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Ms. Coll. 762: Rebecca Buckley Ferguson letters, 1747-1819

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Ms. Coll. 762: Rebecca Buckley Ferguson letters, 1747-1819

Description

A transcription of the Buckley-Ferguson letters (1747-1819). Born in the Philadelphia suburbs to William (b. 1713) and Ruth Buckley (d. 1780), Rebecca lived for periods in Essequibo and Demerara in Guyana and resided in New York after her marriage to James Ferguson in 1792. She is the sister of William Buckley (b. 1745). This collection of correspondence to Rebecca Buckley Ferguson is arranged alphabetically and is from family members and close friends.

Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Digital Humanities

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The Rebecca Buckley
Ferguson Letters:
1747-1819

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A Note on Transcription Choices

Any transcription from original manuscript material into contemporary word-processed document necessarily captures some features of the original text at the expense of others. This transcription prioritizes clarity and legibility for the contemporary user over strict adherence to the page organization of the period letters. This allows the transcription to be read quickly, even when moving from one letter to the next, without the visual distraction of, for example, the rapid and inconsistent line changes that would have characterized the typed document should the original line organization of the text block – typically two to three lines per typed line – have been preserved. Ease of use for the contemporary reader/researcher comes at the expense of some period detail, however. Typed entirely in Times New Roman for clarity of content, the transcribed document cannot capture, for example, the wavering hand of Susanna Cheesman in her December 17th, 1781 letter to Rebecca Buckley: “the Cold Weather ... has so Stiffend my fingers I can scarcely feel my Pen,” she writes, adding “You can see by the writeing how cold I am” (page 9). These types of decisions have necessarily affected the transcription provided.

The transcription has been consistent in its methodology, adhering to several formatting rules:

- Text that is [bracketed] has been added for clarity, and does not appear in the period letters.
- The page organization of the letters, typically on one sheet, have been preserved in recto and verso form – that is, all text from the recto is transcribed on one page, and all text from the verso is transcribed on a separate, subsequent page for each letter. Exceptions are noted and explained in brackets.
- Address information and post markings would interrupt the body of the text if transcribed exactly as they appear. The address information on the recto has been noted at the top of the page transcribing the recto side text, though it actually appears opposite this text and flipped in the horizontal direction. Note of any wax seal on the verso appears in the same location.
- In general, very little space is left between lines of text and between paragraphs in the letters. Spaces have been added between paragraphs for clarity. In the rare case that a letter does leave a space between paragraphs, additional spaces have been left in the transcription as well.
- Indentation is rarely used at the beginning of new paragraphs in the letters. Indentations, where transcribed, also appear in the period letters.

Additionally, the Penn Manuscript Collective first transcribed a selection of these letters on February 5, 2016. These transcriptions have been edited for formatting and with some textual changes, but largely the transcriptions have been reused here. They are:

- E. M. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, November 12th, 1787 P. 18
- Sarah P. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, November 12th, 1787 P. 19
- Anthony M. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, April 25th, 1788 P. 22

William Buckley to Elizabeth Hugg Williams, April 19th, 1747

[Addressed to:]

Letter to Mother
April 1747

Bristol 19th. April 1747

Honou'rd Mother

~~It~~ this serves to acknowledge the Receipt of Jim & Ab. Mason as well as that to my wife & our Fr^d. Jos. Jacob both of w^{ch}: were very acceptable, Especially as they Intimate thy Intention of Visiting us – I should have thought it Fortunate had thou happen'd with us at this time – ~~Not knowing when the trouble my Family may be Restor'd to~~ But shall be also Pleas'd if it happens a while Hence that thou sends my Family Recover'd of the Small Pox – My wife first had 'em was take abo^t: 3 Weeks since & is now Recover'd have I Children now Ill & tis come out on one of em suppose they will all have it in few Days & hope the Almighty will Mercifully Restore em to us

Fr^d. Jacobs' now waching Obliges my being short, so shall. I shall not Ado but that humble

[This letter leaves a conspicuous space for a signature but does not include one.]

Will of William Buckley, October 17th, 1769

I William Buckley of the Island of S'Eustatia March ¹ Considering the Uncertainty of this Transitory Life; Do Make & declare these Presents to Contain my last Will and Testament. This is to say (In promis) I give & Bequeath unto my beloved Brother Phin^e Buckley all my Cloaths & Wearing Apparell. Him I give & Bequeath w[hole in page, some text lost] Sisters Elizabeth Buckley Rebecca Buckley & Mary Buckley all my Estates goods & Chattles that I know [hole in page, some text lost] may hereafter be in profession off after my Debt to [hole in page] are p^d that is to say one third unto each [hole in page]n in hand paid, upon the day of ma[hole in page]e provided they marry according to the Custom & Manner used amongst the People called Quakers. And I do hereby nominate & appoint my beloved Brother Phin^e Buckley to be my sole Executor, to whom g[hole in page]wer to dispose of my Estate as above, retaining Three hundred Pounds Phil^a Curr^{cy} in his own hands, the interest there of to be annually paid to my Beloved Mother Beth Buckley & after her Decease to my three sisters as above the Survivor or Survivor of them. And I do hereby further declare that in Case neither of my above named sisters should Marry, [hole in page] be allowed interest annually for their Part of my Estate as above, & in such Case after the Decease of me or all of them I hereby desire it may become the property of any Son my Brother Phin^e may have provided he be named William, otherwise to be equally divided amongst his Male Children, & in Case he hath no Male Children I give & Bequeath to Elias Green son of John Green Five hundred pounds & in Case of his Death to the Heirs of his Body to be equally

Divided amongst them, & the residue to the Heirs of my Brother Phineas. In Wellness
whereof I have hereunto set my hand & seal this Twenty Ninth day of Octo^r in the year of
our Lord One Thousand seven hundred & sixty nine.

