

COLONEL THOMAS JOHNSON'S PAPERS

Colonel Thomas Johnson was born at Haverhill, Massachusetts March 22, 1742 O. S. He came to Haverhill, N. H. in 1762 but settled at Newbury, Vermont, on the Oxbow in the neighborhood of Gen. Jacob Bayley. He was Captain in the militia organized in May 1775; Captain of an independent company which marched to Ticonderoga in 1777; and served as aid to Gen. Lincoln in the campaign of that year. He was placed in charge of prisoners and conducted them to New Hampshire.

In the year previous he had been selected to blaze out a route from Newbury to St. Johns. With four men he started out March 26, 1776, in five days they reached Metcalf's on the Mississquoi; five days later they arrived at St. Johns, being about one hundred miles from Newbury. This route later became the basis of the Hazen road.

The conduct of Col. Johnson during the last years of the Revolutionary war was the subject of attack during his lifetime, and of vigorous defence on his part. He rendered good service to the American cause in the campaign against Burgoyne, but during the remainder of the struggle he appears to have devoted himself to his own affairs. He held intimate business relations with Colonel Asa Porter of Haverhill and other prominent Tories, who appeared to have believed that he could be won over to the support of British interests. His capture by the British, which occurred at Peacham, February 18, 1781, was planned with the expectation that he would be induced to transfer his allegiance.

He was treated while in Canada with a consideration accorded to no other prisoner. After his return home in the following October he held frequent communications with the British authorities, but always averred that he transmitted no information that could be used to the injury of the American cause. He played a double game and sometimes put

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himself in danger from both sides, but with the result that he ultimately secured himself and his property from injury, which probably would have been the case even if the result of the conflict had been otherwise than it was.

Colonel Johnson was a shrewd business man, and was the object of envy of many who were less successful than himself. There is no reason to suppose that he was recreant to the cause of Liberty, and his loyalty to Gen. Bayley at the time of the attempt to capture the latter exposed him to danger from the British. He felt it necessary to spend some time in southern New England after that event to avoid meeting with British emissaries.

The following papers are a part of the letters and documents collected by his son David Johnson, and are owned by the Tenney Memorial Library of Newbury, Vermont. They are arranged chronologically. A few of them are letters written by the Colonel, others are drafts of letters and statements in his handwriting, still others are letters written to him. Yet others are copies of papers secured by his son David. Most of them are dated and plainly show by whom and to whom they were written.

August 3^d 1775 [Newbury, Vt.]

Sir You are by Vote of the Committee required to Cause Bemode Peters and Wife, Jesse McFarland James Calkins and Noah Whites Wife to come before the Committee at the House of Lieut Simeon Stevens on Teusday next the 8th Inst at Two o Clock in the Afternoon to be examined &c

By Order of the Comm^{ers}

Neh^h Lovewell Clk

To Capt Thomas Johnson

[Page 1]

[Havir^l Haverhill,] N. H. July 10, 1776

Daniel Hall of Laful age testifieth and sath that I went to Col^o Porter* to by Rum and that when he gave him the Botel I said that he had beter Come and See it Put up him Self When we had got in the Saler he Says that he Sposed that he was not Igent of the Plan that they had Layd H [Hall, and so several times] anserd he know^d of one By T [John Taplin] Porter Says that It was a mater of grate Consequence and that they might Bee as Expunditious as Possible and not Drive maters two fast and Says we must Have news from New york H makes anser that they must not mind all that was In the Papers Porter ansers he Did not take notis of them But they Should Have Leters from Privat justead men and that It Depended a great maters on the news that they had from York and Cant you Lay a Plan to go to Kitchinmoos [Catching moose?] for the Contanant will Stan In need of meat Porter Says that we must not Say two much But Call on me once in a Day or two and I will Let you Know how we Purseed

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24 July 1776 I wate^d on Col^o Porter as Before agreed on He Says that things worked well But they must wate a few days for news from new yorke Porter Says that he Shold Bee Radey in a few Days to furnish him with a Riting to Cary to Canady he Desired that I wold take the Riting and Carre It ten or fifteen miles into the woods and leave It their til they got one or two more to go with him under the Pertence of going to moos hunting and then to go into Canady to Ginr^l Burgine [Burgoyne] and Say that he will Do the Leters up in Such a maner that If they ware to Bee taken that they

*Col. Asa Porter of Haverhill N. H. a graduate of Harvard, was Associate Justice in Grafton Co. N. H., was distrustful of popular government, his house was believed to be the resort of tories during the Revolution. His sympathies were with the Royal cause, but he had a strong restraining influence over the more lawless elements. He with Col. John Taplin had held offices under the King and could not join the forces which rebelled.—Note by the Editor.

Shold not Bee Discovered for the Riting Shold Bee on the
out Side Report and it cold not Bee Seen and that it wold
not apear more than Sum old account

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July 27 1776 I wating on C. Con^l Porter again He says
that they had thots of altring the Plan for as Bial Chambr
[Abial Chamberlain] was going He had of Cout to St. Johns
that they wold git all their Party to go with Chambr so that
after they had got to Sat Johns they Shold take care of him as
they Pleased and for them to See Col^o Peters which they hear
was Deserted to Canady and to Let them now their Plan

July 29 this Day beeing In Company with Col^o to plan
and with Wilard Stephens and Solomon Stephens they think
Best to Rest Sending over to Canady til Col^o Porter Comes
up the River and til Bial Chambr Comes Back from Canady
as the news seames to bee against them at Present But as
soon as Chambil Comes Back they say that they wold have
me go Rite of and take timo [Timothy, mutilated] Umstead
with me Stephens Says that he is afeard to Send Ritings and
that he Can Send a token that wold Do but Taplan Says
that they wold have Ritings for him [to] Cary to Col^o Peters
and that he need not Stay half our in Canady to bee in per-
tence of citch moos

