

PETITION TO THE GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA FROM THE INHABITANTS OF  
KASKASKIA, May 4, 1781

[M. C., T. MSS.—A. D. S.]

A Son Excellence Mr. Le Gouverneur de Virginie &c., &c., &c.

Supplient très humblement Les habitants des KasKasKias Illinois et ont L'honneur de Vous représenter très respectueusement qu'ils auroient reçu Mr. Le Colonel Clark et ceux qui L'accompagnoient avec tout Le zelle possible en arrivant dans ce paÿs, espérant Jouir Comme nos Compatriotes d'une Vraÿe Liberté comme il nous La assuré

Les Suppliantes, ont fourni toute Les provisions necessaires aux troupes a un prix assez modique, qui leurs ont été payées avec une monnoye de Cartes et Lettres de change qu'il nous a dit valoir des piastres Espagnolles avec lequel argent nont pû avoir leurs Besoins ny en faire aucun employ et usage par Consequent nous est resté entre les mains de nulle Valleur quant à Cela nous navons aucune plaintes contre Led<sup>t</sup> Sieur Clark; qui nous a laissé Sous le commandement des Mr. M<sup>t</sup>Gomery duquel nous allons faire Le detail de Son administration. a estéourny soixante Milliers de farine au moins a Comptér depuis

[*Translation.*]

To his Excellency, the Governor of Virginia, etc., etc.

The inhabitants of Kaskaskia in Illinois very humbly pray, and have the honor to make known to you that they received Colonel Clark and those, who accompanied him, with all the zeal possible, when the latter arrived in this country, because they hoped to enjoy, as do our fellow-citizens, a true liberty as had been promised to them.

The suppliants have furnished all the necessary provisions for the troops at a price sufficiently moderate, which provisions were paid for in a paper-money and letters of exchange which Colonel Clark told us were equal in value to Spanish *piastres*; and with this money [those who received it] were not able to procure what they needed or to make any use of it. Consequently it remained on our hands, since it was of no value. In regard to this we have no complaint to make against the said M. Clark, who left us under the command of M. Montgomery, of whose administration, we shall give a detailed account.

He was furnished with sixty thousand pounds of flour at least, counting from the autumn of the year 1779 until the month of May,

Lautonne mil sept cent Soixante dix neuf, Jusques au mois de may mil Sept cent quatre vingt, qui Estoit tout ce qui pouvoit Estre ôté cela Estoit plus que Suffisant pour la Subsistance de trente huit hommes de troupe y compris Les officiers, puis quil en à traité pour Son propre compte sur la Rive Espagnolle; non content de Cela, à donné des ordres à Sa troupe dailler de maison en maison armée, pour prendre de force ce quils trouveroient de farine.

a fait tuér à Coups de mousquet dans Les Rues à la porte des granges et même dans les Cours quantité de nos animaux domestiques, toutes fois et quantes le Caprice luy dictoit, malgré Les fournitures de Viande à luy faites, alors les Suppliants luy ont représenté quil les ruinoit totalement et que ce nestoit plus Jouir de La Liberté qui leur Estoit promise par L'honorable Colonel Clark chargé disoit-il des Estats unis de Lamerique; Sa reponse fût, que sil y avoit quelqu'unes de mécontents, quils pouvoient Se préparer à tenir leurs armes en Estat et que luy et Sa troupe Estoit tous pretes apparamment quil Vouloit faire main Casse sur nous ce que nous avons souffert Patiamment.

M<sup>r</sup> Le Colonel M<sup>t</sup>Gomery à fait une Infinité dinsultes aux habitants

[*Translation.*]

1780, which was all that could be collected. It was more than enough for the maintenance of thirty-eight troopers, including the officers, since he traded therewith on his own account on the Spanish shore. Not satisfied with this he ordered his troops to go, under arms, from house to house in order to seize by force what flour they could find.

