



## ***Thomas Rodney to Caesar Rodney, 30 December 1776.***

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. . . . On the 25<sup>th</sup> inst. in the evening, we received orders to be at Shamony ferry as soon as possible. We were there, according to orders in two hours, and met the rifle-men, who were the first from Bristol; we were ordered from thence to Dunk's Ferry, on the Delaware, and the whole army of about 2000 men followed as soon as the artillery got up. The three companies of Philadelphia infantry and mine were formed into a body, under the command of Captain Henry (myself second in command), which were embarked immediately to cover the landing of the other troops.

We landed with great difficulty through the ice, and formed on the ferry shore, about 200 yards from the river. It was as severe a night as ever I saw, and after two battalions were landed, the storm increased so much, and the river was so full of ice, that it was impossible to get the artillery over; for we had to walk 100 yards on the ice to get on shore. Gen. Cadwallader therefore ordered the whole to retreat again, and we had to stand at least six hours under arms—first to cover the landing and till all the rest had retreated again—and, by this time, the storm of wind, hail, rain and snow, with the ice, was so bad that some of the infantry could not get back till next day. This design was to have surprised the enemy at Black Horse and Mount Holley, at the same time that Washington surprised them at Trenton; and had we succeeded in getting over, we should have finished all our troubles. Washington took 910 prisoners, with 6 pieces of fine artillery, and all their baggage in Trenton. . . .

The enemy have fled before us in the greatest panic that ever was known; we heard this moment that they have fled from Princeton, and that they were hard pressed by Washington. Never were men in higher spirits than our whole army is; none are sick, and all are determined to extirpate them from the Jersey, but I believe the enemy's fears will do it before we get up with them. The Hessians, from the general to the common soldier, curse and imprecate the war, and swear they were sent here to be slaughtered; that they never will leave New-York again till they sail for Europe. Jersey will be the most whiggish colony on the continent: the very Quakers declare for taking up arms. You cannot imagine the distress of this country. They have stripped every body almost without distinction—even of all their cloths, and have beat and abused men, women, and children in the most cruel manner ever heard of.

We have taken a number of prisoners in our route, Hessians and British, to the amount of about twenty. It seems likely through the blessing of Providence that we shall retake Jersey again without the loss of a man, except one Gen. Washington lost at Trenton. . . . I hope, if I live, to see the conquest of Jersey, and set off home again in two weeks. . . .

Source: Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, eds. *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six: The Story of the American Revolution as Told by Participants* (Edison, 2002), 514-15.