

George Chalmers Letters: 1728-1818

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Document Summaries – Reel 2, Section 1

Letters and Papers 1797 November 3 - 1801 August 20

****Note:** Folio page numbers referenced below are found on the pages on the right side, located top right.

Folio Pages 9-10

1797 November 3, New Providence, Peter Edward [clerk of assembly] to George Chalmers. Waiting for news to arrive as to who the new governor is. There are reports of Lord Dunmore's reappointment. Assembly to meet on 7th instant when a new speaker will be elected (Mr. Roker is no more.). Candidates spoken of are C. Wyllly and W. [Haven?], of which Wyllly would be the better but if chosen expect it to be temporary due to attention required of his business. Describes the character of Lewis Johnston, who expects will take the place of Mr. Roker for Long Island. Expects short session as no governor. In defenceless state if war continues; 32nd Regiment is greatly reduced and still decreasing daily. Since late executions apprehensions of insurrections subsided; militia continue to patrol. Chenille on Long Island succeeded by long drought have destroyed both cotton and pasturage. Other islands dealing with heavy rains. Mentions vessels – "Squirrel" and "Charlotte Swallow," and Captain Fowke/Fawke and reason Admiral disappointed with him. Comments on the necessity of assembly's proroguing before next governor's arrival in order to avoid some difficulties last governor encountered.

Page 11

1797 December 12, Finsbury Square, Mr. Mylne to George Chalmers. Encloses statement relative to Spanish trade with Bahamas.

Page 12

1797 December 12, London, Geo Mylne to George Chalmers. Agreeable to you, provide observations on subject of order of council lately issued for permitting a commercial intercourse between Bahamas and Spanish colonies in America. Notice sugar and coffee not mentioned in list of articles which can be imported. Refers and quotes from Free Port Acts to make the case for their inclusion.

Page 13

1797 November 19, New Providence, P. Edwards to Chalmers? Assembly met and chosen as speaker, Mr. Campbell, an "engine of Mr. Hepburn," and "better adapted to file that honourable station" than

Mr. Wylly. Mentions bills and ordinance passed. Weather and effects of Chenille on cotton islands. Lists voting by each house member concerning election of speaker for either Mr. Wylly or Mr. Campbell dated 7 Nov.

Page 14

1797 November 26, New Providence, Jos: [Joseph] Eve to George Chalmers. Discusses the results of his consideration of applying to the legislature for remuneration for a second time; seems to relate to a machine he invented. Thankful for assistance with this matter. When peace arrives expects to go to England "where I can make Machines under a secure Patent, in such a superior manner...."

Page 15

1797 November 15, New Providence, Wm. Wylly to George Chalmers, Esq.. Thanks for apology and pamphlet on the culture of {cloves?}. Mentions - able to do house business more easily with majority, a "bombastic" speech which relates to the conspiracy of the French "Negroes," Deputy Treasurer's remittance for Chalmer's expences, [Duke of Pallame/Pallume?]. Sending copy of Consolidated Slave Act "which I think you will like." [Act not included]

Page 16

1797 November 27, Nassau, Stephen Haven to George Chalmers, Esq.. Concerns the late speaker, Mr. Roker, and the conduct towards him in the last session, which involved member of the House, Mr. Hepburn. Also gives thanks for what was said about Mr. Darrell's matter, which hopes will succeed.

Page 17

1797 November 28, Nassau, John Wells to George Chalmers. Mentions legislature have made arrangements for your arrears to be discharged; the Chenille affecting cotton fields and will diminish the crop; comments on latest intelligence about government in Paris and reduction of Puerto Rico; possibility of two people, one being Lt. Col. Anstruther, will be commander in chief.

Page 18

1797 November 28, New Providence, Peter Edwards to George Chalmers, Esq.. Provides account of last session of legislature – conducted with temper but money bills have passed; encloses Consolidated Slave Acts just printed; presumes Mr. Wells sent you gazettes; just as well neither candidate for governor are from "this side of the water"; problems with election on Long Island, mentioning Mr. Johnston, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Campbell, and comments "hope new governor will put us all in good humour"; ships and brig to London and brig for Glasgow now sail under convoy of "Squirrel" frigate; and Chenille troublesome on out islands.

Page 19

List of Acts passed in the Session of Nov. 1797

- An Act for laying Duties commonly called the Revenue Act
- Venue Act
- Transient Tax Act
- Assessment Act
- Ordinance for Presidents salary
- Act to prevent the Increase of cotton bugs on the island of St. Salvadore [San Salvador]
- Act to continue further the provisions of an act for embellishing the Bay
- Act to enable the comm. of public buildings to erect gaol
- Appropriation act
- Bill to compel persons to build division walls on the out island
- Bill to prevent damages by cattle running loose
- Militia Bill amendments postponed by the Assembly

Page 20

Note, no date, signed with unrecognizable initials. Enclosed, I send you, the Duke of P. letter, to Mr. Hunt, regarding the non-promulgation of Governor Forbes' Commission – His Reply, you shall see, if you will call him before you go to the House this morning.

