

# THE GILDER LEHRMAN INSTITUTE *of* AMERICAN HISTORY

## *Inside the Vault: Washington's Crossing of the Delaware River*

January 6, 2022

*The session will start shortly. Please note:*

- Your video and audio will automatically turn off.
- You can participate through the Q&A function.
- If you have technical difficulties, please email [collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:collectionprograms@gilderlehrman.org) so we can assist you.

# *Our Team*

## Panelists

- Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
- Dr. Phillip Hamilton - Professor of History at Christopher Newport University
- Alinda Borell - Senior Archivist
- Shelby Miller - Curatorial Intern

# *During the Session*



- If you would like to ask a question, you can **use the Q&A feature.**
- We will be answering audience questions throughout the session.

## **For Security and Privacy**

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.

- Each Brigade to be furnished with two good Guides. General Stevens Brigade to have the advanced party & to have with them a detachment of the artillery without Cannon provided with pickets and skirmishes. If possible the enemies Cannon in case of necessity to bring them off as it can be effected. The party to be provided with long ropes for the purpose of dragging off the Cannon. General Stevens is to attack and force the enemies Guards and seize their posts as they pass them from forming in the trees and when they are annoyed from the houses to attack them in pairs. The Brigade of Mercer & Scott is under the Command of Major General Greene to support General Stevens, this is the second division of the Army & the Army and to march by the way of the Birmingham Road. P. O. Chas. Evans & Sargents Brigades transfered ~~to march~~ under Major General Sublinar to march by the new road. This is the first division of the Army and to form the right wing. Lord Stairs Brigade to have the reserve of the left wing and General P. O. Chas. Brigade the reserve



To Mrs K. (Salisbury) from Trenton Dec 28 1776. III 95  
1792  
 at New Haven - Dec 15<sup>th</sup> of 1776  
 my dear beloved wife  
 Trenton 6<sup>th</sup> 1776  
 Yours me exceedingly that I rec'd late  
 my letters from this place & that I am re-  
 ceived from the sacred object of my affections. This  
 War with all its severity is not able to banish your  
 true love from my heart whatever I am  
 employed about. Still you are with me - I  
 say to me self so very busy not so you have  
 nice return as soon as the Laws call of this  
 Country will permit - will return with the  
 permission I have and enjoy all the  
 blessings of ~~marriage~~ conjugal affection. I send  
 you a few days past by Mr. Jones. It was from  
 as my true love would not allow me to return  
 you near before the home head of our happy  
 The morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> instant against the enemy  
 The enemy by their superior numbers had oblig'd  
 us to retire on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware  
 by which means we were oblig'd to evacuate  
 going up nearly all the stores, even after our  
 return over the river the prospect of Philadelphia  
 was a matter exceedingly grievous. The  
 Force of the enemy three or four times as large

# *Henry Knox (1750-1806)*



Gilder Lehrman Collection

- July 25, 1750 - Henry Knox is born in Boston, Massachusetts, to Scots-Irish parents.
- 1759 - Knox's father leaves the family for the West Indies. The family is left without financial support.
  - Henry quits school and becomes apprenticed to a bookseller to support his family.
- 1762 - Henry's father dies.
- 1771 - By the age of 21, Henry owns his own bookstore.
- 1772- He joins the Boston Grenadier (artillery) Corps.
- June 1774 - Henry marries 17-year-old Lucy Flucker.

## *Knox's Early Military Career*

- July 1775 - Meets George Washington while serving as volunteer in the Continental Army
- November 1775 - Appointed colonel and made commander of Artillery of Washington's army
- November 1775 - January 1776- Engineers the transport of cannon captured at Fort Ticonderoga to Boston
- Summer and fall of 1776 - New York campaign - early defeats of the Continental Army

