



You will oblige me very much by having *all these matters* adjusted as soon as possible, and by informing me of the result; that I may be placed upon a certainty, and conduct myself accordingly. As it will not be in my power to hold those, who offer here, in suspence more than a few days longer.

You forgot to leave me the names and grades of those Officers whose celebrity were Known in the Revolutionary War; and by expecting it, I did not charge my memory with them, and have forgot the names of those you did mention.

I have had no return of my fever, and am recovering my flesh fast, nearly a pound, and a half a day; at which rate if I should hold it for a twelve month I shall be an overmatch for Major Willis.⁹⁷

We were very glad to hear that you got safe home in the extreme hot weather you travelled from hence.

Mrs. Washington, Nelly and Washington Custis are all well, and unite in best regards and wishes for your self, Mrs. Spotswood, and the family, with Dear Sir, &c.

PS. To insure this letter's getting to you without any delay at the Post Office, I have requested Mr. Parks to send it to you by Express.

97. Francis(?) Willis.

***To REVEREND G. W. SNYDER⁷**

Mount Vernon, September 25, 1798.

Sir: Many apologies are due to you, for my not acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favour of the 22d. Ulto, and for not thanking you, at an earlier period, for the Book⁸ you had the goodness to send me.

I have heard much of the nefarious, and dangerous plan, and doctrines of the Illuminati, but never saw the Book until you were pleased to send it to me.⁹ The same causes which have prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your letter have prevented my reading the Book, hitherto; namely, the multiplicity of matters which pressed upon me before, and the debilitated state in which I was left after, a severe fever had been removed. And which allows me to add little more now, than thanks for your kind wishes and favourable sentiments, except to correct an error you have run into, of my

Presiding over the English lodges in this Country. The fact is, I preside over none, nor have I been in one more than once or twice, within the last thirty years. I believe notwithstanding, that none of the Lodges in *this* Country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the Society of the Illuminati. With respect I am &c.

***To WILLIAM RUSSELL** ¹⁶

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 8th instr. is received, and I thank you for your obliging attention to the articles promised me, when I had the pleasure of seeing you at this place.

7. Of Fredericktown (now Frederick), Md.

8. *Proofs of a Conspiracy &c*, by John Robison.

9. In a letter from Snyder (Aug. 22, 1798, which is in the *Washington Papers*), it is stated that this book "gives a full Account of a Society of Free-Masons, that distinguishes itself by the Name of 'Illuminati,' whose Plan is to overturn all Government and all Religion, even natural."

16. Of Middletown, Conn.

I will direct twenty of my best ewes to be reserved for the Ram you have kindly promised me; which, with the Chaff machine, I shall look for when an opportunity will allow you to send them.

The cause which has prevented their shipment, is very afflicting to humanity, and must be sorely felt by the City of New York, and other places under the same calamitous circumstances.

I have sent to the care of Mr. Thomas Porter of Alexandria, fifteen bushels of fine forward wheat, in five flour barrels, agreeably to your desire. Having none of my own growth that was pure and unmixed, I purchased this quantity from a neighbour of mine who raises no other kind, and am assured it is genuine.

I feel very much obliged, Sir, by your present of the Ram, and further kind intentions; for the trouble you have taken to procure the Chaff machine for me; and not less for your kind wishes, which I reciprocate with great cordiality being Sir Your etc.

To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1798.

Gentlemen: Your favour of yesterday's date is received. and enclosed are checks on the Bank of Alexandria for \$428.40 amount of payment for the lot had of Mr. D. Carroll;¹⁷ which you will please to deliver when the Conveyance is received; and \$178.57 being the third of \$535.70 to be paid for lot No. 16 in square 634 purchased from you.

17. Daniel Carroll, of "Duddington."

I feel very much obliged by the trouble you have taken in this business; and you will add considerably to the obligation, by examining Mr. Blagdins¹⁸ estimate accurately, to prevent any imposition upon me: your knowledge of prices, and perfect acquaintance in matters of this kind, will enable you to form a correct judgment of the component parts, as well as the aggregate amount of the proposed buildings, whereas my unacquaintedness in the present price of materials, Workmen's wages, &ca. &ca. might subject me (if the Undertaker was so disposed) to great imposition. I am willing to pay the full value, according to the Plan, and will sign any agreement you shall approve; relying infinitely more on your judgment in this business, than on any skill I have in it.

There is a matter I often intended to mention to the Commissioners of the City, but have always forgot to do it, when I was at their Board. Eventually it may be interesting to me, and I shall therefore do it now, as it has again occurred.

When I purchased lots No. 5. 12. 13. and 14, in square 667¹⁹ (at public sale), it was declared at the time, and I have the Surveyors sketch (without any signature however) shewing it, that they were (that is No. 12. 13. and 14) water lots. There is a street between them and the Eastern branch; and if *any*, not more than a slipe of the bank between the Street and the water. On the strength of this declaration I purchased, and paid pretty smartly for the lots; but in the evidence (received from the former Commissioners) of this purchase, nothing therein contained gives assurance of this fact, and hereafter it may become a disputable point, very much to my injury.

18. George Blagdin (Blagden). He was the builder of the two houses Washington erected on North Capitol Street.

19. Square 667 is bounded by Water, V, W, and First Streets SW.

I have troubled you with this statement, accompanied with the Surveyors sketch (to be returned) that you may be enabled to point out the measures necessary to be taken, for my surety, in this case. Indeed, it appears to me that my title to *all* the lots I have purchased from the *Public* is incomplete; having no more than certificates thereof; when, on my part the conditions have been fully complied with. With very great esteem etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To MAJOR GENERAL HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, September 29, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of yesterday's date from George Town is received.

You know perfectly well what my inducements were to part with the property you purchased of me, but rather than have any difficulty, or unpleasant disputes respecting the payments, agreeable to contract, I would take productive property in the Federal City, in Alexandria, or almost any where, or any thing productive, or unproductive, at what it would fetch in the market; provided the title is indisputable; but I protest decidedly against receiving *any* where their is the smallest pretensions of others.

As to the *present* being an unfavourable time to dispose of property in the City, or elsewhere, permit me to observe that, it is a question of very equivocal solution. The rise or fall, depends upon events, which, under present circumstances, few among us are able to penetrate, or foretell the issue. But all this is matter of opinion or speculation, and but little to the purpose.

Point out, if you please, the precise property; the precise situation of it; and, if absolutely free from any incumbrance or disputes. This will enable me to determine, at once, if there be a probability of accommodating matters in the way you propose. It is necessary I should inform you, that I have tried every expedient in my power, to obtain payment of Jesse Simms's note, but, as yet, without effect, and that, by looking to my letter of the 8th. of Sepr. Last year, you will perceive that credit was only to be given when paid.