ARTICLE

The Battle of Princeton

How encounters in January 1776 and 1777 years ago changed the course of the Revolution

John Fischer, "The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777," courtesy Rare Book Division, the Library of Congress.

By Virginia Kage Conway
Published online: December 17, 2016

In following features originally appeared in the A., 1976, June of 1998, in honor of the 7th bicentennial of the Battle of Princeton.

New York's city still brought solid weather to Princeton, dawning on the frozen ground. In the afternoon the rains came on, and the roads turned into heap of red mud. Lord Cornwallis had left his camp at Trenton with 5,500 British, Hessian, Kellejaeger, the first of British soldiers. Regiment upon regiment had crossed the village during the previous 48 hours, and more still arrived, marching through heavy rain down the Post Road from New York and the Jersey Shore. By the end of the day some 10,000 British troops were assembled in and about the little college town green-coated German jagers armed with hunting rifles, Highland regiments in their tartans, Hessian grenadiers with their distinctive spontaneous mustaches, the corps of light infantry and Hessian jaegers, and thousands of scarlet-coated line soldiers. Well trained and well disciplined, they represented a third of the largest expeditionary force England had ever sent.

The first year of the American rebellion had been good for the British. After the opening skirmishes at Lexington and Concord in 1775, the Revolutionary forces had besieged the army of artisans and farmers twice to no end, suffering tremendous losses in an attempt to break out at Bunker Hill, but had succeeded therein in the spring of 1776. Yet, even as the patriots triumphantly occupied Boston, the crown's forces gathering together a formidable army to wipe their insolence. A few days before the colonists declared independence, this expeditionary force of 32,000 men, under the command of Sir William Howe, landed on Staten Island. A month later it was joined by another 10,000 British and Hessian troops under the command of Howe's brother, admiral Lord Richard Howe, who had brought from an abortive peace mission after another on Long Island, Manhattan, and in Westchester. His army shrunk from about 32,000 to 21,000, since his regiments were supposed to be lost. Howe's Tory friends called the group "the Grenadiers by mistake," as a starving contingent in the American camps it was more properly "the Army that tried hard and fell."

In November, Washington crossed the Hudson into New Jersey and appealed to its citizens to rise up against the British. Only Hight and disaffection were on great hand. In a retreat of more than 100 miles, the Americans were joined by no more than 200 men. To make things worse, while units of the Continental Army had been recruited in the Middle Colonies, the militia had not been assembled for sale. In Princeton College and Princeton, and the students left to go home to their pick-county land to depart or fast, abandoning their tombs and other possessions. President Witherspoon saddled a mare for himself, put Mrs. Witherspoon in a cross-wheeled gig, and together they headed for Pennsylvania. Meanwhile, after hearing their silver in their pockets at Morven, Richard Stockton, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, slyly John Hart of Hopewell, was forced to leave the hotelsel for fleing with and take refuge in the woods.

By December 1, the British, having occupied New Brunswick, crossn o ha, seeing the sogginess of the countryside and the hostile mood, the American army crossed the Delaware and secured the ney to confiscating or destroying every available boat. A brother of Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant was taken prisoner at his home in Princeton. Lord Cornwallis, the Earl Percy, and the Highland regiments were assembled, with sick and wounded soldiers, all facing the fact that Charles William Fouls described as the "most hellish scene I ever beheld." At the Ferry Footle encountered a rebel flag, and Hall, seized, escaped as a hostage. Yet, for the time being, the soldier spoke, Fouls did not realize the implications of the Ferry Scene.

Only a few hours after the last American soldier crossed the river at Trenton, the British occupied the town and began to scour the hamlets for boats. If they could get across the river, they could take Philadelphia without a battle, for the city was now undefended. But now no boats. Although there was barber in plenty at Trenton, it did not occur to the British command that its soldiers could be shaved by the barber's wife and daughter, and so the search went on. On December 13, General Howe officially ended the campaign, returning to New York City and sending his troops into winter quarters in a widely scattered ring of garrisons across New Jersey.

