

**James Hill to George Washington, August 30, 1772,
with Livestock Agreement between Joseph Valentine
and John Stratton, Letters to Washington and
Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of
the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus
Murray Hamilton.**

FROM MR. JAMES HILL.

Sunday Mornng. 30th. of August 1772

SIR

I reced your Letter from the Post office dated August 3d & it did not Come to me in several days after & yr. Directions in respect to the Tobo. coud not be complied with for I was informd that Capt Easton Had his Load so that I never Heard from him after yr. Letter came to hand & our Tobo. in New Kent happend not to be Inspected & I have had more Trouble to get it Inspected than I ever had abt. any one thing in all my Life. I offerd the Tobo. to the Inspectors in April Last & they desired me not to have it Brought for they were Quite full & Begd that I might continue the old Custom wch was when the Ship was in & sent for the Tobo. they Brought the Tobo. & had it inspected & carried of immediately & before The Inspection was out I goes three Different times to have the Tobo. inspected & they desired the overseer not to bring it for they coud Not take it they were Quite full & they sd if the Ship made it Late they woud inspect it after the Inspection was out, & when the Ship carried down the Tobo. They woud not Inspect it they sd the Law was against it & must wait to have ye Lawyers opinions & some was of oppinion they might Look at it & others to ye contrary at Last they agreed if I woud Get Mr Wallers oppinion

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they woud Inspect it wch Mr Waller readily gave as it was through there Instigations it was not Lookd at in time they ought to do it wch was done a wednesday & thursday Last, & have Purchased the overseers parts at the Cash Price wch should be Glad to know if you approve of it or not, as I had not yr. Instructions to do it I was informed it was Generally done in Mr Vallentines time—As John Vallentine was not there I left a Hhd for him & when he swore to his father's agremt with him I woud setle with him Accord gly & left word with one of the overseers to let him know if he woud take the same Price as the Rest did I woud take it the ships fleet—is to take the Ballce. tomorrow—Rockahock 9 Brick House 9 old Quarter 4 Harlows 5 Home house 11 Mill Quarter to Jacksons 6 Mallory over the Mill 2 Claibornes K Wm 14 Easten Shore 7 & 1 for New Kent in Hanover I couod not get a price to my Likeing & Shipd it on board Peterson the Hole if John Valletine let us have his is 78 Hhds. Shipd on board Peterson; I have turnd of two of the overseers the one at the white House & the other at Brick House & the two that I Intend to replace has Large families one has 6 Children & the other 5 tho they agree to take 600 wt meat & a grass beef at the fall They are two men that I am well acquainted with in respect to there Honesty which if you dont Dislike there family being two Large believe they will Answer very well tho think it my Duty to inform you before I finally agree with them, wch if you dislike will be off & get others I have agreed for 6 Sping wheels at 10/per wheel to have Sping done at Every Quarter in Bad weather & times when the wenches Lays in, & at Rockahock there is a wench that is Kept for Sping. & has been all this year asping 47lb wool & says that Mrs. Washgton orderd. that she shoud spin no more than 3lb a week & old Nanny wont Spin a thread & Says her Mistress left her only to Sew wch we have a great deal of wool to Spin from the Easten Shore for I cant sell it for more than a bit a lb & think we had better have it Spun up & wove for the wenches & children if you think Proper, & this wench Nanny has Raisd 71 Turkeys Besides other Fowls of all Sorts & Says her Mistress allows of it please to apply to her & let me have yr. Directions how to Proceed in them Particulars there is Several Old wenches that might Spin for the Estate that cant work out one on the Easten Shore that might Spin that dont work out not #d of her time only minds the Children—I send you inclosed Strattons agrmt with Vallentine in respect to the Ship on Mockon

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Island¹ which is a very Great dispute with Stratton & me he wants his 40 Ews. & to let me have the 20 & then divide the Balle. after Lettg. the man that he Put on take the Sixth Part with some the man he Put on for Lookg. after them this man was owing of Stratton money as I am informd & he agreed with this man if he woud Put on some Small Quantity that he shoud have the 6th. Part for Lookg. after them without the consent of Mr. Vallentine only the consent of Biggs wch Stratton has Bought the sheep yearly of this man untill he has got Paid as I am informd now whether I must Continue the Man & let him find Part & believe he will take the 8th. Part for Lookg. after them & is to Bring of & carry on all the Cattle & Bring of what Ever we Want of for his Living there & Ive got Jacksons Deposition in Regard to the agremt. with Stratton & Vallentine tho it was not mentiond Particularly that he Looked upon it that when Ever a Division they were to Divide Equally the other Says he will Swear the Same wch are the two witnesses to y agremt. tho Stratton Says he has three that will Swear to the Contrary tho they did not assign the agremt. as witnesses I am a going upon Receiving Yr. Answer to my Letter to the Easten Shore in order to have it finishd & the Sheep Divided as the Lambs were two Small & the weather two hot when I was over or Shoud Endeavourd to have finishd when I was over the man that is on the Island Bears the Carecter of a very Honest man tho Stratton at this time has a very Great Dislike to him & wants him turnd off his name is John Handby But from the Carrecter that other People gave him I thought to continue him if you was agreable as there must be some one to look after the Stock or they woud Be all Killd by the Watermen Stratton wants to rent the Place But I told him I chose to make tryal my Self Before we woud Rent it; as for an Invoice you wrote to me for I am at this time at a loss to know what we have in already & as you have a list of Every negro & the Invoice of what came in this Year immagined you knew Better than I did what woud Serve them tho the Calculation to Every Grown fellow & wench woud be 3 Ells of Bro Ling to Shirt or Shift, & 5 yards of Cotton to suit for a wench or fellow there is a number of the negroes that has applyd for Shirts that had but one Last year & am informd by the overseers that there Shirts was always so small in General that they were even of Little or no Service to them

