

*New Jersey's
Revolutionary Experience*

16

*The Revolutionary
Struggle in New Jersey,
1776-1783*

LEWIS F. OWEN

New Jersey Historical Commission

NEW JERSEY'S REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE

Larry R. Gerlach, *Editor*

This series of publications is dedicated to the memory of Alfred E. Driscoll, governor of New Jersey from 1947 to 1954, in grateful tribute to his lifelong support of the study and teaching of the history of New Jersey and the United States. He was a member of the New Jersey Historical Commission from 1970 until his death on March 9, 1975.

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SUMMARY: Beginning with the British invasion of Gravesend Bay, Long Island, in August, 1776, traces the ensuing military events which occurred in New Jersey until the end of the Revolutionary War.

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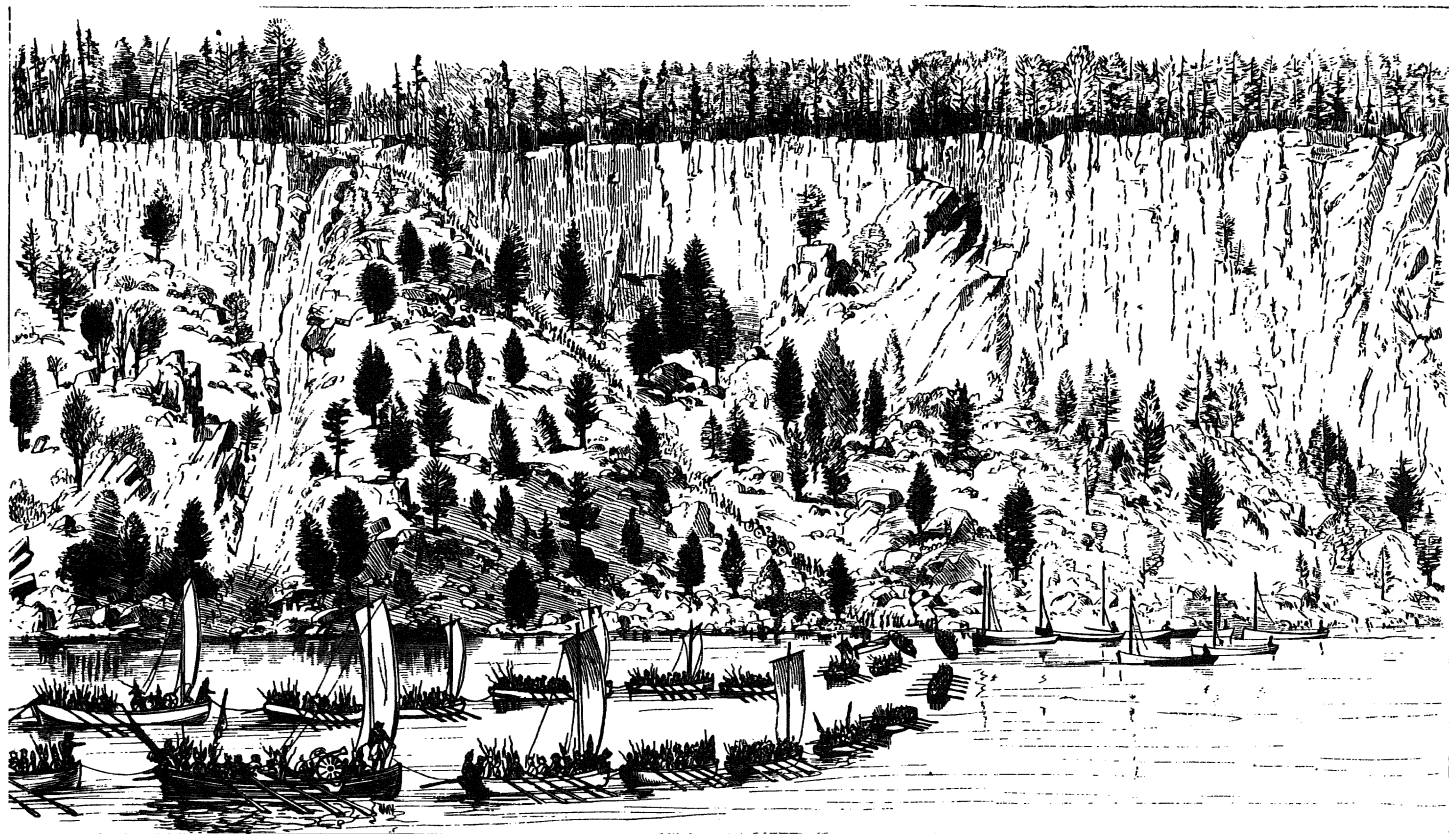
**THE NEW JERSEY AMERICAN
REVOLUTION BICENTENNIAL
CELEBRATION COMMISSION**

Foreword

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is a Bicentennial pamphlet series published by the New Jersey Historical Commission with a grant from the New Jersey Bicentennial Commission. The twenty-six numbers and two teachers' guides are intended to acquaint secondary school students and the general public with the state's history during the era of the American Revolution. Some titles treat aspects of the Revolution in New Jersey, while others show how important themes of the colonial period developed during the revolutionary years; some bring together the results of existing scholarship, while others present the findings of original research; some are written by professional historians, and others by laymen whose investigations of Jersey history exceed avocation. Because the series is directed to a general audience, the pamphlets have no footnotes but contain bibliographical essays which offer suggestions for further reading.

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience is the product of a cooperative venture by numerous individuals and agencies. On my behalf and that of the pamphlets' readers, I accord recognition and appreciation to the individual authors for their contributions to New Jersey history, to the New Jersey American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration Commission and the New Jersey Historical Commission for their support of the project, to Hank Simon, president, Trentypo, Inc., for his invaluable suggestions and cooperation in producing the series, and to the staff of the Historical Commission: Richard Waldron, Public Programs Coordinator, who as project director supervised the series from commencement to completion; Peggy Lewis, Chief of Publications and Information, and Lee R. Parks, Assistant Editor, who edited and designed each number; and William C. Wright, Associate Director, who contributed valuable suggestions at every stage of production.

Larry R. Gerlach
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Landing at the foot of the Palisades for the attack on Fort Lee, November 20, 1776. Engraved in 1873 from a drawing made by Francis Lord Rawdon, a British officer participating in the invasion.

Concord and Lexington were brave memories by the late fall of 1776. The struggle that started there had swept triumphantly along during those early months. The confinement of the British in beleaguered Boston by fifteen thousand hastily assembled provincials had led to the victory at Bunker Hill (properly Breed's Hill). With the appointment of General George Washington as commander in chief, the besieging army had taken more cohesive shape and had survived the periodic waves of desertions which plagued it from the start. Cannon placed on Dorchester Heights had convinced the British commander, General Sir William Howe, that Boston had to be abandoned, and the British presence had vanished into the north on March 21, 1776.

It was to return within a few months, with some two-hundred eighty ships, over thirty thousand soldiers, and ten thousand seamen, as the force of Admiral Lord Richard Howe joined the Halifax command of his brother in New York's Lower Bay. Of the alternatives open to him, Sir William chose to invade Long Island. The American successes came to an abrupt and disastrous halt.

Starting early in the morning of August 22, 1776, the British landed fifteen thousand men with forty cannon in Gravesend Bay before noon. Still more thousands poured out of the transports in the next few days, and on August 27 this army defeated the patriot forces in the battle of Long Island. A dense fog and a contrary wind kept the British frigates out of the East River, enabling Washington to withdraw the remnants of his army to the questionable shelter of Manhattan Island.

There was no way to hold the city. Only General Howe's apparent reluctance to destroy the Americans prevented their being

trapped when the British landed at Kips Bay, halfway up the wooded island. Again and again the rebel forces were bypassed and then permitted to escape northward. Harlem Heights was abandoned and Kings Bridge was passed. Fort Washington was crammed with three thousand Americans, then isolated as the action moved further up. When a second major clash finally took place, at White Plains, the untrained rebel forces again were no match for the disciplined invaders. On October 31, a storm ended the two-day engagement, and the Americans moved north once more to a strong position above the Croton River. Content, Howe turned back to attack Fort Washington. This carelessly designed, weakly constructed earthwork lacked ditch, palisades, barracks, water supply, or adequate food and fuel. Against Washington's recommendation, a council of war had voted to hold it. Its continued defense now became the climax of the New York disaster.

