

## Dear Mrs. Cad: A Revolutionary War Letter of Rebecca Franks

*Mark A. Stern*

Life was splendid for Rebecca Franks during the winter and into the spring of 1777–1778. Washington's rebels were immobilized at Valley Forge, improperly clothed and short of adequate food supplies. Winter set in, and British General Sir William Howe was content to enjoy the comforts of Philadelphia, which his army occupied. Some of the finest mansions in the city had been commandeered for Howe and his officers. They embarked upon an almost endless series of parties, galas, assemblies, and other social delights with the many young, pretty, charming, and affluent ladies of the city.<sup>1</sup>

Miss Franks was certainly one of these. Renowned for her beauty, wit, and conversational acumen, she enjoyed close friendships with a coterie of the richest and prettiest girls in town: Betsy, Sarah, Mary, and Peggy Shippen; the Chew sisters, Mary, Elizabeth, and Peggy (who were of appropriate age among their family's eleven girls); Williamina Bond; Nancy Redman; Mary White; and others.<sup>2</sup>

Upon settling in Philadelphia, Howe made a point to visit David Franks at his Woodford estate to establish a working relationship with the agent in charge of victuallizing the British Army in Pennsylvania and on the frontier. Franks was Rebecca's father. The general was accompanied by his aides and top staff, including the dashing Major John André, who encountered Miss Franks and her friends. The encounter was pleasurable: All those handsome young men in their impressive officer uniforms and the beautiful young women responded instinctively. A pattern of daily visits ensued; even Howe took part. André drew sketches of the ladies and composed poetry. We have no evidence of how Mr. and Mrs. Franks liked the situation, but there was nothing wrong with finding a way to please your best customer.

David Franks had supplied the British troops as a cocontractor with his father, the late Jacob Franks of New York, who, in turn, fulfilled contractual requirements passed on from the firm of Arnold Nesbitt, Sir James Colebrook, Adam Drummond, Sir Samuel Fludyer, and Moses Franks of London.<sup>3</sup> Moses Franks was also Jacob's son and David's brother. The business arrangement had been in force since the conclusion of the French and Indian War.<sup>4</sup>

David Franks's parents, Jacob and Bilhah Abigail Levy Franks,<sup>5</sup> were Jews whose families had migrated from Germany to England. Leaving brothers behind in London, Jacob came to America and settled in New York in 1708 or 1709. He prospered, met and married Abigail, and raised a family of three sons

and four daughters who lived to adulthood. Three other siblings died as young children. Jacob was a pious Jew and joined with others to build Kahal Kadosh Shearith Israel, the first Jewish congregation in New York, in 1728. Until his death in 1769, he was a pillar of the synagogue, serving as *parnas* seven times and in other leadership roles continually.

Jacob and Abigail sent their two oldest sons, Naphtali and Moses, back to England to learn the merchandising business and to establish themselves. Both succeeded handsomely and married first cousins, retaining solid Jewish bonds within the family. After a brief attempt to form a partnership with his brother Moses, David moved to Philadelphia and, in 1742, commenced his business life as a merchant by joining in partnership with his mother's brother, uncle Nathan Levy.

The year before, tragedy had struck the Franks family when David's older sister, Phila, eloped with the Anglican Oliver DeLancey, Jr., whose family was powerful both politically and socially in New York. Jacob and Abigail were devastated.<sup>6</sup> Both rationalized the episode because DeLancey was from a solid background and was, in fact, a partner with John Watts in the victuallizing firm that served New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts under contract with Jacob Franks. Despite these positive elements, they did not see or speak with Phila for a year. Later, both contemplated separate meetings with her, but normal relations were never achieved.

Compounding this agony, in 1743, David married Margaret Evans, daughter of Peter Evans, who was a high-level official in the Philadelphia city government and a leading parishioner at Christ Church, the city's Anglican church. David's parents were further upset as all of David's children were raised as Protestants; except for Rebecca, all were baptized at Christ Church.<sup>7</sup> But a strange phenomenon emerged: Despite her upbringing and despite her mother's devoted church attendance and connection to Christ Church, Rebecca became known as the "Jewish belle" of Philadelphia — a consequence of her father's faith and its indelible stamp.

