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Gaston Wright

&

New London,

1781



GROTON HEIGHTS

AND

NEW LONDON



LETTERS

FROM

ZABDIEL ROGERS

AND

THOMAS MUMFORD



From the Originals
In the possession of Gordon L. Ford

Brooklyn N^o Y^o
Privately Printed.
1881

3877

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no. 17

Paul G. Ford

NOTE

Of the writer of the foregoing letter, the following records are found,

* * * * *

“ Col. Zabdiel Rogers of the State Militia was often called out during the War — In 1775 his regiment was sent with others from the State to the City of New York — It was afterwards several times ordered to the Western border line of Connecticut — In 1781 he was on duty at Rye and Horseneck ”

(Miss Caulkins History of Norwich. Edition of 1866, p. 422)

* * * * *

“ The regiment from Norwich, under Col. Zabdiel Rogers was the first upon the ground — It arrived early in the evening — Wm. Williams Esq. of Lebanon rode from Lebanon to New London in three hours (twenty three miles) on horseback. The Enemy were just preparing to embark when he arrived ”

(Miss Caulkins History of New London, p. 569.)

* * * * *

Extract from the proceedings of a general Court Martial, beginning and held at New London and Groton, in the state of Connecticut, on the 20th. day of August Anno Domini 1782. by warrant and order of His Excellency the Captain General of the said state, of which Brigadier - General Roger Newberry was President,

“ Zabdiel Rogers, Esq. Colonel of the 20th. regiment, was called upon to answer the charge of remaining inactive upon the 6th. day of September. The sentence was not guilty, and acquitted with honor.”

(Battle of Groton Heights. By William W. Harris. p 76.)



N London. 7th. Sept. 1781

Dr. Sir:

I have the Unhappinefs to acquaint you Genl. Arnold with about 1500 Or 2000 Men Land- ed Here Yesterday Morning & have Burnt this Town From the Court House to Nathl. Shaw House which was Sav'd & from Giles Mumfords House to Capt. Richards Store On Both Sides Ex- cept a few Houses on the West Side of the Way— & All the Stores, Houses &C' from Elliots Tavern To the Fort — They Have Burnt your House & All Your Stores at Groton & Most of the Houses on the Bank — They Attack'd the fort at Groton with Great Spirit but were Repuis'd with Lofs Several Times by Col^l Ledyard who Commanded. who was Oblidg'd to Surrender to Superior Force. after the fort Had Surrender'd They Inhumanely Put him to Death as Also Capt. Peter Richards and A Number of Others—Giles; was Engag'd with the Enemy the whole Day And is Much un- well to Day thro' his fatigue — your Family Went Back. Suppose to Paquatonnack. where Capt. Mumfords Wife & Children have Gone — The Goods that Were divided I was Lucky Eno. to Get to Norwich The Ev'g Before the Enemy Landed —Giles had a Very Slight Wound. . . . Cannot now Write you further Particulars Must Referr you to What I have Wrote The Gov^l & Shall Write again Imediately—The Enemy are Now Under Sail Going Away — Shou'd think it Best for you to Come Down —

I am With Great Affection Your friend

ZAB: ROGERS

Thos. Mumford Esq^r:

(Addressed)

Thos. Mumford Esq^r:

Per Express

Now at Hartford

Groton 9th September 1781

Sir:

I have this Ins^t Rec^d yours of Yesterday p. M^r Sam^l Raymond Exprefs, Requesting a narrative of the Barbarous Scence of the Enemy Committed on the Brave Garison that Nobly defended Fort Grisw^d. Col^o Ledyard prevailed on a Number of the brave defenders of American Liberty to Joyn him in the defence of Said fortrefs added to the Small Garison amounting in the whole to about 150, who nobly defended Said fortrefs against About 1000 picked Brittish & foreign Troops, who Attacked that fort Sword in hand, & were Repulsed halfe an hour, during which time the Enemy Sufferd About $\frac{1}{4}$ of their numbers in killed & wounded, but being overpowered in numbers Col^o Ledyard finding the Enemy had gained pofsefsion of some part of the Fort & entering at the Gate, having three men kill'd, tho^t proper to Surrender himself with the Garison prisoners, & presented his Sword to an officer who Rec^d the Same & imediately Lunged it thr^o the Brave Commandant when the Ruffans (no doubt by order) pierced him in many places with Bayonets, Lieu^{ts} Chapman & Stanton of the Garison, with upwards of 70 others were inhumanly Murderdered with the Colonel, Chiefly the most worthy inhabitants of this Town, my Son Cap^t Peter Richards make one of this number—About forty are Dangerously wounded, & About forty made prisoners whose Lives were Spared by the interposition of a Brittish officer who entered the Fort too Late to Save the Brave Col^o Ledyard &c, the names of the whole killed & wounded I have not time Just now to Send your Excellency, never was a post more nobly defended, nor Brittish Cruelty more wantonly displayed, we have Lost the flour of this Town both in officers & Res-

pectable inhabitants — my House with the Chief of the others on the Bank are Burnt & many families Left destitute of food & Raiment, all the Stores in New London & more than halfe the Houfes are Likewise Consumed, I Conclude your Excellency is informed the infamous arnold Commanded, he dined with Jerremiah Miller & afterwards had his House Burnt with the others, I Can give your Excellency no encouragement from Our privateers, the Two Brig^s. I am Concerned in are Sunk to Save them. their Sails & Riggen all Consumed in Stores, one other has no guns, so that only one Remains fit for Duty unequal to the plan proposed, I here there is Two French Ships of force at Newport — Gen^l Tyler (now here) has tho^t proper to order Some publick Stores dealt out for the present Relief of those that have Lost their all, & no Husband &c. to provide them Support, he wishes to know your Excellency's pleasare Respecting his Conduct herein, & has appointed Doct^r Turner Superintendent of the Hospital department & direct him to Supply the needful for the wounded, I gave him my Advice in this matter

The foregoing is all that is preserved of a letter, shown by its contents to have been written by Thomas Mumford (a merchant trading in New London but having his residence in Groton upon the opposite side of the river) to Jonathan Trumbull Sen^r, then Gov^r of Conn^t

His daughter, Catherine was the wife of Captain Peter Richards who is thus mentioned in "The Richards Genealogy" p 96

" Peter — born 1754, died 1781 Slain in Fort Griswold — married Catherine Mumford born 1754, died 1805: residence New London; had only Catherine, married Levi Huntington: residence Norwich "

The following letter (the body of which is in the hand writing of William Williams, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence) refers to a rumored surprise three years prior to the assault and capture of New London and Groton Heights. I have been unable to find any other allusion to the affair.

G. L. F.

Lebanon Sep^r 3^d ½ past 6: p. m. 78

Sir:

Your Letter & Inclosure this minute received gives me the first & only Intelligence I have concerning the appearance of a British Fleet off New London. Your Situation &c. will afford you, the earliest & most particular Intelligence, & you will not fail to give such early orders to the whole or Such part of your Division of the Militia of this State as the Exigence of y^e Cafe Shall require, & the present appearance is such (unless different Accounts before this reaches you Sh^l^d be had) as renders it necessary to be as Speedy as possible in ordering & collecting Them at New London or elsewhere to oppose any Attempt of the Enemy which may be made.

I am, wth Esteem and Regard

Sir Your Obed^t

hble Servant

JONTH TRUMBULL

P S You'l report your doings as Soon as Necessary.

Maj^r General Huntington

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