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and avow allegiance to the state by August 1, 1777, the money raised from the sale of their goods was forfeited to the public treasury.

2. On June 4, 1777, the legislature authorized the governor or commander in chief to deport the wives and children of exiles if deemed necessary. In part because of the concerted effort to resist implementation of the Act of Free and General Pardon of June 5, the Council of Safety on June 24 ordered that the wives of designated Loyalists be sent behind enemy lines and on July 11 extended the order to provide for the banishment of all dependents of those who had gone over to the British (see Doc. 8).

7 William Franklin to Governor Jonathan Trumbull

[*PNJHS*, N.S., 3 (January 1918), pp. 46-48.]

Pursuant to the orders of the Continental Congress (see Sec. VII, Doc. 4), William Franklin arrived in Lebanon, Connecticut, on July 4, 1776. Ironically, the former royal governor of New Jersey signed a parole with the rebel Governor Jonathan Trumbull on the very day the congressmen adopted the Declaration of Independence. Because of both his former position as governor and his father's prestige, he escaped confinement in the notorious Simsbury Mines near Hartford and was granted the maximum amount of freedom possible. He was allowed to retain his butler, and could travel freely within the town limits and correspond with whomever he wanted so long as he did not contact the enemy or in any way attempt to further the British cause. Sometime in December 1776 Franklin broke his parole by collaborating with the Howe brothers to issue royal pardons to Loyalists in Connecticut and New Jersey. He may have done so out of anger at the Congress for failing either to permit his transfer to New Jersey or to allow his exchange with the British; perhaps he was embittered because his son, William Temple Franklin, had gone to France with Benjamin Franklin in October, thus signifying his allegiance to the grandfather's position. In any event, Franklin was found out and ordered confined to the Litchfield town jail in April 1777. There he sat in a small room with only one window for light and air, unable to leave the cell, to write letters, or to receive visitors. When Elizabeth Downes Franklin learned of her husband's plight, she became despondent. Of frail constitution, she could not bear the emotional strain; she died on July 28, 1777, after having "suffered much in her mind." William sank into a deep depression upon hearing of her death. He had apparently lost everything because of his loyalty to the crown—his position, his possessions, his son, his father, and now his wife. The letter below to Governor Trumbull poignantly describes his mental and physical condition in September 1777. He later recovered and was exchanged in October 1778. He was an active Loyalist leader in New York from the time of his exchange until his departure for England and exile in 1782.

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Litchfield Gaol Sept. 15, 1777

Sir,

Having received authentic Intelligence of the melancholy Death of my Wife at New York, to which Place she was obliged to retire when General Howe evacuated Amboy,¹ and that she has left my Effects in the Hands of a Gentleman who happened to be there from New Jersey, but who expects to remove soon from that City, I find myself under a Necessity of requesting your Permission to send my Steward, Thomas Parke, to New York, in order to assist in taking Care of those Effects, and to bring me out some Linnen and other Necessities of which I stand in great Need, and which I cannot procure here for Money. There are, besides, some Papers and Accounts in which my Father, as well as myself, is interested, and which I would willingly transmit to him or his Attorney at Philadelphia, before I die, an Event that I am convinced cannot be far off, unless there should be some speedy Relaxation of the unparallel'd Severity of my Confinement. I feel myself in a sensible Decline and am already so much reduced in Size, and become so weak and relax'd, as to render it extremely improbable that I shall ever recover my health and Strength again. The Anxiety I was long under on Account of the distress'd Situation of my dear Wife, whose Death I was convinced would be expedited by the Intelligence she would necessarily receive of my cruel Treatment, and the Affliction with which I was overwhelm'd on the News of the actual Death of one of the best of Women, has brought on such a Dejection of Spirits, attended with an almost constant Fever, besides other Complaints, that my Life has become quite a Burthen to me. In short, I suffer so much in being thus, as it were, buried alive, having no one to speak to Day or Night, and for the Want of Air and Exercise, that I should deem it a Favour to be immediately taken out and shot—a speedy or sudden Death being, in my opinion every Way more eligible than such a miserably lingering though equally sure one as I seem at present doom'd to.

In a Letter I wrote to Gen'l Washington and the Congress requesting Leave to visit Mrs. Franklin in her Illness, I pledged myself that I would send them a Vindication of my Conduct with Regard to the Breach of my Parole I am charg'd with by them.² I therefore propose drawing up a full Narrative of my Case, from my being first sent a Prisoner into this Colony, and as I shall for this Purpose have Occasion for several of those Papers which I left behind at Middletown³ and which have since, I understand, fallen into your Hands, I must request you would transmit them to me by the Bearer Mr. Lord. I know not that there are any among them which you can think worth keeping, or taking Copies of, but if there should be any such, you can either transmit me the Originals, or certified Copies as you may think most proper. As the Room in which I am confined is directly over the common Sitting Room of the Tavern, in which there is generally so great a Noise as to render it almost impossible for a Man to collect and digest his Thoughts on any Subject and as Mr. Lord is unwilling (without your Permission) to leave me Pen, Ink & Paper, to write by myself when a convenient opportunity may offer for the Purpose, and it is troublesome & inconvenient for him to attend me on the Occasion, I am under a Necessity of begging that you would let me be removed to some private House (where he thinks I may be as safe as in this Gaol). and, when I want to write, to be shut up in a Room, in which he can take Care that there is no other Paper, but what he gives to me, and receive the same when I am let out. This will avoid all Risk of my making an ill use of the Indulgence, and will save him the Trouble of attending me for several Days

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together, which it will probably take me to draw up and copy such a full Narrative as I propose sending to Gen'l Washington & the Congress. Besides, I want to write (while I am able) to my Father & Son upon Business of Consequence to them, and to make some Settlement of my Affairs, which the Death of my Wife has made necessary—nothing, however, but what I am willing shall pass the Inspection of Mr. Lord or any others you may appoint.

If I am accused of any particular Breaches of my Parole, besides what are specified in the Resolves of Congress,⁴ I should be glad you would inform me of them, that I may take Notice of them in my proposed Narrative.⁵

As I have ask'd nothing in this Letter but what is obviously just and reasonable, I cannot but hope for your Compliance.⁶

I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

WM. FRANKLIN

1. The British army under the command of General Sir William Howe completed the evacuation of Perth Amboy on June 30, 1777.

2. On July 22 Franklin wrote the American general informing him of Elizabeth's serious illness and requesting a pass to visit her. Washington, who lacked authority in the case, forwarded the letter to the Congress. On July 28, the day Elizabeth died, the Congress resolved that "after such a violation of so sacred a tie as that of honor" it was not "consistent with the safety of the States, to permit him to have an opportunity of conferring with our open enemies under any restrictions whatsoever." Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of George Washington*, 8:474; Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 8:583.

3. It was in Middletown, where he resided from October 1776 to April 1777, that Franklin broke his parole by working on behalf of the Howes.

4. After an investigation of Franklin's conduct, the Congress resolved on April 22, 1777, that "Gov. Trumbull be informed that William Franklin . . . has . . . sedulously employed himself in dispersing among the inhabitants the protections of Lord Howe and General Howe . . . and otherwise aided and abetted the enemies of the United States: And, that he be requested to order the said William Franklin Esqr. into close confinement, prohibiting to him the use of pen, ink, and paper, or the access of any person or persons, but such as are properly licensed for that purpose by Governor Trumbull." Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress*, 7:291.

5. If Franklin ever wrote the narrative, it has been lost.

6. In December Trumbull permitted Franklin to take lodging in the home of Captain John Ellsworth in East Windsor.