Over the years since then, there are numerous references to Rebecca as a Jewess. In 1893, Anne Hollingsworth Wharton referred to her as "the beautiful Jewess"<sup>8</sup> The following year, the Jewish scholar Max J. Kohler authored a twenty-seven-page monograph devoted to her that states, "We find Rebecca constantly referred to in contemporary and later papers as a Jewess."<sup>9</sup> That same year, Henry S. Morais devoted several pages to Rebecca in a book titled *The Jews of Philadelphia*.<sup>10</sup> Nearly a century later, a collection of essays on Jewish life in Philadelphia explains that her father was one of the original subscribers to the Philadelphia Dancing Assembly and that "Rebecca Franks was one of the most popular belles of Revolutionary society in the city."<sup>11</sup> One of the most comprehensive histories of Philadelphia discusses "Miss Rebecca Franks, the Jewish belle of the city."<sup>12</sup> In 1997, we read "On the other hand, David Franks,

Philadelphia's leading Jewish merchant, was a die-hard loyalist whose daughter Rebecca was the belle of the Philadelphia social scene."<sup>13</sup> After forty-one years of marriage to an Anglican baronet, her death was recorded under "Jewish Obituary Notices" in the *Gentlemen's Magazine of Great Britain*.<sup>14</sup>

In 1780, David Franks was expelled from Pennsylvania despite a series of trials in which he was consistently found innocent of treason.<sup>15</sup> He and Rebecca were ordered to go beyond the battle lines and not return to the state until after the war was over. They moved to New York City. Two years later, Rebecca married Colonel Henry Johnson of the British Army, who had been captured and kept from battle during the final stages of the war. Soon after their wedding, with the war ended, Johnson was sent back to England and the couple settled in Bath. Not long after, he was promoted to major general and assigned as governor of Ross Castle in New Ross (near Wexford), Ireland. Rebecca accompanied him there, and it was during their stay that she wrote the letter shown here.

Rebecca's friend (and her mother's first cousin) Willie Bond had married one of Washington's most admired officers, Gen. John Cadwalader. The women corresponded, although only one sample of their letters has surfaced. That letter, from Rebecca to Willie, expresses many of the frustrations Rebecca endured from her withdrawal from Philadelphia and its frothy days of 1777–1778. The letter provides an unusually perceptive and historically interesting view of relationships between a number of fairly well-known, affluent English and American subjects at the conclusion of the War for Independence.

The letter sends many messages to the contemporary reader. First, Rebecca Franks had no difficulty taking sides on any issue and would have been an interesting young woman in the twenty-first century. She yearned for social recognition, fed upon it, and invited her correspondents to reinforce her opinions and biases. She was very partial to her good friends and often contemptuous of those she either disliked or envied.

Years later, Rebecca was reported to have regretted her Tory leanings, expressing the thought that she should have been a patriot.<sup>16</sup> More likely, Rebecca really lamented her separation from 1778 Philadelphia and the joys and excitements of those days filled with endless parties, dances, and gatherings with her closest friends. Life as the wife of a general and baronet never quite achieved the same level of intensity she had enjoyed at Woodford.

One other strong message delivered in the letter shows that the lines between Whig and Tory and loyalist and revolutionary were blurred significantly. Close friends and relatives functioned on both sides without intruding greatly upon their personal relationships. Rebecca had been exposed broadly to Tory/loyalist individuals and groups all of her life, yet she maintained comfortable and affectionate relationships with many pro-revolutionaries and had close friends whose husbands were continental congressmen or officers in

Washington's army. Benedict Arnold was one of Washington's top generals when Peggy Shippen married him, which made not the slightest difference to Rebecca and Peggy's friendship. Nancy Paca's husband was a Maryland congressman, and Peggy Chew's husband was governor of Maryland. Rebecca enjoyed endearing friendships with both. William Tilghman ended his career as chief justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court after many years in public service but remained Rebecca's "old flirt" Billy. Willie Bond's brother exiled himself to England throughout the war to shield his Tory feelings, while her husband was one of Washington's most trusted generals. Cadwalader fought a duel taking Washington's side in a suspected plot to overthrow him as commander-in-chief.<sup>17</sup>

All of Rebecca's cousins and other relatives tilted toward the British side, and she married a British colonel. At the same time, her father obtained authority from the Continental Congress to victualize British prisoners in a half-dozen jails throughout the northeastern colonies.<sup>18</sup> Clearly, social standing and personal affection superseded political leanings before, during, and after the war. True, many loyalists were punished severely after hostilities ended, but not by their friends or relatives.

