

James Warren to Mercy Otis Warren

My Dear Mercy Watertown June 18th. 1775

The Extraordinary Nature of the Events which have taken place in the last 48 Hours has Interrupted that steady & only Intercourse which the situation of publick affairs allows me. the Night before last our Troops possessd. themselves of a Hill in Charlestown & had time only to heave up an Imperfect Breastwork the regular Troops from the Batterys in Boston & two Men of War in the Ferryway began early next Morning a Heavy Fire on them which was Continued till about Noon when they Landed a large number of Troops & after a Stout resistance & great Loss on their side disposessd. our Men, who with the Accumulated disadvantages of being Exposed to the fire of their Cannon & the want of Ammunition & not being supported by fresh Troops were obliged to abandon the Town & retire to our Lines towards Cambridge to which they made a very handsome Addition last Night. with a Savage Barbarity never practised among Civilized Nations they fired and have Utterly destroyed the Town of Charlestown. We have had this day at Dinner another Alarm that they were Advancing on our Lines after having reinforced their Troops with their Horse, &c., & that they were out at Roxbury we Expected this would have been an Important day. they are reinforced but have not Advanced, so things remain at present as they were we have killed many men & have killed & wounded about [six] hundred by the best accounts I can get. Among the first of which to our inexpressible Grief is my Friend Doctor Warren who was killd. it is supposed in the Lines on the Hill at Charlestown in a Manner more Glorious to himself than the fate of Wolf on the plains of Abraham. Many other officers are wounded and some killd. it is Impossible to describe the Confusion in this place, Women & Children flying into the Country, armed Men Going to the field, and wounded Men returning from there fill the Streets. I shant Attempt a description — your Brother borrowed a Gun, &c., & went among the flying Bullets at Charlestown retd. last Evening 10 o’Clock. The Librarian got a slight wound with a musket Ball in his Hand. Howland has this minute come in with your Letter. The Continental Congress have done & are doing every thing we can wish. Dr. Church recd. last Evening & Brod. resolutions for assuming Govt. & for supplying provisions & powder, & he tells us tho under the rose that they are contemplating & have perhaps finished the Establishmt. of the Army & an Emission of money to pay & support them, & he thinks the Operations of yesterday will be more than sufficient to Induce them to recommend the Assumption of new forms of Govt. to all the Colonies I wish I could be more perticular. I am now in a Committee of Importance. & only steal time to add Sentences seperately. I feel for my Dear Wife least her Apprehensions should hurt her health be not Concerned about me. take care of your Self. you can secure a retreat & have proper Notice in Season. & if you are safe & the Boys I shall be happy fall what will to my Interest. I cant be willing you should come into this part of the Country at present. I will see you as soon as possible can’t say when, the Mode of Govt. prescribd. is according to the last Charter. some are quite satisfied with it you know I wishd. for a more perfect one, it is now Monday Morning. I hear nothing yet but the roaring of Cannon below. but no Body regards them I need not say that I long to see you. perhaps never more in my life. I shall try hard for it

this week I hope your Strawberries are well taken care of & that you have fine feasting on them. Your Brother is waiting for Freeman, who with all his patriotism has left us for 10 days. I have Letters from both Mr Adams & Cushing. I can't Inclose them, because I must answer them when I can get oppt. I am calld. on & must Conclude with my wishes & prayers for your Happiness & with Love to my Boys & regards to Friends Your Aff: Husband,

Jas: Warren S:

Adams is very unwell — the Jaundice to a great degree & his Spirits somewhat depressd. Church hopes he will recover. I hope some of us will survive this Contest. Church has put into my hands A Curious lett. full of Interesting Intelligence I wish I could give it to you you may remember to ask me about it & the author. I have shewn it to Coll Otis if he goes before me enquire of him. Your Brother Jem dined with us yesterday behaved well till dinner was almost done. & then in the old way got up went off where I know not. has been about at Cambridge & Roxbury several days

Adieu.



Th. Jefferson
MONTICELLO