
William and Mary

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LETTERS OF JAMES RUMSEY, INVENTOR OF
THE STEAMBOAT

James Rumsey was born at "Bohemia Manor," Cecil County, Maryland, in 1743. His father was a farmer of good social standing with a large family and limited means, but the son acquired a pretty fair education, considering the times, as his letters show. He served as a soldier in the Revolution, and at the close of the war, in 1783, with Nicholas Orrick as partner, Rumsey went into the mercantile business at Bath, now known as Berkeley Springs, in Morgan County, West Virginia. In 1784 with Robert Throgmorton he kept a boarding house for visitors to the springs, and when "the Potomac Improvement Co." was established became its secretary.

His mind, however, had a mechanical turn, and several years previous to 1783 he applied himself to perfecting a boat for navigating rivers. His first boat appears to have been propelled by mechanical power alone and in 1784 he showed a model of it to General Washington, who had a cottage at Berkeley Springs, and Washington became an eye-witness of the working powers of the model by an actual experiment in running water. In the fall of the same year Rumsey obtained from the Virginia Legislature an act protecting his right of navigation within that State for ten years, and soon after the Maryland Legislature passed a similiar provision. Rumsey was no novice in the possibilities of steam, and about September, 1784, he began to study how to apply its power to boat navigation. He removed about this time to Shepherdstown, constructed a new boat fifty feet long, and on December 3, 1787, after a preliminary private trial in March, 1786, made his first public exhibition of the invention at Shepherdstown in the presence of many persons—comprising General Horatio Gates, Colonel William Darke, Colonel Joseph Swearinger, Jeremiah Morrow, afterwards Governor of Ohio, John Mark and other prominent people. The trial was repeated December 14, 1787, and the boat attained a speed against the current of four miles an hour.

Shortly after this Rumsey in January, 1788, published a pamphlet, entitled "A Paean or Short Treatise on Steam," in which, alluding to this second experiment, he claimed that a speed of ten miles an hour might readily be obtained through the use of steam.

The same winter (1788) Rumsey went to Philadelphia, and the interest awakened there in his steamboat resulted in the formation of the "Rumseian Society." The May following, aided by this Society, he went to Europe, bearing letters of introduction from Washington, Franklin, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Rush, and other distinguished Americans.

In England he made the acquaintance of the Society of the Arts, and procured various patents from the British government for various improvements in steam engines, pumps, boilers and mill machinery, but the main object of his visit was to introduce the steamboat, and to this he addressed himself with his accustomed energy. He was a poor man, however, and was constantly short of funds. In order to pay his way he had to engage in various side labors, some of which are referred to in the letters that follow. He struggled on, however, and the boat was at length finished and made ready for public trial. It was 100 feet long, with proportionate breadth of beam and depth of hold.

But after all the burden borne, on the very eve of triumph, Mr Rumsey was not spared to witness the consummation. On December 20, 1792, he delivered an address before the Society of Arts in London, on hydrostatics, immediately after which he busied himself in wording resolutions to be entered in the Society's book. While thus engaged he complained of a violent pain in his temple. He became speechless, and though competent medical assistance was rendered him, expired at the Adelphi Hotel the next evening at about quarter past nine, December 21, 1792. His remains were interred in the churchyard of St. Margaret's, Westminster, London.

In spite of his decease the trial was made of his steamboat, and as stated in the "Gentleman's Magazine" for February, 1793, page 182, the trial proved very successful, for the boat sailed against wind and tide at the rate of "four knots an hour."

Rumsey's claim to precedence was fiercely contested by John Fitch, of Philadelphia, but the question is settled against the latter by his own words, as he states himself that the first idea of a steamboat occurred to him in April, 1785. Moreover, Rumsey gave the first public demonstrations of the steamboat's success.

Rumsey will always remain an interesting figure for he paved the way for the success of Fulton, whom he met in England and doubtless influenced. Anything like a full biography of him has never been written, though a sketch of the man and his work was prepared for the West Virginia Historical and Antiquarian Society by George M. Beltzhoover, Jr., and printed in 1900 by the West Virginia Historical Society.

The helmsman on Rumsey's boat at Shepherdstown at the demonstration, December 3, 1787, was Colonel Charles Morrow, a brother of Rumsey's wife. Two other brothers of his wife were among the spectators, John Morrow, who afterwards was a member of Congress from Virginia (March 4, 1805-March 3, 1809) and Jeremiah Morrow (born at Gettysburg in 1771), Senator of the United States (1813-1819) from Ohio, and Governor of that State (1823-1826). One of the passengers on the steamer was Ellen Mark, who before marriage was also a Morrow, probably a sister or cousin of Rumsey's wife. Her husband, John Mark, was a Scotch-

Irishman from Ulster, and founder of the first Presbyterian Church in Fredericksburg. His daughter Ann, who was with her mother on the steamer, married Hon. John Baker, of Shepherdstown, and had a daughter Ann Baker, who married Thomas W. Gilmer, Secretary of the Navy under Tyler.

In the archives of the Virginia State Library are the papers of a suit originally begun in the High Court of Chancery for Staunton, Virginia. These papers were deposited in the Library by order of the Circuit Court of Augusta County, in 1907, at the instance of Armistead C. Gordon, chairman of the Library Board. The suit was brought by Doctor James McMechen against Rumsey's executor, Edward Rumsey, for settlement of alleged indebtednesses of his testator. These papers have never been published before and of them the most important are now published with the consent of Doctor Henry R. McIlwaine, State Librarian. They are chiefly valuable for throwing light on Rumsey's movements while in England.¹

To The Honble George Wythe Chancellor of Virginia

Respectfully complaining sheweth unto Your Honor his Orator

James McMeechen of the County of Berkeley.

That some time in or about the year 1784 a certain James Rumsey and your Orator entered into Articles of agreement (here ready to be produced) for the purpose of prosecuting and receiving

¹ The following is a list of the documents filed in the cause of McMechen vs. Rumsey.

1. Copy of order of Circuit Court of Augusta County, Virginia, directing that the papers in the ended chancery cause McMechen vs. Rumsey be deposited in the Virginia State Library.

2. Bill filed by James McMechen. (Printed in full.)

3. Writ of summons (to sergeant of corporation of Winchester) against Edward Rumsey, executor of James Rumsey, deceased. Dated 13 December, 1799.

4. Writ of attachment (personal), to sergeant of corporation of Winchester, against Rumsey for contempt of court.

5. Copy of order in the High Court of Chancery, May 16, 1801, taking as confessed the bill of the complainant, McMechen, in view of Rumsey's refusal to answer a writ of attachment for contempt.

6. Answer of Edward Rumsey, executor of James Rumsey, deceased, to a bill of complaint exhibited against him in the High Court of Chan-

profit by an Invention of constructing boats to sail ag^t Rapid stream, by which agreement it will appear that the said James Rumsey and your orator stipulated to pursue jointly and severally with their utmost deligence & attention every Most probable sucessfull Measures for obtaining either premiums or exclusive Rights from the several states of America or from the United States in Congress or from any principality, State or Kingdom in the eastern World at the joint expense of them the said Rumsey & your Orator their heirs &c. and upon obtaining such premiums or exclusive Rights, the said Rumsey should be entitled to three fourth parts thereof and Your Orator to one fourth. Among other things stated in said agree^t the parties bound themselves in the penal sum of one hundred thousand pounds.

And your Orator further sheweth that the said James Rumsey being a man of abilities, well versed in the Doctrines of Hydro-

cery wherein James McMeechen is complainant, and exhibits A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H referred to in said answer. (Printed in full.)

A. Articles of agreement between James Rumsey and James McMeechen, 10 November, 1784.

B. Letter from James Rumsey to James McMeechen, dated London, April 15th, 1792.

C. Letter from James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated Philadelphia, May 14th, 1788.

D. Letter from James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated London, September 12th, 1791.

E. Letter from James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated London January 5, 1791.

F. Letter from James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated London, August 23d, 1791.

G. Joseph Barnes with Daniel Parker, award. Dated, London, 9 March, 1795.

H. Letter of James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated London March 30, 1792.

7. Letter from James Rumsey to Charles Morrow, dated London August 4th, 1789. (Printed in full.)

8. Letter from Joseph Barnes to Charles Morrow, dated Philadelphia, January 29th, 1792. (Printed in full.)

statics, central forces and the Laws of gravitation, aspired to other objects of invention, which were extremely usefull to the world such as Rumseys improvement on Doctor Barker's Mill, Rumsey's steam boiler &c. &c. in the proffitts of which arising from premiums, exclusive Rights or otherwise your Orator was also entitled to One fourth part. Your Orator futher sheweth that in consideration of the aforesd. agree^t he advanced by different payments unto the said Rumsey the sum of three hundred pounds being the full amot. of his part of the expences attending the experiments of said Rumsey, as will appear in part by said Rumsey's letter and the books belonging to what was called the Rumseyan Society now in the hands of John Morrow of Shepherd's town, Berkeley County. That the said Rumsey made considerable sales of the above inventions in Philadelphia and received large sums of money of which your Orator was entitled at least to the sum of one hundred and thirty odd pounds, that he migrated to England about the year 1789 or 1790 and there prosecuted his plans aforesaid and made considerable sales receiving at One time the sum of two thousand pounds which he remitted to this Country as follows £1000: to the Rumseyan Society which came to the hands of One Joseph Barns and one thousand pounds in goods wares and merchandise which came to the hands of Charles Morrow since deceased with orders that these sums should be distributed among the parties intrusted, Out of which your Orator was entitled to receive £500: being his fourth part. Your Orator further charges that in or about the month of December 1792 the said James Rumsey departed this life having previously made & published his last will & Testament in Writing thereby constituting Edward Rumsey his brother Exor. who took upon himself the burthen of the administration & whom your Orator prays may made a Dft. to this his bill of compt. your Orator charges that the said Edwd. Rumsey came to an Acct. & settlement with Barns and Morrow and others for the monies remitted as aforesd and received a large sum of money particularly Your Orators shares except as to the sum of fifty two pounds Penn^a Cur^y which y^r Orator recd. of the said Charles Morrow that the said Edwd. Rumsey the Dft. deputed the aforesaid Joseph