On November 16, after the commandant, Colonel Robert Magaw, had refused to surrender, a strong British force encircled the rocky height which provided the fort's only real strength. From three directions the British attacked the outworks and, though suffering heavy losses, drove the patriots back into the main fort. By three o'clock, after a brave but futile defense, the Americans were forced to surrender. In his report of the event Howe listed 2,818 rebel officers and men captured and 53 killed. Of the 8,000 British and Hessians, 458 had been killed or wounded.

Some days before the battle Washington had crossed to the New Jersey side of the Hudson with all the Continental troops from the states south of New York. Headquartered in Hackensack, he had received word of the impending attack late in the afternoon of the fifteenth, and he observed the debacle from the cliff at Fort Lee. Afterwards the commander in chief could only ride back to his headquarters to plan his next desperate move.

Perched on the towering cliffs across from fallen Fort Washington, Fort Lee had been the scene of frenzied activity for weeks as its three thousand ragged men raced to evacuate the supplies which had been stored there. With wagons all but impossible to obtain, with "all the boats stove from Burdett's Ferry to Hobroch and from Powley's Hook to Bergen Point, to stop the communication" of Tories and spies with British New York, General Nathanael Greene had still managed to get the ammunition and powder away. Patrols

and details totaling five hundred men were fanned out to guard the likely landing places and the mountain passes. But now disaster struck. Greene was awakened to learn that some six thousand British had crossed upriver in the night and climbed a seemingly unscalable cleft in the Palisades; they were now poised eight miles away, ready to strike at his exposed position. There was no need to consider alternatives or even to consult Washington, who was ten miles away in Hackensack. War had come to New Jersey—a war that the ill-supplied and badly trained Americans would lose if they had to fight pitched battles. In a ragged stream the thousands of men marched off, their breakfasts left to scorch on the cook fires, precious tents standing empty, cannon abandoned on their stands or ditched along the way. A desperate retreat had begun.

The main body straggled off toward the northwest. Others by the hundreds angled off into the comparative safety of salt meadow and heavy marshland. Rather than face what they thought was certain battle, another hundred skulked in the woods around the abandoned redoubts of the fort—to be captured and become, as prisoners, the only casualties of the affair.

With Washington giving orders after a dash from Hackensack, the ragged little army pressed farther and farther north along the only road, having to march closer and closer to the enemy in the race for New Bridge (modern River Edge) and safety across the Hackensack River. At what is now Englewood a liberty pole stood, a stark irony which the straggling men were glad to put behind them. To their relief the British still held off, making no attempt to engage the escaping garrison at this key location.

Many reasons for the British failure to cut off the retreat have been suggested, from faulty maps to fatigue at tugging cannon and sixty-pound packs up the Palisades. But maps were only a toy to officers surely guided by the boldly active local Tories. And neither fatigue nor the British insistence on time consuming parade-ground pomp can explain the failure to engage the streaming mob and wipe out what was left of Washington's army. For the real reason we must turn to two conditions which guided the British policy at that time.

First, Howe had lost some four-hundred fifty British and Hessians killed and wounded in the taking of Fort Washington. This reminder of his experience at Bunker Hill discouraged him from

risking casualties when the action apparently could be carried off without firing a shot. With both forts captured, the Hudson was cleared and the enemy was on the run.

Second, Howe already held forty-three hundred captured rebels in New York, a city of twenty thousand inhabitants crammed with thirty thousand British and Hessian troops. He could not take care of several thousand more prisoners, especially in a war he expected to win by discouragement and occupation rather than by killing and captivity.

And so he continued the tactic that had allowed the Americans to escape Long Island and Manhattan and would permit uncontested flight across New Jersey. Whether this was a tactical decision aimed at making reconciliation possible, or simply bad generalship, will never be known. But time and again the rebels got away. And so the struggling army, mostly shoeless, wrapped in blankets and ragged remnants, streamed across the narrow span at New Bridge to the western bank of the Hackensack River.

Safety demanded more than a river's breadth, and the exhausted men were still in danger of being trapped between the Hackensack and the Passaic rivers. So at dawn the next day they moved south. With them marched Thomas Paine, author of the revolutionary pamphlet *Common Sense* (January 1776), which had helped to rouse the spirit of independence. He was serving as General Greene's aide-de-camp. Paine sat at their campfires and began an inspiring series of essays, *The American Crisis*. "These are the times that try men's souls," he wrote. "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman." As the title indicated, this was indeed "The Crisis."

The land was rich and fertile, but it offered no haven to the retreating troops. They burned the Hackensack and Passaic bridges. They rallied at Newark to rest for a few days as the supply depots — the "magazines" that Washington had wisely strung across the state — were readied. Within the week they reached New Brunswick. The enlistments of the New Jersey and Maryland brigades expired, reducing the ranks still further. Orders to Major General Charles Lee, with his three thousand troops at White Plains, were ignored. The army dwindled as it went, with frantic reports of large-scale Tory

recruitment adding to the fears. And always at their heels—sometimes so close the regimental music could be heard—Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis pursued. He entered New Brunswick as Washington left; they cannonaded each other across the Raritan River, but no real contact was made. Princeton saw first the rebels and then, within minutes of their departure, the redcoats; but still Cornwallis failed to speed his pace. The British spent seven hours on the twelve miles remaining before Trenton, while the Americans got there and crossed the Delaware River, taking all the boats they found along the bank.

New Jersey was left in British hands, but the rebel army—what little was left under arms—was safe for a time. And the British were already getting a taste of what life would be like later on, for the farmers who had earlier failed to answer Washington's pleas for help now began to harass Hessian foraging parties. Even General Howe, riding back to New York from a council with Cornwallis, was attacked by five Jersey farmers, one of whom was killed. By December 11 the British had lost seven hundred oxen and one thousand sheep and hogs to roving bands of rebels.

To secure the New Jersey plain and farmland, Howe established a hundred-mile chain of posts from Hackensack through New Brunswick, Princeton, and Trenton to Burlington. "The chain is rather too extensive," he wrote Lord George Germain, British secretary of state for the American department, on December 20, "but I conclude the troops will be in perfect security." Satisfied, he settled down for a winter of dining and gaming. And he waited for the flood of contrite rebels to accept the pardon he had recently offered.

But then came the affair at Trenton. The sixteen hundred Hessians quartered there under the command of Colonel Johann G. Rall were surprised in the dawn after Christmas by the sudden appearance of Washington and his army, reinforced to twenty-four hundred men and eighteen cannon. The crossing of the ice-filled Delaware, the failure of Colonel John Cadwalader's and General James Ewing's columns to make the crossing until too late, the march to Trenton and the bold daylight attack—these deserve far fuller coverage than can be given here. Muskets, soaked by rain, hail and snow, gave way to cannon, bayonet, and sword. In about an hour more than a hundred Hessians were killed or wounded

and close to nine hundred were captured; the rest fled, and later many of them deserted.

Their supporting columns thwarted by the river ice, the victorious Americans had to return to Pennsylvania with their prisoners. Then, with the enlistments of most of his army ending on the New Year, Washington offered an unauthorized bounty for remaining. On December 30 he went back across the Delaware into New Jersey with a scant sixteen hundred volunteers and Continentals and a few New Jersey and Pennsylvania militiamen. He moved the troops toward Trenton, empty now of British. From Crosswicks came Cadwalader's delayed militia and from Bordentown, General Thomas Mifflin's five hundred tramped through six-inch snow. An advance force stalled Cornwallis's move down from Princeton, pulling back to hold him at the Assunpink, a narrow but defensible creek just south of Trenton.

Washington's men, now reinforced by raw recruits to nearly five thousand, were on the hill behind the creek with the Delaware at their backs. In the gathering dusk Cornwallis halted his fifty-five hundred veterans and waited for morning before attacking the trapped Americans. But in the night the rebels, leaving their campfires burning, slipped away north toward Princeton.