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I have got a mill[w]right to come & View the mill & he Says she must Be Rebuilt that she is not Sufficient to Hold a head of water & has given me a Bill of Scantling & after I have the timber Brought in place he will work with our Carpenters at £3–15 per month till I get her done I had a notion of haveing her Patched up but he thinks its runing of a great Risk so have concluded to have her Rebuilt if you think Proper & there Will Be wantg. A pr. of Mill Stones for the wheat mill

You desire to know How our Crops are frequently when I wrote to you Before they were Extreably Likely But at this time they are much to the Contrary for we hant had a rain to wet the Ground 1½ Inches since last thursday was 4 Weeks that our Tobo has moulted Prodiouly at Bottom & fird away with the Dry weather; & they are as much to the Contrary up at the new Kent Quarters they are full Wet up there, that if there woud come Rain now in a few days it woud be of Great service both to Tobo & Corn for our Crops below,

In selling our corn below people dont care to take because I dont care to take there money by count they Say it has always been taken in that way & Others in Neighbourhood take money by count, therefore dont care to do it without you'll take it of me in the same way which is takeing Pistoreens & as the rest of the Neighbours does it, I think we had better take it in that way. for I trade but Slowly as to the Bro Ling. & Cotton I ve had no kind of Memo of what came in & I take it out the Bales no faster than we make Use of it as the Store house is much Pesterd wth Leather Salt & Iron &c. Yt. I had not Room to take the goods out only as we made Use of them, Yt. I dont know What has come in tho am Doubtfull there wont be Linning Enough as there is Several of the People that has had Shirts out as they had but one this winter which was oblige to give them another & we were short of Broad Hoes & if ye. coud not have Spared out of yr. Store us some must been oblige to abought I shoud a made an Exact List of the Hole but have been so very Ill with the fever & Ague yt I am Scarce Able at this time to set up But hope as you have an Exact List of negroes you can make out the cloathg. & tools & Nails the same Quantity as came in this year I believe will do another tho I think it a good way to have a plenty as it

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woud be Bad to buy Hose at there Extravagant Prices—& as to the other Materials I send you a list of what I can Recollect—please to Excuse my desireing you to put yr. Self to so much Trouble, I woud have waited till I got better but did not know but it might make a Material Difference with you wch was Willing to let you know how Every thing was as quick as posable & upon receiving yr. Answer if you cant conveniently do it if I Get able will let you have a list of the Hole but in case you shoud send By a Rough Draft for two much you may depend on the Greatest care Being taken of it, at a rough Calculation 896 Ells ozngs. & 544 Yds. Cotton

I have Shipd to Norfolk on board of Chrosia Graves Vessel 50 Barrels of corn from the New Kent Quarters which he tells me he can get me 14/ Cash or 15/ Apl pay & he is to Engage yours at yr. Quarter in King William & what there is to Spare at the Highest Price he can Get But did not know how to direct him in Respect to the price which you might chuse the cash or to give the Cr which you I please to inform me he is now gone to Norfolk with mine & 200 of Mr. Foster Webbs Mr. George Webb wants him to take his but I had engaged him—& he tells me Colo. Bassett has gone to Norfolk to make Sail of his I cant Get more for the Easten Shore corn than 13/6 & that Mr. Wilkins who Lives very near the Place has offerd & have waited a great while in order to see if it woud not Rise, the Market, but dont perceive it does in any other way than as I write you above what Narrow Hoes you send for Please to write for them to be Larger for they are so small that they are of Little or no Service being so very Sick ant able to write any more

& conclude Yr. Mo. Hble Servt. JAMES HILL PS I wanted to a known if you woud chuse yt. I shoud Buy wheat at 5/ per Bushl. for what we shall Want to Sew after Sewg. what the Estate makes or to make Tobo. untill we can Raise Grain of our own.—

Likewise if I must dispose of the oats upon the Easten Shore or Intend Yrs. for yr. own Use

1 An Agreement made between Joseph Valentine and John Stratton that the Aforesd. Joseph Valentine is to put on Twenty Ewes and John Stratton forty Ewes for which they are to have the Wool of their Own Sheep the first year and Ever after to Divide Equally as long as they Can Agree and the Afore said John Stratton is to put on Twenty One head of Cattle for Which he is to find Water and Pasturage for the same & to Carry on and Bring off

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and Kill all Cattle that shall be Wanted Carried Or Kill'd by James Biggs and the aforsaid John Stratton is to have Liberty to put on any person or persons whom he shall Chuse. JOSEPH VALENTINE JOHN STRATTON, SEAL
Test by WILLIAM JACKSON WILLIAM BIGGS