Page 21

1797 December 21, New Providence, Wm Willy to George Chalmers. Discusses Chalmers' arrears due as our agent, and mentions Mr. Haven. Shows exasperation at no new governor yet.

Page 22

Duplicate to above.

Page 23

Statement of the extent of lands granted, and what remains vacant in the several islands. Table with following column headings: Number of tracts granted; Number of acres granted; Islands and Keys adjoining; and supposed vacant. Example – Number of tracts granted, 114; Number of acres granted, 21,500; Islands and Keys adjoining - New Providence, Hog, Rose Island; Supposed vacant, 24,000.

Page 24

1797? Bahama Act No. 243 objected to by Baldwin. Statement only – "Baldwin's Report objects to No. 243 The Act for laying certain Rates & Taxes; & directly the application thereof being in direct violation

of the act of the 27th Geo. 3. Ch 27; & therefore ought not to have been passed by the Gov. Council & Assembly of the Bahama Island.”

Page 25

1798 April 21, Memorial of George Chalmers, Colony Agent of the Bahama Islands to the Board of Trade. Praying permission may be given to import foreign sugar and coffee from Spanish settlements into the ports of Nassau, Exuma and the Caicos Islands, under the authority of 32 Geo. 3, C. 43 & 33d Geo. 3, C. 50, and instructions to the governor dated 20 November 1795.

Pages 26-27

1790 October 8, St. Vincent, Wm. Walker, Esqr. to Tho. Forbes, Esq.. Extract of letter. Received letter from Sir Joseph Banks directed to Doctor Anderson, superintendent of His Majesty’s Botanic Garden here, requesting him to collect a large assortment of exotic trees and plants for the Bahama Government. They are ready but not known by what conveyance they are to go; no use if proper care not taken.

Page 28

1798 October, Adam Chrystie and Dugald Forbes, Nassau. Report of the Committee of Council on the Receiver General and Treasurer’s accounts, with respect to the receipt and expenditure of the public monies from 25 September 1797 to 25 September 1798 – after reviewing, find same perfectly correct. Also gives opinion on Mr. Chalmers’ protested bill concerning his salary – “it is not just that he should reap any benefit by protested Bills, in fact he ought to have returned the protested Bill to the Treasurer instead of sending it to his friend in order to obtain a profit.”

Pages 29-30

1798 October 6, Office of Trade, Whitehall, to [none named]. After perusing papers transmitted by Mr. King in respect to lands in Bahama Islands, provides response. Papers may be considered under two views: the past, and the future. Lands in these islands never been considered by British government in same way as those in ceded islands – as objects of profit or sale. Soon after war in 1783, land was given to loyal refugees and others for public purposes of cultivation and settlement. Cotton, began at this time, was carried to a great extent till checked by sterility of soil and ravages of worms. Lord Dunmore converted his majesty’s bounty for the general good into a job for the benefit of individuals. From Lord Grenville came the instruction of 6 March 1790 to refrain from passing grants of land until his majesty’s pleasure thereon was signified, which was qualified by letter from Lord Grenville of 10 March 1790 informing Dunmore that it was not the King’s intention to prevent the issuing of a grant or charter in cases where a warrant of survey had been already executed, nor to preclude any claim to a charter for lands which might be forwarded among antecedent steps that in equity gave a title to a grant. Thus, it was not the King’s design to stop jobs; but not to prevent settlement and cultivation. Under Governor Dowdeswell, instructions have been followed without a similar qualifying letter, but this letter of 10

March is recorded in the books. Mentions planters of Crooked Island who had petitioned government for new lands. Looking to the future, the King's policy of inviting settlers cannot be effected without titles given to the lands. Cultivation of cotton which employs many ships and furnishes material for manufacture must be discontinued and the Bahamas deserted unless the restriction of said instruction be removed. Merchants are concerned – ships unemployed and remittances fail due to the failure of cotton which seems to require fresh soil.

