

Transcript of a Letter from General Henry Knox to Lucy Knox (Reed 11-04)

Below is letter written by General Henry Knox to his young wife, Lucy Knox, while encamped at Whitemarsh, Pennsylvania. Although the letter was written one month before the Valley Forge encampment, the sentiments expressed describe many of the feelings experienced by soldiers during their time away from their loved ones. As a general's wife, Lucy would eventually join her husband during the winter of 1777-78 and was a frequent visitor and friend to Martha Washington, who also stayed at the camp.

Novr. 5th 77

Camp White marsh Church 12 miles Philadelphia

I have received my dearest loves letter of the 25th [illeg] I want words to express the pleasure it gave me - You my Lucy your Harry possesses all that tender anxiety all that a kind Sentimental Friendship for you which he ever had - he has not lost one particle of affection in the battle of arms. Those Scenes which Shock humanity render our dear Social connection the more interesting.

It is a painful tribute which I think is incumbent on the honest man - altho' our friendship wanted no Stimulous, yet when Providence restores? unto each there again, the anxiety of absence will give [illeg] high Xrefish and [illeg] to our then felicity - believe me my dearest dear nothing but the flattering hope of being assisting in freeing my Country from a lot of proud usurpers and from threatened slavery war than death should have tempted me to resign [illeg], that happiness which I enjoyd in the society of my h[illeg]. The consolation of my own mind upon this subject is all the expected reward.

I am sensible my dear Girl what pleasure I forfeit from the contemplation of the growing faculties of our dear babe - I cannot describe the emotions of my heart at your description of the play and actions of the dear little innocent - but I hope [illeg] to dispose of affairs that I may enjoy the [illeg]ty of domestic life again and when none than make me afraid.

I wrote you a few days ago by Colo [illeg] just saw him being out on [illeg] the only day he was in Camp. I also wrote my friend Harry but I suppose before this ?in reach by [illeg] he will have set out for Camp - I hear his regt. arrive at [illeg] Mill it is [illeg] onto Camp - The business of my department will all be to [illeg] this Winter, but not before the army goes into Winter Quarters and probably I shall not settle the business here [illeg, corner missing] the Christmass - nothing but inavoidable necessity shall hinder me from seeing you early in the Winter - nothing m[illeg]ned has

happen since my last - there has been a constant cannonade all this day on the Forts in the river but we know not yet the cause -

--The defense of the forts reflects the M[isleg] orders in the Garrisons in them, th?ng how made [isleg, piece missing] the best defense by far of any thing this wa[isleg, piece missing]

William is well but too sazy [isleg, piece missing] [isleg] d to write - he says he has written you and the Colonel several letters and he will write no more until you answer them

I am sorry for the misfortune of the [isleg], but it is worse of my fault - I hope she has paid [isleg] [isleg]fest. I have taken proper steps about the £ 400 to the [isleg]—

That kind [isleg] [isleg] and protect you in the utmost prayer of your truly affectionate

FKnox

Vocabulary:

<p>anxiety: earnest but tense desire; eagerness sentimental: expressive of or appealing to tender emotions and feelings such as love, pity, or nostalgia render: to cause to be or become; make tribute: a forced contribution incumbent: obligatory; a duty to perform stimulous (in today's English: stimulus): something that brings action or exertion or quickens action, feeling, or thought providence: the future care and guidance of God or nature felicity: the state of being happy; bliss</p>	<p>usurpers: those who seize and hold power by force and without legal right resign: to give up (usually a position) consolation: comfort, solace forfeit: a fine or penalty; the act of giving up domestic: related to the home, the household, or the family inavoidable (in today's English: unavoidable): unable to be avoided; inevitable garrisons: a body of troops stationed in a specific place</p>
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Reflection Questions:

1. How does Henry Knox feel being away from his wife?
2. What reason(s) does he give for continuing his commitment to the Continental Army?
3. From the letter and from your own knowledge about soldiers, why does Henry enjoy this correspondence with his wife so much?