He has caused to be shot, in the streets, before the barn-doors, and even in the very yards, a number of our domestic animals, at all times and whenever caprice dictated, in spite of the supplies of meat that had been given him. When the suppliants showed him that he was totally ruining them and that this was no longer the enjoyment of that liberty that had been promised to them by the honorable Colonel Clark, who was commissioned, as he said, by the United States of America, his answer was that, if there were any who were dissatisfied, they could prepare themselves to keep their weapons in condition, and that he and his troop were all ready.<sup>1</sup> Apparently he was willing to slaughter us all, and this is the kind of treatment we have suffered patiently.

Colonel Montgomery has continuously insulted the inhabitants of

<sup>1</sup> For this threat, see *ante*, p. 150.

de ce paÿs qui apres avoir imploré sa Clemence Les à reçûs Brusquement alors ils ont demandé à la Cour civile de Sommer ce Commandant de donner un Estat de la troupe qui Composoit Sa Garnison ce quil à Refusé malgré nos Justes et soumises representations il nous a traité d'impertinents; il navoit garde de Se Soustraire a la demande du peuple, puisquil nourrissoit aux dépens du publique, quantité de familles y compris enfants et Esclaves qui navoient aucun rapport avec la garnison.

ah quil Est douloureux à un peuple aussy bien soumis et porté disclination a S unir avec Lamerique; de Se Voir frustris aussy injustement; par des personnes qui Estoit a tous Egards obligés de prendre Leurs Interets; pour recompense, il leur est resté Seulement des papiers dont on ne peut faire aucun usage, tandis que ceux qui Estoit en place sils avoient voulu accomplir leur promesse auroient fait honneur avec des marchandises cela auroit Epargné quantité de fraix aux habitants pour leur procurer La rentrée des fonds de ce papier, et nauroient point Couru de risques dans un Circuit de Chemin aussy dangereux par Rapport aux Barbares d'autant mieux que Lestat de Virginie ne Seroit plus reliquataire envers eux

[*Translation.*]

this country, who, after having implored his clemency, received such insults impatiently. Then they demanded that the civil court summon the commandant to give an account of the condition of the troops that composed his garrison. This he refused to do in spite of our just and humble representations. He treated us as impertinent. He was careful not to submit to the demand of the people, since he was feeding, at the public expense, a number of families, including children and slaves, who had no connection whatever with the garrison.<sup>1</sup>

Ah! how grievous it is for a people, so submissive and anxious to unite with America, to see themselves frustrated so unjustly by persons who were bound by every tie to protect their interests. As a recompense, there remained in their hands only some papers, with which they can do nothing, while those who were in authority, if they had wished to fulfill their promises, should have honored these with merchandise. This would have spared great expense to the inhabitants in procuring for them the payment of the principal of this paper-money; and they would not have had to run risks over roads so dangerous because of the Indians; and still better the State of Virginia would no longer be their debtor.

<sup>1</sup> The papers referred to are printed *ante*, pp. 136, 140.

après tous ces faits Reiterés Le dit sieur M<sup>t</sup>Gomery s'est retiré et nous a laissé Sous le Commandement de M<sup>r</sup> Rogers, qui nous a reduit dans la plus triste scituation Ce Second à pareillement fait tuér tous nos animaux comme avoit cy devant fait Le dit Sr. M<sup>t</sup>Gomery

A fait prendre le bois de Chauffage dans les Cours des habitants a force darmes, où l'un des enfants d'un magistra à Voulu luy représenter poliment quils ne devoient pas prendre d'autorité; alors ce commandant de Concert avec Mr. Dodge Lont fait emprisonné et menacé Le pere de pareille punition.

Enfin voufant Jouer de Son reste à Vendu et brulé en partie tous les pieux, ruiné tous les bâtiments d'un fort appartenant à des Citoyens de cet endroit, après toutes ces molestations, à Ecrit à la Cour civile, Etablié par Mr. Le Colonel tood, conformément aux Loix de L'honorable assemblés de Virginie, une Lettre diffamatoire disant quil Casseroit toute la magistrature et fouleroit aux pieds, sils ne vouloient pas rendre Justice a Mr. Bentley qui à refusé le Serment de fidelité ainsy quil Est prescrit par L'acte de lad<sup>te</sup> assembléc.

