Charles Yancey of Albemarle

&

Thomas Jefferson

Selected Correspondence

1807-1825

By

Kenneth B. Yancey

2013
Introduction

In the late 1730s Robert Yancey, son of Charles Yancey, Sr. married Temperance Dumas, daughter of Jeremiah Dumas, a Huguenot immigrant. Both of these families had settled along the Little River in Hanover County, Virginia. From early land patents we know that the Yancey family lived on the north side of the Little River and the Dumas family lived on the south side of the river. In 1742 the area of their homesteads became part of the newly formed Louisa County.

Robert and Temperance had four known children: Martha whose birthdate is unknown; Charles born May 10, 1741; Robert born about 1743; and Jeremiah born March 9, 1745. Robert, Sr. died in 1746 in his thirties. As a result, some of the children were raised by other family members, and Temperance remarried.

Sons Charles and Robert married Crawford sisters Mary and Ann, respectively. Jeremiah and his bride, Margaret Mullins of Mullins/Maupin Huguenot ancestry, settled a bit further west in Ablemarle County.

Son Robert, better known as Reverend Robert, and his wife Ann had a son, Charles Yancey, born March 22, 1770. This Charles became a large landowner of over twenty thousand acres. He served in both the House and Senate of the Virginia General Assembly representing Buckingham County. His political career spanned over forty years and he has been referred to as “The Wheel Horse of Democracy”. He was commonly known as Major Charles Yancey.

Son Jeremiah was a planter and landowner on the Moormans River at Bucks Elbow in Albemarle County. He and his wife Margaret also had a son, Charles Yancey born March 13, 1766. This Charles became a tavern owner, mill operator, county sheriff and, like his first cousin Charles above, served as a member of the Virginia General Assembly in the House of Delegates. This Charles represented Albemarle County and was commonly known as Colonel Charles Yancey.

One of the motivations of this presentation is to correct the historical record regarding which of these two Charles Yanceys served in the War of 1812. Secondly, each Charles engaged in correspondence with Thomas Jefferson, but it is my feeling that the enduring relationship between Jefferson and Charles of Albemarle has been overshadowed by the long and distinguished political career of Charles of Buckingham. Hopefully, this effort will provide some balance to that perception.

As youngsters, each Charles lived during the Revolutionary War. As young men, they knew Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, not only as political leaders, but as neighbors and acquaintances. They experienced the War of 1812 and served as elected representatives of their counties in the Legislature of Virginia. They were among the first generations to wrestle with the governance of our nation, at the state level, following independence. They helped pave the way on such matters as currency, banks, roads, river navigation, public colleges, state and national defense and led by example on the matter of citizen participation.

Hopefully, the following letters will increase our appreciation for the relationship that existed between Charles Yancey of Albemarle and Thomas Jefferson. For information on accessing these and more letters online, see Editor’s Note on last page 38.

Kenneth B. Yancey 3rd great-grandson of Charles Yancey of Albemarle
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 Mar 1807</td>
<td>Charles Yancey of Albemarle to President Thomas Jefferson</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Aug 1814</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson of his command of the 1st Virginia Regiment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Oct 1814</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson of his presence in the legislature</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Sep 1815</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson why the petition to build a college in</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Albemarle did not pass the House of Delegates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Oct 1815</td>
<td>Jefferson’s response to Yancey regarding the college petition</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Dec 1815</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson of multiple legislative issues including</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a call for a convention, banking, and navigation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Jan 1816</td>
<td>Jefferson responds to Yancey and discusses banking, debt, navigation,</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>currency, and the Central College</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Oct 1821</td>
<td>Yancey writes Jefferson from Yancey Mills regarding his brother, Joel</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yancey, in Kentucky - Jefferson’s transcribed response is included</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 May 1825</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson of his visit to New York, New York and his</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>witness to a new hoe invention for Jefferson to evaluate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Jan 1816</td>
<td>Yancey informs Jefferson that the petition for the Central College</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>passed the House of Delegates and he was seeking Senate support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Oct 1861</td>
<td>President Abraham Lincoln authorized the award of 80 acres of land</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for Charles Yancey’s (of Albemarle) service as Commander of the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st Virginia Regiment during the War of 1812</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
March 28th, 1807.
to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States.

Dear Sir, Your of the 8th Instant has come to hand. I have fully complied with Col. Bass's request. It conveys pleasure. I could serve him in such a small matter but with regret, he ceased no longer serve us in Congress. I have always thought him proper of that zeal. Attachment to his constituents that ought to characterize every representative of a free people. Do me the favor to send this letter to him. Tell him, as friend Baptist Wood, is a candidate for the County. I suppose he has been informed of our worthy fellow Citizen W.C. N. Chotai offering to supply his place; permit me to make use of this opportunity, of assuring you of my full justice and congratulation of your conduct. I have had the honor of being engaged in the important office of representative of the American Nation. I am assured of your high consideration.