Cannon wheels muffled with rags, they stole along the frozen roads while Cornwallis slept. A British rear guard under Colonel Charles Mawhood set out from Princeton at dawn on January 3 to join the main body of troops, but instead met three-hundred fifty Americans under General Hugh Mercer looming out of the fog on their way to destroy Stony Brook Bridge. After momentarily mistaking the advancing rebels for Hessians, Mawhood engaged them, initiating a battle in which Mercer was mortally wounded. Washington arrived with Cadwalader's militia in time to rally the Americans and drive the British back. Some of the British took refuge in the town; others fought their way out to join Cornwallis, who, summoned by the sounds of battle, was making a desperate dash from Trenton.

Major General John Sullivan, commanding the main American force on a parallel road, held off from the fifteen-minute battle, then advanced into town and fired a cannonball into Nassau Hall to discourage the British occupying it from making any defense. As Cornwallis's troops edged into the town from behind, the

Americans left, too exhausted to continue toward New Brunswick, where there were British supplies and a war chest of £70,000.

In the days that followed, Washington and his troops marched north to winter quarters in Morristown. The British settled down in the safety of New Brunswick, withdrew their minor outposts in the surrounding country and considered the means they had chosen to fight the war. Where wishful thinking and Tory boasts had promised quick victory by defeating the few radicals and protecting the loyal majority, the British now saw the prospect of a long and costly subjection of an entire country.

It must have seemed at first that things were going their way. The quickening flow of people running to the shelter of British arms in the winter of 1776-1777 gave evidence of the pressures that were rending New Jersey. The division between local Loyalists and patriots soon developed into a civil war, fought within the larger national conflict. The despair that had briefly visited occupied Boston was to be a reality for all the years of war in this fought-over, marched-over, much-plundered countryside. Excesses on both sides added fuel to the flames until the lives and property of thousands were destroyed, from the Ramapo Mountains to Cape May Point.

Patriot sentiment had arrived early in New Jersey. The burning in effigy of New Jersey's stamp distributor had forced his resignation in 1765, and the protests of the Stamp Act Congress that year were supported by the colonial legislature. Greenwich, in Cumberland County, had its own tea party when forty men disguised as Indians made a bonfire of the *Greyhound's* cargo of tea on the night of December 22, 1774. During 1774, even though New Jersey had suffered little from crown tyranny, committees of correspondence, observation, and safety sprang up throughout the colony, delegates were elected to the Continental Congress, and the assembly petitioned the king for redress of grievances.

Cortlandt Skinner, Speaker of the assembly, cast the deciding vote for the petition. Later, however, when the war began, he became a brigadier general of Loyalist forces. Similarly, Bergen County's Abraham Van Buskirk, a delegate to New Jersey's First Provincial Congress in May 1775, secretly accepted the king's commission as lieutenant colonel of a clandestine Tory regiment even before Fort Lee fell. Samuel Tucker, president of the Provincial

Congress in 1776, went over to the British. Richard Stockton—after imprisonment in New York’s terrible Provost Jail had broken his health and spirit—became the only signer of the Declaration of Independence to sign a British loyalty oath. Other leaders, too, changed sides when the American cause seemed lost. At least one, Isaac Ogden from Essex County, claimed he had served in the Provincial Congress “by Loyalist request—to oppose the radicals.”

The British war plan, based on an assumption of such popular support, failed to foresee what effect the impartial depredations of redcoats and Hessians would have on local loyalties. It also failed to recognize the impossibility of protecting known Loyalists in their homes, a goal toward which the short-lived screen of posts had been established after Washington’s retreat in 1776.

So now the torment began, and no other state would know anything like the continuing storm that pounded New Jersey until the declaration of peace in 1783. Many Tory families fled to British New York; there the men joined such Loyalist outfits as the four battalions of Skinner’s New Jersey Volunteers, which included Van Buskirk’s Bergen County regiment and one from Sussex County under Joseph Barton, another former patriot leader. Others later joined Daniel Coxe’s West Jersey Volunteers in Philadelphia. In all, there were as many battalions of Jerseymen in the Loyalist forces as there were in the Continental army.

But equally active—either openly loyal or merely opportunistic—were those who stayed at home as the war moved back and forth across the state. In little groups or semiorganized bands, they burned, robbed and murdered throughout the war, starting on the day after Washington left Hackensack in retreat.

The mere appearance of British troops in a locality sparked fierce action against patriot neighbors. For years many a patriot farmer spent most of his nights hiding out in the woods, returning at daybreak to work his fields. As soon as the redcoats left, the Loyalists in turn were beaten, dragged off, and tarred and feathered, and their property was confiscated by the state. Lightning raids were mounted from New York and the Tory strongholds along the Hudson to burn specific houses or capture individuals inimical to the Loyalists. Monmouth County’s “Pine Robbers,” (to use the patriots’ epithet), who had aided British shore parties along the deserted coast since the war’s earliest days, rose during

Washington's retreat and had to be put down by Continentals spared with difficulty. So strong and open had Loyalist sentiment become, in fact, that Washington wrote "our affairs are in a very bad condition, not so much from the apprehension of General Howe's army as from the defection of New York, the Jerseys and Pennsylvania."

It may be considered a wonder that there remained any patriots at all among the inhabitants of these states as they watched their ragamuffin army run from the seemingly invincible British. But many of them stubbornly held to their beliefs and their still poorly defined aim of "liberty."

Howe claimed that twenty-seven hundred New Jersey citizens applied for the king's pardon during and after the retreat of 1776. Ironically, many of these quickly found themselves the targets not of rebels but of Tory marauders who had discovered that those with "protection papers" were less likely to hide their valuables than were the beleaguered patriots.

With its counterpoint of patriot reprisals, the Tory raiding—terrible to its victims but relatively meaningless to the war—spread behind the retreat like the wake of a ship. The first real Loyalist military contribution, after John Aldington's feat in guiding Cornwallis up the night-shrouded Palisades, occurred on December 13, 1776, with the capture in Basking Ridge of Major General Charles Lee, Washington's second in command.

As events were to prove, the locals who guided Cornet Banastre Tarleton to the house where Charles Lee was dawdling probably served the American cause better than their own. Despite Washington's pleas for speedy reinforcements, Lee had taken his own time bringing his command over from White Plains. He had just finished a leisurely ten o'clock breakfast and was answering letters when Tarleton and five of his dragoons rode into the yard, chased the sentries away and demanded the general's surrender. Dragged off "bareheaded, in his slippers and blanket coat, his collar open, and his shirt very much soiled from several days use," Lee remained a prisoner until April 1778. His captivity kept him out of several important actions, but would end in time for him to play a key—often debated—role in the battle of Monmouth.

Much more important to the British effort was the military support given by the well-trained and superbly equipped New Jersey Loyalist troops. As an alternative to dearly-bought Hessians or to

redcoats shipped three thousand miles from home, these battalions seemed to fulfill the overoptimistic promise of loyal support on which England continued to base so much of her policy toward the colonies. Without the opposition provoked by the looting and pillaging, in which British regulars and Hessians constantly engaged, these Loyalist forces might well have been even stronger and more welcome during their incursions into the state; conceivably, they might have been instrumental in winning the war for the crown. As it was, their power helped keep New Jersey in turmoil, and few actions conducted by either side failed to involve them.

In one of the earliest movements, six hundred troops under Continental General William Heath marched the twelve miles from Tappan to occupy Hackensack on December 14, 1776, in the wake of the British pursuing Washington. They seized fifty of the "disaffected" (Tories) and some much-needed stores. All but eight of the prisoners were released when the rebel force pulled out.

The rebels quickly followed with a raid from Ramapo by five hundred men under Generals George Clinton and Samuel Parsons. Getting word of Loyalist troops quartered in the area, they hurried the fourteen miles to Bergen Wood (part of Jersey City today) with a local guide and took twenty-three prisoners, thus beginning the see-saw marching and countermarching that was to cover New Jersey in the next seven years. The British and Tory forces then promptly raided Hoppers (upper Paramus) and Paramus and carried off a half-dozen patriot farmers.

As the American retreat continued across the state, turmoil spread with it. At the Crosswicks drawbridge organized civilians nightly harried the Hessian guard of a hundred men. British outposts everywhere were attacked; messengers were captured or killed with such regularity that shortly before the Trenton battle Colonel Rall had to send a hundred men and a cannon to guard an especially important message.