Barns to go to England and to dispose of the inventions of the said James Rumsey decd. which your Orator is informed were sold for the sum of seven thousand five hundred pounds sterling money of which Your Orator was entitled to one fourth part But now so it is May it please your honor the said Deft. combining and confederating to and with divers persons unknown to your Orator but when discovered he prays May be made Defts. to this his bill of complt how to injure & oppress him, hath refused to account your Orator for any part of his shares aforesd. altho. repeatedly called upon giving out in speeches that your Orator is not entitled to any part and again denying that any monies have come to his hands All which actings and doings are contray to equity and good conscience and tend to the Manifest injury of Your Orator in the premisses. In Tender consideration where of and for as much as your Orator is remideless by the strict rules of the common Law but only releaveable in a court of Equity where delinquents of this kind can be compelled to account upon oath To the end therefore that the dft. may upon his corporal oath full true and perfect answer make to all and singular the premisses as fully and completely as if the same were herein again expressly asked and enterrogated and the Dft Rumsy may be compelled to account with your Orator for the proffitts made by his Testator and those reced. by him & the Deft. and be decreed to pay unto your Orator the full amot. of his fourth part of all such proffitts and that your Orator May have such other & further relief as unto the court May Seem Meet &c.

Holmes Pq.

(Backed) McMeeKin v Rumsey

Suit brought to March term 1800

August Rules 1800 Bill and time

May term 1801 Bill taken for confessed

June Rules 1801 answer and Gen Rep & Com

January Rules 1802 set for hearing on plts motion

thus the cause remained on the docket of the said

Court, the first day of February 1802.

P. Tinsley

McMehen }
 vs } Bill
 Rumseys Exors. }

Suit brought to March term 1800
 May term 1801 bill taken
 for confessed.

August 6, 1800

To The Honorable George Wythe Chancellor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Answer of Edward Rumsey as Executor of the Will and Testament of James Rumsey deceased to a Bill of complaint exhibited against him in the High Court of Chancery wherein James McMachen is Complainant.

This Respondant now and at all times reserving to himself all manner of benefit of exception to the manifest errors uncertainties and imperfections in the Complainant's bill contained to so much thereof as he is advised is material to be responded unto he answerth and Saith; That true it is that on the tenth day of November in the year 1784 an article of covenant and agreement was entered into by the said Complanant on the one part and this Respondants testator on the other; which said article of covenant marked (A) this Defendant prays may be taken as part of this Answer: that from the recital and current of the said Article as well as from the belief of this Respondt^r it was the evident intent of the parties that the contract should be exclusively confined to the procuring of Patents and exclusive rights in the manner form therein discribed to a certain mechanic invention of the genius of the said decedant of a boat constructed to sail against rapid currents, and this Respondant now protests against any other inference from or construction of the said article, and avers that he knows of no other contract between the said parties save that which may grow from the letter and spirit of the said article of covenant: that it is apparent from the said article that the prosecution of the said Patents and exclusive rights was to

be at the joint expense and risque of the said parties and that the emoluments and products of the said inventions directly and indirectly should be one fourth thereof to the Complainant and three fourths thereof to this Respondt's Testator: and that the Complainant never embarked in the fate or proceeds of any other invention of the decedant and would have no claim to the proffitts thereof; that some time in the year 1793 at the urgent request and instance of the said McMachen and while this Respondt an a certain Joseph Barnes were entirely unwary and while this Respondant was ignorant of any article between the said parties, he with the said Barnes was induced to sign a Certificate the purport of which he cannot now recolect, but which he conceives embraced greater lattitude than the above exposition of the said article, but he now solely avers that the perusal of the said article which came to him by a private and accidental conveyance from Philadelphia subsequent to the said Certificate, has induced him to vary from the said Certificate: a paper executed more from an anxiety to do ample justice to the Complainant than from an adiquate comprehension of the contract and its circumstances: that it has since appeared evident to this Respondant that the decedant could not have been so insensible to the dignity of his being as to have contemplated by the said contract a surrender to the Complainant on any conditions of one fourth of the product of his thoughts and genius to the day of his death. this Respondant has merely understood that some advances were made by the Complainant to the decedant, but to what extent he cannot state neither hath he any vouchers in his possession to elucidate this point, but this is well known to this Respondant that intervening the date of the said article and the 14th day of May 1788 the period of the decedant's departure for England the various expenditures in the prosecution of the invention: by applications and journies to many states in the Union, and to the Congress of the United States; by innumerable experiments; by the erection of expensive Works on the Potomac and other incidental expenses amounted to a sum the Complainants proportion of which would far have exceeded the sum of 300£ stated in the Complanants Bill and which this Respondt believes is meant to

be Pennsy^a currency. That some time in May 1788 the decedant arrived in the city of Philadelphia where he was honored with the patronage of the most enlightened characters of his country; but from a strange fatality he did not derive the slightest pecuniary advantages in that city from his invention, and consequently made no sales so that the allegation of the Complainants Bill that the decedant made sales and received emoluments therefrom in the city of Philadelphia is groundless which will more fully appear by the lower part of the first and the whole of the second page of a letter from the decedant to the said Complainant marked (B) and which is prayed to be taken as part of this answer, which letter having been found by the widow of a certain Charles Morrow an acquaintance of both parties and who in his life time accidentally possessed the same, was by her handed to this Respond^t—true it is that just previous to the decendants departure for England and at other times after the total sum of 600£ sterling was advanced by the Rumsian Society merely as an adventure, with the decedant for the promotion of his general plans, and which the Testator thought himself bound to refuse from principles of honor. In the year 1788 which will appear by Letter Marked (C) and which is prayed as part of this answer, a Society partly from the exertions of the decedant and others, became organized in Philadelphia under the title of the Rumseian Society, by which society the sum aforesaid was as aforesaid advanced: from the urgent wishes of the said society zealous for the promotion of mechanic science, and the pressure of his own affairs, the Testator was about to depart for the eastern world the then expanded theatre of genius and emulation, where he was taught to think an ample field would be open for the exercise of his humble talents in the acquirement of a fair fame and honest subsistence: that for the promotion of his success, the said Society furnished him with recommendatory addresses and part of the above sum evidenced by drafts on respectable persons in London that under these sanctions on the 14th day of May 1788 the testator took his departure for Europe. That after the Testator arrived in London he found himself in a strange and great Kingdom whose character has even been to concentrate the springs of action into mo-

tives of sordid gain supported more by the strength of his recommendations than pecuniary resource and unaided by a shilling from the purse or credit of the Complainant his pretended partner : that so situated he addressed the Parliament of Great Britain and procured certain Patents and exclusive rights to certain inventions of his own, among which was the steam invention for stemming currents recited in the first mentioned contract : and then as he ever after continued, equally unaided by the said Complainant he anxiously sought those pecuniary resources essential to the promotion of his schemes : that he negotiated with several mighty characters in the Kingdom and effectuated an agreement with a certain —— Whiting a man in London of wealth and high responsibility : that under the auspices of the said Whiting and the flattering allurements of a brilliant prospect the scope of his action became more extensive and his engagements more serious : it was soon after agreed that a ship should be built and that the steam machine should be constructed with her, that the cost of the said ship separate from the constructing the machine was 600 guineas, for the whole of which sum the testator became liable : that shortly after Whiting became insolvent and he not having contributed a shilling towards the above expense the testator being wholly liable found himself surrounded by embarrassments pressed by creditors and at the door of a prison ; which may more fully appear by other documents prayed to be taken as part of this Bill if possible to be produced : that under this predicament the testator eager to be relieved from his pressures contracted with a certain firm under the title of Rodgers & Parker, the tenor of which contract was that the said Rodgers and Parker were to receive two thirds of the product of the steam ship in consideration that they would advance 2000£ towit one thousand in cash and one thousand in goods but the whole amount to be 7500£ if the said ship should be compleated : that the Testator ever acting for the best received one thousand pounds in goods for the other thousand commuted for 800£ in cash : that Rodgers & Parker actually failed and became insolvent, so that the progress of the said ship was entirely impeded, and no other benefit ever received from the said house previous to said failure :

that the Testator accepted a draft on him drawn by a certain Benjamin Wynkoop for £1000, Treasurer of the Rumsian Society, and in London discharged the same in money, 800£ thereof being one of the above received sums and two hundred from his own stock: that just previous to the said payment the friends of the Testator reflecting on his situation furnished him on loan with certain sums for which he became responsible: that then one thousand pounds worth of goods were forwarded to Berkeley County in Virginia: that these goods were consigned to a certain Charles Morrow to be sold, which will appear more fully by Letters marked B. C. D. E. and F. and which last are prayed to be taken as part of this Answer. That about August or Sept. 1791 the Testator having found himself in debt to the amount of 1500£ sterling money to have been entirely connected with unfortunate and broken characters; burthened with the heaviest demands; struct with the horid picture of his affairs, seeing nothing before him but the walls of a prison or irretreivable disgrace, cast an anxious but desperate eye towards the several sources from which he had been taught to expect relief: the hand of the Complainant was not extended to his support, unaided by any connection in his own country, unsanctioned by residence or tried friendship in Europe; being blended in the deplorable fate and sharing the unstable credit of those with whom he had been contracted he thought, that the arm of providence alone could snatch him from certain ruin. But happily for him and those to whom he had become liable, he received an invitation to Ireland through the Earl Carhampton to render his assistance in projecting and cutting a Canal in that country, for which he received £10: ster^s per day, as will appear by Letter D: that he was employed either 40 or 60 days, the proceeds of which were applied to his previous incumbrances: that he afterwards not wishing to return to London went to Liverpool, whence he invented a certain Mill upon new principles, for one quarter part of which he received £750 ster^s which also was applied to the discharge of his previous debts, and then was priviledged to return to London; that while at London he continued prosecuting the steam ship under the direction of the trustees of Rodgers &