Charles Yancey

[Signature]
March 28th 1807

To Thomas Jefferson President of the United States

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 18th instant has come to hand in last mail and I have fully complied with Col. Randolphs request. It was with pleasure I could serve him in such a small matter, but with regret he could no longer serve us in Congress. I have always thought him possessed of that zeal and attachment to his Constituents that ought to characterize every representative of a free people. Do me the favor to read this letter to him and tell him old friend Baptist Woods is a Candidate for the county. I suppose he has been informed of our worthy fellow Citizen W.C. Nicholas offering to supply his place. Permit me to make use of this opportunity of assuring you of my full and entire approbation of your conduct since you have been engaged in the important office of representative of the American nation and be assured of my high consideration and esteem.

Charles Yancey
Albemarle

Note: The distinct signature of Col. Charles Yancey of Albemarle at the end of this letter helps distinguish his letters from those of his first cousin, Maj. Charles Yancey of Buckingham. Both served in the Virginia General Assembly and many of their letters in the Jefferson collection are difficult to distinguish except by signature.
Camp Fairfield 22nd Augt. 1814

Dr. Sir,

I perform a duty grateful to my soul, in communicating to you our military movements or operations since our arrival at this place, we were organized into two Regts. or Int. of the more officers were called out, under the requisition from the state, than what are necessary under the requisition Act, to try the U.S. which gave disadvantage to the defence, as I have been a good citizen, they have honored service under the arrangements, I therein given high evidence of public service, from the honor to inform you that I command the 1st Regt. of Colo. of Breaking from the rank with the officers from under my command, I am perfectly satisfied, They will do their duty & acquit themselves with honor, If met by the foe.

Co. Edward Garland etc.
Camp Fairfield    22\textsuperscript{nd} August 1814

Dear Sir

I perform a duty grateful to my feelings in communicating to you our Military movements or operations since our arrival at this place. We were organized into two Regts. on instr(uctions) and altho(ugh) more officers were called out under the requisition from the State, than what are necessary under the requisition adopted by the U.S. which gave disquietude to the (?) (?) Yet like good citizens they have honorably acquiesced under the arrangement & thereby given high evidence of public virtue. I have the honor to inform you that I command the 1\textsuperscript{st} Regiment & Col. Belue\textsuperscript{1} of Buckingham the 2\textsuperscript{nd}. With the officers & men under my command I am perfectly satisfied. They will do their duty & acquit themselves with honor if met by this foe. Col. Edward Garland who

\textsuperscript{1}Col. Belue is elsewhere recorded as Lt. Col. Thomas Ballowe of Buckingham

\textbf{Note:} Prior to the discovery of this letter, it was assumed that Maj. Charles Yancey of \textbf{Buckingham} was the commander of the 1st VA Regt. during the War of 1812. That error resulted from an assumption regarding a War Department letter dated Nov. 17, 1925 to Wm. Shepard of Guinea Mills, VA. That letter stated that Col. Yancey did serve and at one point was “Absent on the Legislature”. Although Charles Yancey of Buckingham had a long and distinguished career in the VA legislature, he was not in the legislature during the 1814/1815 or 1815/1816 sessions. However, Charles Yancey of \textbf{Albemarle} was a member of the legislature at that time. Moreover, thanks to the research of Dennis Yancey, the record of the Bounty Land awarded for this Charles Yancey’s role as the commander of the 1st VA Regiment was found in the General Land Office of the federal government. Dated 1 Oct 1861 the posthumous award of 80 acres was granted to his wife Jane Yancey. The warrant was signed by President Abraham Lincoln. See page 37.
was a soldier of '76, come down as my adjutant on his arrival here, he found that station began 10, more activity, labor, caution, than an man of his advanced age could perform. he quietly returned to his family. his place is filled by Capt. 13. Tanner, an officer of merit. who comes with recommend to me these instances of devotion to our country. need he pleasing to its friends if I am sure to no one more than yourself. we expect shortly to remove to the valley thing where it is laid, the water is better than in here all the war means consider your own house had best freshen the book list. I am sure as I am fully persuaded that you feel a deep interest in everything which relates to our common country, whose liberties you were so instrumental in establishing. that in the gap of more important occupations you would drop me a line. If he desired that I shall feel high gratification from time to time to give you such intelligence as may be entitled to your notice show the honor to be suitably your Mo. B. S. B. W. W.
was a soldier of 76, came down as my adjutant. On his arrival here, he found that station required, more activity, labor, & exertion than a man of his advanced age could perform. has quietly returned to his family & his place is filled by Captain B. Stanford, an officer of merit, who comes well recommended to me. These instances of devotion to our country must be pleasing to its friends & I am sure to no one more than yourself. We expect shortly to remove to the Holly Spring where it is said, the water is better than it is here altho(ugh) our men considering our n(um)ber have had but five on the sick list. I should be happy as I am fully persuaded that you feel a deep interest in everything which relates to our common country, whose liberties you were so instrumental in establishing, that in the (?) of more important avocations you would drop me a line & be assured that I shall feel high gratification from time to time to give you such intelligence as may be entitled to your notice. I have

the honor to be respectfully your mo(st) ob(edient) s ervan)

