repeating them to you in person, at this retreat of ours from the bustling scenes of public life.

The intercepted letter, 4 of which you were at the trouble to send me a copy, *if genuine*, is really an abomination; disgraceful to the Author; and to be regretted, that among us, a man in high trust, and a responsible station, should be found, so debased in his principles as to write it. With respect to the sentiment which relates to me, as late President of the United States, I hold it, as I shall do the Author, if he uttered it, in the most sovereign contempt; but such an attempt as is therein exhibited to poison the minds of the Indians, and destroy the utility and influence of the Agents employed by Government for the express purpose of preserving Peace and harmony with the Indians, and this too for the avowed design of facilitating a Plan which he is unwilling, or ashamed to express; and more than probable from the complexion of the letter, is of an injurious nature to the Country, deserves an epithet

4. Dated Apr. 21, 1797, from William Blount to James Carey, an Indian interpreter. A copy by Henley is in the *Washington Papers*.

which he can be at no loss to apply.

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I hope the original letter, if it carries the marks of genuineness, has been carefully preserved and forwarded to the proper department, that the person guilty of such atrocious conduct may be held to public view in the light he ought to be considered by every honest man, and friend to his Ctry. With great esteem etc. 5

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, July 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: The enclosure, contained in Colo. Henleys letter me (which with the letter itself is forwarded) needs no comment. Had it come to me as a confidential communication, the transmission of it to you might have been attended with some embarrassment; but as it is free from this, I have no hesitation in making the government acquainted with this transaction.

The presumption indeed, and I hope the fact also is, that the letter of which the enclosure is said to be a copy, has been transmitted to your Office, or to the Department of War by Mr. Byers; 8 and if found genuine, will, no doubt have proper attention paid to it; for if such nefarious practices by men in high and responsible stations are suffered to escape without such punishment as the Constitution and Laws of our Country have provided, we may bid adieu to all order, and submit to have the

5. From the "Washington Photostats."

8. James(?) Byers.

wheels of Government clogged in all their movements.

If The original letter has been received at either of the Public Offices, the copy, with Colo. Henleys letter to me may be returned; for having no Amanuensis I could retain no copy

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of them; if it has not, the copy may remain with you, and such use thereof as the case will warrant, may be made of it. With great esteem etc.

***To THE EARL OF BUCHAN**

Mount Vernon, July 4, 1797.

My Lord: Under cover from Mr. Cambbell of New York, about the time of my bidding adieu to the Walks of public life, I had the honour to receive your Lordships letter of the 1st of July 1796 from Kirkhill.

Congress being then near the close of an important Session, many matters of a public, and some of private concern (preparatory to the change which was on the eve of taking place) engrossed so much of my time and attention as to induce me to suspend the acknowledgment of all letters not of a public nature, or requiring immediate answers, under an idea that when I should be fixed in my retreat abundant leizure would be afforded to discharge all my epistolary obligations. In this however I have found myself mistaken, for at no period have I been more closely employed, than within the three months I have been at home, in repairing the ravages

which an eight years absence (except occasional short visits which were inadequate to investigation) have produced on my Farms, buildings, and everything around them.

I have taken the liberty of troubling your Lordship with these details to avoid the imputation of being inattentive to your favours; which I should be unwilling to incur, and ungrateful if I deserved to be so charged.

At the age of 65 I am recommencing my Agricultural pursuits and rural amusements; which at all times have been the most pleasing occupation of my life, and most congenial with my temper, notwithstanding a small porportion of it has been spent in this way.

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I was not sanguine in my hope of obtaining tenants from Great Britain, for my Farms of the estate on which I reside, although the experiment was made. It appeared to me more probable that Capitalists, and such as would answer my purpose would rather become Proprietors than tenants; although the latter, in reality, might prove the best medium to attain the former; experience having shewn, in many instances, that *some* by making precipitate purchases, have made injudicious establishments; while *others*, by holding off too long, have expended their means, when small, before they had decided on the part of the Country, or on the plan to be adopted.

It was my constant endeavour whilst I had the honour to Administer the Govern

ment of these United States, to preserve them in Peace and friendship with all the World. Humanity, interest and policy all combined to dictate the measure; and I have reasons to believe that the Gentleman who has succeeded to the Chair of State will pursue a similar policy; and if to stop the further effusion of human blood; the expenditure of National wealth; and the cries, and distresses of fatherless children and widows made so by the most destructive Sword that has ever been drawn in modern times, are sufficient inducements for returning it to the Scabbard, a general Peace must surely be at hand. Be these things however as they may, as my glass is nearly run, I shall endeavour in the shade of my Vine and Fig tree to view things in the "Calm light of mild Philosophy." With Mrs. Washington's compliments to Lady Buchan to which I beg leave respectfully to add mine, I am etc.

To THE EDITORS OF THE TIMEPIECE 9

Mount Vernon, July 5, 1797.

Gentn.: Declining by public notification to receive any of the Gazettes of United States after the first of March last (unless particularly ordered) I presumed the design of sending the "Time piece"

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9. Published in New York by Philip Freneau and Alexander Menut.

was to discover whether I was inclined to become a Subscriber or not.

Under this persuasion I expected after a laps of sufficient time to ascertain this fact that every succeeding paper would be the last, but as they are still continued, I have to offer you my thanks for those which have been forwarded and to request that no more may be sent; having no disposition to engage in Politics and receiving all the news (foreign and Domestic) from the Gazettes at the Seat of the Government I require nothing more. I am etc. 10

To THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Vernon, July 7, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 1st instant was brought to me by last Post.

The Journals of the 1st. 2d. and 3d Sessions of the first Congress, I have, and no later. These are in folio; one volume of the Senate, and another of the House of Representatives. If no complete set can be had, either in folio or octavo, it would be useless to obtain a copy of what I now possess; but if they are to be continued in the latter, and an entire set could be had of that size, it would be preferred on account of the uniformity.

Please to accompany the copying Press with the account of cost, and the

10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

amt. shall be transmitted in Bank notes.

With great esteem etc.

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[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THOMAS ERSKINE 11**

Mount Vernon, July 7, 1797.

Sir: Your "View of the Causes and consequences of the present War with France," 12 which you was pleased to send to me through the medium of Mr. Bond of Philadelphia, has been duly received; and I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments for this mark of your polite attention, particularly for the exalted compliments which accompanied it.

To have so conducted my steps in the intricate walks of public life and through a long course, as to have met the approbation of my Country and the esteem of good men, is, next to the consciousness of having acted in all things from my best judgment, the highest gratification of which my mind is susceptible; and will, during the remainder of a life which is hastening to an end, and in moments of retirement better adapted to calm reflection than I have hitherto experienced, alleviate pain, and soften any cares wch. are yet to be encountered, though hid from me at present.

For me to express my sentiment with respect to the Administration of the concerns of another government, might incur a charge

11. Member of Parliament.

12. Published in 1797.

of stepping beyond the line of prudence; but the principles of humanity, will justify an avowal of my regret, and I do regret exceedingly, that any causes whatever, should have produced, and continued until this time a war more bloody, more expensive, more calamitous, and more pregnant of events, than modern, or perhaps any other time, can furnish an example. And I most sincerely and devoutly wish that your exertions, and those

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of others having the same object in view, may effect what human nature cries aloud for, a General Peace. I have the honor &c.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, July 7, 1797.

Dear Sir: By the last Post I was favoured with your letter of the 3d. instant and thank you for its enclosure, although, on the same day, I had, myself, transmitd. a copy thereof to the Secretary of State.

I had doubted a while, whether to forward it to your Office or that of State, but finally resolved to send it to the latter, as it seemed, more properly I thought, to belong to that Department.

If the letter (intercepted by Mr. Byers) is a genuine one, and the Gentleman's handwriting is not easily mistaken, or counterfeited, what excuse can a late Governor and present Senator of the U.S., or his friends for him, offer for such Nefarious conduct? The defence must be

13. William Blount.

curious, and will, I have no doubt, be conducted with as much effrontery as art. I hope, notwithstanding, if the fact is proved, that the author will receive all the Punishment which the Constitution and Laws of this Country can inflict and thereafter be held in detestation by all good men. To seek private emolument at the expence of Public Peace, perhaps at the expence of many innocent lives: And to aim a stroke at the reputation of a virtuous character, 14 hazarding his health, probably life, to promote tranquility between the Indians and our frontier Inhabitants; and by destroying his influence, and well earned good name among the former, 'to render him incapable of serving his Country and this forsooth because he may be a stumbling block in the way of a plan which he has in contemplation,

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is a crime of so deep a dye as no epithet can convey an adequate idea of to my mind. A poor wretch stealing the worth of a shilling, possibly to buy bread, would be hung, or confined to hard labour; and here, a plan (at which I can only guess) is on foot to defraud the public of its rights; deprive Citizens perhaps (in its consequences) of their lives; to stigmatise characters; and ultimately to produce War, with all its concomitants, wch. will, more than probable, meet with advocates.

But as you inform me that the matter would be laid before Congress, as on Monday last, I shall wait (with some degree of impatience I confess) to learn the result. 15 Always, I remain &c.

14. Benjamin Hawkins.

15. From Frederick J. Turner's *Documents on the Blount Conspiracy*, 1795–1797, in the *American Historical Review*, X, pp. 274, 574–606, it is stated that the United States Senate expelled Blount, July 8, by a vote of 25 to 1. Impeachment proceedings were initiated in the House, but did not come before the Senate until January, 1799, when they were dismissed. Blount's plan was to seize Florida and Louisiana from Spain and turn them over to Great Britain.

***To CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY**

Mount Vernon, July 8, 1796.

My dear Sir: Sincerely commiseratg. the distresses of the Citizens of Charleston, occasioned by the late unfortunate fires; I take the liberty of offering through you, my mite towards their relief without any desire of having my name mentioned. 63

With affecte. regard I am etc.

***To THE EARL OF RADNOR 16**

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Mount Vernon, July 8, 1797.

My Lord: The sentiments which your Lordship has been pleased to express in your favour of the 19th. of January last) 17 relatively to my public conduct, do me great honour; and I pray you to accept my grateful acknowledgment of the unequivocal evidence it conveys, of the favourable opinion you entertain of the principles by which it was actuated.

For having performed duties, (which I conceive every Country has a right to require of its citizens) I claim no merit; but no man can feel more sensibly the reward of approbation for such services, than I do. Next to the consciousness of having acted faithfully in discharging the several trusts to which I have been called, the thanks of one's country, and the esteem of good men, is the highest gratification my mind is susceptible of.

I am now placed in the shade of my Vine and Fig tree; and at the age of Sixty five,

63. \$300 were inclosed.

16. William Pleydell-Bouverie, third Earl of Radnor.

17. Radnor's letter of Jan. 19, 1797, in the *Washington Papers* , and printed by Sparks as a footnote to this letter, is represented now by a copy in the writing of William B. Sprague.

am re-commencing my Agricultural and Rural pursuits; which were always more congenial to my temper and disposition than the noise and bustle of public employments; notwithstanding so small a portion of my life has been engaged in the former.

I reciprocate with great cordiality the good wishes you have been pleased to bestow on me; and pray devoutly, that we may both witness, and that shortly, the return of Peace; for a more bloody, expensive, and eventful War, is not recorded in modern, if it be found in ancient history. I have the honor etc.

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***To ROBERT GOODLOE HARPER**

Mount Vernon, July 10, 1797.

Dear Sir: By the last Post I was honoured with your “observations on the dispute between the United States and France” 18 and for your polite attention in sending them to me I pray you to accept my best acknowledgments.

Being on the point of celebrating Harvest home, I must be allowed, as a Farmer, to make every other matter yield to the accomplishment thereof; that being over, the Pamphlet, I am persuaded, will be read with edification and pleasure by Dear Sir Your etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

18. Published in 1797. It attracted much attention and went through several editions.

To SAMUEL WASHINGTON 21

Mount Vernon, July 12, 1797.

Dear Sir: I perceive by your letter of the 7th Instant that you are under the same mistake that many others are, in supposing that I have money always at Command.