Parker who merely discharged the expenses of the said ship until his decease and from which at his decease he received no actual emolument; as will appear by Letter marked (H) and prayed to be taken as part of this Answer: that in about the 22d. of December 1792 the Testator died. This respondant being not in possession of other documents or accounts relative to the said Estate prays that if any should after come to hand they may be taken as part of this Answer. That true it is the decedent left his Will and Testament in which he appointed the Respondant his Executor: that this Respond^t hath taken upon himself the executorship of said Estate: that some time in the year 1793 this Respond^t appointed a certain Joseph Barnes (now in Holland) his attorney to do and perform all matters and things relative to the said Estate in England: that the said Barnes went to England; acted as this Respond^t believes in all respects for the best; that he entered into an arbitrament: that an award therefrom took place, and that there by as well as from the statement of Barnes and this Respond^t's belief the said Testator was indebted on account of the said ship, the invention mentioned in the first contract referred to, the arbitrators not concurring the invention to be in that perfection called for by the agreement which said answer marked (G) this Respond^t prays may be taken as part of this answer; and that the allegation of the Complainant that Barnes received 1000£ sent to the Rumsian Society this Respondant avers to be totally groundless, as he knows of no money ever received by Barnes on account of his attorneyship as aforesaid or on any other account of the estate of the decedant: that this Respond^t hath truly and faithfully conducted himself as Executor as aforesd: that the sum of £501: 9:1¾: came to his hands from the product of the remittance of goods as aforesaid to Charles Morrow: that since that time he hath settled with the county court of Berkley, with the said Estate as Executor as aforesaid that the estate was then found in his debt some where about one hundred pounds allowing as a debit against him the five hundred and one pounds, nine shillings and a penny ¾d as above and that not a shilling has in any shape otherwise been received of the said estate by this Respondant: and among other

credits allowed by the said court in this Respondants favor was the actual satisfaction of a Judgment obtained against the said Estate for the sum of about £200, which had been contracted by the testator in England towards the prosecution of the above mentioned steam ship. So that the Respondant is now confident in averring that he hath nothing of the estate at present in his hands: that the goods before referred to as having been transmitted to Morrow were not directed to be divided as the Complainants bill alledges; and that there were no orders as to the distribution of these goods or the product thereof to McMachen or any other person further than appears from the letter marked B: that true it is a draft was made by the defendant upon the said Wynkoop for £1000 treasurer of the Rumsian Society for the discharge of the decedants previous acceptance as above stated: that 600£ was to be disposed of to the society: and this and the rest appear by letter marked B: but none of this draft hath ever been received; the said Wynkoop having been insolvent; and this Respondant further states that the decedant received no proffit from any other invention within his Knowledge save the Mill before mentioned and the steam boat to which last the contract of the parties were confined.

So that now it appears may it please your honors that the decedant expended and became indebted for and discharged to the use of the steam boat invention above mentioned £1500—sterling money, equal to £2000 Virg^a currency 1000 curr^y of which according to the acknowledged contract became the debt of the Complainant: then as the £600 sterling equal to 800£ curr^y was advanced by the society for the joint benefit of the Comp^t and Testator, which never was refunded he the Compl^t became also indebted to the Testator other 400£ Va. currency, which added will make a debt due from the Complainant to the Respondant of 1400£ Va. currency. The whole of the proffits of the steam invention was £1800 sterling money equal to £2400 currency; of which the Complainant wanted to claim one fourth part towit 600£ currency, which deducted from the aforesaid debt of £1400 will in due submission leave the Complainant in debt to the Testator in the sum of £800 current money

of Virginia; But should this honorable court deem it consistent with equity, good faith and the contract, that the £1000 remitted to Wynkoop, having been lost after every diligence on the part of the Testator and this Respondant, which he now avers hath been used and that it never hath been received by the Testator to the use of the said contract; then the proportions to demand of the Complainant acting only on £1000 sterling would be but £250 sterling leaving according to the above submission a balance now due from the Complainant to the decedants estate of £1250 current money of Virginia.

And now this Defendant having amply responded to all the material allegations in the Complainants Bill contained, now utterly denying all fraud, guile, combination and collusion prays to be dismissed according to the rules of equity and with his proper cost and chas [?] in this behalf most unrightously expended.

Joh. Woodward Jr. Df

Monroe County towit

Personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace for said county Edward Rumsey the Defendant within mentioned and made oath that allegations of the within Answer as far as respects his own Knowledge are true and as far as they relate to the Knowledge of others he believes to be true Given under my hand this 24th day of April in the year 1801.

James Alexander

(Backed)

McMeechan }
vs. }
Rumsey }

Ans

Answer: High Ct. Chancery

Edw^d Rumsey Exr.

ads.

James McMachen

Woodward

May 27, 1801.

[EXHIBITS]

(A)

ARTICLES of agreement made and Concluded by and between James Rumsy of Berkley County & State of Virginia of the one part & James McMechan of the same place of the other part witnesseth that whereas they jointly have undertaken to prosecute their scheme for obtaining a premium on Exclusive Right for sd. Rumsey's Invention of Constructing a Boat to sail against Rapid Currents be it known and Remembered by these present that the Terms and Conditions of their Mutual agreement is as follows viz; that they the sd. James Rumsy & James McMechen shall & will Jointly and severally pursue with their utmost Diligence and attention every the most probable & successful measures for obtaining eighther premiums or Exclusive Rights from the Several States of america or from the United States in Congress or from any other principality, State or kingdom in the Eastern world, at the Joint Expense of them the sd. Rumsy and McMechen their heirs &c. & that upon their obtaining the several premiums or exclusive Rights as the Case may be the mode proposed for Divition thereof shall & is hereby agreed to be that he the said James Rumsy his heirs &c. shall be Intitled to three fourths of the several premiums obtained & James McMechen the one fourth & three fourths of the profits of Exclusive Rights that may arise to James Rumsy & one fourth thereof to James McMechen his heirs &c. & furthermore it is hereby Covenanted & agreed that the mode of petitioning & addressing the several States in future for premiums or exclusive Rights shall be in the Name of James Rumsey his heirs &c. alone as the sole Inventor, & the end that all Difficulties & Disputes may be Removed relative to the Divition of the premiums arrising as they may be Recovered by Reason of the grant thereof being made to James Rumsy & his heirs alone it is hereby further Covenanted and agreed that James Rumsy shall & he is hereby bound in the penal sum of fifty thousand pounds Current money of Virginia as also his heirs, Exors. and admrs. to be recovered to the use of the sd. James McMechen his heirs &c. provided the

sd. Rumsey his heirs &c. shall refuse or neglect to Render up unto the sd. James McMechen his heirs &c. his moiety or one fourth part of the Several premiums as they may be recorded or Recovered from the Several States, by Reason of his Invention, to all which matters and things herein Containd the parties to these presents do hereby bind themselves each to the other their heirs, execut^r & adm^{rs} in the penall sum of one hundred thousand pounds Money of Virginia to be Recovered of the party Delinquent or that shall Refuse to Comply with the Terms and particulars of this article, and in Testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals Interchangably this 10th day of November 1784.

James McMechen (seal)

James Rumsey (seal)

Test

Dabney Miller

Richard Curd

Richard Anderson Jr.

(Backed) Articles of agreement
Between
James McMechen
& James Rumsey
Nov^r 1784.

McMechan
vs Articles
Rumsey

(B)

London April 15th 1792.

Dear Sir,

Near the end of November last I received your favor of the 14th July 1791, wherein you tell me that you had "received two

letters from me since I had left America" I believe that is all (before this) that I have written to you, and hope that you will not ascribe the smallness of the number to neglect, or want of friendship; as I can assure you that neither was the cause; But my having written frequently and, pretty, fully to Capt. Morrow, respecting my proceedings here, with a request to communicate the same to you (among other friends) made me conclude it was unnecessary (to say nothing of the aversion I have [for wr]iteing one thing over and over again) to repeat the same to you and in this light (tho it is indirectly) I have written to you, as often as to any friend that I have.