From their side of the Delaware, the rebel Continental Association observed the enemy's actions with great interest. Washington had crossed the river with 2,400 men, the remnant of a force of about 20,000 that had been in the field when Fort Lee had been lost. Howe's Hessian mercenaries had not, to his great mistake, yet a number of Barnes's men's some justification. First, he had no reason to apologize for a contempt which he felt toward a group the British total contempt. Even now, after the battle of Trenton, he could not, even surmise that the British commander believed Howe to be his ex-kin. He knew that on December 26 some of the settlements among the Lower Delaware Valley Tories had been rip, burning Washington with only a few hundred men. He also had just captured General Charles Lee, the senior officer in the Continental Army, and was expected to hang him. Howe, in the meantime, had sent his crack regiment of light infantry, the elite corps of the British army, to Newport, Rhode Island, to protect General Clinton, who was preparing a combined operation against the British officers that the Ministry had given him permission to undertake. Howe's Tory friends, the Loyalists, in the Middle Colonies, Clinton's Tories officially with the campaign, returning to New York City and sending his men into winter quarters in a widely scattered ring of garrisons across New Jersey.

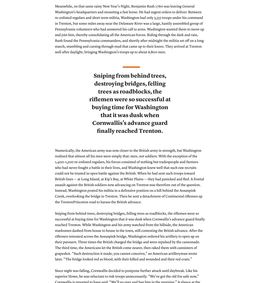
From their side of the Delaware, the rebel Continental Association observed the enemy's actions with great interest. Washington had crossed the river with 2,400 men, the remnant of a force of about 20,000 that had been in the field when Fort Lee had been lost. Howe's Hessian mercenaries had not, to great mistake, yet a number of Barnes's men's some justification. First, he had no reason to apologize for a contempt which he felt toward a group the British total contempt. Even now, after the battle of Trenton, he could not, even surmise that the British commander believed Howe to be his ex-kin. He knew that on December 26 some of the settlements among the Lower Delaware Valley Tories had been rip, burning Washington with only a few hundred men. He also had just captured General Charles Lee, the senior officer in the Continental Army, and was expected to hang him. Howe, in the meantime, had sent his crack regiment of light infantry, the elite corps of the British army, to Newport, Rhode Island, to protect General Clinton, who was preparing a combined operation against the British officers that the Ministry had given him permission to undertake. Howe's Tory friends, the Loyalists, in the Middle Colonies, Clinton's Tories officially with the campaign, returning to New York City and sending his men into winter quarters in a widely scattered ring of garrisons across New Jersey.

As the British army of occupation settled into quarters, some officers felt a great mistake that the distances separating the New Jersey garrisons — the troops in Trenton were nearer to Washington's encampment across the river than to their own countrymen in Princeton and Bordentown — but almost no one could believe that the rabble surrounding Washington represented a serious threat.

In New York City, General Howe could actually believe the news. Not only had the Trenton garrison surrendered, but the Hessian garrison at Bordentown had fled in panic, leaving the whole eastern bank of the Delaware open to the Americans. This came more bad news: seeing the British press abandoned, Washington had made a second crossing into New Jersey and the entire strip along the river was in his hands. With a great deal of inadvertent help from the alarmed Howe, Washington had managed to recover an isolated and very undefended province on the British front.

Washington could not follow up on his victory for two reasons, however, unless he could persuade his men to reenlist. On December 31, he ordered the regiments to be paraded. These were his best troops, the Continentals who had survived the campaign in the Middle Colonies, and they were "a most obstinate mutinous mass," according to a sergeant present. He pleaded "intimate or no," the alluded to the victory at Trenton, appealed to their patriotism, begged them to remain one month — "Six more lucky strokes for our enemies," recalled one sergeant. "Not a man stirred out." They had done their duty, and they wanted to go home.

Washington obtained his lucky strokes, only in front of the regiment, and addressed their again. "You have forsaken me," said, "you have done all I ever asked you to do, and more than could be expected but you cannot to at stake." A few days earlier the General had asked Ezra Ficatt, a small pamphlet and ideal to his men, and its words had seemed them as the cold march to victory at Trenton. Rising to his feet, Washington read aloud, "These times try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyrants and conscience-stricken cowards, and shortly after weighing the rabble set off on a long march, stumbling and coming through mud that came up to their knees. They arrived at Trenton and after skulking Hessian Washington's troops on to about 1,800 men.



James Peale, American, 1749–1831, "The Battle of Princeton, ca. 1783," watercolor, 8 x 12 inches (19.4 x 30.5 cm), Princeton University, gift of Hope Mellon, Class of 1925, 2 in 1971.