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Newbury July 1776

Daniel Hall of Laful age testyfieth and Sayth that on
the—of this Instant Beeing In Company with David Weeks
Discorsing on our Present Distresses and on our armeys Leav-
ing Canady Weeks Seeming to Hang In favor of the Minas-
tral [Ministerial] troops He Sayd that he wished that he
knowed his mind and that he wold tel him Something if he
Dard Hall made reply that he Need not Bee afrade Weeks
sayd that he wold tell him and If He ever told of It he swore
that he wold kill him Weeks Says that their [there, and so
frequently] was a Pasel of men joining to Send to Canady to
Ginral Burgine for Pretescion and that Hall was to Bee one

of them and they ware to go with flags on their guns Hall agreed to join them and asist them all that Lay In his Power Weeks Says that you might wate on Col^o Taplin for further Instrucons Hall wated on Taplin requested of him what he Should Do for he was afeard that we Should Bee all Cut of Taplin Replies by god If you will Bee Ruled By me we will Do well a nuf and that we must Send to Canady

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for Prettection and that a meadely for he was a feard that they ware two late now But I want to See Col^o Porter Before I do anything But By god I Darst not Bee Seen with him Taplin Repling again that he wanted to See Wilard Stephens Hall Replied that he mite See him aney time Taplin Desires that he wold go and Call him to his house

Calling on Taplin again Requesting how he made out with Stephens T anserd well a nuf But they cold not do aney thing til they had Sent Down the River and that they Should have word by Sol Stephens and that In Eight Days Taplin Desires that I wold com By 2 or 3 times a Day and that he wold Bee walking out So that he mite Speak with him offen H wating on Taplin T [Taplin, and so again] Says that he had Seen Porter and that they cold not Do aney thing til they had a Return up the River T says that we wold Do well a nuf yet By god we will one [win] all Coos yet

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August 2 1776 This Day wated on Col^o Porter He informs me that he Hath Been Down the River and that he hath Seen Loyer [lawyer Timothy (?) Olcott] Olcot and that he Likes the Plan well and that he will asist as far as he Can Porter Says that Indians are Seen Down the River frecuntly But they hath Been Seen In Reality for their hath Been one Regurly ofiser and one Indian from Canady to Clamount [Claremont] for to See Mr Casit They wated 2 or 3 Days Before they Darst Venter In But Vary Luckly Came in to one of our frends' house and their Stayed til they had Don their

Bisness and had Seen Sevril friends But Cold not see Mr Cosit and their Bisness as folows to See how many friends their is hear to the Minastreal [ministrial] troops, and to See if they wold help to Conduck^t them to this Part of the Contry and to See if they wold help them take Poesion of this Part of the Contry

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Porter Sath that he thinks that it twill Bee Best for Sol Stephens to go Soon to Mideafst [Metcalf's, on Lake Champlain.] and Let him now the Plan and their he Can Bee Persected a few Days til he Can Bee Sent into Canady and their to find Col^o Peters and Let him know the Plan and Let him know that you are Coming and in a few Days I wold have you go over with Timothy Umpstead But I want to hear more a Bout that fleet that they say are in the mouth of Canady River [St. Lawrence] and whether they are Drayed Back or no or Whether they are Coming on this way or not

I have just thought that I wold Rite to Col^o Peters By you as folows that I hear that T Paper money is of no valie their and that my negro was in the army and that I wold have you Sell him for as much of the same as you Cold git and that I wanting to have him git as much of the same as he cold and that I hoped he wold Remember his frinds hear and that he wold give me Silver money a nuf to Bare my Expences and Says that you Cold tel him the Rest

DANIEL HALL

[Endorsed on last page in another hand:—Daniel Hall's Testimony against Col^o Asa Porter

Camp near Independence [Ticonderoga N. Y.] Sept. 12, 1777

Hear with my kindest Regards to you and all Frinds We have taken Ticonroga and the ground on that Side [of Lake Champlain] and Considrabel of Plunder their one Canon and their one amminison have to fite them with: We took 3 hundred Prisners a number of offisers and Retook

more than one hundred of our Prisners and arms for them
and they ouse them with good Spirit

We are beseaging Mount Independence have been three
Days all Round them they are sending all they can Down
the Lake they expect we shall have it we have Lost 4 or 5
men but none from Coos Peters went Rite up in face Shot
and got 1 Tack a good Blanket and one Bool which the Bowl
he will git 20 or 30 Dolars for Capt [Simeon] Stephens and
Lieut [? Robert] Paul went Clost to them this morning in the
fog and got 3 oxen and one Cow they all git the Pay for them
Our men have got well clothed I have had But Littel Sleep
this 3 nights for the Roring of Canon and Cracking of guns
are Continuly in our Ears I might Say that I felt ugly when
I first heard the firing I have had But 2 Chances of firing
my gun at the Enimy when ifred the first time they gave me 3
for one the canon balls and the Grape Shot Ratel Like Hale
Stones But they Dont kill men I Dont feel aney more Con-
sern^d Hear than I Did at home in my Busness If God will
I entend to Be to home in one fornite from now I had to
turn out the men into the woods this morning 2 ours Beefore
Day the guns Cracked Like Brush Burning and I Broak my
Shins that is all the Damig I know of Don I have heard
from you But once Since I Came from home from your trew
and Loving Husband

THOMAS JOHNSON

It is Helthy hear
[Address on Outside]

Mrs. Thomas Johnson

Newbury Coos

Pd 8

Letter Rote att

Mountindpendean.

