

To the R<sup>ts</sup>. Hon<sup>ble</sup>. the Lords of the Committee of his Majesties most  
Hon<sup>ble</sup> Privy Council for Plantation Affairs.

LS

My Lords

Pursuant to your Lordships Orders, Dated the 14<sup>th</sup> of June & 26<sup>th</sup> of  
Nov<sup>r</sup>. 1754, We have taken in Consideration, "The most humble Petition of the Merchants,  
"Factors & Agents Residing in the Island of Jamaica, in behalf of themselves & their Constituents,  
" & all others the Merchants of Great Britain, Ireland and the Colonies of North America, trading to the  
" said, praying for the Reasons therein contained, that his Matie would be graciously pleased to  
" Command his Gov<sup>r</sup>. of the said Island to reside, for the Dispatch of Business, & holding the Courts in which  
" he resides at the Town of Kingston, the Metropolis of the Trade of the said Island, & that his Matie would  
" be graciously pleased to grant the Pet<sup>r</sup>. such Relief; with respect to the Courts of Judicature & Records,  
" as to his Matie in his Royal Wisdom & Goodness, shall seem meet. And also, the humble Petitions  
" of the Inhabitants of the Town of St. Jago Dela Vega, in the said Island, and of the Planters & others,  
" Proprietors & Occupiers of Lands & Settlements, in the Neighbourhood of the same, and of the  
" Justices, Planters, Merchants & Inhabitants of the County of Cornwall in that Island, Humbly pray<sup>g</sup>.  
" that his Matie would be graciously pleased to suspend giving his Judgment on the Petition for the  
" Removal of the Seat of Governm<sup>t</sup>. to Kingston, in which the property and very being of so many of his  
" Maties Subjects is at Stake; untill such time as the Pet<sup>r</sup>. shall be able to obtain Copy thereof,  
" and have full and opportunity of laying before his Matie their Answers thereto; And also, the  
" several Petitions, Memorials & other Papers, in support of the said Petitions, respectively referred  
" to us by your Lordships said Orders; We have likewise taken into our Consideration, the Copy of  
" a Letter, from Charles Knowles Esq<sup>r</sup>. Gov<sup>r</sup>. of Jamaica, to Us, Dated the 15<sup>th</sup> Feb<sup>r</sup>. 1764, Referred to  
" Us also, by your Lordships said Orders, Transmitting the said Petition of the Inhabitants of the  
" Town of St. Jago Dela Vega; and taking Notice of the Rustous manner, in which, it was sett  
" on Foot, and of the indecent behaviour of M<sup>r</sup>. Fuller, the late Chief Justice upon that occasion.  
" And also, another Petition of several of the Inhabitants of the Town of St. Jago Dela Vega, and of  
" several of the Planters & others, being proprietors and occupiers of Lands & Settlements in the  
" Neighbourhood of the same, humbly praying, " That his Majesty would be pleased to Command  
" the Gov<sup>r</sup>. to Restore the Seat of Governm<sup>t</sup>. & the Insigns thereof, and the Courts of Chancery and  
" Ordinary to the Town of St. Jago Dela Vega where they had been placed & held from the taking of the said  
" by their Ancestors, untill lately removed by him, and that his Majesty would be pleased to Order  
" him to Call the General Assembly in the said Town, and also to leave the Records there, untill  
" such time as his Matie should be graciously pleased to signify his royal will & pleasure to the contrary.  
" As the Prayer of the Petition of the Inhabitants of St. Jago Dela Vega referred to us by your Lordships  
" Order of the 14<sup>th</sup> June, & of the Petition of the Inhabitants of the County of Cornwall, referred to us, by your  
" Lordships Order of the 26<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup>. were merely, that they might be allowed time to give in their Answers to  
" the Petition of the Merch<sup>ts</sup> & others, praying that the Seat of Governm<sup>t</sup>. might be removed to Kingston,  
" We thought it our Duty without troubling your Lordships with a particular Report thereupon, to allow  
" that



those Pet<sup>ns</sup> reasonable time for that purpose, to the End, that all parties, might have an opportunity of being fully heard, upon a matter of so great Importance to the Welfare & Commerce of that Island, and having rec<sup>d</sup>. the Answer of the Inhabitants &c, of the Town of St. Jago Dela Vega to the Petition on behalf of the Town of Kingston, and also the Answer of the late Chief Justice Rose Buller Esq<sup>r</sup>. to the Compt<sup>l</sup>. Exhibited ag<sup>t</sup>. him, by the Gov<sup>r</sup>. & likewise Memorials, from the Merch<sup>ts</sup>. of Bristol, Liverpool & Lancaster, & from the Merch<sup>ts</sup>. of New York & Philadelphia, in America, in behalf of the Petition for the Removal of the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. to Kingston (Copies of which Answers and Memorials are herewith Inclosed) and having heard all the Parties respectively by their Council, We beg leave to lay before your Lordships, our Sentiments upon the several points contained in your Lordships said Orders of Reference.

