

James Tilghman Jr. to George Washington, April 7, 1774, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM JAMES TILGHMAN, JR., ESQ. ¹

PHILADELPHIA 7th.. April 1774

DEAR SIR

The Reason of my not giving a speedier Answer to yours of the 17th.. February,² was owing to my being out of Town when it arrived. I have had some Conversation upon the Subject of it with some of the Gentlemen in the Palatine Trade, and shall think myself fortunate, if any Information that I can give, may be of the least Service to You in the Affair. I have talked about it particularly with Mr. Robert Morris, whose Judgment in a Matter of this Nature I would rely upon sooner than that of any Man I know. His Opinion is against your sending out a Ship for Palatines for the following Reasons, which to me, appear good.

The Expence of chartering a Ship, and the Money that must be advanced in the purchase of the Servants/ for We are not allowed to send any Thing from hence to Holland/ would be exceeding high, and the Loss to which the Importer is subject by their dying is often very great and always considerable; their being crowded together a great Number of them in a Ship makes contagious Disorders frequent amongst them, which often carry off great Numbers of them, especially if they happen to have a tedious passage. But granting no Accident of this Sort should happen, Mr: Morris is of Opinion that you may purchase them

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in Philadelphia upon much better Terms than you can import them. The Reason of it is this; the People here generally prefer the Children to the Men and Women, so that the latter are commonly left upon the Importers Hands after the former are all sold, and as the Expence of maintaining them is very heavy, they are willing to get rid of them upon any Terms. Mr: Morris told Me that the last Fall he would have sold thirty or forty Families such as you want for one half what they cost him. Another Advantage in purchasing here, is that you may get 12 or 18 Month's Credit for the Payment of them. Mr: Morris thinks the Trade so troublesome and precarious, that he has declined it but was kind enough to tell Me that he would gladly give his Advice and Assistance in procuring them upon the easiest Terms, which I know will be very much in his Power, should you conclude to purchase here; or should you determine rather to import them yourself, he will in that Case, supply you with necessary and full Directions on that Head.

I have passed but a gloomy Winter in Philadelphia; my Disorder was more deeply rooted than I at first imagined. I am now tolerably well recovered; the sweet Spring seems to have brought Me a fresh Supply of Hea[l]th & Spirits, and I hope shortly to be once more Myself. My Happiness is still increased by the agreeable Prospect that I have of shortly seeing all my Friends in Virginia, I shall leave Philadelphia in a Week, and in one Week more hope to pay a Visit to Mount Vernon. be good enough to present my best Compt. to Mrs: Washington, Mr: & Mrs: Custis, & Mr: L. Washington, and believe Me

Most Respectfully & Sincerely Yrs: JAMES TILGHMAN JUNR:

1 Born at "The Hermitage," on Chester River, Maryland, December 6, 1716. Mr. Tilghman began the practice of law in Annapolis, but in 1760 moved to Philadelphia. In 1765, he accepted the position of secretary of the Land Office of Pennsylvania. During the Revolution he was arrested as a loyalist, but was released on parole. Later the parole was removed, and he died at his home in Chestertown, Md., August 29, 1793. He was the brother of Matthew Tilghman, and father of William and Tench Tilghman.

2 The draft of this letter is bound with the manuscript letters to Washington. DR SIR I am going to give you a little trouble because I am persuaded you will excuse it.—No good reason you'll say, but the best I can offer for such a liberty.—Interested, as well as political Motives, render it necessary for me to seat the Lands which I have Patented on the Ohio in the Cheapest, most expeditious, & effectual manner; many expedients have been proposed to accomplish this, & none in my judgement, so likely as by Importing of Palatines: but how to do this, upon the best terms, is a question I wish to be resolved in.—Few of these kind of People ever come to Virginia; whether because it is out of the common course of its Trade, or because they people they themselves object to it

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I know not am unable to determine. I shall take it very kind of you, therefore to let me know resolve the following questions, which I am persuaded you can do with precision, by enquiring of these such Gentlemen as have been engaged in this business;— Whether there is any difficulty in getting them in Holland?—What the difficulty proceeds from & from whence does this it ?—Whether they are to be had at one season of the year, readier than another & what season? all times or at particular reason only, & when—Whether they are engagd previous to the [illegible word erased] sending for them, & in what manner?—or do ships take their Chance after getting there? Upon what terms are they generally engaged there?—and how much pr. Poll do they generally commonly stand the Importer, Landed at Phila. Is it Customary to send an Intelligent German in the ship that is to bring these Palatines?—Does Vessells ever go immediatly to Holland for them, and if they do, what Cargo's [do they] carry? or, are they, to go round, & what round,—In short, what what Plan would be recommended to me by the knowing ones, to me; as best to Import a ship full freight, say two or three hundred, or more, to Alexandria?—in case when of a full freight how are the numbers generally proportiond to the Tonnage of a Vessell?— Your favour in having these sevl. Queries answerd, with any other Information which you may think necessary for me to be inform'd [of] I shall gratefully receive as as I am totally unacquainted with every thing of the kind.— The hard & continued Frost since ye m of J [month of January] has confind every body to their own homes, so that I have nothing new to entertain you with.—Wheat in Alexa. has been in brisk demand all the year & kept almost invariably at 57 per Bushl.—Flour has also met with a pretty ready Sale at 1276 at 127.—Jack Custis could not be content till he had got a Yoke fellow in Miss Nelly Calvert to whom he was Married, the 3d. Inst. I hope tho you have remov'd from us, this part of the world you do not mean to forsake us altogether and that it is unnecessary to add, that I shall at all times be happy in seeing of you at this place.—My best respects attend your good Father, Sisters & Brother's, & with very sincere regard I remain Dr Sir Yr.