Mess^{rs} Mr Ebeneser Swan and Capt Simeon Stevens
Gentlemen

You are hereby Desired to take into your Care and Cus-
tody a Number of Canadian Prisoners and torey's sent here
by order of Coll Bayley by Capt Thomas Johnson lately

taking at Ticonderoga—you are desired to take them from here as soon as Conveniently Can be done and Take such a Guard as you Gentleman shall Think sufficient to Guard said Prisoners from here to Exeter unless Relieved by the way as by some other orders from same superior authority as Committee of State from the State of New Hampshire and you are hereby desired to take such Care and charge of Said Prisoners and provide Such Necessaries for Them on the way as you Gentlemen shall Think Reasonable for their Common support and Them Safely Deliver at Exeter as to Such officer as officers in authority as you shall be Directed so to do

In behalf of the Committee
PETER LABEREE Chairman

Charlestown Sept
the 27: 1777

[Original in Secretary of State's Office,
Montpelier]

25 cts

Newbury October 1, 1777

The expences Paid By me for 92 Prisners and 26 of the gard from Caselton to Charlston

Paid for Provision and ferig 6:00-7

Please to Pay this Account to Gen' Baley or to Capt John Baley and you' oblige your Humble Servant

THOMAS JOHNSON Capt

To the Pay Master of the State of Vermont

£6-0-7

[Copy of letter.]

Newbury 14 May 1781

Sir I send by Lewis Vincent the pay and Muster Roll of the Company of St Francis Indians according to a resolution of Congress respecting them, a much larger number has been here at times but are not steady and though I donot think they have ever done us any damage but are

rambling in the woods those inserted have been serviceable as scouts &c. The bearer Lewis Vincent has always been alert in our cause and I should be glad he might be added as a Lieut. I have delivered to Eleven Indians Cloathing which I received by your Excellency's order at Boston Capt Vincent was clothed at Boston.

The Squaws and children and two Indians were not included in the order, if your Excellency, chooses to give any orders about them I shall be ready to obey them

Two days since three deserters came from Masco [Missisquoi?] in Canada they informed that the Enemy are building a Fort at the head of the Masco River not more that thirty miles Hazen's Road as we travel not more than twenty miles straight, that the Enemy have fortified Cape Diamont and have made mines without the City [Quebec?] in every place where it is likely the City may be stormed. I have sent three men to view the Enemy's works at Masco

The first of last month the Enemy captivated at M^r Elkins in Peacham twenty miles on Hazzen's Road Col. Thomas Johnson and two others in the night, they belonged to this town and were out on business.

We have obtained no help as yet the fear of the Pionte [?] are great and not without reason

I am your Excellency's most obedient servant

JACOB BAYLEY

[Addressed] Gen'l Washington

[Note by David Johnson]

The time mentioned in the forgoing letter of the capture of Col. Thomas Johnson and two others is an error.

Thomas Johnson, Jonathan Elkins Junior and Jacob Page were captured in the morning of March 8th, 1781, as appears by Thomas Johnson's journal

The above letter is to be found in Gen'l Washington Correspondence vol. 39, p. 131.

St. Johns May 20 1781

Thees Lines from your most Affectionate Frind. one of the greatest trobels on my mind is your misfortune the Poor State of helth that I left you in and as I Left my afares in So Bad Situate it must give you the greatest trobel I have heard Nothin from home since I left it: it wold give me the greatest satisfacon to hear from you. I had a Vary tedious jorney in Coming hear but I have been well since I came hear and have been treated in the best manner by all Ranks of men Since I came to this Province I never have been Close Confined walk out as much as is for my helth I Live Well my Situation is made as Comfortabel as I could Expect I Cannot Say that I have Aney Expectation of Returning home this Sumer all tho I think I might had it Not been for the Repeated Breaches of faith of Contanental offisers which other Prisners must Suffer for*

Brother [Jacob] Page is well but is at Shambelee [Chambly] is well I hav Not Seen him Since that Day week I left home Jonathan Elkins is hear and well my Best Regards to Mr Wallace & Doct^r Hopkins and Beg that they will assist you all that is in their Power in my affares as to the Goods and Stores I left on hand my Desire is that M^r Wallace will Dispoes of them in the best manner to answer my Porposes as he is the best Acquainted with my Affairs: I have Sum Papers with me that Considerably Concern my affares with other men but as the Distance is So great and as I know not whos hands this may fall in to I Shall Stil hold them: I hope that you have Ruben Sambron with you if you Can for aney Price hire to take Care of the busness Daniel Kimbal Ephram Lasey or Daniel briant John and Ruben Sambron knows what feild I would have Plowd this year as I stand in need of Sum Cash I Desire that Mr Wallace wold procure A Bill of thirty or forty Pounds and Send to me the first oportunity Let it bee one that you are Shure will be answr'd I think Mr.

* He refers to John Chapman who was released on parole and did not keep his promise—Editor.

Steward is Likely and send to me the first oportunity: as I have Desired this to be forward to you Pleas to Pay the Charges Theas from your trew and Sincear frind and Husband

THOS JOHNSON

[On the back of this letter the following was endorsed.]

To Mrs. Johnson

Should you want to send money or any article to Col^o Johnson you may doubtless have an opportunity by a Flag from Castleton by the fifteenth of July next

[signed] I ALLEN

[On the same sheet with the above letter is the following one.] for Mr. [William] Wallace [May 1781.]

Sir I have this Day Received Liberty from the Commandant of this Post for 2 men to Come to the Lake with Sum money or a bil on sum one in glasgow which you can the easeset get for me I should be glad they might bee men of Caricter they must come to the shiping which likely will be near Crown Point [put] up a flag when they Come near the Lack and if they have Not a boat to go on bord of the shiping they must make Signal with their flag and they will bee Carrid on bord with Such things as I have sent for they Need Not be a feard they will be well treated if well behaved as I want much to hear from home the Sooner you answer my Request the more you will oblige your frind an humbel Servent

N B Pleas send my wach & Stockbuskel

THOS JOHNSON

[Addressed]

The wife of Col^o Thomas Johnson

Newbury Coos

To the care of Col^o Allen

and Col^o Hunt

[Ira Allen and probably Col Jonathan Hunt, sheriff of Windham County]

Newbury July 13 1781

Honored Sir These lines come to you with duty to inform you that I am well through the goodness of God, as I hope they will find you, but John is sick with the fever, but I hope not dangerous The rest of the family are well at present

