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**"AS GOOD A COUNTRY AS ANY MAN NEEDS  
TO DWELL IN" LETTERS FROM A SCOTCH-  
IRISH IMMIGRANT IN PENNSYLVANIA,  
1766, 1767, AND 1784**

The usefulness and limitations of immigrant letters as a source for American history have long been recognized. As repositories of primary information about political, social and economic activity their value can be seen in a number of well-known collections illuminating the experiences of different groups of immigrants.<sup>1</sup> Amongst eighteenth century immigrants in Pennsylvania those from Ulster form one of the most interesting and cohesive groups, and the motives for and the effects of this migration have been extensively described and analysed.<sup>2</sup> Yet the most explicit use of letters by immigrants from Ulster—and from Ireland generally—has been of those by immigrants who came in the nineteenth century. This is because fewer letters were written and fewer still have survived from the earlier period, while later letters, especially from the post-famine era, are plentiful in number and rich in descriptive quality.<sup>3</sup> The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has a collection of about two to three hundred items in its files, the great majority relating to emigration to America and dated after 1800.<sup>4</sup> Yet some eighteenth century letters still remain in private possession, having been handed down through the generations as treasured family memorabilia. The three letters transcribed below are such examples.<sup>5</sup> It cannot be said that they are especially profound or unusual in their content; their author was one of the otherwise anonymous masses, not a major actor at the centre of the stage. Even so, the letters merit transcription and preservation, not just because they are from a period when surviving letters are relatively scarce, but because they afford intimate glimpses of

the reactions and experiences of an ordinary emigrant to Chester County, Pennsylvania, firstly in peace and later in war.<sup>6</sup>

The letters are from Job Johnson, an immigrant from Ulster who arrived with his brother William sometime in the early 1760s. As the second and third letters show, Job was a schoolteacher<sup>7</sup> in Oxford township, Chester County, who later joined the army. Of William we know only that by 1767 he had gone into "the Plantation business, by which he makes out extraordinarily well," and from the context of the reference it appears that he, like the elusive David Hay referred to in the first letter, had probably indentured himself in order to pay for the cost of his passage.<sup>8</sup> The family in Ulster to whom Job's letters were sent included at least two other brothers, Robert and Johnny, two sisters, Martha and Elizabeth (Betty), and Uncles John, Robert and James. The family's farm, Barley Hill, in the township of Slatabogy, was two miles to the east of the little market town of Maghera, County Londonderry, where their descendants still farm today.

In the half century before Independence approximately a quarter of a million Scotch-Irish migrated from Ulster to the North American colonies in a series of waves which peaked in the years 1717-18, 1727-28, and 1740-41; Job and William were two who joined the last great surge of Ulster emigration which started in the early 1760s and culminated in "a veritable tidal wave" in 1771-73.<sup>9</sup> The township of Oxford where they settled had been one of the earliest Scotch-Irish communities in north America; it lay in the southwestern part of Chester county on the banks of the Octorara, one of the tributaries of the Susquehanna, some forty miles to the west of Philadelphia. By the 1770s there were about five hundred communities in North America containing substantial numbers of Scotch or Scotch-Irish immigrants in their populations; more than 130 of these communities were in Pennsylvania and Delaware, looking to Philadelphia as the main port of immigration.<sup>10</sup>

Of the three letters the first is the least informative and, literally, the most fragmentary. A worn fold has resulted in the disappearance of a word or two at the end of every line of writing, and in some cases it has not been possible to guess sensibly the missing words: lacunae and guesses are shown in square brackets; otherwise, original spellings and punctuation have been retained. The information and sentiments expressed within are common to, indeed typical of, many immigrant letters. Given the uncertainties of life anywhere in the eighteenth century, let alone on the American frontier, there is an understandable obsession with "that precious Jewel Health," linked with an unques-