C Yancey

Note: On Wednesday, August 24th, two days after Col. Yancey wrote Jefferson of his command, the British burned public buildings in Washington, D.C., including the House and Senate Chambers, the Library of Congress & navy yard.
Richmond 23rd October 1814

Sir, I am deeply concerned with your health, and I write you this in sorrow, caused by an unusual fever, which has caused me to lose about 5000 dollars worth of property. Having received this information from home, I went to camp for 3 days, returned home, and was immediately informed by my correspondents that you are in the legislature. In this situation, I shall forever forget that station which is so greatly due to you. An act of services already rendered can never be equalled.

Several important resolutions were made, some of which were important to the people of the state during the war. No act of this nature could have been more decisive in the eyes of the people, as it appeared to become a federal one.
Richmond  23rd October 1814

Dear Sir

An apology is due to you as I promised to write you while in service. A sick family caused by an unusual fever has caused me to lose about $2,000 worth of property. On receiving this information from home I left camp for 8 days & went home. This prevented my communication with friends in the manner I wished. I am now in the legislature & hope in any situation I shall never forget that attention which is so justly due to you. An account of services already rendered. We have several important resolutions & before us one of which was to appoint a joint committee to repair to Washington to confer with the general Government on the best possible means of defending this state during the war with G.B. (Great Britain) To this I gave my decided negative as it appeared to assume a dictatorial tone,

Note: As noted on page 5 the War Department letter of 1925 stated that “The muster roll of the Field and Staff dated Holly Nov. 30, 1814 bears remark ‘Absent on the Legislature’.” In this letter Charles Yancey of Albemarle writes Jefferson that he had left camp earlier for 8 days and was in the legislature as of October 23rd.
It is an exclusive privilege, which I thought we were not entitled to, having by some compact, long ago, given to the Federal Government, the sole power of defending this resolution, however, has been so amended as to cause a communication to the Executive of the State, respecting the execution of the same with some modifications, and it is now necessary a committee have reported a bill respecting $200,000 for paying troops, a committee is appointed to organize the militia system of this State, and the plan of the U.S. also a committee to revise and amend the laws, particularly for the public, all parties seem to agree that we ought not to join in defending the same as spirit of blaming the offense can not be seen to prevail among the Federalists,
& an exclusive privilege, which I thought we were not entitled to, having by solemn compact, long ago, given to the Federal Government, the sole power of defending & this resolution, however, has been so amended as to cause a communication to be opened by the Executive of VA with the general government, respecting this state's quota of men & to carry on the war:

we have also a bill before us to suspend the (? ) law, deeds of trust & which I assume with some modification will pass into a law. a committee had reported a bill appropriating $200,000 for paying troops & a committee is appointed to organize the Militia System of this state, on the plan of the U.S. Also a committee to revise & amend the laws respecting public roads.

all parties seem to agree that we ought now to join in defending & but the same old spirit of blaming the Jeffersonian policy seems to prevail among the Federalists,
I am doubtnd they are amusing tobyday
the Govt. Government, they seem to be ineduce
to avoid the wheel of the calamous situation
of the country to get a Majority Jefferson
or seem to stand with them too much. the
canmmon cant amusing any for several days
has been about who is to be the next Gover
nor & Senator? for the former there are
named W. G. Nicholas, J. A. Randolph,
Hugh Nelson, A. Mason, J. W. Clay &
Stephew Wilson. I am inclined to think
our county will furnish a Governor the
3 gentlemen being all equally friendly.
When of talent having all least claim
make it disagreeable to the representa
tion from the county, but I hope men voting
from proper motives, will never mean the
displeasure of good men for the latter who, the
new Governor, Senator Brent, J. W. E. Wilson
are talked it: our taxes will be raised the
I am doubtful they are aiming to degrade the general government. They seem to be inclined to avail themselves of the embarrassed situation of the country, to get a Majority & office hunters seem to join with them too much. The common cant among us for several days has been about who is to be the next Governor & Senator? For the former I have heard named W.C. Nicholas, T.M. Randolph, Hugh Nelson, A. Mason, J.W. Epps, & A Stevenson. I am inclined to think our county will furnish a Governor, the 3 gentlemen being all equally friendly, & Men of talents having all just claim Make it disagreeable to the representatives from the county, but I hope men voting from proper motives will never incur the displeasure of good men. For the latter office the now Governor, Senator Brent, J.W. Epps & Mason are talked of. Our taxes will be raised. This