The case is so much the reverse of it, that I found it expedient before I retired from public life to sell all my Lands (near 5000 Acres) in Pennsylvania in the Counties of Washington and Fayette, and my lands in the Great Dismal Swamp in Virginia, in order to enable me to defray the expences of my station, and to raise money for other purposes.

That these lands might not go at too low a rate (for they sold much below their value) I was induced after receiving prompt payment for part, to allow credit for the remainder, of the purchase money, in obtaining payment of which from two of the purchasers, I find much difficulty; but a third having within these few days paid me an installment of three thousand

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Dollars, I will rather than you should be compelled to sell your land, lend you a third of them, altho' it will be inconvenient for me to do so; and may be the means of retarding my purchase of wheat for my mill: which for want of it, has been very unproductive to me for several years; I might indeed say an expence to me.

It is because you have assured me that misfortunes have brought on your present difficulties (tho' by the by let me observe if you had inspected as you ought, the staking of your wheat more closely, the spoiling thereof might

have been avoided) and because I have heard that you are industrious and sober that I put myself to the inconvenience, of parting with the above sum; for I wou'd not lend it for the purpose to enable you to indulge in any thing that is not strictly œconomical and proper; and I shall add further, that it will be my expectation that the money be immediately applied to the uses for which you have required it, for you may be assured that there is no practice more dangerous than that of borrowing money (instance as proof the case of your father and uncles) for when money can be had in this way, repayment is seldom thought of in time; the interest becomes a moth; exertions to raise it by dint of Industry ceases, it comes easy and is spent freely: and many things indulged in that would never be thought of, if to be purchased by the sweat of the brow. in the mean time the debt is accumulating like a Snow ball in rolling.

I mention these things to you, because your inexperience may not have presented them to your mind; but you may rely on it, that they are indubitable facts, and have proved the ruin of thousands, before suspected. Great speculations and sometimes trade may be benefitted of obtaining money on Interest, but no landed Estate will bear it.

I do not make these observations on account of the money I have purposed to lend you, because all that I shall require is, that you will return the nett Sum when in your power, without Interest. It may and at any rate as it was 22

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21. Son of Washington's brother Charles.

22. From the unfinished copy in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1797.

Sir: Since my last to you, dated in Philadelphia the 6th. of March, I have been honoured with yours and Lord Hawke's joint favour of the 28th of March 1796 introductory of Doctr. Scandalla; who gave me the pleasure of his company in June last, and whom I found a very sensible, and well informed man.

I have also received your seperate favours of the 21st. of February and 29th. of March, in the present year: The last accompanying your printed account of the origin of the Board of Agriculture and its progress for the three years after its establishment. For your kindness in forwarding them, I pray you to accept my best thanks.

I will keep one copy of this Work myself, and shall read it, I am sure with pleasure, so soon as I have passed through my harvest, which is now nearly finished; the other copies shall be put into such

hands as I conceive will turn them to the best account.

Your not having, in either of the letters acknowledged above, mentioned the receipt of two from me dated the 10th. and 11th. of Decr. 1796; the last a private and very long one, fills my mind with apprehension of a miscarriage, altho' I do not see how it should have happened, as they went with several other letters under cover to Mr. King (our Minister in London) who in a letter to me, dated the 6th of February following after giving information of what he had done with my other letters, adds "and as soon as Sir John Sinclair returns to Town I will also deliver the letter addressed to him."

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Was it not for this information I should, by this conveyance, have forwarded a duplicate.

The result of my enquiries of Members of Congress, attending the December Session, varied so little from the details I had the honour to give you concerning the prices of land &ca. in my private letter of the 11th of December as to render a second edition unnecessary. The reduction however, in the price of our produce since last year, (flour having fallen from fifteen to seven or eight dollars a barrel, and other articles in that proportion) may occasion a fall in the price of Lands. A stagnation it has already produced, and I have been told a reduction also, in some of the latter Sales.

Our Crop of Wheat this year from the best information I have been able to obtain, will be found very short, owing to three causes; an uncommon drought last autumn, A severe winter with but little Snow to protect it, and which is still more to be regretted, to what with us is denominated the Hessian fly, which has spread devastation, more or less, in all quarters; nor has the latter wheat escaped the rust. The grain however, except where the rust appeared before it was hard, is extremely fine. We are equally unlucky in our Oats, occasioned by a severe drought since the month of April. With sentiments of high esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To WILLIAM STRICKLAND**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1797.

Sir: I have been honoured with your favours of the 30th. of May and 5th. of September of last year.

As the first was, in part, an answer to a letter I took the liberty of writing to you, and the latter arrived in the middle of an important Session of Congress, wch. became more

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interesting as it drew nearer to its close inasmuch as it was limited by the Constitution to the 3d. of March, and on that day was to give political dissolution to the House of Representatives, a third part of the Senate, and the Chief Magistrate of the United States I postponed from the pressure of business occasioned thereby the acknowledgment of all private letters which did not require immediate answers until I

should be seated under my own Vine and Figtree where I supposed I should have abundant leisure to discharge all my epistolary obligations. In this however I have, hitherto found myself mistaken, for at no period have I been more closely employed in repairing the ravages of an eight years absence (except short occasional visits which allowed no time for that investigation which, since my re-establishment here I have found my buildings, gardens, and every thing appertaining to them so much required.) Engaging workmen of different sorts, providing for, and looking after them together with the necessary attention to my Farms have occupied all my time since I have been at home.

Unimportant as these details must be to you, an apology in my estimation seemed necessary for suffering so interesting a letter as yours of the 5th. of September to remain so long unacknowledged. and I could offer none better than the facts which occasioned it.

I was far from entertaining sanguine hopes of success in my attempt to procure tenants from Great Britain but being desirous of rendering the evening of my life as tranquil and free from care as the nature of things would admit I was willing to make the experiment.

Your observations with respect to Occupiers and Proprietors of Land have great weight, and being congenial with my own ideas on the subject was one reason, though I did not believe it would be so considered, why I offered my Farms to be Let: Instances have occurred, and do occur daily to prove, that capitalists from Europe have injured themselves by precipitate purchases of

free hold estates immediately upon their arrival in this Country, while others have lessened their means in exploring States and places in search of locations; whereas, if on

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advantageous terms they could have been first seated as tenants, they would have had time and opportunities for the propensity to become holders of land themselves should continue for making advantageous purchases. But it is so natural for Man to wish to be the *absolute* Lord and Master of what he holds in occupancy, that his true interest is often made to yield to a false ambition. Among these the emigrants from the New England States may be classed and will account in part for their migration to the Westward. Conviction of these things having left little hope of obtaining such tenants as would answer my purposes, I have had it in contemplation ever since my return home to turn my Farms to Grazing, principally as fast as I can cover the fields sufficiently with Grass, Labour and of course expence will be considerably diminished by this change; the Nett profit as great and my attention less divided; whilst the fields will be improving.

Your Strictures on the Agriculture of this country are but too just, it is indeed Wretched, but a leading if not the primary cause of its being so is, that instead of improving a *little* ground well we attempt much, and do it ill. a half; a third, or even a fourth of what we mangle, well wrought and properly dressed would produce more than the whole under our system (if it deserves that epithet) of management yet, such is

the force of habit that we cannot depart from it. The consequence of which is, that we ruin the lands that are already cleared, and either cut down more wood if we have it, or emigrate into the Western country.

I have endeavoured, both in a public and private character, to encourage the establishment of Boards of Agriculture in this country, but hitherto in vain; and what is still more extraordinary and scarcely to be believed, have endeavoured, ineffectually, to discard the pernicious practice just mentioned from my own estate; but in my absence, pretexts of one kind or another have always been paramount to orders. Since the first establishment of the National Board of Agriculture in Great Britain, I have considered it as one of the most valuable institutions of modern times; and conducted with so much ability

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and zeal as it appears to be under the auspices of Sir John Sinclair, must be productive of great advantages to the Nation, and to mankind in general.

My system of Agriculture is what you have described, and I am persuaded, was I to farm it on a large scale, would be improved by the alteration you have proposed, at the sametime I must observe that I have not found Oats so great an exhauster as they are represented to be. But in my system they follow Wheat too closely to be proper, and the rotation will undergo a change in this, and perhaps in some other respects.

The Vetch of Europe has not succeeded with me; our frosts in winter, and droughts in Summer, are too severe for them. How far the mountain, or wild Pea, would answer as a substitute by cultivation is difficult to decide,

because I believe no trial has been made of them and because their Spontaneous growth is in rich lands only; that they are nutritious in a great degree in their wild State, admits of no doubt.

Spring Barley (such as we grow in this country) has thriven no better with me than Vetches. The result of an experiment made with a little of the true sort, might be interesting. Of the field Peas of England (different kinds) I have more than once tried, but not with encouragement to proceed; for among other discouragements they are perforated by a bug which eats out the Kernal. From the cultivation of the common black eye peas I have more hope and am trying them this year both as a crop, and for plowing in as a manure; but the severe drought under which we labour at present, may render the experiment inconclusive. It has, in a manner, destroyed my Oats and bids fair to do so by my Indian Corn.

The practice of ploughing in Buck Wheat twice in the Season as a fertilizer is not new to me; it is what I have practiced, or I ought to have said rather, attempted to practice the last two or three years; but like most things else, in my absence, it has been so badly executed that is the turning in of the plts. has been so lily timed, as to give no result. I

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am not discouraged however by these failures, for if pulverizing the soil by following, and turning in vegetable Substances for manure are proper preparatives for the Crop that is to follow; there can be no question that a double portion of the latter, without an increase of the ploughing must be highly beneficial. I am in the act of making another experiment of this sort and shall, myself attend to the operation, which

however may again prove abortive from the cause I have mentioned, viz, the drought.

The lightness of our Oats, is attributed more than it ought to be to the unfitness of the climate of the middle States. That this may be the case in part and nearer the Sea board in a greater degree I will not controvert; but it is a well known fact that no country produces better Oats than those that grow on the Alligany Mountains immediately Westward of us. I have heard it affirmed that they weigh upwards of 50 lbs. the Winchester bushel. this may be occasioned by the fertility of the soil and the attraction of moisture by the Mountains, but another reason and a powerful one too, may be assigned for the inferiority of ours, namely that we are not choice in our Seeds and do not change them as we ought.

The Seeds you were so obliging as to give me, shared the same fate that Colo. Wadsworth's did; and as I believe seeds from England generally will do if they are put into the Hold of the Vessel, for this reason I always made it a point whilst I was in the habit of importing Seeds to request my Merchant, and the Masters of Vessels by which they were sent, to keep them from the heat thereof.

You make a distraction, and no doubt a just one, between what in Engld. is called Barley, and Big or Beer; if there be none of the true Barley in this country, it is not for us, without experience, to pronounce upon the growth of it; and therefore, as noticed in a former part of this letter, it might be interesting

to ascertain whether our climate and Soil would produce it to advantage. No doubt, as your observations while you were in the United States, appear to have been extensive and accurate, it did not escape you that both Winter and Spring Barley are cultivated among

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us: the latter is considered as an uncertain crop So. of New York, and I have found it so on my farms: of the latter, I have not made sufficient trial to hazard an opinion of the Success. About Philadelphia it succeeds well.

The Cassia Chamoecrista, or Eastern shore bean as it is denominated here, has obtained a higher reputation than it deserves; and like most things unnaturally puffed, sinks into disrepute. Ten or more years ago, led away by the exaggerated accounts of its fertilizing quality, I was induced to give a very high price for some of the Seed; and attending to the growth in all its Stages, I found that my own fields wch. had been uncultivated for two or three years, abounded with the same Plants, without perceiving any of those advantages which had been attributed to them.

I am not surprised that our mode of fencing should be disgusting to a European eye; happy would it have been for us, if it had appeared so in our own eyes; for no sort of fencing is more expensive or wasteful of timber. I have been endeavouring for years to substitute live fences in place of them, but my long absences from home has in this, as in every thing else frustrated all my plans that required time and particular attention to

effect it. I shall now (although it is too late in the day for me to see the result) begin in good earnest to Ditch and hedge, the latter I am attempting with various things but believe none will be found better than Cedar; although I have several kinds of white thorn growing spontaneously on my own grounds.

