

## RS#16: Excerpt from Letter from Deborah Champion to Patience

*Deborah Champion (b. 1753) was the daughter of the Continental army's commissary general, Henry Champion. From Westchester, Connecticut, she rode to Boston carrying messages from her father to General George Washington. This is her recounting of that adventure to a friend.*

Westchester, Conn.

Oct. 2nd, 1775.

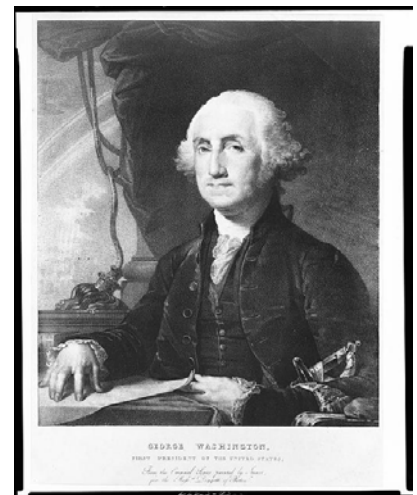
My dear Patience,

It happened last month, and I have only been home ten days, hardly long enough to get over the excitement. My adventure began when Father again told me I must ride fast and take good care of the documents, and we set forth with his blessing.

We met few people on the road. Almost all the men are with the army, so we saw only old men, women, and children on the road or in the villages. Everywhere we heard the same thing, love for the Mother Country, but stronger than that, that England must give us our rights, that we were fighting not for independence, though the fight for it might come if the weight of unjust taxation was not removed. Nowhere was a cup of imported tea offered us. We heard that it would be almost impossible to avoid the British so I hid the papers in a small pocket in a saddle bag.

Suddenly I was ordered to a halt. As I could not help myself I did so. A soldier in a red coat appeared and suggested that I go to headquarters for examination. I told him "I had been sent in urgent haste to see a friend in need." To my joy he let me go saying, "Well, you are only an old woman any way." Would you believe me—that was the only exciting adventure in the whole ride.

My father just told me not to say how or where I saw General Washington, nor what I heard of the affairs of the Colony because a letter is a very dangerous thing these days and it might fall into strange hands and cause harm. What a wise man my father is. I must obey, but I can say I saw General Washington. I felt very humble as I crossed the



threshold of the room where he sat talking with other gentlemen, one evidently an officer. Womanlike I wished that I had on my Sunday gown. I put on a clean kerchief. I gave him the paper, which from his manner I judged to be of great importance. He was pleased to compliment me most highly on what he called my courage and my patriotism. Oh, Patience what a man he is, so grand, so kind, so noble. I am sure we shall not look to him in vain as our leader.

Well, here I am home again safe and sound and happy to have been of use. I hope I have not tired you with this long letter. Mother desires to send her love.

Yours in the bonds of love.

Deborah.

P.S. I saw your brother Samuel in Boston. He sent his love if I should be writing you.