1 cant - The American Heritage Dictionary - Discourse recited monotonously
2 Wilson Cary Nicholas became Governor and served from 1814—1816
3 James Barbour, “the now Governor” served as Governor from 1812—1814
you know, the soldier must be paid. Can’t you drop
me a hint as to public roads? with all sincere
Respect your friend & Most obedient servant

Charles Yancey

On 26 September 1815, Charles Yancey wrote Jefferson to explain why Jefferson’s proposal to establish a College in the County of Albemarle had not passed the House. The principal cause seemed to relate to the actions of a Mr. Miller who had submitted the proposal to Mr. Watson, a Delegate from Louisa County. Mr. Watson felt that the proposal was too late in the session to be considered. Yancey, the Delegate from Albemarle, felt that a hearing on the proposal was in order and so deferred to the wishes of Mr. Watson. In his letter, Yancey urged Jefferson to send the proposal to him and “it would receive my particular support.” The adjacent letter of 15 Oct 1815 is Jefferson’s response to Yancey, reflecting some frustration over the handling of his proposal following the death of Peter Carr. No transcription is provided. Yancey’s letter of 26 Sept 1815 is not included in this presentation.

When the proposal for the Central College finally passed the House, Yancey wrote Jefferson and indicated he was seeking Senate support. See Yancey letter on page 36.
Monticello Oct. 19. 15.

Dear Sir,

A long absence from home must apologize for this late answer to your favor of Sep. 26. — I was desired by the late Mr. Peter Carr and some of the Commissioners for the Academy proposed to be established in Albemarle to furnish them with a plan for the Institution I accordingly communicated to them the best I could derive, after an enquiry of many years into the nature of similar establishments, and forming from the whole what I thought adapted to our situation. I also prepared a petition for them to the general assembly and the form of such an act as I thought should be passed. These papers I gave to Mr. Carr, and have never seen them since, nor do I know in whose hands they are. Indeed I had apprehended that the proposition was not attended to since his death, until I saw an advertisement that a petition would be presented to the assembly to authorize the purchase of a house for it in Charlottesville. This has been authorized by the board of commissioners; it is more than I know; and if not authorized by them it is a predetermination of a question which in my judgment decides forever the fate of the Institution. — Capt. Joseph Miller, a resident of Norfolk, but who has stood a good deal in this county, and with one praiseworthy, if I believe is known to you, will have a petition before the assembly for carrying into effect the will of his brother, which we hope will meet with your patronage. Accept the assurance of my esteem and respect.

Cato. Charles Yancey

Th. Jefferson
Richmond 24th Dec. 1815

Sir, we have been most punctually engaged in revising petitions, making appointments. A few bills have been reported. There is a bill for the sale of lands in the house, and one for an edifice of importance depending on it, which has for its object the sale of a portion of which there appears to have a considerable degree of difference in opinion, but I am inclined to think it will pass our house in some shape or other. The negative in the Senate, as they are so far from the people, I confess, where I reflect on the danger of Insurrection, I am at a loss what to do. Another of great importance, of which we shall have in my letter respecting the establishment of another banking operation in this State also.
Richmond, 24th Dec 1815

Dear Sir,

We have been as yet principally engaged in receiving petitions, making appointment & a few bills have been reported & have passed our house & some of considerable importance depending. One of which has for its object the call of a convention on which there appears to be a considerable degree of difference in opinion, but I am inclined to think, it will pass our house in some shape or other & be negatived in the Senate, as they are a bit further from the people. I confess, when I reflect on the danger of (innovation?), I am at a loss what to do. Another of great importance of which we shall have many respecting the establishment of another Banking association. In this I feel also
considerable embarrassment seeing these States grant Charters to almost every association of the kind. & hearing peoples of good standing Charge the directors of being engaged in what is commonly called Shaving of paper\textsuperscript{1}, & im properly curtailing to embarrass the man who is much in debt in bank. to make way to show him chase & seeing that by the laws, & usages respecting banks, some persons Must ultimately suffer is serious cause of Alarm. every Measure which would tend to prevent such evil ought Now, to be Adopted if possible. we have a committee appointed to Report on this part of the Governors Communication. Respecting Roads & internal Navigation, out of which I hope some Common benefit

\textsuperscript{1}\textit{Shaving} - The Random House Dictionary of the English Language - to Purchase (a note) at a rate of discount greater than is legal or customary.
will receive a petition has been present
To pray the passage of a law, to cause all
Damage in a summary way, from those who
have looted on the Gicama River. To pre
vent Dam in future across said river.
Or any other obstruction, erected granted
by the Legislature. Should this by any
Probable Means, affect your Interest, or
that of Colo. Randolph? if not benefit the
Public. Any communication you, or he,
may feel disposed to make, would be
Cheerfully Act. And attended to by
Your friend & Mo. B. Teal.