Page 31

1798 October 10, Saint Vincent, Willm Walker, Commissary General to George Chalmers, Esq., Agent for the Bahamas. As per Joseph Banks directions in his letter to Doctor Anderson, Superintendant of His Majesty's Botanic Garden here, exotic plants and seeds are being readied. Question as to a safe conveyance for such a valuable acquisition. Enemy is great and our communication is shut up – had but one direct opportunity to the Bahamas these two years. Discusses options and concerns. Has long thought "many of the Exotics from the garden here, would thrive there, and be of infinite advantage to Inhabitants in particular the Bread Fruit – as from the frequent and long Droughts they experience; grain and other kind of bread-fruit for the Negroes, are often scarce, dear and difficult to be had." Has success with this plant personally at little key in Exuma Harbour.

Pages 32-33 (2 copies)

1798 November 1, Botanic Garden, St. Vincent, Alexander Anderson to Rt. Hon. Sir Jos: Banks, Bart.. Happy to supply useful plants, either as to food, medicine, commerce or economy, and have already near 100 boxes filled. Question – how to be conveyed? Expect the plants to do well, if not too dry. Thanks for continued support since you nominated me to the superintendence of the Garden, and as principal support of the Garden since 1785. Governor Bentinck is great friend to Garden and to me; have gotten an increase in pay. Have lately plants from Trinidad and adjacent part of continent, among them some valuable wood, as Purple Heart and Letter wood or Pirate nair of Aublet.

Page 34

1798 December 25, R. Stirling to Stephen Haven. Short note – As I purpose on this day with giving you a set of bills for £ 100, & taking up the £ 50 ones, I shall take it as a favour if you let me have 60 or 70 dollars this morning to buy a few articles, & pay off a few trifling debts. I shall also thank you to have the Bills drawn & dated the 1st Jan. 1799, as I am really too blind to do it.

Page 35

1799 January 5, Governor [William] Dowdeswell, Government House, Bahamas to George Chalmers. Encloses papers. Received despatch from secretary of state containing an explanation of the instructions in regard to land grants, as well as the regulation for my conduct in that business. Not as precise as preferred.

Pages 36 – 37 (2 copies)

1799 January 2, Wm Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers, Whitehall. Governor approved my brother's appointment as fort major, and if you hear of any word from England it has been approved, please let me know. Bills for back pay have been drawn upon by the Lords of the Treasury, which believes is not the regular course. Reasons for brother's appointment; presume you know he is a captain on half pay so he has "gained no great matter by the exchange."

Page 39

1799 January 24, Peter Edwards, New Providence, to George Chalmers, Whitehall. Laid your letter before commissioners. Did not understand what was meant in your last letter – the case of my friend. Only recollect in a letter to the governor respecting my son and my wishes to have him connected in the offices of Prothonotary and clerk of the Crown with me, on which the governor wrote Mr. King but have not heard since.

Page 40

1799 January 9, Peter Edwards, New Providence to George Chalmers. Confidential. Congratulations on the "very important and glorious events..." Referring to Chalmer's earlier letter, suggests to take but a general notice of the disagreement of the council and assembly. Mentions governor's reaction to the Duke of Portland's last letter – hurt - on the land business. No more of the 47th have arrived. It has been quiet but have not been treated well – Chenille disastrous to plantations on Long and Crooked islands. The Spanish trade keeps us alive. Encloses letter for my friend Mr. Irving.

Page 41

1799 January 23, Governor Dowdeswell, Government House to George Chalmers. Extensive benefits arisen to the colony from importation of foreign sugar and coffee into Nassau, which the community is much indebted to you for your active and successful exertions to open that important source of commerce. Now vessels from Europe do not have to linger in the harbour for months for want of freight. Mr. Duffe comes in for a good share of the business that is going forward and is doing well. As you may imagine, I was little hurt when secretary of state's letter indicated I had barely escaped censure for my conduct in regard to the petition presented by the planters on Crooked Island.

Waiting on decision of Privy Council. Grateful for your favourable mention in your communication with Lord Liverpool. In relating to public expences, which is a considerable sum, propose establishing some regulation for more efficient investigation of accounts before being passed in council. Most expences incurred by late governor which president declined to interfere with and fall under that description. Voluntary subscriptions are not forthcoming; those not coming forward ask why they should when government does not support them. In naval defence, only one king's ship and for troops, reinforced with 100 men instead of 500.

Page 42

1799 January 24, John Wells, Nassau to George Chalmers. Comments on circumstances related to present war – diplomatic efforts, trade and commerce effects, French internal concerns; also Irish politics, and French interference. Comments on internal politics.

