

BOWNE HOUSE ARCHIVES



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BOWNE FAMILY PAPERS - TRANSCRIPTIONS

Document ID: #2018.1.3-06B

Document Title: Letter from John Bowne in Flushing to
Hannah Bowne in London

Date: 23rd day of 5th month, 1676.

(July 23, 1676 - Old Style) / August 2nd, 1676 - New Style)

Note on dates: Early Quakers used the numbers, not the names, of the months and days of the week. Prior to 1752, English people mostly used the Julian ("Old Style") calendar, which was 10 days behind the modern ("New Style") calendar and began the New Year on March 25th.

This transcription retains the spelling and punctuation of the original document.

Transcribed by: Charlotte Jackson

Last revised: 3/2024

Letter, John Bowne in Flushing to Hannah Bowne at London
Flushing, 23rd of 5th mo. 1676 [Old Style]
BFP #3-6b

deare harte,

My well beloved wife: in the fresh springs of Life, doth my unfaled love abundantly flowe to thee, and in the blesed truth doo I dearely salute thee and in sperit imbrace thee where we are unseparably unyted as in gods counsell wee abyde, the which above all things is the desier of my soule, and not for us only, but for all the upwright hearted in every place who have got a holy resolution to folowe the ledings of the ~~of~~ the Blessed Spirit of truth, which leads in to all truth and in meekness and humiliety to abyde (where safty is) soo shall wee be a good Savor unto the lord and unto all men and shall adorn the truth which wee profese, which beeing continued in unto the end will have a beter reward then an earthly crown. Oh my deare, the breathings of my hart is day and night unto the lord for thy presarvation in this, and over all tryalls and difocultys thou mast meet [with, all of] which I have no cause to doubte becace I know thy hart is upwright to the lord. and hee is faithfull and true in all his promises soo that I can joyfully rest content in the will of the lord, to whom bee faithfull obedience yelded, and liveing prayses retorned for evermore amen. My dearly beloved, I spake a word or two to thee before [our] parting, that thou myghtest give me as clere an acount as thou couldest bee free to doo by writing of what ~ myght be in thy view as to thy travell or thy return by the first,¹ not knowing how it myght bee as touching of

¹ *by the first*: by the first ship bound to New Netherland

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myselfe concerning comeing over after which times
as I was in my worke it was dayly presented in my
mynd untill I could not longer delay to speke to
Frances² and my dear dofter bettie³ concerning
there takeing the charge of all my busynes and famil[y]
the which they was both varie free unto: after to
my adged father to know his willingnes, which was
more thine I could expect soo that it now resteth
on my mynd more and more, to hasten the dispatch
of all my soumer concerns and to settel all acounts and
to put all things in the best order I can to bee readie
for the next good oportuniety that may present
soo that if noe tydings of thy soden return nor some
other thing which I expect not doo not prevent me
but the Lord make way [for] it, then I hope in the 10th
month⁴ if not befoure to bee in london, where I should
bee glad to meete with thee if the lord soe order it,
and frome thence to have thy company into my owne
countrie⁵ after which I know not but I myght bee free
to acompany thee if the lord see it good till we come
to ouer deare childeren agen: whose deare love is to
thee and they are all well and pretie willing to part
with mee for thy sake that I may acompany thee.
Now my deare I would not have thee bee trubled for
the childeren for if I leave them I doubt not but
it will bee well, my father[,] John Adames, his wife,
Hugh Coperthwite, his wife, William Noble, his wife,

² *Francis Cooley*: Flushing resident who managed Bowne's farm while he was overseas.

³ *daughter Bettie*: Elizabeth Bowne (b. 1658), their eldest surviving child, was 17 years old at the time of this letter.

⁴ *The 10th month*: December was the 10th month in the Julian calendar used by English subjects in the 17th century.