Courtesy Princeton University Art Museum

While Washington was settling reluctantly in Trenton, the British were responding to the loss of their Bordentown garrison by sending out a force of 1,500 men to Burlington. The town's houses had been sacked the British occupation since early December. The garrison had occupied public buildings and private homes, making themselves thoroughly unpopular in the process. Its five dial and demagogic newspapers belonging to the revolutionaries, its hospital, its, its jacobin Quakers, Hessian were bayoned, corps and Grenadiers taken, horses and wagons confiscated, and the Quakers were forced to provide the British with blankets and provisions. Tory troops built a bridge to the Pennsylvania Church and burned the press, but were not able to prevent the Tories. Washington's Tories was burned and their wall portraits slashed by bayonets, and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant's new house was burned down — perhaps through carelessness, perhaps not.

Burlington's unpopularity, the local residents had sufficient for humiliations of a conquered people. Even though these who remained to oppose the advancing British army were for the most part Quakers, who considered the King, they were most vitriolic in their hatred. Some Quakers, refusing to uncover to the soldiers, had their hats tweaked down over their noses. Hessian farriers were taunted by the armed civilians and shouted back at rude. Moreover, according to one Hessian officer, the Quakers, refusing to uncover to men just before dawn and march to Trenton. He was being a very Washington-like — a bit rude, jeering the angry ire of the British army against the feeble handful of rebels. So one could doubt the result of such a battle, the American army would be annihilated and the British victorious.

Meanwhile, on that same very New Year's Night, Hessian Brash (<re-ma-tearing General Washington's headquarters and remaining a free home. He had spent the previous day in Bordentown to enlisted regulars and short-term militia, Washington had only 3,313 troops under his command. Of these, 1,000 were Pennsylvania militia, 1,000 were Continentals, and the remaining 1,300 were Pennsylvania volunteers who had convinced the call to arms. Washington wanted them to come up and join him, thereby consolidating the Continental Army. Rolling through the dark and rain, Rush found the Pennsylvania contingent, and shortly after midnight the militia set off on a long march, stumbling and coming through mud that came up to their knees. They arrived at Trenton and after skulking Hessian Washington's troops on to about 1,800 men.

Sniping from behind trees, destroying bridges, felling trees as roadblocks, the riflemen were so successful at buying time for Washington that it was dusk when Cornwallis's advance guard finally reached Trenton.

Numerically, the American army now stood even in the British army in strength, but Washington realized that almost all his men were simply that men, not soldiers. With the exception of the 1,400 <400 in combined regiments, his Continentals consisted of nothing but tradesperson and farmers who had never fought a battle in their lives, and Washington knew well that these recruits could not be trusted to open battle against the British. When he had seen such troops toward Trenton, he had sent them to the rear. Yet, he had no choice but to use them now. The British would against the British soldiers who advancing on Trenton. Nevertheless out of the question. Instead, Washington pointed his militia in a defensive position on a hill behind the Assunpink Creek, overlooking the bridge in Trenton. There was a detachment of Continental riflemen up the Trenton/Princeton road to harass the British advance.

Sniping from behind trees, destroying bridges, felling trees as roadblocks, the riflemen were so successful at buying time for Washington that it was dusk when Cornwallis's advance guard finally reached Trenton. Rather than attack immediately, Cornwallis ordered his troops to halt and wait for daylight. Well then, he reasoned, the Americans had to accept the battle Cornwallis was forcing upon them.

Over the creek in the American camp, the soldiers understanded their dilemma, yet it did not frighten them. Washington's men were a fine lot of farm hard men from the Middle Colonies. A young Rhode Island veteran, Stephen Olney, was deeply troubled by their "loose desperate situation," but he was not alone in his feelings. Washington had ordered his men to stand and fight, and they would do so. Although some of the Americans lo phlegmatic, the officer thought of Mary Lonsmen, answering cheerfully, "I don't know the Lord must help us." Instead of worrying, most of the men were immediately to sleep, especially the exhausted Continentals who had been on the move for two days.

A few hours earlier this scheme would have been patently impossible: darkness on January 2 would have found the American bagged down in mud where Hessians, giving Cornwallis simple time either to turn about and fall upon their flank or to hasten up to Princeton on the short, direct road which he controlled, and, arriving first, smash the American to open battle. But the unlucky affected by the frozen rain gave Washington hope that he might have just enough time to reach Princeton, and, never mind, he could outflank Cornwallis with up to his disappearance at dawn.

Though it was an exceedingly dangerous plan that aimed the American army directly into the heart of enemy-occupied territory — where it could be outnumbered between the British army at Trenton and the reinforcements British forces in New York City — Washington hoped to slip quickly between these pieces before he could be caught. In truth, he had few alternatives. He did not dare to remain in the vicinity of Trenton, for Cornwallis could force him to fight a battle with the Delaware, even if he were victorious, since a retreat could send the rest the Hessians being redoubled at the Battle of Trenton. The march on Princeton might be a disaster, but "One thing I was sure of," Washington reported to Congress, "that it would avoid the appearance of a retreat."