The wheat was much killed with the Winter but the Grass looked very well till taken by the Worms which have done great damage but not so much to ours as many others. We have almost done mowing Reuben & Elisha May are here to work, so that I hope to get through with it without anything being lost, but I want much to see you and hope that you will get home as soon as you can get a way with honour

I remain your Dutiful son till death

MOSES JOHNSON

To Col^o Thomas Johnson Prisoner at St Johns Canada
P. S. My kind Regards to my Uncle Page

[Endorsed on the back]

Examined by me

JACOB BAYLEY J P

Haverhill, July ye 13 1781

Dear Sir I am sorry for your misfortune in being taken and detained so long from your family and friends but it is the fortune of War. You must not be cast down. I am glad to hear you fare well which must make you more happy than hard treatment. I am in want of the Papers you have of mine, which I should be glad you would send to me if you

can safely, unless you are likely to get liberty to come home soon I am in haste With due Respect your Friend and Humble Servant

SAM^l ATKINSON

COLO THOMAS JOHNSON

[Endorsed on the back.]

The within examined and found nothing amiss
Pr Sam^l Fletcher L^t Col. Com^{dt}

Fort Warren* 17 July 1781

Newbury July 14, 1781

These from your sincere friend are to inform you that I have enjoyed a comfortable state of health ever since you left home. Our family are all well except John who has been sick a few days, but is now getting better. The children behave as well as could be expected. I greatly miss your care in the family.

I could not get either of the Lacey's Daniel Kimball nor Bryant to take care at the business. I have got Reuben Sandborn and Elisha May. I think they carry on the business as well as can be expected without you. I can but hope that you will return home in a short time altho you wrote that you had no expectation of getting home this summer.

It gives me great satisfaction to hear that you are well used, for I was very anxious for you until I heard something of your situation . . . Sister F [Famma Johnson] lives with me yet, she gives her love to you, Brother and Sister Carleton send Regards to you and wish for your return as soon as may be with honor I did not get yours of May 20th till June 17th

Suppose you think it long before you have return I have done the best I could Hope you will receive what I now send before long I send you as you desired a Bill your Watch Stock buckle and Knee buckle

[signed] ABIGAIL JOHNSON

*Fort Warren was at Castleton—Editor.

William Wallace to Thomas Johnson

Newbury July 14th 1781

Dear Sir

Agreeable to your Desire I have sent you a sett of Bills on Glasgow Contents thirty Sterling from M^r Andrew Brock There is not a House in Glasgow I should Putt more Confidence in than this The Money comes his Father and its shure to be Honord. Doct^r Hopkins takes The Charge of the Bills and Letters from this Place and is to go By way of Castle Town expecting there to Send the Bills and other articles by a Flag from Verm^t If that don't answer he will Proceed to Crown Point agreeable to your Instructions I have sent a Letter for Glasgow I hope you will Do what you can to have it sent forward

I hope you will make your Confinement as Easey as possible as your Business here is carred on as well as you could Expect John hath had a poor Turn but is Likely to have it over in a few days, and the Children Behave Much Better than you Could have Expected

M^{rs} Johnson Enjoys her Health well, and carrieth her Misfortune Beyond all Expectation, and is daily Expected to hear of an alarm and the Product thereof a Boy or Girl for to Make up The loss of your time in Canada

Mrs [Jacob] Padge is well and hath a fine Boy, which will be glad News to M^r Padge from a far Country M^r Carlton is very diligent in assiing you Concerning your Business. It is a general time of Health here at this time. Mrs Ephraim Bayley after a hard turn of Sickness Paid the Death Due to Nature May 3^d I recvd a Letter from your Brother Jesse [Johnson] this week. He Desires to be Remembered to you with the Rest of your Friends, and if there is any thing would Procure your Redemption it would chearfully [be] undertaken if attended with Honourable Circumstances.

Friends here Join with me in Sending their best Respects to
you

I am, Sir, your Sincere Friend and Humble Servant
WILLIAM WALLACE

To Col^o Tho^s Johnson

Articles Sent

Bills £30.0.0 Sterling one sett kept here

Silver Watch Stock Buckle Knee Buckle

N. B. M^r Powers hath Moved over to Haverhill and
Preacheth 1-2 of his time there

[Endorsed on the margin.]

Examined by Me

Jacob Bayley Jus^t Pece

[Addressed on outside]

COLO THOMAS JOHNSON

at St. Johns in Canada

Prisoner

Bill of Exchange to Johnson

£30. 0. 0. Exchange Ryegate July 11th 1781.

Sir Thirty days after Sight of this my fourth of Exchange my first second and third, of the same tenor and date not being paid, Pay to the Order of Thomas Johnson Thirty Pounds Sterling money of Great Britain, it being for value recvd here and place the same to my account, as pr advice from your Humble Servant

ANDREW BROCK

To ROBERT DONALD Merchant
Glasgow

Three Rivers [P. Q.] August 14, 1781

Hears from your Tru Frind and most affectinate Husband having once more unexpectly an oppertunity of Riting to you which I embrace with the greatest Pleasure I Recivd a Letter from Doct^r hopkins infroming me that he was Stil

wating on the Lake and Likely wold be til I Cold Send forward againe—

I have injoind the best State of helth this Sumer that I have this five sumers. it gave me great Comfort to hear that you had injoind a Comfortabel State of helth Since I Left you which I was much Distressd to hear

Should there be No Exchan agreed on before this Comes to your hand I trust that my friends will Do all that is in their Power that I may be exchanged this fall—I live with a french Priest but hath changd his Religion and is Now a Priest to the Church of England by Changing his Religion he got 200 Pounds [mutilated] and an English wife—I have Sent my Papers home you may Let Capt Atkinson have Such of them as he Stands in Need of on his giving a Recit for them I am Vary glad to hear that Sister Tamey is with you my Love to her I hope that She will Not Leave you Til it may Please got [God] to Return me to you Again I have Seen Brother Page once Since I Came into this Province but have not heard from him Since hope that his friends will Look for an Exchange for him I hope that you will bare those misfortans with all the Pashance and fortitude of mind in your Power

My kind Love to all frinds and Nabours

Hears from your Sincear
frind and Husband

THOM^s JOHNSON

[Endorsed]

Inspected by the Commissioners

A: DUNDAS

[On same sheet as letter of Johnson's Aug. 14, 1781 to his wife.]