Rollers I have been in the constant use of many years; in the way you mention; and find considerable benefit in passing them over my Winter grain in the Spring, as soon as the ground will admit admit a hoof on it. I use them also on Spring grain and grass Seeds after Sowing, and sometimes before, to reduce the clods when the ground is rough. My Clover, generally, is sown with Spring grain, but where the ground is not too stiff and binding, it Succeeds very well on Wheat, sown on a light Snow in February, or beginning of March; It sinks with the Snow, and takes good root. And Orchard grass, of all others, is, in my

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opinion, the best mixture with Clover: it blooms precisely at the same time, rises quick again after cutting, stands thick, yields well, and both horses and Cattle are fond of it, green or in Hay. Alone, unless it is sown very thick it is apt to form tussacks; if of this, or any other Seeds I can procure, you should be in want, I shall have great pleasure in furnishing them.

I should have been very happy in forming an acquaintance with the Gentleman of whom you speak so highly (Mr. Smith of Ross-Hall) but unless he has been introduced on a Public day, and among strangers, unaccompanied by any expression to catch the attention, I have not yet had the pleasure to see him, nor have I heard more of Mr. Parsons than what is mention of him in your letter.

Your sentiments of these Gentlemen, or others, or giving letters of introduction to any of your acquaintance, requires no apology, as I shall always be happy in shewing civility to whomsoever you may recommend.

For the detailed account of your observations on the Husbandry of these United States, and your reflection thereon, I feel myself much obliged; and shall at all times be thankful for any suggestions on Agriculture subjects, you may find leisure and inclination to favour me with, as the remainder of my life (which in the common course of things being now in my 66th. year cannot be of long continuance) will be devoted wholly to rural and Agriculture pursuits.

Mrs. Washington feels the obligation of your polite remembrance of her, and Mr. and Mrs. Law, who went from hence yesterday, have added a daughter to their Stock, and are all in good health. For the trouble you took in going to Hull, to see if any of the emigrants who were on the point of Sailing from thence for America would answer my purposes as tenants, and for your very kind and friendly offer of rendering me Services, I pray you to accept my sincere thanks, and an assurance of the esteem and regard with which I am. 23

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23. From the original through the kindness of George A. Ball, of Muncie, Ind.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, July 21, 1797.

Dear Sir: I again take the liberty of requesting that the letters herewith sent may accompany your dispatches to Mr. King, who I also hope will have the goodness to excuse the trouble I give him in this business, to insure the safety of the dispatches.

I hope I shall not have occasion to give either of you much more trouble in this way, as correspondencies of this sort were not of my seeking, and I have no disposition to keep them up, except with Sir John Sinclair (President of the National Board of Agriculture) on Agricultural Subjects.

One of the last productions of this Gentleman I transmit to you, with a request that if the Plan of establishing a similar Board in these United States should be re-entered upon at the next Session of Congress, you will be kind enough to lay it before the Committee which may be appointed for the purpose of preparing that business. I am etc.

[N.Y,P.L.]

***To RICHARD PETERS**

Mount Vernon, July 23, 1797.

Dear Sir: Receive my thanks for the information given in your letter of the 3d. of July, and for the offer you have obligingly made, of procuring for me, Seed of the Yellow bearded Wheat.

Influenced by the opinion which prevailed some years since that that kind of Wheat would resist the Hession fly I then procured seed of it, and have kept myself in stock ever since,

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to make use of it upon a larger scale, if occasion shd. render it necessary. And so well persuaded as I am that the attack of this insect will be severe next year, I shall reduce considerably, my seeding of Wheat the coming Autumn; and fill the deficiency with rye, principally. Of Wheat, however, I shall sow three kinds: The early, or May Wheat, as it is called here, in a small proportion; and the residue of the Yellow bearded, and a very fine white (also forward) wheat which I obtained last Fall from the Mountains.

Soon after I wrote you last the Rust seized my Wheat straw, and a good deal injured the latter grain. And a severe drought which we have laboured under since April, until this day week, has rendered our Crop of Oats extramely short and rendered our meadows scarcely worth cutting and till *now* , by a second fine rain yesterday, left us little hope of making Indian Corn.

Present me and Mrs. Washington in affectionate terms to Mrs. Peters, and be assured of the sincere esteem, etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

July 28, 1797.

Dear Sir: Mr. King our Minister at the Court of London, to whom I sent the decree of the High Court of Chancery of this State with a request to have it published according to the Direction therein contained "in some public Paper in the Kingdom of Great Britain for two months successively," has caused the same to be inserted agreeably thereto in the London Gazette as may be seen by One herewith enclosed (Several of which has been forwarded to me) And wrote to me as follow on the occasion.

I have had the honor to receive your letter of the 25th August and Doctr. Nicholl whose Advice I have asked has been so obliging as to give me information respecting the

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manner in which the order of the Court of Chancery shd. be published. In a day or two I will procure its insertion in the proper News Paper, Some little attention will be requisite to avoid as far as practicable the great expence which commonly attends this kind of publication. The News Paper containing the notification, shall be transmitted to you agreeably to your directions.

I have thought it expedient to make this Communication to you that any use you shall adjudge proper may be made of it. Always and Sincerely etc. 26

26. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To RUFUS KING**

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1797.

Dear Sir: I did not expect that I should have had occasion to trouble you again relative to my Administration of the Estate of Colo. Thomas Colvill. But the Gentleman who instituted the suit in the Chancery Court of the State, on my behalf informs me that it is indispensable that an affidavit of the Decree's having been published two months successively in an English paper (as appears prima facia to be required) should be returned; and he wishes *much* to possess the same by the next term, in March, early.

Taking it for granted that the Decree has been published two months successively, I presume and hope there can be no difficulty in having it testified by the Editor of the Paper in which it was inserted, and forwarded to me by duplicate.

Excuse me, I pray you, for giving you this trouble; and be assured always of the high esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

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Mount Vernon, July 31, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th Inst. came to hand by last post.

The *demand* of Mr. Monroe is no more than another card played in the same game. 27
The moment I can get at my Papers (for having no convenient Place yet to

27. Lee had written (July 2.4): "Mr. Monroe has lately demanded in a letter to the Secretary of state an explanation of the letter of recall which was sent to him in France." Lee's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

arrange them; they remain in an indigested mass) I will send you a copy of that which you require.

A Lady of my acquaintance (who lives at a distance from hence) being under some apprehension of an approaching cancer, has written several times without obtaining satisfactory information to know if the Nephew of Doctr. Tare (his name I am unacquainted with) still lives in Philadelphia. in what part of the City, and whether his Applications for Cancerous complaints are attended [with the success his Uncles were.

If it is not too much trouble you will oblige me, and in a more especial manner the Lady by solving the foregoing questions. Let the information be the entire subject of a letter, that I may send it with or without your signature to the person, for whose satisfaction it is required.

Several late publications in France, speak a language which it is presumed was not expected by some of its advocates here; And considering the characters from whence it proceeds And the changes which have taken Place in their late Actions, augur something more favorable, than was to be expected from the conduct of the Directory, of that Country. With Great Esteem etc.] 28

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28. From a photostat of the incomplete original in the Chicago Historical Society. The part within brackets is supplied from the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, July 31, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 25th Inst. was received by the last Post.

Mr. Monroe's application, is nothing more than a continuation of the *old* game, in a new form; and as I presume he means to play it with all the advantages that are to be derived from his auxiliaries *here* , I will thank you for the *whole* of what will come before the public, now, or then, according to circumstances.

I would thank you also for forwarding the letter herewith sent by the first conveyance to Mr. King, and the duplicate by some other Vessel.

I hear with much pleasure that the Public sentiment in France towards these U S is not in union with the Directory. It would be to be regretted on every account if it was. Yours etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Mount Vernon, August 4, 1797.

Dear Sir: Agreeably to my promise I have looked among those parcels which I conceived most likely to procure the Paper of which you required a copy, without the desired effect. How to account for it I am at a loss unless Mr. Lear and Mr. Dandridge (whom I employed to separate and Pack up my files) may have left it, with Papers of a similar nature, which I also miss, with those designed for my Successor in Office.

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I have not, nor is it in my

power yet, to open all my packages; because I have no place to put them at this moment in a separate State. When I do this, if I find the opinion you have given, in a certain case, among them a copy of it shall be transmitted to you. With great esteem etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, August 4, 1797.

Dear Sir: In a late letter from the Attorney General (Lee) he has requested a copy of the opinion he gave relative to the recall of Mr. Monroe.

Among the Packages most likely (as I conceived) to produce it, I have searched for the original in vain; nor among these do I find the opinions of the Heads of Departments on various other subjects. How to account for this I am unable, unless the bundle containing them, which I once put into your hds. for a particular purpose was never returned, or left by Mr. Lear and Mr. Dandridge (who were employed in separating and packing up my Papers) put them by mistake among the files which were intended for my Successor in Office.

I have not yet opened all my packages of Papers, nor can I do it until I have provided some place in which they can be deposited with safety; but I pray you to let me know whether the bundle I have alluded to was returned, or not, by you. Your answer may save a further search and some anxiety.¹ With very great esteem &c.

1. Pickering's answer (August 10) stated that he had two bundles of the abovementioned papers; that he would let the Attorney General take a copy of his opinion and then send the papers to Washington. Pickering's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM**

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Mount Vernon, August 6, 1797.

Dear Sir: I am so much your debtor in the epistolary way, that it would upbraid me too severely was I to go into a particular acknowledgment of the receipt of all the letters with which you have honoured me in the course of the last two or three years: and avoiding this accustomed mode, I scarcely know how to begin my letter to you, or what apology to make for so long a silence.

As honesty however (in every transaction of life) is in my estimation, the best policy, I shall frankly declare to you, that soon after I entered upon the duties of my late station, I found that the multiplicity thereof allowed no leisure for the indulgence of private correspondencies; and having made it an invariable rule through life, to discharge every trust I engaged in, in behalf of the public, to the utmost of my judgment and abilities, I did not hesitate long in determining to relinquish the latter. I supposed, too, that when I should quit the arduous duties attached to the Presidency of this Country and return to the walks of private life, that I should have found abundant leisure to discharge all my epistolary obligations; but here also I have, hitherto, been disappointed; for my long absence from home (except in short occasional visits, which allowed no opportunities to look into the state of my personal concerns, and buildings) has so deranged matters which related thereto, and has committed such depredations thereon, as, at

no period have I found closer employment than in the last five months I have been at home, to repair the damages: and this will continue to be the case for sometime to come.

I am now seated in the shade of my own Vine and Fig tree, and shall devote the remainder of a life, nearly worn out to such Agricultural and rural amusements as will afford employment for myself, and cannot, or ought not, to give offence to any one; offering while I am on this Theatre, my sincere vows that the ravages of war, and the turbulence of passions; may yield their sceptors to Peace and tranquillity that the world may enjoy repose.

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Having withdrawn myself from the scenes of political life, Politics will not be the theme for my letters; and having little to relate from the humbler, and placid walks into which I am now entered, that would be interesting or amusing to a person who is engaged in important matters, I shall only add that I have the honor etc.

***To HENRY DORSEY GOUGH**

Mount Vernon, August 13, 1797.

Sir: Having occasion to send a light carriage to Baltimore, I have directed the person (Mr. Jno. Anderson son of my Manager) who has charge of it, to call upon you and get a ram, and two ewe lambs of the Cape (broad tail) Sheep, if you have any to dispose of, and such as you would recommend for breeding.

I want them on account of the Mutton, and if the Ram was of the size and age to serve a score or more ewes this season, it would be desirable. If Mr. Anderson succeeds in his application for these sheep, the cost of them shall be paid to your order on demand. I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1797.

Dear Sir: It is a little out of time, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th ulto, but "better late than never," and one object in doing it, is to pray you to thank Mr. Bordley in my name, for the work he had the goodness to send me, through the channel of your conveyance.