tioning assumption that divine power determined that condition. The pieties expressed in all three letters are manifestations of the central force of religious belief amongst Presbyterian Scotch-Irish immigrants.<sup>11</sup> The first letter also shows that the brothers quite naturally yearned for news of the family back home; and sent back their own news about other emigrants and relatives in Pennsylvania. But already, within about a year of arrival, enthusiasm for the attractions, especially the material attractions, of the New World were stronger than the pang of homesickness; in Pennsylvania even a broom-maker might so prosper as to enjoy "Meat and Drink such as Slatabogy Never, Can Afford him."<sup>12</sup> Whilst the postscript was prompted by a request to send out linen, its piquant afterthought clearly illuminates popular attitudes to that "Cursed Commodity, the Stamp Act." Job's views were typical of those which made Scotch-Irish immigrants fervent supporters of the Revolutionary cause.<sup>13</sup>

The second letter, written some twenty-one months later, reveals a little more about the writer. By 1767 Job had been a schoolmaster for some two and a half years. Lingering doubts about settling in the New World had disappeared. The superior attractions of Pennsylvania over Ulster were clearly evident: "The Country . . . is as Good a Country as any Man needs to Dwell in . . . it would be a good estate in Ireland that would make me stay there . . . I do not know one that has come here that Desires to be in Ireland again. . . ." There then follows an enthusiastic description of agriculture in Chester county in which Job relates to the family in Slatabogy the kinds and sometimes the amounts of fruit, grapes, grain, Indian corn, cattle, root crops, and legumes that might be obtained: even flowers were so abundant "that the Woods abound in more plenty than your garden at home."<sup>14</sup> But an essential condition for the enjoyment of this material abundance was hard work: ". . . Bread will not be got with Idleness else it would be a Brave Country indeed. . . ."

Seventeen years span the period between the second and third letters. Although correspondence between Job and his relatives had evidently continued until the eve of war, by 1784 he had not heard from or written to the family for nine years. Swept up by the Revolution he had served in the Pennsylvania militia at first against the Indians in the West and then in Washington's army in the march on Williamsburg and the siege of Yorktown, which "was like nothing but one Continued Clap of Thunder between us and them."<sup>15</sup> Somehow he had survived it all, as well as "the Flux once and Ague Twice." After his last severe illness his thoughts turned once again to Slatabogy and to the family he had left

behind twenty years earlier: "I would be glad to know what children each of you has gotten, and the Names."

Job Johnson's letters possess no special literary qualities, nor are they concerned with high politics or diplomacy. Yet they convey something of the flavour of the effect of emigration and war on the life of one ordinary individual. We glimpse, briefly, the excitement and challenge of the New World, the pangs of homesickness, and the everpresent threat of ill-health or worse. It is tantalizing that only three of Job's letters have survived. One can but lament the loss of so much other potentially illuminating source material for the history of immigration in Pennsylvania during the Revolutionary era.