### Reproduction and annotation of the letter follows.\*

February 19, 1784

Killernah<sup>19</sup>

Dear Mrs. Cad<sup>20</sup>

The night before last I had the satisfaction of hearing from you, a pleasure I wish much more frequently I could enjoy. But the vile sea — how much happiness does it deprive us of — but most willingly wou'd I encounter its dangers to visit Phila[delphia] again — but alas — I fear I never can hope for that ALL your eloquence will not prevail while he can he will stay, either in Ireland (where we are now) or England, and his wife must obey.<sup>21</sup>

I couldn't help smiling at that part of yr letter that so gravely reprobates grandeur & dissipation — you are indeed consum'd Old Lady — now if I who have it not in my power to enjoy such things — was to rail against them the world might excuse me — but in you who have all the rich gifts of fortune 'tis laughable really<sup>22</sup> — Becky<sup>23</sup> tells me you are again in for the plate [that is, pregnant], poor Toad. Why don't you follow your Mother's wise example — she always contrived matters so as only to be that way once in 7 years. Billy Hamilton<sup>24</sup> once made a speech at Dr. Smith's the day you din'd there as a Bride which you have fully versified — do you recollect it — I dare not trust it on paper — I can tell you very little of yr American acquaintances in London as I left the place last August & indeed when there I knew very little of them except Mrs. Arnold<sup>25</sup> who always behav'd more like an affect-te sister than a common friend, she still continues the same. I hear every week or fortnight from her, she expects to be confin'd the beginning of next Month,<sup>26</sup>

she's a true Francis in that particular — she was & is still more noticed and more liked than any American that ever came over. She is visited by people of the first rank & invited to all their houses<sup>27</sup> — As for Mrs. R Penn<sup>28</sup> she is and ever will be the Master<sup>29</sup> — No alteration except if possible she is larger & hoarser than ever — her sister<sup>30</sup> is thought pretty — but I do not hear of her having any particular admirers — I saw very little of them while in London — Mrs. P was too violent an American to have any intimacy with a British officer's wife — she is lately lain of a son — Mrs. Bingham<sup>31</sup> arriv'd but a little while before I left London & while I was confin'd<sup>32</sup> so did not see either her or Mrs. Hare.<sup>33</sup>

The former spent part of the Summer at Brighthelmstone where she was much admired in London She is not known & I hear has had but six ladys to visit her since her arrival.<sup>34</sup> At first she talk'd of going to court and living away at a great rate but that Idea is now quite thrown aside & she finds an American in London & an American in their own country quite different beings. Mrs. Arnold is the only one who has been the least Notic'd — I can tell you nothing of yr British acquaintances — I've seen more since I came to Ireland — Col. [undecipherable]<sup>35</sup> is still in Canada — so is Colin Campbell<sup>36</sup> & married to a very beautiful woman — a Daughter of Guy Johns[t]on's<sup>37</sup> — Remember me to General and Mrs. Dickinson<sup>38</sup> — Col and Mrs Cad<sup>39</sup> — & all the rest of yr acquaintances — I blow your Spouse a kiss and mine blows you one at the same time — I've not heard from [illegible] — as I write to Becky I say nothing to her of that branch of your familie — When you receive this may you be happily fix'd in D—r Phila. Which in spite of Everything I shall always prefer to every other place — Advise & tell me soon that you have given General C another son<sup>40</sup> — kiss those you have already for your Sincerely Affecte

B Johnson

If you see B. Tilghman<sup>41</sup> tell him his old Flirt sends her love to him —

\*Reprinted with permission from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Cadwalader Collection (#1454), Series 3X, Box 71, Williamina Bond Correspondence, Letter B. Johnson to Williamina B. Cadwalader, February 19, 1784.

The Huntington Library, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Beverly Hills Public Library, the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, and the Frances Henry Library at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles all provided essential archival materials for this work. Additionally, Professor William Pencak of the Pennsylvania State University gave valuable guidance and inspiration, which are much appreciated.

---

*After thirty-eight years as an engineer in the aerospace business and sixteen years restoring concert grand pianos, Mark Abbott Stern found his true passion in the history of Colonial Jewish America. At long distance, William Pencak has mentored his research within the Franks family, and a biography of Rebecca's father, David, nears completion.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia, A History of the City and Its People: A Record of 225 Years*, Volume 1, Philadelphia: S.J. Clarke, 1912, pp. 272–277.

