

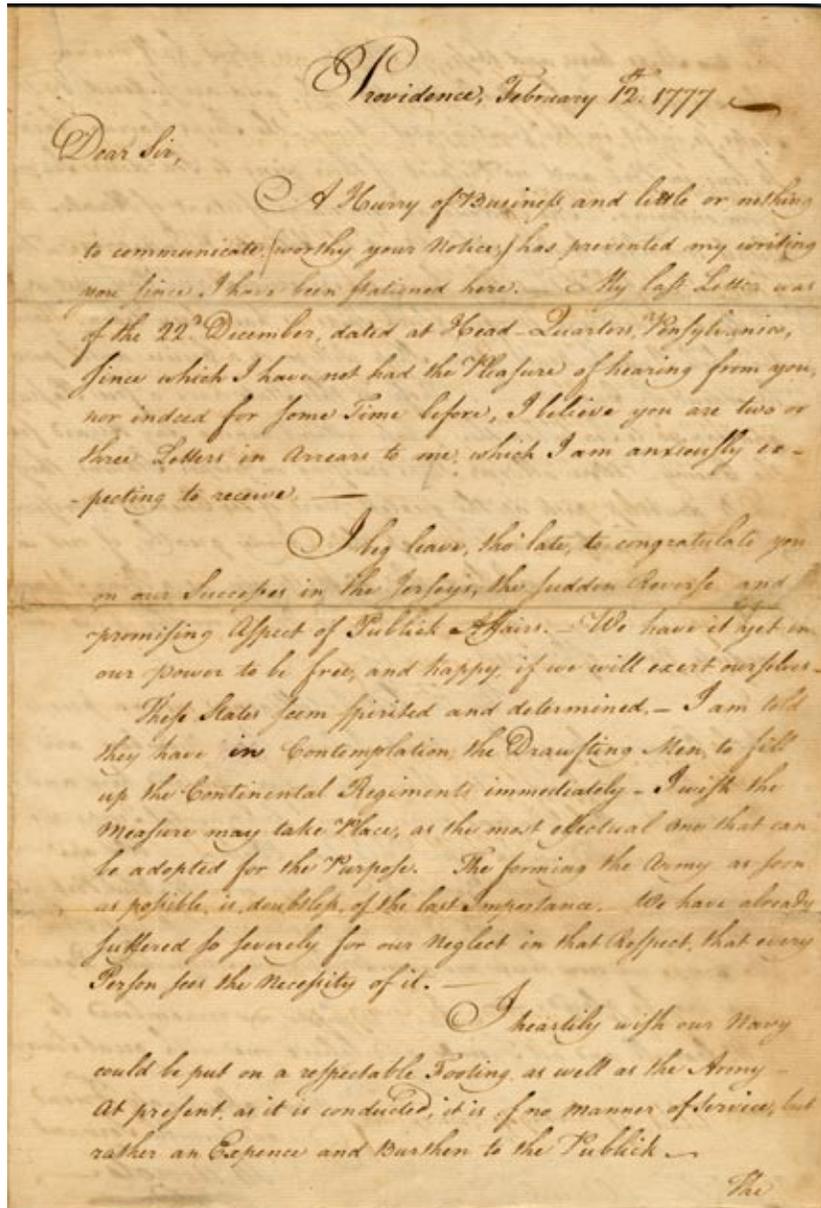
Providence, February 12: 1777~

Dear Sir,

A flurry of business, and little or nothing to communicate, worthy your notice, has prevented my writing you since I have been stationed here. My last letter was of the 22. December, dated at Head-Quarters, Pennsylvania, since which I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you, nor indeed for some time before, I believe you are two or three Letters in arrears to me, which I am anxiously expecting to receive. ~

I beg leave tho' late, to congratulate you on our successes in the Jersey's, the sudden reverse, and promising aspect of Publick Affairs. We have it yet in our power to be free, and happy, if we will exert ourselves— These States seem spirited and determined, I am told they have in Contemplation, the Drastring Men, to fill up the Continental Regiments immediately— I wish the measure may take place, as the most effectual one that can be adopted for the purpose. The forming the Army as soon as possible is, doubtless, of the last importance. We have already suffered so severely for our neglect in that regard, that every person sees the necessity of it.~

I heartily wish our Navy
Could be put on a respectable Footing as well as the Army—
At present, as it is conducted, it is of no manner of Service, but rather an Expence and Burden to the Public~



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Date: Feb. 12, 1777

Description: Letter from Benedict Arnold to Samuel Chace.

The two Ships here, and those at Boston, are about half mann^{ed}(?) who are engaged for twelve Months only, and are suffered by the States, to enlist in the Continental Army, the Ships having lain so long in Port, and no Prospect of their going to Sea, deters Seamen from entering. The Admiral complains of want of Hands. My People complain loudly of his want of Activity & Enterprize - The Seamen complain that they have never received any Pay, nor a Shilling of the Prize Money of such Ships as have been taken. Upon the whole I much doubt if one Ship will go on a Cruise until possibly ordered by Congress. - Those in this State have a free Passage and can go to Sea when they please without running any Hazard from the Enemy - Were all our Ships cruising on proper Stations, they would, doubtless, pick up the greatest part of the Enemies Provision Ships, and Transports, and distress their Army greatly, if not entirely ruin it. - I hint the Matter to you as a Thing I know to be practicable, and in my Opinion, an Object worthy of the immediate Notice of Congress. -

By the best Intelligence we can procure of the Enemies strength in Rhode Island, their Numbers are about four Thousand - We have about five Thousand here, and in this Vicinity, One Thousand more, the only Continental Troops we have, are expected in in a few Days from Boston. - We are making every necessary Preparation to pass over to New Port, which I believe we shall attempt, if we can procure a sufficient Force. - The Troops we now have are raw Militia, on whom little Dependence can be placed. - Please to make me remembered to M. Carroll, and all Friends, and believe me with great Sincerity.

Dear Sir, your affectionate Friend
and humble Servant
B Arnold

Hon. Samuel Chace Esq.

The two Ships here, and those at Boston, are about half mann^{ed}(?) who are engaged for twelve months only, and are suffered by the States, to enlist in the Continental Army, the Ships having lain so long in Port, and no prospect of their going to sea, deters Seamen from entering. The Admiral complains of want of hands. Many people complain loudly of this want of activity & enterprise. The Seamen complain that they have never received any pay, nor a shilling of the prize money of such ships as have been taken. Upon the whole I much doubt if one ship will go on a cruise until possibly ordered by Congress. Those in this State have a free passage and can go to Sea when they please without running any hazard from the enemy. Were all our ships cruising on proper stations, they would, doubtless, pick up the greatest part of the enemies provision ships, and transports, and distress their army greatly, if not intirely ruin it. ~ I hint the matter to you as a thing, I know to be practicable, and in my opinion, an object worthy of the immediate notice of Congress. ~

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Dear Sir,

your affectionate Friend
and humble Servant
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Honorable Samuel Chace Esquire