[*Translation.*]

After all these acts, which we have mentioned, the said M. Montgomery went away and left us under the command of M. Rogers, who reduced us to the saddest condition. This second commandant has also caused all our animals to be killed as had been done before by the said M. Montgomery.

He has caused the firewood to be forcibly seized in the very yards of the inhabitants. When one of the children of a magistrate saw fit to inform him politely that he had no right to take it, this commandant, acting with M. Dodge, had this child put in prison, and they threatened the father with a similar punishment.

In short, wishing to play to the limit, he sold and partially burned all the pickets and tore down all the structure of a fort belonging to some citizens of this place. After all these impositions he wrote to the civil court, established by Colonel Todd according to the laws of the honorable Assembly of Virginia, a defamatory letter, saying that he would abolish the magistracy and crush it under his feet, if the magistrates did not wish to render justice to M. Bentley, who had refused to take the oath of allegiance as is prescribed by the act of the said Assembly.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, pp. 206, 211.

Il convient d'eclaircir Son Excellence des promesses qui ont Eté faites aux suppliants par Le Sieur dodge proposé à Leffet pour payer les fournitures faites aux troupes de Lestat, en marchandises à bonne composition, bien loins d'y satisfaire puis qu'il a servy dinstrument pour autorizer les plus grandes Vexations.

Mr. Le Colonel de la Blame Venant du Congrès muni d'une Commission dinspecteur général de toute La Cavallerie dans Lamerique avec une Lettre de recommandation adressée aux suppliants, par Mr. fauler, qui Estoit cy devant notre Commandant, à present officier dans le service ameriquain au fort Pite, Laditte Lettre en datte du 25 Juin 1780; a Levé des volontaires pour allér au detroit combatre Lennemy et a trouvé apropos avec Laprobation de Mr. M<sup>t</sup>Gomery de prendre Le Pavillon françois pour se mettre à Labry des Insultes des Indiens mal Intentionnés, toutes les dépensés faites pour cette Expedition, ont Eté aux frais des habitants et non a ceux de Lestat; Le Malheur à Voulu quil ait Eté defait après un coup Glorieux, notre confiance Estoit en luy puis quil Estoit chargé de nos affaires.

[*Translation.*]

It is fitting to enlighten your Excellency concerning the promises which were made to the suppliants by M. Dodge, who proposed to pay for the supplies, furnished the troops of the state, in merchandise on good terms; but he has been very far from giving satisfaction in this, since he served as an instrument to authorize the greatest vexations.

Colonel de la Balme, who came from Congress, provided with a commission of inspector general of all the cavalry in America, and with a letter of recommendation, dated June 25, 1780, addressed to the suppliants by M. Fowler, who was formerly our commandant and, at present, an officer in the American service at Fort Pitt, has mustered some volunteers in order to go to Detroit to fight the enemy. He found it of advantage, with the approbation of M. Montgomery, to take the French flag so as to be protected against the attacks of hostile Indians. All the expenses of this expedition were at the cost of the inhabitants and not at the cost of the state. Fortune decreed that he should be defeated after a glorious achievement. Our confidence was in him, since he was intrusted with our affairs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The papers are printed in chap. v.

M<sup>rs</sup> Rogers et dodge nous ont attribué un Crime en ce que Les Suppliants avoient Chargé a M<sup>r</sup> d'un Ecrit adressé au ministre de france à filadelfie dans Lequel ils le prient de Sinteresser pour eux au Congrès comme il est àproximité et prendre même Leurs Interests pour mettre fin aux torts qui leurs Etoient fait par la troupe de Virginie

tous ces mauvais traitements Sont La Cause que de nos meilleurs habitants Se Sont Retirer Sous le gouvernement Espagnol, Et d'autre qui attendent Votre Justice, préférant Les Loix despagne; a la tyranyè et despotisme quils ont Souffert de la part de Vos Gens.

