

Robert Stewart to George Washington, February 15, 1761, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM CAPTAIN ROBERT. STEWART.

WINCHESTER 13th. Febry. 1761

MY DEAR SIR

I arrivd here the 11th Inst. after the most severe and longest Campaign I ever Serv'd and the excessive pleasure I enjoy by hearing of your welware [welfare] rises in proportion to the great uneasiness I from a dread of the reverse was long under, not only, by the uncommon Secession of your so much desir'd, till then uninterrupted, & truly valueable Correspondence, but, my not being able to learn any thing of you, and tho' I was very sensibly affected by this misfortune, an unalterable persuasion of your incapacity (without the clearest reasons) of dropping a Friendship which I esteem one of the greatest Blessings of my Life, would not suffer me even to suppose a possibility of its proceeding from any other cause, than the miscarriage of one of our Letters, and it is with inexpressibly satisfaction I find my opinion thereon so well grounded for our mutual Friend Craik tells me that you did me the favour to write to me which Letter he gave to Heath but Heath cannot recollect to whom at Pittsburgh he deliver'd it, I suspect the villainous curiosity of some mean Scoundl. for robbing me of the pleasure the rect. of it would have afforded me, nor am I free from apprehension of the many Letters I in the course of last Campaign wrote you, their having met with the same Fate, should that be the case, I flatter myself, that those generous Sentiments of Friendship, so eminently conspicuous in every part of your Behavior to me, for a space that fills a considerable share of Life, has render'd

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every Avenue to your Heart impregnable to every suspicion of neglect or Ingratitude in me, for it is with great Truth I assure you, that I never let slip one opportunity of transmitting you every occurrence which I imagin'd could in any degree entertain or amuse you —

I had resolv'd after a few Days rest to have waited on You at Mount Vernon, but I am informd that you are going to Annapolis, and is to be here soon, which frees me from the pain that would inevitably arise from asking for Leave of absence from Steps. who I'm certainly inform'd is incessantly employ'd in traversing this County and with indefatigable pains practices every method of making Interest with it's Inhabitants for Electing him their Representative in Assembly, his claims to disinterestedness, Public Spirit and genuine Patriotism are Trumpeted in the most turgid manner; it's said he will reduce these shining Virtues to practice (for it's undeniable that if his pretensions to them had ever an existence it must have been in Idea) by Introducing various Commerical Schemes, which, are to diffuse Gold & opulency thro' Frederick, and prove (I suppose) as Sovereign a Remedy against Poverty and Want as Glen's red Root was in removing hunger and imbecility from our Horses in Campaign 58 when they were destitute of Forrage and Sustenance of every kind, But however strange & chimerical these nonentity's may appear to common sense, yet by his striking out of the beaten Road he has attracted the attention of the Plebeians, whose unstable Minds are agitated by every Breath of Novelty, whims and nonsense, yet with his speculative Wealth and an immensity of Flummery he has brought over many, which and some groundless Reports gave me extreme uneasiness till I was certain that the Leaders and all the Patrician Families remains firm in their resolution of continuing for You, But tho' there is every appearance of your going with a greater Majority at the next than you did at the last Election, yet as in affairs of that Nature it is difficult to form a certain Judgement from appearances, I conceive your own presence, as soon as you can conveniently come, would highly conduce to fix it beyond the most distant doubt —

I was astonish'd to hear that Jones is suspected of becoming an opposer, But in that Event (which I can hardly believe) it would appear that he is actuated by the most selfish motives, and I'm persuaded that the cause of his opposition will be shewing your watchfull

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care for whatever might affect your Constituents, promote in place of diminishing your Interest with them — I need not tell you how happy McNeill and I are in arriving at a Juncture when the Flame of Burgessing kindles every Breast —

I hope to have the great pleasure of seeing you soon and I beg you'll be so good as to offer my Compliments. in the most respectfull and obliging Terms to Your Lady & the Children & believe me ever to be with the highest Esteem and most perfect Regard

My Dear Colonel Your most Affecte. & Most Obliged hble Servt ROBERT STEWART