

THE SELECTED PAPERS OF  
**Charles Willson Peale**  
AND HIS FAMILY

VOLUME 1 *Charles Willson Peale: Artist in  
Revolutionary America, 1735–1791*

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MAY 28, 1774

1. Sellers connects CWP's Whig politics and the award of money for his painting, stating that Ridout seems to have "engineered" it. Ridout, however, was a member of the Court party and not at all sympathetic to Whig radicalism, while Eden, beneath a conciliatory surface, was busily engaged in raising a paramilitary loyalist association. Unless Ridout and Governor Eden were using the acceptance of the painting as a smoke screen to cover up their own political machinations, it is more likely that such Whig members of the Assembly as William Paca "engineered" the payment. Sellers is undoubtedly correct, however, in assigning this episode to CWP's career as a politician. Charles Coleman Sellers, "Virginia's Great Allegory of William Pitt," *WMQ*, 3d ser. 9 (1952):65; *CWP*, p. 110; Ronald Hoffman, "The 'Disaffected' in the Revolutionary South," in *The American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*, ed. Alfred F. Young (DeKalb, Ill., 1976), p. 281.

## 69. CWP to Elie Valette<sup>1</sup>

WILLIAMSBURG. MAY 28, 1774

Williamsburg 28 May 1774

Sir

Mrs. Peale is in want of money, if it is convenient you will oblige me very much in paying her the ballance, *(or at least enough for me)* which you will find stated at the bottom, or should it not be convenient to pay *(the whole)* to that amount amediately, as much as will pay the House Rent, and the remainder at a more convenient Time,<sup>2</sup> I hope you will not think this request unreasonable as necessity obliges the importunity of Sir your very

Humble Servant  
C W Peale

The picture 36 *(15)* Guineas  
Cash R:d £20 current Moy  
To Mr. Ellie Vallette

ALS, 1p.

PPAmP: Peale-Sellers Papers—Letterbook 1

1. Elie Valette (1734–80) was register of the prerogative office of Maryland in 1765, and the following year, deputy commissioner of Anne Arundel County. Peale painted his portrait (*private collection*) soon after Valette's book, *The Deputy Commissary's Guide within the Province of Maryland*, was published in 1774. *P&M*, p. 213; Papenfuse Files.

2. Valette seems to have ignored this letter, for on September 8, 1774, Peale inserted a warning to "E.V." in the *Maryland Gazette* that unless his bill was paid, his name would be published in the next issue of the paper. Valette treated the threat coolly, for again, on September 15 and 22, CWP inserted a notice:

MR. ELLIE VALETTE, PAY ME FOR PAINTING YOUR  
FAMILY PICTURE.

CHARLES PEALE

On September 22, the *Gazette* carried the following answer:

MR. CHARLES WILSON PEALE, ALIAS CHARLES  
PEALE—YES, YOU SHALL BE PAID: BUT NOT  
BEFORE YOU HAVE LEARNED TO BE LESS INSOLENT.  
ELIE VALETTE

Not until October, 1775, did CWP finally collect the payment due him. Below, 80, entry for October 19, 1775.

## 70. CWP to John Beale Bordley

ANNAPOLIS. JULY, 1774

Dear Sir

I know not how to make an appology for being so often troublesome (*to you*), I do not murmer at being obligated to you, but it hurts me to be continually adding to that heap of favours, and the necessitys of my affairs not allowing me time to make you what little satisfaction might otherwise be in my power, pardon this preface, it was necessary. Mss. Brown and Johnson<sup>1</sup> was with me the other day with the threat of putting my bond in Suit, without I could Settle it amediately I desired them to wait for your coming to town, I will repay it you soon as I can have it in my power, but I want to leave this place this will greatly assist me in that skeme: (*and*) I cannot go away in debt to any other person I have paid large sums within these 2 years and find my bussiness will enable me after I am square with the world to lay by something for Old age— if my request is too unreasonable, [or if it] is not convenient to you, pray let it pass from [ms. torn] (*—as if it never been mention'd*) as [if] it had never been and I must absent [myse]lf from my family a little time [longe]r to answer that demand.<sup>2</sup> (*but if the Request*) [ ] but should this or any of [ms. mutilated] Friendship I fondly flatt[er] [ms. mutilated] enjoyed great will be the [ms. mutilated] Your very [ms. mutilated]

Cha:s W Peale

To the Honble Beale Bordly Esqr

ALS, 2pp., ms. mutilated

PPAmP: Peale-Sellers Papers—Letterbook 1

1. Perhaps William Brown of the British firm of Perkins, Buchanan and Brown, which owned a store in Annapolis. Johnson may have been the merchant Joshua Johnson. Above, 41, note 1; Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, pp. 142–43.

