

Masters. But your Letter was the first Intimation that another Tribe more numerous and powerful than all the rest were grown discontented.—This is rather too coarse a Compliment but you are so saucy, I wont blot it out.

Depend upon it, We know better than to repeal our Masculine systems. Altho they are in full Force, you know they are little more than Theory. We dare not exert our Power in its full Latitude. We are obliged to go fair, and softly, and in Practice you know We are the subjects. We have only the Name of Masters, and rather than give up this, which would compleatly subject Us to the Despotism of the Peticoat, I hope General Washington, and all our brave Heroes would fight. I am sure every good Politician would plot, as long as he would against Despotism, Empire, Monarchy, Aristocracy, Oligarchy, or Ochlocracy—A fine Story indeed. I begin to think the Ministry as deep as they are wicked. After stirring up Tories, Landjobbers, Trimmers, Bigots, Canadians, Indians, Negroes, Hanoverians, Hessians, Russians, Irish Roman Catholicks, Scotch Renegadoes, at last they have stimulated the to demand new Priviledges and threaten to rebell.

Abigail Adams to Mercy Otis Warren

Braintree April 27 1776

He is very sausy to me in return for a List of Female Grievances which I transmitted to him. I think I will get you to join me in a petition to Congress. I thought it was very probable our wise Statesmen would erect a New Government and form a new code of Laws. I ventured to speak a word in behalf of our Sex, who are rather hardly dealt with by the Laws of England which gives such unlimited power to the Husband to use his wife ill.

I requested that our Legislators would consider our case and as all Men of Delicacy and Sentiment are averse to Excercising the power they possess, yet as there is a natural propensity in Humane Nature to domination, I thought the most generous plan was to put it out of the power of the Arbitrary and tyrannick to injure us with impunity by Establishing some Laws in our favour upon just and Liberal principals.

I believe I even threatned fomenting a Rebellion in case we were not considered, and assured him we would not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we had neither a voice, nor representation.

In return he tells me he cannot but Laugh at My Extrodonary Code of Laws. That he had heard their Struggle had loosned the bands of Government, that children and apprentices were dissabedient, that Schools and Colledges were grown turbulent, that Indians slighted their Guardians, and Negroes grew insolent to their Masters. But my Letter was the first intimation that another Tribe more numerous and powerful than all the rest were grown discontented. This is rather too coarse a complement, he adds, but that I am so sausy he wont blot it out.

So I have help'd the Sex abundantly, but I will tell him I have only been making trial of the Disintresstedness of his Virtue, and when weigh'd in the balance have found it wanting.

It would be bad policy to grant us greater power say they since under all the disadvantages we Labour we have the assendancy over their Hearts

And charm by accepting, by submitting sway

Abigail Adams to John Adams

B[raintr]e May 7 1776

I can not say that I think you very generous to the Ladies, for whilst you are proclaiming peace and good will to Men, Emancipating all nations, you insist upon retaining an absolute power over Wives. But you must remember that Arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken—and notwithstanding all your wise Laws and Maxims we have it in our power not only to free our selves but to subdue our Masters, and without violence throw both your natural and legal authority at our feet—

“Charm by accepting, by submitting sway
Yet have our Humour most when we obey.”

2. Taylor & Duffin Report Molly Brant's Opinions and Actions, 1778

Niagara, 26 Octobr. 1778

Sir

It is about Sixteen days ago since Mr. Taylor arriv'd here. Miss Molly [Brant] being then in the Indian Towns, we postponed writing to you untill her return, which was daily expected, but it was 10 days after before she arrived. The little Trunk was delivered to her immediately. Her brother Mr. Joseph Brant was about 35 Miles above *Aughquago* when she heard of him last. He has been on the Frontiers since the beginning of May last: trying to make his Way through to the British Army with a pretty Considerable Party of Whites (which joined him there) and Indians, and though he has destroyed a great part of these back Settlements: it is told of him that he & his Party has Shewn dispositions of Humanity to Women & Children & Persons not found in Arms. . . . Miss Molly says he has now thoughts of penetrating through to the Army at New York, with only three or four with him: as he finds it impracticable with the whole of his Party, which he does not think Strong enough to force their way, and with three, or four he may March by back Roads, & in the Night. Miss Molly however thinks the risk is too great, so Wishes, & is not without hopes; that he may come in here, & if he does She Imagines he will go down to Canada to see his Excellcy. General Haldimand, & you. . . .

We paid Miss Molly £25 Halifax Currey. agreeable to his Excellcy. General Haldimands desire to Mr. Taylor, when in Montreal this fall. She desires you will thank his Excellency for her, and if the Season was not so far spent She wou'd have gone down to Canada to thank him herself. She is mightily pleased with his Exellcy's notice of her. . . .

Miss Molly told Mr. Taylor that the Indians often ask her what is the reason that Colo. Claus did not come to Niagara. If it were not for the Service She thinks She

Taylor & Duffin to Daniel Claus, 26 October 1778, British Library, Add. MSS. 21774, ff. 9–10. This document can also be found in Maryly B. Penrose, comp. *Indian Affairs Papers: American Revolution* (Franklin Park, N.J.: Liberty Bell Associates, 1981), 167–168.

can be of here: in advising & conversing with the Indians: She wou'd go down to Canada with her Family. She desires Mr. Taylor to inform you the Manner She lives here is pretty expensive to her: being obliged to keep, in a manner, open house for all those Indians that have any weight in the 6 Nations confederacy. We have told her we will not see her in want. We conclude in Haste

Sir

Your Most Obedt. Hble. Servts.
Taylor & Duffin

[To] Daniel Claus Esqr.