Signed Sealed Published & [hole in page] the Presence of us by the above named
WBuckley

W^m Buckley [enlarged signature]

Jonatⁿ Jon[hole in page, presumably the signature of a notary]

Willia[hole in page, presumably the signature of a notary]

Will of the ^{^ Grand} father of Samuel B. Ferguson [in another hand and another pen, faintly]

M. Reading to Rebecca Buckley, July 30th, 1781

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with “R” stamp]
[Addressed to, written on the diagonal:]

Miss Buckley
Leguan

My Dearest Miss Bekey.

I have been a long Time in Expectation of being favoured with a few lines from you. But did not know your arm Prevented you from doing me that favour, the Doctor told me that you Expected me Yesterday.

I shall do myselfe th^at Pleasure when my Aunt goes over I am glad to hear that your Arm is well, for now I hope you will Write to me.

July 30th. 1781.

And Believe me to be your ever Affectionate
M^s Reading

Susanna Cheesman to Rebecca Buckley, December 17th, 1781

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with indistinguishable stamp]
[Addressed to:]

Miss Buckley

To the care of M^r Edward Ireland
Mercht. Barbados.

Mr favour of
Capt: Reid –

Esequebo .

Bristol December 17th: 1781

Our Smitten Friends are sent on Errands full of love:
For us they Sicken and for us they Die –

I truly Sympathize with you my Dear Beckey on the loss of your worthy mother, and allow you to grieve a little while but not too long. Like you I lose the best of parents when far from him, and at a time of Life I most needed a Parent-Guardian – Yet when I considerd that it was the Will of an allusive Providence to take them to Himself (I was very young when without Father or Mother) I was redigned, reflecting that my loss was their gain. So my Dear I pray you to keep up your Spirits and Endeavour to regain your Health which I most sincerely Wish you a perfect share of, for Life without it, is a Heavy Burden.

I little thought when I wrote you last, that my next Letter would be Dated from the Place. Through what New Scenes and Changes must we pass I may justly say. Since I left Barbados I have seen Antique St: Kills, St: Eustatia, was in the City of Cork lay at Cove a Fortnight and at the Expiration of very near three

Months arrivd Here in Tolerable good Health. my Poor Sister quite unwell has been so ever since we made the Banks of Newfoundland – Desires her love to you and all the Family. I have seen your Friend G ... & since so been here. had I not known he was Engagd to Miss Brotherson I cant tell what woud have become of your poor Friend Susans Heart. I have got into such vein of writeing shoud not know when to leave off. Was it not for the Cold Weather which has so Stiffend my fingers I can scarsely feel my Pen. Eleven Oclock at night in my Chamber without a Fire I am hardly able to hold out to tell you, I am with love to your Brother and Sister, M^r and M^{rs} Patterson. Your ever Affectionate and Sincere

Susanna Cheesman

PS

You can see by the writeing how cold I am, Direct your Letters to the care of M^r Ireland He will send them to me and pray write by every Opportunity Adieu –

Dr. Jonathan Hicks to Rebecca Buckley, December 19th, 1782

[Addressed to:]

Miss R. Buckley
Leguan

Dear Becky

Demerary 19th December 1782 –

Moses has just informed us that you are going or gone to Paritea, We cannot suppose you can know of our being at Peter's Hall, as we suppose your Visit there is intended justly at least ^{^tells} but if this finds you at Leguan you may know that the visit intended must be deferred till after Christmas as then we shall be at Home and happy to see you; M^{rs}. H is so big that after she returns she will scarcely trust Herself from Home again for some Months and allways at Home and nothing can make ^{^me more} happy to find that the length of time since she saw you has not diminished the Affectionate Friendship so long subsisting between you, & assure ^{^you} that no one thing has made me more uneasy than an apparent neglect to Her from you, but when I consider the Disservility that has attended an intercourse for some Time past – & look upon it not so much your Fault and therefore excuse you – but I once Thought that nothing would have prevented you from being with Her for some Months at least, and not to have been Six Months without ere a visit from you. Complaining in the Rights of your

Affectionate Friend Jon^a. Hicks –

Polly begs her love to you –

Slave Sale Contract, June 17th, 1783

Rebecca Buckley

To Patterson & Buckley D^m [Document]

To a Negroe Girl named Cecilia with Cost of gelden [?] &:	f329.17.
To so much discounted by W ^m . Parkinson with Joseph Dowding	257.13
To so much discounted with A Blatchly by D ^r	<u>80—</u>
	f667.10

By work done for sundry persons of whom we have rec^d pay inf458.15
By W^m. Buckley for the balance 208.15f f667.70 –

Esequebo June 17th 1783
Errors Excepted
Patterson & Buckley

Dr. Jonathan Hicks to Rebecca Buckley, January 27th, 1784

[The letter preserves a very small red wax seal with no stamp]
[Addressed to:]

from Doctor Hicks

Demerara [this notation in pencil in another hand]

Miss Rebecca Buckley
Housekeeper of the Cats &
2 Dogs in
Philadelphia.