#### NOTES

1. Outstanding collections dealing with immigrant letters from Poland, Norway, and Great Britain are: W.I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* (5 vols., Boston, Mass., 1918-20); Theodore C. Blegen, *Land of their Choice; The Immigrants Write Home*, (St. Paul, Minn., 1955); Alan A. Conway, *The Welsh in America. Letters from the Immigrants*, (Cardiff, 1961); and Charlotte Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants: The Adaptation of English and Scottish Immigrants in Nineteenth Century America* (London, 1972).
2. Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish, or the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America* (2 vols., originally pub. 1902; repr. Baltimore, Md., 1968); Wayland B. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944); James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1962); R.J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775* (London, 1966); James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Southeastern Pennsylvania*, (Baltimore, Md., 1972); Audrey Lockhart, *Some Aspects of Emigration from Ireland to the North American Colonies between 1660 and 1775* (New York, N.Y., 1976); and William C. Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions to Early American Life and Culture* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1978).
3. E.R.R. Green, "Ulster Emigrants' Letters," in E.R.R. Green (ed.) *Essays in Scotch-Irish History* (London, 1969), pp. 87-103; Arnold Schrier, *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900* (Minneapolis, Minn., 1958).
4. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has collected between two and three hundred letters from emigrants; most are from the nineteenth century. Of their eighteenth century letters the best known correspondent was John Dunlop, printer of the Declaration of Independence, who had emigrated from Strabane to Philadelphia. A facsimile and transcription of one of his letters is in PRONI, *Eighteenth Century Emigration to North America* (Education Facsimilies, nos 121-140: Belfast 1972). Few of the eighteenth century letters are as informative as the three reprinted below.
5. The letters are in the possession of Dr. Charlotte C. Arnold (nee Johnson) of Belfast, and I am grateful to her for permission to transcribe them. Photocopies of the originals are now deposited in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 66 Balmoral Avenue, Belfast 9.
6. Other published immigrant letters which describe life in early Pennsylvania include A. H. Dodd, (ed.) "Letters from Cambria County, 1800-1823," *Pennsylvania History*, XXII (April 1955), pp. 134-145; Harold B. Hancock, "Life in Bucks County in

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1722-23," *ibid.*, XXVII (Oct. 1960), pp. 397-403; Theodore Thayer, "An Eighteenth Century Farmer and Pioneer: Sylvanus Seely's Early Life in Pennsylvania," *ibid.*, XXXV (Jan. 1961), pp. 43-63. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish*, vol. 2, pp. 64-67, reprints a letter by Robert Parke, an Irish Quaker, in which the description of agriculture might be compared with that in Job Johnson's second letter, below.

7. Schoolteaching was a common "though second-best" occupation for young Ulster immigrants in this period, according to Professor Green, partly because of the shortage of recruits for a job which paid poorly: Green, "Ulster Emigrants' Letters," pp. 94-95. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, pp. 319-320, notes the marked zeal for education amongst the Scotch-Irish settlers.

8. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, p.44; Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions*, p. 39.

9. Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions*, pp. 36-39.

10. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish*, vol. 2, p. 2; Dunaway, *Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, pp. 44, 51; Lehman, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions* p. 43.

11. Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions*, p. 85. A Presbyterian church had been established in Oxford township as early as 1725: Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish*, vol. 2, pp. 61, 103.

12. For a description of the attractions of southeastern Pennsylvania immigrants, see Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish* pp. 186-199.

13. Henry J. Young, "Agrarian reactions to the Stamp Act in Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania History*, XXXIV (Jan. 1967), pp. 25-30; also Dunaway, *Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, p. 156.

14. On the abundance and characteristics of agricultural produce in the region see Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, pp. 262-263; Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country*, pp. 32-41, 150-183; and Lehmann, *Scottish and Scotch-Irish Contributions*, pp. 54-55.

15. The Eighth Pennsylvania Regiment was originally formed to guard the Western posts and to protect the frontier; in 1777 it joined the continental army under Washington. See Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania*, pp. 161-162. For the siege of Yorktown see Franklin and Mary Wickwire, *Cornwallis and the War of Independence*, (London 1970), pp. 354-388.

John Johnson in Saltabogy, to the care of Mr James Barclay, Merchant in Maghera, County of London = Derry. Oxford Township, March the 2th, 1766.  
Dear & Loving Brethren.

We Trouble you again with a few lines to Let you know that we are Both well in Health since our Last unto you Thanks Be to the Almighty God who has so Abundantly Been Favourable to Us in this our Pilgrimage, with that Precious Jewel Health, And we Hope that These Lines will find one & all of you in perfect Health Both in Body and Mind for which we are Both very solicitous Concerning and would be Glad that one and all of you [would] Not Neglect any convenient opportunity of letting [us know] The same from time to time During our Pilgrimage in [this new] Land Dear Brethren we having Nothing Further to write [to tell] of you but what we have already wrote This Being the Ninth [time] that we Have sent Home This Year, Eight by Hugh McCagen [who] is Gone home and although he was in this town had no [more] opportunity of speaking with him before the Departure. [Please] to let Cousin Robert Johnson Know that I have got to under [stand that] his Son Isaac had put Himself Apprentice to a Chair [maker a] short time before His Death But the Term he was Bound [or the] Masters Name I have Not as yet Justly come to know. He