3. Daniel Claus Assesses Molly Brant's Influence, 1779

Montreal 30th. Aug. 1779

Sir . . .

As soon as Molly heard of my arrival she paid me a Visit and gave me a full Detail of her Adventures & Misfortunes since the Rebellion but in particular in fall 1777 after our Retreat from Fort Stanwix when she was robbed of every thing by the Rebels & their Indns. for giving Intelligence of their Motions by wch they were surprised & defeated when She was obliged to leave her home & flee for her & childrens safety to the 5 Nats. wherein she was assisted by her Brother Joseph and proceeded to take Assylum among the five Nations every one of which pressed her stay among them but she fixed upon Cayouga as the Center & having distant Relations there by whom she was kindly recevd. After Genl. Burgoynes Affair she found them in general very fickle & wavering in particular the head Man of the Senecas called *Cayengwaraghton* with whom she had a long Conversation in Council reminding him of the great friendship wch. subsisted between him & the late Sr. William whose Memory she never mentions without Tears, wch strikes Indns. greatly and to whom she often heard him declare & engage to live & die a firm Friend to the King of Engld. And his Friends with other striking Arguements wch. had such an Effect upon that Chief & the rest of the 5 Nations Sachems present that they promised her faithfully to keep up to the Engagements to her late friend for she is in reality considered & deemed by them as his Relict & one word from her goes farther with them than a thousd. from any White Man with out Exception who in general must purchase their Interest & Influence at a high rate. After Majr. Butlers Return from Montreal in fall 1777 hearing she was at Cayouga he sent her repeated and very pressing encouraging Messages to reside at Niagara wch. she at first did not know how to comply wth. being so well taken care of by her friends till at last she brought it abt. so as they could her leaving them not take amiss & parted in friendship. Her departure from Niagara now was greatly regreted by all the Indns. that heard of it and would be more so when the Campaign was over & they all be acquainted wth it as she is their only confident to whom they communicating every thing of Importance & desiring her

Daniel Claus to Frederick Haldimand, 30 August 1779, Public Archives of Canada, MG 19, FI, vol 2: 131-133. This document can also be found in Maryly B. Penrose, comp. *Indian Affairs Papers: American Revolution* (Franklin Park, N.J.: Liberty Bell Associates, 1981), 232-234.

Advice & she prevented many at mischief & much more so than in her Brother Joseph whose present Zeal & Activity occasioned rather Envy & Jealousy with for his last Excursion was greatly damped on that Accot. having had near 300 Indns. ready to join him wch. on his setting off was brot. abt. to be stopped & countermanded, and he obliged to set out but with a small number. Molly seems to me not to be well contented with her present Situation having left her old Mother brother Relations & Acquaintances among the five Nation who she regrets & they will miss her on Accot. of her friendly conversation & Advice.

[Daniel Claus]

4. The Patriot Esther DeBerdt Reed Describes the "Sentiments of an American Woman," 1780

On the commencement of actual war, the Women of America manifested a firm resolution to contribute as much as could depend on them, to the deliverance of their country. Animated by the purest patriotism, they are sensible of sorrow at this day, in not offering more than barren wishes for the success of so glorious a Revolution. They aspire to render themselves more really useful; and this sentiment is universal from the north to the south of the Thirteen United States. Our ambition is kindled by the fame of those heroines of antiquity, who have rendered their sex illustrious, and have proved to the universe, that, if the weakness of our Constitution, if opinion and manners did not forbid us to march to glory by the same paths as the Men, we should at least equal, and sometimes surpass them in our love for the public good. I glory in all that which my sex has done great and commendable. I call to mind with enthusiasm and with admiration, all those acts of courage, of constancy and patriotism, which history has transmitted to us: The people favoured by Heaven, preserved from destruction by the virtues, the zeal and the revolution of Deborah, of Judith, of Esther! The fortitude of the mother of the Macchabees, in giving up her sons to die before her eyes: Rome saved from the fury of a victorious enemy by the efforts of Volumnia, and other Roman Ladies: So many famous sieges where the Women have been seen forgetting the weakness of their sex, building new walls, digging trenches with their feeble hands, furnishing arms to their defenders, they themselves darting the missile weapons on the enemy, resigning the ornaments of their apparel, and their fortune, to fill the public treasury, and to hasten the deliverance of their country; burying themselves under its ruins; throwing themselves into the flames rather than submit to the disgrace of humiliation before a proud enemy.

Born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government, we associate ourselves to the grandeur of those Sovereigns, cherished and revered, who have held with so much splendour the scepter of the greatest States, The Batildas, the Elizabeths, the Maries, the Catharines, who have extended the empire of liberty, and contented to reign by sweetness and justice, have broken the chains of slavery, forged by tyrants in the times of ignorance and barbarity. The Spanish Women, do they not make, at this moment, the most patriotic sacrifices, to encrease the means