

A Quill

Scheduled, December 3rd, 2012

Second Attempt, September 23rd, 2013

A work of fiction placed in a historical setting:

How I long for the touch of my master's hand; his warm caress, his strong thrusts in passion, the pauses to collect his energy and press again. His mind lost in the thoughts that pass through me. Oh, but for the joy of the passionate man do I long, so long to feel again. But alas, here I sit alone, void of touch, void of sun, void of the breeze and all the senses that drive the day. I know nothing but an emptiness; an emptiness that knows no bounds; an emptiness that is so deep that when a lantern is raised, the light never to return. I sit alone in this glass walled prison. I sit naked behind this glass, under the eyes of those that purchased their ticket. I am the object of a mass of voyeurs, but the pride of no one.

I once knew the passion, the fear, the joy, the sorrow, the love, from the soul of man as no one else knew. I know the soul of my master, Col. Charles Buckley, as no other can or ever will.

How did I become an ornament in this elegant prison? How did I come to no longer know the hand of man? We sit quietly, patiently, loyally waiting for the opportunity again to become the agent of passion and soul. I look around and see beside me the furniture, tapestry and books of my age. We are so old and tired. It is a strange reproduction of my Philadelphia down to the smallest detail; the world of the Col. Charles Buckley. The age of my birth is beside me with all the color and texture of 1787. But we are now just the prop for some sort of play that never starts. Each day the special lights arise and people come, they gaze, they ponder, and they read the letters on the wall beside me. To my right, are displayed the personal possessions of James Madison, the revered father of our Constitution. It is fitting that these two friends who shared their time at the College of New Jersey. They both studied under John Witherspoon, a signor of the Declaration of Independence. They shared the revolution, and now share

this time frozen display. To my left, are displayed the artifacts of Gen. Benedict Arnold, a name that is become synonymous with treason to our new nation. It is fitting that the tools of the heart of Col. Buckley be placed beside these men, but also so wrong.

On the rarest of days the master of this house, called the curator, comes by and opens the glass and tells our story. She has even touched me, I feel the love, admiration and reverence she has for me. It is my quest to feel the soul of man. But alas, I am quickly returned to my glass prison at this place they call a museum to once again stand alone.

After waiting faithfully for over 200 years hidden in the wall of a guest house, why am I here? I am but a quill!

I was born the first feather of the left wing of an eagle, The Pinion – the favored instrument of the right handed writer. The crow was favored for its fine and delicate lines. My master's friend, Thomas Jefferson, even bred special geese to keep himself in a proper supply of quills. For all the ease of goose or swan or crow, my master preferred me – the pinion feather of the eagle. We are tough, we last a season not a week as those other quills. I am the chosen one, the quill of an eagle is for the strong and earnest hand. Now my role as the keeper of knowledge for man is no more, I am but a display frozen in time.

What happened to us? For 1,700 years, my predecessors have been the backbone for the thought, word and deeds of man. We wrote the Magna Carta, the letters of John Locke and The Declaration of Independence. We transcribed the Bible, the stories of old, the laws that govern man and the will of kings. Mr. Madison's goose quill to my right, wrote a small portion of the Federalist papers. The mind and soul of three dedicated men Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay carefully crafted 175,000 words with excruciating care; with hand pressed too hard an inkblot appears, with hand pressed too soft no word is written. We quills shared the loves, losses and intrigue in the letters that connected our spirits when miles stood between us. After the post office was created at the end of

the revolutionary war, the volume of letters exploded through the colonies. Families once distant were now united! While Europe's post was plagued with robbery and loss, we grew to 75 post offices and 2,400 miles of routes. A letter could travel from Boston to Philadelphia in just four days. The distance between our 4-million citizens faded away in the letters we shared, the commerce we drove and ideas we flourished as the rest of the world lagged behind. It is the destiny, my noble quest to know the soul of man. We quills were mightier than the sword!

My life with my master only lasted a season; I share his story in the letters to Mr. Madison, his mother and his brother John, written by his hand with my tip. Only one recipient preserved them for history to see. Those letters hang on the wall in our glass prison. A story that has grown to embrace the man's entire life; as if to paint a full portrait when you only see a hand and ear. These words have made him such a well-known man; a man with one hand but many faces. How fitting that one face shines as Mr. Madison and the other darkens as General Arnold.