Following Washington's surprise victories at Trenton and Princeton, both armies settled into winter quarters. Howe in New York and Washington in Morristown. The British were constantly short of wood for their fires and hay for their horses but only occasionally short of food. On the other hand the Americans starved, though quartered in a farming area, and their horses died for lack of fodder. The reason for the contrast was simple. British gold

brought the loyal and the greedy flocking across the Hudson with every kind of supply. The Americans were virtually penniless, their Continental currency already nearly worthless.

Foraging parties from both sides scoured the once-rich country. Those from British-held New York were not safe even though at least two battalions of regulars guarded them. On January 20, 1777, Pennsylvania riflemen and a detachment of New Jersey militia under General Philemon Dickinson routed a British foraging party near Somerset Court House (modern Millstone) and captured forty of its wagons and a hundred horses.

Earlier, with his men almost starving, Brigadier General William Maxwell had taken his New Jersey Brigade (the collective name for the New Jersey regiments of the Continental army) to Spanktown (Rahway) to raid the saltworks. Chasing out the British and Hessian guard, they continued to Elizabethtown (modern Elizabeth) and captured supplies. Near Middletown, in the same month, the rebels had an encounter with Lieutenant Colonel John Morris's Second Battalion of New Jersey Loyalists. Militia forced Tory irregulars to pull out of Shrewsbury in February, only to be driven out in turn by a British force.

Paramus and Hackensack were repeatedly the targets of Loyalist raiders, principally under Colonel Joseph Barton. These raids, like the one on Slotterdam (Elmwood Park) on the Passaic River, were intended more to capture Whigs than to take supplies. Patriotic Bergen County Dutchmen, the victims of former neighbors, were soon well represented in the notorious sugar houses and ships that served as New York's prisons. Colonel Mawhood, one of the principals at Princeton, foraged near Spanktown and was chased off by Maxwell's brigade. At Strawberry Hill (Woodbridge) in March, the same militia troop had the honor of engaging a foraging party under General Howe himself.

This kind of warfare went on unceasingly while both armies laid up for the winter. The chief sufferers were the farmers, Tory and rebel alike, whose cattle, horses and sheep were carted off by the thousands as both sides competed for food in an area fast being picked clean.

On April 13, with the approach of spring, the British attacked General Benjamin Lincoln at Middlebrook (modern Bound Brook). Cornwallis, with four thousand men, night-marched from New

Brunswick, caught the Americans at breakfast, and drove them from their positions, inflicting a loss of sixty men and two cannon. It testifies to the strangeness of the war that Cornwallis breakfasted at the house of Colonel Philip Van Horne, a retired militia officer, and that General Lincoln dined that night under the same roof after the British had pulled out.

Unorganized mounted farmers fired continually on the eleven thousand troops and one thousand wagons that Howe moved out of New Brunswick toward Middlebrook on June 11 as though to cross the Delaware at Coryell's Ferry (modern Lambertville, New Jersey and New Hope, Pennsylvania). After covering only thirteen miles in two days, the British stayed near Somerset Court House almost a week in the hope that Washington would emerge from his secure entrenchments a few miles to the north. When the Americans refused to take the bait, Howe turned back and at Perth Amboy began to ferry his troops to Staten Island. Attacking in earnest from the main positions at Middlebrook, General Greene thrust into New Brunswick, driving out its Hessian defenders, while Lord Stirling (Major General William Alexander) pushed on toward the departing British. Immediately Howe turned, routed this pursuing force, and marched back as far as Westfield. Washington still refused a major engagement and, recalling his army, watched Howe ferry everything he had, except for a small force at Paulus Hook, to Staten Island. New Jersey was in American hands again, and Washington wrote, "The exertions of the N.J. militia have kept the enemy out of her limits, except now and then a hasty descent, without a Continental regiment. Besides doing this, she has sent and is now sending reinforcements to this and the Northern Army."

Howe had orders to sail up the Hudson to join General John Burgoyne in an effort to split New England from the rest of the colonies. But instead he put to sea on July 23, 1777, in a fleet of 211 vessels. Amid wild rumors about his destination, he disappeared for a month before being sighted far up Chesapeake Bay. Washington marched out to meet him in Pennsylvania and suffered a series of defeats (Brandywine, Paoli, Germantown) which ended with Howe's occupation of Philadelphia.

Behind Washington's departed army the hit-and-run war proceeded in New Jersey. On August 19 the New Jersey Volunteers, a crack Loyalist troop, captured prisoners and supplies at Perth

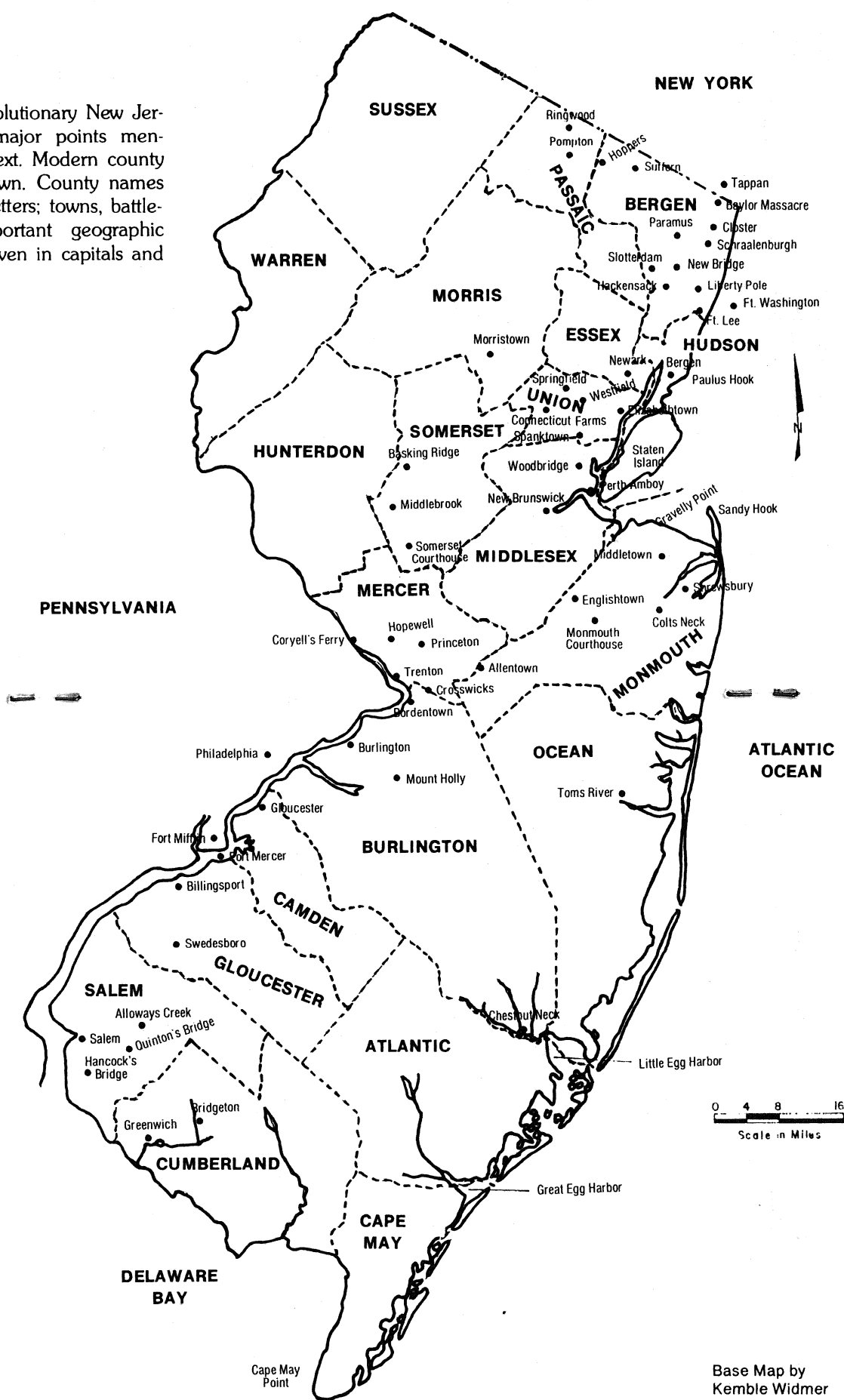
Amboy. Retaliating, the Americans crossed to Staten Island and took several prisoners, including the Tory Colonel Barton. But in September there was an affair of a different complexion. Sir Henry Clinton, soon to replace Howe in Philadelphia as commander of all royal forces, suddenly poured two thousand regulars, Hessians, and Loyalists across the Hudson. Marching with none of the usual delay, Generals John Vaughan and John Campbell, with grenadiers, chasseurs, Hessians, light infantry and artillery, reached the Passaic River the next day and fought a lively action at Slatterdam against a hastily assembled militia. Fearing a full-fledged invasion, General Alexander McDougall rushed down from Peekskill with about one thousand Continentals and two cannon.

