

THOMAS JEFFERSON LETTER  
TO WILLIAM OVERTON CALLIS

*contributed by Louis Leake Kean  
Mineral, Virginia*

*The following letter was addressed to William Overton Callis of Cuckoo, Louisa County, Virginia from Thomas Jefferson.*

Monticello May 8, 1795

Dear Sir

The acquaintance which I had the pleasure of having with you formerly, would scarcely, after such a length of time, justify the trouble I am about to give you. I must therefore rely for it on the circumstances of the case and your own goodness. Mr. Marks\*, on his intermarriage with my sister, received among other slaves, a woman of the name of Nance, a weaver by trade. She was then 24 years of age, had a son 5 years old and a daughter 2 or 3. The woman and her two children were delivered to him in 1785 at 95 Pounds. He is now disposed to sell the woman, of which my sister has given me notice, knowing that on resuming the business of domestic manufactures, I am in want of a weaver. She is now 34 years of age, and I believe has ceased to breed. Being too far distant from Mr. Marks to treat on this subject myself and knowing nobody in his neighborhood, I have presumed to solicit you to negotiate the matter for me and to purchase her at whatever price you shall think her really worth. As the information has come to me after I had disposed of my last years crop, and like other farmers I draw my resources from the earth, I could not engage any payment but from proceeds of the present year, say one year after purchase, which will of course be considered in the price. If you will be so good as to take this trouble for me, and can agree for the woman, I bind myself to whatever you shall agree to and will give my bond accordingly. She wishes me to buy her children but I would not purchase the boy. As to her youngest child, if she insists on it, and my sister desires it, I would take it. Pardon the liberty which my distant situation has obliged me to take with you and accept assurances of the esteem. With which I am  
Dear Sir,

Your most obedient servant  
Thomas Jefferson

\* Hastings Marks and his wife, Anne Scott Jefferson Marks, lived at "Mt. Airy", Louisa County, Va., off Route 644 near Beaver Creek and South Anna River.