January 27th. 1784-

Why Becky Child how dost thee do, I am sorry that I can't stay with thee, but I wish thee better – ^{^even} that is much more than you wish me, however I suppose you are not essentially different from your Sex you want a great deal of courting before you condescend to take so much notice of me, as to make any thing else of me than a go between to you and your dear Polly – however you may see by the beginning of this that I have yet some small Remains of that ancient Concern for you, which I never professed but have practised towards you – I was happy to hear by Tommy Sr. that you was well but sorry that you ^{^are} as far off as Leguan from Paritea, and I suppose notwithstanding your great pretended Affection for Dear Polly you will make the distance as great, however I beg your pardon for casting my Reflections as you have been in America only Six months and the 13th Jan^y [January] I had the Happiness of having a Letter from Miss B. to Doctor Jonathan Hicks Long Island, a very laconic one I assure ^{^you} and inside blank, I suppose for myself to fill

however as my dear polly is writing an Answer to yours. I could do no less than prove the same time to thank you for mine M^{rs}. H. tells me you acted after me to know if I was as fine a fellow as I used to be, give me leave to answer with much less impartiality than She would, and take it at once He is as fine a fellow as you ever saw if possible ten thousand times more 10 than ever, this only between you & I. believe me I would ^{^not} wish it known as it may produce some Bickerings amongst the Ladies in Philda –

Mrs. H. tells me you want my picture as the last favor, I have little else to do however if I had ever so much I would find time to send it you & if it is done ^{^not} to well as you think it ought alter it where you please – 10 take it – Jon^a Hicks, aged 31 years & two months, about 5 feet 10 Inches high, brown Complexion dark brown Hair generally wears it platted behind – fine round forehead, well arched Eyebrows – dark hazle lively Eyes, a long [inkblot over this word, presumably “nose”] little inclined to the Roman, a lovely pouting mouth, truly formed for kissing./ a round Chin, well covered with a black beard Shaved close – always wears a smile upon his Cheek. a pretty long Neck. Shoulders well turned and gently falling, such a pair of Arms as if fit to encircle you and press to a Breast where ever in the Mansion of perfect Sincere and lively friendship As you only want a portrait, It is unnecessary to be drawn lovers

Give my love to Betsy & Sally tell pompy Sylvia Cecila howd’y – accept as much of the Regards as you please

Of your Affectionate J Hicks

To Miss R Buckley

Philadelphia

Becky I should like to see you when you read ^{^this} if you are not pleased with it put it in the fire only save from the flames my picture wich you wished for so much. Polly that is M. H will write you a long Letter and I suppose will let nothing escape Her [hole in page, this word lost] a good thing may be repeated and I therefore tell you that John Philip Hicks is a fine fellow and what makes him more to be esteemed He has had the small pocks and is very fond of his papa & yours. J.H.

Sarah Buckley to Elizabeth M. Buckley and Sarah P. Buckley, March 5th-
April 21st, 1784

[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley to the Care of Sam.^l Morris

March 5

Philadelphia

[This letter was written on three dates: April 13th, April 21st, and March 5th. The letters appear out of order. On the recto, Sarah Buckley writes her April 21st letter. On the verso, she adds to her April 21st letter on March 5th. The April 13th letter appears at the bottom of the verso. The letters will be transcribed in narrative order, moving the April 13th letter to its own page, for clarity.]

Dear Beckey

Thee will see by thee preeceeding I men't to write you all but am prevente'd by a Crou'd of Engagements, we are just Return'd from seeing M^r P Ty'd for life shall have the particulars in my Next, Old M^r Drowning's Death has Occasioun'd thy good Brother a deal of Business as he is left Exetor the old Gentleman was Buried the 11 Instant Cap^t leads sails for N Yorke shortly shall write by him. Our Loves to every of the Family as if Nam'd pray make an Appology for one to all & Believe us to be through every change yours Affectionately William & Sarah Buckley

Leguan April
Th 13, 1784

Esequebo Aprilth 21 1784

My Ever Dear Children
E & S. Buckley

As Capt Latham's Vessel sails in a few Day's I ^{am} willing to be in time, as I purpose writing generally, but allways make it a rule you should be first least any thing should Intervene to prevent my good Intentions. I wrote you in February & March, which hope you will Receive, but have not Received any from you later then those by Cap^t Latham, tho their has been several Arrivals lately from Barbados & other Islands, I sometimes am ready to Accuse you of being Undutifull of us or at least Neglecting to Inquire of your Friends for suitably Opportunity, or I thinke we should hear more frequently from you. Nothing Material has occurd since I wrote you – you tell me if you were little Birds you would take your Flight this way & see how we were Employ'd & how the Plantation looks, my Employ through the weeks is in the Domestic way First Day's are generally spent in reading your Dr Letters & often in Writing to you, as to the Plantation its much as you left it Except the Addition of a new peice taken in & planted. the Cotton Trees are in full Blome which Affords a pretty Prospect. the Negroes pretty healthy except poor Bruise, who has been Complaining some time. one Night after the family were gone to Bed, he & Cow Jack must needs try which were the best Horsemen, poor John was throw'n on his head & the Doctor thinks must have hurt his Brain as he complains cheifly of his head. he has been Blisterd & other Remedy's Us'd but not with the desird sway. I wrote you Princess was Deliver'd of a Daughter, which she calld sally (After thee my Dr Sall) Unfortunately it Dyd the 6 days the superstitious Negroes say it was becaused it was Namd before the 9 Day.