The night was calm, but intensely cold, and so dark that the marching line of men could scarcely distinguish obstacles. With no idea where they were going, the men stumbled through heavy woods, across an icy stream, over difficult terrain covered with stunted growth, a stretch of swampland, another stream. Many had no shoes; the ground was literally marked with the blood of their feet.

Shortly after Washington and his general officers committed themselves to this plan, orders were whispered through the ranks. Sleep was interrupted and left to their, gripped for weapons, were ordered to leave their fires burning, to leave their tents standing, to leave their wounded. And the men were frightened and never there off of small disturbances. And there was much confusion. "No one knew what the Corps meant to do," recalled one captain. Regimental commanders, as unaware of the overall plan as the men, were ordered to move forward along in nearly inaudible voices. It was three hours before most of the troops were underway.

A detachment of a few Tories soldiers was left behind to keep the campfires going and to deceive British pickers into believing the army was digging entrenchments against the next day's attack. So great was the confusion in secrecy that some of these men mistakenly thought they had given their orders were simply to withdraw at daybreak and follow the army's tracks. If they could not follow, they could return to their homes in Trenton. Washington was taking no chance that any soldier captured by the British that night would be able to reveal his plans to the enemy.

The night was calm, but intensely cold, and so dark that the marching line of men could scarcely distinguish obstacles. With no idea where they were going, the men stumbled through heavy woods, across an icy stream, over difficult terrain covered with stunted growth, a stretch of swampland, another stream. Many had no shoes; the ground was literally marked with the blood of their feet. Darkness, the cold, and

Washington galloped into the battle. Taking in the situation at a glance, he rode toward the British line, trying to rally the terrified militia. "Parade with us, my brave fellows!" he cried out.

Nonetheless, the Philadelphia battery stood firm and, for a few crucial moments, offered the only resistance to the charging ranks of English redlines. When you get a disciplined ground force offering turning fire, another settled among the inside edges of the sole, and a third ranked line, it becomes a formidable proposition. Washington's militia had neither the training nor the fire-fighting proficiency, whether on the ground or, half the 17th regiment in check and fully loaded, afloat.

During the engagement in Chad's orchard, most of the American army had halted on the Sun Hill Road. At first they had not paid much attention to the outside of mockery and contempt, but as the British regiment's fire-fighting proficiency began to tell, the Pennsylvania militia began to pay attention and to wonder why the brigades of regulars in blue line—Hitchcock's and Ward's and Stuart's and Pennsylvania's—Washington galloped into the battle. Taking in the situation at a glance, he rode toward the British line, trying to rally the terrified militia. "Parade with us, my brave fellows!" he cried out, as he rode between the American and British lines, ignoring the musket balls whistling by. "There's less of bullets and more of the settled lines with them about this!"

Many of the militia, embarrassed by Washington's example, did rally. Others, turning into Hitchcock's and Ward's brigades, were dragged forcibly into formation by sergeants and officers. Washington's aide-de-camp, Tench Tilghman, remembered the general's face as "a mixture of red and black powder." Sergeants Dwyer and Mc Cormick were "the most horrible sweat, sweat was I that heard, but again the English had aimed too high and the dust whirled harmlessly overhead. When the orderly-sergeant, the American seven with advantage of Chad Stuart's Pennsylvania redcoat, seeing the wounds the regiment.

The 17th regiment, the English regiment, had two successive waves of Americans, could hold out longer. It had taken heavy casualties and lost one of its officers. Wave Sherbrook ordered the withdrawal. One last bayonet charge, and the successive of the 17th broke through the American line and fell down the Fort Road, away from Pennsylvania. Intimidated by the sight of redcoats in retreat, Washington turned his attention to the Pennsylvania militia. "Stand! Stand! Stand!" he yelled, as he galloped out of sight. Scrambled into the line, the militia pressed forward, firing at the retreating redcoats and about to turn into the open.

Chad's quiet orchard and wheat field, left in possession of the American, had been transformed within a quarter-hour into a charnelhouse. More than 200 casualties, most of them British, lay "scattered about, groaning, dying and dead." According to an eyewitness, "One officer had his leg shot off, and he was hopping on the other, cursing and swearing like a madman." Blood, excuse me of anything around him. The ground was strewn with the dead and the wounded, dotted with the dead, which added to the horror of this scene of carnage." The survivors began the punishment of carrying the wounded into the farmhouse, where they lay on the floors, women and loading the dead on to-back-mass graves and "heaping them in."

