Introduction

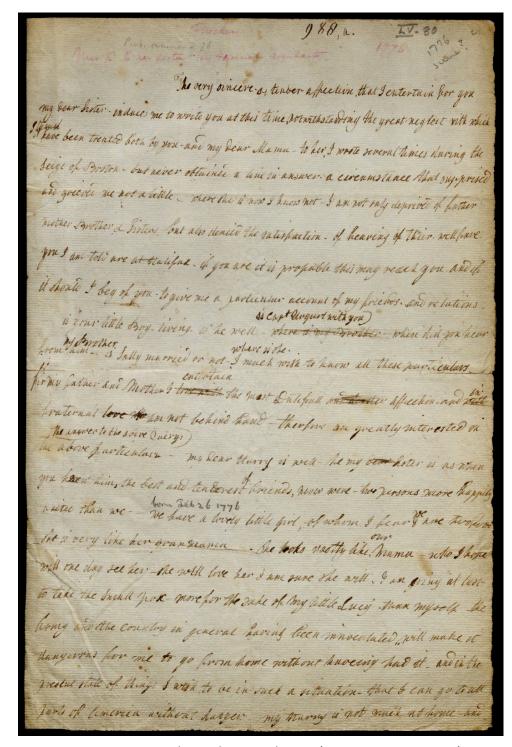
The Revolutionary War divided families. In 1774, eighteen-year-old Lucy Flucker married twenty-four-year-old Henry Knox. Lucy's parents were powerful, wealthy Tories, and they were not happy with the match. Henry Knox was the son of an Irish immigrant. At the age of nine, he quit school to go to work when his father abandoned the family. Henry was also rumored to be a patriot.

Lucy and Henry left Boston in 1775. Henry joined Washington's army, and Lucy was left on her own for the first time in her life. When the British evacuated Boston after the siege in 1776, many loyalists left with them including Lucy Knox's family. After returning to Boston, Lucy felt her family's absence. In this letter, Lucy attempts to reconnect with her sister, Hannah Urquhart, whose husband, James, was a captain in the British 14th Regiment. The heavy editing visible in the image shows how hard it was for Lucy to be caught between her husband and her family:

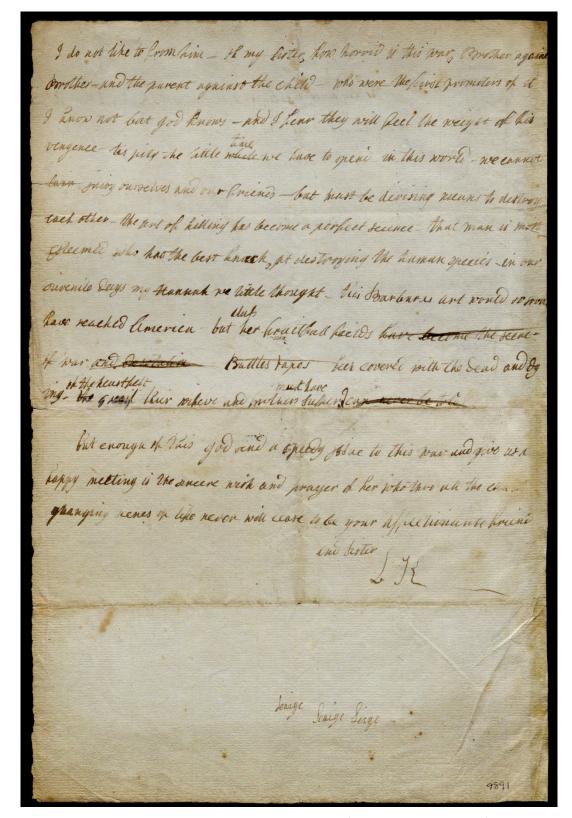
oh my Sister, how horrid is this war, Brother against Brother – and the parent against the child – who were the first promoters of it I know not but god knows – and I fear they will feel the weight of his vengence – tis pity the little time we have to spend in this world – we cannot injoy ourselves and our friends – but must be devising means to destroy each other – the art of killing has become a perfect science

Questions for Discussion

- 1. Why did Lucy write this letter?
- 2. What is the tone of the first part of the letter?
- 3. Are there particular questions from Lucy that attract your attention? Why?
- 4. What does Lucy mean when she writes "I am going at last to take the small pox"?
- 5. How does Lucy assess the impact of the war?
- 6. How does Lucy end her letter?



Lucy Knox to Hannah Urquhart, April 1777. (GLC02437.009891 p. 1)



Lucy Knox to Hannah Urquhart, April 1777. (GLC02437.009891 p. 2)

Transcript

The very sincere or tender affection that I entertain for you my dear Sister induces me to write you at this time, notwithstanding the great neglect with which [inserted: I think] I have been treated both by you – and my dear Mama – to her, I wrote several times during the Seige of Boston – but never obtained a line in answer a circumstance that supprised and grieved me not a little – where she is now I know not – I am not only deprived of father mother Brother & Sisters but also denied the satisfaction of hearing of their wellfare. you I am told are at Halifax – if you are it is propable this may reach you and if it should I beg of you – to give me a particular account of my friends and relations.

is your little Boy – living – is he well – [struck: where is my Brother] [inserted: is Cap^t Urgurt with you)] when did you hear from him [inserted: my Brother] – is Sally married or not – [inserted: where is she.] I much wish to know all these particulars for my father and Mother I [struck: love with] [inserted: entertain] the most Dutiful [struck: and tender] affection – and [struck: with] [inserted: in] fraternal [struck: love [&]] am not behind hand – therefore am greatly interested in the above particulars [inserted: the answer to the above Querys] – my dear Harry is well – he my [struck: dear] Sister is as when you [knew] him, the best and tenderest [inserted: of] friends, never were – two persons more happily united than we – we have a lively little girl, of whom I fear I [inserted: we] [are too] [struck: fond] she is very like her gran mama - She looks vastly like [inserted: 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 – and in the present state of things I wish to be in such a situation – that I can go to all parts of America without danger. my Harry is not much at home – and [2] I do not like to from him – 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 [struck: while] [inserted: time] we have to spend in this world – we cannot [strikeout] injoy ourselves and our friends – but must be devising means to destroy each other – the art of killing has become a perfect science – that man is most esteemed who has the best knack, at destroying the human species – in our juvenile days my Hannah we little thought – this Barbaras art would

A family torn apart by war, 1777

so soon have reached America – but [*inserted*: alas] her fruitfull fields [*struck*: have become the scene] of war [*struck*: and destruction] [*struck*: Battles taxes] been covered with the dead and dying [*inserted*: oh the heartfelt] – the grief their sister and brothers [*inserted*: must have] suffered [*struck*: can never be told]

but enough of this god send a speedy issue to this war and give us a happy meeting is the sincere wish and prayer of her who thro all the changing scenes of life never will cease to be your affectionate friend and sister

LK

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