died in the said mans House of an Intermitting fever [and] was took Care of During his Illness very well by a Girl [who was] I suppose some one of the Wilsons Which Stayed with Him [there] at the said Mans House; And Be also pleased to let [George] Given know that I having occasion about Forty miles to Go to West Jersey called in the Coming back to See the Widow [\_\_\_\_\_ of] William Hay at Trenton, when I had the opportunity of [taking letters] From him directed to William Hay and his love to us Therein [and] Desiring us to see about His Son David who Has left [\_\_\_\_\_] Here, therefore as soon as I Got Back I went to Philedel [phia hoping] to Buy him from the Said Captain and to put the [end to the] matter if it Lay in My Power as I could get no other [way to get] him off. But the said Ship went to New York that the [\_\_\_\_\_] So that it was Utterly out of our power to Do any Thing for Him. But let them not be in any Concern About Him For I have Reason to think that it was the Best Step that He Could Take Both for Soul and Body and He May Come to that which none of the Brethern Ever will come to by Staying at Home a Roasting of Potatoes. Dear Brethern we Must let you know that we Charge you Very Much With Not Letting us know in any of your Letters yet wrot [how] all our Good old Neighbours are, especially George Given [al-] though He May Think we have forgotten Him Being at Such a distance from Each other yet when Brother William and I meet [we] seldom part without Have His Name in some of our Discourse. If He Was Here He would make Well out at Making of Broomes [to] sweep Houses with, there Being a Great Call for Such Tradesmen [at] sixpence per Broom, so that If He is Not Failed since we [went] away He Might Make Easily six of them Each Day Besides [having] Meat and Drink as Slatabogie Never can Afford Him. Having no more at Present to Acquaint any of you with [we] would Desire that you would give our Kindest Compliments to [all] our Uncles, Aunts, Friends and former Acquaintances and we would Take it as a favour of any of them that would [favour] us with a Letter Hereafter. So We Conclude with our Real [love] to Sister Martha & Sister Elizabeth while we Remain [dear] and Loving Brethern Your Most Affectionate And Ever Loving Brothers

William & Job Johnson

P.S.

Dear Uncle John. If you could get Me sent with some Safe Hand In the Spring about Ten yards of Linen Well Bleached and of Yard width Thirteen Hundred on Fourteen Hundred Cloth. It would very much oblige your Most Loving Nephew and Humble Servent Job Johnson.

We have had Little or no Winter here this year; and of Snow not any but what lay on the Ground for four or five Days only. The Stamp Act has not Taken place Here as yet. The people Stand so Much against it. But it is forced Upon some of our Islands, Especially Jamaica [and] Nova Scotia where at present they make Legal prizes of [our] vessels going in there. But we Expect Now Every Day to Hear of it Being Repealed or Forced Upon us By Men of War [sent] Here to be Sent to Block up our Trade untill we Be obliged to Take that Cursed Commodity Called the Stamp Act which is all the Name for it here.

Oxford Township. November 27th 1767.