Believe me that I am much and most Sincerely distressed by the account you give me of the disagreeable situation that you ware in when your letter was written; but I hope and believe that you had only taken a View of the dark Side of your Situation, & trust that the fear you expressed of things getting worse with you, was more Ideal than rail! I too often myself see danger through a magnifying glass, it is therefore that I am experimentally enabled, to Judge of your Situation by my own! you mention the £1000, worth of goods that I sent to Capt. Morrow, and the £100 stg. I allotted for you; It may therefore not be improper to say Something respecting them least you (for want of more accurate information) should have some wrong impressions relative thereto; when I made the sail of the patents here, I was to receive £1000 in goods and £1000 in Cash, on finding that the latter was not easy to be come at, I (therefore) agreed to take £800 for it, in hand; you know how unfortunately the whole of that sum, fell into the hands of that scoundel, Wynkoop, who I then expected (as I had taken up his Bills that otherways must have been protested) would repay the whole £1000, which I directed to be disposed of as follows £600 Sterg. to the Society (which sum they had advanced to me) £100, to you £50 each to ned & my wife, and the remainder to Mr. Barnes the Villian paid none of [torn] therefore no more need be said respecting it, at present: The £1000 Ster^s worth of goods I sent to Capt. Morrow to be sold upon, and for, my own account; to indemnify me for the expences I had been at, an account of the business

here; which at that time (say nothing of my Servise) was upwards of £750 sterlg.!!! and now is more than double that Sum! all this over and above the £600. furnished me by the Society from which you may Judge (having had no resources) of the enormous Sum that I (constantly have and) now owe. View me thus loaded with debt, in a Strange Country, Conected with broken men; and pursueing projects, in the Success of which, but few believe. Compare this with your own Situation and bless yourself that you are yet Liveing in the peacefull shades of Berkley! tho on but a Scanty Subsistance. I have frequently been in the prisons here, on purpose to make them familiar to me! as I have long expected that one of them, must eventually become my abode; I will not discribe them to you; they are too horrid for your contemplation; if however you should dwell upon the Idea, conceive a man shut up with thousands of hardened & unhappy wretches, without the allowance of even bread and water to Subsist on! believe me this is Literally true! and to add to the horror, be assured that a man, the moment he is Locked up, is no more thought of, or sought after than if he was in his grave! Capt. Mor[row] will inform you with the success I have lately had with one of my new mills, which however has produced no pecuniary relieff, one of my partners being much worse than nothing (with respect to property) and the other scarcely never to be seen, is but cold comfort; after four years absence from home! the Business has for some time been totally at a stand; how it will end, to use Barnes' expression; "heaven only knows." I am determined however as soon as I possibly can, to bring the whole to an end; of some kind or other, as I find it impossible, any longer to proceed without better support; this you will Say is a hard lot; especially [torn] time when I have (according to my agreement) [torn] to me, more than £3000 sterlg. I have long since Intimated to Capt. Morrow to Let you have any money, or goods that you might stand in need of; which no doubt he will readily do; I therefore trust that you Cannot suffer while I am able to furnish you with that resource; which you very well know is all that I have in the world, and that it will ever give me pleasure to divide it with you, which I Cheerfully will Should

desperate events not deprive me of it. give my best respects to Mrs. McMechen and be assured that I remain your Sincere friend

James Rumsey

Doc^r Jas. McMechen.

(Backed) Doc^{tr} James McMechen
 To the Care of Captⁿ Charles
 Morrow, Shepherds Town,
 Berckeley County,
 Virginia.
 Single sheet

[The following was written as a postscript.—*Editor.*]

London June the 29th 1792. The ship that I expected this Letter to have went by sailed without my knowledge and no other oppertunity offering till now the Letter was obliged to lay by. I have nothing new to add except that one of my partners has totally sank under the pressure of his affairs by which means it comes out that he has conveyed his third of the patent to his Creditors more than 16 months ago; the other will weather the storm I hope Soon he has already let me have much money as to relieve [torn] from the danger of a jail and the pressure of my most hungry dunns but the business is still almost Stationary, but I hope some change (perhaps) for the better may yet take place; my news from Barnes is all bad, you shall [hear?] from me again soon. I am in good health and bad Spirits. tell my enquiring friends so. I am your friend J. Rumsey.

(C)

Philadelphia May 14th 1788.

D^r Charles

In two hours time I shall be on board A Ship bound for London with a bill for two hundred pounds Sterling in my pocket and the best Letters that Philadelphia Can aford me Doctor Frank-

lin is now writing Letters for me and many other has wrote, at a meeting of Our Company on the 9th of May They proposed this plan and Did me the honor of Calling the Company The Rumseian Society. on the 13th Ins^t, was the Second Meeting when my going was Determined upon and the Gentlemen in Consequence of it very generously Consented to Cansel my proposials So far as they ware binding on me, and has Since procured the bills as an adetional Venture and are to Suport Joseph Barnes in the pursuit here on the Continant, I have Impowered you the Doct^r and him to act in my place while I am gone This Charles is my Meredian if I Do not Do sumthing now I am Done. It is Certain my prospects is flattering as these gentlemen that patronise me are Conspicuous Characters. We Chose our officers in form a Gent^r William bingum [Bingham] Esq^r was Chose president Mires Fisher Esq^r Vice president M^r Joseph James Secretary and Bengaman Wynekoop Esq^r treasurer. I Enclose you a Report of the Committee of the Society I beg Sir that you will Leave no Stone unturned to Detect fitch [John Fitch] in his Villianey you shall have one of his pamphlets Sent you as Soon as they Come out you Can then judge what Sort of proofs is wanten and Can forward them to Our Secretary & Committee of Correspondence which I had nearly forgot to mention Wm. Bartan Esq^r is one of them and Mr. Levi Hollingsworth is another Bengaman Wynkoop Esq^r acts as another the fourth I forgot write to any of them you think proper but M^r Wynekoop is the most active he has been propelled with great velocity through the streets for Several Days by the force of Steam alone.

Charles take [care] of my Child and of all the Little Business I Left with you I Can make no promises but I think I Shall not go to Europe for nothing if I donot you Shall be Remembered if Mr. Pages and Mr. Fitzhughs houses Can be Done by anymeans It will save me sum charector Remember me to polly tell her I Sincerely wish her all happyness and tell my Child to be good garl and Remind her that it is in part for her I toil Keep neddy with the Doct^r if posable or Sum other school I shall Endeavor to have him Sum Clothing got against winter and if nothing Else Can be Done Send him here to Joseph Barnes

I have Laid a train for him to finish his Studyes but it will be Expensive and therefore most be the Last Shift Except^t; my cir[cumstan]ces mend Remember Me to Dady [torn] and Charles, and to all my old friends and Neighbours

(Backed) McMechan

vs Letter

Rumsey

Capt. Charles Morrow

Berkeley County

Virginia.

(To be continued)

William and Mary College

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LETTERS OF JAMES RUMSEY, INVENTOR OF
THE STEAMBOAT

(Continued)

(D)

London Sept^r. 12th 1791.

My Dear friend,

I hope you will excuse me if This letter should not be so full as you expect or I intended especially when I tell you that I am in the middle of a Specification of a patent I expect "to have more patents that any man in Europe"—I believe I have not wrote you but one letter Since april last which was by Cap^t. Chapman Last month, in which I did not mention a word of my progress throgh a firey trial which has not yet come fairly to an end I shall not enter into menuties but shall give the prominent features of my probation—In april I was so far gone as to be obliged to wait upon my Creditors and tell them my situation who was lenetive (?) enough not to push me Sutdenly to any Extremities hoping that rogers and parkers affairs would Come round by the rise of the american funds So as to enable them to pay me and go on in the mean time I was a perfect Lacquey to them boat [both?] giving assistance in aranging their affairs as no person Could get to see Parker only through me—Rogers Claimed a great debt of him and therefore became Very envious to him because he would not instantly give up all his property to him parker on the other hand denyed the fact and proved to me by incontestable documents that he could not owe the other what he Claimed untill he discharged a Joint debt that they owed to a house in america amounting to £15,000, sterling which proved to be the fact, tho the debt had always been Considered as Roger^s. own till an article appeared between them to prove the Contrary, Rogers^{es}. view was To Sacrifice parker to Save himself and was supported in his pretentions by "Several of the most respectable merchants in the City" (the common phrase) if you alow there is any that deserve respect ; Parker upon the other hand Saw that his Scattered property which was Chiefly in funds was every day increasing in

value and therefore made it his business to put of all that Lay in his power which in the end proved the best of policy as he is now with Certainty worth a very great Estate, but to go back to the Claim, Rogers proved to be a man of more Cunning and duplicity than any man I ever met with and would by his fair manner have made me an easy Sacrifice if I had not been from experience much upon my guard; after many long negotiations an arangement^t. took place between Rogers, his trustees (not assinees) and parker, in which I was highly Instrumental, that made it necessary for Rogers to go to holland in order to make an arangement of parkers property there which was to be put into proper hands and lay twelve months untutched which object was accomplished and was the Corner stone of parkers Salvation from total Ruin as they Rogers & his trustees had attached some and was determined to attach it and all the rest of parkers property. Things being thus aranged I began to feel Comfortable thinking from what rogers had told me that I should get immediate releif, the moment Mr. Parker should come into the arangements Just mentioned, for which I waited with great patiance, not liking to urge a man in distress, till I found M^r. R. upon the eve of departing for holland without taking the least notice of my Situation this induced me to wait upon him with my account to have at least a Settlement with him, when to my utter astonishment after finding that the highest Coulored Sedine (?) of evation, that I ever Saw, would not put me of he was obliged to appear in his proper coulers, by refusing to admit or acknowledge evin the existance of my having any regular claim; aludeing no doubt that I had broken the articles by carrying on the business in my own name! which no doubt you recolect was done Expressly to oblige him & P [Parker] thinking there could be nothing but Villians in the world I determined to put it to the test by instantly going to P [Parker] and hear what he had to say I told what had passed he Said he expected, I then requested that he would Settle and Sign the accounts if he approved of them which he instantly did without exammining them, what difference in men, parker has always been hidden and misterious in his proceedings But to do him Justice I have allways found him honourable; The next day I took my old friend Wakefield with me and in his presence gave Mr. R. notice that I should