⁵ *mine own country*: probably refers to Bowne's native Derbyshire

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Samuel Deane, his wife, Moris Smith, his wife, & Danell Paterick and many other friends desiers to bee dearly remembered to thee. Marie Tilton is returned friends that are faithfull are generally well, and I know there love is verie deare to the[e]. deare henery curre⁶ came a litell after thee was gon his deare love is to thee. William Edmonson and James Fletcher are gone from Rode Island estward, but I

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expect them here about the 6th month meeting dear thomas and Alsie Corwin was at Rode Island waiting for a pasage to the west indes there's many friends taken away by sicknes in Maryland as to the ware⁷ wee have not much noys of it of late wee have bine verie quyet here as on that acount ever since thou went and hope it may contineu soo the lord is plesed to blese these parts with a plentiefull harveist my deare remember my verie deare love to deare John and Marie Elson⁸ and to thomas hart and his wife and to deare John Crooke and tel him I hoope to [effect] his bisnes here befoure I come the [wich] cost mee and others soume hard travell [....] My dearly beloved, thou art more to me thin I [.....] therefore I commit thee to the alone protecti[on] of him who is alone able to presarve

⁶ Henry Curryer

⁷ *the war*: probably refers to King Philip's War

⁸ John and Mary Elson, who ran a Quaker Meeting in London at the Sign of the Peel, St. John's Lane, Clerkenwell

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through [what]ever hee may sufer us to bee exercysed
with and soe with deare love once more to thee I
take my leve and rest thy true and faithfull
Husband—John Bowne

Flushing this 23:th
of the 5th: month 1676

My deare, this I intend to inclose to John
Elson (with one of Henry Corrers that is to goe
into Yorkshere, which hee desires thee: If there
to take care to send it away by the post) by one
[Blag..], Master of a plimmoth pinke⁹ bound
for london another of the same [sender] I shall
send by Thomas Williams of our town, bound
for [Ireland] in a [_ow] pink, but must touch in
England. I received a very loving letter from Lewis
Morris. He arrived very safe in 22 days and found
dear John [Raly...] very well, who was verie
serviceable there, but [saith] nothing of his going
[away.] George [H....] hath sent his ship to
Barbados and expects her here again about the
time Michaelmas,¹⁰ and so for London. If
freight present in her¹¹ I hope to come, if not
before. Now dear heart, I must acquaint thee to thy
grief, as it hath been to mine, that my sister did

⁹ *a Plymouth pink*: a pink was a square-rigged sailing ship with a narrow prow and a flat bottom allowing for ample cargo. Plymouth is a port town in Devon in the south of England.

¹⁰ The feast of St. Michael, observed September 29. (Bowne does not actually seem to have left until December.)

¹¹ *If freight present in her*: freight referred to passengers as well as cargo

**Letter, John Bowne in Flushing to Hannah Bowne at London
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take a husband yesterday.¹² It is the man that went
and came with L. Morris¹³ and us to the New
Country;¹⁴ of this I hope opportunity may present
to inform thee more. She desires her Love may be
remembered to thee here. I enclose a letter from our dear
daughter Bettie to thee, for whom I have cause to
rejoice that the Lord hath made her so content to
undergo her charge,¹⁵ and also so good an exampl^e
to those of younger years. So my dear, in that which
never changeth I bid thee farewell. John Bowne

[ADDRESS LABEL - ON A SEPARATE PIECE OF PAPER]

Thes{e} for the Hands of his
very loving wife, Hanna[h]
Bowne, in London or else-
where, thes{e} [...] with care.

To be left at Jo^r. Elson at y^e Sign
of y^e Peele in Saint John Street
In London ~

¹² In 1676 the widowed Dorothy Bowne Farrington was censured by the Long Island Quaker Meeting for "taking a husband of the world," i.e., marrying someone outside the faith.

¹³ *L. Morris*: Col. Lewis Morris (1601-1690): a Barbados plantation owner who became a Quaker and resettled in New York.

¹⁴ *New Country*: probably the colony of New Jersey, where Morris had just purchased 6,000 acres in Monmouth County

¹⁵ *her charge*: the responsibility of caring for her siblings during her parents' absence