Colonel Aaron Burr, commanding at Suffern, darted down to New Bridge, where the British had established a strong position. He captured the entire picket guard of officer, sergeant, corporal and twenty-seven privates without the main post's being aware of it. Having intended no more than a foraging expedition and an exercise for his troops, Clinton soon moved back to New York with his spoils and some unlucky patriot farmers.

After occupying Philadelphia in the fall of 1777, Howe found himself hard put to supply his men, who were soon on half-rations despite constant foraging. Passage up the Delaware was effectively blocked just below the city by two forts and, farther south at Billingsport, by several *cheveaux de frise*, barriers made of sunken hulks and rows of huge iron-pointed timbers reaching to within five feet of the surface and angled down river. Fort Mifflin, hastily and poorly built, stood on Fort (previously "Mud") Island, just off the Pennsylvania shore. Fort Mercer, at Red Bank on the New Jersey side, was a huge fourteen-gun earthwork protected by a ditch and an abatis (a defensive obstacle of sharpened, outward-pointing stakes). It was manned by Colonel Christopher Greene's four hundred Rhode Islanders. On October 22, 1777, some two thousand Hessians under Colonel Carl von Donop demanded its surrender, threatening no quarter if a defense were made.

Secure within earthworks which only days before had been reduced to manageable size by a high interior wall that cut the fort in two, Greene refused. Cannonading mightily, the attackers rushed in while the Americans held their fire. Over the undefended north wall the cheering Hessians swarmed. But for once deserters and

Figure 1: Revolutionary New Jersey, showing major points mentioned in the text. Modern county boundaries shown. County names are in capital letters; towns, battle-sites and important geographic locations are given in capitals and lowercase.



Tory informers had failed to keep the enemy up to date. Stopped by the new inner wall, they were driven out again by a blast of fire which also caught the other attackers and accounted for about four hundred casualties, including the fatally wounded von Donop. The defenders lost fourteen dead and twenty-three wounded in a victory which must have strengthened Howe's misgivings about frontal assaults on American positions.

The next day the guns of Fort Mifflin stopped six British ships attempting to run a gap in the *cheveaux de frise*. The sixty-four-gun *Augusta* blew up, and the sixteen-gun *Merlin* was grounded and had to be destroyed by her crew. But beginning on November 10, shore guns and a floating battery that mounted huge thirty-two-pounders systematically destroyed the Pennsylvania fort and after six days forced the survivors to flee to Fort Mercer.

Fort Mercer was evacuated during the night of November 21 in the face of fifty-five hundred troops advancing under Cornwallis. Upriver, the fleet of American naval vessels under Commodore John Hazelwood was unable to escape and had to be burned. Hazelwood had already lost the twenty-four-gun Continental frigate *Delaware*, the Pennsylvania frigate *Montgomery*, two schooners, and assorted row-galleys in earlier actions on the river. He now destroyed most of his other ships, which had made up almost the entire navies of Pennsylvania and the United States.

With the British secure and well-supplied in Philadelphia, Washington's discouraged men tramped north for the terrible winter of Valley Forge, warmed only by the story of General Horatio Gates's victory over General John Burgoyne at Saratoga. New Jersey settled down for another siege of raiding, sniping and looting. All the western part of the state—especially Burlington and Gloucester counties—bore the brunt of pillaging by British, Hessians, and Tories during the winter months. Orders from Governor William Livingston and the Council of Safety for the removal of livestock from the area arrived too late; there was little left to move inland.

With the winter at Valley Forge testing patriot sentiment, events in New Jersey followed the previous year's pattern of attack and retaliation.

Two Bergen County militiamen, Abraham Brower and John Lozier, were sent to reconnoiter the British position at Paulus

Hook. They captured John Richards, a well-known Tory visiting his family on a British pass, and shot him when he attempted escape. Soon they were in turn captured by outraged Loyalists shouting "murder." Imprisoned in chains, they quickly became a cause celebre. In retaliation, the patriots chained a captive Staten Island Loyalist, Colonel Christopher Billip, to the floor of the Burlington jail. Nine months passed before Washington's intercession prompted Sir Henry Clinton to end the matter by releasing the two American prisoners.

All over the state similar, if less dramatic, episodes kept the inhabitants on edge—a Tory Ranger captain shot dead while passing near a dense woods, a patriot militiaman carried off to New York, two free blacks captured on their way to New York with a basket of eggs.

Privateers darted out of Little Egg Harbor, the Shrewsbury and Shark rivers, and other nests around Cape May and along the Jersey coast to disrupt British shipping and create a few more wealthy patriots. Farmers in the southern counties eyed each other warily and sometimes engaged in armed action. Roving bands of opportunists pillaged and plundered in the name of whatever suited them best. The winter of 1777-1778 was nonetheless relatively quiet in most of New Jersey.

Along the western border from Burlington to Bridgeton, raids by Philadelphia-based regulars, Hessians, and newly-formed Loyalists regiments pestered the countryside. From Trenton, General Casimir Pulaski's cavalry posed a threat sufficient to keep British and Tory incursions at a minimum in that area. In the Haddonfield region Captain Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee's troop of light cavalry kept the peace for a time, but it was withdrawn and a new Tory group, the West Jersey Volunteers, occupied Billingsport and controlled the area for the remainder of the season. General Anthony (Mad Anthony) Wayne, foraging from Valley Forge, roamed from Mount Holly to Salem, collecting cattle and horses and burning the hay he could not carry.

Colonel Charles Mawhood descended on Salem and on March 18, 1778 advanced to attack three hundred militia under Colonel Asher Holmes at Quinton's Bridge. His screen of cavalry drew the militiamen across Alloways Creek, and then the hidden main British force pounced. The Americans were thrown back with

severe losses but then were reinforced by Colonel Elijah Hand with the Cumberland County militia and two cannon. The bridge was destroyed; Major John Graves Simcoe, British commander of a Tory regiment called the Queen's Rangers, could not advance and had to send back to Salem for support. But Colonel Hand's growing militia force outflanked the enemy and next morning drove them back into the town.

From there Mawhood issued a threat to burn the homes of Salem County Whigs and turn their wives and children over to the Tories if the militia did not lay down their arms. To this letter he attached a list of those residents who would be the first to suffer. Calling him an "Attila," Hand promised instant retaliation if anything like that transpired.

Mawhood then mounted a midnight assault on Hancock's Bridge, a few miles south of Salem. With orders to give no quarter, they rushed the guard there, only to find that the four hundred militia had gone. Judge Hancock, owner of the house in which the guard was posted, was bayoneted along with his brother (ironically both were staunch Loyalists) and most of the twenty-man guard. The raiders, considerably enriched, took ship back to Philadelphia.

A one-day British raid on Gloucester Point failed to trap a party of the Second New Jersey Regiment under a Major Howell, which had been sent to rout the Bilingsport Loyalists. Continuing to the Haddonfield headquarters of Colonel Israel Shreve and the Second New Jersey, the fourteen-hundred-man British force found that the Continentals had retreated north to Mount Holly. The invaders killed several of the Cooper's Ferry guard, including Colonel Joseph Ellis of the Gloucester County militia. They then burned some houses and returned to Philadelphia.

Repeated thrusts at Swedesboro resulted in skirmishes with the militia and the burning of the school and several homes. But a far more serious expedition was launched against the rebels' remaining naval forces. The few American vessels that had escaped the Delaware River operations, in addition to two new frigates under construction, lay under poor security between Bordentown and Trenton. Four armed British galleys, a brig, and a schooner carried light infantry upriver from Philadelphia on May 7, 1778 and, despite militia resistance, burned the unfinished vessels and several smaller craft. Proceeding to Bordentown, they burned naval and army

stores and the home of Joseph Borden. While most of the officers dined in the house of Francis Hopkinson (poet, artist, lawyer, writer, and signer of the Declaration of Independence), the troops advanced to Biles Island, just south of Trenton. There and at Watson's Creek they burned more shipping and houses, while their accompanying ships burned others on the Pennsylvania side and cannonaded Bordentown.