To M^r Carlton

Dear Sir

I am informed by M^r Wallace that you have been Vary helpful in my absence I Retur you my Sincear thanks hope that you will Continue to do all in your Power in my afares

and in my familie and to make your Sister as Comfortabel
as Posabel but think that I have no need to menshon thoes
things as I am sure that you will Do all in your Power my
Best Regards to Mrs Carlton all friends and Nabours

Hears from your Sincear frind and
Humbel Sernt

THO^s JOHNSON

[Address]

To The Wife of Thomas Johnson
Newbury Coos

[Draft of a letter to Capt. A. Pritchard* on the same
sheet with a letter to Gen. St. Leger† beginning "*I do myself
the honor,*" written in 1782 and forwarded at the same time
to Canada, in handwriting of Col. Johnson.]

Dear Sir

I received yours with the greatest pleasure and the
greatest safety.

I trust that you deliver the enclosed and Papers with the
greatest safety and expedition in your power I think the
present way of conveyance to be safe to all friends

To Captain Prichard

*Captain Azariah Pritchard was a Connecticut tory; visited Canada
where it was indicated to him it would be to his advantage to seize some
prominent man in the Connecticut valley and bring him as a prisoner to
Canada. With a party he secured Col. Thomas Johnson at Peacham in
March 1781. Again he tried to capture Gen. Jacob Bayley June 15, 1782,
but Bayley being warned of danger in season escaped. Pritchard was a
selfish unprincipled man and cared only for himself.—Note by the Editor

†Col Barry St. Leger was a British Col. who co-operated with Burgoyne
in his campaign in 1777 by making an attack on Fort Stanwix; in 1781 he
led a force as far as Ticonderoga to aid the British Commissioners in their
conference with the Vermont leaders but retreated on learning of the sur-
render of Cornwallis; after the war he was a commandant of the royal forces
in Canada.

[Copy of a draft of a letter to St. Leger, without date or signature, handwriting of Thomas Johnson. From an allusion in it to the surrender of Cornwallis it probably was written soon after the news of that unhappy affair.]

I am happy to inform . . . at this time . . . just returned from Boston . . . I find N. H. most inveterate against Vt. . . . They have appointed Officers and ordered men to be raised to suppress . . . This is caused by the information given by the Prisoners that deserted last fall. They tell of a Reliance [June Alliance, by another hand] carrying on betwixt Canda & Vermont But Vermont hath friends in plenty

Governor Hancock [of Mass.] is accused of being too friendly to Vt by M^r Adams and others, and he really is friendly to the State

I am informed by friends that some part of the Province of Maine with Nova Scotia is carrying on a work which if effected will have a most glorious effect at this time.

Such as have been very furious with us in times past now say that they will—their own business if they are not distressed. As General Bayley hath left this place there is no one that troubles themselves with taking people.

There is much talk of a Peace The first Towns in New Engl. are giving their Members instructions how to settle a Peace, as to the Fisheries, and many other things

No orders as to Recruiting of the Army as yet. No movements in the Army, as I can understand . . . But in one month from this time I think that I can give you a more authentic account.

A few days past General [Moses] Hazen passed through this State, making all the interest in his power to get the grant of Lands in this State

As to surrender of Cornwallis I shall forward the Papers to you, which will give you the account of that unhappy affair—But the Friends of B: are not disheartened. It may

serve to lull the country. Should it be otherwise I shall endeavor to give you the earliest notice.

I think the present way of conveyance to be very safe.

We have had late accounts of the French. When they left the Chesapeake that they sailed right for St. Eustatia and took it on Surprise, with little or no resistance, as well as Martinico. The French made a Present of St. Eustatia right to the Dutch as soon as they had taken it.

My earnest request is that Mr. [Jacob] Page may return home as soon and in that way that your wisdom may direct.

To Brigadier General St. Leger

[Draft of a letter supposed to have been written in early part of 1782, and may have been addressed to Washington.]

Sir:

With the greatest impatience I have been waiting these some months for an exchange, but finding the Plans of the last year which were frustrated wholly for want of Provision carrying so fast into execution this year and finding my country running led and driven so far and so fast into the British Plan which must inevitably bring destruction on this part of the country that I find myself under the greatest necessity of breaking over the common rules of Honour in giving your Excellency the enclosed accounts while a Prisoner and on my Parole I can but hope that by this time I may have an Exchange procured for me But let my Exchange be as it may it appears to me to be of the greatest necessity of keeping my information as a secret at least for the present, should my information and and my conduct meet with your Excellency's favour it is my desire that I might have some directions how I may conduct for the Future—And as my life, my all, and the destruction of some part of this country so much depends on your protection and favour I can but hope that you will turn your thoughts a moments on our situation

[Draft of a letter from Johnson]

Newbury April 13, 1782

Dear Sir

I would inform you that several months have rolled off very heavily as I have been hoping that some door would open that I might have acquainted you of some affairs that I think must have been agreeable to you. As I have been made so well acquainted with your desires inclinations and attachment to the British Crown I shall with the greater pleasure inform you how the Rebels are imposed on and as my life my interests my all depends on your holding this as a profound secret I shall put trust and confidence in you for the same.

You may be assured that Col^o [Ethan] Allen did agree with the Britons before exchange to do all in his power to bring the State of Vermont into an Alliance with Briton You may be assured that I saw the account that was given at London setting forth the value of the Grants the richness of the soil the no. of the Inhabitants & the great consequence it was to Briton to secure and defend them. Also that Col^o Allen was then at Bennington acting on concert with the plan.