Charles Yancey
will result. A petition has been presented praying the passage of a law, to come at Damages in a summary way. from those who have lands on the Rivanna River. & to prevent Dams in (future?) across said river, or any other obstruction, unless granted by the legislature. Should this by any probable means affect your interest or that of Col. Randolph & not benefit this public. Any communication you or he may feel (disposed?) to make, would be cheerfully received. and attended to by Your friend and Most Obedient Servant.

Charles Yancey
Jefferson’s Response to Yancey  

6 Jan 1816

Dear Sir,

Monticello Jan. 6. 16.

I am favored with yours of Dec. 24. and perceive you have many matters before you of great moment. I have no fear but that the legislature will do on all of them what is wise & just. on the particular subject of our river, in the navigation of which our county has so great an interest, I think the power of permitting dams to be erected across it ought to be taken from the court, so far as the stream has water enough for navigation. The value of our property is sensibly lessened by the dam when the court of Fluwanna authorized not long since to be erected, but a little above its mouth. This power over the value & convenience of our lands is of much too high a character to be placed at the will of a county court, and that of a county too, which has not a common interest in the preservation of the navigation for those above them, as is the existing dams, if any conditions are proposed more than those to which they were subjected on their original erection, I think they should be allowed the alternative of opening a sluice for the passage of navigation, so as to prevent water from going down, as is it was before the erection of their dam, or otherwise it would be of their dam were away. Those interested in the navigation might then use the sluices or make locks as should be thought best, nature and reason as well as all our constitutions condemn retrospective conditions as mere acts of power against right.

I recommend to your patronize our Central college. I look to it as a germ from which a great tree may spread itself.

There is before the assembly a petition of a Cape Fear planter which I have at heart, because I have great esteem for the planter, lower as an honest and useful man, he is about to settle in Cape Yancey.
Monticello, January 6, 1816.

Dear Sir,

I am favored with yours of December 24th, and perceive you have many matters before you of great moment. I have no fear but that the legislature will do on all of them what is wise and just. On the particular subject of our river, in the navigation of which our county has so great an interest, I think the power of permitting dams to be erected across it, ought to be taken from the courts, so far as the stream has water enough for navigation. The value of our property is sensibly lessened by the dam which the court of Fluvanna authorized not long since to be erected, but a little above its mouth. This power over the value and convenience of our lands is of much too high a character to be placed at the will of a county court, and that of a county, too, which has not a common interest in the preservation of the navigation for those above them. As to the existing dams, if any conditions are proposed more than those to which they were subjected on their original erection, I think they would be allowed the alternative of opening a sluice for the passage of navigation, so as to put the river into as good a condition for navigation as it was before the erection of their dam, or as it would be if their dam were away. Those interested in the navigation might then use the sluices or make locks as should be thought best. Nature and reason, as well as all our constitutions, condemn retrospective conditions as mere acts of power, against right.

I recommend to your patronage our Central College. I look to it as a germ from which a great tree may spread itself.

There is before the assembly a petition of a Captain Miller which I have at heart, because I have great esteem for the petitioner as an honest and useful man. He is about to settle in
our county, and to establish a brewery in which art I think him
as skilful a man as has ever come to America. I wish to see
this beverage become common instead of the whiskey which
kills one third of our citizens and ruins their families, he
is staying with me until he can fix himself, and I should be
thankful for information from time to time of the progress
of his petition.