Page 43

1798 January 1, Bahama Gazette, Nassau, "A Happy NEW YEAR TO THE READERS OF THE BAHAMA GAZETTE." Poem.

Page 45

1799 February 9, Brewer Street, Botanic Garden [no name], St. Vincent. Encloses paper from General Melville concerning G. M.'s queries with answers and hopes it gives the information Sir Joseph Banks wants. Not all is accurate, particularly with respect to the extent of the Botanic grounds, excluding what was cultivated as the Botanic Garden. First allotment of land made by requisition of G. M. to commissioners for sales of Crown Lands in St. Vincent and other ceded islands, was in 1765 and consisted best of G. M.'s recollection, of 20 acres, and since restoration of the island by the French in 1783, a few adjoining acres have been added to the Botanic ground and enclosed with it, totalling 25 acres. If G. M. learns of more accurate dimension, will inform Sir Banks.

Enclosure: 1799 February 7, London. "Queries sent by General Melville, to Mr. Lewis, the D. Secretary at War; with the answers given thereto, written in Red Ink."

1st. What is the extend of the Royal Botanic Garden at St. Vincent? No actual survey has ever taken place, but stated to consist of between 20 and 30 acres, 17 of which are under cultivation at gardens.

2nd. What number of "negroes" are employed in cultivating it? 16 "negroes" and one assistant.

3rd. What is now the salary of Dr. Alexander Anderson, the Royal Superintendent of it? 20 shillings per diem.

4th. Whether there is any salary allowed for an assistant or draftsman under him and what? 5 shillings a day.

5th. Whether the superintendent is allowed any annual charges for travelling or other contingent expences incurred by him? No annual, but occasional charges are allowed both for travelling and contingencies.

Page 46

1799 February 20, Harry Webb, Nassau to George Chalmers. Politics done. Privateers uncommonly successful. Staple crop of cotton not doing well; planters discouraged the former year as well. Here at your service.

Page 47

1799 March 15, Wm. Walker, St. Vincent to George Chalmers, Whitehall. Found a vessel to carry the exotic plants to the Bahamas, the schooner "the Lord Duncan" bound for Nova Scotia. Provides types of costs associated.

Page 48

1799 March ?, John Wells, Nassau to George Chalmers. Anxiously awaiting news from Europe. At Havana, on orders from Madrid, preparations for expected attack from large British armament to sail in February from Portsmouth. Admiral Bligh is effectually stopping all intercourse between Cuba and the main. Three vessels with [quicksilver?] from Cadiz for La Vera Cruz has been caught by our privateers. Trade with Cuba is interrupted presently and much complained of by the French Consul. We are supplied well with provisions. Things look misty in the S. E. and I fear the Emperor will not act handsomely to this Sicilian majesty.

Pages 49-50 (2 copies)

1799 April 4, Governor Dowdeswell, Governor's House, Bahama to W: [William] Walker, Esq.. Copy of letter. On the subject of your last letter, the collection of exotic plants from St. Vincent. Will call legislature when meet next for pursue measure for preparing piece of ground and appointment of a caretaker. No further steps are to be taken until I communicate with you and Governor Bentinck.

Page 51

1799 May 10, Governor Dowdeswell, Government House, Bahamas to George Chalmers. Concerning the establishment of Botanical Garden at Bahamas. Received correspondence on matter and send you some of received. No measure taken by legislature yet but expect it will be considered at next session. Will do what I can but have my doubts upon it.

Pages 52-53 (2 copies)

1799 May 17, George Chalmers, Office for Trade, Whitehall to Wm. [William] Walker, Esq., St. Vincent. Could not under the circumstances of war obtain a vessel from the Admiralty to transport the plants to Bahamas. Pleased found a schooner to transport precious cargo. "In the present flourishing state of the Bahamas, the Assembly will not grudge to make good the carriage." Sir Joseph Banks is pleased with attention Mr. Anderson, the King's gardener, and that he has been aiding Joseph Banks' plan of a botanical garden for the public.

Pages 54-56

1799 May 19, Peter Edwards, Nassau to George Chalmers. Secret letter. Happy to state we are quiet and generally healthy. Politically more quiet than with former governor; most inhabitants would agree –

free from ambitious views, free from restless politics. Discusses internal politics and the pressures on and benefits of present governor, and gives an example of a situation in latest election for the Town of Nassau in the place of Mr. Begbie which passed quietly. Mr. Jones, Judge of the Admiralty and one of the assistant judges of the general court, is dead. Discusses qualities best suited for job, that 2 people applied, chief justice and Mr. Kelsall, the latter of which he writes favourably about. Comments on chief justice even applying considering his position during the last appointment to this office. Meeting of planters was called to consider applying to convene assembly to amend the acts, commonly called the Cotton Bug Acts, which are of importance to the planters, but believes difference of opinion prevailed on the necessity of an application for only three appeared. About 70 more of promised reinforcements arrived with Major Hicks of the 47th Regiment. We are without ship of war on this station. Commissioners of Correspondence is summoned for Tuesday next and should hear about the contract with Mr. [Dunnigole?]. Regret to learn you had not heard of your reappointment but expect it will arrive.

