

James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, September 15, 1800.

1800, Sep. 15

Sept
Richmond Sept. 15. 1800.

Dear Sir

I find by yours of the 12. that Mr. Croven had not recd. my letter to him w^{ch} was add^{ed} wth to be leaving abt. a fortnight since. I was apprized by Lotlett & Miller of the 12th of the fact that Mr. Croven and Mr. Darville wished to purchase my land above that town, as they sup- posed in partnership, and communicated my terms to the former. I will take six do^{ts} by the acc^t, of which I must have at least £ 1000. when possession is delivered, which may be immediately, and the balance as soon as possible. I wth Miller and Lotlett I must have the whole in cash at that price, but with value from that demand, tho' I think comparatively with the prices given for other land in the county, it w^{ld} not be a bad bargain. The improv- ments cost me at least £ 600. They are new and good. The tract contains abt. 1000 acres. If these gent^l. or either of them will give me a day I will meet them in Albemarle, to discuss the affair. We have had much trouble with the negroes here. The plan of an insurrection has been clearly proved, & appears to have been of considerable extent. 10. have been condemned & executed, and there are at least twenty perhaps 40. more to be tried, of whose guilt no doubt is entertained. It is unquestionably the most serious and formidable conspiracy we have ever known of the kind. Tho' indeed to call it so is to give no idea of the thing itself. While it was possible to keep it secret, w^{ch} it was till we saw the extent of it, we did so. But when it became indispensa- bly necessary to resort to strong measures with a view to protect the town, the publick arms, the Treasury and the post, w^{ch} were all threatened, the opposite course was in fact less than one to be a display of our force and measures of dis- fence with a view to intimidate those people. Where to arrest the hand of the Executioner, is a question of

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great importance. It is hardly to be presumed, a rebel
who swears it was his intention to assassinate his master
if pardoned will ever become a useful servant,
and we have no power to transport him abroad.
nor is it less difficult to say whether mercy or severity is
the better policy in this case, tho' where there is cause
for doubt it is best to incline to the former course.
I shall be happy to have yr. opinion on these points.
yr friend & servant
Ja. Monroe

Monroe Gov. Sept. 15. 1800.

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Thomas Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

[Transcription Page 1]

Richmond Sept. [September] 15, 1800.

Dear Sir

I find by yours of the 12 that Mr. Craven had not recd. my letter to him wh. [which] was address'd [addressed] to Lusburg abt. [about] a fortnight since. I was apprized by Catlett & Miller of Charlottesville that Mr. Craven and Mr. Darrelle wished to purchase my land above that town, as they supposed in partnership, and communicated my terms to the former. I will take six dolrs. [dollars] by the acre, of which I must have at least 1000 when possession [possession] is delivered, which may be immediately, and the balance as soon as possible [possible]. I wrote Miller and Catlett I must have the whole in cash at that price, but will relax from that demand; tho' [though] I think comparatively with the prices given for other land in the county it wou'd. [would] not be a hard bargain. The improvements [improvements] cost me at least 600. They were new and good. The tract contains abt. [about] 1000 acres. If these getn. [gentlemen] or either of them will give me a day I will meet them in Albemarle, to decide the affair. We have had much trouble with the negroes here. The plan of insurrection has been clearly proved, & appears to have been of considerable extent. 10 have been condemned & executed, and there are at least twenty perhaps 40 more to be tried, of whom guilt no doubt is entertained. It is unquestionable the most serious and formidable conspiracy we have ever known of the kind. Tho' indeed to call it so is to give no idea of the thing itself..

While it was possible [possible] to keep it secret, wh. [which] it was till we saw the extent of it, we did so. But when it became indispensably necessary [necessary] to resort to strong measures as with a view to protect the town, the publick arms, the Treasury and the Jail, wh. [which] were all threatened the opposit [opposite] course was in part taken. We then made a display of our force and measures of defense with a view to intimidate those people. When to arrest the hand of the Executioner is a question of

[Transcription Page 2]

great importance. It is hardly to be presumed, a rebel who avows it was his intention to afsafsinate [assassinate] his master &c [etcetera] if pardoned will ever become a useful servant, and we have no power to transport him abroad.

Nor is it lefs [less] difficult to say whether mercy or severity is the better policy in this case, tho' [though] where there is cause for doubt it is best to incline to the former council.

I shall be happy to hear yr. [your] opinion on these points.

Yr. [your] friend & servant
Jas. [James] Monroe