I presume the affair of Mr. Blount will lye dormant until the Committee of Congress make Report at the ensuing Session. It will be to be regretted, *much* , if this business is not

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probed to the bottom. That Government may not sleep or be forgotten in the meantime, I perceive Mr. Monroe has opened a Battery; but if his subsequent fire does no more injury than the first, his Artillery will recoil upon himself.⁶

It had escaped me, until reminded by a re-perusal of some of your first letters, that my Table ornaments and Coolers were in your possession. Not for the value of the thing, but as a token of my friendship and as a remembrancer of it, I ask you, Colonel Pickering,

6. Pickering had written (August 9): "Mr. Monroe has anticipated me in furnishg. you, by his publication in the news-papers, the correspondence between us on the subject of his demanding the reasons of his recall. After such a solemn demand, so zealously maintained, and after such professions of candour, I did not imagine he would have had the folly to avow, as in his last letter, that he in fact wanted no information on this point: proving, what I supposed was his real object at first, that he made the demand *in order to be denied*. I kept a table ready for him in my office during a week, while I expected him to review his correspondence with the department: but he has never called, altho' he stated this as necessary for his information in his intended vindication." Pickering's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

and Mr Wolcott to accept, each one of the two bottle Coolers; I think there are three of them. the other articles I pray you to have carefully packed (the Porcelain in fine Saw dust) and sent to Colo. Biddie, who will be directed what to do with them, and will pay the cost of packing.

What is the character of Porcupine's Gazette? I had thought when I left Philadelphia, of ordering it to be sent to me; then again, I thought it best not to do it; and altho' I should like to see both his and Bache's, the latter may, under all circumstances, be the best decision, I mean not subscribing to either of them.

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Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis thanks you for your kind remembrance of them; and unite with me in best regards for Mrs McHenry, yourself and family. With much truth I am etc.

P.S. I shall rely on you to present the Coolers in my name to the Gentlemen above mentd. Since writing the letter which encloses this scrap, I have determined to let the Table ornaments and large Coolers go into the hands of Colo. Clement Biddle unpacked, to see if he can dispose of them; and I pray you to cause them to be delivered in that manner accordingly.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, August 14, 1797.

Dear Sir: Not having any thing to communicate of sufficient moment to give you the trouble of receiving a letter from me, I have delayed until now, to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 10th. and 25th. Ulto.

When I left Philadelphia, Mr. Lear and Mr. Dandridge who remained, were directed to dispose of my Household furniture (such parts I mean as were not packed for a removal to this place) but from some misapprehension the Ornaments of my dining Table, and some Plated bottle Coolers, were not disposed of as were expected; but left in the care of Mr. McHenry (Secretary of War) subject to future orders, when they came away.

I have now to request that you will receive these from him, and if you can, to dispose of them (one of the Coolers excepted, concerning which I will write to you some time hence) on the best terms you can. it is not probable that any one, unless the Presidt. or any of the foreign Ministers should be so disposed, would take the *whole* of course to *retail* them, would be the most likely means of getting them off.

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The articles you will receive, if I mistake not, will consist of two four bottle Coolers. A Platteau in nine pieces. three large groupes with glasses over them, two vases, and twelve small single figures, of Porcelain.

The Invoice of the Platteau I am unable, at present, to come at; but that of the figures is enclosed, as is the ones which contains the Cost of the Coolers, which were never used; there being four, originally, and two were found sufficient to answer my purposes.

I do not expect, notwithstanding they are new, that the one offered for Sale will fetch the cost, and the other things I am certain will fall much below it, as they have not only been used, but the Porcelain in some of its nicest parts, is injured. Although I have not been able to find the cost of the Platteau I have a memorandum which informs me that they stand me in 486 *Livres in Paris* exclusive of all the subsequent charges of transportation from thence to Havre, freight Insurance duty &ca &ca.

I send the Invoices for the satisfaction of yourself, and any who may be inclined to purchase; when this purpose is answered they may be returned to me.

Will you be so good as to ask Mr. Dobson⁷ if there are no more Volumes of the American Edition of the Encyclopaedia out: the 16th is the last I have received, and inform him at the sametime, that it is my wish that my second Sett (for I subscribed for two setts to encourage his undertaking the work) was neatly bound and sent to me, having given away the sett in Boards. With esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

7. Thomas Dobson, a Philadelphia printer. He published the *British Encyclopedia* in 20 volumes.

***To REVEREND NEWBURGH BURROUGHS**

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Mount Vernon, August 20, 1797.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 22d May last, from Belfast; and wish it was in my power to give you a more satisfactory statement of the decd. Mrs. Savage's affairs in this country than I am about to detail.

True it is I was one of that unfortunate lady's trustees, and as true, that while I was in a situation to render her any services I performed them (jointly with the other trustee) as far, and as fast as the tedious delays of our Courts would suffer justice to be administered.

But from the year 1774 until the beginning of the year 1784, it was not in my power to attend to hers, or any private concerns of my own, being absent from this State (Virginia) eight years of the time; during the whole of which, and for sometime after, I believe there was a suspension of all law and all justice, except such as proceeded from a sense of honour, the last of which was no trait in the character of Doctr. Savage, husband of the Lady, for of all ingrates he was the most ingrateful.

While alive, and the Courts were open, he had recourse to all the chicaneres of Law, and all the subterfuge of Lawyers to avoid paying her annuity; and since his death, his Estate, if any, for there are various opinions concerning it, and much contention arising therefrom, would render it uncandid were I not to add, especially as the heirs of his Security (also dead) have pleaded the want of Asserts that it is my opinion, strengthened by the Report of the Revd. Mr. Fairfax, the other Trustee (who I believe has done all

that circumstances would permit) that little is to be expected from the prosecution of this business.

The Suit is still going on, but without sufficient means to support it from hence, and the circumstances already mentioned, it has too much the appearance of throwing away good money after bad, to proceed. So far as I have an individual interest in the matter, the hope of a return of the money which I advanced Mrs. Savage in her distress, when it was not

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in the power of her Trustees to force payment of the Annuity, and other expenditures in common with Mr. Fairfax, has vanished long since.

Having but lately returned home from a second eight years absence, which with many interruptions for public purposes between while, has prevented my taking active share in this business for upwards of twenty years, I have given it as my opinion to Mr. Fairfax, that it would be best to offer a percentage, or a good fee to the Lawyers prosecuting the Suit for the Claimants under Mrs. Savages Will, for all they can recover on this account; and to receive *nothing* unless they do, by way of Stimula to their exertions: What effect this will have, or whether any, remains to be decided. I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, August 21, 1797.

Dear Sir: Since writing to you on the 14th Inst. I have received your letter of the 12th with the cost of the Picture frames and Glasses; to receive which soon would be convenient and agreeable to me.

The large Plated wine cooler reserved from sale in my last, I pray you to have carefully packed up and sent with the letter enclosed by a safe conveyance to Colo. Hamilton of New York.

I am in want of an *open stove* for a room that has no fire place in it. this stove is intended to stand crosswise an angle in a Garret room and must have a conductor from the upper part thereof into the flue of the adjoining Chimney. An Iron hearth and a fender to suit the same of a cheap kind must accompany it.

Enclosed I have endeavoured to describe in a parallel sketch my idea of the kind and size I want; but if this should be imperfectly understood I wou'd then ask you to look into what

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was my private study (over the bathing room) in the house I occupied in Philadelphia. I do not however see any occasion for the second turn wch that Pipe takes; and which probably is the cause of its smoking; an evil to be avoided if possible.

The sooner I could receive this Stove the more convenient it would be; as the room into which it is to be placed is now in hand.

I presumed when the Congress exempted me from postage of letters it was intended that I should be placed on the ground I formerly stood; that is, that letters *to* and *from* me should pass *free* : if it is not so understood and you are charged postage for the letters I address to you it is my desire that this postage should be paid at my cost as it was

not my intention for the trifling and troublesome business you transact for me to saddle you therewith. With Esteem etc.10

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, August 23, 1797.

Dear Sir: I am extremely sorry to find by yr. letter of the 17th instant and the Philadelphia Gazettes of that date, that the yellow fever has again made its appearance, and devoutly wish that it may soon be removed from your City.

Your motive for delaying the sale of my Table furniture is not only good as it respects the yellow fever but if you think any advantage would result from the measure it might be delayed until the assembling of Congress in Philadelphia some of the members might incline to become purchasers if the articles are retailed. Be so good as to ask Mr. Simmons what he has done with my old Coach and make the most you can of it. I will wait the publication of all the Vols. of the Encyclopedia before the Sett intended for *my use* is bound, but could wish to know when this may be expected, as I no longer possess the sett which are in boards. With esteem etc.11

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10. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

11. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To HENRY DORSEY GOUGH**

Mount Vernon, August 23, 1797.

Sir: I feel, sensibly, your kind and polite attention to me, in the presentation of a bull calf of your *improved breed* . A very fine one indeed it is, and merits my particular thanks, which I pray you to accept.

My Stock of *all sorts* has been much neglected during my eight years residence from home, and will take more time than in the usual course of Nature will be allowed me, to improve them *much* ; but with the means you have been so good as to furnish me, and other aids, I shall, by proper attention, put my black cattle into a way of improvement.

I am sorry to hear of the disease and consequent degeneracy of your Sheep. Before I left home in the spring of 1789 I had improved that species of my stock so much as to get 5¼ lbs of Wool as the average of the fleeces of my whole stock; and at the last shearing they did not yield me 2½ lbs. By procuring (if I am able) good Rams and giving the necessary attention, I hope to get them up again; for they are with me, as you have declared them to be with you, that part of my stock in which I most delight. With esteem and regard I have the honor etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1797.

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Dear Sir: Your favours of the 9th, 10th, and 19th instant have been duly received; for your care of my European letters, and attention to the copying Press, Laws of the U.S. and journals of Congress, I feel myself obliged. If the Vessel has not already left Philadelphia, the Tryal, Captn. Hand, is up for Alexandria; and will afford a good conveyance for the above articles, as it has other small matters on board for me.

Colo. Monroe passed through Alexandria last week; but did not honor me by a call. If what he has promised the public does him no more credit than what he has given to it, in his last exhibition, his friends must be apprehensive of a recoil.

From a variety of accounts, as well as from extracts you had the kindness to send me, I have no doubt of a change in the sentiments of the People of France favourable to the interests of this Country; but I can scarcely believe that it will be so great, or so sudden as some imagine. Candour is not a more conspicuous trait in the character of Governments, than it is of Individuals. It is hardly to be expected then, that the Directory of France will acknowledge its errors; and tread back its steps *immediately*. This would announce, at once, that there has been precipitancy, and injustice in the measures they have pursued; or that it was incapable of judging, and had been deceived by false misrepresentations. Pride would be opposed to all these, and I can scarcely

think the Directory will relinquish the *hold it has* upon those who, more than probable, have suggested, and promoted the measures, they have been pursuing. I rather suppose that it will lower its tone by degrees and (as is usual) place the change to the credit of *French magnanimity*. The report, as coming from Captn. Towers, that General Pinckney had been invited to Paris by the Minister of Foreign Affairs attached itself in its passage to Philadelphia or passing through different hands; for General Lee (who hearing various reports of what the Captn. had related of his conversation with the General) went on board the Saratoga and got the details, without any mention of that fact, which wd. have been of too much importance for omission.

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That the statement of facts in the printed letter to Genl. Pinckney will work conviction, and produce a change of conduct in those who are desirous of information, and not obstinately bent upon wrong measures, I have no doubt, and I can say with truth, that my mind has never been alarmed by any fears of a war with France. I always knew that this Government had no desire to go to war with that, or any other Country, and I as firmly believed that no Power, without a *semblance of justice* wd. declare war against it. That France has stept far beyond the line of *rectitude* cannot be denied; that it has been encouraged to do so by a party among ourselves, is, to my mind, equally certain; and when it is considered, moreover, that enriching themselves,

and injuring Great Britain were the expected consequences of their Spoliations, I could account, (though not on honourable principles in them) for their going to a certain point, but I never did believe that they would declare an open war against us, or compel us, if they foresaw that would be the result, to declare it against them.