<sup>2</sup>Randolph Shipley Klein, *Portrait of an Early American Family; The Shippens of Pennsylvania Across Five Generations*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975, pp. 185, 190–193, 305–306.

<sup>3</sup>Edwin Wolf II and Maxwell Whiteman, *The History of the Jews of Philadelphia from Colonial Times to the Age of Jackson*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1957, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Sidney Meshulam Fish, *Barnard and Michael Gratz: Their Lives and Times*, Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America, 1994, p. 49.

<sup>5</sup>Leo Hershkowitz and Isidore S. Meyer, *The Lee Max Friedman Collection of American Jewish Colonial Correspondence: Letters of the Franks Family (1733–1748)*, Waltham, Massachusetts: American Jewish Historical Society, 1968, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 116–122.

<sup>7</sup>Wolf and Whiteman, *History of the Jews*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1893, p. 212.

<sup>9</sup>Max J. Kohler, *Rebecca Franks: An American Jewish Belle of the Last Century*, New York: Philip Cowen, 1894, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Henry S. Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia*, Philadelphia: Levytype Co., 1894, pp. 36–37.

<sup>11</sup>Murray Friedman, *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830–1940*, Philadelphia: Ishi Publications/Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1983, p. 291.

<sup>12</sup>Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia*, Volume 1, p. 276.

<sup>13</sup>Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997, p. 315.

<sup>14</sup>*Proceedings of the American Jewish Historical Society (PAJHS)*, Volume 37, 1947, p. 419.

<sup>15</sup>*American Jewry: Documents, Eighteenth Century*, Jacob Rader Marcus, ed., American Jewish Archives Publication, No. 3. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1959, pp. 30, 241–260.

<sup>16</sup>Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, LLD, *Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, LLD*, Volume 1, New York: Sheldon, 1864, pp. 171–174.

<sup>17</sup>Gregory A. Stiverson and Phebe R. Jacobsen, *William Paca*, Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1976, pp. 80–81; Rebecca Franks to Abigail Hamilton, August 10, 1781, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography (PMHB)*, Volume 23, pp. 303–309; John Golder, *Life of William Tilghman*, Philadelphia: Thomas Town, 1829, pp. 12–15; Joanne Loewe Neel, *Phineas Bond: A Study in Anglo-American Relations 1786–1812*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968, p. 17; Charles P. Keith, *Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania 1733–1776*, Philadelphia: W.S. Sharp Printing Co., 1883, p. 375; *The Papers of Nathanael Greene*, Richard K. Showman, ed., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983, pp. 56–57; Gen. Nathanael Greene to Gen. John Cadwalader, November 10, 1778, *Correspondence of Nathanael Greene*, Volume 3, p. 56; Cadwalader to Greene, December 5, 1778, *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>18</sup>*Minutes of the Continental Congress*, 21 May 1776.

<sup>19</sup>Killarney, Ireland.

<sup>20</sup>“Mrs. Cad” was Williamina Bond Cadwalader, daughter of Dr. Phineas and Williamina Moore Bond and, later, the second wife of Gen. John Cadwalader. She was born 26 February 1753 and died 9 September 1837. In her single days, she was known as “Willie Bond” and was an attractive and popular young woman. She and Rebecca Franks were both ladies of the Mischianza celebration, which honored the retirement of General Howe. The fourteen ladies were selected by Maj. John André as the “foremost in youth, beauty and fashion” in the Philadelphia social scene. It was André and Oliver DeLancey, Jr., who organized the event.

Horace Wemyss Smith, *Life and Correspondence of the Rev. William Smith, D.D.*, New York: Arno Press, 1972 (reprint), Volume 2, Appendix xii, pp. 541–543; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, Volume I, Philadelphia: L.H. Everts, 1884, pp. 377–381.

<sup>21</sup>Rebecca Franks (1758–1823) was born and raised in Philadelphia and enjoyed a young womanhood of exceptional social prominence and attention. She had endless “beaux” and appears to have never tired of parties, social gatherings, and flirtations. Her father enjoyed contracts with the British government for more than twenty years requiring that he provide food and other supplies to British troops in the colonies. When the British army occupied Philadelphia in the fall of 1777, the social whirl commenced for British officers and local Tory ladies, which lasted until Howe’s departure in the spring of 1778. That year is in the background of memories that lingered with Rebecca and roused such nostalgia for Philadelphia.