My Very dear Brethern,

Not being willing to neglect any opportunity that I have in my power to writ unto you, I have thought proper to address myself to you all in a few lines

hoping that they may find you all in good Health, as thanks be to God they Leave Me, the Chief purport of them is to acquaint you that I have not had the favour nor happiness of one Letter from any of you this year. Although you have had many Good opportunities to have sent by, Which gives Brother and I great uneasiness Concerning your Welfares, and if I were not sensible that letters between this and Ireland are subject to Miscarry, I would really be apt to lose you with unkindness: But however [ ] it may be that you have wrot, and they have Got Lost, and on that account I shall not insist on your infringement of Brotherly sincerity and regard, but proceed to acquaint you, that brother William is in Good Health, And lives in Hertford Township, Chester County with one John Lewis, which is the same place he was when I wrote to you before. He follows plantation business by which he Makes out extraordinary well, he likes this Country so well that he Does not know whither he shall ever Return home or not. I was fully Determined to agone home this fall, But I Could not Get ready in time therefore I Continue in the above Township, where I now have been Two years and a half Teaching a very Large School, and am now engaged in it untill the tenth of February ensuing. Again which time if God permits the days I intend to come home Not with any other view than through the regard I have to see you all once More, and to settle My Affairs there, and so to return (God willing) here again. I wrote seven letters home last year, six I sent by David White [?] but I do not know whether or not you have Got them, and I have Got No answer therefore I have nothing further to writ; only knowing that it is common [ ] at home to expect something Concerning this Country its property and Quality, therefore this is Really my Judgement of it, that it is as Good as Country as any Man needs to Dwell in; and it is Much better than I expected it to be in every way I assure you, and I really likes it so well and it is so pleasant to me that it would be a good Estate in Ireland that would Make Me Stay there, and indeed many times when I have been by myself and think of the Lord's Good Dealings unto Me, I cannot but admire him for his Mercies that ever he turned My face hitherward; and Give Me strength and Confidence in himself and boldness by faith, to oppose all Gainsayers, though never so strong, although I cannot say that then, it seemed so Clear for Me to leave the land of My Nativity, Yet Now to Me it is a Certainty that My Removal was right and in what I Did I had peace, and in all My exercises by sea and Land, I never felt the Least in Me, as to Desire I had not come forward, but rather rejoiced (Turn over) in the Midst of them all. My Brother was not so clear in these things untill he had Been a year in the Country, Which indeed is Mostly the Case, with all the first year after they Come here: but Blessed be God all is well to our content. And if one heard every objection that lay in the way of Coming here, it would be work enough. But My resolutions were, and my sayings to several opposers, that I would come, if God hindered me not no Man should. And I do not know one that has come here that Desires to be in Ireland again, for to Live there and I have often wondered at our Countryfolk that was hard of belief in regard of what was said of their Country, and would rather live in Slavery, and work all the year round, and not be threepence the better at the years end than stir out of the Chimney Corner and transport themselves to a place where with the like pains, in two or three years, they might know better things. The only encouragement that I had to Come away was because Many Go to America worth nothing yet some of them servants and to hear or see them Come back again, in two or three years worth more than they would have been by staying at