My quest to know the soul of man starts when my master receives a letter from his dear friend Mr. Madison on a spring day in 1787. Those letters from Mr. Madison are lost to time. We must reason what was in them by my master's response. We will see our history from only one slim and careful view; a full portrait painted from the smallest of views. This glass prison is full of such presumptions, some true to history and some could not be more wrong. Ah, but back to my quest to know and share a man's soul.

The heart of my master, through his hand and my ink laden tip reaps the account of a man drawn into history; his legacy will rest on his well-considered words. His response to Mr. Madison

By the hand of Col. Buckley
March 1, 1787

Mr. James Madison
Montpelier
Orange County, Virginia

Dear James,

We are steeped with pleasure to receive your fine letter. It brings unbounded happiness as too much silence has passed since our last correspondence. I am flattered by your thoughtful tone and kind words for the trials that have faced our family. Since Sarah has taken to permanent sickness, the responsibility of our seven growing children is born to my aging mother and myself as time permits. The business of the farm and our provisioning endeavor continues to move forward despite the long days and endless hours of toil. We now cultivate a full five of our 160 acres. Your immensely kind and humbling words in remembrance of my skills for finding provisions for our men in the war are greatly exaggerated. I humbly respect your petition for the urgency and need to have me join you in Philadelphia at this Convention in late May. Amending our Articles of Confederation is an urgent and timely matter of the utmost importance. Shays' Rebellion proved we must take action! The need for adjustments to this governing order is paramount.

Sadly, with the illness of my darling Sarah, and the responsibility for our children flowing to my aging widowed mother, and what scant hours I have in the day, I must respectfully set aside your heartfelt request to join you in Philadelphia. Leaving my darling Sarah and my mother with the children with no manager for the farm would lead to unbridled ruin without support; sadly, my departure would be our end. I wish you the greatest of fortune in the critical affairs of our new nation but must remain to the care of my property.

You're obligated and faithfully humble friend,

Col. Charles Buckley

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I feel this man as he writes Mr. Madison, each word is so carefully chosen. He feels a hope and a longing for success. I also sense a small smirk reigns; I feel in his hand the sinister excitement within as does a child when stealing a biscuit from his mother never to be caught.

As weeks pass, Mr. Madison sends ever more compelling letters offering rising support for my master. With each reply, my master's heart lightens, he humbly accepts offer after offer and adds more requests with each letter he writes. I can feel the heart of my master lighten at each turn with the excitement for a prosperous transaction complete and a hidden shadow of the satisfaction in drawing the slyest of creatures into your well laid snare. These letters carry the words of a friend, but have the hidden trap of a lawyer enticing the innocent to the worst of binding contracts.

I share his words from his last reply to Mr. Madison; consider his words, our only view, and the man he presents.

May 5, 1787

To Mr. James Madison
Montpelier
Orange County, Virginia

Dear James,

Your forth post arrived today with commanding arguments. Your announcement that Gen. Washington has agreed to lead the Congress and he specifically asked could we support his effort embraced our hearts. I read portions of your letters with mother who reluctantly but valiantly volunteered to tend to the seven children in my absence. Your kind offer to have a farm manager will alleviate my burden and avoid ruin. I will accept

this meager stipend when I arrive in Philadelphia and will forward it to the manager directly as mother easily befuddles in the matters of money. Your arrangement for accommodations in the guesthouse of a prosperous Philadelphia family is met with un-ending appreciation. I ambitiously endeavor to assist the provisioning and management for the arrival and support of all the delegates to our necessary and important effort. I have the greatest of hopes that your new adventure to amend the Articles of Confederation will set our nation on a more fruitful and benevolent course.

I come with a humble heart, a sharp mind, and a strong arm to serve our nation as we did together a decade ago.

With great sincerity and humility your friend,

Col. Charles Buckley

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His words begin the story of a man who earned his space next to Mr. Madison. His words are of humble elegance but his hand tells a different story. Beneath his excitement, I feel the wicked pleasure that is drawn from the demise of another. I have not seen the heart and soul of this man, just the craftiness of a shrewd lawyer wooing his next victim. My master now places me in my writing box and we prepare for our journey from Connecticut to Philadelphia.