Wharton, *Through Colonial Doorways*, pp. 14, 18, 23–64; Marcus, *The Colonial American Jew 1492–1776*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970, Volume 2, p. 716.

On 17 January 1782, Rebecca and Colonel Johnson were married. Their move to England and thence to Ireland followed. There, Rebecca dwelt without close friends in a musty old castle and, clearly, pined for her life back in Pennsylvania. Moreover, she lay the blame for her frustration at the feet of her new husband. Four years later, with Rebecca comfortably ensconced at Bath, Johnson directed the defense of New Ross against the Irish rebel army and was instrumental in stopping the rebel advance and turning the tide of the war in the southern region. The following year, with the rebellion suppressed, the new viceroy and commander-in-chief, Lord Cornwallis, removed him from the post and expressed the opinion that Johnson was a “wrong-headed blockhead.” In later years, Johnson was promoted to general and created a baronet.

*Burke’s Peerage and Baronetage*, Peter Townsend, ed., London: Burke’s Peerage, 1963, p. 1323; *PMHB*, Volume 3, pp. 150–166; Daniel Gahan, *The People’s Rising — Wexford 1798*, Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1995, pp. 121–141; Charles Ross, *Correspondence of Charles, First Marquis Cornwallis*, London: J. Murray, 1859, Volume 3, p. 116.

<sup>22</sup>Rebecca chides Willie Bond for complaining about “grandeur and dissipation,” which were apparently discussed in her earlier letter and refer to the Philadelphia/Delaware social scene in which she was prominent. Rebecca wants Willie to feel sorry for her current plight away from parties and balls and the intense social life she had enjoyed as a girl in Philadelphia and in London before the transfer.

<sup>23</sup>“Becky” was Rebecca Cadwalader (1746–1816), one of the six daughters (one died in infancy) of Dr. Thomas Cadwalader and a sister of both Col. Lambert Cadwalader and Gen. John Cadwalader, and Willie Bond’s husband.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, p. 374.

<sup>24</sup>“Billy Hamilton” was William Hamilton (1745–1813), younger brother of Andrew Hamilton of “Woodlands,” who was married to Rebecca’s older sister, Abigail. Billy and Rebecca had grown up as neighbors and childhood friends and, later, as flirtatious teens. Billy had a penchant for public speaking and delivered lengthy English verses at the 1759 commencement exercises at the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) when Rev. William Smith was building the school’s reputation. Billy was fourteen years old at the time. He also delivered a tribute at Willie’s and the general’s wedding, to which Rebecca alludes. Billy Hamilton was exiled from the colonies on the same day that Rebecca’s father suffered identical punishment for alleged crimes against the revolution. At the end of the trials, both men were found innocent of all charges.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, pp. 135–136; Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, Volume 1, pp. 210–213; Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, Volume XII, pp. 495, 499.

<sup>25</sup>“Mrs. Arnold” was the former Peggy Shippen, who had married General Benedict Arnold before his desertion and subsequent exile and who moved to England with him in 1781. Peggy and Rebecca had been best friends as girls and young women and continued to correspond after the war ended. *PMHB*, Volume 25, pp. 29–41; James Thomas Flexner, *The Traitor and the Spy*, New York: Harcourt-Brace, 1953, p. 318.

<sup>26</sup>Rebecca used the term “confin’d” to describe the physical restrictions imposed by advanced stages of pregnancy.

<sup>27</sup>As in Philadelphia, social relationships were bound and reinforced in England by mutual visits between ladies and gentlemen as well. Visits usually included tea service and some kind of snacks and were the means of acknowledging friendship or, very often, deference and respect, for the hostess. Great numbers and high status of visitors indicated very high social esteem whereas the lack of visitors would be read as social weakness or failure. It was not unusual for individuals to make frequent, repeated visits to leaders of the social circle. Rebecca observes the success enjoyed by Peggy Shippen Arnold almost pridefully. This is her best friend, and she is delighted by Peggy’s reception in London society.

Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia*, Volume 1, p. 387.