# *Timeline of the Six Crucial Weeks*

**November 16, 1776**

Fall of Fort Washington, NY

**December 7**

Washington's army  
retreats to  
Pennsylvania and  
waits for  
reinforcements

**December 25**

George Washington and the  
Continental Army cross the  
Delaware River

**December 30**

Washington and troops  
withdraw to Pennsylvania

**January 3**

Battle of Princeton, NJ

**November 20**

Battle of Fort Lee, NJ

**December 13**

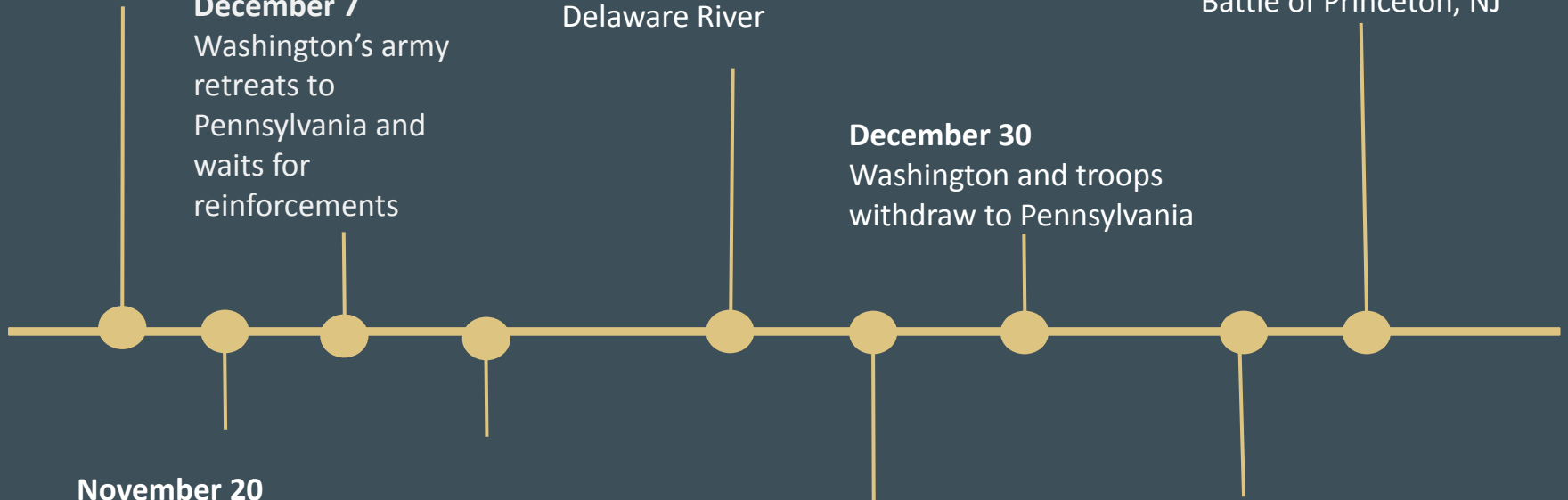
Capture of  
Major General  
Charles Lee

**December 26**

Battle of Trenton

**January 2, 1777**

Second Battle of  
Trenton





# Washington's Orders, December 25, 1776

KNOX  
Each Brigade to be furnished with two good Guides. <sup>Dec 25 1776</sup> <sup>V 224</sup> <sup>III-93</sup>  
General Stevens Brigade to form the advanced party & to have with them a detachment of the Artillery without Cannon provided with spikes and hammers to fix up the enemies Cannon in case of receipt or to bring them off if it can be effected. The party to be provided with drag ropes for the purpose of dragging off the Cannon. General Stevens is to attack and force the enemies Guards and seize such posts as may prevent them from forming in the streets and in case they are annoyed from the houses to attack them on fire. The Brigade of Mercer & Lord Stirling under the Command of Major General Greene to support General Stevens, this is the second division or left wing of the Army and to march by the way of the Trenton Road. St. Clair, Glavin & Sargents Brigades to march under Major General Sullivan to march by the river road. This is the first division of the Army and to form the right wing. Lord Stirlings Brigade to form the reserve of the left wing and General St. Clairs Brigade the reserve