Seven days of bouncing as a bung in a blow. At last we arrive, new paper and ink are retrieved and our story starts again with a letter to his mother.

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May 20th, 1787
Betsy Tainter Buckley
Buckley Farm
Colchester, New London County

Connecticut

Dearest mother,

It has been two days since our arrival in Philadelphia and preparations are proceeding at a rapid pace. Only five days remain before the delegates are to be in place and General Washington is to start the proceedings. We are provisioning for 74 delegates that have been appointed to the convention. You will be pleased to know that your dear old friend Benjamin Franklin will be in attendance at his ripe old age of 81, despite his painful and crippling gout.

The accommodations arranged for my tenure are simple and adequate. It is a small brick two-story townhouse nestled on a busy street belonging to a baker. The kitchen and ovens are in the basement preserving space on their meager plot and the cesspit is easily accessed behind the house. His shop fills the first floor and I respectfully share the space with his wife and five children. They offered me one of the two small upstairs rooms but I refused in favor of the store room behind the shop. The fresh air from the harbor blows through this fine city each day bringing welcome relief from these warm May days. The abundance of commerce is everywhere, horse drawn wagons clacking upon the cobblestone streets, merchants displaying their wares in abundance, the movement of tobacco, rice, whisky and other commerce is taken from or loaded onto the ships never ends. My host family does their best to provide for my care but with such a large family they bear a burden of sacrifice as we do. Preparation and provisioning takes all of my time, from dawn until deep into the night we prepare for our delegations needs.

I will bear witness to the Hon. Mr. Franklin and General Washington your sacrifice to support their noble cause, any small stipend you may spare from fathers inheritance will assist greatly. I miss you, the children, my beloved Sarah and relish the thoughts of my return. I look forward to your correspondence.

Your dutiful son,

Charles

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As my master places me into my resting place within his writing box, his words tell a story of sacrifice. It reads well on the wall behind my frozen display of five surviving letters. His heart carries some hidden sinister scheme. I now know the hand of a story teller. Will time bring light to the truth that I feel beneath? I share more of my one sided story, a new letter is written. Seven weeks into the Convention.

July 15th, 1787
Betsy Tainter Buckley
Buckley Farm
Colchester, New London County
Connecticut

Dearest Mother,

I am the most apologetic son for not writing sooner. Your letters of support and the money you sent are getting me through this daunting venture.

To preserve the health of our delegates in the summer heat, we are spreading fresh dirt and sand on the cobblestone streets in front of the Pennsylvania State House to quiet the carriages. The men inside may now proceed with this course without the stifling prospect of closed windows. We cannot support their every need only to have them faint by noon from the summer heat. The Congress voted to keep the debate secret. This allows all the delegates to be free to express all their opinions and manage their votes without influence. We now post guards to keep all the curious at bay.

Each day, I listen to the debate rage on as to the shape and future of our nation. There are those that speak with the greatest of eloquence that we need a government shaped by the elite, the largest landholders, and the most successful of our nation. The counter argument foretells that such a lofty group would behave in time like the monarchy we just expelled. The opposition stands that all power should be derived from the people; those entrusted with it should be in dependence on the people by a short duration of their appointments. Even during the short period the trust should be placed not in a few, but in a number of hands, a large council. Those opposed proclaim this will degrade into a mob that shall succumb to anarchy. There is great foundation for both arguments. A broad body of man supporting and representing the common landholder balanced with a body representing the learned appointed by the state legislatures far away from the mob with a longer and more reserved approach.

They are taking a far path from their charge of amending the Articles of Confederation. Based on the lead from the Virginia delegation, they are creating an entire new Constitution. I pray we do not trigger another revolution amongst ourselves.

I am thankful for the careful detail you share of the daily events but even though you clearly state that the farm runs much better without me, I do intend to return. Despite your concerns, my brother and I have a plan for a greater future success.