persue the Legal Steps, pointed out in our agreement to oblige him to settle our affairs to which end I delivered him a written notice of what I intended and said likewise that I should call next day upon a M^r. Maitland who was his principle trustee that seemed to frighten him so much as to propose meeting me at M^r. Maitlands in the morning to See what Could be Done at the time appointed I attended at M^r. M^s. but was told that M^r. Rogers could not be Seen till Seven in the evening, This mortifies me extreamly as I had Just been toald that he had taken a Seat in a Coach that was to start at that hour for the Sea port from which he was to embark for holland by accident I afterward heard that he was to be with Mr. Maitland at 3 o'clock I therefore attended but Could not get admited though I saw him through a window! I urged however to See Mr. M. who at last condescended to come to the Door, and after Some time promised that I should See M^r. Rogers at Six I according at that time Called but So Compleatly was Maitlands mind poisoned that instead of giveing relief he expected me to give security to repay the money I had had of M^r. R. & P. should I fail to go throug & perform all the experiments I had undertaken! the meeting ended in maitlands undertaking to defend by Law the inocent M^r. Rogers from the unjust pretention of a man (meaning me) who till then he was taught to be believe was more deserving I told him that I wished to have the good will of every one particularly his as I had been taught to believe that he was a gentleman, that was not only Capable of judgeing properly of things, but had an inclination also to decide impartially upon what came before him, but since I found that I had been wrong informed His good or bad opinion of me was but of Little Consequence in my Estimation and then Let them! the moment after M^r. R. set out for holland where he was two months. —In the Course of the time that had passed I verry unsuspecting held several treates (?) with two persons recommended by M^r. Rogers, who wanted to purchase, as he Said part of the patents; being anxious to permote any plan that was likely to extricate me from dificulties, I unsuspectingly answered to all the enquiries that was made by one of them, who proved to be his and his trustees, attorney. that no doubt Came to pick up what testimony he could that would opperate against me in a Legal process,

as afterwards well known that the attorney had not the least faith in my plans, and wonder at the time from his Ignorance of them how it Came that he had So much as to want to purchase. I was now once more driven to the last Extremity with the worst of appearances before me. when contrary to all Expectation an invitation Billet was delivered to me by *two* footmen in Loud (?) Livery that wanted an answer. I opened and found it was from the *Earl of Carhampton* appointing a meeting with him upon business, at the time appointed I waited upon him and at Several other periods which ended in an agreement for me to go to Ireland for at least 60 days at £10 sterling per day! to give Some directions about a Canal that is carrying on there by government and individuals united of the Latter one half at least are Lords Knights &c with the Duke of Linster at their head. It was those in Council that had directed the Earl of Carhampton, then in England, to Send over an able engineer, and his Lordship pitched upon me, the next thing was to get leave from my Creditors (a mortifiing aplication) to go, the ten pounds per day was a least that they thought was worthy their humain indulgence therefore I got it But was advised by my old friends (who behaved nobly upon the occation) Bailay & Vaughn, to wait upon Maitland before I went and inform him of my intention I did so and he in a letter to each (for I toaled him I had Called by their advice) protested against my leaving the kingdom, and reflect upon them if they had advised the measure, which he doubted, these [illegible] protest was very favorable to me as they produced very sperited replys from both the gentlemen in question say they had and still did advise the measure and that nether him or any other person had any right by or under my agreement to stop me—I according on the Sixth day of may Set out upon my Journey but did not arive at *dublin* till the 25th partly oweing to bad weather and partly to the Circuetous rout I had taken to See all the principle Canals in England—upon dilivering my letters to the Irish nobless, a meeting of the board was instantly Called and I was Summoned before them. You know me too well my friend for it to be necessary to tell you the Sensations I felt on my entering a Room where undoubtly was Colected in about forty great men a large propotion of all the Science in the Kingdom! many were

the questions I was asked and had to Solve or answer from which I found that they were absolutely an orricle (?); I am Sorry however to tell you that my deffedence (that I never shall get the better of) exposed me more upon this occation than I expected, though I afterward had the Satisfaction to find, did not opporate So much against me as I expected as it did not abate the Confidence they were prepared to put in me, I therefore Set about and executed the business wanting to be done with all the expedition in my power & which I Compleated and laid (in my own fist (?) writing about five times wose than Common) in a much less time than was expected and in a mannor (with respect to Substance) that gave general Satisfaction to all parties Concerned which before had been much divided, and then returned to England; but not to London but Liverpool, and kept my retreat a Secret to all but faithfull Wakefield who previous to my departure I made my agent as he had got quit of his partner and had Lent me all the money he Could raise, besides in my absence borrowing £100 for my use which Saved me from Stopping business in London at all! while Laying upon my oars at Liverpool, manchester, Chester &c. I invented a mill upon principles intirely new, (which I am now specifying—you know what I mean) and which it is evident Saved me from distruction; as previous to that my opponants in London acted in the most hostill manner poseble haveing heard that my business was done in Ireland therefore Expected Soon to “unconditional Submition” (But they would have been mistaken, as I had determined as my Country had done before me, never to be brought to Such terms by a Briton) a Change of features in affairs however made it necessary for them to depart from that proceedure, for I was fortunate enough while at Liverpool to make a Conditional Contract with Some Gentlemen at that place, that I believe had written to me before your departure from england to erect the mill and have an interest in it, Should my partners in London refuse an offer that I should make them respecting Her, and our other affairs which if they should, I was immediatly to receive £300 from the Liverpool gentlemen (whom I had made acquainted with my Situation) to get a patent and pay the debt, that most pressed me at London. This point being gained I Sent my pro-

posials of Settlement to London at the Same time telling them what I had done with regard to the new mill if the did not Settle, and receive her, upon the principles I had laid down, which all through gave an indulgence to them, besides giving the mill into the bargain; On hearing what I had done and finding that delay might be very dangerous the alarm was sounded, and a general Council held in which my terms ware acceded to in toto, as I had declared that nothing short would be accepted; I therefore instantly Came to London to confirm them to which So much delay was given by duplicity and Stratagem as some times to make me fear that I Should Loose boath objects, and should if the mill at Liverpool had not been [illegible] making Such progress as to fear that She would be Set of and thereby become public property before a patent could be obtained for her which I would not begin with till the accounts Should be settled, which at last was done and an article of agreement entered into after it had under gone a thousand corrections to relieve it in Some degree of the Studied ambeguity that introduced into it in order to obscure it its true intent and meaning, which the the fairest feature (and therefore ought to be protected) Could never be brought fully into View The sceine however Closed in a mannon not a little gratifying to me as the haughty Mr. Maitland was himself by letter obliged to garuntee the payment of Rogers' note to me for £237-5- before the business Could be Closed. we Since have established an office Mr. Wakefield Clark at £150 per annum and have 12 or 15 men at work in a shop of our own! & expect soon to make Some experiments of mills after which the old subject of applying Steam to the Columbian maid will be resumed the nine months She has lain by has so rusted an injured the mechnery as to make it necessary to take it all apart. We are (torn) below the albian mills (ruiens) at a place Called "Falean Starrs" in Surry and upon the water Side where we meet twice a week and go through the accounts and &c with as much Importance and accuracy as if we were Comitioners of the first important trust in the State, at the close of every examination, each man putts down his dividend of money due, and signs the Statement of the accounts they have past, when the meeting, by a formal minute written in a large (torn) book (reciteing the proceedings of the

day) Breaks up.—Haveing thus given you [illegible] upon [illegible] from my last (upon that [illegible]) At the present time, with an arising in Ireland into the bargain; I shall now Conclude by begging the favour of you to Excuse all Blunders and omissions that Loosees the Sence of what was intended As I have not time to Examine or Corect all that I have Said, having robed myself, as it ware, for the time have taken from the labourious task that I have upon Land, only for which I should take pleasure in writing you a quire which would not exhaust the fund of, Incidents, and anecdote, that I have upon hand. at an other oportunity you shall have more.—Let me beg you after reading this to Send it to Capt. Morrow it may be Some amusement to him and my friends to retrace more particularly my movements for the last nine months which hitherto I have only Very partialy or generally mentioned to them.

Believe me Dear West, let fortune Sport with me as she may, that I am in all Situations your sincere and efECTIONATE friend.
M^r. G. W. West.

James Rumsey

[Addressed]:

To
Cap^t. Charles Morrow
Shepherds town
Berkeley County
Virginia

(E)

London Jan^{ry} 5th 1791.

Dear Charles,

I have but fifteen minutes Left to Scratch you out a letter of bad news by the packet of this month. The persons that I sold my patents to have failed, which at present has put a total Stop to all my affairs I had my name on their Bills to the am^t. of about three hundred pounds which I have got paid with much difficulty otherwise I should have become a Bankrupt with them.—I hope to keep the Vessel and all the mechainery from their concerns, if do she will keep me Safe against debts that I owe on account of the Con-

cern to the amount of £800—Sterling—The Society in america are mostly Leaches and Sharks, Some of them has Supressed all my letters to Barnes for some time Back, in which was all Wynkoops Bills, and instructions how to proceed thereon, the Vessel is ready to move with a Considerable degree of reputation, But must now be kept back from motives of policy. Should you Send a Scheme of goods for the Spring donot Calculat upon my Sending them to you with Certainty as it is uncertain where or how this Late misfortune may End.

Some of the Society grumble at my Sending you goods, and have drawn more Bills upon me which Shall be protested. As the Society owes me Considerably on account of my advances here therefore Let no pretences what Ever induce you to Let them or any Person pretending Claims upon me (in Consequence of inventions) not Even Mr. Barnes have a Shilling. To Enable you to go on the better, do not remit me any money here, thes are only a few hints of the deranged State of affairs at this moment, as soon as they Come to Some fixed point you Shall have all the particulars Explained. I Expect nothing Else but a breath with the Society who has Certainly behaved Rediculous to me in a Very great degree, the Very persons that they introduced me to here See it and are my friend thogh they would not trust them for a farthing y^{et} the Lend me hundreds. I long to hear from you. give my tenderest respects to my family and all friends and believe me Dear Charles to be with unalterable Sincerity your friend and hb^l. Ser^t.

James Rumsey

P. S. the post waits I therefore have not time to read what I have written.

[Addressed] Cap^t. Charles Morrow

Shepherds Town

Berkeley County

Virginia

(F)

London Augs^t. 23d 1791.

