

MARK BIRD IN 1807

~~XXX~~ At 57, ill and ~~in~~ land-poor, but optimistly hoping for financial aid, Mark Bird wrote at least two letters to old friends and iron acquaintances in Pennsylvania by ^{June} ~~January~~ 1807. He probably wrote also to Robert Coleman of Cornwall, since he referred "to particularly the gentlemen Irish men." He stressed that he was "bankrupt by the vile unnatural war"; ruined by the "Warr" and "my principle ruin was by the war and depretiation". (He did NOT mention any money due to him from the Federal government. His ^{Delaware Works} ~~of the early 1780s~~ had swallowed these payments.) He had forgotten his early enthusiasm for the Revolution and military affairs, possibly after "marching ^{11/11/1776} into New Jersey with his Berks County batallion.)

"The rumatick or Siattick" forced him to use crutches; he could not ride horseback; was confined to the house or to the use of a sulky. Land-poor, he needed labor. Of his three Nergoes, one had died and he had to sell ~~the~~ the other two "owing to an unfortunate [iron] partnership" with Arthur Clark. Land, worth only a quarter of ^{MS} ~~their~~ real value, needed men, the reason for this financial plea. (Mont. p 7) On ² ~~this~~ letter to the famous Dr. Rush, the physician had prescribed cold baths, tincture of Pokeberries and flour. Further, he had declined soliciting financial relief for Bird, since all of his 1776 friends were either dead or "reduced."

A second letter with the same date came to Matthew Brooke, owner of the ¹ Birdsboro Forges and a ^{ONE-} ~~third~~ owner of Hopewell Furnace. Account of his "faled" limbs, Bird observed that he would never see Pennsylvania again. But he recalled how Brooke and his sister, Mrs. Buckley "Shewed the most friendly countenance to me" and "seemed to feel the most sensible to my situation than any others I met with in the state." (Bird referred to his 1796 visit to the area when he was AGENT for the James Wilson sale of his former properties, then the property of his brother-in-law, James Wilson.) He told that he had written to Robert Coleman of Cornwall two years earlier, but received no reply. Bird hoped that ^{the very wealthy} local iron masters would upon Brooke's

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request provide help for "poor Cripple ~~and~~ not quite reduced to Beggery"
~~Mark Bird~~. In a P S, he asked to be remembered to both Matthew Brooke I and
his wife.

WHETHER BIRD LETTERS TO RBT COLEMAN SURVIVE IS
UNKNOWN. NONE SURVIVED AT H S of Pa.