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John C. Wynkoop to Peter van Schaack, Kingston, April 17, 1792

I did not receive your letter of the 13th. of last Month before *Yesterday*. . . .

Your reflections on the Justice of a gradual Manumission, or rather Abolition of Slavery, are elegant and profound. They are founded on the eternal Law of Nature and of Nature's God. I say with the firm and enlightened Congress in their Declaration of Independence that "We hold these Truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The difference of Complexion, of Manners, Customs and Climates, makes no Difference in the impartial Eye of Philosophy, between the Rights of human Nature, and the jetty Affrican, the copper coloured American, the tawny Spaniard and the fair European, in regard to Freedom all are *equal*. Mr. Jay's being president of the Manumission Society, as I informed you in my last, prejudiced many People against him in this County. They now begin to think it *an amicable Error* (if any) but what has made *Numbers* change their sentiments in Mr. Jay's Favor, is a Circumstance not generally known but which merits your particular Attention, I mean, that *Clinton* is *at least* as much for *manumitting* the Slaves as his Competitor. This Fact appears in the Journal of Assembly of 1785, when a bill had passed both Houses for Abolishing Slavery but made some odious Distinctions between the Blacks when freed and the Whites, such as disqualifying the former from being *Electors* &c. The Council of Revision objected to the Bill because the Blacks *would not* (if the Bill passed) be entitled *to all the Priviledges of Freemen*. The Bill was accordingly lost. This Argument has an amazing Weight here, and if properly enforced will have the same with your Dutch Friends.

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