<sup>28</sup>“Mrs. R. Penn” was Mary (Polly) Masters Penn (1756–1829), wife of Richard Penn (1735–1811), who was the younger brother of Pennsylvania Governor John Penn. Richard came to Pennsylvania from England in 1763 and obtained, through his brother’s largesse, a series of administrative positions in which he served until 1769. He returned to England but shortly thereafter was offered the position of lieutenant governor, for which he returned to America in 1771. Two years later, having been replaced by his brother, he again moved to England, where he stayed most of the remainder of his life. Though part of the prestigious Penn family, Richard never enjoyed the social advantages of his wealthier and more highly placed relatives.

During those last two years in America, Richard met and married Polly Masters (May 1772). On their wedding day, he was thirty-seven years old and she was sixteen. Polly’s father, William Masters, died when she was just four years old, leaving his widow, Mary Lawrence Masters, with two daughters, a considerable fortune, and much real property. Over the next several years, Mrs. Masters had a house built that she gave to Polly and Richard Penn as a wedding gift. The Penns, Mrs. Masters, and her other daughter, Sarah, spent the war years in England, where they remained until this letter was written. The house in Philadelphia went through a succession of famous occupants, including General Howe, Benedict Arnold, French Consul John Holker, Robert Morris, and George Washington.

Rebecca shows some dislike for Polly Penn but fails to go into detail about the origins of those feelings.

*PMHB*, Volume 22, pp. 71–97; *ibid.* Volume 16, p. 96; *ibid.* Volume 16, p. 46; *ibid.* Volume 8, pp. 279–299; *ibid.* Volume 22, p. 88.

<sup>29</sup>A play on words due to Polly’s maiden name.

<sup>30</sup>Polly’s sister, Sarah Masters (1758–1825), comes in for some negative comment regarding her lack of suitors. Eleven years later, Sarah Masters married Turner Camac, scion of one of the oldest Irish families, who possessed extensive land and a copper mine. The couple moved to Pennsylvania, where Camac managed the farmlands Sarah had inherited from her parents.

William Masters Camac, *Memoirs of the Camacs of County Down, With Some Account of Their Predecessors, in One Volume, to Which Is Added Brief Sketches of Some of the Families With Whom They Intermarried*, Philadelphia: W.M. Camac, 1913, pp. 100–126.

<sup>31</sup>“Mrs. Bingham” was Ann Willing Bingham (1764–1801), the reigning queen of Philadelphia society and regarded by many as the most beautiful woman in the colonies and in Europe as well. Her husband, William Bingham (1752–1804), was probably the richest man in America from banking and land speculation successes. At their wedding in 1780, William was twenty-eight and Ann was sixteen. In May 1783, the Binghams went to London for a combined business and pleasure trip that lasted three years and included visits to the continent. Ann

delivered her second child in December 1783 during the stay. In later years, Ann was admired as an exceptionally charming hostess. Bingham built a huge mansion, which became the hub of society in Philadelphia. It has been said that Washington and Jefferson were in Bingham's social set rather than the reverse.

Ann Bingham was not one of Rebecca's closest friends, but they were surely acquainted through various connections.

*PMHB*, Volume 61, pp. 286–324; Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia*, Volume 1, pp. 383–384.

<sup>32</sup>Rebecca alludes to having been “confin’d” during 1783. The first of her two sons, Henry Allen Johnson, was born in September 1785, fully nineteen months after this letter was written. Very likely, Rebecca suffered a miscarriage, although there is no recording in extant letters.

*Burke's Peerage*, p. 1323; Hershkovitz and Meyer, *Friedman Collection*, p. 129n.

<sup>33</sup>“Mrs. Hare” was Margaret (Peggy) Willing Hare (1753–1816), daughter of Charles and Ann Shippen Willing and a first cousin of Ann Willing Bingham. Though eleven years her senior, she appears to have enjoyed a close personal association with Ann Willing. Peggy's husband was Robert Hare (1752–1810), owner of one of the major breweries in the colonies, whose porter was sought from great distances. George Washington sent his carriage from Virginia to pick up a supply. Later, he wrote from New York City (through Clement Biddle, who handled distribution for Hare) and from Mount Vernon to have shipments made to him. After the brewery burned down in 1790, Hare served in the Pennsylvania State Senate alongside William Bingham.

The Hares traveled to England together with the Bingham in May 1783 and were quartered close to each other. The Hares returned to America much earlier than the Bingham. Rebecca had enjoyed the same social circles as the Hares prior to her marriage, and they were well acquainted.