Dear Charles,

I think I have not written you a line Since the 9th of April at which time I sent you the Copy of a letter I had written to Mr. Barnes on the Sixth of Said month, which informed you of my then, Very disagreeable Situation, that grew more and more uncomfortable every day as debts increased and Creditors grew impatient, friends began to Cool, and a few days must have ended my Career, in Europe had it not been for the following fortunate Circumstances turning up, at a moment that was almost the last, in which it Could have given relieff! the Circumstances aluded was as follows. "In Ireland they are Cuting of a Canal of great Extent and magnitude in which the most of the nobility and gentry of that country are Concerned, not only as legeslators, but as individuals also in which Capacity they have Subscribed two hundred thousand pounds Sterling towards Carrying on the work; which has been on hand for Some time till meeting with difficulties that embarrassed and divided them, so much, that they determined in a full board of directors (which altogether Consists of upwards of forty members) to Send to England for an Engineer, to point out the manner in which the Business ought to be Carried, The Earl of Carhampton who was then in London, was desired to make enquiry for a proper person for Such an undertaking and behold (from among the hundred thousand that profess to be Engineers in this Kingdom) he pitched upon me; after attending him several times, I received my instructions, with letters to Several *Noble Lords*, I Set out on the 6th of May for Dublin, at the Salary of ten pounds Sterling per day, till I should return; It would be a history to relate the particulars of this Journey, which was attended with many Sceines that were new, and interesting, to a mind like mine; and thoght they were attended with many pleasing, indeed flattering, Circumstances, and ware Crowned with Success in the End; yet great and many were the Tryals, and agitations, that I had to Encounter with, in the accomplishment of my undertakeing—It was not an easy task for an orrator Such as I am, Contious of inabelity, in language and

want of fluency of Speetch, To Explain to the potamack Company my Sentiments upon the navigation they were upon; Judge then what must have been my Situation, when ushered in to hold forth, a techneial language, to upwards of twenty, Imperious, and no doubt Learned Lords, Knights, &c! who had been worked up into the Expectation (as Some of the Facetious toald me) that I could create boath Clay and Stone! Before these directors I had occation to appear Several times during the business I went upon which I at Lenth accomplished, to the General and great Satisfaction of almost every person Concerned; and at the End of forty days returned to England (not to London) again; The money I Raised from this Expedition; and the mannor in which my appointment and absence opperated upon my Ennimies here (the persons that bough my patent, and their trustees) was the means of Snatching me from the Sure distruction that awaited me, and all my European affairs; I did not return to London untill I received a confirmation from my agents, that my opponants had acceded to terms, which I had offered to them, during my absence, as the only ones that,—should Ever again induce me to Cooporate with them! The terms I proposed was not so good as those that my Contract entitled me to But they ware the best I could get, and have already releived me from an anomous load of debt; and has set a business again into action with briskness, that has Layn Dormant almost Eight long months! at other oppertunities I will relate more particular the methods and manner by which I conducted and carried into Execution (without a Law suit) the great point I have gained, tho constantly opposed by *power*, *poverty*, and *prejudice*, not only against my *profession* but *myself & Country* I am Dear Charles your Sincere and Constant friend, and Ob^t. Hb^t. Serv^t.

James Rumsey.

August 24th 1791.

D^r. Sir,

The Ship not going yesterday as I Expected, that will take this to america, enables me to Say Something in reply to your

favours of the 10th of February which I received in Dublin on the 25th of May and Should have answered much sooner had not I determined to See my affairs on a more permant foundation, or defeated, before I Said anything about them to my friends—I am sorry that you have not found better Sail for your goods, but notwithstanding that, do not be discouraged, a time must Come, when they will answer better ; and therefore I must approve your resolution to let them Lye on the Shelves ; Sooner than trust them out. I have no doubt but the goods I sent you Come pretty high, But Should you have occation for more, I shall endeavor to have them laid in upon the Very best terms, at that time, I could not manage that point as I pleased, but now the goods part of the Contract is broke ; So that I shall purchase where I please in future.

Turnover

In continuation to the 24th of August 1791

I am much obliged to you and my Sister for your friendly Solicitude on account of my Child, and hope that you have Continued it in spite of any indulgences She may meet with to the Contrary for be assured that I highly disapprove of her going to any public place, what ever ; without a very particular acquaintance being with her in which case I have no objection, but would lean to a moderate indulgence, of what Extent, I now leave to your selves the Single Sircumstances of Suekeys age, and Situation, has given me more uneasiness, than all the dificulties I have met with besides, on you an my Sister ware my hope founded, should you relinquish your authority, or she refuse to obey, I should consider her as lost ; not from bad example but from the indulgence I am well assured She will receive, I therefore beg and trust, that you will do everything in your power to have her to Conduct herself with propriety ; if She Should not, america Shall never See me more!! for it is for my Children I Labour & therefore was it to happen, that they Should not deserve my Endeavours, in their favours ; I would never wish to See them again as nothing Could hurt me so much, as their disgrace. I

Shall write to both Polly and Suckey by this opportunity, and shall urge a Change in their Conduct, the ensuing winter; which I hope will be attended to, if it is not, I shall take measures (if not too late) to prevent the like from every hapning again.

What a strange part has been allotted for me to act in this world, the fourth year is advancing with rapid strides Since I left you! and I am not yet ready to return; and what is worse, I see no immediate prospect of it; But Shall push with all my might, to bring that long wished for period to pass; for believe me I am Still as I always have been, lookeing forward for Comforts yet to Come, and which now appear to reside in my native Country! wheither they do or not Charles of this I am Certain, that if ever I ouer (?) any Comforts in this life, is for me it will be among you; Being Experimentally Convinced that but few of the innocent and Substantial Comforts of this life, exist near Kings and Courts, attendance and parade, Such as Continually go on in this great metropolis where many are Literally Starving for bread, while others Cannot move a single yard without half a dozen Servants to attend them! dressed in Clothing more Costly, by far, than our members of Congress! the wealth of this Country is Imence, many invididuals Spend their ten thousand a year, without being half gratified for want of more! It seems to myself yet I can assure you that it is true, that when persons are talked of, that has but from £500 to £1,000 a year, they are Considered as in but middling Circumstances and So many of these kind of Sentiments I have heard, as to be impressed with the Same Idea! the Sound of a thousand Sterling is not, to me, so large as 100 dollars used to be; nor did I find it so hard to raise a hundred guineas here, with out resources too, as I did in america to raise that many penns (?) shillings when in the midst of all my friends and acquaintances!! Can you tell me the reason of that Charles? It was because I was a prophet at home!! I am now in a strange land—all this however does not Lessen my attachment for my own Country, nor prejudice me in favour of this. My best and sincerest regard to you and my Sister, and am as always your Sincere friend

J. Rumsey.

[Addressed]

To

Cap^t. Charles Morrow
Shepherds town,
Berkeley County
Virginia

favoured by

Cap^t. Chapman
Ship Salley
W. G. P.

(To be Continued.)

William and Mary College

Quarterly Historical Magazine.

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LETTERS OF JAMES RUMSEY, INVENTOR OF
THE STEAMBOAT

(Concluded)

(G.)

TO ALL TO WHOM these Presents shall come Edward Bancroft of Francis Street in the County of Middlesex, Esquire James Allan Park of Carey Street in the said County Esquire and Robert Barnewell of the City of London Merchant send greeting.

WHEREAS by a certain Bond or Obligation bearing date the twentieth day of February in the present year one thousand seven hundred and ninety five Joseph Barnes of the State of Virginia in North America Gentleman then residing in the City of London Executor of the last Will and Testament of James Rumsey late of the Parish of Saint Margaret Westminster Engineer deceased became held and firmly bound to Daniel Parker of Water Town in the State of Massachusetts in America then residing in Charles Street Soho Square in the County of Middlesex Esquire in the penal Sum of five thousand pounds—subject to a condition thereunder written for making the same void Reciting that by a certain Bond or Obligation in writing bearing date on or about the first Day of May then last past the above named Joseph Barnes became bound to the above named Daniel Parker in the penal Sum of five thousand pounds with a condition thereunder written whereby after reciting that disputes had arisen between the said Joseph Barnes and Daniel Parker and in order to put an end to the same they had agreed to refer the same to the award of the above named Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall or any two of them it was theyby [sic] conditioned to make void the same if the said Joseph Barnes should keep the award and determination of the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall or any two of them of and concerning all and all manner of action and actions cause and causes of Action suits bills bonds specialties covenants contracts promises accounts reckonings Sums of Money

Judgments executions extents quarrels controversies trespasses damages and demands whatsoever both in Law and Equity at any time theretofore had made moved bought commenced sued prosecuted committed or depending by or between the said parties or either of them so as the said award and Arbitrators or any two of them should be made in Writing under the hands and seals of them or any two of them ready to be delivered to the said parties in difference or such of them as should desire the same on or before the first Day of November then next and then last past and reciting that the said Arbitrators had proceeded to take upon themselves the burthen of the said Reference and examine the parties and their Accounts papers and vouchers relating to the matters referred to them but did not make their Award within the time limited by the said recited Bond and it was agreed between the said Joseph Barnes and Daniel Parker to refer again to the award and Determination of the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall or any two of them the matters before referred to them by the said recited Bond The condition of the said Bond or Obligation now in recital was that if the said Joseph Barnes his Heirs Executors or Administrators did and should for his and their parts and behalf in all things well and truly stand to obey abide by perform fulfil and keep the award order arbitrament final end and determination of the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall or any two of them of and concerning all and all manner of action and actions suit and suits cause and causes of action and suit bills bonds specialties covenants contracts promises accounts reckonings Sums of Money Judgments executions extents quarrells controversies trespasses damages and demands what soever both in Law and Equity at any time theretofore had made moved brought commenced sued prosecuted committed or depending by or between the said parties so as the said Award of the said arbitrators or any two of them be made in writing under their Hands and seals ready to be delivered to the said parties in difference or such of them as should require the same on or before the twentieth Day of April next then the Obligation should be void or else should be and remain in full force and virtue And it was thereby agreed by and between the said parties that the said Bond or Obligation and the submis-