Detailed instructions  
for troop movements



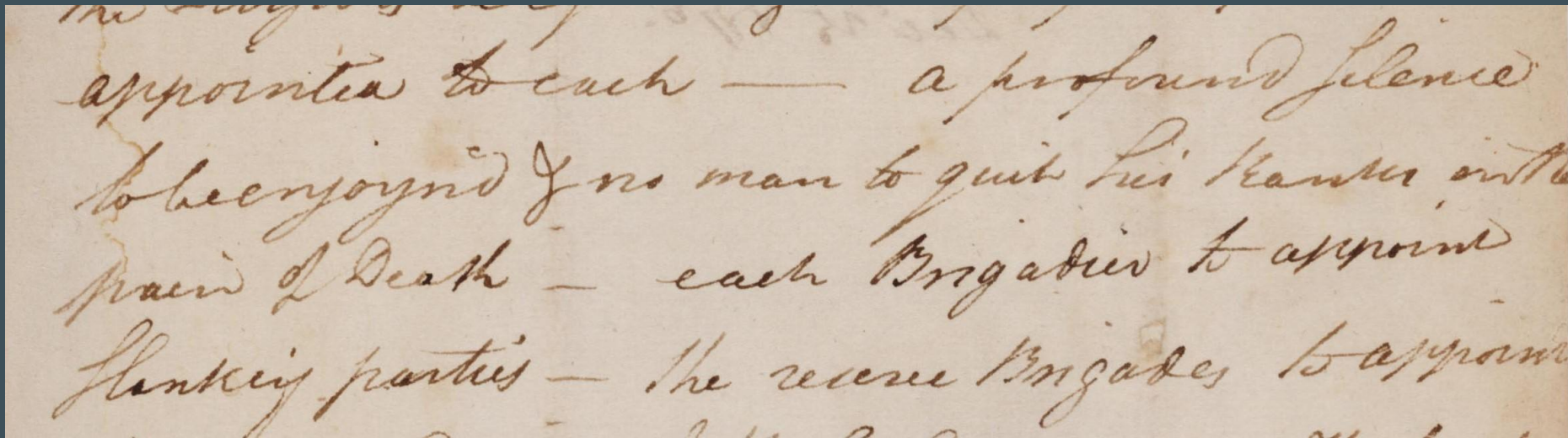
# *Map of Trenton*

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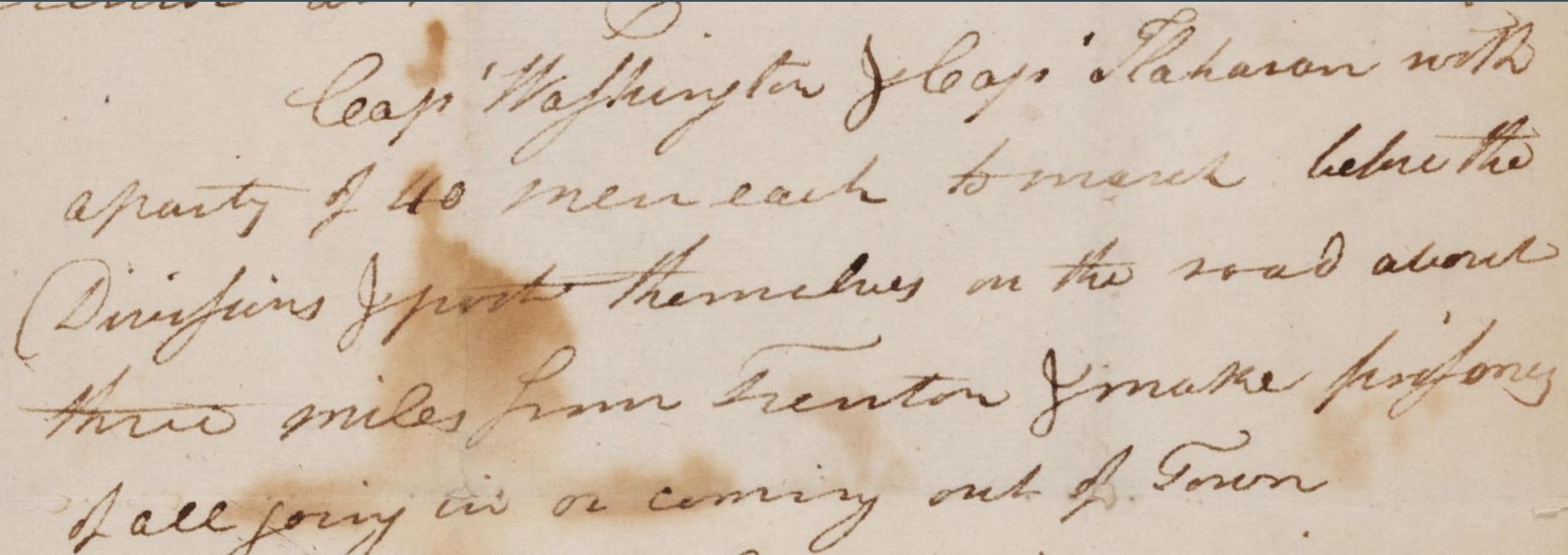
Henry Knox, Order of March to Trenton, December 25, 1776,  
Gilder Lehrman Collection

# Henry Knox's Order of March on Trenton Quote



“ — a profound silence to be enjoynd & no man to quit his Ranks on the pain of Death — each Brigadier to appoint flanking parties — ”

# Henry Knox's Order of March on Trenton Quote



Capt Washington & Capt Flaharan with  
a party of 40 men each to march before the  
Divisions & post themselves on the road about  
three miles from Trenton & make prisoners  
of all going in or coming out of Town

“Capt Washington & Capt Flaharan with a party of 40 men each to march before the Divisions & post themselves on the road about three miles from Trenton & make prisoners of all going in or coming out of Town”