In my brief respites from the daily toil, the Baker's family provides moments of peace and sustenance as best they can afford. They retain a morsel of their daily baking for my nourishment.

The candle is short and sleep calls. I will write again soon.

Give my love to the children and my darling wife Sarah.

Your dedicated son,

Charles

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My master is exhausted; I can feel how hard he works to find the words for his mother. These stories are a true labor; this is not like my master who is always flush with words. The facts may ring true, but they are shallow words. I am still lost, still no sight of the true soul of this man. Another letter is written to his mother, I have hope. Ten weeks into the Convention.

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August 3rd, 1787

Betsy Tainter Buckley
Buckley Farm
Colchester, New London County
Connecticut

Dearest Mother,

Your letter filled me with happiness with all the news of the children and the hard work our manager is doing in my absence. Your willingness to pay for his services from the inheritance of our loving father takes great weight off my mind. I will take your advice and take more time to rest. You are very clear how well the farm is running in my absence and yes I will work as hard at home as I have in Philadelphia. You need not remind me of this in every letter. Despite your repeated observations on the fragility of my memory, after nine letters I will not forget. My brother and I know very well that your abilities were never fully utilized. You are clear in your frustration with being denied formal schooling and that should not be thrust upon our children. To that point, I had the pleasure of spending an evening with your dear friend Mr. Franklin and he spoke heartily on this exacting issue! He declared to all that he has often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and

Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. Mr. Franklin is confident, had they the advantage of education equal to us, they would be of quality as ourselves. What has the woman done to forfeit the privilege of being taught? Mr. Franklin was most adamant in his cause to educate those of the farer sex.

I pray his words carried in the wind all the way to your ears in Connecticut. I forwarded your approval and high regard for his points. He is thankful of your commitment at home so we may be carried by the highest of success.

Off to sleep to prepare for another full day.

Give my love to the children and my darling wife Sarah,

Your dutiful son,

Charles

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My master's hand is heavy, it is laden with thought. He is so careful as to his words. His words would appear that of a thoughtful man, but his heart hides contempt for the very story he sends to his trusting mother. I sit for weeks in the dark recesses of my writing box, waiting to share the soul of this man with no success. These letters would place him in good stead next to Mr. Madison. It is well earned, or is it? What a story he weaves. First, I learn the conniving hand of the unscrupulous friend, now I know the weaver of tales. I hope to know the soul of this man before I am worn out! Thirteen weeks into the Convention.

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August 24th, 1787

Betsy Tainter Buckley

Buckley Farm
Colchester, New London County
Connecticut

Dearest Mother,

Your dutiful son has fallen from grace with his lack of letters. Your weekly correspondence detailing the happenings of the farm our children and the news of Connecticut give me light in these long days. Your curiosity in Philadelphia is worthy of description. It is too dangerous and long of a trip for you to see this fine city. I will share its features. This is a city of commerce. Everyone here deals in some sort of trade or traffic or mercantile business or supports those who do. New ships arrive and depart every day lining the city's eastern edge. They bring molasses from the West Indies, manufactured goods from Europe and are dispersed to the city and countrywide. The abundant grain and livestock products of Pennsylvania's rich hinterlands and drawn from regions near New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland are loaded onto vessels sailing back to Europe and the Caribbean. Producing, transporting and selling these goods create a lively city. Over 40,000 people live here and horses abound; the city is immense! The motion never stops, after sunset the street is scraped by scavengers with carts to take the soiling away to the Commons where it is deposited and sold to farmers for their fields. When the rear of the tiny plot of our townhouse is overwhelmed by the cesspit, a team is called and that too is hauled away. Order here is preserved by constables; there are 14 in all, one for each ward. They walk the streets each day and examine all vagrant and disorderly persons. These constables have been helpful assistance in scattering the curious during the convention as secrecy is paramount. The best merchants here have enjoyed incredible success and wealth. The homes near the center of town on Third Street must marvel the estates of Europe. Their grand windows and multiple fireplaces tell a story of a warm winter and a breeze filled summer. The kitchen, the stables and the cesspit are well away from the majestic homes so the noise and smells of the day never intrude on their lives.