sion thereby made should be made a Rule of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench at Westminster if the said Court should so please AND WHEREAS by a certain other bond or obligation bearing even date with the above recited Bond the said Daniel Parker became held and firmly bound to the above named Joseph Barnes in the penal Sum of five thousand pounds with a Condition thereunder written for making the same void if the said Joseph Barnes as Executor aforesaid should and did observe perform fulfil and keep the Award Order and Determination of the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall of and concerning the matters thereby referred (being the same matters mentioned and contained in the said herein before recitd Bond) AND WHEREAS the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall have further taken upon themselves the said Reference and have examined and interrogated the said parties and Witnesses and examined and inspected several Books Papers and Accounts respecting the same and heard and considered what was alledged on both sides NOW KNOW YE that we the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall do therefore hereby award order and direct that the said Joseph Barnes as Executor as aforesaid and Daniel Parker or one of them shall and do out of the Copartnership Estate and Effects of Daniel Parker James Rumsey and Samuel Rogers well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the Reverend Edward Wadson of Huntingdon at the House of Mess^{rs} Roberts Curtis and Company Bankers in Cornhill London between the hours of ten and eleven of the Clock in the forenoon on the twentieth Day of April next ensuing the principle Money and Interest then due to him under or by virtue of a certain Bond or Obligation on the same Bond or Obligation being thereupon delivered up by him to be cancelled and destroyed (being the same Sum of Money awarded and directed by us to be paid to him by Samuel Rogers and Joseph Barnes as Executors as aforesaid in and by a certain other award order and Direction under our Hands and Seals bearing even date herewith and made in pursuance of a certain bond or obligation bearing even date with the above recited Bond And we do further order and direct that the said Joseph Barnes do and shall out of the assets of the said James Rumsey which have or

shall come to his Hands well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the said Daniel Parker his Executors Administrators or assigns the Sum of two hundred and eighty four pounds ten shillings and six pence of lawful Money of Great Britain and that upon payment of the said Daniel Parker and the said Joseph Barnes as Executor as aforesaid shall do well and truly enter into and execute to each other a good and sufficient release in Law of all Claims and Demands whatsoever under and by virtue of certain Articles of Agreement bearing Date the twenty fifth Day of March one thousand seven hundred and ninety made between the said James Rumsey of the first part the said Samuel Rogers of the second part and the said Daniel Parker of the third part and of certain Indenture bearing even date therewith and made between the said James Rumsey of the first part the said Samuel Rogers and Daniel Parker of the second part and Samuel Browne of the third part or any other Account whatsoever from the beginning of the World to the Day of the date of these presents and we do further hereby award adjudge order and direct that the said Daniel Parker shall and do pay two third parts or proportions of the Costs Charges and Expences of making and executing this Award And that the said Joseph Barnes shall and do pay the remaining third part thereof out of the Effects of the said James Rumsey which shall come to the Hands of the said Joseph Barnes
 IN WITNESS whereof the said Edward Bancroft James Allan Park and Robert Barnewall have hereunto set their Hands and Seals the ninth Day of March in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety five.

Edw^d Bancroft (LS.)

James Allan Park (LS.)

Rob^t Barnewall (LS.)

Sealed and delivered being
 first duly stamped in the
 presence of

Rich Dann Jr.
 Threadneedle Street
 London

18th August 1796 Examined with the original
 (of which it is a true Copy) by us

William H. White Clerks to Wadeson & Hardy
 S. F. Townsend Austin Friars London

[backed]

Dated 9th Day of Mar. 1795.

Joseph Barnes Gent.	}	Award
with		
Daniel Parker, Esq ^r		

(H)

London March 30th 1792.

Dear Charles.

In november Last I received your Several Letters dated at Shepherds town in July 91 and on the 27th day of december I received you letter of 22^d of nov^r 91 written at philadelphia. I Sincerely thank you for the kind concern you express, throgh the whole of them, for my past misfortunes, and future welfare, and trust that you will believe, that I have your interest and happiness as much at heart, as you have that of mine. you Seem to be frightened at the nature and complication of my affairs, and was no doubt more so when you received the Letter forwarded to you for M^r West in nov^r last; but do not Let these things make you any longer uneasy, they are but the natural occurrences, that all men in my line of life may expect to meet with, especially in a City that may (not unjustly) be called the capotal of the world; of course possed with a great proportion of all the knowledge thereof, without much of its Virtue, on which account it is Soon determined after a man is broght upon this theatre whether he is fit for an actor or not; I have So far passed muster, tho the part I have had assigned me as yet has been Such as (only) to keep me in view Rather than to make me Conspicueous and notwithstanding my discouragement has been great indeed, from the difficulties that have Constantly been heaped upon me yet I do not Loose heart, finding that "my back is always equal to the burthen that

I have to bear"!!! and therefore (thogh unhappy enough) am not in so miserable a Situation as you Seem to fear; my unhappiness is only at intervals when my philpsophy and fortitude forsakes me, which is not oftener now, not withstanding the turbulence and magnitude of my persuits; than when my greatest want, was a grist of your indian Corn without having the money to pay for it!!! After So long a preface your mind will in Some degree be prepared for any kind of news, I Shall therefore not hesitate to Say at once, that my affairs at this moment are not in a more favourable train, than when I wrote you last, which has been the true Cause of my remaining So long Silent, hoping every week that Came (for Some months past) would put me into possession of the means of being independent, at least in this land of exile, which would lead to my turning my Eyes (once more) towards my own Country; but alas my weried patience must brace up, to face another long long year, before I can even hope for that pleasure. Then (and not before) you may expect me!!! as I have determind by that time to force my business here to an end of some kind or other; It might with certainty (Should I live) be a prosperous end, had not all my conections here as well as my one [vaunted?] *patrons*, in america, been *Laches*, instead of *Liberal disinterested men*. Charactors, by the by that have no existence, except in Idea! of honest men, there may be many; I know there is Some!!! my Steam Vessel, from the poverty of the Concern, has laid by the walls, nearly, for the last six months, not withstanding that Very little work (besides repair of damages recevd by laying by) would make her ready for an experiment; that would not fail of Success, that would entitle me to receive from my partners £2,500 Ster^rs. But what of that Success? if they have not the ability and inclination to pay me, they already owe me, for the new mills that I have Completed, upwards of £3,000 Sterl^rs yet not a farthing of it is to be had, promises and prospects of receiveing a Considerable part of it is always before me, but the *means* for *maturing* them never appears. Thus you See (as through all my life) I am obliged to live on *hope*, almost, alone: which at this moment is but very faint as it has become quite uncertain wheithe the business (which is now but feebly carried on) must not in the Course of a few days once more Stop!

for want of Supplies of money to carry it on; how it may be is uncertain, yet Certain it is, that a few days must bring Changes of Some sort, as I am determined to proceed [torn] short time longer, without something Substantial Should Come down; for like all projectors I have, resources in other Schemes, which I this day expect to obtain a *patent* for, that will be put into the hands of persons for execution whose Situation will respect to money matters will make their efforts (to bring my new plans forward) much more efectual, than ours [?] has been in bringing forward the old ones:

I am very sorry that trade proves So dull with you but don't let that discourage you, Something will turn up as advantages, or it will revive: I wish you Could Sell your property, goods and all; for a good farm, for after all is Said and done I am Satisfied it is the most Comfortable life to be a Contented farmer! It is in that way I hope to end my days! Remember me kindly to all my friends, particularly to my sister, who is so much interested in my hapiness; and but * * * that I remain your Sincere and much obliged friend &

Hum. Servt.

James Rumsey.

	Sh for ^d	15 Cents
Geo. Toun 4th June	Alexr	10
		—
[backed]		25

Capt. Charles Morrow

Shepherds town

Berkeley County

Capt. McKensy

Virginia

Ship Mary

Letter from James
Rumsey filed in suit

(I)

London august 4th 1789.

Dear Charles,

I have your letters of the 16th & 17th of march 89 by M^r Hunter, and that of the 17th of May by Cap^t Suttan from philadelphia now before me, and be eshored that it gives me great pleasure to hear that you, my sister, and all friends are well, those by M^r Hunter I received the last week in June, that by Cap^t Sutton are the 12th of July, my reply will be tedious and not Satisfactory but before I Enter into a particular account of the difficulties I have Lately met with I will tell you that I have Concluded after mature Consideration not to Send out the goods proposed before next Spring, the principle reasons for not doing it follow,—you remember I long Since informed of a gentleman that was so good as to offer me money to try my Experiment and that I had a Vessel building at Dover for that purpose, she is now finished and is at London what is still better she is paid for, the hull Cables and anchors and trunk in her bottom Cost 600 guinies; you will be frightened when I tell you that after I had entered into an agreem^t for this vessel an had subjected myself to be drawn upon at very short periods for the money, I returned to London where to my great astonishment I found my friend and patron in *Jail* for a Large Sum of Money, I had just received a remittance from the Society about Suficiant to make the first payment for the Vessel which unfortunately was lodged with him, with the greatest difficulty, and more address than I everbefore was Capable of, I got it out of his hands, Contrary to the Expectation of Every one that knew the Circumstances; by which I was Enabled to make the first payment, my Situation was now such that I was obliged to Close with the first person that would Let me have money, a good natured honest Creature that knew no more of my Schemes than an *Idiot*, proposed to Lend me some money, I accepted of it and got £500 of him, from two other gentlemen I got £200, more and was going on tolerable well when a partner of my honest friend returned from abroad, pretended to be much dissatisfied with the money being gone without having Some considerable part of the Scheme for it, we had a meeting in order to try to Contract for part of my british