# *Washington Crossing the Delaware*

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Emanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1863, The Richard Gilder Personal Collection, a gift by Lois Chiles in memory of Richard Gilder, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History

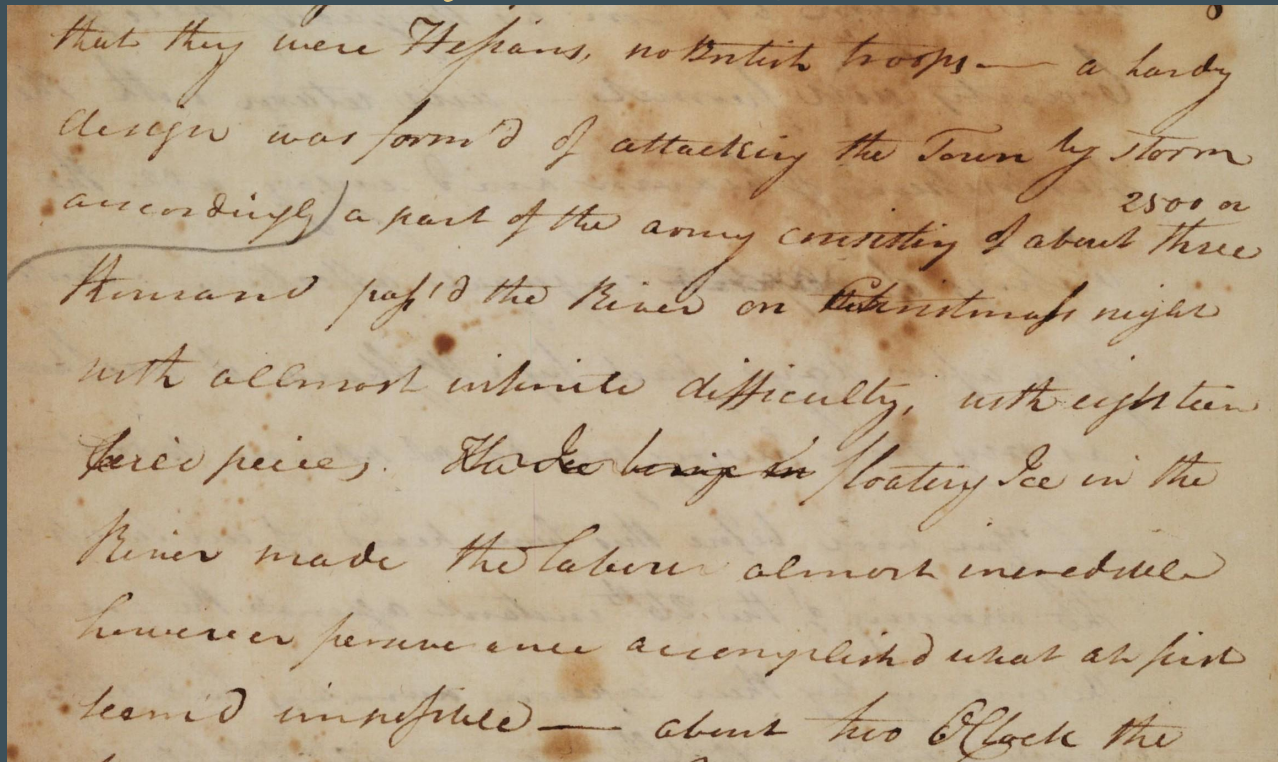
# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox, December 28, 1776

III 9927  
To Mrs K. (Delaware) <sup>kins</sup> <sup>near</sup> <sup>London</sup> Dec 28, 1776  
St. New Haven or <sup>near</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>Rock</sup>  
Mortier  
my dear & beloved friend  
I grieve me exceedingly that I think date  
my letters from this place & that I am so far  
distant from the dearest object of my affections. This  
War with all its variety is not able to banish your  
sweet lov'd Idea from my heart. whatever I am  
employ'd about I tell you are with me. I  
say to myself so my duty not so mine. Henry  
will return as soon as the forced sales of his  
County will permit - will return with the  
Hermes of heaven and enjoy all the  
blessings of ~~happy~~ conjugal affection. I wrote  
you a few days past by Mr. Shaw. it was short  
as my then living would not allow me to prolong  
your time before this have heard of our success on  
the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> instant against the enemy.  
The enemy by their superior numbers had oblig'd  
us to retire on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware  
by which means we were oblig'd to evacuate &  
give up nearly all the stores, even after our  
retiring over the river the preservation of Philadelphia  
was a matter exceedingly precarious. The  
Force of the enemy three or four times as large

