

George Washington to John A. Washington, October 26, 1778, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.

***To JOHN AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Fredericksburg in the State of New York, October 26, 1778.

Dear Brother: In overhauling some old Papers the other day, I came across the Inclosed Letter from Colo. Cresap¹ to me, written, as he says, in answer to one of mine on the information of his having set up a claim to some part of the Land formerly owned by our deceased Brother Lawrence, and given by him to my Brother Austin.² It is essential, as I have upon other occasions mentioned to you, that this matter should be enquired into; or, a hundred to one but Cresap Chouses the Hier at Law out of part of these Lands, under various pleas; strengthen'd by possession. At first he began to Rent them in behalf of my Brother's Estate (pocketing I dare say the Money). Now (by the Inclos'd Letter I find) he lays claim to one Lott, when, if my Memory does not fail me exceedingly, my Brother had Patents for both, and never was their the Shadow of a claim set up towards either till lately. As it is a Tract however that I never had any personal knowledge of, I may be mistaken in my conception of the matter, but as before think there were two Lotts; one of which my Brother purchased of Pendergrass,³ and the other of Cresap. The fact may, I presume, be ascertained by having recourse to the Deeds, and other Land Papers belonging to that Estate, or to the records in the Proprietors Office; and in my judgment no time should be lost in the Search, as Cresap is extremely artful, and his claim will obtain strength by length of Possession.

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We have been kept for sometime in an awkward, and disagreeable state of suspense respecting the Enemy's intentions; nor are we able at this time to discover their views. They have five or Six thousand Men on Ship board; where they have been since the 20th. Instt., laying in the Harbour of New-York; the destination is a mystery, but I believe they are bound for the West Indies. Boston and Charlestown are both talkd of; but the Season, I should suppose, is too far advanced for any enterprize on the first, altho the French fleet would be a great additional inducement; and the latter is not, under present circumstances, I think a sufficient object. However, as it is out of all support of this Army and the other place (Boston) while the French Squadron lays there, a Capital object, I have moved some Troops that way, to be ready in case of need. Various are the conjectures respecting a total evacuation of New York, and various are the appearances, and evidences; some tending to a belief of it, and others contradicting it. If I was to hazard an opinion upon the occasion, it would be, that they do not leave it this Winter. If I was to be asked for a reason, I should say because I think they ought to do so they having almost, invariably run counter to all expectation.

I begin to despair of seeing my own home this Winter, and where my Quarters will be, I can give little acct. of at this time. My love to my Sister, and the rest of the family concludes me Dr. Sir, Yr. etc.

PS. On the 20th. Instr. a Fleet of more than a hundred Sail left New York, said for England, they were Convoyed off by Admiral Byron (with 14 or 15 Sail of the line) whom it is thought will go to Boston, and take a Peep at the French fleet, to keep the Count in Port till their own Transports get a good offing.

1ol. Thomas 1resap. Probably the letter is the one dated Mar. 21, 1775, in the Washington Papers. It is printed in Hamilton's Letters to Washington, vol. V, p. 141.

2ugustine Washington.

3errard Pendergrass.