

Source F – Excerpt: Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Mount Vernon Ladies' Association Vice Regent Mary Morris Hamilton August 27, 1858

Source Type: Letter

Background: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, founded in 1853, is an entirely female-run preservation organization dedicated to protecting George Washington's home at Mount Vernon. Mary Morris Hamilton was one of the original board members in 1858.

- 1 I have just received your letter of the 24th inst., inviting me to become one of the “Lady
- 2 Managers” of the Mount Vernon Association.
- 3 Gladly would I aid a work in which noble women feel much enthusiasm as the purchase and
- 4 renovation of Mount Vernon seems everywhere to call forth. But, most respectfully do I decline
- 5 the honor you offer me; for every energy of my body and soul is pledged to a higher and holier
- 6 work than building monuments...
- 7 Woman labors hard to restore Mount Vernon, and forgets that the good old Revolutionary
- 8 Fathers, in declaring that “All men are created free and equal,” lost sight, altogether, of the negro
- 9 and the woman, and pronounced all those laws and statutes, which the repudiated for themselves,
- 10 wise and good for their mothers, wives, daughters, and slaves...What duty so imperative on
- 11 women as to educate, elevate and dignify her own sex? Until we give to the world freedom, and a
- 12 new type of womanhood, we have no energies to spend elsewhere.
- 13 Yours, Respectfully,
- 14 Elizabeth Cady Stanton