

**George Washington to Jonathan Trumbull, December 14, 1776, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.**

**To GOVERNOR JONATHAN TRUMBULL**

Head Quarters, Bucks County, December 14, 1776.

Sir: I was last night favored with yours of the 6th. In a letter, which I did myself the pleasure to write to you two days ago, I gave you a full Account of my present Situation and the occurrences that have happened since I left the Neighbourhood of Fort Lee. The want of Means of Transportation, has hitherto hindered the Enemy from making any Attempt to cross the Delaware; and, I hope, unless the Course of the Season intirely changes, that the Weather will soon prevent their making use of Boats, if they should build them.

Your Situation to the Eastward is truly alarming; and I wish it were in my power to afford you that assistance that is requisite.<sup>1</sup> You must be sensible, that it is impossible for me to detach any part of my small Army, when I have an Enemy far superior in numbers to oppose; but I have immediately countermanded the march of General Heath's Division, who were coming down from Peekskill; they are ordered to return again to that place, and hold themselves ready to move, as occasion may require. Genl Lee's division are so necessary to support this part of the Army, that, without their Assistance, we must inevitably be overpowred, and Philadelphia lost. I have Ordered General Arnold, who was on his way down from Ticonderoga, immediately to repair to New London, or wherever his presence will be most necessary. The Troops, that came down with him and Genl.

## Library of Congress

Gates, are already, [from the advices I have received] so far advanced towards this Army, that to countermand them now, would be loosing the small remainder of their Service intirely; as the Time of their Inlistments would expire, before they could possibly reach you; Whereas by coming on, they may in conjunction with my present Force and that under Genl. Lee, enable us to attempt a Stroke upon the Forces of the Enemy, who lay a good deal scattered and to all appearance in a state of Security. A lucky Blow in this Quarter, would be fatal to them, and would most certainly raise the Spirits of the People, which are quite sunk by our late misfortunes.

In the Interval, between the Dissolution of the old and the Inlistment of the New Army, we must put our dependance on the public Spirit and Virtue of the People; which, I am sorry to say, has manifested but too small a Regard to their rights and Liberties in the States of New Jersey and Pennsylvania; the Citizens of Philadelphia excepted; but, I hope, such a Spirit still exists among your people, as will convince these bold Invaders, that, altho' they may, by a Superior Naval Force, take possession of your Sea port Towns, yet, they cannot penetrate and over run your Country with Impunity. I have the Honor to be, etc.

P.S. I have just received a Letter from General Heath of the 10th. Inst., in which he informs me, that his Division was to Cross the North River on that day; so that they must be at Morris Town by this time, which is but 50 Miles from hence; upon this Consideration, I have changed my Intention of countermanding him, for the same reasons as given in my Letter above, respecting the Troops under Generals Gates and Arnold.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>parks notes that General Clinton and Earl Percy, with 6,000 British troops detached from the main army at New York, took possession of Newport and Rhode Island on December 8. For the letters of General Clinton and 1ir Peter Parker relating to this event see the Remembrancer, vol. 3, pp. 261, 262.

<sup>2</sup>he draft is in the writing of Zench 2ilghman, except the phrase in brackets, which is in Washington's writing.