

Addressed to: James Irvine

From: Johnston & Purss

Quebec 12th Sept^r 1783

Mr James Irvine

Sir,

Inclosed we hand your Bill of Lading & invoice of six barrels and eight hundred and sixty boxes essence of spruce shipped on board the ship Mary, Mathew Peacock master, for New York on acco^t & risk of Mrs Anne Taylor which we have consigned to you to sell for the best advantage you can for Mrs Taylor's interest. We expect it will fetch 12 dollars p^r box but should anyone have a mind to purchase a large quantity (suppose 100 boxes and upwards at a time) for the West Indies or other parts, you may sell it at eight dollars p^r box, observing that you are to sell for ready money only. When you are in cash about one or two hundred pounds or more at any time, you will invest it in a good bill, or Bills of Exchange, and remit to our friend William Brymer Esq^r, Castle Court, Budge Row, London for our acco^t. Herein you ought to be cautious whose bills you take and to inform yourself well of the credit and responsibility of the drawer or indorsee before you buy them. You are to charge 5p cent on the gross sales of the essence for your commissions, 2½ p cent for rent and also 2½ p cent comm^{ns} on the amount of the remittances you make which is for your trouble for transacting this business, exclusive of the charges of landing, cartage, &c^a. On your arrival at New York the first thing you will have to do will be to provide yourself in a convenient lodging. You will therefore inform yourself of the rates of lodging rooms & storehouse for the essence. We suppose a room or two will be sufficient for your present purpose, and you can board in some creditable private family having always an eye to frugality & oeconomy. The next thing you will have to do will be to advertise in the newspapers that you have imported a quantity of the essence of spruce from Quebec which you sell cheap for cash only, in whole sale & retail, at such a store (naming the house in such a street). We have procured you a few letters of introduction to some gentlemen in New York with whom you will consult if occasion requires. You have also a letter from us to Mr John Allsop who was formerly a merchant in New York before the late trouble. If he is returned to New York you will deliver him the letter and we doubt not he will assist you with his advice. We herewith deliver you a small acco^t he owes us balance £17..18..4 which we have desired him to pay you. In case New York is evacuated this fall, we think he can be of great service to you under the new government. We mean if you find encouragement to continue you for some time at New York as we judge it may be a central port for the other States of America and the West India islands. You will advise us of your progress from time to time by every opportunity by land and water, with your remarks of the trade on the place, especially of the sale of the essence for our government in sending you from time to time such supplies as you may find a sale for. If you cannot dispose of the essence in casks at the same price

p^r pound as the pots in boxes, there will be no difficulty we presume in getting pots and boxes made to be filled into. It is impossible for us to give you directions in every particular, the circumstances of the time and place must govern you, and we rely on your prudence and discretion in suiting your conduct to these circumstances. And we cannot, from the good opinion we hold of your understanding and discretion, but indulge ourselves in the hope that you, even at this critical time of life, will be able, in the present times of dissipation to maintain your character for integrity, sobriety & industry, which will ever and alone recommend you to the notice and esteem of all men whose regards are worth cultivating. We wish you a pleasant passage, health and success and are

Your sincere friends & hbl^e serv^{ts}

J & P

P.S. If contrary to our expectations New York should be evacuated before or at your arrival & that you are not admitted to settle there, or that you cannot dispose of the essence in that place, you will imbrace the first opportunity of a vessel (to) any of the British West India islands, ship the essence, and proceed with it thither, and sell it for the best advantage you can, remitting in good bills to Mr Brymer as above directed, retaining in your hands, when the sales are finished, two or three hundred pounds in cash wth which you will return to this place by the first opportunity. Adieu

Yours as above

J & P