

A Guide to the Josiah Parker Letters, 1780-1800

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Josiah Parker

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There are no restrictions.

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Biographical Information

Josiah Parker was born 11 May 1751 at the Parker family estate "Macclesfield" in Isle of Wight County, Virginia. He was a member of the Committee of Safety and of the second through fourth Virginia Conventions in 1775. Commissioned a major in the 5th Virginia regiment 13 February 1776, Parker served under General Charles Lee (1731-1782) until the Fall of 1776, when he was transferred to George Washington's army. Parker was promoted to lieutenant colonel 18 July 1777 and to colonel 1 April 1778, but resigned from the army 12 July 1778. He represented Isle of Wight in the Virginia House of Delegates 1778-1779. During the latter stages of the American Revolution, Governor Thomas Jefferson appointed Parker to command all Virginia militia south of the James River and to work in cooperation with the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), who commanded the Continental army troops there. Parker returned to the House of Delegates in 1782-1783, and was appointed naval officer for the ports of Norfolk and Portsmouth, serving in that post from 1786 to 1788. An unsuccessful candidate to the convention to ratify the Federal constitution, Parker won election to the United States House of Representatives, and served from 1789 to 1801. After leaving Congress, Parker engaged in various agricultural pursuits. He married Mary Pierce Bridger, a widow, 26 May 1773. Parker died 14 or 18 March 1810, in Isle of Wight County, and was buried at "Macclesfield."

Scope and Content

Letters, 1780-1800, of Josiah Parker (1751-1810) of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, consisting of correspondence, 1780-1782, concerning military actions against the British army in Isle of Wight County and Suffolk, Virginia by Virginia militia forces under Parker's command; requests for information on the British army in the area; discussion of American and British movements in Virginia and in the South; and a request for an exchange of a prisoner of war by the British army. Also, correspondence, 1800, consisting orders for the sailing of the schooner Clotilda, and a letter to the Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddard (1751-1813) concerning a resolution by the United States House of Representatives about the status of the navy.

Contents List

Letter, 9 November 1780, from General John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg (1746-1807) to Parker and Colonel Gibson advising on how to attack British forces near Suffolk, Virginia.

Letter, 11 January 1781, from Baron Friedrich von Stueben (1730-1794) addressed to Richard Parker (d. 1780) requesting information on the size and location of enemy forces (this letter is either misdated, or, more likely, misaddressed and meant for Josiah Parker).

Letter, 17 May 1781, from the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834) to Parker asking Parker to unite the militia and engage the British, also includes a note from William Constable to Parker reporting on British actions.

Letter, 27 June 1781, from Lieutenant William Simpson of the British army to Parker asking for the exchange of Dempsey Butler who had been captured earlier.

Letter, 5 July 1781, from Lafayette to Parker discussing the maneuvers of British and American forces.

Letter, 6 July 1781, from Brigadier General Allen Jones in South Carolina to Parker reviewing the situation of General Nathanael Greene's (1742-1786) army in South Carolina.

Letter, 14 July 1781, from Lafayette to Parker requesting military information.

Letter, 21 July 1781, from Lafayette to Parker discussing Lord Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805) and Banastre Tarleton (1754-1833).

Letter, 24 July 1781, from General Anthony Wayne (1745-1796) to Parker reviewing British and American military actions.

Letter, 30 July 1781, from Wayne to Parker commenting on British military policy.

Letter, 1 August 1781, from Lafayette to Parker discussing recent military actions.

Letter, 12 June 1800, from Parker to Captain Thomas Gray giving sailing orders for the schooner Clotilda.

Letter, 1 December 1800, from Parker to Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert (1751-1813) sending a copy of a House of Representatives resolution regarding a committee investigation of the status of the navy, the enclosure is not included.

Letter, no date but probably late 1781 early 1782, from Parker to the Governor of Virginia, probably Benjamin Harrison (1726-1791) concerning British troops still in the vicinity of Isle of Wight County.