Your Pappa is gone to Fort Islant on Business that will detain him some day's your Dear Brother is my only Companion, & does all he can to beguile my lonely house, he comes on prettyly with his Booke & a Day or two ago to amuse him & myself I made him a Cobby Booke

he has made a few strokes & hopes soon to write you

March Fifth

Day is Appointed for your Uncles Parkinsons Nuptials. If I could be Excus'd going it would suit my Inclination, but I suppose if I Do not it will give Umbrage, shall in my Next give you a Circumstantial Account of the Bride & Groom & Company. Tomorrow Milikin & his Lady sail for Europe, our little Island you know does not furnish New's & I go abroa'd less then ever so have no chance for vercity

Your Dear Pappa Receivd a letter ^{^the other Day} from Billy Morris, Couch'd in the most Affectionate Term's, it was wrote the day after your Arrival, he says he should not have know'n you but for Pompey pray does he take any notice of you I think he ought – If I was not afraid to trust myself with a certain subject I would write to him, but as I know it to be a Delicate subject perhaps it may come better from your Pappa then me.

You have my Dr Girls I trust seen the two seasons pray how do you Bear the Changes. I long to hear your sentiments on many subjects, as I suppose you can be under no restraint to Parents that will be happy to Observe Nature Undisguis'd & Partial to your youthful Squibles you are to Reflect, when writing to us it will be more Acceptable if you are very Minuit. Tell us your hopes & fears your Disagreabels as well as Agreeables be Assur'd we shall be happy to lend or ~~our~~ ^{our} separation as easy as Possible And hope the time is not far Distant when we shall have it in our Pow'rs to Meet never to Part more while in Mutibility, had you'r Anxious Poppa been favor'd with Answers to Particular letters, I could Inlarge on thee subjects, but hope it will not be long before we shall have that satisfaction – Then it will be in his Pow'r to Accompany me if the answers are Agreeible But my Dear Babes we have not heard if you'r Commencing house Happen if you have, do be particular in letting us know how you like it

I long to know what you are doing at school, I expect to see great Improvement in your writing pray do not Disapoint me

Your Dr Brother sits by with he's little Booke Ingag'd in reading the Death & Burial of poor Robin, he Desires me to tell you that is the best of all tho they all please him greatly

I suppose you will Expect I should say something of your Girls they are all well & Busy in preparing for Easter, as a reward for well doing I this Day cut them Hand^d kerchief Coats, & shall According to my promise to you Prepare them as Opportunity's offer that I may have them in readiness to Attend when the word of Command is given. They Desire me to tell you they long to see you too too much & add all we wish Miss Bessy & Sally good good Easter Sophy too joins in the request, Your girls promise Jackets the Jackets you'r Aunt cut are too tight for them

As I told you in the preceding part I should write Generally shall say nothing of your Aunt, but to renew my former Charge, pray be Attentive to all her Commands remembering her Anxiety for you must be great as she has the part of Parents as well as Aunt to Ach do not Hold to it by a Refractory Behaviour, I am sure you Dispose [hole in page, some text missing] must be greatly Altered if you need such Advice, I do not Accuse [hole in page, some text missing] my Dr's I only Mention it by way of Caution And now my Dear Dear Children that you may be Preserv'd in that Fear of an AllWise Being that will Conduct you in there slippery paths of youth is what is much Desird by me, your Dear Brother unites with me in sincere Love & good Wishes to you all from your Affectionate

Mother Sarah Buckley

Elizabeth M. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, November 12th, 1787

[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley
Demarara

Coopers Ferry. November:12th:1787

Dear Aunt,

I wrote thee not long since, in order to go by a Vessel, from Burlington. But she sail'd sooner than we expected And I am not willing there should be any Conveyance to Demerara without embracing it. Therefore write again; & shall enclose the other I cannot express the Satisfaction it afforded me; to hear thee had in some measure regain'd that Inestimable blessing, Health. Which thee has so long been a stranger to. May thee my d^r Aunt be favor'd to Enjoy it – . I cannot help looking for thy return with Captaiⁿ Decator. If thee does not, shall be disappointed, as it was not thy Intent to make a long stay. When thee left us_ Doubt not but thee is very happy among thy old Friends, I should like much to see them once more, but it is a satisfaction I do not look for –

Our Friends in Philad^a are much as usual. We spent the greatest part of last week there, they inquir'd particularly after thee, & desir'd to be remember'd –

Please to remember me to all my Friends as if nam'd, & tell Fanny I should have wrote her but time will not admit – With wishing thee Health, Happiness & a speedy return shall conclude thy

ever Affectionate Neice.

E M Buckley

Sarah P. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, November 12th, 1787

[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley
Demerara

Coopers Ferry November 12th 1787

Dear Aunt

We receivd thy agreeable favour, a few Weeks ago which afforded me ^{the} greatest pleasure to hear thee has regain'd thy Health – I am great hopes thee will return with Captain Decator, but as there is a probability, thee will not am not willing to miss so favourable an Opportunity – Cousin Susan, Barker, spent a few Days with us; she is a very agreeable Woman; tho I do not think her equal to her Sister Betsy – I wish thee could prevail upon some of our Friends, to accompany thee out – We have not heard from Bristol lately; but expect they *will* write by this Conveyance. they are very anxious for thy return – I am very sorry to hear that M^{rs} Hamilton, is no more, I wish she could have been spared to the Children; a little longer she must be a great loss to them – Mama, is much pleas'd to hear thee is bette^r, and desires to be remember'd to thee as well as our Friends,

in which she is join'd by thy ever

Affectionate
Neice
Sarah P Buckley

PS M^{rs} Claton and M^{rs} Wells desires to be remember'd to thee likewise Pompey, to his
Friends –

William Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, December 4th, 1787

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with indistinguishable stamp]
[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley Care
Of M^r. Parkinson Esq^{re}
Demerara
34

Coopers Ferry Dec^m 4th 1787.