Detailed eyewitness  
account of the battle



# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote



that they were Hessians, not British troops — a hardy  
design was form'd of attacking the Town by storm  
accordingly a part of the army consisting of about three <sup>2500 or</sup>  
thousand pass'd the River on Christmas night  
with almost infinite difficulty, with eighteen  
field pieces. The ~~ice~~ <sup>floating ice</sup> in the  
River made the labour almost incredible  
however perseverance accomplished what at first  
seem'd impossible — about two o'clock the

“— a hardy design was form'd of attacking the Town by storm  
accordingly a part of the army consisting of about 2500 or  
three thousand pass'd the River on Christmas night with  
almost infinite difficulty, with eighteen field piece, floating Ice  
in the River made the labour almost incredible however  
perseverance accomplished what at first seem'd impossible —”



# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote

learn'd impossible — about two O'Clock the  
troops were all on the Jersey side — we then  
were about nine miles from the object, the night  
was cold & stormy hailing & hailed with great violence  
the Troops march'd with the most profound Silence  
and good order. they arriv'd by two routes or roads  
at the same time about ~~half~~ half an hour after

“— about two O'Clock the troops were all on the Jersey side — we then were about nine miles from the object, the night was cold & stormy. It haild with great violence the Troops march'd with the most profound Silence and good order.

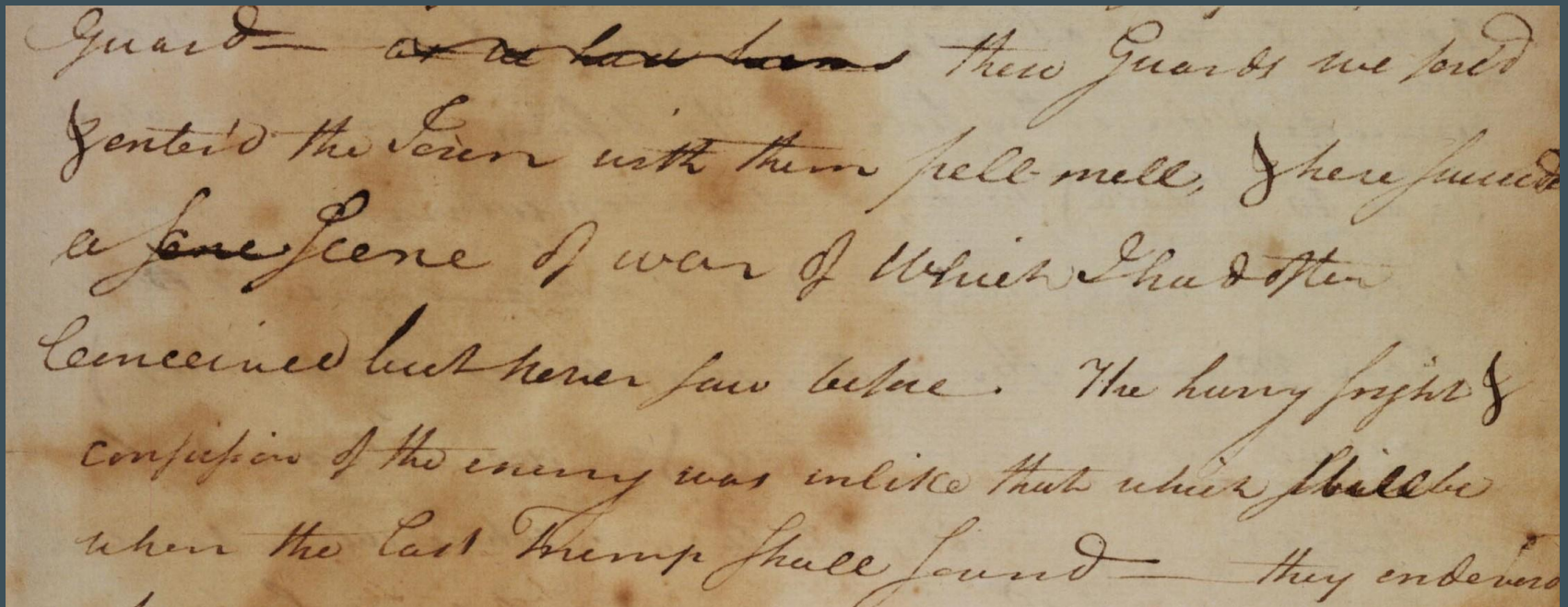
# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote

Day light. <sup>to within</sup> one mile of the Town  
the storm continued with great violence but<sup>3</sup>  
was in our backs & consequently in the faces of our  
Enemy — about half a mile ~~before~~ from the Town was  
an advanced Guard on each road consisting of a Captains  
Guard — ~~at a late hour~~ these Guards we sent

