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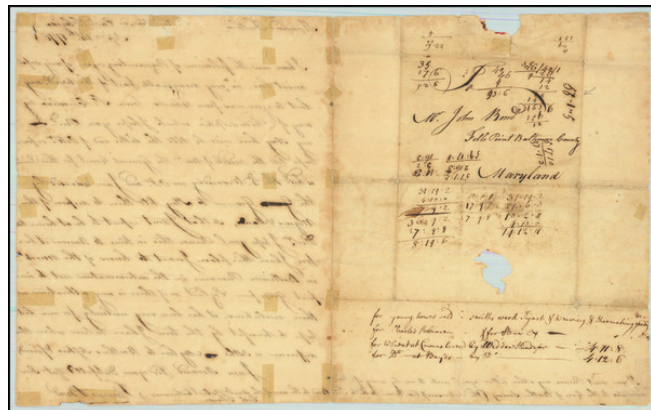
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(Colonial East Florida) [Letter From Thomas Bond in St. Augustine, East Florida, September 14, 1770 to his Father, John Bond, Merchant of Fells Point, Baltimore County, Maryland]

Stock#: 86621
Map Maker: Bond
Date: 1770
Place: St. Augustine, Florida
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: 15 x 9 inches
Price: \$ 2,500.00



Description:

The Bonds of Baltimore "Dispose" of their East Florida Holdings

St. Augustine, East Florida in 1770

"a very disagreeable part of the world"

An extremely early manuscript letter written from St. Augustine, British East Florida in 1770. Thomas Bond writes from "St. Augustine, in East Florida," to his father, a prominent colonial-era merchant of Baltimore, Maryland, on September 14, 1770. The letter relates to business dealings, including planned sales of land and enslaved people in East Florida. Thomas also makes reference to "bad luck" relating to the shipping of goods from England, possibly a speculative venture involving importing goods to East Florida.

John Bond (1712-1786), Thomas's father, was a large landowner and merchant based in Maryland, sometimes styled "John Bond, Gentleman, of Baltimore Town and Fell's Point." His main business was shipping tobacco from Joppa and Baltimore to England. Bond also co-established with his father-in-law the first iron furnace in the colonies. A multi-faceted and capable man, he held a number of important posts in early Baltimore, including justice of the peace, coroner, and judge of the Orphans' Court (1769-1773).

British East Florida



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The British had only recently taken possession of East Florida from the Spanish some seven years before this letter. According to the letter Thomas Bond was planning to "dispose of Negroes & Lands" in East Florida, apparently engaging in speculative land sales in East Florida, while also bringing enslaved people from the North American southern provinces to sell in Florida. Bond makes reference to postponing his plans to sell per instructions of James Grant, the first Governor of East Florida, who later served as a major general for the British during the American War of Independence.

The letter bears a notable postscript that directs John Bond to reply to his son (in the event of non-arrival of an earlier letter) in care of a prominent East Florida resident named Robert Catherwood:

the superscription to me to be to Thos. Bond to the care of the Honble. Robert Catherwood, East Florida.

Dr. Robert Catherwood came to East Florida in 1764, and served on the council there for some 18 years. He worked as a surgeon at the Spanish Hospital, which was later converted into a jail. Eventually, he served as justice of the peace and was named judge of the Court of Vice Admiralty in East Florida. This court had jurisdiction over all maritime cases in the province. Interestingly, to supplement his income Catherwood earned fees by issuing condemnation verdicts, a highly unpopular practice stemming from the enforcement of British revenue measures.

A fascinating survival from the early years of British-controlled East Florida, this document provides evidence of the commercial involvement in the province by merchants from the northern colonies, while shedding light on the difficulties and uncertainties attending any business transaction in the province.

Here follows a transcription of the letter:

St. Augustine, in East Florida, Sept. 14th 1770

Honoured Father,

I have now the pleasure of Acquainting you of my safe arival here, in a very disagreeable part of the world. My last to you was from Charles Town So. Carolina by way of Philadelphia which I hope you Recd - my stay here will be till the latter end of Octor. or perhaps till the middle of Novr. the General Court for this Province is held the 3d. Wednesday in Oct. and I am advised by the Governor to stay till then to dispose of the Negroes & Lands, so that I don't expect to be at home this Decr. I hope



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*you'l receive this in time to answer it before I leave this place. I want to know if the [merchant] in
Baltimore remains in the determination not to import goods from England or if there is any
alteration in their resolutions, it has been very unlucky for me but hope to benefit by the tour I have
taken when the difference is settled. My love to Brothers, Sisters & friends.*

I am Honoured Sir your Dutifull & Affecte. Son,

Thomas Bond

*If you don't Receive my other letter you'l write to me by way of Phila., directed to the care of Brother
Sammy (the superscription to me to be to Thos. Bond to the care of the Honble. Robert Catherood,
East Florida.*

*[the address page has some quite extensive accounting notes and numerous financial calculations,
the latter not fully transcribed here:]*

for young horses sold: smith's work [Tigart?] & Weaving & Shoormaking...

for Charles Robinson - & for stear Ox -

for [W. Lieat?] at Cowens carred by [Widdow Stein'd] & for - 4:11:8

for [Dr.?] at Boyds - by [L?] - 4:12:6

Provenance

Jay Kislak;
Sothebys, April 26, 2022, his sale.

Detailed Condition:

Manuscript letter on laid paper. 1 full page of text. The usual fold marks for a letter of the time. Two small circular tears (some paper loss) due to breaking of original wax seal. Many (approximately 20) small 20th-century glassine tape repairs at folds. Overall condition is still quite good. Addressed on verso: "Mr. John Bond, Fell's Point, Baltimore County, Maryland."