



Dr. Church's Code Cipher

9	w	S	φ	P	X	△	△	L	J	k	ρ	γ	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	
X	v	€	9	⊙	κ	5	J	‡	g	X	L	Z	≡
N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	&

Use the cipher key above to decode Church's letter. Was he a traitor to the Continental Army?

Code #1

L AV€P 5ALκ gLρρ ⊙P9SA
 LVJ 5A⊙PP 955Pγ€5κ A9‡P L
 γ9φP gL5AVJ5 κJSSPκκ

Code #2

L 5VJX5Pφ 280 €LPSPκ VX
 59XXVX X⊙Vγ 24 5V 3
 €VJXφP⊙κ



Code #3

18 3AVJX9XP YPX W9P =
PP3P9LXP 9LSA 99XALXASVX
9XP PPP 93 3APL9 AP9P 99P
XV SVX3P9&3LWPP PXP9L

Code #4

9 P LP9 3V LXPP&PXPPXSP
99V9X YV9P = YV9P APXP9P

Code #5

XAVJPP W9LS9LX PPS99P
999 999LX3 3AP SVPPVXLPX
3APL 99P PVP3 XV9PP9P

Code #6

Y9KP JXP VX P9P9L
99PS9J3LVX V9 L 999LXA



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Answer Key

#1: I hope this will reach you; three attempts have I made without success,

#2: I counted 280 pieces of Cannon from 24 to 3 pounders

#3: 18 thousand men, brave and determined, with Washington & Lee at their Head, are no contemptible Enemy.

#4: A view to Independence grows more & more general.

#5: Should Britain declare War against the Colonies, they are lost for ever.

#6: Make use of every precaution or I perish.

Fully Decoded Letter

I hope this will reach you; three attempts have I made without success, in effecting the last, the man was discovered in attempting his escape: but fortunately my letter was sewed in the waistband of his breeches; he was confined a few days, during which time you may guess my feelings, but a little art and a little cash settled the matter. 'Tis a month since my return from Philadelphia, I went by the way of Providence to visit mother; the Committee for warlike stores made me a formal Tender of twelve pieces of Cannon, 18 and 24 pounders. They having to a previous Resolution to make the offer to General Ward. To make a merit of my services I sent them down, and when they received them they sent them to Stoughton, to be out of danger, even tho' they had formed the Resolution as I before hinted of fortifying Bunker's Hill, which together with the Cowardice of the Clumsy Col. Gerrick and Col. Scammon were the lucky occasion of their defeat. This affair happened before my return from Philadelphia. We lost 165 Killed then, and since dead of their wounds. 120 men lye wounded, the chief will recover; they boast you have 1400 killed and wounded in that action. You say the rebels lost 1500, I suppose with equal Truth. The People of Connecticut are raving in the cause of Liberty; a number from this Colony from the Town of Stanford robbed the King's stores at New York, with some small assistance the New Yorkers lent them; these were growing turbulent. **I counted 280 pieces of Cannon from 24 to 3 pounders** at Kingsbridge, which the Committee had secured for the use of the Colonies. The Jersies are not a whit behind Connecticut in zeal, the Philadelphians exceed them both. I saw 2200 then in review there by General Lee, consisting of Quakers & other Inhabitants in Uniform, with 1000 riffle [*sic*] men, and 40 Horse, who together made a most warlike appearance. I mingled freely & frequently with the members of the Continental Congress; they were united, determined in opposition, and appeared assured of Success. Now to come home; the Opposition is become formidable: **18 thousand men, brave and determined, with Washington & Lee at their Head, are no contemptible Enemy.** Adjutant



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General Gates is indefatigable in arranging the Army. Provisions are very plenty. Cloaths [*sic*] are manufacturing in almost every Town, for the Soldiers. Twenty Tons of powder lately arrived at Philadelphia, Connecticut & Providence. Upwards of twenty tons are now in Camp. Salt petre is made in every Colony. Powder mills are erected and constantly employed in Philadelphia & New York. Volunteers of the first Fortune are daily Flocking to the Camp. 1000 riffle [*sic*] Men in two or three days recruits are now levying to augment the Army to 22 thousand men. 10 thousand Militia are appointed in this Government to appear on the first summons. The Bills of all the Colonies circulate freely, and are readily exchanged for cash. Add to this that unless some plan of Accommodation takes place immediately these Harbors will swarm with privateers. An Army will be raised in the middle provinces to take possession of Canada. For the Sake of the miserable convulsed Empire, solicit peace; repeal the Acts or Britain is undone. This advice is the result of warm affection to my King & to the Realm. Remember I never deceived you; every Article here sent you is sacredly true. The papers will announce to you that I am again a Member for Boston. You will there see our motley council. A general Arrangement of offices will take place except the Chief, which will be suspended but for a little while to see what part Britain takes in consequence of the late Continental petition. **A view to Independence gr[ows] more & more general. Should Britain declare War against the Colonies, they are lost for ever.** Should Spain declare against England, the Colonies will declare a Neutrality, which will doubtless produce an Offensive & Defensive League between them. For God's Sake prevent it, by a speedy Accommodation. Writing this, has employed a Day. I have been to Salem to reconnoitre; but could not escape the Geese of the Capitol. To-morrow I set out for Newport on purpose to send you this. I write you fully it being scacely [*sic*] possible to escape discovery. I am out of place here by choice; and therefore out of pay, and determine to be so, unless something is offered in my Way. I wish you could contrive to write me largely in cipher, by the way of Newport, addressed to Thomas Richards Merchant in close it in a Cover to me, intimating that I am a perfect stranger to you; but being recommended to you as a Gentleman of Honour, you took the Liberty to inclose that Letter, intreating me to deliver it as directed, the person, as you are informed being at Cambridge, sign some fictitious name, this you may send to some confidential friend in Newport, to be delivered to me at Watertown. **Make use of every precaution or I perish.**

The original letter in code and the original translation of the cryptogram may be found in the George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1799. Scans are available online at <http://memory.loc.gov>.



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qwsopxεΔLJKlRXXrαqΘδJ†gXLZ≡
 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzt



Benjamin Church's Decoded Letter, George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799: Series 4. General Correspondence. 1697-1799. Scans are available online at <http://memory.loc.gov>.