2. It is difficult to understand why CWP was in such financial difficulty at this time, unless he was still burdened with debts from his pre-London days or was living beyond his income. He had a great many orders for portraits, owned a horse and sulky and a light carriage, and even some slaves or servants, Lucy and Scarborough, whose children's names are recorded along with the Peales' in Pilkington's *Dictionary of Painters*. His painting room was filled with visitors and his home was well furnished. However, he did have to leave his family for long painting trips, and perhaps many planters and merchants who had their portraits painted, like Elie Valette, were not prompt with payment. From 1769 to 1776, CWP did not keep a diary, and there is therefore little evidence for ascertaining his financial situation. He does not cover these years in the Autobiography either, perhaps because he had no diary record from which to draw information, or perhaps because his memories of these years of arduous travel were too unpleasant. See, however, below, 77.

some quantitys at 6 d pr Bushel. qut [question] whether good

(17) worked on Miss Keys miniature, Lent Mr. Fitzchew my hunting shirt, mended the spring of Mr. Rook[']s clock

(18) finished Miss Key head, got a note from Mr. Paca of leave for Mr. Hide to sell *(her)* my mother what Tea she might realy want.<sup>8</sup> Exercised the afternoon, paid Mr. John Brewer<sup>9</sup> his accot: in full 1£.13s.9d. delivered to Mr. John Brice 1 $\omega$  [lb] of Gun Powder for the publick benefit.

(19) Mr. Daniel Dulany having assumed payment for Elie Vallette in the [matter] of costs £1.9.6 I gave the Widow Johnson<sup>10</sup> an order on him for £27.17s.5d after which a Ballance was due of 5.2.1, Mr Dulany having left a small sword with his Brother Grafton<sup>11</sup> for Sale Vallued at 4 Guineas, I gave Mr Grafton Dulany the Balance of 1.17:11 for the Sword.<sup>12</sup> Set up all the last night my mother being very Ill. Finished Miss Keys miniature, bought one Doz: Watch Glasses to form them into Ovals for miniature pictures,

(20) spent in making Glasses for miniture pictures out of *(crystals)* watch Glasses. paid John Wells<sup>13</sup> account 1 $\cdot$  18 $\cdot$ 5. Except 5s/ which is left till Bobby Polk returns being doubtfull whether he had not paid it. paid James for marketg 12/6. my mother's fever still continues tho' is Rather lower to day than yesterday. Yesterday I left Mr Benn: Dulanys mini[a]-ture Picture with Mr. Farris<sup>14</sup> to be Set also a Glass for him to polish for it.

8. The Continental Association banned the consumption of tea imported by way of Great Britain after March 1, 1775. Dutch tea, however, which was not subject to duties, was available. Thomas Hyde was a merchant in Annapolis. Schlesinger, *Colonial Merchants*, pp. 581, 583–84; Edward C. Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit: The Annapolis Merchants in the Era of the American Revolution, 1763–1805* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 10, 15, 37.

9. John Brewer (1738–88), Rachel Brewer Peale's brother, kept a tavern in Annapolis. Papenfuse Files; Brewer Family, Genealogical Files, MdHi; MdHR: Anne Arundel County Wills, Liber JG, No. 1, Will of John Brewer, pp. 34–36.

10. Possibly Mrs. Johnson, who kept a lodging house and modest tavern in Annapolis during these years. See Fred Shelley, ed., "Ebenezer Hazard's Travels through Maryland in 1777," *MHM* 46 (1951):48.

11. Grafton Dulany (d. 1778), like many members of the Dulany family, became a loyalist. Aubrey C. Land, *The Dulanys of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1968), pp. 281, 300, 315, 324–25.

12. John Adams commented upon CWP's sword in August, 1776. See Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife, Abigail Adams, During the Revolution* (New York, 1876), p. 216.

13. Probably Captain John Wells (died ca. 1803) of Annapolis, who had business dealings with the tobacco merchant, Joshua Johnson. Papenfuse, *In Pursuit of Profit*, p. 117; Papenfuse Files.

14. William Faris (1728–1804), watchmaker and silversmith. Lockwood Barr, "Family of William Faris (1728–1804): The Annapolis Silversmith," *MHM* 37 (1942):423; Baltimore Museum of Art, *Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Maryland Silver in the Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 36–37.