

Philadelphia Freeman's Journal, 12 September 1787

Extract of a letter from Baltimore.

“The sentiment of our Ambassador Adams, that a person ought to be well born to be of any consequence in a commonwealth, seems to be rapidly gaining ground in this country. Hardly any person is at present in want of employ but his advertisement gives a plain intimation, if not an absolute assertion, of his or her being in some one sense or another well born. As for example: “A *Gentleman* having about two or three months leisure time, would be happy to employ it in transcribing, &c.”—Again;—“Wants a place in a store, a Young Man of a *good family*, who understands, &c.”—“To be sold, the time of a servant girl from Germany, who has three years to serve, &c. N.B. She says she is of a *very good family*.”—Now, I would ask these gentlemen and ladies, what are their *good families* and *gentility* to the republicans of America? We accomplished the late Revolution without being *Well Born* (that is, we are descended only from plain laborious ancestors), we have sense enough to become legislators, merchants, farmers and manufacturers without being *Well Born*; and why, young gentlemen and ladies, cannot you manage our books of accounts, or take care of our stores and kitchens without being *Well Born*?—Happy philosopher, who could broach an idea so truly aristocratical!—In the late war, however, I remember it was not demanded, Who are the *Nobles* and *Well Born* of the land; but, Who is able and willing to carry his musquet and knapsack through the snows of Canada or the sands of Carolina and Georgia, and repel the invaders of his rights and country?”

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