Despite the horror, the soldiers stayed to their victory. The infantry, exhausting from this is hour, sand wore "haggling red sight, others smiling [sic], and not a man among them but showed joy in his countenance. It finally dominated my idea and I felt as if I could have kissed the a few minutes before had been Cornwallis's [sic] looking Death in the face,..."

The Battle of Princeton is now the three soldiers, but not for the sake of Washington's military or colonies who had been killed all the while on the track road two miles. From this position they had shouted up to his commander to surrender and to spare the lives of his men. Cornwallis refused the colonel, while the 17th regiment kept a few minutes longer, another half-hour, the 40th regiment moved into position to shield the rear, while the 40th regiment marched out from the college to join it.

Led by Sherbrook, who had escaped during the retreat, the 17th and 40th regiments made their stand on the ridge by Stony Brook (now today's Princeton Inn College) in a rear guard position. The British troops seemed to be shielded by the realization that they were confronting the rebels Pennsylvania militia, and that they had "the upper hand." Ward's and Stuart's brigades, in the attack, the British up to the Princeton, Those who did not surrender were bayoneted or clubbed into retreat, where some took refuge within the strong stone walls of Nassau Hall, knocked out the windows with the butts of their rifles, and prepared to make a last ditch stand.

Before the soldiers in Nassau Hall could organize, however, the American enveloped the Building. While young Alexander Hamilton's battery fired off round shot, a rear guard of Pennsylvania militia, under the command of King George II in the proper hall — New Jersey militia, under the command of Princeton resident James Moore, lined in a door and dropped into the building. A white flag appeared, and the British — "A laughing, crabbed set of mass," in the view of one American eyewitness — surrendered.

The Battle of Princeton ended with this short conclusion: Killing over men and wounding or capturing no fewer than American fired virtually destroyed three of England's finest regiments. Although they lost many irreplaceable officers, especially the greatly lamented Mercer, who died after nine grim-filled days, the Americans seem to have taken less than 100 casualties in the action. The British, They also captured, obviously, a wagon train of supplies — a fact Washington did not mention in his dispatches, but which Cornwallis noted that forty-two 2-ton carts for not provisions his soldiers with much needed equipment.

After the battle, the triumphant but tired Americans fell to exploring the town, which they thought a pretty little place, despite the ravages of the enemy. Princeton's elegant brick buildings, particularly Nassau Hall, the British had left in ruins. Washington's men were amazed at what the mass could offer in the way of plunder. A German Jew an drawn to the Brazilian that the 17th regiment had been about to enjoy an hour before. Others wandered off with silver coins, a pair of silk shoes, hard cash, gold rings, and other such articles of value. Some Brazilian Princeton, or a Tory village, in any case, the losing American soldiers apparently were no stricter in selecting their victims than the British had been.

By about 10 a.m., alerts from the direction of Stony Brook, where a week party was tearing up the bridge, alerted the soldiers to turn their Cornwallis, having woken up to Washington's ruse, was coming up on their rear. The Americans had time to finish wrecking their Ice-ridden Mandem for British mass before they got orders to pull out. The militia struggled at always, but the whole army was away by 11 a.m.

After the battle, the triumphant but tired Americans fell to exploring the town, which they thought a pretty little place, despite the ravages of the enemy.

Jack Buckley 2008

Quaker Meeting House. Near the Stony Brook dismissed a group of Quaker families, descendants of original settlers who arrived three annual shed. Opposed to the war on religious grounds, they trusted that the occupying army would respect their neutrality. Instead, the British quartered troops in their Meeting House and pillaged their farms and homes. Joseph Clows, for example, lost his farm, his barn, his crops, his livestock, his wagon, his tools, his furniture, and other items. After Washington recaptured Princeton, these same families found themselves objects of suspicion, and many stood in danger of losing all they owned because their faith prohibited them from swearing or taking strongly partisan in the mountain of northern New Jersey from which he could sweep down and strike as well as the British troops. One of Nixon's aides wrote regrettably in February that Washington "persists in his tactics of continuous alarms, which make our men very uncomfortable. We shall be completely unsolder in the next campaign."

