

Mayor's Office, Philad. 2<sup>d</sup> October 1827.

Sir,

I had the honour to receive your letter of 14<sup>th</sup> June last, acknowledging the receipt of mine of 20<sup>th</sup> April. I have at present, to request the favour of you to communicate to me as early as may suit your convenience, any information within your knowledge, as to the former or present particular residence of Pickard, or his wife, and be pleased also to state in detail any knowledge you have of their character and conduct. — I have the most implicit belief in the deep infamy of this couple, or I should not have presumed to obtrude any opinion of them upon Col. Stickey, or at all to address him upon a subject so vexatious, and of so much delicacy, but from a strong presumption, that he had been imposed upon by them, & was innocently instrumental in detaining in bondage, two black boys who had been stolen away from this city, over which I had then, and now have the honour to preside as its chief Magistrate, & whose particular duty it is to guard the rights and privileges of its inhabitants, even the most poor and humble of them. I trust therefore to stand excused and justified in the eyes of Colonel Stickey, in again proposing the matter before him, and claiming such assistance as it may be in his power to afford me, in bringing the offenders to justice. —

I am Sir, not certain that a letter which I addressed to you to the care of Duncan S. Walker, at Watchung under date of the 27<sup>th</sup> of April, has ever reached you; it contained all the proofs and documentary evidence in my possession relative to the children carried away from this City by Pickard. I have



I have now in my possession a literal copy of the whole of it, which if the original has not reached you, I shall be pleased to forward on your intimating a wish to that effect. — I say I am not sure it has reached you, because I have not ~~heard~~ from Mr. Walker, or yourself, received any acknowledgement of the receipt of my letter, enclosing said proofs. — This evidence was forwarded for the purpose of exhibiting the management of Pickard in procuring possession of the black children from the Almshouse, and the manner and time of his quitting us, having them in his possession. — The only evidence that applied to James Duilley, is a certified copy of the Managers Indenture, binding the boys under that name to Pickard, of 26. of April 1824. — All the proofs however were intended to apply personally & positively to Pickard and wife as fugitives from the justice of this State, if they should be found in your neighbourhood, and with a view to procure their arrest there, until they should be claimed by the Governor of this State. Perfectly aware that as it should affect you if in possession of either of the boys by purchase from Pickard, it must be by a merciful and equitable consideration of their case, that the evidence itself was not legal as against an innocent purchaser, and only sufficient against the kidnapper himself, to ground proofs whereon to hold him, until a warrant of recapture could be forwarded by our Governor.

There was not a particle of proof in these documents that either of the boys mentioned had been sold to Col. Hickey, or were in his possession, — the evidence of that fact was intended and fully expected to be produced by his examination of the  
boys



boys in his possession, and of these documents, and by comparing them with circumstances that might be known to himself or his agent, or Overseer; they were submitted with the utmost frankness and candour, as the only proofs in my possession, of the identity of the children in question, and of the iniquitous conduct of Richard, and his wife, in their abduction.

I now enclose you copies of the only information I have ever received that touches you in this transaction, and which so strongly induces me to believe that you have been imposed upon by Pickett, or Richard, of whose guilt I think you will join me in believing there cannot be a doubt. —

After perusing the documents I have mentioned, some of the deponents whose names you will perceive attached to the documents, particularly the names of the sons of Captain O'Ellers, Mr. DuBois, and all the Managers of the Almshouse, and their Secretary, are known to me as highly respectable individuals. —

Margaret Dunbar, James Perkins, Charles Clifflin, are respectable free blacks; they have steadily and long resided amongst us, and bear a good character for truth and honesty. —

A letter from Pennel Beale, to the Rev. Richard Allen, the Bishop of the African Methodist Church in this City dated Augusta April 5. 1825, which was placed by him in my hands, — Pennel Beale, the writer I formerly knew, as a resident, and respectable Cabinet Maker, — an Elder or Expositor of the Methodist Church, — a white man, who moved to one of the Southern or Western States several years ago. Mr. Allen informs me that this letter was received by him shortly after its date, and by him retained until he placed it in my hands.

The continued



The continued absence of Pickard, made the statement exceedingly probable, but what formed to give it certainty was the receipt of a letter from Mr. Thomas Elliott of Baltimore of 4<sup>th</sup> month 2<sup>d</sup>. 1827, whose high character and standing in Maryland, is well known, enclosing a memorandum placed in his hands by Mr. St. V. Somerville, which he forwarded to me, & subsequently a narrative from the same Gentleman dated April 5<sup>th</sup> 1827, - copies of all which I herewith enclose. -

I have caused diligent search to be made for the friends of Jim Duilley, but without success. Nor have I any knowledge of a boy called Washington Brown as mentioned by Duilley. It is the circumstance of absolute and complete desertion by the friends and relatives, that causes so many black and coloured children to be placed in the almshouses, and from thence bound out by the Managers, and thence too arises, in very many instances, the impossibility of procuring any other information concerning them than their Indenture of Apprenticeship, if they should be lost sight of for a year or two. -

I am not aware that I can furnish you with any other proof, or evidence, in addition to what has been forwarded to Mr. Walker, and to which I most respectfully and earnestly refer you, fully relying upon your own judgment, after mature consideration, and to your own convictions of duty for the final disposition of this matter.

I feel that in making this application, I am performing  
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a most unphilosophical duty, - and in conclusion will only observe, that I have no knowledge of that class of "self-styled philanthropists," to whom you allude in your letter of 14th June, as "actuated either by motives of ostentation or interest, or the love of mischief; or operated upon by a fanatical zeal, sworn foes of the slave holder, who consider stratagems, fraud, violence and perjury, as so many virtues when resorted to, to cheat a slave holder out of his property," nor do I know of any "good but weak men" to whom you refer, "that are deceived by, and countenance any such illegal, undignified and disgraceful proceedings."

No man with any pretensions to decency, honour or honesty, can or will deserve a character of this kind, and none but convicts at large, or unapprehended kidnappers, could be so deeply steeped in infamy. If any part or portion of this Anathema is intended by Colonel Hickey to apply to this City, it had better have been spared. - He deceives himself, or has been grossly deceived, and it would be my duty to repel such accusation in the broadest and most positive terms.

For the last ten years, I have abundant proof, that our laws have been trampled upon, and a system of kidnapping, and man stealing practised upon us to a monstrous extent, by a band of felons, that deserve the execration of every high-minded and honourable man. And it is my belief, that it is mainly owing to the frequent illegal, and systematic attempts of these characters, or their sub-agents, on our free blacks, that has occasionally caused in the non-slave holding states, a sometimes riotous resistance, to the legal claimants of fugitives from



from labour, that has been indeed painful to the  
friends of law and order.

(Signed.)

Your obed. S<sup>t</sup>  
Joseph Watson,  
Mayor.

Colonel Philip Hickey  
East Baton Rouge.