Like a droptical man calling out for water, water, our deluded citizens
are clamoring for more banks, more banks. the American mind is now in that
state of fever which the world has so often seen in the history of other nations.
We are, under the bank-bubble, as England was under the south sea bubble,
France under the Mississippi bubble, and as every nation is liable to be,
under whatever bubble design or delusion may puff up, in moments when off
their guard. We are now taught to believe that legendarium tricks upon paper
can produce as solid wealth as hard labor in the earth. It is vain for
common sense to urge that nothing can produce but nothing; that it is an
idle dream to believe in a philosopher's stone which is to turn every thing into
gold, and to redeem man from the original sentence of his maker that 'in the
sweat of his brow shall he eat his bread.' Not least enough however to
attempt to reason Bedlam to rights; my anxieties are turned to the most
practicable means of withdrawing us from the rein into which we have run.
200 millions of paper in the hands of the people (and less cannot be from the em
placement of a banking capital known to exceed 100. millions) is a fearful tax
be fell at hap-hazard on their heads. The debt which purchased our independ-
ence was but 80. millions, of which 20. years' taxation had in 1809. paid
but the one half, and what have we purchased with this tax, by wholesale of
200 millions, but usual, stimulating, if new forms of demoralization, revolutionary
our county, and to establish a brewery, in which art I think him as skillful a man as has ever come to America. I wish to see this beverage become common instead of the whiskey which kills one-third of our citizens and ruins their families. He is staying with me until he can fix himself, and I should be thankful for information from time to time of the progress of his petition.

Like a dropsical man calling out for water, water, our deluded citizens are clamoring for more banks, more banks. The American mind is now in that state of fever which the world has so often seen in the history of other nations. We are under the bank bubble, as England was under the South Sea bubble, France under the Mississippi bubble, and as every nation is liable to be, under whatever bubble, design, or delusion may puff up in moments when off their guard. We are now taught to believe that legerdemain tricks upon paper can produce as solid wealth as hard labor in the earth. It is vain for common sense to urge that nothing can produce nothing; that it is an idle dream to believe in a philosopher's stone which is to turn everything into gold, and to redeem man from the original sentence of his Maker, "in the sweat of his brow shall he eat his bread." Not Quixot enough, however, to attempt to reason Bedlam to rights, my anxieties are turned to the most practicable means of withdrawing us from the ruin into which we have run. Two hundred millions of paper in the hands of the people, (and less cannot be from the employment of a banking capital known to exceed one hundred millions,) is a fearful tax to fall at haphazard on their heads. The debt which purchased our independence was but of eighty millions, of which twenty years of taxation had in 1809 paid but the one half. And what have we purchased with this tax of two hundred millions which we are to pay by wholesale but usury, swindling, and new forms of demoralization. Revolutionary
history has warned us of the probable moment when their baseless trust is to receive its fit punishment. As much as the precious metals shall have returned into the circulation as that every one can get some in exchange for his produce, paper will experience at once an universal rejection. Then public opinion changes it is with the rapidity of thought, confidence is already on the totter, and everyone now handles this paper as if playing at Robin's alive, that in the present state of the circulation the banks should resume payments in specie would require their vaults to be like the widow'sazio. The thing to be aimed at is that the excesses of their emissions should be withdrawn as gradually, but as quickly as, when it is as practical, without so much alarm as to bring on the crisis dreaded. Some banks are said to be calling in their paper, but ought we to let this depend on their discretion? is it not the duty of the legislature to endeavor to avert from their constituents such a catastrophe as the extinguishment of 200 million of paper in their hands? the difficulty is indeed great, and the greater because the patient nowolts against all medicine. I am far from presuming to say that any plan can be relied on with certainty, because the bubble may burst from one moment to another; but if it fails we shall be but there we should have been without any effort to save ourselves. different persons doubtless will devise different schemes of relief. one would be to suspend instantly the currency of all paper not issued under the authority of the general government, or of the general government, to interdict after a few months the circulation of all bills of 50.0. under; after a few months more all of 10.0. under; after other terms those of 20.0. and so on to 100.0. which last, if any must be left in circulation, should be the lowest denomination. these might be a convenience in mercantile transactions; in transactions of small sums; and would be excluded by their size from ordinary circulation. but the disease may be too pressing to await such a remedy. with the legislature I cheerfully leave it to apply this medicine or their medicine, or no medicine at all. I am sure their intentions are faithful, and embarked in the same bottom, I am willing to swim or sink with my fellow citizens.
history has warned us of the probable moment when this baseless trash is to receive its fiat. Whenever so much of the precious metals shall have returned into the circulation as that everyone can get some in exchange for his produce, paper, as in the revolutionary war, it will experience at once an universal rejection. When public opinion changes, it is with the rapidity of thought. Confidence is already on the totter, and everyone now handles this paper as if playing at Robin's alive. That in the present state of the circulation the bank should resume payments in specie, would require their vaults to be like the widow's cruse. The thing to be aimed at is, that the excesses of their emissions should be withdrawn as gradually, but as speedily, too, as is practicable, without so much alarm as to bring on the crisis dreaded. Some banks are said to be calling in their paper. But ought we to let this depend on their discretion? Is it not the duty of the legislature to avert from their constituents such a catastrophe as the extinguishment of two hundred millions of paper in their hands? The difficulty is indeed great: and the greater, because the patient revolts against all medicine. I am far from presuming to say that any plan can be relied on with certainty, because the bubble may burst from one moment to another; but if it fails, we shall be but where we should have been without any effort to save ourselves. Different persons, doubtless, will devise different schemes of relief. One would be to suppress instantly the currency of all paper not issued under the authority of our State or of the General Government; to interdict after a few months the circulation of all bills of five dollars and under: after a few months more, all of ten dollars and under; after other terms, those of twenty, fifty, and so on to one hundred dollars, which last, if any must be left in circulation, should be the lowest denomination. These might be a convenience in mercantile transactions and transmissions, and would be excluded by their size from ordinary circulation. But the disease may be too pressing to await such a remedy. With the legislature I cheerfully leave it to apply this medicine, or no medicine at all. I am sure their intentions are faithful; and embarked in the same bottom, I am willing to swim or sink with my fellow citizens. If the
latter is their choice, I will go down with them without a murmur. But my ex-
action would rather be "not to give up the ship."