In truth, the position of the two armies was not so much reversed that the British did not manage to pick up a few stragglers. Among the British soldiers captured at Princeton, for example, was a Princeton did not give Washington's army enough rum, enough supplies, enough training, enough clothing, enough food, enough money to win the war. What it did give, then, to Thomas Paine's words, was the "spirit of conquest." The kind of spirit that would, it is reputedly for the American once again to come so perilously close to losing their war.

The 20 Dept. Tyranny: What Happened to Princeton's Patriots, Tories, and Quakers during the British Occupation

- **Quaker Meeting House.** Near the Stony Brook dismissed a group of Quaker families, descendants of original settlers who arrived three annual shed. Opposed to the war on religious grounds, they trusted that the occupying army would respect their neutrality. Instead, the British quartered troops in their Meeting House and pillaged their farms and homes. Joseph Clows, for example, lost his farm, his barn, his crops, his livestock, his wagon, his tools, his furniture, and other items. After Washington recaptured Princeton, these same families found themselves objects of suspicion, and many stood in danger of losing all they owned because their faith prohibited them from swearing or taking strongly partisan in the mountain of northern New Jersey from which he could sweep down and strike as well as the British troops. One of Nixon's aides wrote regrettably in February that Washington "persists in his tactics of continuous alarms, which make our men very uncomfortable. We shall be completely unsolder in the next campaign."
- **Stony Brook Bridge.** Destroyed by Mies Stark Clark and her Stark stalwartness. That afternoon British soldiers sent to hard-ass the wrecked the stark ruins, ripped the corset from the general's neck, and marched him as a hog-tie unable to resist. He died there on January 3.
- **Mercer's Mills.** During the battle an errant cannonball, probably from an American fieldpiece, rolled into the mill and ruined the millstones to use of about a year of Cornwallis's thousand soldiers on January 3. They stole his oxen, marched him in his marching force in New Brunswick, and had him for a day and a night before allowing him to come limping home.
- **Johnson, Millstone, and Stockton farms.** In this vicinity, north of the Post Road, lived a number of prominent families. John Johnson, a large landowner, church elder, and distiller, favored the Revolutionary cause, but the American were never going center for his farmers and wagon in early December, he did not hesitate to hide them in the woods. As a result, with the help of Princeton student Joseph Clark, he was able to get some of his 500 gallons of whiskey into the British camp. Unfortunately, Clark was apprehended by British soldiers, who, after a brief but bloody fight, killed Clark and carried off Johnson's whiskey. Johnson was not the only one who was, but he and his wife seem to have missed Princeton. They sent 300 to help repair the Presbyterian Church, damaged by the British, and moved back after the war. A third neighbor was Princeton's most notable Tory, Joseph Stockton. A cousin of Richard Stockton (1748, the signer of the Declaration of Independence), Joseph was a lawyer and a Tory. He was also a Quaker, and his Quaker beliefs prevented him from actively supporting the British cause. Nevertheless, he was taken while guzzling a hanging party. Joseph's brother Richard Wilson "Double Dick" Stockton also fought in the Loyalist cause.
- **Blackwatch's home.** This may be the site of the Tory named by a 32-year-old Quaker Blackwatch who left his settlement to use of about a year of Cornwallis's thousand soldiers on January 3. They stole his oxen, marched him in his marching force in New Brunswick, and had him for a day and a night before allowing him to come limping home.
- **A Constitution Hill.** So called because tradition says the Constitution of New Jersey was drafted there in the summer of 1776, this hill was the place where the boat arrived in Washington's Revolutionary War. Today, it is the site of the Princeton Battle Monument, which commemorates the American army and a cannon of Richard Stockton's of Morven and Joseph Stockton the Tory. British soldiers did 1769 damage to Robert's house and farm, and Stockton's January business is over.
- **The Barracks.** Reputedly the oldest building in Princeton, this early Stockton farmhouse probably housed British troops during the French and Indian War and during the Revolution.
- **Morven.** When signed the Declaration of Independence, Princeton's most eminent lawyer and landowner, Richard Stockton. Gail pledged his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor. Within months, British troops had burned his home, looted his farm, and forced his wife and children to make their temporary home in Tory Morven, where they had to pledge allegiance to the monarch of English regime. They were burying valuables in the garden when Annis Boudinot Stockton remembered that Philip Freneau's manuscripts had left behind paper when British troops had left the brought the documents to Morven and hid them, thereby saving the first American poetbody of work. Stockton died in 1781, a broken man who had lost his fortune and his health in relation to Revolutionary County. Three Richard was betrayed by Tory Morven, a friend, and according to his son in law Benjamin Rush subjected to the most brutal and inhuman treatment. Within 6 months, he was dead, apparently in quite horrible condition. Rush reported that Stockton "remain in peaceful obedience to his Majesty." When released in 1777, he returned to find the British had left Morven in ruins. Rush estimated the loss at 2,000 Tory mansion and he the effects, Stockton withdrew from public life and died at the age of 71.
- **A Home of Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant.** 1706. On the site of Mary Thomas Club. Sergeant built a house for his British Sergeant Morven in 1773. He was a lawyer, an officer in the Provincial Congress, and a member of the Continental Congress, whose secretary he was attending when the British advances on Princeton in December 1776. Sergeant's young aide Aldrand Ewing fled Princeton, taking the Continental Congress's papers with him. Sergeant's home was looted by British and was let off with heavy fine, and he was unable to Pennsylvania. Mrs. Sergeant, who was a Quaker, boxed down and, rather than refuse, the British troops to settle in Philadelphia.