“they arrivd by two routs on roads at the same time  
about half an hour after day light to within one mile  
of the Town the storm continued with great violence  
but was in our backs & consequently in the faces of  
our Enemy — about half a mile from the Town was an  
advanced Guard on each road consisting of a Captains  
Guard —”



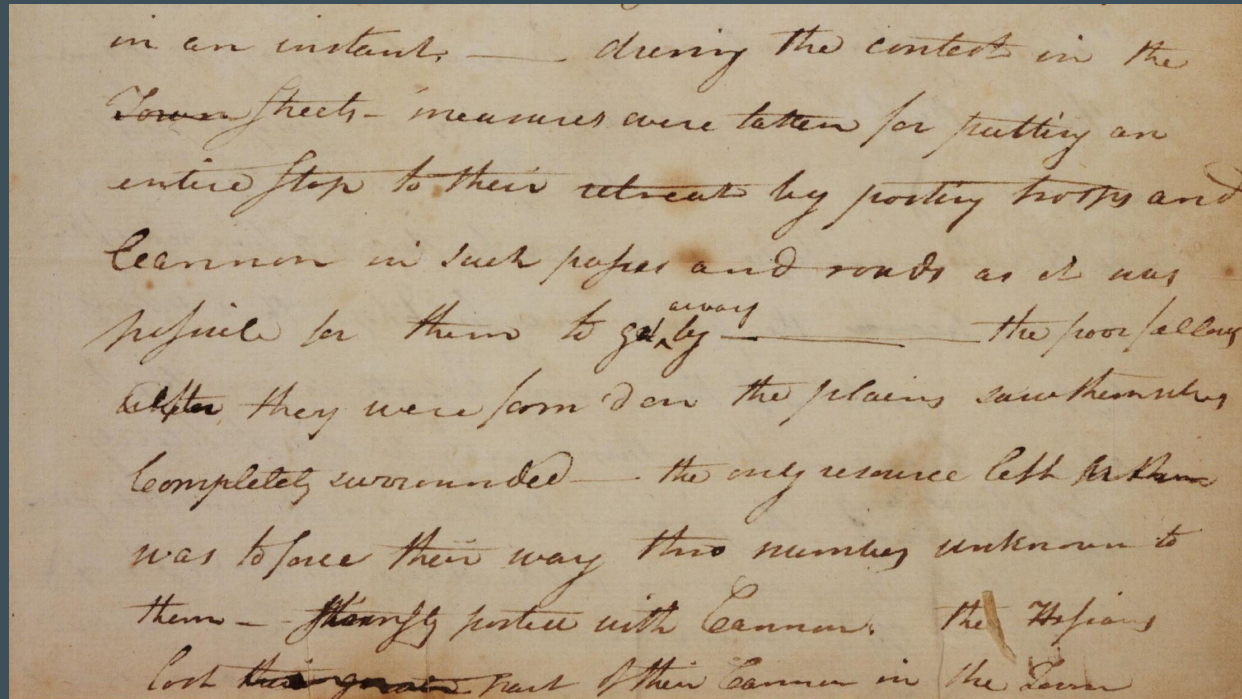
## Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote



Guard ~~as we have been~~ these Guards we forc'd  
enter'd the Town with them pell-mell, & here succeed'd  
a Scene of war of which I had often  
Conceiv'd but never saw before. The hurry fright &  
confusion of the enemy was unlike that which shall be  
when the last Trump shall sound — they endeavor'd

“these Guards we forc’d & enter’d the Town with them pell-mell,  
& here succeeded a Scene of war of which I had often Conceived  
but never saw before. The hurry fright & confusion of the enemy  
was unlike that which shall be when the last Trump shall sound ”

# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote



in an instant, — during the contest in the  
Town streets — measures were taken for putting an  
entire stop to their retreat by posting troops and  
Cannon in such passes and roads as it was  
possible for them to get <sup>away</sup> by — the poor fellows  
after they were form'd on the plains saw themselves  
completely surrounded — the only resource left Mr. Knox  
was to force their way thro numbers unknown to  
them — strongly posted with Cannon. The Hessians  
lost this great part of their Cannon in the Town

“— during the contest in the streets — measures were taken for putting an entire stop to their retreat by posting troops and Cannon in such passes and roads as it was possible for them to get away by— the poor fellows after they were form'd on the plains saw themselves Completely surrounded — the only resource left was to force their way thro numbers unknown to them — strongly posted with Cannon. The Hessians lost part of their Cannon in the Town”

