

Letter # 1

For
Mr. Jacob Michaux
On James River
Cumberland County
Favour of Capt. Walker with Goods to be Delivd
By Robt. Walker

Dear S^r.,

I received yours [pr.?] Capt. Ashburne and am extremely glad to hear of you and your Familys good Health. I have several particulars to acquaint you as to the Alteration in our Family. My Wife's Father Mr. James Michaux Died about six weeks ago at the Age of 70 years he was Ill a long time before he died. His eldest Son Paul died about 12 Months ago and his Wife much about the same time and left 5 Children three Girls and two Boys, the eldest about [8?] years and the youngest about 3 months. I took the Youngest Boy William and different relations of the Mothers side took three Others. the Youngest is at Nurse in London. My Wifes Eldest Sister Nancy has lost a Daughter (Elizabeth) at about 18 years old, these are all the Particulars that has happened since we wrote before. I regretted the loss of Mr. Payne as I was in hopes of his returning to his native Country living to see many happy years and acquainting you with our Situation. I went to see him 2 or 3 Days before he died, he was very glad to see me but was won[?] to a Shadow he seem'd quite resigned for I Believe he was a good young Man, he, myself and wife often used to sit and talk about all he knew of Your Family's which we heard with Pleasure but hope he is in a far happier Place now; in a Former letter I received from you twas your desire that we might have some Correspondence together in the Mercantile way which I dare say might be made very Advantageous to us both but since that time there has been so many Political [Disputes?] that Trade has been very Indifferent and hazardous, but now I think every thing seems to subside and there is every Probability to imagine twill be very brisk, for which Reasons I have Ship'd pr Capt Robert Walker of the Randolph (who goes up James River) Different European goods as pr Invoice, which I thought wou'd suit your part of the Country I have Charg'd every Article as they Cost with the different Expenses, from which you'll be able to see whether twill be worth while to extend our Connections. The Silk Goods are made in my House and are therefore Cheaper than they can be sent by the [Merch^t.?] but if these

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[sort?] are not so suitable as Others, if You'll Please to send word I can send any Quantity of what you'll think more suitable but then Particulars and the manner of Remittance shall be glad you'll Inform me of the first Opportunity possible, the Mercantile Business is what I should be very fond of Provided your Answer will encourage me to pursue it in an Extensive manner, the Article of wrought Silks I should

make a particular Object as the manufactory is carried on in my own home and Sewing Silk I could send on more Advantageous Terms than they are because I should Dye them my self as for every other Article would send what you think will sell best and make the return the soonest, I hope you'll be able to understand every thing because I'm not acquainted with this Business therefore beg you'll Excuse my fault think as Your Different Relations are Despond[?] about the Country we might be able to doe a great Deale for the Spirit of Trade is to pursue it with Ardour, and hope twil be the means of bringing a Family Intimate that has been Sepperated so many Years, and I sometimes think I should be able to do my self the Pleasure of Coming to see you if twas Possable to spare the time my wife and my relation Join in Love to all the Family and believe me to remain Yours Affectionately

Wm. Tompkins

[red Lyon?] Street
Spittlefield
[5?] March 1771

Letter # 2

[Address copied from bottom of Page 4]

[neerly?] a Copy Letter
To
Mr. William Tompkins
Red lion Street Spittlefields
London

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D[ear] S[ir] This will give you the disagreeable Acct. of the loss of your Good before they came to hand it so hapened that two or three days after they were landed at a Publick store at one of the convenientest Ports to me there came the greatest fresh in the River by far that was ever h[?] so great that it carried off all or almost all the Houses that ware built neer the River for receiving goods from the Shipping &^c many of our Tob^o. Warehouses & many Thousand Hh^d. of Tob^o. & several Stores full of Goods ware carried off down the Stream the houses gen[er]ally broak to pieces & the goods ware scatted along the River fo[r] many Miles many of the goods when found ware looked on as a Prize by the finders & but a very few came to the use of the proper owners, this was the fate of yours the house they ware landed in was carried off & though that house continued unbroak till it wint 20 or 30 Miles down the River then [torn] of Negroes & others no better went to the house & got out the things (in the spiled condition they ware

in after lying in the water about a night & a Day) part of which I received which were delivered up to me & part found by a search Warrant & many things that I have no

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[torn] came to their hand, I could not find to the amount of near 60 £ sterling they charged 20 £ for taking up the goods & their trouble for drying them &^c which I had [a]greed to pay before I knew there was so many missing the reward they took out of the Goods I have some expectation of Proving that they did receive more of the good, then they have delivered me which if I can as they have demanded & received such a reward expect it will make them liable for what are missing I shall advise with an Attorney & if he gives encouragement^t shall bring a Suit hope & to recover something however I expect to make but little out of the goods they are so damaged The Silks are so stained & spoiled they are quite unsaleable for which reason, I should send back part of them to you except a few pieces which if I can sell for first cost[?] think it will be better than to send them back the People that [torn] up cut some off almost every piece & [torn] missing I shall endeavor to make the best I can of what I have but that will be but little for they are all much damaged & the goods missing are such as the takers thought the best[?] part no doubt The Silks Embroidered Coat Necklace &^c were very improper for this part of the country for the inhabitants of these

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Parts are generally poor no towns near us the best livers here are only able to get the common necessities & conveniences of Life without aiming at Shew or superfluities those that incline that way generally brake in a few Years & become the Poorest[t?] I have no doubt our way of living here is very different from what you that live in a Capital City can imagine I wish I could ever see You here provided it could be to Your advantage but don't expect that ever will be Your way of life will never do amongst us & as to the Mercantile business I expect that will never be inviting The first attempt seems discouraging to You & as to my self my schemes for life have been for some years fixed on another plan for which reason on the receiving your Let^r. I concluded I would sell your goods in the best manner I could on a reasonable commission for my trouble & write you not to send any more but as there is such a loss in these I shall not charge You any thing for what I shall do for Your loss will be great at any rate. I should send some of the Silks by Capⁿ. Walker but don't know that I can have an opportunity to contrive them to the Ship before he will Sail the ship lies fifty miles from me & I don't know as yet what I can sell therefore think it will be better [t]o wait for a other opportunity & sell what I can first__

There is no material alteration among our relations here the great is in our estate some are much damaged by the fresh I have lost I think to the value of about 5 or 6 hundred pounds worth in houses & other plantation affairs.

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I have now three children and another near at hand we seem to be in way of adding one to the family almost ever year the oldest will be about four years old when we expect to have four in number there is no great alteration amongst the rest of our relations here the greatest is in our Estates occasioned by the fresh lately I have lost I think in houses and plantation affairs to the amount of About five or six hundred pounds & don't expect to make provision plenty for my family this next year though I [yoused?] to make something considerable to spare

[End of letter]