Enclosed you will receive, if this letter gets safe, \$35 in bank notes of the United States; and it would add to my convenience if Mr Taylor would be so obliging as to have the press *fixed* for copying: for as the use of one was not practiced by me I may be at a loss in doing it. I do not mean that it should be accompanied by a Table, but board only between the Rollers, as the screws which I have to a small press, will I presume answer for the other, I wou'd pray him also (if the press is still with him) to use it, and that if there be any imperfection, that it may be corrected before it comes hither, as I should be unable to do it afterwards. With very great esteem etc.

***To THOMAS MACDONALD**

Mount Vernon, August 29, 1797.

Sir: Your favor of the 19th, and the Vole. of Reports¹² which accompanied it, have been duly received. For your care of the latter, and particularly for having it bound, I pray you to

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accept my best thanks; and an assurance that, if inclination or business should induce you or Mr. Rich to visit

12. Of the British Board of Agriculture.

the State of Virginia, I should think myself honored in seeing of you at my Seat.

Little doubt can be entertained of harmonious proceedings in any business, where men of character and honor, well disposed to do justice, are appointed to conduct it. That this is the case as it respects the Commissioners¹³ under the Sixth Article of the Treaty between this country and Great Britain, I am persuaded; and that the fair and liberal decisions of the Board will be a means to strengthen the good understanding which happily exists between the two Countries, while justice is administered to all, I sincerely hope. I have the honor etc.

***To THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO**

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1797.

Dear Sir: Having just been informed of your safe arrival in America, I was on the point of writing you a congratulatory letter on the occasion, welcoming you to the land whose liberties you had been so instrumental in establishing, when I received your favour of the 23d instant from Philadelphia; for which, and the Packet that you had the goodness to bear from Sir John Sinclair, I offer you my thanks.

I beg you to be assured that, no one has a higher respect, and veneration for your character than I have; or one who more sincerely wished, during your arduous struggle in the cause of liberty and your country, that it might be crowned with Success. But the ways of Providence are inscrutable, and Mortals must submit.

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13. Thomas Macdonald and Henry Pye Rich were the British Commissioners for carrying into effect the VIth Article of Jay's Treaty. They visited Mount Vernon Oct. 14–16, 1797.

I pray you to believe, that at all times, and under any circumstances, it would make me happy to see you at my last retreat; from which I never expect to be more than twenty miles again. With great esteem, I remain &c.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, August 31, 1797.

Dear Sir: The last Mail brought me your favour of the 24th instant, covering a letter from General Kosciuszko. And presuming that the Attorney General is on his way to Virginia, I hope to receive soon, the Packets you committed to his charge. Not knowing where Genl Kosciuszko may be I pray your care of the enclosed to him as it is probable his movements will be known to you.

It is with extreme regret I hear of the Yellow fever being in Philadelphia and that so many families will be incommoded by a removal from it. Will it not render the meeting of Congress at that place uncertain? I sincerely hope that you may all escape, by steering clear of the malady.

With great esteem etc.

P.S. Hearing that Mr. Monroe's production is in the Press, I wd. thank you for a copy so soon as it issues from thence.

***To ISRAEL SHREVE**

Mount Vernon, September 1, 1797.

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Sir: Your letter of the 30th. of July has been received but not until within the last three days. Your judgment Bond was, long before, sent to Mr. Ross to bring suit on. What he has done in the matter I know not.

To sue, cannot be more unpleasant and disagreeable to you, than it is to me; but as the want of money, and a punctual payment of it, were the *only* motives to sell my lands in the Counties of Fayette and Washington, so a disappointment in these must defeat the objects which I had in view, and has been the cause of the prosecution to which I have resorted.

You could not be unacquainted with the nature of your contract for the land in Fayette county, nor with the tenor of your judgment Bond, given to fulfil it: of course, you must have known the amount of the Sums as they became due and that they were to be paid at the Bank of Pennsylvania on a certain day, by Instalments; why then would you trust to others to do your business; and by sending a little money by this, and a little by that man who knew not what to do with it when they got to Philadelphia, hazard the disappointments which followed? especially as that mode of payment was purposely guarded against in the contract, as one from whence

I could derive no substantial benefit; whereas regular payment in the manner Colo. Richie has made them would have given me (although the land sold low) all the advantages I expected to derive from the Sale of those lands.

Not knowing what Mr. Ross has done in the premises, I know not what further to say in reply to your letter. If the arrearages are paid up, with interest to the time they became due; and the instalments regularly discharged afterwards, agreeably to the conditions of your Bond, it is all I require and all I can wish; for far is it from my desire to embarrass, or injure your character by a Law Suit: but if punctuality is not observed on your part a Suit (for the reasons I have already assigned) will be the inevitable consequence. And I do now, in explicit terms declare that it will be of no avail to say that such an one is to pay so much another so much, and so on. I shall have nothing to do with any of them;

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because I shall expect each years Instalment will, by the time it becomes due be deposited in the Bank of Pennsylvania, and made liable to my draught. This is a very simple mode, and what I shall rigidly exact. I have no Agent in Philadelphia to whom I would give the trouble of receiving money, nor do I want partial sums lodged there. The amount of the Instalmts. must be known to you, and the times of their becoming due. My appropriations will correspond therewith. Nothing short of the whole sums will answer my purposes. I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, September 6, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 30th Ult was received by the last Post.

As the Encyclopaedia might be useful, to have by me (though wanting the last Volume or two) I would if the binding business goes on as usual, request Mr. Dobson to have all that are published, neatly bound and sent to me, except the *last Vole* . which may be retained as a sample to bind the remainder by. I do not recollect, but suppose the receipts will show, whether he has been paid for *both* sets I subscribed for, or only one; be this as it may, he shall be satisfied on the delivery.

I feel very sensibly for the alarm of the Citizens of Philadelphia, and for the calamity brought on that place by the Yellow fever; and devoutly wish the speedy disappearance of it. With great esteem etc.

***To HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, September 8, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 27th. Ult. with its enclosures, came safe to hand.

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When the negociable note for \$1000 is paid, and the 30 barrels of Corn are received, the amount of both will be carried to your credit.

I am told that the *present* price of Wheat in Alexandria is 8/. but I can fix no

price *now* for what may be delivered 2, 3, 4 or even 6 months hence, or perhaps, not at all (if you depend upon purchasing) in case of a rise; when there is no obligation to deliver a specific quantity, or at any specified time. All I can say on this subject is, that if you have Wheat of your own to dispose of, or can purchase and deliver it at my Mill, where, with my convenience of Boats and hands, it can be done as expeditiously as at Alexandria, I will allow, at the *times of delivery*, the full price that is given *in cash* at the latter place; more I cannot, less I do not wish to do, as the price of my flour must be regulated by the cost of the Wheat.

You cannot, I presume, be at a loss from the statement of the acct. between us, when you will recollect that \$6,666 $\frac{32}{100}$ was, by agreement, with interest on the whole sum of \$20,000; to have been paid me on the first day of december last; and that on the 27th. of Feby. following, you paid me seven hundred dollars in cash, and gave me Reed & Fords obligation to transfer 70 shares (a month after) in the Bank of Columbia; the value of which you estimated at 40 dollars each, when they were actually selling at that moment in the market, at, or near, 18 pr Ct. under par; by which I actually received no more than about \$2300 in lieu of \$2800; besides loosing a months interest on the last mentioned sum, for which my receipt was passed.

As the payments here mentioned, are all I have received, except 90 Barrels of Corn delivered the — day of last month at 21/8,

I presume the object of your request must be to know in what light I view the payment of the 70 shares. I shall therefore frankly declare, that if a disinterested judge is to be found, who will say that I ought, under the circumstances which prevailed at the time, to loose

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the difference between the nominal and real price of the shares, I will never utter another word on the subject; if there is not, or if there are no other circumstances of which I am ignorant, I conceive you yourself will not think it reasonable, or just, that I should loose near \$500 in the payment of \$2800 when my sole motive for receiving these shares at all was (inconveniently for myself) to accommodate you.

You say you informed me at the time that they were selling a little under par, and as you have said, so I will admit it; though my hurried situation at that time leaves no trace thereof on my memory; while there are several facts which cannot have escaped yours: was it not more than once (without urging it ardently) I informed you I was in want of money to clear me out of Philadelphia properly, and was obliged at last to leave the City (without providing many articles of which my family stood in need of), that I had declined receiving Wilsons Notes when they were proposed because I could not depend upon converting them into cash; that the offer of Columbia stock, was late and unexpected, of course seeing no other prospect of obtaining any part of the Instalment; I took them as an accomodation to you; for it will not be denied that if I had been disposed to

appropriate money to this use, I could, and would have been my own caterer, as I was coming to the City, that under these circumstances, hurried and perplexed at the close of the Session as I then was with Executive and Legislature business, and with the necessary attention to the change wch. was about to take place in my private concerns, afforded no leisure to inquire into the value of Columbia Bank Stock, even if I had attended to your information concerning it, and I should from a cursory enquiry only have been struck with no other idea than what occurs continually at the Bank of Alexandria, viz, that just *before* a dividend, the stock is a little above, and just *after* a little below its nominal Value.

I have expressed myself thus, because it comports with my ideas, of truth and justice and propriety; but I mean to enter in no contention, or dispute on the subject being with very great esteem and regard Dear Sir Your etc.

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[N.Y.P.L.]

To CLEMENT BIDDLE

Mount Vernon, September 15, 1797.

Dear Sir: The Picture frames are received and without the smallest injury to the glasses, for the careful packing of which I feel myself obliged.

I pray you to send me four more gilt frames at a dollar a foot running measure for paintings, no glasses; the size of the frames to shew the canvass one foot $7\frac{3}{4}$ Inches by $1.4\frac{1}{4}$ within the frame.

Upon a more careful examination of the Place which the stove written for some time since is wanted, I find I was not correct in the direction I then gave and have endeavoured *now* to explain it better by transmitting the exact form of the Room, shewing the angle in which the stove is to be fixed; the manner of fixing it and the exact size and proportions of the same with its relative situation to the Chimney (wall) and partition as mentioned in the Plan.

I have written thus far on a supposition that a Stove, has not been provided agreeably to the directions in my last, and provided also than one agreeably to the enclosed plan, without difficulty and without delay could be sent, but if the first is already procured, I would have it sent on without loss of time; if not and the one I am now furnishing a plan of could be substituted I would prefer it: nor should I object to *both* if the former is on hand and the latter could be obtained with ease and without much delay.

The first of Octr. will put you into

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the receipt of another quarters interest of my certificate otherwise I would forward money to you for the purpose of meeting the expences of those calls as it is by no means my wish or desire to run you into any advance for me or on my account. With esteem etc.

PS. I wou'd thank you for causing the Advertisement herewith sent, to be inserted agreeably to the endorsation thereon, and for paying the expence for doing it. Send me the History of the United States (by whom I know not) but the one which contains Nos. 5 and 6 alluded to in Colo. Hamiltons late Pamphlet.¹⁹

19. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

The pamphlet is known as the Reynold's Pamphlet. It was printed by John Bioren for John Fenno (Philadelphia: 1797) under the title *Observations on Certain Documents Contained in Nos. V and VI of The History of the United States for the Year 1796*, etc.

***To GEORGE PEARSON²⁰**

Mount Vernon in Virginia, September 15, 1797.

Sir: Your letter of the 12th. of May has been received, but not until within these few days: to which you will please to consider the following as a reply.

Having been long in public life, and but little in this State for the last five and twenty years; and moreover having had but very little agency in the Administration of the deceased Colo. Thomas Colvils affairs even antecedant thereto, no consideration short of being the *surviving* Executor of his Will and the imperious necessity occasioned thereby of bringing matters to a close, could possibly have induced me to resume any Agency therein.

Under these circumstances however, I have at all times, of late, when it was in my power, used my best endeavours to have the accounts closed, in order to ascertain the surplus which that Gentleman had bequeathed to the nearest relations of his Mother, of the names

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of Stott, Wills, Richardson and Catharine Smith, of Durham; or their decendants: and with much difficulty and the aid of a Gentleman (Mr. Keith) well acquainted with this sort of business, have accomplished it, as you may see by having recourse to a notification in the London Gazette of December last consequent of a decree of the high Court of Chancery in this State.