And first as to the Removal of the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. from St. Jago Dela Vega to Kingston, which is the first & principal point to be Considered, it appears to us to be a Question of very high Concern<sup>t</sup>. to the Island of Jamaica, as well with regard to its Trade & Commerce, as to its internal Police & Govern<sup>mt</sup>. and its future Welfare and Prosperity, and likewise to the British Merchants trading thither, & therefore Informing a Judgment upon it, regard ought to be had, not to the particular Interest and Convenience of the Town of St. Jago Dela Vega or of Kingston but to the General Interest and Convenience of the whole Island, and of his Majesties Subjects trading to all parts of it, and as the proposition for removing the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. to Kingston even if it should be approved by his Majesties Council not Intirely & Effectually be executed without the Concurrence & assistance of the Legislature, the Supreme Court of Justice, and almost all the Officers of Record, being directed to be held and kept at St. Jago Dela Vega, by Laws which have been passed from time to time in that Island, and confirmed by the Crown, We are of opinion that it would not be advisable for his Majesties Determin<sup>t</sup>. in favour of this proposition under these Circumstances, and altho' we are sensible that the rejecting of this proposition, would in Effect, be to Determin<sup>t</sup>. in favour of the other side of the Question, yet as the Circumstances & Interest of the Island, & the Convenience may have received great Change & Alteration from the State they were in, when the Acts for fixing the Courts of Justice & the Records at St. Jago Dela Vega were passed, We think it would be more advisable for his Majesties Council to suspend his Judgment upon the Matter until the present Sense of the Legislature be known, who are Representatives of the whole body of the People, whereby his Majesties Council will be better enabled to form a Judgment, of what may be proper to be Done; and we are the rather of this Opinion as the principal Hardships & Inconveniencies, complained of by the Pet<sup>ns</sup>. for the Removal of the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. may, as we apprehend, be alleviated, if not entirely removed, without any previous Determination upon the General Question.

The Principal Grievances of which the Pet<sup>ns</sup>. on the behalf of Kingston complain are  
1<sup>st</sup>. That by an Act passed in Jamaica in 1688, Intituled an Act requiring all Mast<sup>rs</sup>. of Ships & Vessels to give Security in the Secretarys Office, the Mast<sup>rs</sup>. of every Vessel trading thither is obliged to wait in the Gov<sup>r</sup>. at St. Jago Dela Vega, as soon as he arrives & before he Unloads his Ship, & to give Bond that he will not carry any Person off the Island, without the Governours License, or depart himself without the Governours leave, & that the said Masters are also obliged, for want of proper Officers, being established in the Different Ports, to wait upon the Governour at St. Jago Dela Vega, as soon as they arrive, in order to Inter into Bond, and perform such things as are required by the Laws of Trade to be performed by the Masters of all Vessels trading to the American Colonies.  
2<sup>d</sup>. That the Merchants and Factors of the Town of Kingston are obliged to attend the Courts of Justice held at St. Jago dela Vega, twice in every Year, either as Jurors, or in the prosecution of such Suits as they may have

have depending in those, which they represent to be very Grievous & burdensome, as the Duty for the whole Island are chiefly from Kingston, where the great body of the people resides, and the greater part of the Suits, in the Different Courts, do arise, from the Dealings of the Merch<sup>ts</sup>. at Kingston, either for themselves or as Factors, Agents or Attorneys for the Merch<sup>ts</sup>. of Great Britain, Ireland or America.

The Reality of these Grievances has not only been fully proved to us, by the Evidence produced to us, by the Pet<sup>ns</sup>. on the part of Kingston, but has also been admitted on the part of the Town of St. Jago and as it appears to us to be an heavy & unnecessary Burden upon the Commerce Carried on by his Majesties Subjects, not only at Kingston, but in every other part of the Island, & proportionably Inconvenient to all those who live remote from the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. We would humbly propose, that Instructions shou<sup>d</sup>. be given to his Majesties Gov<sup>r</sup>. of the said Island contain<sup>g</sup>. the follow<sup>g</sup>. directions Viz.