There was great excitement at the harbor last week as a new form of ship appeared at the dock. The Congress recessed for the afternoon to view this new vessel powered by fire and steam not the winds driven by God. As Philadelphia is the richest port in America, its future shall be everlasting if it's ships may come and go as they please without concern for the wind.

Mother, you are a true daughter of the revolution and our nation. I will again share your efforts with Mr. Franklin and General Washington.

It is the benevolent sacrifice from each of us that will create a common bounty for all of us.

Blessing to you, the children and my darling wife Sarah,

Your loving son,

Charles

My master's hand has great strength today. He is confident. He is full. The picture he paints of Philadelphia with his words read true, but they are empty of a heart. This story he writes must be coming to a close. It is by great fortune he leaves me, his faithful quill, in his box for so long. As the quill from an eagle, I may see this journey to its end, most quills never do. The quest of all quills is to extend the true heart of man, I can only hope. Sixteen weeks into the convention.

September 15th, 1787

Betsy Tainter Buckley
Buckley Farm
Colchester, New London County

Connecticut

Dearest Mother,

After so many long and trying weeks, the convention is coming to its end. The delegate's dedication has been like no other seen to history. Through the blistering heat of summer, the men arrived with great punctuality at the appointed hour to deliberate the points of the day. Many days exceeded seven hours. Many debates were in small, closed rooms to insure secrecy. How these fine men in full dress and coats did not faint by noon, I will never understand!? God's hand must have been with them. They are entitled to the universal confidence of the people of America that all issues were considered, debated and resolved. With all their commitment, they are ready to go home. General Washington himself proclaimed that "I am quite homesick." Our provisioning was always in good order with the exception of quills, paper and ink. We would feed everyone in New London County for a year with the geese that have fallen to provide the quills for these men. A committee would debate a topic and present a collection of dozens of papers with blotches, re-writes, scratch-outs, unreadable words and circuitous logic no one could muster. Then, Mr. Morris would untinker the snarled sentences and reorganizes the entire document. Upon reading the group of learned men would declare that was exactly what they meant.

If the final drafts are accepted, then we will collect our belongings and return to our many homes. These learned men went completely beyond their charge to amend the Articles of Confederation and created a completely new Constitution. If nine states ratify their divine effort, then we will try again to form a government to stand the test of time that our Articles of Confederation did not! Your two acquaintances from father's efforts in the revolution, Mr. Franklin and General Washington, were magnificent in their quiet leadership. Many a delegate noted that their silence allowed all members to extol their points openly and not withheld because of their presence in the hall.

My brother John and I know very well that you have little faith in our ability to manage the family farms. Your fifteen weekly reminders of how effective the manager and laborers you hired in my absence has not gone without notice. We have dedicated ourselves to improve our state and promise that we will start anew when I return.

Mother, your sacrifice to our family helped reshape a new government.

Please give my love to the children and Sarah and tell them I will be home soon. This is my last letter; I depart in the shortest of time.

Your dedicated son,

Charles

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My master writes with such confidence and strength. I feel a satisfaction in his hand as in a battle won. I feel his story is at an end. Even though facts may be true, he still hides. I can feel it! He ponders another letter, I feel his true self about to emerge. I feel his inner soul stirring and my master is about to shine as he has never done. He gazes about to be sure he is alone, he lets his heart emerge as he writes his brother John.

September 15th, 1787

John Buckley
Tainter Farm
Colchester, New London County
Connecticut

Dearest Brother,

This Grand Convention is set to adjourn in two days hence. It has been so many months and there is so much to share. What a wonderful opportunity to get away from mother, the children, my worthless wife and the drudgery of the farm. The scheme to bring the unsuspecting Mr. Madison and mother into our plan is working perfectly. Luck smiled and we drew them both in! By reading only parts of Mr. Madison's letters to mother, I convinced her of our needs so she is also sending a stipend, tending to the children without complaint and paying a farm manager in my absence. I have allowed mother to believe she is part of a great mission to serve our new nation and that deception must never be lost. Be sure to support her belief that sending the last of father's inheritance for my accommodations is supporting our nation. Thankfully, it is finely going where it should be – his dutiful sons' pockets. As we have used virtually all the funds we accumulated during the revolution, I had hoped this scheme would give us a respite from our daily work but when I arrived in Philadelphia I discovered this was a much greater opportunity!