The persons just named, or those claiming under them, may, perhaps, be disap

20. Clerk of the Peace of Durham, England.

On September 20 Washington wrote to Augustine Davis, publisher of the *Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser*, at Richmond, and to Matthew Brown and Leonard Yundt, publishers of the *Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser*, Baltimore, requesting the insertion of an advertisement for the sale of covering jacks, descendants of "Royal Gift" and sundry horses and mares. This letter and the text of the advertisement, which was signed by James Anderson, manager, is in the New York Public Library.

pointed at the smallness of the sum, viz, nine hundred and thirty two pounds seventeen shillings an seven pence three farthings, estimating dollars at Six shillings; which, upon the final settlement was found to be the surplusage of the Testators estate after his Debts and special legacies were discharged; but if they will advert to the clause of the Will under which they claim, and which was published in England many years ago, there ought not to be any surprize, as it there appears that the *Testator himself* was in doubt whether there would be *any overplus at all* .

The reason why that sum (now actually in the Bank of Alexandria) was submitted to the decision and disposition of the Chancellor, was, because there had been so many claims exhibited; of so vague a nature; and some of them accompanied by such unjust and indecent insinuations, that I did not incline to enquire into the merits of the respective claims, or to become responsible for the distribution of the Money. All those who have pretentions under the Will to a Share of the before mentioned sum, will now know where to

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send their proofs; and to receive an order for their proportion of the Devise, having nothing more to do in the matter myself. I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To THOMAS LAW

Mount Vernon, October 2, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your note of the 28th Ult. by Mr. Frestal, was received on Friday last.

My expences are so great and my resources so small, that it is but little in my power to promote such plans as you advocate. To clear me out of Philadelphia, and to lay in a few necessaries for my family, I sold two valuable tracts of land in the State of Pennsylvania a short time before I left the City. for 22,000 dollars; and since my arrival have sold other lands in Virginia the proceeds of all which (so far at least as hath been received) are nearly expended.

To encourage however a Hotel at the Capitol, I authorise you if the plan is likely to succeed, on the terms you have suggested to put my name down to five Shares.

I am glad to hear that the public buildings progress well. As the period for their accomplishment approaches, there can be little doubt but that private buildings will also advance rapidly; I wish they were in such a state of forwardness as to claim the attention of Congress, if the Calamity which is inflicted on Philadelphia and other Sea port Towns, should render the removal of that body from the present Seat of the Government necessary.

We rejoice to hear that Mrs. Law and the little girl are well, we are so. And all Unite with Affecte. regards for you and them, With Dear Sir etc.

***To THOMAS C. MARTIN²¹**

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Mount Vernon, October 3, 1797.

Sir: I have already erected a threshing machine on Mr. Bookers plan, and was on the point of putting up one or two more when I received a letter from a Gentleman of my acquaintance informing me that you had invented one which did more execution with less force. This has induced me to suspend the erection of those on Mr. Bookers plan, until I can receive better information relative to yours, and this is the cause of my giving you the trouble of receiving this letter and praying that you would be so obliging as to give it.

The advantage which Mr. Bookers has over the Scotch Machine (which I never saw) lyes, it is said, in being less expensive, and less complex, particularly in the substitution of a band in place of cogs and rounds; which, as I have understood, (with the expence thereof) is the principal objection to the latter.

Not having heard whether you have obtained a Patent for the invention of yours, or mean to apply for one, I would not have it understood that my application for information into the principle on which yours act, the power which works it, or the execution, is calculated to deprive you of any benefit which might result in either case.

The object of my enquiry is merely to know whether yours (nothing being more interesting to the farmer) is upon a simple plan and not easily put out of order in the hands of ignorant negros, and careless Overseers; whether cheap, and easily erected, what the execution; and with what force it is worked; together with the manner of

21. Of King and Queen County, Va.

On October 7 Washington wrote to Dr. William Thornton: "Genl. Washington presents his compliments to Doctr. Thornton. Mrs. Washington recollecting her promise of saving him a few of the Spanish Chestnuts, some are now sent. They are immediately from the tree, and should, without delay, be planted where they are intended to remain, or put into a

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box with earth, otherwise they will soon get hard and worm eaten, and the vegetation be prevented." This note is in the *William Thornton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

working it, and the house proper for its reception.

If in these particulars, on a fair comparison with Mr. Booker's, it obtains a preference, I shall certainly, as I am about to provide conveniences of this sort for getting my grain out of the straw, erect yours instead of his: and whether built by my own People or others, I am perfectly willing to allow the Patent fee if it exists, or to stand upon the same footing that others do to avail myself of the best discovery in this or any other country to effect so valuable an end. Your answer to these queries would very much oblige me as my ulterior measures depend upon them and my want of machines to get my grain out in a clean and expeditious mode, pressing. I hope you will have the goodness to excuse the liberty I have herein taken and believe that I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE**

Mount Vernon, October 8, 1797.²³

My dear Sir: This letter will, I hope and expect, be presented to you by your Son, who is highly deserving of such Parents as you and your amiable Lady.

He can relate, much better than I can describe, my participation in your sufferings, my solicitude for your relief, the measures I adopted (though ineffectually) to facilitate your liberation from an unjust and cruel imprisonment, and the joy I experienced at the news of its accomplishment.

23. The "Letter Book" copy is misdated 1798.

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I shall hasten therefore to congratulate you, and be assured no one can do it with more cordiality, with more sincerity, or with greater affection, on the restoration of that liberty which every act of your life entitles you to the enjoyment of; and I hope I may add, to the uninterrupted possession of your Estates, and the confidence of your Country. The re-possession of these things, though they cannot compensate for the hardships you have endured, may, nevertheless soften the painful remembrance of them.

From the delicate and responsible situation in which I stood as a public officer, but more especially from a misconception of the manner in which your son had left France (till explained in a personal interview with himself) he did not come immediately into my family on his arrival in America, tho' he was assured in the first moments of it, of my protection and support. His conduct, since he first set his feet on American ground, has been exemplary in every point of view, such as has gained him the esteem, affection and confidence of all who have had the pleasure of his acquaintance. His filial affection and duty, and his ardent desire to embrace his parents and Sisters in the first moments of their releasement, would not allow him to await the authentic account of this much desired event; but at the sametime that I suggested the propriety of this, I could not withhold my assent to the gratification of his wishes, to fly to the Arms of those whom he holds most dear; persuaded as he is, from the information

he has received, that he shall find you all in Paris.

M. Frestal has been a true Mentor to George. No Parent could have been more attentive to a favourite Son; and he richly merits all that can be said of his virtues, of his good sense, and of his prudence. Both your son and him carry with them the vows, and regrets of this family, and of all who know them. And you may be assured that you yourself never stood higher in the affections of the People of this country than at the present moment.

With what concerns myself, personally, I shall not take up your time; further than to add, that I have once more retreated to the shades of my own Vine and Fig tree, where I

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shall remain with best vows for the prosperity of that country for whose happiness I have toiled many years, to establish its Independence, Constitution, and Laws, and for the good of mankind in general, until the days of my sojournment, whh. cannot be many, are accomplished.

Having bid a final adieu to the walks of public life, and meaning to withdraw myself from the Politics thereof, I shall refer you to Mr. Frestal and George, who (at the sametime that they have, from prudential considerations, avoided all interference in the Politics of the Country) cannot have been inattentive observers of what was passing among us, to give you a general view of our situation, and of the party, which in my opinion, has disturbed the Peace and tranquillity of it. And with sentiments of the highest regard for you, your lady and daughters, and

with assurances that, if inclination or events should induce you, or any of them, to visit America, no person in it would receive you with more cordiality and affection, than [Mrs. Washington and myself would do, both of us being most sincerely and affectionately attached to you and admirers of them, yours, ever, &c.]²⁴

***To REVEREND SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH**

Mount Vernon, October 9, 1797.

Dear and Revd. Sir: I have duly received your several letters of last month; but as an expression of my regret, at the conduct and behaviour of young Custis would avail nothing I shall not trouble you by the attempt.

I am persuaded that your conduct towards him, has been such as friendship inspired, and the duties of your important trust required. And as you have seen, in a degree what my solicitude, advice and admonition have been, he will have himself only to upbraid for any consequences which may follow, and this perhaps come too late.

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By Mr. la Fayette who is on his way to New York to embark for France, I send you Bank notes to the amount of £100 in discharge of the balance of the acct. transmitted (£65); the twenty advanced Mr. Custis when he left Princeton and any other unpaid bills which may hereafter appear. And with thanks for your polite attention to, and care of him while he was under your superintendance, I remain with the highest esteem, regard and respect etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

24. From the original in the possession of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union. The part in brackets is supplied from the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, October 9, 1797.

Dear Sir: Mr. Thomas Pearson, heir intail to Simon Pearson, his Brother, has brought suit in the Court of this County, for the lands which the latter sold to Wm. Triplett, George Johnson and myself, five and thirty Years ago.

I understand from Colo. Simms who is Pearsons Lawyer, that his complaint is founded upon some irregularity in the proceedings of the Jury, who met on the land to value the same, pursuant to a Writ of ad quod damnum. And the examination of the evidence to prove these irregularities went (for I attended) to the establishment of two Points: 1st. that there was no survey of the premises in presence of the Jury, that the time of their enquiry into the value of the land. and 2ly. that the said Jury did not explore it sufficiently to ascertain with exactness what the real value of the land was.

This is the amount of Grafton Kirks evidence, who was one of the Jurors, and who from your Practice in Fairfax County you may have learnt, is a rare hand at all obsolete claims that depend much on a *good memory* .

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As I shall be ultimately affected in this business if Pearsons claim obtains (having sold my part of the Tract (178 Acres) to Mr. Lund Washington it behooves me to look into the matter timously. let me then

ask your opinion on the following points?

1st. Does the Law providing for the Docking of Entails, by a writ of ad quod damnum, make a survey in presence of the Jury an essential Part of the proceedings?

The Writ itself (of which I retained a Copy) directing the sheriff to summon respectable men of his County for the purpose of ascertaing. the value of the land &c., requires no such thing.

2d. Who is to Judge of the mode by which a Jury on Oath is to report *their* Opinion of the value of the land if they are not to do it themselves?

Mr. Kirk swears he did not on the day traverse a foot of the land. Why because says he living adjoining thereto; I could not be made better acquainted with it than I was; neither did Jno. Askins (another of the Jury men) stir from the house at which they met; on the *Land* . Why again? because Jno. Askins knew it as well as he did. The rest of the Jurors he acknowledged rode but were not gone long enough to go over quarter part of the land. These if not the words are the literal meaning of them, and the sum of Grafton Kirk's evidence. No tampering with the Jury to under value the land is even hinted at. and the transfers devises and descent to Simon Pearson are admitted to be good in order to prove that the said Simon held the land in fee tail and dying (as they say) without *legitimate* Children that Thos. Pearson his brother is heir in Tail.

3d. Whether as Simon was lawfully married

and never legally devorced the children of that woman though begotten (no matter by whom) in the state of separation from *him* is not a barr to the claim of Thomas?

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4th. What operation will the Act of Assembly Of Virginia for Docking *a//* Entails, (passed many years after the land in dispute was Docked by a writ of ad quod damnum, and sold in 1762) and many years too before the death of Simon Pearson which only happened last Spring have in this Case? It being understood that the said Simon conveyed the 178 acres, to me with a general Warrantee.

5th. I would ask how far my conveyance of the said land to Mr. L. Washington with a general Warrantee also, make me liable for the buildings as well as the land which has been placed thereon? and

6th. Whether I had better interest myself in defending the suit already commenced in the County Court, or await the decision there and take it up in the dernier resort if it shd. be adverse. I wish also as the case in my Judgmt. turns upon simple points which do not require much study, or research, to be informed (confidentially) whether in your opinion Mr. Swan's demand for defending the suit is not unreasonable? viz.: \$100 in hand and the like sum at the close of the business?