- 1<sup>st</sup>. To Recommend to the Assembly in his Majesties name to pass an Act for repealing the former said Law passed in 1688, and to pass another whereby the Masters of Ships shall be permitted to give the same Security, which is by that Law Required to be given, in the Secretarys Office at St. Jago dela Vega, in any legal Port of Entry, where a proper Office shall be established.
- 2<sup>d</sup>. To appoint a proper Officer or Officers, in every legal Port of Entry, for the Execution & performance of all such matters and things as are required by the Laws of Trade, or by Law of the Island to be performed with respect to all Ships & Vessels trading thereto, and
- 3<sup>d</sup>. To Issue Com<sup>ms</sup>. under the great Seal of that Island, for establishing proper Circuit Courts, to be held within such Parishes or Districts, as shall be found necessary, for the convenient and more expeditious Administration of Justice, in the said Island, whereby the Inconveniencies of attending Jurys, and the prosecution of Suits, in the several Courts now held at St. Jago Dela Vega, so justly complained of, will, as we apprehend be, in a great measure removed.

As the Compt<sup>l</sup>. Contained in Mr. Knowles's Letter of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Feb<sup>r</sup>. 1754, that the Petition of St. Jago Dela Vega was set on Foot in a riotous Manner, and that Mr. Fullers behaviour upon that occasion was Indecent and Improper; No part of that Charge has been supported, on the part of the Gov<sup>r</sup>. by any Evidence laid before us; on the contrary it has been fully and clearly proved to us, as well by the Affidavits of many Persons of Credit in the Island, as by the Testimony of several Gentlemen of Fortune & Character, who were Eye Witnesses of the Transaction, that the whole of it, was Conducted with proper Decency; and therefore the Compt<sup>l</sup>. made by Mr. Knowles, in his said Letter, appears to us to be without Foundation.

With respect to the Petition of the Planters & Inhabitants of the Town of St. Jago dela Vega & its Neighbourhood complained of the said Gov<sup>r</sup>. having removed himself, and the Courts, in which he presides, to Kingston, & having called the Assembly there, We are clearly of opinion that this measure was Improper, not only as it could not be Carried into Execution, without Infracti<sup>o</sup>n of the Law, by which the Records are Directed, to be kept at St. Jago Dela Vega, and an Alteration of the established Course of Law, with respect to the Return of writs, and other methods of proceeding, but also as the Removal of the Seat of Govern<sup>mt</sup>. was, at that time, a Question submitted to his Majesties Council and Determination; It is indeed alledged by Mr. Knowles in his Letter, Dated the 7<sup>th</sup>. Dec<sup>r</sup>. 1754 (an Act of which, so far as relates to this subject, is herewith Inclosed) that he was under a Necessity of taking this Measure, from the repeated Insults and Outrages which had been offered to himself and his Family at St. Jago Dela Vega, and that he did with the Advice & Consent of his Majesties Council there; But we must beg leave to acquaint your Lordships, that none of the Allegations contained in that Letter, will



respect to such Inults and outrages, have been supported, by any Evidence, on the part of the Gov<sup>rs</sup>?  
produced before Me; And therefore, We Submit, whether it would not be advisable, in Case  
Mr Knowles should not make good those Allegations, and prove to your Lordships satisfaction,  
that he cannot return to S. Jago de la Vega, without Danger of Inult to himself & his Family, that  
he should be Directed, to return thither & hold Courts, in which he presides, and meet the Assembly  
there, Untill his Maty's pleasure, with regard to the Removal of the Seat of Government,  
be further known. — we are My Lords

Whitehall  
July 3<sup>d</sup> 1755

a true Copy

Ferd: John Paris

Your Lordships most ob. & most hble Servants

Dunk. Halifax

J. Grenville

J. Pelham



**Hall Family Papers and Sugar Plantation Records**

**1709 - 1892**

**MSS.0220**

**Oversize: FB-226-42**

**POLITICAL AND PUBLIC DOCUMENTS -  
Documents Related to Governor Charles Knowles -  
To the R. Honble the Lords of the Committee of his  
Majesties most Honble Privy Council, 1755 July 3**



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