Also I was informed by the Officers who were at the taking of Fort George and Fort Ann and Ballstown that Col^o Allen did lie at Castleton with his Forces by an Agreement that he made with the British Com^{der} in Canada. They said that had they not agreed with him that he might have cut them all off in three hours As it is not possible for me to give you an account in a letter I must omit the conditions of the cartel and movements proposed and set forth As to the Commissioners pretence of treating with each other as to Prisoners it is only a Sham I was intimately acquainted with the British Commissioners Their consultations were on Terms movements and to let different situations be known

Had their provisions come in season they would have tried for Albany and then have occupied in the State of

Vermont. A large number of light batteaux built on a new construction large Birch Canoes that would carry 12 and 16 men each The neatest sett of small Trucks with 4 wheels so that 6 men would take up one Batt and set it on the trucks & their Baggage and would run over into Lake George in less than an hour Numerous circumstances must be omitted for the want of room Doct Smith that was in Albany Jail gave or sent Gen. Haldiman Expresses containing the situations of the Country which the Governor of Vermont or the Allens did risk and conveyed into Canada and then he was a Commissioner to treat with the Vermont Commissioners The British Prisoners that were exchanged by Vermont told me in Canada that they were sent to from Bennington as far as Rutland in the Bay Province that if they would make their escape to Bennington that they should [be] sent right into Canada

Well may the Britons laugh when they see how the Rebels are imposed on by our Savages Last Summer there was two Indians with one Sergeant Smith down to Phila or near there Smith was in disguise He got the doings of Congress & the whole account of affairs the Southward Gen^l Haldiman was so well pleased with his conduct & intelligence that he gave him an Adjutant's Commission and some presents We see how the Rebels neglect their own Prisoners rather than pay a small matter for their clothing &c they will let them suffer and die in Jail but the Gen^l hath taken measures to pay them for their neglect, for he hath put them on to small Islands to keep them from running away and small guards will do for them—and deprive them of all necessaries but their Rations The Gen^l takes every measure to tempt them to ask for a exchange their Prisoners as he want the provisions for his own men

I think there is one door open for the Rebels now if they had skill enough to improve it but as [I?] know how they do neglect those opportunities it gives me but little concern I

cannot forbear giving you some small account of the advantages that I think might be taken.

Let Vermont be indulged at this time Let them have orders to raise their quota of men for the Season then let the Genl appoint a commander for them and some few more, Then let the troops that are at Saratoga be withdrawn in such a manner and to such places as might be thought proper.

It would be but a few days before the British would make a push for Albany when I think they might be all cut off by a rapid march on their rear West Point seems to be much in their way

No doubt but you may think it strange that I should write to you with such freedom & with such length—but it is because I can put confidence in you & I can but hope you will put confidence in me. I trust I have Gen^l Haldiman's confidence as I have his own seal to give certain token and such a way of conveyance agreed upon that I think I can give you such accounts as you may find wanting, or send such as you may think proper

As it is my Soul's desire to serve you it would give me the greatest happiness if anything here should give you any light or afford you any assistance at this time

[Draft of a Letter undated and unsigned and probably intended for George Washington]

Honour'd Sir

Altho I take my Pen into my hand again so Soon yet I Do it with Regret on this ACasion—yet as my Cheaf Consolation is in your Wisdom & Fidelity I can chearfully surmount the most Plaging Perplexing Divilish Situation that Ever man Can bee Flung into if I cold obtain the Least glimring Prospect; alltho at the Remotest Distance of serving my Native Country or may I bee the Least Fool in the Hole Continent of bringing our much Desird wishes to Pass an onourabel & Lasting Peace it wold make me Full Compensati

All most Every Day Turnes up Sumthing New—

The Last of February their was a Party of men went from Harford to Canada with Tobacco to Exchange For Tea—

About the Same time their went two men From Corinth William Taplin Jacob Fowler their Intenshons are not yet known to me but Expect they will soon be—

I find that Mr Davises Late Success & Favour From the Ginral hath Rased him to a State of independence & I think that he Feels him Self allsifant—I heard that He was agoing to Let one Peter Thusten brother in law to Mr Crocker one [illegible] of Colo Porters Familie go back with his Sones to Canada

I sent in the most Pressing maner to Davis Not to Let him go Nor aneybody else uppon anny Pretence whatsoever— But I understand that he hath Let him go and allso one Daniel Hall of Barnet a worthless Fellow allso one Stragling Fellow unbenone to me I Dont think that Thursten goes For aney good to the Country I think he must have His arent From Colo Porter—I am informed that Mr Coset is gone into Canada again with Doct' Porter of Plymouth you have it in Riting what mr Coosets busness was He hath gon threw this part of the Country No Doubt he hath got minds of all the Leading men in this Part and now is gone to make a Return to the Ginral Their seems to bee Numbers fixing out for the River Lamile [Lamoille] and For onyon [Onion] River to make Settlement—So that you see the Bars are all Puted Down and the Passing into Canada is all most as Frequent as before the war—your Wisdom will better Direct you what the Consequences will be—

I am only to Relate Facts—I have No Altarnitive Left but to bee a Strong Vermonter going on Rappedly chusing officers Setting up government—most Disagreabel God ondy known how I Shall get out

An answer From you wold bee Like a Drop of Cold water to the thirsty sole—your oppion as to the Peac and as to the ground that Vermont Stands on—

I am not ignorant of the bisey ours that you have to pass through I ask it as the greatest Favour and Trust you will not Deni me of the Product of one amongst So maney and as soon as you think Proper

John McClare hath been up to Davis to Send to Ginral Halderman that he was a Coming with his Familie by the way of the green mountains

[Memorandum in Johnson's hand of some incidents previous to and of the interview with Capt. Azariah Prichard on June 15, 1782 a few hours previous to the time Capt. Prichard and his party assaulted the house of General Bayley with the purpose of capturing him.]