There were to be no more raids on the Delaware. It had long been apparent that the British were preparing to evacuate Philadelphia. The one-hundred eighty ships at Philadelphia were insufficient to transport all the troops and all the Loyalists who would have to leave with them. To make space in the ships, it had even been suggested that the five thousand army horses be left behind with their throats cut. But the idea had been too humiliating, and before his departure for home Howe had agreed with Clinton, his successor as commander in chief, that an overland march to New York—though more dangerous than a passage by water—was the only answer. On June 18 the British marched out of a melancholy Philadelphia, which had adjusted all too well to the occupation, and ferried across to New Jersey to begin the fourth crossing of this “corridor state” in eighteen months.

The unseasonably hot weather and heavy rains could not entirely account for the British army's slow pace, nor could the encumbrance of a twelve-mile baggage train. As farmers and militia felled trees across the road and Colonel Daniel Morgan's riflemen harried their flanks, the British plodded on. The farmers moved fodder and cattle out of their path and removed ropes and buckets from the wells. The British retaliated by indiscriminately burning and looting the countryside: mills at Bordentown, ironworks at Mount Holly. Maxwell's New Jersey Brigade clung to their flanks; Cadwalader's Pennsylvania troops kept their rear in a turmoil; Washington, with more than ten thousand men, hovered just north in the hills of Hopewell, resisting the temptation to engage in a battle which might lose him his advantageous position.

In seven steaming days the British advanced only forty miles. Anxious now to strike, Washington nevertheless bowed to a council of war decision not to hazard a full-scale engagement. Principal in that decision was Major General Charles Lee, only recently exchanged for a captured British general and restored as second in

command. The Americans contented themselves with keeping to the north of the British on a converging route.

Crosswicks saw the first real engagement between the two forces, when the militia caught the British trying to repair a bridge across the creek. As the fighting spread, patriot cannon came into action. There were casualties on both sides.

Finding Washington closer to New Brunswick than he, Clinton turned his forces at Allentown and headed for Sandy Hook, where transports could ferry them to New York. Along this new route the British troops found relatively untouched country to devastate, and the looting increased though Clinton hanged two of the marauders.

Finally, when Washington was informed of this change of route, the decision to strike was made. The fickle Lee, offered the command, refused it, then requested it then again refused it; then, with Major General the Marquis de Lafayette already on his way at the head of some six thousand men, Lee once again demanded the position, and Washington agreed. Lee failed to plan or properly press the next morning's attack. On the humid twenty-eighth of June, the battle of Monmouth (actually Monmouth Court House, now Freehold) erupted under conditions most favorable to the Americans but, after very little fighting, degenerated into a welter of conflicting orders, independent movements and chaos.

Leading his bewildered troops in a retreat that no one could ever reasonably explain, Lee was confronted by Washington, who wrested the command from him. In the face of a counterattacking British force, with only fifteen minutes in which to place fresh troops and pass the demoralized retreaters to the rear, the commander in chief moved brilliantly. With the advantage of having met the rout on defensible high ground, he ranged men and artillery in almost impregnable positions from which they stopped the pursuing British. Both sides suffered from the oppressive heat, and many men died from it, but as the afternoon ended the Americans were relentlessly pressing the enemy back. That night they lay on their arms in the woods and fields after darkness forced a halt to their advance. The next morning the British had vanished. From unassailable new positions in Middletown they moved to the waiting transports at Sandy Hook. New Jersey had seen the last major British occupation. Although local fighting would continue up to and beyond the peace treaty in 1783, the British army would make no lengthy

incursions into the beleaguered state.

After resting and refreshing his men, Washington took a leisurely pace up through the state while his army marched to new positions along the Hudson. He visited the Falls of the Passaic. He and his staff lingered at the “Hermitage” in Paramus (in modern Hohokus), home of Theodosia Prevost (later Mrs. Aaron Burr), widow of a British officer, where English noblemen and American officers had been welcomed alternately throughout the war.

The war was going well. The British were back where they had been two years before. Report of the French alliance had reached the Americans at Valley Forge, and now came the news that a French fleet even larger than the British flotilla lay off the coast.

The two armies once again settled into their stalemate. There was time to hold a court-martial for Lee, who had demanded one after his disgrace at Monmouth. Starting at New Brunswick, the court traveled to Paramus, where it finally judged Lee guilty of several charges and suspended him from command for twelve months. His vanity made resignation a foregone conclusion.

With foraging and marching, the summer of 1778 wound down. The British stayed mostly in New York, waiting for the harvest, after which sorties would be worth the effort. The patriots took up posts in an arc around the city, and the French decided not to risk their deep-draught ships in an attack across Sandy Hook’s bar.

On September 22 Cornwallis crossed the Hudson onto the Paulus Hook peninsula with some five thousand troops. With great speed they overran the posts at Liberty Pole (Englewood) and New Bridge as the main American forces pulled back. Three days later Sir Henry Clinton himself came over—testimony to the seriousness of the affair. On the night of September 27 four British regiments and a number of local Loyalists marched north as part of a pincers movement against an American concentration at Tappan. At their head was General Charles Grey, nicknamed “No-flint” Grey for the order he gave during the night bayonet attack that slaughtered Wayne’s forces at Paoli, Pennsylvania.

Several miles south of Tappan, in the house and barns of a Tory farmer, Cornelius Haring, 152 Continental dragoons under Virginia’s Colonel George Baylor bedded down for the night. With a sergeant’s guard of twelve men posted and the British supposedly ten miles south in Hackensack, the Americans felt secure enough.

But a Tory report had reached Grey, and with orders to go in on the bayonet and show no quarter his men seized the guard and rushed on the sleeping men. Even those who surrendered were ordered killed, although many survived multiple bayonet wounds. Baylor was severely wounded and carried off. His subordinate, Major Alexander Clough, and ten others were killed. Of seventeen left for dead thirteen recovered. Thirty-nine, eight of them wounded, were carried as prisoners to New York.

Afterwards called "Baylor's Massacre," this brutal attack conformed to accepted procedure for night operations in the eighteenth century. The military argument was that since prisoners could not be kept safely without light, surrenders could not be accepted. But the Americans rarely fought that way. The actions of British troops and officers in seeming to accept surrender before bayoneting the helpless Americans, and in continuing the same tactics against a party of militia the next day, exemplify the brutality that solidified patriot sentiment throughout the war. Enraging the rebels and collecting a few more Tories who now chose to go to New York was all Clinton's invasion accomplished. After stripping the countryside of grain, forage, and cattle, the British ferried back to the city.

There was one other major episode of raiding and pillaging before winter halted the two armies. Among the several thousand American privateers preying on British shipping with or without official "letters of marque," some thirty of the most troublesome were berthed at Chestnut Neck in Little Egg Harbor (just above modern Atlantic City). On October 4, 1778, three hundred British regulars and Loyalists under Captain Patrick Ferguson attacked them, supported by a considerable naval force. They destroyed ten large vessels and many small ones at the base, as well as shipyards, saltworks, storehouses and homes for twenty miles up the Mullica River. General Casimir Pulaski's legion of cavalry and infantry was sent to oppose this movement, but the British rowed silently upriver and surprised the infantry, killing fifty of them in another night bayonet attack.

After an unsuccessful stab at Newport, Rhode Island, the Americans spread out, in comfortable winter quarters for once, around Middlebrook and Elizabethtown and in Westchester County, New York, while Washington caught up with affairs in

Philadelphia. Outlaw gangs based in the North Jersey highlands terrorized the upper half of the state, but there was little military movement of note on either side. In February 1779 Loyalist Captain Samuel Ryerson raided Woodbridge and captured Captain Nathaniel FitzRandolph, who later died in captivity. An attempt was made to capture Governor Livingston in the same month, but he was not at home. Otherwise it was almost as peaceful as in the other northern states. The war would be carried south within a year by Sir Henry Clinton. Except for sporadic raids, it was not to return.

