

Dec 29th 1968

MRS. STRAFFORD WENTWORTH
1090 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE 46, MASSACHUSETTS

Dear Mr Radball,

How very
kind it was of you to write me
so freely in regard to Frances H.
I do appreciate your doings so.
My father-in-law's Aunt
inherited this ^{gor-} house on Pleasant
St. in Portsmouth, which as you
probably know, is now the
Mark H. Mitchell Home.
I have the portraits of the governors,

39 Hume, & several pieces of
furniture that belonged to John.
My Aunt, Miss Susan J. Kimball
was very talkative about the ancestors,
but said little about Frances.
I wish she would see my! She certainly was
a jade, & odd if she ~~was~~ ^{was} relative!!
How she must have shocked Halifax &
I shall try to drop in on Miss
Vaughan, the next time I'm in Portsmouth.
Thank you very much for the trouble
that you've taken.

Sincerely yours
Margaret R. L. Kimball

Oh, your letter is going in to my copy
of Joe's letter.

MRS. STRAFFORD WENTWORTH
1090 BEACON STREET
BROOKLINE 46, MASSACHUSETTS

October 11th
1960

My dear Mr Raddall.

Having read
your book "The Governor's Lady,"
I am interested in your
description of Frances Milwath.

Could you give me your
sources of information?

Your book is very much at

variance with what my
family taught me!!

Yours truly

Margaret L. C. Whitworth

(Mrs. Stephen Whitworth)

October 18/60

Dear Mrs. Wentworth,

Your request is rather a large one. The material I collected over a period of years would make a book in itself. Here are some items.

Tradition still current in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, tells of the clandestine love affair (including the signal in Frances' chamber window) when her first husband was slowly dying of consumption. Miss Dorothy Vaughan, head of the Portsmouth public library and an acknowledged authority on Portsmouth history, can tell you about this. She can also show you, as she showed me, that the Governor's house -- still standing -- was in easy view of the now vanished Atkinson house.

A description of the wedding of John and Frances, ten days after Theodore Atkinson's death, appeared in the Massachusetts Gazette & Boston News Letter, Nov. 17, 1769. The baptismal record of Queens Chapel in Portsmouth reveals the birth of a son to John and Frances a little less than seven months after their wedding. (Beside the entry there is now a pencilled addition in brackets

thus (p.b.) presumably meaning premature birth; but who made this addition, and when, remain a mystery.)

In the public library at Portsmouth, and at Concord, are copies of a few of Frances' letters. I was fortunate in discovering in England two collections of her letters, written over a period of many years, to the Rockinghams and FitzWilliams. The early letters, written from New Hampshire, are naive things. Those of later years are much more sophisticated. All reveal her as the self-centered, dissatisfied and designing creature she was. I have quoted one in full on pages 356 and 357 of my book.

Her career in Nova Scotia is still a clear memory in Halifax. One of her army intimates, William Dyott, kept a diary which was published in London in 1907 by Constable & Company. He was Prince William's boon companion in Halifax and he describes what he confesses was "a life of debauchery" there. In the officer-and-gentleman code he seldom mentions a lady's name where he himself was concerned; but he mentions Frances Wentworth's affairs with Prince William and others, and quite naively reveals himself dining *tete-a-tete* with her on the summer evening in 1788 when the Prince burst in upon them so unexpectedly. In an earlier entry (November 1787) he writes in part, "Mrs. Wentworth is a most charming woman but unhappily for her husband rather more partial to our sex than her own. But he, poor man, cannot see her foibles and they live very happy."

My book is a novel, of course, and does not pretend to be a biography, but in writing it I kept the known facts firmly before me.

JHR