I recall so well why I despise coming to a city. The smell from the soiled streets challenged the nose with acrid bitterness. When the breeze passes through the harbor it is as a breath of hot wind from the throat of the putrid devil.

Instead of looking for accommodation over a tavern or boardinghouse, I was introduced to a wealthy and successful Philadelphia family to stay in their well-appointed guest house. They saw me as a poor hard working soldier of the Revolution and provided me with full meals, wine and assistance from their servants each day. Despite the wealth of my host, they serve only one or sometimes two meats at the main meal and appear concerned when I finish a second bottle of wine. Their land is so small that between the whiffs of smell of our fine dinner is the putrid reminder of the cesspit behind the house. Men were never meant to live so close together on such a small property.

On the second day, I traveled to the docks and it took but a moment to find a smuggler who would carry supplies to you with no question as to source

or destination. There are ladies everywhere and I don't mean of the nature of our mother. As soon as I was settled, I sampled Philadelphia's finest of the farer sex. The Congress provisioned for seventy-four delegates and only fifty-five attended; with my total control of the provisioning to deliver off the unused portions proved very easy. I trust the wagon loads have been arriving on a regular basis.

The street noise interfered with their eloquent speeches. It was necessary to bring wagon loads of sand to cover the cobblestones and silence the carriages. It was a miserable two days! Before the surface needs renewal, I will establish a company of men to this task. Our horde of blowhards, spewing forth words to impress each other bantering hour by hour may now stand with the breeze from an open window unabated by the noise of passersby. The guards kept the curious away but the mobs may hang the delegates for creating this dreadful new document they call the Constitution. The convention was to amend the Articles of Confederation, not undo them. The delegates are so tired at the end of their days they have not noticed the smaller portions and lower quality wine. The extra provisions and wine best found a new home with an excellent smuggler on their way to you. This is much easier than our effort during the revolution. The delegates, led by General Washington, are engaged with such intensity I can relieve them of their property with no concern. The profit will be immense and set us for many years. Good fortune is upon us.

I must expand on the immense supply of flirtatious young unattached women seeking favors and support of the successful gentleman. Before the first week had ended, I brought one of these fine lusty ladies into my daily routine. I carefully delegated my work so in the afternoon the guards thought I will was overseeing provisions, the provisioners thought I was planning for the delegates, and the delegate support company thought I was overseeing the guards. That allowed every afternoon free to visit my new, young lusty friend. She draws the flame of passion from the loins with a force not known to me. I hope to recreate this path of satisfaction upon my return to Connecticut. Each day rolls to perfection, morning to be seen by

all, mid-day to arrange with the smugglers, afternoons of pleasure, a fine dinner and finish the day in the tavern with Mr. Franklin.

I must tell you about Mr. Franklin. He has become the final piece of the puzzle as my host family does not approve of my second bottle of wine with dinner. Mr. Franklin is of the devout belief that moderate drinking improves the diffusion of knowledge among educated men. He concludes a little liquor is an absolute necessity for tempering and driving the best of judgment and the best of orations. It is our good fortune that as learned of a man Mr. Franklin represents, he defines moderate in the most generous of ways. He spends many an hour, long into the night, discussing and refining the issues of the day while we drain the tavern of its wares. He does have some very odd notions. On many an evening, he has rambled on about the appropriate opportunity for the weaker sex to seek education. How he can reason this as inevitable and from God giving that sex brains at all beseeches me. I stand firmly with Mr. Witherspoon of the College of New Jersey that it would be a fool's journey and a waste of time. As misguided as many of Mr. Franklin's notions are, he has never once looked to me for the bill of fare. He sees me as a poor and dutiful veteran of the revolution and worthy of his company and I do nothing to diminish his perception.

The debate has now raged on for many months. They are clearly tired of it and should be reaching completion two days hence therefore only a few more shipments will arrive. I trust you have stuck diligently to our plan to make small purchases from many area merchants so no one suspects the source of our newly acquired wealth. I have amassed many a coin selling off supplies to smugglers on the wharfs of Philadelphia. The letters from mother declare she is full of pride for her efforts. If we can maintain our illusion, she may be willing to pay additional expenses for travel and our farm foreman upon my return. This too, we shall divide among us.