Spring and summer of 1779 saw what must have seemed to weary New Jerseyans an amplitude of such guerrilla raids, although they had little effect on the war. Continental troops were captured by Loyalists on Bergen Neck; Tinton Falls (Shrewsbury), Middletown, and Closter were burned and looted by other Tories and British regulars. Some militia officers were captured in Shrewsbury, and a few Continentals were taken in Spanktown. It took until August 19, however, for either side to make a major move in the area.

Before dawn on that day, Major Henry Lee made a secret march of twenty miles and launched a bayonet attack on the fort at Paulus Hook. The three hundred men arrived some three hours behind schedule, having been misled by their guide. With high tide flooding the marshes and the protective ditch, they waded the waist-high water. Their guns, unprimed to insure that no shot would be fired, were held on the shoulders; each man was ordered to hold his hat against his left thigh to make sure he couldn't prime and fire. Orders were given to kill any man who tried to do so.

The surprise was complete. Bayonets and sheer numbers brought the immediate surrender of most of the garrison, although a strong force in the central redoubt refused to give in. The Americans' powder had been soaked in the wading, and as dawn approached and British alarm guns fired their warning on the New York side, Lee withdrew—taking along 158 prisoners, in contrast to the British custom. The action had taken only half an hour. During the exhausting struggle back to the New Bridge starting point a Loyalist foraging party fired on Lee's troops, killing and wounding half a dozen. For the exploit Lee received one of only eight medals voted by Congress during the entire war.

An event on October 28, 1779, delighted patriot hearts. The

Queen's Rangers (who benefited from the resemblance of their uniforms to those of Light Horse Harry Lee's troopers) landed at Perth Amboy and went up the Raritan River, burning Raritan's Dutch Reformed church and the Somerset County Courthouse. But the damage was considered well repaid when the Jersey militia captured the Rangers' commander, Colonel John Graves Simcoe.

Little else of importance occurred before the most severe winter in history sealed the countryside. The Americans shivered and starved in their second encampment at Morristown. The British in New York burned church pews and fences and even sawed up ships for fuel. The Hudson froze so solidly that cavalry and heavy guns could cross with ease, and a troop of British cavalry trotted the eleven miles from the Battery to Staten Island. In January Lord Stirling ran twenty-five hundred troops in five hundred sleighs across the Arthur Kill to Staten Island but floundered there in bitter cold and yard-deep snow; British cavalry killed six of his soldiers and frostbite disabled five hundred. Stirling returned to New Jersey with seventeen prisoners to end another of the war's fiascos. The British retaliated within the week, capturing prisoners and burning buildings in Elizabeth and Newark without losing a man.

During the late winter and the spring of 1780, local raiding resumed. Woodbridge, Spanktown, and Shrewsbury felt the sting of British and Tory activity. Hackensack and Paramus were targets of a raid that burned the Hackensack courthouse and several homes. In April, four hundred British cavalry and infantry came overland to Hoppers and skirmished with elements of the Pennsylvania Line. In May it was Newark. The only satisfaction for the patriots came on May 30, when two Tory raiding parties at New Bridge mistook each other for the patriot guard and had a bloody encounter.

What Washington termed this "desultory war" kept the Americans in winter camp until June 7, 1780. On that day a mixed British force of six thousand landed at Elizabethtown and pushed inland. In response, Washington moved into Short Hills. Driving the militia and Colonel Elias Dayton's Third New Jersey Regiment of Continentals before it, a large Hessian force burned all but one house in the village of Connecticut Farms (now Union). A British shot fired through a window killed the wife of Reverend James Caldwell and further inflamed patriot feelings. The Hessians pulled back to Elizabethtown, then again advanced to Springfield, where, on June 23,

they were checked. Burning much of that town, they retreated under heavy pressure to Staten Island.

Since May, patriot concern had been growing over a formidable blockhouse erected to protect refugee (Loyalist) woodcutters at Bull's Ferry (modern Hoboken). It had been used as a base for devastating Tory raids on Closter, New Bridge and Schraalenburgh (Bergenfield). On the morning of July 10, General Anthony Wayne and one thousand Continentals, including cavalry and artillery, moved against it. Inside, eighty-four Tories with two six-pound guns strongly resisted the attack. An hour-long pounding by Wayne's guns at sixty-yard range proved futile, as a scouting party had warned. Protected on two sides by towering cliffs, with the only approach guarded by an abatis of sharpened stakes, a ditch, stockades and a parapet, the place was impregnable. Three officers and fifteen men in the attacking force were killed and forty-six wounded before Wayne marched back to New Bridge with whatever cattle, hogs and sheep he could gather on the way.

In New York a satirical poem soon appeared entitled "The Cow Chase." In it Clinton's favorite aide, Major John André, mocked the attack and its leader, ending his verse with the words:

"And now I've closed my epic strain,
I tremble as I show it,
Lest this same warrior-drover Wayne,
Should ever catch the poet."

When André was tried as a spy in the Benedict Arnold affair a few months later, Anthony Wayne declined to serve on the board at his court-martial.

The plundering and reprisals went on throughout that summer and fall, with Continentals often as guilty as Hessians. Washington ordered army offenders hanged without trial, and the order was carried out at least once. In Monmouth County the American General David Forman—called "Black David" by the Loyalists—formed the "Retaliators" for the purpose of avenging Tory crimes.

The Americans scattered into winter quarters in 1780-1781, Washington just to the north at Newburgh and New Windsor in New York State, the New Jersey Brigade at Pompton, the Pennsylvanians in the old huts at Morristown. To the cold and privation that attended even the best-planned American winter camps was added the boredom of a war no longer being fought in the north. The men



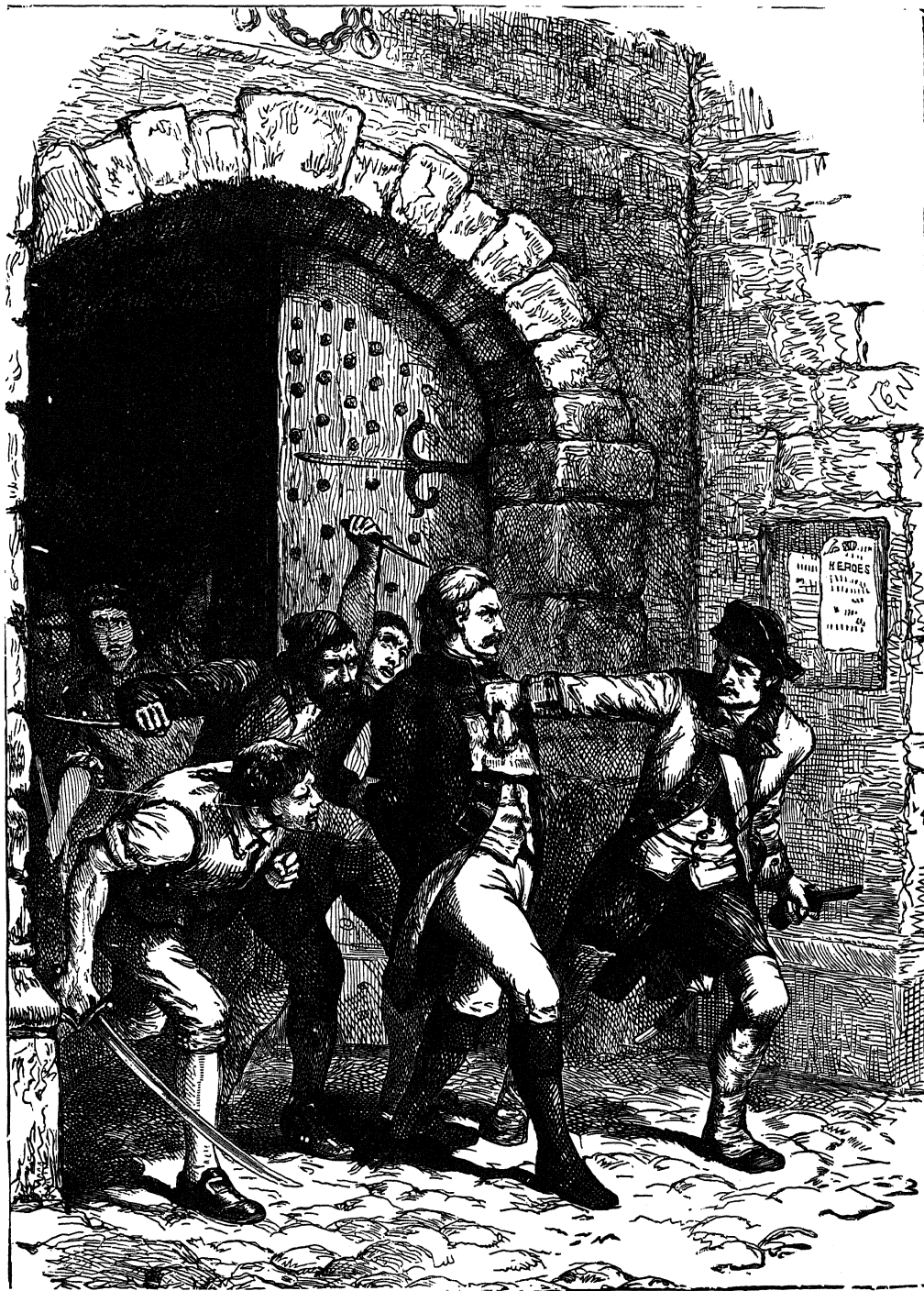
Mutiny of the Pennsylvania Line at Morristown. The artist, in this fanciful wood engraving of 1898, has conveniently placed the Ford Mansion (Washington's headquarters) in the nearby Jockey Hollow encampment.