You may think me an unprofitable applicant in asking opinions and requiring services of you without dousing my money, but pay day may come. If

the cause should go to the higher Courts I shall expect you will appear for me, and Mr. Marshall also (if you should not have quit the practice). If the latter should not be returned in time, say who else had I best employ? I beg you will send me and as soon as you can certified copies from the Records of Richmond, of the papers mentioned in the enclosed. With sincere friendship &c.

P.S. Whether Colo. Simms has any thing in petto I am unable to say, I am told however that he is sanguine and some add that he is to go snacks.²⁵

***To FRANCIS WALKER**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, October 10, 1797.

Dear Sir: In answering your favor of the 28th. Ultmo. which has been duly received; I wish it was in my power to give you more satisfactory information than you will find, in this letter, relative to the lands near Suffolk.

Some years ago (before, if my memory serves me, I was called to Administer the Government of the U States) Mr. John Lewis, as Exectuor of his father, Colo. Fielding Lewis's Will, informed me that the circumstances of that estate required that his father's interest in the lands wch. were bought by him, your father and myself, lying as above, should be sold. In reply, I told him that any bargain for it that Doctr. Walker and himself would make, I would abide by.

25. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Since which I have never heard a tittle from either, on this subject. Nor do I know in whose possession, or under what circumstances the lands now are. That they are not sold I am inclined to believe, because the title papers are still in my care, and no application has ever been made for them.

These, from a cursory examination, appear to be from.

Acres

Josh. Jones to G. W. T. W.27 and FL.28 for 2 tracts 872

Jas. Wright Do.Do.Do.50

Stepn. WrightDo.Do.Do.100

Kings PatentDo.Do.Do. 188

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Total1210

I thank you for offering to sell me your interest in the above lands, but I have no disposition to become the purchaser, having lately sold my share of the Company's property in the Dismal swamp, and formerly a tract adjoining thereto, held by the deceased Colo. Lewis and myself; I shall be willing, however, at any time, to join you and Mr. John Lewis in disposing of them to any other purchaser. With esteem etc.²⁹

27. Thomas Walker.

28. Fielding Lewis.

29. From a photostat of the original owned by Dr. Wm. C. Rives, of Washington, D.C.

***To BENJAMIN GOODHUE³⁰**

Mount Vernon, October 15, 1797.

Dear Sir: The Fish you had the goodness to send me, arrived very safe; and are excellent; for your recollection of that request of mine, and the trouble you were at to obtain the best kind, I pray you to accept my grateful thanks.

The money, as you desired, was paid to Captn. Silver, to the amount of your memorandum of their cost; and they shall be stored, and dressed agreeably to the directions contained in your letter, for giving which I feel myself obliged.

No man wishes more devoutly than I that a stop was put to the further effusion of blood; that harmony was restored to all nations; and that justice was done to ours: but I must confess that my *hope* of seeing them accomplished *soon*, exceed my *expectation*. The affairs of Europe seem to me to be in so perturbed a state, and the views of the principal

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Actors so discordant that it is not easy, on rational principles and fair calculation to predict events.

Nothing is wanting in ourselves to steer clear of the vortex of misery, which has brought so many of the Nations of Europe to the brink of ruin in this desolating war, but unanimity; and if a steady adherence to the principles which have hitherto directed our councils is unable to effect this, it will nevertheless I hope, avert the evils which, otherwise might be expected to flow from the persevering opposition which is levelled at our govern

30. Senator from Massachusetts.

ment; and all those who stand forward in support of it. This is my Creed, and I shall believe in it until the contrary is verified, which Heaven avert! Adieu, with very great esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, October 15, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 28th. Ult. has been received, and I sincerely regret the continuance of the Malady which afflicts the City of Philadelphia, and other Seaport Towns; but hope the frosts which we have lately had, and the approaching cold, will eradicate the disorder.

The Season rendering the Room for which I wanted a Stove in a manner useless for the purpose it was designed, I have procured one in Alexandria. Although it is not altogether such as I wanted, a very good shift can be made with it; and as it supercedes the necessity of those I had written to you for, I have now to request you will decline sending them, or either of them. The other matters you will be so good as to send when an opportunity offers. With esteem etc.

Library of Congress

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THADDEUS KOSCIUSZKO**

Mount Vernon, October 15, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour, dated Elizabeth Town October, has been duly received. I am sorry that the state of your health should deprive me of the pleasure of your company at this place, and I regret still more that the pain you feel from the wounds you have received, though glorious for your reputation, is the occasion of it.

Whatever I can do as a private Citizen (and in no other capacity I can now act) consistently with the plan I have laid down for my future government, you may freely command. You will find however, contrary as it may be to your expectation or wishes, that all pecuniary matters must flow from the Legislature, and in a form which cannot be dispensed with. I may add I am Sure, that your claim upon the Justice and feelings of this country will meet with no delay; Nor do I suppose that the loss of your certificate will be any impediment. Your rank and services in the American Army are too well known to require that testimony of your claim; and the Books of the Treasury will shew that you have received nothing in discharge of it, or if any part, to what amount. With the highest esteem, etc.³²

[N.Y.P.L.]

32. The original letter sent is in the Library of Prince Czartoryski, Krakow, Poland. Sparks prints this letter under date of Oct. 25, 1797.

***To REVEREND WILLIAM GORDON**

Mount Vernon, October 15, 1797.

Revd. Sir: Your favour of the 20th Feb: has been received, and I am indebted to you for many other unacknowledged letters. The truth is, I soon found after entering upon

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the duties of my late public station, that private correspondences did not accord with official duties; and being determined to perform the latter to the best of my abilities, I early relinquished the former, when business was not the subject of them.

It might be asked, why suffer the letter of the 20th. of February (which is of the latter description) to remain unacknowledged, after I had, months past, bid adieu to my public walks? The answer is easy; an eight years absence from home (excepting short occasional visits) had so deranged my private affairs; had so despoiled my buildings; and in a word, had thrown my domestic concerns into such disorder, as at no period of my life have I been more engaged than in the last six months, to recover and put them into some tolerable train again.

Workmen in most countries, I believe, are necessary plagues; in this where entreaties as well as money must be used to obtain their work, and keep them to their duty they baffle all calculation in the accomplishment of any plan, or repairs they are engaged in; and require more attention to, and looking after, than can be well conceived. Numbers of these, of all descriptions, having been employed by me ever since I came home (to render my situation comfortable the ensuing winter)

has allowed me little leisure for other occupations.

Rural employments while I am spared (which in the natural course of things cannot be long) will now take place of toil, responsibility, and the sollicitudes attending the walks of public life; and with vows for the peace, the happiness, and prosperity of a country in whose service the prime of my life hath been spent, and with best wishes for the tranquillity of all Nations, and all men, the scene will close; grateful to that Providence which has directed my steps, and shielded me in the various changes and chances, through which I have passed, from my youth to the present moment.

I scarcely know what you alluded to in your letter of the 20th. of Feby. when you say "I observed in the Philadelphia Papers, mention made of a publication of a volume of your

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epistles, domestic, confidential and official." unless it be the spurious letters which issued from a certain Press in New York during the War; with a view to destroy the confidence which the Army and Community might have had in my political principles; and which have lately been republished with greater avidity and perseverance than ever, by Mr. Bache, to answer the same nefarious purpose with the latter.

I suffered every attack that was made upon my Executive conduct (the one just mentioned among the rest) to pass unnoticed while I remained in public office; well knowing that if the general tenor of it would not stand the test of investigation, a Newspaper

vindication would be of little avail. But as immense pains has been taken by this said Mr. Bache, who is no more than the Agent or tool of those who are endeavouring to destroy the confidence of the people in the officers of Government (chosen by themselves) to disseminate these counterfeit letters, I conceived it a piece of justice due to my own character, and to Posterity to disavow them in explicit terms; and this I did in a letter directed to the Secretary of State to be filed in his Office the day on which I closed my Administration. This letter has since been published in the Gazettes by the head of that Department.

With respect to your own request, I can say nothing, so many things are continually given to the public of which I have no previous knowledge, nor time indeed to inspect them if I had been therewith informed, that I may mistake the meaning of it. The late Secretary of State (now Vice President) permitted a Mr. Carey,³¹ my consent being first obtained, to take copies under his inspection of the letters I had written to Congress; which letters have since been published and are I presume genuine and must be those which you refer to. But as they are the work of another who is now in England on this business, I cannot suppose that you had it in contemplation to derive a benefit from his labours. I shall only add therefore that discretion in matters of this sort must be your guide, without a Yea, or nay, from me.

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For Politics I shall refer you to the Gazettes of this country, with which I

31. John Carey.

presume you are acquainted; and with respect to other matters, I have nothing wch would be entertaining, or worth narrating.

Mrs. Washington unites with me in best wishes for the health and happiness of yourself and Mrs. Gordon, and I am with esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, October 16, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 2d instt. came duly to hand. For the perusal of the enclosure I thank you. It is returned.

We heard with much concern, but long after the thing had happened, of the accident which befel your son. We hope he is perfectly recovered from the fall, and you from your billious attack.

Having no news to entertain you with, and could only fill a letter with the perplexities I experience daily from workmen, and other occurrences of little moment to any besides myself, I shall conclude *this* letter with best respects, in which Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis unite, to Mrs. McHenry and yourself, and with assurances of being etc.

PS. My mind during the last days of my remaining in Philadelphia was so much occupied with public and private concerns that I always forgot, when I was in your company, to enquire whether Mr. Lear had accounted to the War Office for the money he had received

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to purchase the Site for the Arsenal on Potomac. As I was, in some measure, the cause of his Agency in that business, I wish to know whether it is settled to your Satisfaction.

Be so good as to send the letter to Mr. Dandridge to his lodgings if he has not Sailed, or left the City.³⁵

35. From the *McHenry Photostats* in the Library of Congress.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, October 30, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favors of the 30th of August and 8th. of September have remained unacknowledged, because I had nothing to communicate that could compensate for the loss of a moment of your time, which I know is too much occupied in matters of business to be interrupted by unimportant letters.

Having received the enclosed letter by the Ganges, in the twilight, and attending to the first part of the Superscription only, I broke the Seal before I discovered that it was of a public nature. And the direction of the Spanish letter being somewhat equivocal, I send it also, as well for that reason as because I could not read it after it was opened; both to be disposed as you shall see fit.

I thank you for sending me your answer to the very improper letter of Mr. de Yrujo,³⁷ who merited less respectful treatment. The Copying Press came safe, but does not work well; whether for want of more Springs I am unable to determine. Having a small one (which used to be getting out of order frequently, but at present does tolerably well) I do not use it at all. Should the small one fail, I will send you the other, and ask you to have its defects rectified.

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From the last Philadelphia Reports respecting the Yellow fever, it is to be hoped that that dreadful malady has ceased,

37. Carlos Martinez, Marquis de Casa Yrujo. He was Spanish Minister to the United States.

and the distressed Inhabitant are returning to their long forsaken homes. I wish it devoutly, on public as well as private considerations, for an equivocal state of that disorder would place the President in an embarrassing situation. With great esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, October 30, 1797.

My dear Sir: Your several letters, opinion and copy of the deed to Williams for 589 Acres of Land have been duly received and for which I offer my best thanks.

It is a little singular that the proceedings for Docking the Intail of the above mentioned Land should not be found among the Records of the Genl. Court or in the Secretary's office from whence it issued and to which it was most assuredly returned.

As the Intail of this Land was docked on account of my purchase of a part of it I retained a Copy of the writ the Pannel and Sheriffs return, from whence the enclosed is taken and is the best Information and clue it is in my power to give to direct a further search. With Affece. regard etc.38

38. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To ROBERT LEWIS

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, November 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 26th Ult. has been received. To Mr. T. Whiting for presenting and to you for forwarding the orchard grass seeds, I feel myself obliged and request you to mention it to him accordingly.

I approve of your placing a Tenant on my small Tract of Land above Bath at a moderate Rent for the purpose of preserving the Timber thereon: and if decisive proof could be had of the Trespasses I think suit should be brought against them in the *District Court* by way of terror to others. In *this Court* if the proof was positive justice might be expected, in the County Court I should expect nothing but to pay the Cost of the suit. I would not let the land for more than 5 years, limit the quantity of ground to be cleared and reserve all the walnut Timber for my use which may stand thereon.