Friday June 14, 1782 This day Col^o John Taplin of Corinth called on me He signified to me that there was a party in from Canada and that some of my neighbors would be taken off soon.

My answer was that they must take care of themselves, it concerned me but little

Saturday 15 In the morning came Levi Sylvester to me—could have opportunity to say but little to him: he told me that Capt. Prichard with Capt. Breckiridge was in with a Party and that I might see them if I had a mind to. We agreed on time and place I went, but waited one hour before that I could see them. Then Sylvester came to me, asked if there was anybody else there I told there was not to my knowledge Then he said "or with 'me." Within thirty rods I found Capt. Prichard and Capt. Brackredge I had near one hour's discourse with them. After a few compliments passing I asked him how Vermont stood now He said you shall know He says General Haldimand had just received a return for [from?] King George and that he was not to send the Indians on the State of Vermont any more but to use all that should submit to the State of Vermont with tenderness and lenity: and that they were to have all their lands with good privileges. But the opposers of Vermont

to be distressed and destroyed as fast as possible. And more expeditions to accomplish this design Doctor [George] Smith* with Capt. [Justus] Sherwood† were appointed to act as Commissioners or as Trustees, to carry on all Secrets on this River and on Otter Creek, and Captain Prichard to prosecute them

Capt. Prichard said he must take Sylvester with him for they had a Spy at Albany when Kentfield was executed with one other and that Kentfield swore against Sylvester before he was executed and that one Van dyke had given evidence against him, so that it could be but a few days before we would be taken up.

And Further saith that Governor Chittenden has sent an Express to Governor Haldiman that he had received an account from Newbury, Coos, that they had a Town Meeting there on account of going off to New Hamp, [Hampshire] and that General Bayley had got all that Town but three or four, and that I was one and that Colonel Robert Johnston was another. Governor Chittenden earnestly requested and desired that General Haldiman would send immediately and take General Bayley off from this part as he kept all the part in confusion, and that he could not carry out his plans any longer unless he would move him off

Prichard by repeatedly requested me to give my advice how and what time they should strike, which I absolutely refused but Sylvester insisted on it that they should strike at dusk before the Guard should be set, as they imagined they

*Doctor George Smith, or Smyth was one of the British Commissioners to treat with the Vermont officials to secure their allegiance to the British Crown:—Note by the Editor.

†Justus Sherwood was another of the British Commissioners, he was one of the first settlers of New Haven, Vt. and one of the party that rescued Remember Baker from the New York raiders. He became an outspoken loyalist and retired to Canada; was a Captain in Burgoyne's army. He was sent as a spy, ostensibly to arrange a cartel for the exchange of prisoners, but actually to secure if possible the allegiance of Ethan Allen to the British cause and the return of Vermont to the British fold. He remained a British subject all his life and settled in Kings County, N. B. See H. S. Wardners' article in the *Vermont*, v. 28, Nos. 5-6, Oct. 1924.—Note by the Editor.

would have one set, which I found would prevail This brought it near six O Clock when I left them, better than two miles from home—a bad road—But I made all the haste I could to let General Bayley know, and the Safest measures

My request to Capt. Prichard was that he would rest taking Gen^l Bayley a short time on the account that I should be exposed to be taken up and brought out. He said there could be no danger of that as Col^o Bedel said that when they were in before that I was not suspected in the least—and should that be the case he would rescue me—as he would leave Cross at Corinth, under the care of Col^o Taplin so that if there should anything turn up contrary to their Expectations that Cross would be into Canada in three days, and that he would be out with one hundred and fifty men or as many as would lay all this part of the country waste; as all things had got into their hands, so that he could have as many men as he would ask for and as soon.

I told him that would not do to destroy the country as things were in general so well disposed to Government

I mentioned to him about Davis being taken, He said that the Indians had done it without orders or contrary to orders, as they were only sent after deserters He said that he was sorry—For, as Sylvester was going off he had concluded to go to Davis the next place to engage him to hold correspondence with me, I told him he must send him right home and he would answer our turn—I wish that might be the case.

Captain Prichard said that they, or the General, had expected an expedition into Canada this summer, and there was talk of Col^o Bedel having a Regiment, but Col^o Bedel was some suspected as he had not wrote to the General as they had expected. I told him that Col^o Bedel was a friend to right. He said that he had not the least danger as he had the General's Seal, that he had no need to write his name.

I earnestly requested Capt Prichard that he would avoid Shedding of blood as much as possible. He promised me

that he would excepting in defence of his or their lives.

Capt Prichard told me that there was a Party gone down the Grants at this time. I understood him that they would be on their business: that was to take or destroy all that opposed Verm^t. I understood him that was by Governor Chittenden's desire

THOS JOHNSON

[In hand writing of Thomas Johnson, supposed to be addressed to Capt. Azariah Prichard a few days after the raid on the house of General Jacob Bayley June 18, 1782.]

I would inform you that things seem to be much in a turmult here since there was some that run from these to my house and Mr. Carleton's There was about five or six men with arms I had hard work to keep them from [illegible] of on you, and all the way I could stop them was to tell them they must fire alarms So I stopped them till you had got off or I think you would [have] had to left some in the Bow [the Oxbow meadow.]

I hear since that the old—Stopped in the Bow after he had done work for he mistrusted, as he had seen Col^o Taplin go to my house on Friday—2d On Saturday morning Levi [Sylvester] was seen at my house 3d About one hour or two before you struck he received a letter from Saratoga from a Col^o with the account of Levi's being a Spy, and ordering him to be taken So that he thought best to take care of himself till Levi should be taken up which would have been done, that night had he not been gone. I understand that he says that he knew that they would be after him on Saturday or Sunday night to his satisfaction and that he meant to be one side.