Smith, *Life and Correspondence*, Volume 2, p. 150; Stanley Wade Baron, *Brewed in America*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1962, pp. 59, 109, 114–117; *The Pennsylvania Manual*, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Volume 88, p. 512; *PMHB*, Volume 61, pp. 288–289.

<sup>34</sup>The reference to a paucity of visitors was an outright put-down of Ann Bingham — there is a touch of enjoyment in the telling. However, three or four years later, this assessment could not have been leveled, as Mrs. Bingham became, after her return to America, the very epicenter of Philadelphia society.

<sup>35</sup>Possibly “Hope,” although no Colonel Hope is mentioned in other Franks family documents.

<sup>36</sup>Colin Campbell (1754–1814), a Scot, entered the British Army as an ensign in March 1771 and was promoted to Lieutenant in 1774. He accompanied the 71<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot to America and, while stationed in New York, married Mary, the eldest daughter of Col. Guy Johns[t]on. Very likely, he and Henry Johnson served together in the New York/New Jersey area during the war. In later years, Campbell achieved the rank of lieutenant general and became lieutenant governor of Gibraltar.

*Directory of National Biography*, Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., New York: Macmillan, 1908, Volume 3, pp. 801–802; *Burke's Peerage*, p. 419.

<sup>37</sup>Sir William Johnson (1715–1774), a British subject, came to America in 1738 and established himself in the Mohawk Valley, where he earned the respect and admiration of the Mohawk Indian tribe who elected him a sachem. Governor George Clinton appointed him superintendent of Indian Affairs with the Six Iroquois Nations. His nephew, Guy Johns[t]on (1740–1788), was taken under Sir William's wing and trained for diplomatic service with the Indians. Guy married Sir William's daughter Mary (Polly) in 1763 and, upon Sir William's death, received the appointment to replace him as superintendent of Indian Affairs. (Both spellings of “Johns[t]on” appear in records of the family and were apparently used interchangeably.)

A loyalist during the war, Guy Johns[t]on fled to Canada in 1775. During the trip, his wife died in childbirth. An older daughter married Colin Campbell. David Franks's extensive activity in the fur trade with George Croghan, William Murray, and others had brought him into frequent contact with both Sir William and Guy and accounts for Rebecca's knowledge of the families.

*Burke's Peerage*, pp. 419, 1325; *Papers of Sir William Johnson*, Albany: Division of Archives and History, University of the State of New York, 1921–1965, Volume 1, pp. xxxv–xxxviii.

<sup>38</sup>Gen. Philemon Dickinson (1739–1809) and his first wife, Mary Cadwalader Dickinson (1744–1791). Mary was a first cousin of Gen. John Cadwalader, Willie Bond's husband, and intimate within Rebecca's social circle. Mary was the older sister of General Dickinson's second wife, Rebecca (Becky), with whom Rebecca Franks maintained a correspondence. The second marriage post-dated this letter.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, pp. 374, 390–391; W. Jay Mills, *Historic Houses of New Jersey*, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1902, pp. 270–276; *The Twentieth Century Biographical Dictionary of Notable Americans*, Volume 3, Boston: The Biographical Society, 1904, p. 247.

<sup>39</sup>Col. Lambert Cadwalader (1743–1823) and Mary McCall Cadwalader (1760–?). Colonel Cadwalader, though just a year younger, was a nephew of Gen. John Cadwalader, and Mary McCall was from one of the most prominent families in the community.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, pp. 374, 387–389.

<sup>40</sup>Willie Bond did in fact give the general another son, John, born May 1, 1784. Unfortunately, the baby lived only fourteen months and died on July 10, 1785.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, p. 377.

<sup>41</sup>“B. Tilghman” is William Tilghman (1756–1827), who was born in Maryland. The family moved to Philadelphia when he was six years old, and he grew up in the Philadelphia/Germantown milieu. He attended the College of Philadelphia (now the University of Pennsylvania) and studied law under Benjamin Chew. Chew had eleven daughters (one passed away in infancy), several of whom were close friends of Rebecca Franks. Margaret Oswald Chew (known as Peggy Chew, one of the ladies of the Mischianza and a favorite of Major André) was one of these and was among Rebecca's best friends. Tilghman spent a lot of time with the Chew girls, and Rebecca and they were very close friends.

Keith, *Provincial Councillors*, pp. 409–412.