The other depredations mentioned in your letter will not I hope escape unpunished. Remember us to Mrs. Lewis and be assured of the friendship of Your etc.42

42. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JAMES ROSS**

Mount Vernon, November 6, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 2d. Ult. with its enclosure came duly to hand, and I feel myself very much obliged by the favourable footing on which you have placed matters with Colo. Shreve. These are perfectly satisfactory to me, and of which I should have informed you sooner, had I not supposed that the most certain though perhaps not the quickest way of making it known to you would be to lodge my letter in Philadelphia against your arrival there. This I am about to do in the hands of Colo. Pickering.

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Whatever mode, under the derangements occasioned by the sore calamity which has afflicted that City, you shall find most convenient to yourself, will be agreeable to me, for depositing the sum in the Bank of Pennsylvania which has been paid you by Colo. Shreve on my acct. but it may not be amiss to add that, if \$500 have been paid into that Bank for my use, no advice of it has been given to me.

I am perfectly convinced that your observations and opinion with respect to the most advantageous mode, to wit, laying off my lands on the Ohio into lots of about 200 Acres is correct; and the best way to make the most of them. The reasons which have weighed against it hitherto, with me, are first it is troublesome, 2d. may be tedious in its operation, and 3d. my object being to convert the Land, aggregately into money, or some kind of Stock that I might derive a convenience and benefit from the interest during the short stay which from the

46. The "Letter Book" copy is dated November 3.

natural course of things I have to remain here, the end would not be answered in a retail way without, in a manner, sinking the Capitol, receiving money in driblets is tantamount. But as you have been so good as to mention this mode, will you permit me to ask what you think the lands would sell for by the Acre, divided in the manner you suggest; and whether there is within your view, any person in whom confidence could be placed as an Agent to manage this business, who has leisure and inclination to undertake it, for an adequate compensation?

I wish you an agreeable Session, and perfect unanimity in all great questions which involve the dignity, honor and interest of our Country. With very sincere esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To DOCTOR JAMES ANDERSON**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, November 4, 1797.

Sir: Your layouts of the 21st of June and 3d of August last have both been received and are entitled to my best acknowledgements and thanks.

The last was presented by William Spence, who arrived here the 27th. Ulto via New York, in very good health and in very good time, my old Gardener having left me, as I wished it might happen, about a fortnight before.

For the prompt attention you paid to this business I feel myself under very great obligation; and shall strictly fulfil the engagement

you have entered into on my behalf with Spence; who, though rather younger than I should have chosen (if time and circumstances had admitted of a choice) seems to be decent in his appearance, and as far as time and opportunity have hitherto allowed me to form an opinion is orderly in his conduct. Experience must decide on his skill as a Gardener. He speaks of this confidently, and goes to work handily, as one who knew what is to be done. He has deceived you or me however, with his tale of Matrimony; for he has brought no wife with him, and says it was *a promise only*, of marriage from the Girl you saw; which, ultimately, she would not comply with. I am well satisfied as matters are, and perfectly approve, and thank you for every step you have taken in this business.

This letter will, I expect, find you in your new abode and if my best wishes could contribute any thing to the happiness you must enjoy in the circle of an amiable family, I offer them to you with the utmost sincerity. The circumstance attending it, as related by yourself are not only singular, but from the independence with which it is accompanied, must be the source of pleasing reflections to you, rare indeed is the case, in countries composed, in great parts, of such numerous fleets and armies, as is that of G. Britain, that neither the father or any of a numerous off spring should be engaged in either, and be under no other

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control than the Laws of the Country: When to this, the reflection, that all parts of it are in competent circumstances and happy, it must

be highly gratifying to your feelings. A situation of this sort is free from cares and more to be envied than wealth or honours by a rational mind.

Free as I now am from the toil, the cares and responsibility of public occupations and engaged in rural and Agricultural pursuits; I hope aided by the reflection of having contributed my best endeavours to promote the happiness and welfare of that Country which gave me, and my Ancestors birth, to glide peaceably and easily on in the shade of retirement; and with good will to all men until my time shall be no more. In doing this I promise myself more real enjoyment than in all the bustling with which I have been occupied for upwards of 40 years of my life which as the wise man says, is little more than vanity and vexation.

I shall thank you for any information you can give me of the prospect of disposing of the Lands I had advertised for *sale*, and to be *let* but would have no engagements entered into respecting them as overtures are making to me in this Country for part of them in both relations.

I pray you to accept my thanks for the addition to the two first volumes of your Essays on Agricultural Subjects and to be perfectly assured of the high Esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, November 6, 1797.

Sir: Since I had the honor of writing you on the 15th of July, I have been favoured with your letter of the 13th of Feby. introductory of Thos. Macdonald Esqr. and your note of the 9th of June by Genl. Koscuisko; together with the Surveys, and papers accompanying

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both. For your goodness in sending them, I pray you to accept my best thanks, and that I may not be a burthensome member of the Board, I enclose a small Bill of Exchange to be deposited in the hands of your Bookseller to defray the cost of the several copies of your works which may be forwarded to me. When this is expended, I will make another deposit for the same purpose.

As neither of the notes, the receipt of which is acknowledged above, nor any other, has intimated in the most distant manner that my letters of the 10th and 11th of December (the latter a private one) had ever reached your hand, I now do, as well for the purpose of evincing that I was not inattentive to your request, as to give information which may yet (though late) be useful, forward a duplicate of the private letter from a Press copy taken at the time, and of my last also, of the 15th. of July; being more disposed to trouble you with a repetition of the sentiments then expressed than to lay under the suspicion of inattention to yr. commds.

I can now, with more certainty than on the 15th. of July, inform you that lands have fallen in price; ascribable to two causes, the shocking depredations committed on our

Commerce (within the last Six or eight months by the French) and the reduction in price of our produce. Both contributing to render Cash a scarce, and of course a valuable article.

Our Crops of Grain are, in places, tolerable, but upon the whole below mediocrity in quantity, whilst the grain is fine. This also, that is the shortness of the Crop, will assist in reducing the price of lands still lower.

An eight years absence from home (except occasional short visits to it) has thrown my buildings, and other matters of private concern, into so much disorder, that at no period of my life have I ever been more engaged than in the last six or eight months to repair and bring them into tune again. This has prevented me from looking into the Agricultural Surveys of the Countries of England and Scotland with the attention I propose to do the ensuing Winter I shall certainly be very desirous of having a compleat sett of them, and

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if any are missing will apply accordingly; as it is my intention to have them classed, and bound, Neatly. With great pleasure I received a visit from Mr. Macdonald a few days ago, who fully answers the character given of him, as a polite and sensible man.

With great respect, etc.⁴⁵

45. From the traced facsimile in *Letters on Agriculture from...George Washington...to Arthur Young and Sir John Sinclair* (Philadelphia' 1847).

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, November 6, 1797.

Dear Sir: Since writing to you a few days ago, I have been favoured with your letters of the 26th. and 30th. Ulto.

If you should have occasion to write to Mr. Parish⁴⁴ of Hamburg, you would oblige me, by thanking him in my behalf, for his very polite and friendly offer of sending me any thing I might have occasion for from that place.

It would be more formal than necessary, to introduce Mr. Bucknall's Orchardist to the Philosophical Society of Philadelphia otherwise than through you. If then you will be so good as to relate the manner in which it came, and present it with my best respects to that body, I will thank you. With very great esteem and regard I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

44. John Parish, formerly United States Consul at Hamburg, Germany.

***To FITZGERALD, HERBERT, AND GILPIN⁵²**

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1797.

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Gentlemen: On Monday last, in Alexandria, Colo. Marsteller53 applied to me to rent my lot with the house on it in that place for three years, from the expiration of the year for wch it is now engaged (at Sixty pounds until Feby.).

I answered, that I was well disposed to receive him as a tenant and for the term above mentioned, but was unable to fix the rent then; being unacquainted with such as were usual in Alexandria, or might be expected within that period, but that I would leave it to you three Gentlemen, or any two of you who should agree, to say what it should be. And moreover to enumerate what repairs it would be indispensibly necessary for me to make *again* , it not being long the houses and inclosure were put into complete Order.

Your compliance with the request will very much oblige me, and I shall hope to be excused for the trouble it will give you. Be assured of the esteem etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

52. John Fitzgerald, William Herbert, and George Gilpin.

53. Philip Marsteller.

***To PHILIP MARSTELLER**

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1797.

Sir: The enclosed result, from our conversation on Monday last. It is left open for your perusal and presentation, and I shall consider the decision of the Gentlemen to whom it is addressed, as obligatory on me.

As no time ought to be lost in securing the stone work of the Stable, I now authorise you, to get it effectually done upon the best terms you can, without awaiting for their report, and without delay, to avoid accidents, and a greater expence. With esteem etc.

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[N.Y.P.L.]

To BUSHROD WASHINGTON

Mount Vernon, November 22, 1797.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th Inst. has been duly received, as I believe all your others have. The order for settling my Acct. as Exor. of Colvill was immediately sent to Mr. Keith who asks as

The order of Court must be published for a month in the Alexandria Gazette, and the time fixed upon for auditing the accounts made known at the foot of the order, a copy of the order served upon Mr. West, with a notification for the time for the review of the accounts, and as the defendants live out of the Country, a considerable length of time may be necessary to allow for entering upon the business, I could wish to be made acquainted with what you suppose to be a reasonable time before I determine any thing respecting it.

As this business has been entered upon in consequence of your advice be so good as to let me know what answer to give Mr. Keith.

We have heard nothing more of Mrs. Forbes. If it shou'd fall in your way, without formality, I should be glad if you wou'd ask Mr. Robt. Brooke if he did not receive a letter from me in Octr. on this Subject? If he did, and I see not how it shou'd be otherwise, his conduct towards me has been very ungenteel, such as I would not have meeted to him or any other.

The first knowledge we had of Mrs. Forbes was communicated by his Brother Mr. Jno. Brooke to Mr. Anderson my manager who being at Fredericksburg and expressing our want of a house keeper, the former strongly recommended Mrs. Forbes; and promised to ascertain whether she would come or not. upon a second application (by letter) from Mr. Anderson, Mr. Jno. Brooke wrote him that *he* had written two or three times to Richmond

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on this business but had recd. no answer. A few days afterward however he wrote again that Mrs. Forbes was willing to come for \$150 pr Annum, and was desirous to know soon, if she wd. be accepted on those terms; advising in the same letter to avoid delay and accidents, that the answer might pass to *her* through his brother *Robert*. The first post after the receipt of this letter, viz, on the 27th Octr. I wrote to the latter enclosing this letter as an apology for giving him that trouble) requesting as a *favor* that he wou'd let Mrs. Forbes know that I acceded to her terms, and wished

her to proceed immediately to this place and that he would be so good as to give me some item of her character.

Since which I have never received a line from him and presume (if I had not as much by accident as by a premeditated design) brought the matter to your View I might (if the Case is not jepordized now) have been defeated altogether in obtaining the above person as a house keeper. If any miscarriage attended my letter the thoughts I entertain of Mr. Robert Brooke are unfounded if he recd. it they will mark him pretty strongly in my estimation. Remember us kindly to Mrs. Washington, and be assured always of the friendship of Your etc.54

54. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1797.

Sir: The Copy of Mr. Parkinson's letter and my answer both of which are enclosed for your perusal and the latter to be forwarded is the best apology I can offer for giving you the Trouble of this Address.

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As he has taken the liberty of naming you as a Gentleman to whom he is well known I have followed his example (as he writes to me on an interesting Subject) in doing the same to enquire if he shou'd make the Application in person which his letter

contemplates, whether his character, abilities as a farmer and capital are such as to enable him to stock and manage a farm the rent of which would be (according to his choice of those I have to let) from a thousand to eighteen hundred Dollars per annum, or wheat equivalent.

I should not my good Sir have used the freedom to ask this information had not Mr. Parkinson declared that it was by your advice he has made the Application and means to pursue it in March next. If he comes under such auspices it would recommend him strongly to me; and to know it in time wou'd be pleasing to Your etc.⁵⁵

55. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.