

George Washington to Stephen Moylan, August 12, 1779, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.

***To COLONEL STEPHEN MOYLAN**

West-point, August 12, 1779.

Dear Sir: Mrs. Moylans illness will readily obtain my consent to your being absent from the army a fortnight provided a movement of the enemy should not require your presence sooner. General Howe¹ should be made acquainted with your absence. The sum you speak of as having expended for secret Services surprizes me exceedingly, because I do not call to mind ever having empowered you to lay out money for such purposes, nor do I recollect ever to have received any intelligence of an extraordinary nature differing in any respect from that which every Officer at an advanced post, or removed from the main army regularly obtained (by his own observation and industry or from the Inhabitants) and transmitted to head Qrs; and because the sum exceeds the aggregate of the charges of all the other Officers of the line for Services of this kind, although some of them have been appointed for, and have attended particularly to this business. Under these circumstances and as a public Officer, my duty obliges me to call for such an acct. as will justify my conduct in ordering payment.² With regard and esteem I am, &c.

1en. Robert Howe. He had his quarters at Salem, N. Y., which was in the northeast corner of Westchester County, near the Connecticut line.

2oylan's letter of August 13, from Greenwich, Conn. (he had conducted his secret service activities from Pound Ridge, Conn.), shows that he assumed his orders to be somewhat perpetual, as he asserted that he had Washington's orders "when I parted from you at Ziddlebrook, to lay out money to gain intelligence ... the Countermarch of the army from the Clove in that year [1779] I realy thought was occasioned by the information

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I had given your Excellency. if my word is not a Sufficient voucher to the public, I assure your Excellency I will not nor cannot give any other, and if I ever do get what I have laid out I do not think, from the depreciation of the money that I shall be paid half what in justice I am intitled to." Zoylan's letter is in the Washington Papers.