Pages 57-58 (2 copies)

1799 May 22, Stephen Haven, Nassau to George Chalmers. Contents of your letter are in unison with my ideas of measures to be adopted under the circumstances. Since writing matters have altered. Believe will be no repetition of conduct of last session, and addition of Mr. Begbie to council will prevent any mischief. Mentions Mr. Chrystie's (clerk and member) unprincipled character and that he should be removed from council. Regret protest of minority in council did not reach you early as well as the resolves of the house, explains probably mistake, mentioning Mr. Wylly. Pertaining to your bill, still waiting; opinion on the subject, with assessment of governor's character – fair, open and plain man who says what he thinks, though he is diffident of himself more than he needs be. Satisfied concerning colonies sugar trade with Spaniards. Hopes to get home in June; too busy to go just yet.

Pages 59-60

1799 May 23, Wm. Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers. Discusses 2 persons (not named) whom Chalmers alluded to in his letter of the 4th of February (both in government) and his opinions of them as members and their character. With Mr. Begbie and Mr. Kelsall now in office, governor will only have himself to blame if his administration meets with further opposition. Discusses Chalmers' back salary dilemma. I may be compelled to resign my chief justiceship; and if this happens, hope you will not disapprove after my explanation. Thought taking the position would attend advantage to the colony, without injury to my large family, and emoluments enough to defray ordinary expenses. Explains his "embarrassing" situation financially and brings up the possibility of another government position.

Page 61 (last page missing)

1799 May 27, Wm Wylly, Moses Franks, Alex. Begbie, Alex. Wylly, Step. Haven, Jno. Armstrong, [J.?] Webster, Alex. [Dayton?], Office of Correspondence, New Providence to George Chalmers?. Responding to previous letters from Chalmers. Grateful Consolidated Slave Act met with approbation on your side of the water. Important to promote the security and happiness of our "Negroes" but the acting question has done little more than reduce to certainty of written law what was general practice in

government of these useful people. Acknowledge role Chalmers played in obtaining of Free Port Act, and its attended beneficial consequences to our traders. Also for efforts to effect revocation of Instruction by which governor is prohibited from land granting and desire he continues pressing as this prohibition is injurious to colony. In relation to defence, only small proportion of promised reinforcements have arrived and do not expect a fair division. On the subject, believe this colony should not come after Bermuda, and due to our local situation we would be the most vulnerable in this part of the globe and most attractive to Spain. Privateers have already taken as much property in this war as the fee simple of the colony would sell for. Pleased with efforts for a botanical garden but provision for expences will have to wait for next session. Establishment of a packet would be very advantageous and convenient to our trading people. [\[See page 66 for rest of letter.\]](#)

Page 62

1799 May 23, Wm. Wylly, [Tuscalum/Tusculum?] to George Chalmers?. Concerning his contemplation of resigning his position as chief justice. Will be in town this Monday.

Page 63

1799 June 1, Wm Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers. Resignation as chief justice and comments on replacement by Mr. Franks. Comments on present situation in regard to government power. Other matters.

Page 64

1799 May 24, Stephen Haven, Nassau to Wm. Wylly, Esq.. Does not want to become an applicant for the vacancy for many reasons which will relay when next meet. Acknowledges you have suffered much due to your present appointment. Not sure your resignation will make your situation better and may regret it. Busy with approaching term and letters and will have to wait to see you.

Page 66 (Continued from Page 61)

Jamaica packet passes by Bahamas enroute to England and could stop to pick up letters. Acknowledges Chalmers' role in pursuit of this and urges continued pressure. Desire your representation to secretary of state and lords of the admiralty on need for more naval defence as only have one ship of war. Concerned it exposes colony to great danger and amounts to act of injustice for our merchants are obliged under the Convoy Act to pay duties for convoys though no convoys are granted them. Regarding disagreement between Admiral Sir Hyde Parker and the Bahamas government on the subject of impressment of seamen, copies of relative correspondence and papers are available at the Duke of Portland's for your use to show that the conduct of governor, council and courts have been legal and proper. Has caused considerable anxiety here and few will produce inconveniences. Request your urging in regards to making this a separate naval station as it was under Captain Fraser. Have ordered treasurer to remit arrears for salary and disbursements due you.

Page 67

1799 May 30, Wm. Wylly, Nassau to Governor Dowdeswell. Provides reasons for his wanting to resign as chief justice. Pleasure at king's appointment and the hopes to provide service without doing injury to family. Further explains how office does not compensate him well enough to support his large family.

Page 68

1799 June 1, Wm. Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers. His resignation of chief justiceship and to be attorney general.