Dear Sister

Having but a few minutes notice of this Convoy anew, cou'd by no means omit informing thee of the Gen.^l Wellcare of our Brothers Family. Phiney has been admirably preserved & I think there is a probability of his being spared to his Family some time longer. Sally Harrison I have reason to believe will shortly be married, tho' her Father will not yet give his Verbal Assent. Noisy Chatter has perhaps had some influence in the matter. I am much disapointed in not receiving more letters from thee, as I observe many ~~letters~~ Vessells by the Papers, arrive, from you Post. We have never had any but of two.

Excuse Brevity & Accept a Great Share of Love from Evy Branch of the Family
as could could of they Loving

Shall Look for thee with
M^r. Patterson

W^m. Buckley

Anthony M. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, April 25th, 1788

New Jersey April 25th 1788.

My ever Dear Aunt

I now set to write thee, I hope for the last Time for this trip, as we look for thee Daily. Thee will be much disappointed if thee waits for Captain Decator, as he does not mean to return. I was much disappointed in thy not coming, in some of the late Vessels. Oh! now my Dear Aunt, what a pleasing Sight would it be to see thee, once more, & I hope I will be favoured ^{with} it soon. –

I remain with Love, dear Aunt, thy
ever Affectionate

Please to give my Love to all
friendly Friends.

Nephew
Anthony M Buckley

Pompey gives his Love to all the Negroes, Sophia in particular. ~

PS. Please to give my Love to Jemmy & Moses & all the rest of the Negroes

T. Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, May 2nd, 1788

[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley
To the care of William Parkinson Esq^r
East Seat Coast.
Demerara

Bristol May the 2^{ed} 1788

My Dear Aunt cannot readily conceive the real pleasure her agreeable favour afforded which was handed me some weeks past, not having it with me I cannot answer the Contents / at present so fully as I could wish, but hope to have the satisfaction 'ere long of delivering my sentiments to thee in Person as we are all pleasing ourselves with the expectation of thy Arrival very soon, perhaps thee may be on thy passage at the same time this is, which I wish maybe the case. –

The Gayest Season of the Year is now Approaching the Trees are again adorned, with Blossoms and promise fair for a fruitfull autumn; The little Warblers skipping from sprig to sprig Charm us with their Innocent Notes – hast my Dear Aunt to add to our Delights and partake of the Blessings, kind Providence has bestowed on America—

I shall make no more excuses either for bad writing or long silence; but Conclude with wishing thee an agreeable passage Home, and that, ^{that} inestimable Blessing Health which then has so long been looking for may return with thee; which willfully consummate for thy absence –

Please to remember me to Fanny; ^{Beg} any body that pleases, and accept more of my Love than I can send in Black & White, Not forgetting I am thy Affectionate Nephew

T. Buckley

William Buckley to Rebecca Buckley, July 13th, 1789

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with indistinguishable stamp]
[Addressed to:]

Rebecca Buckley
Bristol

Coopers Ferry July 13th 1789.

Dear Sister

Free^d they mournful Lefty some days past. I really think it a great pity thee has not some dyeing swain, to sooth them, cannot thou find one in the famous borough of Bristol look out sharp, as thee knows I am not of Epistolary amusement. My kind love to the family inform that he would oblige me if he could change horns with me; as I am almost determined I will not be troubled with the Black Mare again. Believe I shou'd go with Sally Robbins to Lamberton, & call at Bristol on my return if I had horses.

Accept of as great a Share of Love as thee can make good care of & Believe me thy Love^{ng} & Affect^e Brother

Buckley

James Ferguson to James Bringhurst, Check, January 19th 1796

[The check has printed components in three typefaces and handwritten components. Printed components are transcribed in capital letters while handwritten components are written in lower case letters. The number “73” for check number, “6” in 1796 and “49” preceding “dollars” are handwritten.]

NO. 73 – PHILADELPHIA.
CASHIER OF THE BANK OF NOTH AMERICA,
James Bringhurst – OR BEARER,
– forty Nine – DOLLARS & – CENTS.
49 DOLLARS & – CENTS.

January 19th – 1796
PAY TO

James Ferguson

Sylvia Buckley to Mrs. James Ferguson, April 15th, 1799

[The letter preserves several postmarkings on the addressed portion of the recto, which have been transcribed in capital letters, as they appear on the letter]

[Addressed to:]

27 MA

17

BOSTON

M. James Ferguson
Care of Mrs. Buckley & Underhill
New York

My Dear Misstress

Demerary April 15. 1799

With much pleasure I received yours of 27th January last, for which please to accept my thanks. I sincerely long to see your, your little Family & good father & was it not for the war I would certainly take a voyage to America. Remember me kindly to all your friends & tell them, How doyd [How do you do?] for me. Particularly M^{rs}. Parkinson who I hope is not angry for my not being with her when she left this as I was quite unwell. Keep your little Children for me I wish I could write myself as there would be many little things I should like to say that I cannot trouble another to communicate

Charlotte & Becky the latter I have named after you desire to be remembered to you by little marker as also Johnny & Michael all of which belong to me they goes by Mr Hubbard who I have required to pay you six Joues [presumably Guineas, the currency] for me. He married Miss Parkinson who I am sorry to say died mere Months since. A soot I shall mention what I wish you to send me for the three Joes [Guineas] Mr Parkinson paid you & the six I shall loan Mr. Hubbard to as I wish to make a little that when I die I may leave something to you & my little master. I have one or two little things I want to send you but no opportunity for New York will present. Mr Jochem desires to be remembered to you I live with him & he treats me well & I am happy.