I am a great friend to the improvements of roads, canals & schools. But if I
wish I could see some provision for the former as solid as for the latter, some-
thing better than fog. The literary fund is a solid provision, unless lost in the
impending bankruptcy. If the legislature would add to that a perpetual tax
of a cent ahead of the population of the state, it would eat away at one, and
forever maintain a system of primary or ward schools, and an university.
There might be taught in it, to the highest degree, every branch of science useful
cross time & country; and it would rescue us from the base of Toryism, fa-
ничество, and indifference to their own state which we now see, and our youth
to bring from those of New England, if a nation expects to be ignorant & free,
in a state of civilization, it expects that never was & never will be. The free-
holders of every government have properties to command at will the li-
berty & property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but the
people themselves, nor can they be safe with them without information; where
the press is free and every man able to read, all is safe. — the frankness of
the communication will I am sure suggest to you, a discreet use of it. I wish
to avoid all centers of opinion with all mankind. Show it to no man, even
with expression of my great esteem. It pretends to convey no more than
the opinions of one of your thousand constituents, and to claim no more
attention then every other of that thousand.

I will ask you once more to take care of Miller & your college, and to
accept assurances of my esteem & respect.

[Signature]

[Jefferson]
latter is their choice, I will go down with them without a mur-
mur. But my exhortation would rather be "not to give up the
ship."

I am a great friend to the improvements of roads, canals,
and schools. But I wish I could see some provision for the for-
mer as solid as that of the latter,—something better than fog.
The literary fund is a solid provision, unless lost in the impend-
ing bankruptcy. If the legislature would add to that a perpetu-
al tax of a cent a head on the population of the State, it would
set agoing at once, and forever maintain, a system of primary
or ward schools, and an university where might be taught, in
its highest degree, every branch of science useful in our time
and country; and it would rescue us from the tax of toryism,
fanaticism, and indifferentism to their own State, which we
now send our youth to bring from those of New England. If a
nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civiliza-
tion, it expects what never was and never will be. The func-
tionaries of every government have propensities to command
at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is
no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor
can they be safe with them without information. Where the
press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe. The frank-
ness of this communication will, I am sure, suggest to you a
discreet use of it. I wish to avoid all collisions of opinion with
all mankind. Show it to Mr. Maury, with expressions of my
great esteem. It pretends to convey no more than the opinions
of one of your thousand constituents, and to claim no more at-
tention than every other of that thousand.

I will ask you once more to take care of Miller and our Col-
lege, and to accept assurance of my esteem and respect.

Th: Jefferson
Charles Yancey to Thomas Jefferson         5 Oct 1821

Dear Sir,

my Brother Joel Yancey of Kentucky, often writes me & of ten mentions you, in a late letter he says “pray don’t forget to mention me in Persuasive terms to our good Republican father, friend & supporter Mr. Jefferson,” I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you my dear Sir, that I have no last sight of the obligation the people are under to you, for the many years hard labor you have spent in maintaining & supporting our Republican institutions. Accept Sir, of my last wishes for your health & happiness, with affections of regard & esteem from
Sir your friend of the O. C.,
Charles Yancey
Yancey Mills  Albemarle, Virginia  5 October 1821

Dear Sir
My Brother Joel Yancey
of Kentucky often writes me & often mentions you. in a late letter he says, “Pray don’t forget to present me in Respectful terms to our good Republican Father, friend and benefactor Mr. Jefferson.” I avail myself of this opportunity to assure you my dear sir that I have never lost sight of the obligation the people are under to you, for the many years hard labor you have spent in maintaining and supporting our Republican institutions. Accept Sir, of my best wishes for your health & happiness with assurances of regard & esteem. I am Dear Sir your friend and most obedient servant.