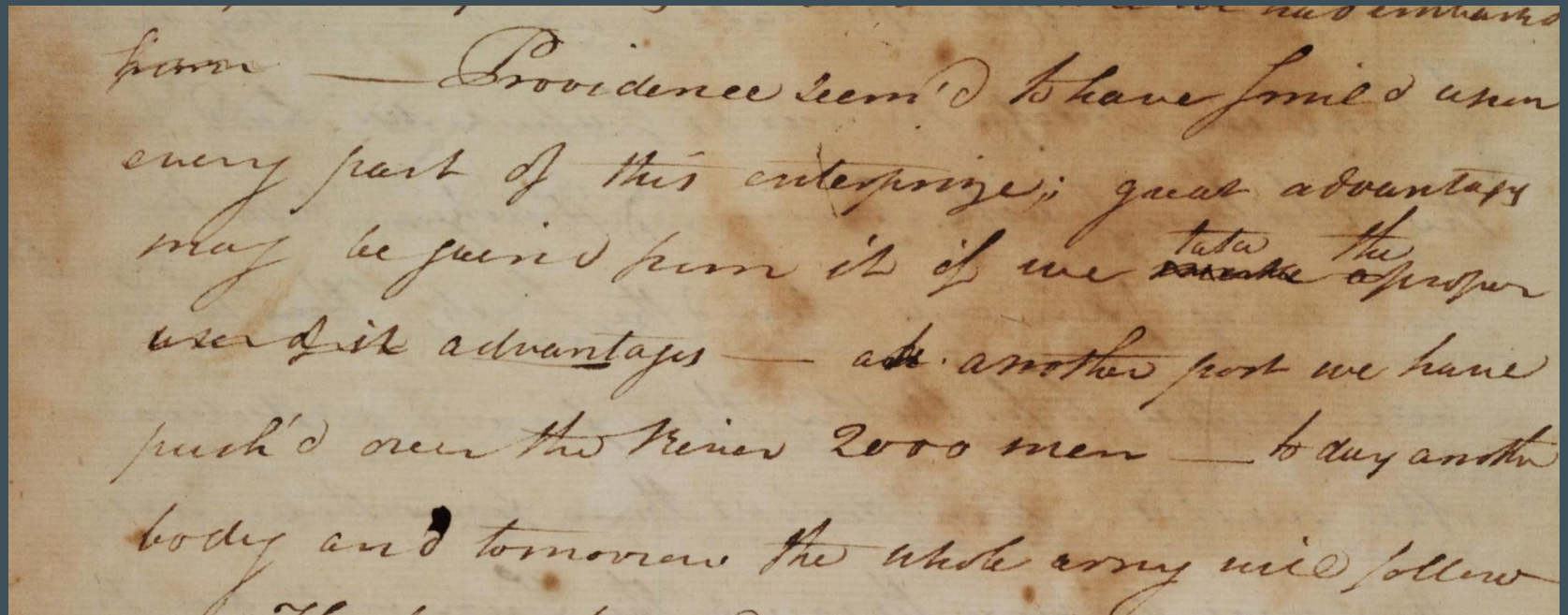
## Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote

4 they did not relish the project of forcing, & were oblig'd to  
Surrender upon the spot with all their artillery, 6 brass peices  
army colors &c &c. — a Colo Rawle commanded who

“they did not relish the project of forcing, & were oblig’d to Surrender upon the spot with all their artillery 6 brass peices army Colors &c &c.— a Colo Rawle commanded who was wounded.”



## Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote

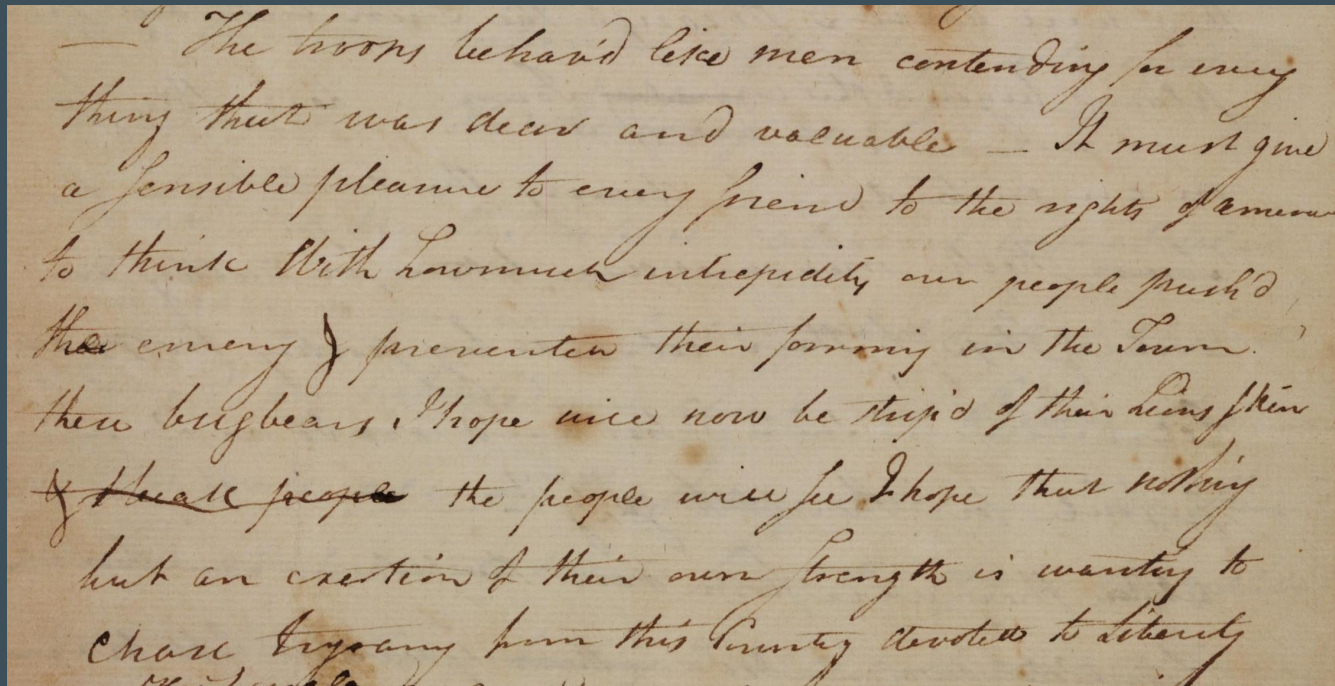


Providence seem'd to have smil'd upon  
every part of this enterprize; great advantages  
may be gain'd from it if we ~~take~~<sup>take</sup> the  
proper advantages — at another port we have  
push'd over the River 2000 men — to day another  
body and tomorrow the whole army will follow

“Providence seem’d to have smil’d upon every part of this enterprize; great advantages may be gain’d from it if we take the proper advantages – at another port we have push’d over the River 2000 men – to day another body and tomorrow the whole army will follow –”



# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox Quote

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, yellowed paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The text is a quote from Henry Knox to Lucy Knox, dated December 28, 1776. The paper shows signs of age, including some staining and wear at the edges. The text is written in a single column, filling most of the page.

The troops behav'd like men contending for every thing that was dear and valuable — It must give a sensible pleasure to every friend to the rights of America to think with how much intrepidity our people push'd the enemy & prevented their forming in the Town. these bugbears, I hope will now be strip'd of their lions skin & ~~these people~~ the people will see I hope that nothing but an exertion of their own strength is wanting to chase tyranny from this Country devoted to liberty

“— The troops behav'd like men contending for every thing that was dear and valuable — It must give a sensible pleasure to every friend to the rights of America to think with how much intrepidity our people push'd the enemy & prevented their forming in the Town these bugbears, I hope will now be strip'd of their Lions skin the people will see I hope that nothing but an exertion of their own strength is wanting to chase tyranny from this Country devoted to Liberty”

# Henry Knox to Lucy Knox

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that even my Lucy may think her Harry proud of a little  
species of little vanity in doing at all — I am an exacting gen  
satisfaction to amuse of any sensibility to find the approbation  
succeeding well meant endeavors. — I was in hope  
I should have been on my way from Philadelphia  
to Hartford ere this but this matter has prevented  
me for the present — my business will be  
sitting there indefinitely this winter & then I hope  
to have the happiness of being for a few days with my Lucy  
at Waverley Boston — I wish to know at least  
where you are — I rec'd a queer note from Peter  
but it contain'd me rather some thing or another —  
may that kind King who protects provides over  
the inequality of a Guardian angel, keep vigilance  
watch that no evil befalls thee or thy babe & send  
the sign to your anxiously trusting Mother Mary

576  
M. H. Knox  
Dec 28 1776

# *Upcoming Programs*

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## **Inside the Vault**

- February 3, 2022, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. ET (4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. PT) Dr. David Blight's will discuss his favorite Frederick Douglass documents in the Gilder Lehrman Collection.
- March 3, 2022, Dr. Martha J. King will discuss *Mary Katharine Goddard: Woman printer, entrepreneur, and Postmaster in the Founding Era*