M^{rs}. Bennet and M^{rs}. Kendall are well & was happy to hear you was so Cecelia belongs to Mrs. Kendell I have not seen her a long time tell your sisters how'dye [How do you do?] & by Mrs Kitney to send me an American brother, a singularly Needle, Book & a Locket ~~Remember~~ & my Earnings for which you can pay her.

M^{rs}. Hubbard not going to New York shall depend lending the money. I remain with
prayers for your Health & Happiness Your affectionate servant

Sylvia Buckey

Linen
Collars
Handkerchief
Slippers
Threat
Needles
Thimbles
1 box candles
1 box soap

Sylvia Buckley to Mrs. James Ferguson, April 25th, 1799

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with indistinguishable stamp and several postmarkings on the addressed portion of the recto, which have been transcribed in capital letters, as they appear on the letter]

[Addressed to:]

27 MA

17

BOSTON

M^{rs}. James Ferguson
Care Mrs Buckley & Underhill
New York

Demerary Apri^l. 25th 1799 –

Most Worthy Mistress;

I am at a loss for words to express the joy I felt at the receipt of your Kind & polite Letter; datted New York. January the 27. Wherein I am happy to find that my Behaveour has met with your approbation; as such I will try to continue as deserving like, I shall do my Best to Please you, for you have not been a Misstress but a most tender Pearent, to me for through you I had the most Noblest, Exeample that could be Shewen, which I shall ever try to follow. And you may be assoured [assured], that I am as willing to sirve you, as ever I was. I think more so Because I should like to end the Remanider [remainder] of my days with you; if it pleased God –

shew

I must now Congratulate with you, on the happiness it has pleased God for to bestwe [bestow] upon you, that of my three young Masters when I hope will do Honour to your grey heart hereafter. Methinks that I see them playing a round you, for I am long to Behold them, wherefore Please to give to each six kisses for me, & say to them that there made [maid] has sent that – If it please God that I can keep my health I will work, & do my best to save some little Proviton [Provision], to present each of them as a Notice of your great goodness, to me –

Please to tender my Kind respect to my Master, & I hope to have the pleasure of seeing him before I dies also you'll do the same to your Brothers family, you desired I should Remember to M^{rs}. Kendall & M^{rs}. Bennet. I have done so But from M^{rs}. Hubbard are no more, Mr Joachams best to be Kindly Remembered to you & family, he has been a most good Gentleman to me Cecelea is well all the Negroes in General

Remembers to you, with respect of the money I sent you by Mr. Parkenson, I am very sorry that it was Taken, & more so for the Good Gentleman, as I could not have expected that he should pay any part at all, after Being a sufferer himself. M^f. Hubbard wife Deliver to you 48 dollars, which you wife Please to layest in articles as for List, should the money not be sufficient, I will be ansered for what ever may be wanted, & if any thing this way will answer your market ^{^I hope} you will not be Backward in writing for it & you may depend that your commands shall be fullfiled all my People Joins with me in prayers for your Health & Prosperity Believing me to be your Dutiful servant till death

Sylvia Buckley

Mrs. Parkinson to Rebecca Ferguson, August 2nd, 1799

[Addressed to:]

M^{rs} R Ferguson
Re M^r Parkinson
New York

August 2^d 1799

My Dear Aunt Beckey,

Knowing the goodness of your heart, I am about to give you some trouble M^r Parkinson leaves me tomorrow for New York from whence he is to sail for England, and it is difficult carrying any thing in a stage. I will be much obliged to you to make him a gallon and half of Cream & some Ginger Cake and Rush to take to sea. – in case you have forgot how to make the Cream I will tell you – It must be new Milk, to every quart of which you must take a pound of loaf sugar ground as fine as powder. Set the Milk on the fire and when it boils, throw in the sugar gradually and stir it till it is well mixed, then set over a slow fire and let it boil away one third; when it is cold bottle it and Frozen down the Cake. – My Sister unites in Love and Compliments to you M^r Ferguson and your dear Children – excuse brevity as you may become my mind and hands are both fully employd at this time – Adieu yours sincerely
M^{rs} Parkinson

Sylvia Buckley to Mrs. James Ferguson, July 18th, 1800

[The letter preserves a red wax seal with indistinguishable stamp]
[Addressed to:]

Mrs. James Ferguson
New York

Esequibo July 18th. 1800

My Dearest Misstress

I wrote you some time past by Mr. John Hubbard which I make no doubt but you have Rec^d. Since which I have not the pleasure and satisfaction of hearing from you I now imbrace this opportunity again by Mr. Hubbard on [hole in paper, some text lost, presumably the name of the vessel bound ...] for New York to make an Enquiry after your health hoping you enjoy a peaceful antiquitty as likewise Mr. Ferguson your little sons and all your friends as it leaves me. At this present thanks be to God, In my former letter by Mr. Hubbard I wrote you all particulars reallion ^{^to} my self so shant trouble you again with it, I cannot give you any particular Acc^t. of your friends on Tigan or to windward as I have on the west coast of Esequibo I make no doubt but you may in Mr. Hubbard in New York who can give you all particulars, I am in possession of Fine Slaves of my own which in general begs to be Remembered to your Mr. Ferguson and then Little Martin, I begd of you in my last letter to send me these but that that could be got fm Mr. Jocham, which I must beg you again to send me, and must beg of my little Martin to send me again of Earrings from one, a pair of Slippers from another, and a Locket from the other, which I wish them to wair on Holidays in Remembrance of them and their Dear Mother, should I do Mr. G[J]ocham before Mr. Hubbard sails win send by him Eight Juie [presumably Guinea, the currency] which I own

I must beg you to accept of four and purchase any thing to wair in Remembrance of me,
and to purchase some things with the other four and send me such as you think best

O how happy should I be to in your Children and your self, I must beg to be most kindly
Rememberd to Mr. Ferguson [hole in page, some text lost, appears to be "and your"]
most dear little Martin with prayers they may be a comfort and an Honour to you in your
old age. I must conclude with my sincerest and affectionate wellwishes for your health
and happiness am am

My Dearest Misstress
Your Own Affectionate
Sylvia Buckley

[Sylvia Buckley], Copy of Mr. Ferguson's Slave a Will [After July 18th,
1800]

[Only half of this document survives. A considerable portion of the text at the transition between the recto and verso and at the end of the document is missing.]