home while they lived and yet they would Not Content themselves at home, but went back again which was sufficient to Convince any one that the Country was Good. But there are Many in Ireland that Desire to hear ill of this place, because they would keep their friends there with them, in Bondage and Slavery, rather than let them come here, and they think we never writ enough of the Bad properties of this Country and the Vermin in it. Now this I must say in report that there are Bears, Wolves & Foxes, Rattles snakes, and several other such creatures, but Not in this part as ever I seen, as I have Travelled Many Miles to & fro. But I suppose the fear of those Creatures in Ireland is far worse to Some there, than the hurt of them is here. But I believe that this Province of Pennsylvania by all I have see and heard of it, is as Good a one as any in America. I have seen in all places I have travelled, Orchards Laden with fruit to admiration, their very Limbs torn to pieces with the weight, and Most Delicious to the Taste I have seen a Barrel of Curious Cyder from an apple tree; and peaches in Great plenty. I could Not but at first smile at the Conceit of them, they are a very Delicate fruit, and hang almost like our onions that are tied on a rope. As for cherrys both red and black they cannot be a Country to exceed it. Pears are also very plenty, and very Good; plumbs in abundance, Quinches also, but I Do Not like them; although Good of their kind. And here are from May until Michaelmass great Store of Very Good wild fruit, viz—Strawberries, Cranberries, Huckleberries and bilberries. There are Gooseberries in some places, middling good, but in a general way Does not Grow so well here as at home, But here Growes exceedingly fine Currants, of which the Inhabitants Make excellent wine. Here is likewise in Great plenty, wild Grapes of which they Make Wines. And it is My Judgement, of what I have observed that fruit trees in this Country destroy themselves by the Very Weight of their fruit. As for Grain, where land is Good and well laboured it turn out to admiration; some Acres will produce Thirty, some Twenty and in Common the Land hereabouts will produce between fifteen & Twenty Bushels of Good Wheat, that will Weigh sixty or sixty two pounds per Bushel. The Land they plows three times, and allows three packs of Wheat to sow an acre. Rye grows exceeding well here; Barley Does not do so well here as at home, they allow two Bushels to sow an acre. Oats does pretty well here but not so well as at home, and indeed this year there was None in this part of the country they are Commonly ripened before they come to perfection, owing I Suppose to the heat of the Climate, and they Make No other use of them here than to feed their horses; they allow only Two bushels to sow an acre here in a grain called Buck Wheat Very Good, and is of Great service, and produces to admiration, the Common time of sowing this Grain is about the Twentieth of July and in less than three Months May have it in Meal, they allow three pecks to sow an acre, and they will have in a Common Way between Twenty and thirty Bushels off an acre. Here is a very serviceable grain called Indian Corn, and where it is well Laboured and Duly attended will reward the Labour with four or five hundred fold, two Quarts is what they allow [ ] the Ground here in a general way are but shallow, and is very easy [ ] a boy and two horses will plow an acre very easy in a Day. As [ ] Grass there is pretty Good Lowland Meadows, which is mowed [ ] as to their pasturage or upland, the grass is not extraordinary [ ] Cattle Very fat, the Inhabitants here Give their Cattle Salt [ ] they tell Me Makes them thrive. Every farmer has yearly two



[            ] acres of Turnips, which turn out to their advantage, all roots  
 [            ] well here, potatoes does exceedingly well in Most parts where they  
 [            ] to Raise them: here is also Cucumber, Water Mellons, Mush  
 millions [?][            ] and pomkins in Great abundance. As to flowers we have  
 such abundance that the woods abounds in More plenty than your Garden at  
 home. Pease grow very well here; and English Beans Likewise; but here is Beans  
 called Kidney, that is excellent eating with the podes on. And indeed this is a  
 Brave Country, although no place will please all. And some may be ready to say  
 I writ of Conveniences; but not of Inconveniences; My answer to those I honestly  
 Declare there is some barren Land; as, I suppose there is in Most places of the  
 World; and Land in this part is very high, selling Commonly at six and seven  
 pounds per acre. Neither will such land Produce Corn without something to buy  
 them. Nor Bread will not be got with Idleness else it would be a Brave Country  
 indeed, and I Question not, but all them would give it a Good word. For my part  
 I never would had the Least thought of returning home only through regard of  
 seeing you all again. I would here writ More particularly to each of you  
 Concerning us both, but seeing, God willing, I shall so suddenly follow this  
 Epistle in person, Let these suffice. Dear Brethern, I Desire the favour of you to  
 remember us kindly to our Relations at home Indefinitely; for I have not time at  
 present to particularize them, so in a hopeful expectation of finding you all well  
 at My arrival, I conclude and remain, My Very Dear Brethern with the Most  
 sincere regard your affectionate Brother

Job Johnson

Messrs John, Robert & James Johnson of Slatabogy to the care of Mr James  
 Barclay in Maghera, Merchant.

Mr. Robert Johnston, in Slatabogie County Londonderry, Ireland.

