

DIEGO DE GARDOQUI & GEORGE WASHINGTON



Diego de Gardoqui, unknown artist, ca. 1785
(Courtesy of the Cano de Gardoqui Family)

His Excell^y Don diego de Gardoqui. —

Sir,

The day before yesterday gave me the honor of your Excellency's favor, written on the 12th of June, with a postscript thereto of the 22^d of July. It was accompanied by the cloth made of the wool of the Vicuna, which indeed is of a softness & richness which I have never seen before, & is truly worthy of being called his Majesty's true manufactured cloth. For your Excellency's goodness in presenting me with this specimen of it, I pray you to accept my best acknowledgements. I receive it Sir, as a mark of your polite attention to me, & shall wear it with much pleasure as a memento thereof. The color is really beautiful, & being natural can never fade. —

I feel myself much indebted to your Excell^y for communicating the testimonies of my gratitude to the King, thro' the medium of His Excell^y Count de Florida Blanca, for his royal present of the Jack asses; one of which arrived very safe, & promises to be a most valuable animal. I am endeavouring to provide a female, that the advantages which are to be derived from this Jack may not end with his life.

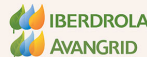
I can omit no occasion of assuring your Excellency of the high sense I entertain of the many marks of polite attention I have received from you; nor of the pleasure I should feel in the honor of expressing it at this seat of my retirement from public life, if you should ever feel an inclination to make an excursion into the middle States.

I have the honor to be &c.
G: Washington

El español Diego de Gardoqui, un comerciante de Bilbao, contribuyó de forma esencial a la independencia de los Estados Unidos antes, durante y después de la contienda contra Inglaterra. Entre 1777 y 1782, fue el encargado de entregar los cuantiosos fondos destinados por el Rey de España, Carlos III, a los patriotas norteamericanos y desarrolló una red de suministros de armas, materiales y dinero para las tropas de George Washington. De la amistad entre Washington y Gardoqui queda su numerosa correspondencia personal, como la carta de 1786 presentada aquí, sus intercambios de regalos y la presencia destacada del español en la toma de posesión del primer presidente de los Estados Unidos en 1789. Diego de Gardoqui fue el primer Embajador de España en los Estados Unidos.

Spaniard Diego de Gardoqui, a merchant from Bilbao, made essential contributions to the independence of the United States before, during, and after the war against England. Between 1777 and 1782, he was in charge of delivering the significant funds allocated by King Carlos III of Spain to the North American patriots and developed a network to supply arms, materials, and money for George Washington's troops. The friendship between Washington and Gardoqui is evident in their extensive personal correspondence and exchange of gifts, as described in Washington's letter from 1786 reprinted here. Gardoqui attended Washington's inauguration as the first President of the United States in 1789 and served as the first Spanish Ambassador to the new United States.

Copy of a letter from George Washington to Diego de Gardoqui, August 30, 1786. George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754 to 1799: Letterbook 13, March 5, 1786. (Manuscript/Mixed Material, Library of Congress, loc.gov/item/mgw2.013/)



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