Page 70

1799 May 30, Peter Edwards, New Providence to George Chalmers. Secret. Discusses and comments on contents of letter received by W. Wylly, on his resignation as chief justice, and potentiality of Mr. Franks, attorney general, taking on the position in an exchange of offices. Commerce increasing but naval commanders not helping but hindering and provides example of schooner enroute to Bahamas with governor's licence and lots of money being captured and sent to Jamaica for adjudication, much to detriment to the merchants. Our privateers successful in capturing quicksilver and cochimeal which is good for our treasury, but cash is scarce and men of war seem to be inclined to continue our scarcity. Country generally healthy; fatal fever in few transient persons but no epidemical fever similar to that in May and June 1797. Clergyman, Mr. [Neish?] arrived for Exuma. Opinion of Mr. Franks as choice for the bench. Hopes for positive response regarding his wish for second son to join him in offices of prothonotary and clerk of the crown. Eldest son is a lieutenant in General Tonyn's regiment now at Gibraltar; worked under his government in East Florida, and if Tonyn would help, would certify his conduct and service.

Page 72

1799 June 1, Stephen Haven, Nassau to George Chalmers. Opinion on W. Wylly's resignation as chief justice, the replacement, and his intentions for office in government.

Page 73

1799 June 2, John Wells, Nassau to George Chalmers. Domestic tranquility. Yellow fever – few have fallen victim, all strangers. Discusses his understanding of status of government appointments, includes judge of the admiralty and chief justice, and mentions misters Wylly and Kelsall. Mr. Wylly is to be appointed attorney general. Discusses advantages of a British hold on Cuba. Comments on international war; mentions Portugal's ability to withstand France. Reasons union of Ireland best. Mr. Haven will be with you in about a month and returns to London early winter.

Page 75

1799 June 11, Alexander Anderson, Botanic Garden, St. Vincent to Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Banks. Encloses list of plants sent to Bahamas as ordered. Explains why order is smaller than considered – no rain for 6 months so several plants are lost to the garden. Received a few days ago from island president some East India seeds sent by the board of agriculture; mentions a couple. Names seeds sent. Enclosure: List of plants on board schooner “Lord Duncan” for government of Bahamas, dated 1799 May 8. Includes the name and amount of each; total is 466 plants in 185 boxes, tubs and kegs.

Page 77

1799 June 7, Stephen Haven, Nassau to George Chalmers. W. Wyly’s resignation and Haven’s political intentions. Enclosure: 1799 May 7, Will. Walker, St. Vincent. Receipt of plants from Alexander Anderson, superintendent of Botanical Garden.

Page 78

1799 June 29, John Wells, Nassau, to George Chalmers. Mentions latest international news heard from America concerning the war, and shows optimism for success; mentions Spanish-French relations. Hopes Portugal army will be employed this winter in Cuba, a colony Britain should have. Espouses the benefits of Cuba for the British Navy, such as for plank timber, and as not to be so dependent on Baltic powers for such. Comments on modern philanthropic mania, especially amongst those who have been at college. Plants arrived by Mr. Walker, and until we have a garden, distributed to planters for care. Expects in 10 years bread fruit will be essential article of produce. Increase in fever since the rains set in; in most cases, intermittent. Based on seeing the worst cases, provides his guess at the cause and cure, and mentions the governor had been ill and better but Mr. Kelly is dangerously disposed. Spanish trade has quit as they are concerned about manoeuvres of cruizers from Jamaica. Reason merchants unhappy with this. Expects Mr. Hall’s arrival and expectation of establishment of letter packet. At market was a turtle weighing 500 lbs.

Page 79

1799 July 6, John Wells, Nassau to George Chalmers. Received intelligence from England concerning the war such that expects victory to allied armies soon. Mr. Haven, your friend, will deliver this note; to arrive with daughter, 12 years of age, to be placed in a seminary. Great many people have yellow fever, mostly “strangers,” and as this place grows, so does rates of disease. Concerned this summer will witness severe inroads made by the disease. Believes, like influenza, has something to do with the atmosphere. Were it not the “vile Irish Rebels” an effectual blow might be given to the French government. Explains and further comments on the war, mentioning Russia. Opinion on Irish union. Comments on American system of government. Mr. Haven is solicitor general of this colony; provides comment.

Page 80 (letter cut off)

1799 August 7, Nassau. Nothing very material happened since you left. New court of admiralty rules: if citizen of Britain or of neutral country trades with any nation at war with Britain he is liable to have his property seized and condemned. This includes every American vessel going to or from Havana or other Spanish port, and a number have lately been sent in here. Vessels are being taken indiscriminately by men of war and as indiscriminately condemned at Jamaica where they are regularly sent. Provides example. Blank licences – comments on illegalities and improprieties in their granting. Asks to be informed on the subject. Your departure not as disadvantageous as supposed. You must lose some in the prize court but common law business will mostly go on as usual.