Charles Yancey

Thomas Jefferson’s Response:
Yancey Charles  Yancey Mills  Oct 5 21   Rec’d Oct 16
“Oct 16, 1821
I receive at this place your favor of the 5th conveying to me the kind remembrance of your brother Mr. Joel Yancey for which I pray you to return him the assurances of my continued esteem.
The expressions of the favor with which you are so good as to (_?_) my public services are (truly?) grateful to me, and I pray y(ou) to accept my thanks for them & the assurance of my high respect.”
Richmond 7th May 1825

Dear Sir,

I am lately at New York in New York state. I was then requested to take some Patent hoe, & present to the farmer, & Planters of this part by the Agricultural Society of this state, with a request that you, & Col. T. M. Powdole, should receive one each a letter has been but in the P.O. here for you from The Patentee, (Mr. Hines) The hose of the iron & some of the iron deco kind, They are light & useful.

I fear I shall be troublesome when I seek your opinion after a fair trial. I am your old friend & well wisher.

Charles Yancey

P.S. I hope the hoe proves useful. The inventor may be encouraged.
Richmond 7 May 1825

Dear Sir,

I was lately in New York in New Your state & was there requested to take some Patent hoes & present to The farmers & Planter of Va. I rec(eive)d 1 Doz for the agricultural society of Va with a request that you & Col T.M. Randolph should have one each. A letter has been put in the P.O. here for you from the Patentee. (W. Hines) the hoes are of the tran_?_kind They are light & useful. I fear I shall be troublesome when I ask your opinion after a fair trial I am your old friend & well wishes.

Charles Yancey

Ps. I hope if the hoes prove useful the inventor may be encouraged.

Note: At age 49 this may have been Charles Yancey’s last letter to Thomas Jefferson, age 82, for on July 4, 1826 Thomas Jefferson died. Although the tumult and glory of state and national statesmanship had passed for both, their friendship as neighbors & political colleagues for over 20 years continued. Jefferson had been a steadfast friend, mentor and benefactor to Charles and Charles had been a constant communicator with Jefferson on state legislative activities as well as war matters. One enduring legacy of their friendship is the University of Virginia.
Richmond Febry 17 1816

Dr. Sir

The petition of the Miller has passed over the
agreeable to the prayer & that
spoken to Mr. sale to backup
it in the Senate. the petition

for the Central College has

passed over body & the one con

cerning the obstruction

of the Navigation to exercise

hearing with esteem I am

Dr. sir your friend & ask

Esteem. Charles Yancey
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

To all to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting:

Whereas, In pursuance of the Act of Congress, approved September 28th, 1830, entitled "An Act granting Bounty Land to certain Officers and Soldiers who have been engaged in the Military Service of the United States," Warrant No. 29410, for 80 acres has been issued in favor of James Yancy, deceased, deceased, Edward M. Yancy, deceased, Edward M. Yancy, deceased, Virginia Militia, Dec. 1815, which Warrant has been assigned to Anthony Leonard, by Jo. H. Yancy, deceased, Jo. H. Yancy, deceased, the only heirs of the said James Yancy, deceased.

has been returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE, with evidence that the same has been duly located upon the West Half of the North West quarter of Section Eleven, in Township One, Range Three West, of the Second Division, in the District of Lands subject to sale at Fort Leavenworth, containing Eighty Acres.

according to the Official Plat of the Survey of the said Lands returned to the GENERAL LAND OFFICE by the SURVEYOR GENERAL:

Now know ye, That there is therefore granted by the UNITED STATES unto the said Anthony Leonard, or Assignee, as aforesaid

the Tract of Land above described: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said Tract of Land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said Anthony Leonard, or Assignee, as aforesaid and to his

heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimoni Whereof, I, Abraham Lincoln,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, have caused these Letters to be made Patent, and the Seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

GIVEN under my hand, at the City of Washington, the first day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty-one and of the Independence of the United States the eightieth.

BY THE PRESIDENT:

Abraham Lincoln

By W. O. Stoddard, Secretary.

J. A. Granger, Recorder of the General Land Office.
Editor’s Note

These letters of Charles Yancey of Albemarle and Thomas Jefferson were copied from The Library of Congress - Thomas Jefferson Papers - online collection at:

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/

These and other letters of Thomas Jefferson, Charles Yancey of Albemarle, and Charles Yancey of Buckingham may be accessed by entering Charles Yancey in the search box at the upper right of the above home page.

Except for the transcription of Thomas Jefferson’s January 6, 1816 letter presented on pages 25, 27, 29 & 31, all other transcriptions were produced by Kenneth Yancey.

Any errors related to these other transcriptions are those of Kenneth Yancey. Corrections or suggestions for improvement are welcomed at: kenandjudyyancey@verizon.net.