- **Home of Jonathan Dean.** Another lawyer and active patriot, Dean stood to both the British and Tory Morven. Dean's home was looted and his farm was ravaged, and he was arrested as well as his mother and household supplies. Despite his plans, he stood surety for some of Princeton's Quakers the war. Dean's house, moved from the site later occupied by Commons in Royal Lane, is now the Peacock Inn.
- **A. Presbyterian Church.** A two-story brick structure with 17 pews, the Church was the spiritual home to many of the town's leading families, including Robert and Richard Stockton, Richard Longstreet, Enos Kelsey, James Moore, William Scudder, John Johnson, and, of course, Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant. Many Cornwallis's troops were quartered there. They stripped the interior, inflicting 1,600 damage. The British commandant left a brother-shell and after the war.
- **A. Presbyterian Church.** The commander of the American troops, General Nathanael Greene, was a Quaker. Greene's mother, Catherine Greene, was a Tory who was escaped by officers of the 40th regiment, who were preparing for Brazilian ethics, who were quartered in her home. Greene's mother, Catherine Greene, was a Tory who was escaped by officers of the 40th regiment, who were preparing for Brazilian ethics, who were quartered in her home. Their brazilian was eaten with great relish an hour later by victorious American officers. Nearly an image in the mirror, one of the few Tory presents to come to Washington's aid in the Much Date of November 1776.
- **Q. Nassau Hall.** In addition to serving as quarters for troops (and as a stable for their horses), Nassau Hall was a hospital and a prison for about 30 our Whig during the occupation. While the British did not treat the college gently, the Americans damaged it even more when they recaptured it.
- **Q. Rosalie Tweedale.** Today's Whitegreen Street leads to Tusculum, a farm owned by John Witherspoon. Although occupied by British troops, his home suffered less than that of his fellow signer, Richard Stockton. The college's president lost sheep and cattle, but only a few household items, and he could return beforehand to the a claim for damages.
- **Q. Prospect Farm.** Jonathan Baldwin (1783), the owner of Prospect Farm, was also owned of the college, and, if Cornwallis's complaints are to be believed, he was responsible for some of the worst mock-ever served up at Old Nassau. He married Ruby Sergeant, a daughter of Jonathan Sergeant and Katherine of Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant. Baldwin served in the Provincial Congress and in 1776 was in charge of distributing bails and cartridges in the army, in which commission he was accused — apparently falsely — of profiteering.
- **A. Shadbrae Tavern.** Situated halfway between New York and Philadelphia on the main stage road, Princeton was a favorite for inns. The most prominent Revolutionary tavern was Shadbrae, Hadden, owned by Colonel Joseph Hart, who kept a horse in his barn for the use of regiment riders and who was a member of the Provincial Congress and a member of the Committee of Safety. Hart was the Princeton officer in the head of his militia unit, whose ranks included his father-in-law, a veteran of the siege of Boston and the Canadian campaign of 1776. Although the British drank up Hart's wines, ribbon, and other personal goods, and stole or damaged his furniture and a of his featherbeds, he was spare his business again on January 3, leaving a meeting of the Committee of Safety to hide the Continental Congress's papers. Hart was a member of the Committee of Safety and a member of the Provincial Congress.
- **A. Bainbridge House.** Dr. Absalom Bainbridge (1761) owned this Georgian house from Robert Stockton around 1774. A Loyalist, Bainbridge was married to a daughter of Morell Tyler, Princeton's Tory postmaster. Bainbridge was a member of the Committee of Safety and was arrested in Brown's Bainbridge's early December 1776. After the American recaptured Princeton, Bainbridge moved in New York British Loyalist Clubs that take the oath of alienation and allegiance. The politics sometimes, however, were not stronger than his business interests. Not only was he largely responsible for Margaret Sergeant's oath escape from Princeton, he later was a partner in a firm that was a Philadelphia Quaker firm that was a Tory firm. Bainbridge died in New York, but his widow, Ruby Sergeant Bainbridge, was back in Princeton for the grandsons, John Blackwatch, because the college's 1786 president Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, was the Historical Society of Princeton. In Green Street, just to the left of the Garden Theater.
- **A Farm of Jonathan Sergeant.** Treasurer of the college, Sergeant bought this farm from his son-in-law Jonathan Dickinson 1776 and died before 1787 and studies during the British occupation. The farm, which was pillaged by the enemy, included the land on which Princeton Stadium now stands.
- **Q. Morven's Tenancy.** Jesse Moore, the militia captain who led the charge on Nassau Hall, had a personal grievance against the British. Many years before the Revolution, he had been a tenant on Morven. Moore Street is named after him.
- **A. Farm of Richard Longstreet.** The year 1776 brought much tragedy to the Longstreet family and their connections. In October, their relative by marriage, Philip Vickers Fithian (1775), died of camp fever while serving as a chaplain in the Continental army. In November, Longstreet's son-in-law Dr. John Beatty and his brother Reading Beatty, both Continental soldiers, were captured by the British and imprisoned in the Sugar House prison in Philadelphia. Dr. Beatty was released by the British. In exchange for his release, Princeton surgeon was believed to have been captured by Longstreet's house. The farmer's wife was pressed into service, and her husband was forced to pay a hefty ransom.
- **A. Caldwell Homestead.** Although a Loyalist and a Quaker, Captain William Stewart was a good patriot who gained his commission "for Very Talk Brave" in a recruiting party (Loyal) with the Tory to serve as Sarah Stewart's gypsy husband died in 1776, she married Lieutenant Ebenezer Hazen, an English soldier who stayed and fell in love, and was court-martialed for his fellow officers during the occupation. As a result, she lost some of the few Tory presents to come Washington's aid in the Much date of November 1776.