Page 81

1799 July 6, W. Wylly, Nassau. Discusses Mr. Haven in relation to chief justice position. Wylly very sick since some days past.

Page 82

1798 October 10, Wm. Walker, St. Vincent to George Chalmers. Concerns sending plants for Botanic Garden as previously written in above letters. Additional note at the bottom signed by Walker, dated 1799 January 14 – Armed schooner mentioned not arrived but expected. Fearful when arrives may be difficult to procure her, which is concerning since 300 boxes ready to go.

Page 83

1799 October 16, W. W. [William Wylly?], Nassau to Governor Dowdeswell. Discusses subject of his return to council. Believes offices of privy councillor and attorney general are not compatible.

Page 84

1799 November, Wm. Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers. Have not heard from you since my last letter of 6 July. Bill has passed Assembly reappointing you our agent for 5 years. Governor has asked me to return to council but would clash with my practice and duties of my present office. Believes returning to the bar is the wisest act of his life. Indicates amount made in fees recently, proving how he had sacrificed by accepting the chief justiceship. Request your attention to my two older sons who have been in Nova Scotia for some time who are on their way to England. One is intended for the navy and the other, for the bar. Request your assistance in finding a school for them; would prefer a public one such as Winchester or Eaton.

Page 86

1799 December 8, Peter Edwards, New Providence to George Chalmers. Update on the Assembly's proceedings and encloses list of acts assented to and possibly copy of governor's speech at close of

session. Have violent cold some days so has not been printed. Contested election had at Exuma for a member in the place of Mr. Wood who was called to council – Henry Wood and Walter Brown were the candidates. Mr. Brown carried it by his own vote which was petitioned against, and after investigation, the vote stood. Only circumstance which creates any doubt of him is his intimacy with Mr. [McK..] Mr. Haven can explain several new bills passed. Indicates the salaries approved by Assembly for chief justice, assistant judges and speaker. Poor Parson Greish caught violent cold on board small vessel coming from Exuma and died, provides his reasons for illness. We continue to be unfortunate in our clergymen. Present rector is touch and hardy. Prizes of various descriptions continue to be brought into this port. One of our small privateers has just brought in a ship from La Vera Cruz worth \$50,000. Sends congratulations on continued brilliant and very important successes of king's arms and of his allies and hope for peace. Enclosure: 1. " List of Acts passed November Session 1799"; 2. *The Bahama Gazette*, Friday December 6 to Tuesday December 10, 1799.

Page 89

1799 December 12, Wm Wylly, New Providence to George Chalmers. Assembly finished much quieter than started. Comments on some of the acts passed, including one relative to freedom of "negroes."

Page 90

R. Hunt. Custom House, Nassau, New Providence.

1. "An aggregate Account of British Vessels, which have cleared Outwards from the Port of the Island of New Providence, Bahamas, for Great Britain and the West Indies in 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799 & 1800." Table containing the following headings: Year, Vessel Numbers, Tons, Men, General Exports (summary statement for all years). Example: Year – 1795; Vessel Numbers – 53, Tons- 4736, Men – 427, General Exports – besides summary list for all years, includes statement - exports to West Indies in time of war consist of cedar posts, turtle, some prize goods and articles of little value.
2. "An aggregate Account of Americans, which have entered into the Port of New Providence, Bahamas, from the United States of America in the years 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800." Table with same headings as no. 1, with summary listing of exports under "General Imports" - flour, biscuit, Indian corn, peas, oats, rice, live stock and horses, beef, pork, pickled and dry fish, butter, etc., lumber of all sorts.
3. "An aggregate Account of American Vessels, which have cleared Outwards from the Port of New Providence, Bahamas, in the years 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800." Same headings and under "General Exports" – salt, fruit, hard woods, prize goods and specie.
4. "An aggregate Account of Foreign Vessels entered at the Custom House, Nassau, New Providence, from Foreign Colonies under authority of His Majesty's Royal Instructions in 1798, 1799, & 1800." Same headings and under "General Imports" – cochineal, indigo, drugs, cotton wool, [fustick?], logwood and other dye woods, [Ma...?] lignum [vite?], other hard woods, hides – peltry from New Orleans, sugar clayed and brown, coffee and specie.