[Written with several notes added in various places. Notes transcribed first:]

Copy of Mr. Ferguson's Slave a Will	Located on recto in Sylvia Buckley's hand
Copy of the will of one of grandson Fergusons slave who died at Demerara S. B. F.	Located on recto, in another hand and another ink color (likely Sarah Buckley Ferguson at a later date)
Misstress Harry Deleny Harry Maggie Give & Alman Harry B. Maggie Jocham M Beth William Deleny By F ^r . Percy	Located on verso in Sylvia Buckley's hand

(Copy).

In the name of almighty God – Amen.

I Sylvia Buckley being weak & sick already, but of sound and disposing mind memory and understanding do make and ordain this my last Will and testament in manner and form following –
Richiness after my just death and funeral expenses are paid I give to the Prov. Of this Colony the firm of Eleanby Wilden-. Will – I give and divide to my Mistress, by name Mrs. Ferguson now residing in America the firm

To save her for her life time and at her heath she said Nelly shall be free and first her I give unto said Buckley all my wealth & apparel and furniture in that part of my homely which I tend as a garden

I give and divide to she free Michael, woman Catherine Jochems with whose father I formerly lived as their Helper. My house I & remainder of it should it Release my woman Charlotte and her family, and rest of my money Negroes recover could by her to take good care of them – So sell none of them but to give them freedom for my sake –

Samuel B. Ferguson to Rebecca Ferguson, July 28th, 1819

[Addressed to:]

R. Ferguson
No. 37 Herman St
Newyork

Bridgeport July 28. 1819

My Dear Mother

Knowing thy anxiety to hear from me I embraced the spirit of opportunity by the return of Packet to write thee of my safe arrival at ½ part to D. C. after a fine show of 10 hours I found thee Parkinsons very agreeable most of them Residents of Bridgeport & became acquainted with a Mr. Bortuck & his lady Captain Himman to his Lady. I remained on board the Packet until the next morning. After Breakfast I took a walk about sunrise or little after & about 8 O clock called on my friend Fred^c Peet with whom I was acquainted with in Nyork whose father is residing at Bridgeport I then called on Mr. Sherman at his store when he walked up to the tavn yard & found It a very Convenient place with about 45 seats with good shot & out buildings. Having nothing else to do I prepared for work & at noon went with Mr Sherman to his House to Dinner found Mrs Sherman a very pleasand young woman I think about 25 years of age they have a little Daughter 2 months old the day I went there Which with a little servant girl comprise the family. Bridgeport so being a pleasant place they think about 700 inhabitants

in the Burrough It is about ½ mile from the House & Tavn yard he have a time being of rebels as the tap through the sound. This Burrough was Settld a short time before the Revolution or rather when was only about ½ Dog Houses here at that time It was then Called Newfield

I yesterday P.M. took tea in Company with my young friend Fred^c at James Clifford Whose friends with his mother he is about my age & with whom I was acquainted with in Nyork being all of us Connected with St Georges Church Sunday schools It is quite pleasant to meet with those you were acquainted when you go to a strange place. I was Introduced to a young lady their a Miss Sarah Packett who is some Connection of the Family. We spent an hour or two very pleasantly then went down to the River & went in a Bathing after which we went to Old Mr Peet House were Introduced to Mr Peets Daughters Mariah & Minerva Peet & shortly after returned home to Mr Shermans where I shall board. Please write me soon as thee gets this & send it by the packet this comes by the Comet Capt P Sherman who leaves Newyork Sat. Evening Please Remember me to father W^m & James when thee writes him also to Mrs Dixon & family & all our friends

Please send by night my night shirts & a couple of my working shirts

I wille try & write often & please write me as often you can

Hope to come & see you all before many months

Very sincerely
Thy affectionate Son
S. B. Ferguson

The Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Family Genealogy, 1738-1913: Notes on the Genealogical Records

The Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Letters include two leafs of genealogical information about the family, with writing on recto and verso. These pages each have a single cut edge (as if sliced out of a family album) and what appears to be an etched and printed decorative border with two columns and the headings “Births,” “Deaths,” “Marriages,” and “Births,” respectively.

Though the document records the precise dates of these major life events from 1738-1913, it only includes two hands, which will be referred to as “Hand 1” and “Hand 2” for clarity. Hand 1 uses the same pen throughout, recording births through 1885, marriages through 1885, and deaths through 1909. It seems clear that much of the work by Hand 1 was done in one sitting. There is a noticeable continuity in the way in which the pen runs dry and thin on the page then on the very next line includes a little blot, as if the writer had just dipped it into ink and carried on writing. Hand 2 records births from an unknown August from some time after 1885 through 1913, marriages from 1903-1909, and deaths in 1912. Though it is clear that Hand 2 is the hand of one person from their distinctive way of writing the capital letter ‘H,’ it appears as though this writer returned to the document several times over the years. They use several pens, sometimes writing tightly, sometimes more loosely.