I have also taken measure of the fine house where my host family resides. During the final week an evening event is planned that shall include these supportive Philadelphians. As they are celebrating the future with our delegates, I will relieve them of much of their fine silver being careful to

give the appearance that it was foreign seaman from those God forsaken wharfs. As their trusted servant, I will work diligently with them to find the culprits. I am slowly dispersing my personal possessions to make room in my trunks for the silver, gold and exquisite items amassed. As my writing desk and quills have no room in the face of silver, I leave them behind in a secret compartment in this guesthouse.

I look forward to a wealthy and prosperous old-age brother; revolution is a very profitable business.

As always, turn this letter to ash so no man will ever know of our venture.

Your dedicated brother,

Charles

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My master has shown his true soul. Hints I felt but could not see. I have now satisfied my quest to be the instrument that captures the true heart and soul of a man for destiny. To my horror, the true soul of this man in the letter he writes was turned to ash; I cannot expose this despicable man. I am the agent of a malicious fraud. I sit behind this glass representing the supposed warm heart, honest toil, and national dedication of the adored Charles Buckley known only through his hand, a single view, in writing a story in letters to his mother. Man's attempt to capture history is nothing more than the full portrait painted from the image of a hand and ear. Docents come and docents go, each telling the story of this honorable man. The curator holds me with love and admiration believing I am the instrument of character that made this nation great. A loving mother saves the words of her so un-worthy son, to a friend they are lost and a brother burns the only vestige of my master's soul to bury the truth forever. Now history adores this fine son; text books resound the story of his toil, statues stand in public parks, his family home preserved and his grave adorned. The great financial success of a man attributed to the promise to a mother

and the inspiration grown from the Great Convention of 1787. History has painted a portrait of the success of this man; a beautiful portrait painted with only a contrived glimpse from a woven tale, not the true great success drawn in treachery. I alone know the true heart of Charles Buckley. A man of many faces; the face who connives his trusting friend, the face that weaves a tale for a mother who wants to believe in her ne'er-do-well son and the true wretch worthy only of an unmarked grave forgotten to time. I alone have felt the joy in his hand drawn from the deceit to those who trusted him. I alone have felt the satisfaction in turning the bounty of a thankful nation into his personal prize.

How many other presumptions of history are so wrong? This museum is littered with them. How many facts we take for knowledge are contrived falsehoods? It is said that the victor of war gets to choose his history. For almost 1,700 years, the heart of man and his true self was known to his quill. What truths do we hold today that are total fabrications and lies; I know there are far too many. How many times has history painted the portrait of truth with only the image of hand and ear? All those unsuspecting onlookers, peering through my glass, reading the woven tale of deceit designed to fool a loving mother and therefor being fooled again. How many great men of history are only worth the dust of an unmarked grave? The foundations of our truths are tormented by the falsehoods of what we want to see. History will never know this man; a man who cloaked himself in a shroud of deception, a man, as in the victor of war, who wrote his own version of history. My quest to know the heart and soul of a man has failed to express that truth to history. If man could only know the truth as does a quill. Sadly, I can never change this portrait painted that is so wrong, no one will ever know the true tale, for I am just A Quill.

Post Script: Although Col. Charles Buckley is a fictional character, the facts and historic references are not. For example: Ben Franklin did believe drinking improved the intellect and championed a women's education. Witherspoon, of what is now called Princeton, saw no need to educate women. The Congress was secret. Philadelphia was a city of 40,000 with 14 constables, stunk to high heaven and was full of lustful ladies. A formal

dinner with less than three meats was considered cheap. The average farm was 160 acres and the family cultivated five of it. By 1787, we were already two inches taller than the average European. We are part of an amazing story. I have shared many a factual truth about our past, or have I. I only know the history through the eyes of what the writer wants me to see. Is our history a full portrait painted from just the image of hand and ear? I cannot really know the whole truth. I cannot really know the soul of these men, for I – your humble writer – am not A Quill.