Hand by Mr. \_\_\_\_\_

Philadelphia December 5th 1784

Dear Brother,

The pleasure I this morning feel of having through the Infinite and Kind  
 Redeemers Goodness, a life like mine prolonged through a long and Severe War,  
 the hardships I have been partaker of, But bless God who has at last given us the  
 Victory, and established our Independancy. Oh happy peace which enables me  
 at this time, through God, to take up my pen to enquire after your Wellfares,  
 and to give you an account of My own, and in the first place I must tell you, that  
 a large Volume would not contain what I would wish to writ on that Subject,  
 Much less a letter. Therefore let it but Suffice to give you to know, that your  
 letters of 1775 being the last I received came to hand and never After untill this  
 day had I the happiness to answer them. The above year I enjoyed a bad State of  
 health and in the fall of that Said Year, being out in the Militia, as Quarter  
 Master I took the Bloody Flux at Perth Amboy (State of New Jersey), which  
 Continued with me for Seventeen weeks, in spite of medicine and that was not  
 wanting, and at last ended in a Intermitting fever, (or Ague) which continued  
 with me Nine Months longer. Being at this time got to Philadelphia and lay  
 under the hands of two of the ablest Physicians here, was several times given up  
 for Death, but Yet, through God, was so far recovered in Summer 1776, that I  
 could ride a little and did so and found Benefit thereby, But still a complication  
 of disorders attended Me, which I thought would Soon take me out of this World

of Troubles; Yet through Mercy he who judges best for all Men allotted me to see a great deal more hardships and thanks be to his Name who has brought me through them all to this happy period. For shortly after I got so well that I joined the Army again, Being Appointed by Congress an Assistant Deputy Commissary General of Issues for the Western Department of the State of Pennsylvania in which line of the Staff I bore that Commission for three years and six months, being the Most of that time out against the Indians in the Western Army; this letter could not be able to Contain (Turn over) but a very small description of that Savage people that we had to fight against, and their Cruelty to us when in their power, the Battles Skirmishes with them and the numbers slaine, with the hardshipp undergone by us while in their Country, I must not fall on as it would swell my letter that I would writ nothing else; However, After being there three years, I was, to My great joy, ordered to Philadelphia to join the Army then going with his Excellency General Washington to besiege Lord Cornwallis in little York (State of Virginia). I left the Indian country in August having Six Hundred Miles to Philadelphia, and got there in time to join our Troops and the French then on their March to Williamsburgh, being four hundred and twenty Miles more, with our having had one days rest save two nights at Philly on my way which I had not seen for the Above Times—We got to Williamsburg and began the Seige 28th of Sept. 1781 which lasted untill the 19th of October, all which times (to be short on the Subject) was like nothing but one Continued Clap of Thunder between us and them; When at last they surrendered; I will say no more on the Subject of War only that the preserver of all Men made me Fortunate enough to get through the whole without loss of Life or Members; Still, though, with an ailing constitution for which I have the greater reason to bless God who contained me when many stout and strong around me fell. After coming home from the hardships of the war There has not been a year since but what I have had a severe spell of either one disorder or another; the Flux once and Ague twice; and now Dear Brother I am just through Providence got just so far as to be able to sit up to write you this, for about four weeks ago No one that saw me would have believed that ever I should have wrot more in this world, I was bedfast for seven weeks of a Nervous fever, and Indeed hardly can I now sit to writ you; but anxious desire to let you hear from me once more and God only knows but it may please him to make it the last. I would have thought that you would have wrot me before this, but Not a line have I received from one in Ireland, only old Uncle John and Brother Johnney; But I expect that you will. My most kind Compliments to Sister Betty, and children, I would be glad to know what children each of you has gotten, and their Names. My Respects to all old Neighbours, Friends and former acquaintances, and let them all know that I yet live, and I would be glad to hear from them all. While I remain Dear Brother with ardent good wishes for your health and Prosperity, Together with that of your family.

Your most affectionate brother,  
Job Johnston

Mr. Robert Johnston