5. "An aggregate Account of Foreign Vessels, cleared at the Custom House, Nassau, New Providence, for Foreign Vessels Colonies, under authority of His Majesty's Royal Instructions in 1798, 1799 & 1800." Same headings, under "General Exports – all sorts of British manufactured dry goods; East India goods etc. all imported from Great Britain directly, also different species of prize goods, wine, brandy, soap and other articles not contraband of war.
6. "An aggregate Account of British Vessels, which have entered into the Port of the Island of New Providence, Bahamas, from Great Britain, Ireland & the W. Indies in 1794, 1795, 1796, 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800." "General Imports" statement – British and E. India manufactures, beef pork, butter, madeira wines, British plantation produce.
7. "Exports to Great Britain from the port of Nassau between 5 July 1799 & 5 July 1800. Table with following headings: Date, Vessels Names and Cargoes, Tons, and [St for sterling?] Amounts. First entry as example – 1799 July 10; Ship "Lord Duncan"; one of the items as cargo is 174.949 lb white sugar; total tons of all items is 231 tons; and total [sterling?] amount of 22.448..15..7.
8. "Exports to Great Britain from the port of Nassau between 5 July 1800 & 5 March 1801." (Page 99) Same headings as no. 7.
9. "Imports from Great Britain into the port of Nassau between 5 July 1799 & 5 July 1800." (Page 100) Table with following headings: Date, Vessel Name, Tons, Captain's Names, [Place] From, Value of Cargoes in Sterling. First entry as example – 1799 July 9, Ship Nelly, 310 tons, Captain Seacome Ellison, from Liverpool, cargo valued 18.000 in sterling.

Pages 101-103

"Plan for a Botannic Garden in the Bahamas; drawn up by the Right Honorable Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society."

Page 104

1800 June 24, Wm Walker, Exuma, Bahamas to General Melville, His Majesty's Commissary of Stores & Provisions in St. Vincent. Not received by Melville until 1801 January 7. Extract of letter. Expences paid fall short of required for delivering exotic plants to Bahamas, and together with bad crops results in spending more last year than could be spared.

Page 105

1800 August 21, Jn. Banks, Soho Square. Concerns the cultivation of Bahamas. Acknowledges and reasons why Bahama agriculture and its planters are in distressing state – 3 evils: mode of cultivation without any ameliorating course of husbandry or even collection of manure; minster not granting new lands and replacing fertility of those exhausted; and red bug and cheville. Provides extensive opinion on how these can be rectified.

Page 107

1801 October 15, George Chalmers, Office for Trade, Whitehall to [secretary of state?]. Letter no. 4. Concerns the opening of the land office. Puts in writing here what was previously spoken about concerning the Instruction which shut up the land office of the Bahamas in 1790. Bahamas granted to set of proprietors on condition of plantation with a power of government. During reign of George I, government taken into hands of crown. Property in soil continued with descendants of original proprietors till end of American war. Appropriation Act 24 Geo: 3, ch. 44 placed lands in the hands of the crown with consideration of offering an asylum for American loyalists. Additional Instruction issued to colonies on 6 March 1790 which had the effect of shutting land offices and destroying that policy. People of Bahamas felt this blow and several persons encouraged by these measures to settle with their families and "slaves" still without grants. Planters for the last ten years have had lands no longer producing either cotton or corn. Planters were examined under oath by the Assembly to survey the causes of this "evil," and all concurred the need for fresh lands in order to make any profit. Government agreed in an address to the king praying for repeal of the additional Instruction. As agent to the legislature of the Bahamas, I was authorized to write to the commissioners of correspondence that the request was granted. Nothing has happened to repeal this after 12 months passing. In meantime, people have emigrated and pressures of necessity have become more weighty. It is obvious there is little left to be done in order for this to happen unless Lord Hobart doubts how far the Duke of Portland has already decided on the policy of complying with the request. Provides 3 reasons the principles are sound for doing so. It has been 2 months since submitted this situation to you and are getting pressure from the Bahamas.

Page 108

1801 June 9, W. F., Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade to Evan Nepean [under-secretary of state]. Under direction of the Lords of the Committee desire that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty will give positive orders with little delay to the naval commanders in those seas that captains of all ships of war and privateers pay regard to licences granted by governors in West Indies and under authority of king's Instructions for carrying on trade between those islands and Spanish colonies in America. This trade is politically and commercially advantageous.

Page 109

1801 August 20, Rt. Hon. Lord Hobart [secretary of state], Downing Street, England to Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Triggs [commander in chief of the West Indies]. Extract of letter. Heard the Bahamas are alarmed and excited by introduction of Black troops, also received petition from inhabitants of New Providence stating the grounds for their alarm and request for reduction of the number of those troops. Directed with little delay to take measures for withdrawing these troops that exceed 100 men or 2 companies and to dispose of them as you judge to other British possessions in the West Indies or South America.