

PASS vol. XI (p. 649): This is a letter dated January 7th from President Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania to the Committee of Congress where he mentions the soldiers' refusal of the British offer of defection.

President Reed to the Committee of Congress.

D. HUNT'S, MAIDENHEAD,
FOUR MILES FROM PRINCETON, *January 7th, 1781.*

DEAR SIR: I have just time to inform you that the troops have rejected with disdain the proposition made by Sir Henry Clinton to join his army. That I came here this morning, and have had the pleasure of meeting Gen. Wayne, Col. Stewart, and Col. Moylan, who have been permitted freely to come to me at this place and make such a report of the temper of the men as induces me to go among them. They express great anxiety for it, and requested the gentlemen, in case I consented to come, to let them know, that they might turn out the line and show all possible respect. These circumstances have changed my resolution of not trusting them, but I think they will warrant the risque. The consequences of their defection to the enemy are so great and alarming, that I think nothing ought be left unattempted to improve a good disposition. I have but one life, and my country has the first claim for it. I therefore go with the cheerfulness which attends performing a necessary, though not a pleasant duty. With my best regards to the gentlemen of the Council, and respectful compliments to the President of Congress with whom I doubt not you communicate,

I remain, Dear Sir,

Your obth & very hub^l serv^t,

JOS. REED.

P. S.—I propose to come out of town again this evening.

TRENTON, *Jan. 7, 1781.*

SIR: The Committee of Congress are obliged to your Excellency's communications by Col. Shields. We esteem it as a happy prelude to a return of the troops to their allegiance. We doubt not your Excellency's improving so favorable a symptom to bring the matter to a speedy, safe, and honourable an issue as possible. The committee will wait here for your further communications of the progress you make, and prepare themselves for every event, to aid your endeavours and to give them all success that the powers vested in them by Congress can enable them to do.

In name of the Committee in Gen. Sullivan's absence.

JNO. WITHERSPOON.

His Excellency President REED.