

PRIMARY SOURCE

GEORGE WASHINGTON TO BURWELL BASSETT, JR. AUGUST 11, 1799

Dear Sir,

Mount Vernon (11 August) 1799

1 Sometime between *illegible*ment to the walks of *illegible* girl*, the body servant of
2 Mrs Washington, absconded without the least provocation and without our having
3 *illegible* suspicion of such, her intention *illegible* whither she had gone.

4 At length, we learnt *illegible* got to Portsmouth in New Hampshire; in consequence of this
5 information *illegible* authentic) I wrote to the Collector of the Port, Mr Whipple requesting
6 *illegible* use proper means to restore her to her Mistress. At first, according to *illegible* she
7 appeared willing to return: *illegible* the Vessel in which she was to *illegible* about to sail, she
8 concealed *illegible* one difficulty and delay *illegible*ther, so as to keep her Mistress
9 *illegible* Services until this time.

10 If, under this statement of *illegible* intention (as declared when here) of *illegible* Portsmouth,
11 you could by any easy *illegible*self & proper means, be the *illegible* of recovering, &
12 forwarding the *illegible* place, it would be a pleasing circumstance to your Aunt.

13 I do not however wish you to undertake anything, that may involve *illegible* unpleasant, or
14 troublesome *illegible*. The girl, as we have been *illegible* was enticed away by a Frenchman,
15 *illegible* her, she was willing to come back; but *illegible* other connexions, wanted *illegible*
16 conditions to her return, afterwards.

17 This I could not *then*, nor will I agree to; further than that, if she put's me to no unnecessary
18 trouble and expence; and conduct's herself well for the time *illegible* she will escape
19 punishment for the *illegible*, & be treated according to her merit's *illegible*. To promise *more*,
20 would be an impolitic & dangerous precedent. Your Aunt unites with me in best wishes for
21 you; and I am—Dear Sir Your obedt & Affecte Servant

22 Go: Washington

23 *She went by the name of Oney Judge

*This is a transcript from Founders Online. Because the letter is torn and faded, many of the words are not readable.

Citation: “From George Washington to Burwell Bassett, Jr., 11 August 1799,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/06-04-02-0197>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 4, *20 April 1799–13 December 1799*, ed. W. W. Abbott. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999, pp. 237–238.]

your intention, as declared (what here) of
leaving Portsmouth, you could by any way
and in yourself, & proper means, be the
in the way of recovery, & forwarding it
to the place, it would be a pleasant
consequence to your Aunt. —

I do not however wish you to
undertake any thing, that may involve
yourself in a displeasur, or troublesome
situation. — The girl, as we have been
informed, was whisked away by a Footman
of the Regt. he left her, she was willing to come
back, but for any other occasions, was
not to have a provision to her return, &c.
This I could not bear, nor will
I ever do, further than that, if she put
me to any necessary trouble, and expense,
I will not be bound to pay for it, & if
she should ever be punished, I shall
not be treated accordingly, to her present
situation. — To promise more, would be
to contradict the diagnos precedent. —

Your Aunt writes with me in
high wishes for you, and I am — Dear Sir
I am, Sir, your obed^t & aff^o Servant
James Oglethorpe Esq^r E. M. Oglethorpe

86
The
Aunt
of
the
girl
is
writing
to
you

[Faint, illegible handwriting, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

Received of Mrs. J. B. 25
11.8.1899

Recd of Treasurer 2/19/1899

Dear Sir,

Handwritten note in left margin, possibly "Lancaster" and "Wagon".

London, 18th Nov 1898
As at the middle of private life, and
first, the body is at all times
abandoned without the least
and without our living from
pieces of our, can take a long
with the sea had gone.

at length, we cannot
got to Portsmouth in 1898
concern of this information
authentic) I wrote to the
Bot, & Whipple, requesting
a proper means to restore
Mistake - at first, according
the appeared wrong to return
the vessel is which she was
about to sail, she concealed
readiness to and delay for
than, so as to keep her
services until this time.

I enclose this statement of...

W. H. Whipple