Inside the Vault: 
Highlights from the Gilder Lehrman Collection

March 4, 2021

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 so we can assist you.
Panelists

● Sandy Trenholm - Collection Director
● Lois MacMillan - 2006 Oregon History Teacher of the Year
● Holli Campbell - Company Manager for the Broadway production of *Hamilton*
● Zoya Siddiqui - Curatorial Intern
● Allison Kraft - Assistant Curator
During the Session

- If you would like to ask a question, you can use the Q&A feature, which is at the bottom of your screen.
- Viewing in full screen is recommended to see the presenters and the presentation at the same time.

For Security and Privacy

- Your microphone is automatically muted.
- Your camera is automatically turned off.
All of our tonight’s letters were written between April and August of 1777.

- Letter to her estranged sister, Hannah, about the division the war caused in their family
- Letter about smallpox
- Two letters discussing loyalists, shortages, and the dangers of the American Revolution

“Adieu my love. LK.”

“Dearest, best of men,”

Gilder Lehrman Collection
Lucy Flucker Knox (1756-1824)

- Born August 2, 1756
  - Parents Thomas Flucker and Hannah Waldo (loyalist)
  - Siblings Thomas and Hannah
- Married Henry Knox in June of 1774
- 1775 - Lucy & Henry escape during the siege of Boston.
- 1776 - The Flucker family flees to Canada & England.
  - Never saw her family again
- February 18, 1776 - Baby Lucy is born.
Lucy Knox to her sister, Hannah

I do not like to write this — if any living love remains of the army, gentlemen again brother and the parent against the child — who were the first promoters of it.

I know not what good comes — and I fear they will feel the weight of this resignation, the fear we should make us to gain in this world. We cannot love giving ourselves away or a principle — not hate the deceiving people to destroy each other — for the art of doing has become a perfect science. That man is more deceived who has the best knack at destroying the human species, in our current days, than Hannah in little thought. We bow and would report that have reached America, but her kind and gentle heart, no one the heart of war, must continue, Battle they — her ears with the smell of death, and see the great and noble who produce before her.

We enough of this. God and a bloody knife to this poor and poor and happy sitting in the same sort and prayer of her who the sun in the camp, gracious, name in the never less take to be your accommodation forever and ever.
“Oh my Sister, how horrid is this war, Brother against Brother – and the parent against the child – who were the first promoters of it I know not but god knows – and I fear they will feel the weight of his vengence – tis pity the little time we have to spend in this world – we cannot injoy ourselves and our friends – but must be devising means to destroy each other – the art of killing has become a perfect science.”
“My dear Harry is well - he my sister is as when you [saw] him, the best and tenderest of friends, never were - two persons more happily united than we - we have a lively little girl, of whom I fear she looks vastly like our Mama - who I hope will one day see her - she will love her I am sure she will. I am going at last to take the small pox - more for the sake of my little Lucy - than myself - the Army and the country in general having been innoculated will make it dangerous for me to go from home without haveing had it.”
“My own and only brother”

“I hear my brother is in York but hope it is not true - if it is - I will write to him and advise him to come home - this is a horrid war my dear Harry - I wish it had been protracted till my head was cold - that I might have spent the little time I have to stay in this world with him who is dearer to me than all that world beside - but oh he is taken from me to fight an inveterate enemy - and perhaps to draw his sword upon my own and only brother.”
Lucy to Henry,
May 1, 1777

- Dated April 31, but probably May 1
- Written from the hospital in Brookline, Massachusetts
- Discusses smallpox
- Ends by explaining Lucy was “weakened by the mercury I have taken”
“Among the Continental regulars in the American Revolution, 90 percent of deaths were caused by disease, and Variola the smallpox virus was the most vicious of them all.” (A History of Military Medicine, p. 107)

- British soldiers had herd immunity.
- On February 5, 1777, George Washington made the risky decision to mass inoculate the army against smallpox.
- Mid-April 1777 - Lucy Knox and baby Lucy are inoculated for smallpox in Brookline.
“I suffered exceedingly – I have more than two hundred of them – twenty in my face – which is four times as many as you bid me have – but I believe none of them will leave a mark – Lucy has but one – and has not had an Ill hour with it – both hers and mine have turned and are drying away.”