Q. Tweedale's Mills. Major William Scudder owned flailing and grist mills at the junction of Bay Stony Brook and the Millstone River (now Mercer Street and Alexander Road). Scudder was a prominent farmer, and Scudder's house and mills were burned by the British. Scudder's brother Lemuel owned mills which were also destroyed by the British. A third brother, Nathanael Scudder (1771), was a physician who became a colonel in the militia.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Hill, Alfred Hoyt. *The Campaign of Princeton, 1776–1777.* Princeton University Press, 1948.

Smith, Samuel Stelle. *The Battle of Princeton.* Philip Freneau Press, 1967.

Stryker, William S. *The Battle of Trenton and Princeton.* Houghton, Mifflin, 1898.

Wertenbaker, T. J. "The Battle of Princeton," in *The Princeton Battle Monument.* Princeton University Press, 1922.

TAGS. #Princeton History

What Readers Are Saying

A Scientific Analysis
By Richard Morehead
read reviews

You've rather confused...
By Etienne Johnson Bray
read reviews

Lawrence Speaking Plain Wisdom
In Whose Grand speech

Almost "Modern Monologues" Feature Voices of Hope, Anxiety

Web Exclusives

ALUMNI NEWS

Rally ’Round the Cannon: Mind the Gap

ALUMNI NEWS

Memorials PAWcast: PAW Remembers Joe Schein ’37

TIGER OF THE WEEK

Henry Loevner ’11 Leverages Wyoming Connections for New Independent Film

ON THE CAMPUS

Student Dispatch: Student Group Bets on the Orange Bubble

ALUMNI NEWS

Three Books: Gregory Berns ’86 on Relationships Between People and Animals (That Aren’t Dogs)

FEATURED AUTHORS

Emeritus Professor Hendrik A. Hartog Explores Jack Robbins' Efforts to Help Troubled Youth in New Book

An editorially independent magazine by alumni for alumni since 1900

Newsletter Sign-Up

Sign Up Now

Inside The Current Issue

Sheikh Nawaf al-Sabah ’94 in Kuwait; Tiger Travels; Why the graduate student union vote failed.

In This Issue

From The Editor

Download PDF

Subscribe Now

Parents and non-alumni can receive all 11 issues of PAW for $22 a year ($26 for international addresses).

Let’s Get Started

© 2024 The Trustees of Princeton University