A ces Causes et autres à Supplier de droit Les Suppliants Recourent à Vôtre Excellence à ce Qu'il Luy Plaise Examiner Leur Estat déplorable et Comme ils sont reduit par des gens quils regardent Comme leurs Compatriotes, ainsy quil leur avoit Eté assuré dont ils se Sont trouvés déchûs par quantité de Calamitees Jusques au départ de Mr. Rogers Commandant; En Consequence ils Esperent que pareille monopolle ne Regnera plus chez eux a lavenir leur rendrés Justice du passé et ils

[*Translation.*]

MM. Rogers and Dodge accused the suppliants of committing a crime, because they entrusted to M. [de la Balme] a writing addressed to the minister of France at Philadelphia, in which they prayed him to act for their interests in Congress, as he was near, and to attempt to put a stop to the wrongs which were being practiced against them by the troops of Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

All these acts of tyranny are the causes that our best inhabitants have withdrawn to the Spanish government, and others, who were expecting your justice, prefer Spanish laws to the tyranny and despotism which they have suffered at the hand of your people.<sup>2</sup>

On account of these causes and others, the suppliants have, in accordance with justice, come to your Excellency to petition that it may please you to examine their deplorable condition and how they are reduced by those persons whom they regarded as their fellow-citizens, as they had been assured, and by whom they found themselves oppressed by all sorts of calamities up to the time of the departure of M. Rogers, commandant. Consequently, they hope that a similar monopoly of powers will no longer reign, in the future, amongst them, and that you

<sup>1</sup> See *ante*, p. 189.

<sup>2</sup> This exodus began as early as 1779, was greatly accelerated after 1787, and continued till the end of the century. *Ill. Hist. Collections*, ii., consult Index under "emigration."

ne Cesseront de prier Pour La Conservation des precieux Jours de Votre Excellence

CHARLEVILLE PERE	ANTOINE JANIS	FR CORSET
DANIEL BLOUIN	LACHANSE	BARUTEL
ANTOINE BUYAT	FR. CHARLEVILLE	LONVAL
NICOLA LA CHANSE	BTE LACHANSE	LOUIS BRAZAUZ
JEAN BAPTISTE BAUVAIS	LOUIS BUYAT	JEAN CHOISSER
PIERRE PRENO	ANTOINE BAUVAIS	VITALE BAUVAIS
MARIANE CONANTE	C DANIS	GODIN
CHARLES CHARLEVILLE	LOUIS LONVAL	BTE CHARLEVILLE
JEAN BAPTISTE JANIS	AIMÉ BUYAT	A MORIN
VEUVE DELISLE	FRANCOIS JANIS	JANIS
PELTIER FILS	ANTOINE PELTIER	
Marque de JEAN LARUE	Marque de HENRY RELHIER	
“ “ MICHEL PELTHIE	“ “ MORENSIS	

[Translation.]

will render them justice for the past; and they will not cease to pray for the preservation of the precious days of your Excellency.

CHARLEVILLE SR.	ANTOINE BAUVAIS
DANIEL BLOÛIN	C. DANIS
ANTOINE BUYAT	LOUIS LONVAL
NICOLAS LACHANSE	AYMÉ BUYAT
JEAN BAPTISTE BAUVAIS	FRANÇOIS JANIS
PIERRE PRENO.	ANTOINE PELLETIER
MARIANE CONANTE.	FR. CORSET
CHARLES CHARLEVILLE	BARUTEL
JEAN BAPTISTE JANIS	LONVAL
WIDOW DELISLE	LOUIS BRAZEAUX.
PELLETIER JR.	JEAN CHOISSER
ANTOINE JANIS	VITAL BAUVAIS
LACHANSE	GODIN
FR. CHARLEVILLE	BAPTISTE CHARLEVILLE
BAPTISTE LACHANSE	A. MORIN
LOUIS BUYAT	JANIS
Mark of JEAN LA RUE	Mark of HENRY RELHIER
“ “ MICHEL PELTHIE	“ “ MORANCY