On Sunday morning they sent and took Esq^r Chamberlain and his son up and sent them over to Haverhill on Monday I understand they had a Court of Inquiry on them

On Tuesday morning I had a Guard to wait on me out of

bed and took me to Haverhill. In the afternoon I was examined, I was accused of carrying provisions out to you in the woods, and keeping Tories Company, but they could not prove anything So that they allowed me to come home and take care of my own business and not to keep such company any more. And that they will keep a good look out over me for the future.

As your Policy in Paroling the people hath gone far beyond my weak Plans, it will not be in their power to hinder my corresponding with you which I shall embrace every opportunity to let you know every circumstance in my power I expect that all things will be still and easy in a few days again

I hear this morning that Esq^r Chamberlain has gone home, again but on what conditions, or what he hath done or said I cannot yet get at. I think that if you can send Davis home and to me that will serve us all this summer. I shall send two Newspapers to you which you may send to the General. They are such as came to my hand late, but not much in them.

I should have written to the General but have nothing of consequence, to write—which I think doth not become me to write to such a man unless I had something of concern. If I can get anything worth notice I will convey it in the same channel with this. These from your sincere friend and well wisher with all respects to Friends

Col^o John Taplin Esq^r Please to deliver the enclosed or cause to be delivered to the *subscribed*, and you will oblige me as well as others

John Cross Please to deliver the *within closed* and you will oblige me as well as him

[Fragment to Pritchard by Col. Johnson, June 1782.]

Dear Sir:

It was not in my power to send out so soon as we talked of. I did embrace the first opportunity in my power. Had

not the least thought of their being gone. Was much surprised when I found they were gone, and with a Report that seems will be much to my damage and very unjustly. You must certainly know had I a mind to have played the mischief with you that it was my power to have taken you and your whole party, as I knew it in the morning. You may rely on it that all that came from me was by Silvester being at my house, in the morning and my being out in the Woods in the afternoon—and just before night he [Gen. Jacob Bailey] received Shem Kentfield's Evidence, which gave him suspicion that it was best for him to keep out of the way till Sylvester was secured.

Had they have known that you were coming I am sure you could not have found them without their arms. There was as many in the House as you had with you, and they had arms in the House loaded as I have been told by some of the Party since—That they left there in the morning and went there to Guard in the night The Old Fellow [Gen. Bailey] is took down Country again

I feel some concern about Esq^r Chamberlain that he hath given some account but it is only fears

[Parol^d inclosed in letter of Johnson to Washington dated Exeter July 20th 1782.]

I Lieutenant Colonel Johnson now at St Johns, do hereby pledge my faith and word of honour to his Excellency General Haldiman whose permission I have obtained to go home, that I shall not do or say anything contrary to his Majesty's interest or his Government and that whenever required so to do, I shall repair to whatever place his Excellency, or any others his Majesty's Commander in Chief in America shall judge expedient to order me until I shall be loyally exchanged with such other person as shall be agreed upon sent in my place

Given under my hand at St. Johns this 5th October 1781

[Johnson's letter is found in Volume 58, page 4, Washington's Correspondence, edited by Sparks.]

[Unsigned and undated
fragment in Johnson's hand, probably written about
October 1782, to Gen'l Washington]

I would inform that when I Rote from Exeter my Fears was great & I find Since Not without reason I find Since my Papers was Recevd and answed the Desird Effect the hole is Sadled on another man I find that my Caricter Stands good att Present I have been informed when Scoutes have been in but I have Recivd Nothing of importance but a Conformation of Former Facts that I was made aQuainted with— I am informed that all Things goes on well betwixt Vermont and Canadey that Canady is Indeavoring to Prepare For Vermont Such Things as shall Sute them in Trade & are informing That all That will Lay Still or join with Vermont Shall be Safe M^r Abel Davis That was Taken by the Indons Last June att Peacham was Sent home on my requesting him & Reconmending him To be a Fit Person to Convey Thoes intelgences by Their being informed by John one clan [?] went of 2 or 3 Bayleys being abstant [?] att Peacham the Scout Came out Sooner than I expect That I had Nothing Prepard for them They sent word to me that they wold bee in again the Fifth of Sept. Desiring me to bee Ready att that Time a Few Days after that Scout was in Their Came Threw this Place an offiser with 3 or 4 men with him they Vewed the gards hear and as I have Reason to think Found that they Cold not see with out Exposing them Selves to the gards they went to Said Davis att Peacham informing him that they had Seen me and that he must [send?] him the Next Day on the Rode about Five miles with his son to Pilate him to Canadey and that he had been but 5 weeks out of Canady got Expresses from them to Canadey and that he wold give his son one Doler p^r Day and that he should Return again

Soon he Likewise Said that he wold bee back him self if he cold get orders and Take Ginral Bayley and the gard hear

[Copy of letter from General Barry St. Leger to Thomas Johnson without date but probably written from St. Johns in 1782.]

My Dear Sir

I thank you very kindly for your attention to me—The Security that you so friendlily offer for the trifle I had in my power to confer upon you while you were in captivity is generous and like yourself and shall be had in remembrance and be assured that from the lively sense you express of small favours tho you are my political enemy I shall ever wish to confer greater ones on you

What are the people on your side of the Mountains about? That you will not tell me of course Let that be as it will; I know more than they think of; and I can assure the enterprizing Spirits they shall not insult the frontiers I have the Honour to Command with impunity

As I write not this with a view to change your present principles I hope if it shall fall into improper hands it may be no prejudice to you I am Dear Sir

Your affectionate H. Servant

BARRY ST. LEGER YS

Tho^s Johnson

[In Johnson's handwriting; apparently written to some American officer]

Newbury October 19, 1782

Dear Sir:

I have the pleasure of conveying some small matters to you which I think will not be altogether disagreeable to you. I think in the Journal way I list it that young Davis was gone into Canada He went to the Block House at Mascha The officer that he went to pilot was called by the name of Lt. Kava V [Kana] when he first went in but he paused a little and