This genealogical information has been transcribed in full, but, since it was written on the type of pages that might have appeared in a printed, 19th century family album, and since it was largely written by one author in what seems to have been one sitting, it warrants further investigation. Hand 1 seems to have been a Rebecca Buckley Ferguson descendant attempting to lovingly reconstruct their own family past. In the process, it is extremely likely that some errors – of omission, in the case of family scandal, or fabrication, in the case where a reasonable guess or misremembered date was included without note – enter into the document. It is also worth noting that the Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Letter collection changed hands through several book dealers throughout the 19th and 20th centuries: since blank 19th century family albums are easy to obtain, it is possible that a collector or dealer could have fabricated these documents entirely in order to enhance the value of their collection. The inclusion of Hand 2 seems to suggest the former, but Hand 1’s appearance of having written in one session suggests the latter.

“Births” appears twice - once each on the verso of “Marriages” and “Deaths” – but will be transcribed continuously here for clarity.

Hand 2 will be distinguished from Hand 1 by the use of italics, which happens to be consistent with the appearance of Hand 2 in comparison to Hand 1.

Both writers use inconsistent abbreviations for the months. Dates will be written out “Month Day, Year” in the contemporary format for clarity.

The Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Family Genealogy, 1738-1913:
Births, 1780-1913

James Ferguson	1738
Elizabeth Harley	March 15 th , 1746
James Ferguson II	March 1 st , 1766
Rebecca Buckley	January 11 th , 1756
William B. Ferguson	June 22 nd , 1794
James B. Ferguson	November 25 th , 1795
Samuel B. Ferguson	April 30 th , 1797
Sarah H. Parroli	September 21 st , 1797
Ruth Rebecca Ferguson	March 14 th , 1823
Samuel B. Ferguson II	August 12 th , 1825
Sarah I. Ferguson	May 18 th , 1827
Rebecca Ellen Ferguson	December 31 st , 1831
Henry B. Ferguson	April 9 th , 1835
Annie M. Ferguson	April 30 th , 1840
Louis M. Segee	January 9 th , 1849
Henry S. Starr	August 20 th , 1849
Emma H. Segee	October 16 th , 1850
Henry H. Ferguson	August 19 th , 1852
Phillip H. Segee	October 3 rd , 1853
Samuel B. Ferguson III	March 19 th , 1854
Mary L. Segee	April 12 th , 1857
Annie F. Segee	May 25 th , 1859
Annie H. Ferguson	February 13 th , 1861
Sarah R. Segee	November 16 th , 1862
Rebecca B. Segee	November 16 th , 1862
Frederick Segee	January 2 nd , 1869
Isabelle Segee	January 2 nd , 1869
Harry S. Starr	April 19 th , 1878
Howard F. Starr	December 29 th , 1879
Ethel L. Starr	March 25 th , 1885
<i>Gladys R. Segee</i>	<i>August</i>
<i>Virginia W. Starr</i>	<i>September 7th, 1905</i>
<i>Frances W. Starr</i>	<i>February 9th, 1910</i>
<i>Howard F. Starr</i>	<i>July 18th, 1910</i>
<i>William Starr</i>	<i>December 28th, 1913</i>

The Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Family Genealogy, 1738-1913:
Marriages, 1765-1909

James Ferguson to Elizabeth Harley	March 15 th , 1765
James Ferguson II to Rebecca Buckley	November 8 th , 1792
Samuel B. Ferguson to Sarah H. Parroli	October 14 th , 1821
Sarah I. Ferguson to Philip B. Segee	April 17 th , 1848
Samuel B. Ferguson II to Catherin M. Callow	September 27 th , 1849
Henry B. Ferguson to Helen H. Blackman	October 6 th , 1858
Emma R. Segee to Henry S. Starr	May 3 rd , 1877
Louie H. Segee to Geraldine Hirst	June 1885
<i>Eleanor I. Hartt to Henry S. Starr</i>	<i>June 10th, 1903</i>
<i>Mandie Pettit to Howard F. Starr</i>	<i>May 10th, 1909</i>

The Rebecca Buckley Ferguson Family Genealogy, 1738-1913:
Deaths, 1780-1912

James Ferguson	1780
Elizabeth H. Ferguson	1806
J. B. Ferguson	August 10 th , 1819
W. B. Ferguson	December 25 th , 1828
James Ferguson	January 30 th , 1830
R. R. Ferguson	March 2 nd , 1832
R. B. Ferguson	April 28 th , 1836
A. M. Ferguson	April 17 th , 1852
S. B Ferguson III	June 9 th , 1854
J. H. Segee	April 12 th , 1855
L. H. Ferguson	August 13 th , 1856
H. L. Segee	November 3 rd , 1858
L. B. Ferguson	November 12 th , 1858
R. B. Segee	December 19 th , 1866
F. Segee	May 6 th , 1869
I. Segee	July 19 th , 1869
S. B. Ferguson	November 21 st , 1871
S. H. Ferguson	September 5 th , 1886
A. M. Ferguson II	March 10 th , 1890
C. M. Ferguson	April 20 th , 1900
S. B. Ferguson	April 23 rd , 1900
H. L. Starr	June 22 nd , 1906
E. M. Starr	January 2 nd , 1908
S. I. F Segee	November 9 th , 1908
P. B. Segee	January 19 th , 1909
<i>S. R. Regee</i>	<i>January 4th, 1912</i>
<i>R. A. Ferguson</i>	<i>July 10th, 1912</i>