“I have no glass but from the feel of my face I am almost glad you do not see it – I dont beleive I should get one kiss – and yet Dr tells me it is very becoming.”
“I have just come from a scene my Harry which has roused my very soul ... a man who was inoculated at or about the time I was lay in the last agonies his pock proved the purple sort – and he poor soul must die – his brother had just arrived from his wife, who was near laying in – and very impatient for his return – and as a proof of her affection – had sent him some good things such as he might venture to eat – he sent for Mr Gardiner (who is in the next room to me) to make his will – and I had curiosity to go – he is just now dead – what a stroke will it be to that poor miserable woman – but oh my God my own situation will not bear reflection – how do I know to what the dear partener of my Soul is at this minet exposed – indeed my Harry I am serious, I cannot live at this distance from you.”
Lucy to Henry, May 1777

- Movements of the armies
- Shortages in Boston
- Treatment of loyalists
“I have got seven yards of linnen for breeches for you. am affraid to have it made up here, for fear it should not be spoiled. as it cost twenty shillings pr yard - sure there must be a tailor in morristown - if there is not dont scold at me - seven pound lawful - for two pair of breeches is a great deal of money - too much not to have them made neat.”
“Can you not get some covers franked, it would save us a very great expence – an object at this day. when the price of every thing is so exorbitant indeed it is difficult to get the necessarys of life here, at any price – the evil increases daily – beef is at eight pence a pound if you will take half an ox neck, skins, and all you may get it for seven pence – for butter we give two shillings a pound – for eggs two pence a piece – and for very ordinary lisbon wine, twenty shillings a gallon – as for flour it is not to be had at any price.”
Lucy to Henry,
August 23, 1777

- Details about her day
- Loss of her family
- Saving money in case Henry should be taken prisoner
- Equal command
“When I seriously reflect that I have lost my father Mother Brother and Sisters – intirely lost them – I am half distracted true I chearfully resigned them for one far dearer to me than all of them – but I am totaly deprived of him – I have not seen him for almost six months … tis hard my Harry indeed it is I love you with the tenderest the purest affection. ”
“I wish I had fifty guinies to spare to send by her [the ship the Hero] for necessarys – but I have not – the very little gold we have must be reserved for my Love in case he should be taken – for friends in such a case are not too common.”
“Oh that you had less of the military man about you – you might then after the war have lived at ease all the days of your life – but now I don't know what you will do – your being long accustomed to command – will make you too haughty for mercantile matters – tho I hope you will not consider yourself as commander in chief of your own house – but be convinced tho … that there is such a thing as equal command.”
BACKGROUND

Lucy Flucker Knox (1756–1824) was born into a life of wealth and privilege in Boston, Massachusetts. Her father, Thomas Flucker Sr., was Royal Secretary of the Province of Massachusetts and the third highest-ranking crown official in the colony. Lucy was known as a highly educated, strong-willed, and dynamic woman. At the age of seventeen, Lucy gave up her position in society and was disinherited by her family when she married Henry Knox, a poor bookseller. In 1776, most of her family left Massachusetts for England, while her brother remained to fight with the British army. Lucy never saw her family again.

The daughter of a loyalist and the wife of a patriot, Lucy is an important witness to history because her family was divided by war. As her husband climbed the military ranks and became one of George Washington’s most trusted friends, Lucy traveled in influential patriot circles and was not reluctant to discuss affairs of state in a frank and forthright manner with her husband. After the war, the Knoxes took possession of the vast Flucker estate and built their home in Thomaston, Maine. Although only three of their thirteen children survived to adulthood, Henry and Lucy had a long and apparently happy marriage. No reliable images of Lucy Flucker Knox exist. This silhouette is the only known “image” of Lucy.
Upcoming Programs

- **Inside the Vault**, Thursday, March 18 at 7 pm ET (4 pm PT)
  - We will be discussing Civil War diaries as primary sources.

- **Book Breaks**, March 7 at 2 pm ET (11 am PT)

- Nominate a teacher for History Teacher of the Year!
  - Each year the History Teacher of the Year award honors an exceptional K-12 teacher in each of the 50 states, District of Columbia, Department of Defense Schools, and US Territories. These winners are then entered into a pool for the National History Teacher of the Year award.

- Visit [gilderlehrman.org](http://gilderlehrman.org) for free resources for students, teachers, families, and history enthusiasts of all ages.