patent but Could not agree, they offered me £1200 Sterling for one fifth of it; my reasons for not Closeing with them when in so bad a Situation, ware many, they then pushed for their money which obliged me to apply to the Very gentlemen throug home I intended to get the goods; for the lone of that Sum they ware good enough not only to let me have that Sum but as much more as will finish my Experiment the Cost of which will be at least one thousand guinies, this you will say is a great deal of money for me to borrow in a strange Country Especially when the Society that Sent me here has actually, in one Sence of the word deserted me having fairly refused thogh not in direct terms, to Establish a Credit here for me to try the Experiment these letters from the Society I have Shewn to the Gentlemen that has let me have the money. The Society words are "if the Experiment you are about succeeds you will send us out an Engine for a twenty ton boat by Cap^t Sutton; the Cost of which they will pay to your order at our next meeting the Society will take in Consideration a proposition that has been made to them, for Establishing a Credit in London for Such Engines and mechines as they may want!" I will leave you to Comment upon what they have said but I Conceive I am to get no Credit Except the Experiment Succeeds, I have written them a Spirited Letter in which I toald them as this Experiment would be at my own risk, that I Expected all the profits (should any arise) of that vessel. I hope under these circumstances that you will approve of my not asking for the goods, not that I think thay would have been refused me but it would have had so much the appearance of straining[?] the free horse, that I had not resolution enough to do it besides was my misfortune to happen in the Experiment I should feel a double weight upon me by the takeing the goods for should they take up the Idea that my Scheme would fail it might raise in them Some suspicions of the uprightness of my intentions. The foregoing dificulties at times bare harder on me than any you ever knew me to Encounter in america the reason was their is no * * * of a payment here one single day therefore the failing in one payment would have made me a *bankrupt* and my name must have been (to the great Satisfaction of my Enemies) posted up in the public papers, or myself sent to *Jail*, after what I have said

it is unnecessary to add any reasons for the delay of the Experiment to so late a period, the mecheniry is now on board the vessel and is going slowly together, *I remain quite Sanguine*, she is a butifull vessel Burthen 101 & 45/94 tons I have called the *Columbian Maid* but think to change it to the *Rumseian Experiment* as soon as success is ascertained. I am much obliged to you for [illegible] with your [illegible] for my Success, it is Certainly my friend a great undertaking to attempt Such an Experiment as mine is under the Eyes of one *million* of Souls I did not at first intend to do it, but Several attempts are making in different parts of the kingdom to work Vessels by Steam thogh not on my plan I am therefore determined to let the world know the general principles of mine as Soon as posable, that I may thereby gain their Support and patronage, it is necessary in a country like this where almost anything Can be accomplished by *Bribery* and as shore as I have success, I shall have powerfull opponants, and althogh I have (untill now) kept it as Private as possible yet I have Secured several powerfull friends to introduce me to the Lords of the admorality &c. as soon as my Vessel is ready the Duke of Clarence, the kings third son, has been informed of it, and is much pleased with the account, several of the nobility and Sir Joseph Banks (*president of the royal Society*) are ready to tender me Every servise in their power, my plans has been approved of in the royal academie of Sciences in paris and by the Society of the museum of arts and Sciences, in the Same place, where through the interest of the Marquis de Candorset[?] and Some others of my friends their, I am p^ropossed as a member of that Society. It takes Some time to go through the necessary Ceremonies, but Suppose I shall be Elected Doc. Franklin is at present the only one upon that list that is an american, no person can be admited that has not produced some new philosophical discovery; So much my friend for the gratification of Vanity, the Substance I find is much harder to come at yet I hope it will all Come about in due time. respecting setting up a boat in Patamock I shall not forget that object the moment I have it in my power to attend to it.—as to my returning home, it is the only thing that Distresses me to a great degree, for if I stay to do my business (and consequently my duty) in Europe it will take a long time, and to leave

it undone would be to Surrender to others the fruit of my labours, as well as a great proportion of the reputation I might gain by being the Establisher of them; these Considerations, and a wish to return to my native Country "and to the bosome of my friends" keeps as it ware, a Continuel warfare within my mind which renders me quite unable to determine on Either measure as yet. I am astonished at Fitches perseverance and rascallity I wish you had got him taken with a writ, however upon the hole I think his Exertion [?] will opperate against him. I hope that M^r Barnes has been able to Colect and pay you the money I owed you I have frequently written to him upon the Subject and shall do it again at this time. The unaccountable number of letters I have dayly to write persons in this & other Countries will I hope plead my excuse to my father and the rest of my relations and friend for not writeing Individually to them, Especially as I depend upon you to Communicate to Each the Contents of my letters so far as may be prudent an you think they would be glad to hear. I have not heard a word of M^r Vasey Since he left London last year. The people of france will be a free people, they are following the Steps of the americans who taught the world the Value of Liberty, this City is Crowded with french tories that has made thire Escape from their Justly Enraged Country men, the popularity of the marquis DeLafayette and his Close Intimacy with our Countryman M^r Jefferson, makes him (M^r Jeferson) as it ware the present *dictator* or *law giver* to the french nation, the historyes of the world Can not furnish such an other Instance, there has indeed been tyrants that has ordered the Chains of Slavery to be rivited on as many people, but an american is the first that attempts to have them taken off. I lived to see that dread full place called the *Bastile* it is now no more, but leveled to the Earth by the Candidates for Liberty, —You have not toald me how the navigation of Potamack goes on, and whether richi Stuart [h]as yet the Command of that business I should also be glad to hear if the Sawmill is like to make a liveing that is tolerable for my poor old father and his Children that are there if it does I am Satisfied, your not mentioning it has gave me Some reason to doubt of their Success. I have my uneasiness on many other accounts about which I am realy afraid to Enquire; if any person

has been injured or disappointed by me, I am sorry for it, the only Comfort I have when such gloomy thoughts, occupy the mind is the being Concious that I never wished to injure one of my fellow Creatures who did not deserve it, and that I always did things for the best, what Ever might have been the Event.

Doct^r McMechen has written to me I am Sorry to hear that he is in so poor a way I wish I was able to relieve him. [torn] is singular (but I can ashore you my friend that It is true) that I never felt more affliction, for the misfortunes of my friends and those dependent upon me, than I ever [did?] upon my own account. I shall Endeavour throgh [torn] Barnes to give him some assistance. David gray [torn] is married; if you see him tell him I [torn] posable hapiness, and for his own sake [torn] he did not Come to Europe as it not [torn] Can Colect Idea^s which will add much to [torn] this life, whatever it may do to his knowledge—I should be glad to hear about the play house, Fitzhughs houses, W^m Orrick & his affairs &c &c &c. after my best respects to you & your relations and to my Sister, and mine with Sincerity Subscribe myself yours & their Efectionate freind

James Rumsey.

[backed]

Capt. Charles Morrow
Shepherds Town
Berkley County
Virginia

To the parti-
cular Care of
Mr Hellen

Mr Morrow will please
to puruse this and returne
it to me again

C. M.

McMachen
vs Letter
Rumsey

Philad. Jan. 29th 1792.

Capt. Charles Morrow

Dear Sir,

These lines will be handed you by Adam Fraley, a young man who came recommended to me by Jacob Smith as an ingenious Mechanic, he is professionally a mill wright and is to execute the work of Major Hights mill upon the principles of reaction, in which are to be two Machines, I have given him assurances of patronage, on my receiveing a satisfactory advice of the completion and Success of Said mills; the essential parts of the aparatus are to be made here—

The Committee of Congress appointed to bring in a Bill to amend the Patent system, have not yet made report! however, they promise me it shall soon appear; From what Little I can discover, the report of Said Committee will not meet my Ideas but I will attend to its passage through the Low house, and if it shall be deficient get my friend to amend it. Nor has the Committee of the Rumseian Society appointed to take a retrospect of their constitution &c. yet made report—

The 16th instant I rec^d a Letter from our friend J. Rumsey dated London Nov. 3^d 1791— In which his apology for not having so long written to me is, his not having had matter of importance to inform me. No important event had taken place, he is passive on the Subject of the Steam Vessel; he observes that his partners have for some time payed up their quotas of the expenses, but he fears there is but little probability of getting any of the purchase money 'till the Machines shall be made productive and yield it; he adds that his difficulties were much Lightened, but in consequence of his having then got any Machine in motion which was productive, not entirely removed.

He, further adds that the hopes of the Rumseian Society here must in future depend on their Liberality, because in his Last Patent, dated Aug^t 24, 1791—he has specified mills and Engines so far superior to any of his former as to render them comparatively of but Little value; In consequence of which he requests the mill proposed at New York to be Suspended 'till he forwards an improved Machine for that purpose.

He further adds, that he was on the point of trying a mill on principles entirely new, of the result of which his next in a few days should inform me.

He observes, that, he used to think he was more unfortunate than others because he met with more impositions from his fellow men, but, almost too Late, he finds the truth to be his own credulity in, and want of a competent knowledge of mankind, which he observes the City of London an excellent school to teach.

He, informs me he had not since Buel Left London rec^d a Line from him, which together with Some disagreeable things which he has since heard of him is Sufficient ground to Suspect he (Mr. Rumsey) is once more deceived, however Mr. Rumsey observes if the result shall be, that Buel had not acted with propriety or has done any thing contrary to Mr. Rumsey interest he will make America too warm for the [torn] of Buels views?

with the purest motives
of respect

I am Sir

your hum. ser^t

Joseph Barnes

Capt C. Morrow

P. S.

Best respects to M^{rs} Morrow and Love to children particularly Little polly for whom I feel sensible emotions.

Likewise respects to M^r Rumsey, & friends,

J. B.

[backed]

Capt. Charles Morrow

Shepherds Town

M W

Berkely County

Adam Fraley

Virginia

McMachen

vs

Letter.

Rumsey