had other complaints. A thankless country and an impoverished Congress had supplied no pay for so long that even the depreciated currency formerly received was fondly remembered. The troops were in rags and starving, sometimes going nearly a week on half a pound of beef and half a pound of rice per man. On January 1, 1781, six regiments of General Wayne's Pennsylvania Continentals mutinied.

Rushing from their huts they seized provisions, ammunition, and six field pieces. It was a near-bloodless affair. One officer and one mutineer were killed in the milling confusion, but finally the mutineers made an orderly departure with fifes and drums playing. An unarmed Wayne went along to negotiate a settlement with them and to try to prevent desertion. The men insisted they did not intend to desert but only meant to face Congress in Philadelphia with their demands. And so fair were those demands that Wayne, though he moved up the New Jersey Line and militia for possible action, set out to right the wrongs the men were protesting.

The British, expecting wholesale desertions and chaos to follow this mutiny, moved troops and ships to Staten Island and Raritan Bay. Clinton offered full pardon, past pay, and protection to the mutineers. A notorious Tory raider, John Mason, guided by James Ogden, a young farmer from South River, carried the message, but by the time they delivered it negotiations to satisfy the men's demands were under way. The mutineer's own Board of Sergeants sent the spies to Philadelphia, where they were hanged.

The Pennsylvania and congressional authorities gave in to most of the demands and carefully examined the enlistment papers many of them claimed were fraudulent. Emboldened by the success of the Pennsylvania regiments, the New Jersey Line mutinied at their Pompton encampment. Washington, recognizing what the spread of mutiny foretold, ordered General William Heath to send down five hundred trustworthy New England troops from West Point. The commander in chief himself rode to Ringwood, just below the New York border, to take charge. Before dawn on January 27 the troops, under Major General Robert Howe, surrounded the tents of the sleeping mutineers, aimed three cannon at them point-blank, and forced them to surrender. Of the three ringleaders tried, two were summarily shot. Within the month the Jersey troops were preparing to march south to join the Virginia campaign. There were



Captain Joshua Huddy being led from his New York prison. A romanticized nineteenth century engraving which ignores the facts that he was supposedly being exchanged, not murdered, and that he had been confined on a prison ship, rather than a building.

no more mutinies.

The remainder of the year 1781 in New Jersey can be summed up in a paragraph, but every word reflects a dreadful cost in blood and property. The Essex County militia raided Staten Island in March, and the British hit back with a sortie on Elizabethtown. In May, Bergen County and Orange County (New York) militia overran a Tory blockhouse on the site of abandoned Fort Lee. Tories raided Monmouth County in force toward the end of June. Washington prepared either to attack New York or march south to Virginia, depending on the availability of the French fleet. From Woodbridge, rebels again attacked Staten Island in August. Loyalists raided Shrewsbury and Colts Neck in October.

Meantime, word had reached Washington that Admiral the Comte de Grasse would be available in the south for two months with twenty French warships and three thousand troops. Abandoning their New York plans, the American army and the French expeditionary force, based in Westchester County (New York), marched down through New Jersey in the move that culminated in the effective end of the war with the surrender of General Cornwallis's army at Yorktown on October 19.

But the war did not end in New Jersey. Rarely a war of large troop movements or full-fledged battles, the struggle in the once-rich Garden State continued, becoming even more bitter as the Loyalists saw their chances for victory fade. In April 1781 the king had put a new and effective weapon into Tory hands by authorizing the Associated Loyalists, a paramilitary organization with William Franklin, New Jersey's former royal governor heading its board of directors. It was permitted to own its own vessels, take and keep its own prisoners, and keep military or naval booty—a practice often winked at but never before openly sanctioned. Answerable to no one, supplied and encouraged by the British, this ultimate in vengeance put spite on a paying basis never before achieved. Although on the sea it could be called merely the counterpart of the American privateer system, on land it had neither precedent nor parallel.

Thanks mainly to this new organization, Loyalist raids were still troublesome. The year 1782 opened with such a raid on New Brunswick, and there was another in Monmouth County. Meantime a unique rebel "Water-Guard" patrolled the west bank of the Hudson in whaleboats, but only slightly hampered a vast and growing

traffic with still-British New York.

An incident in March was characteristic of New Jersey's years of partisan, quasimilitary conflict. It started in familiar fashion. The Associated Loyalists raided the saltworks at Toms River. Some forty troops, with eighty seamen and an armed brig, the *Arrogant*, were joined by local Tories for an attack on the protecting blockhouse, manned by militia Captain Joshua Huddy and twenty-three men. The sharp and bloody affair ended when Huddy, his powder running out, surrendered with sixteen survivors. The raiders burned the blockhouse, and all but two houses in town before they sailed off. They lodged their captives on a New York prison ship.

Shortly before, a captured Loyalist named Philip White had been killed — while trying to escape, his captors said; murdered, the Tories claimed. Captain Richard Lippincott, a refugee from Monmouth County, took Huddy from his prison, supposedly to exchange him for a prisoner of the Americans. But under secret verbal orders from Franklin's Board of Associated Loyalists, he took the captive to the Jersey shore and hanged him at Gravelly Point on the Navesink River. On the victim's chest he pinned a note threatening similar reprisals in the future and ending: "Up goes Huddy for Philip White."

The patriot uproar was immediate. Washington presented the matter to Congress, which approved a plan to select a British captive for hanging if Lippincott was not turned over to the Americans. Corresponding directly with Sir Henry Clinton, Washington was assured of official British horror at the act. Clinton ordered the court-martial of Lippincott, who was acquitted as "following orders." Furious but impotent, Clinton dissolved the Board of Associated Loyalists. But when he refused to give up Lippincott, the Americans selected British Captain Charles Asgill by lot to be hanged. Informed of this, the captain's mother, Lady Asgill, went to the French foreign minister, the Comte de Vergennes, and pleaded for her son's life. Vergennes wrote Washington, who in November 1782 obtained Congress's approval to release Asgill and end the distasteful affair. (Lippincott later received an award from the British government of three thousand acres on the site of modern Toronto and half-pay for life.)

Within a few months came the signing of the peace treaty. On

April 14, 1783, Governor Livingston proclaimed the official end of hostilities.

The fighting was over at last. Patriot-Loyalist enmities took generations to die, but after years of bitter struggle, the New Jersey farmer could at last sleep in his own bed without fear.

For Further Reading

Most standard sources, which cover the full sweep of the revolutionary war, define New Jersey's contribution but cannot give sufficient detail or flavor to impart a feeling of the struggle here. Such a feeling must come from scraps found in the general works or from less well-known volumes. For closer detail, a surprising fund of information can be found in works long out of print but still widely available in public and school libraries. Sources in all three categories should be considered. The following examples offer comparatively rich rewards.

For coverage of the entire war with good New Jersey material, there are two outstanding works which lean heavily on actual eyewitness accounts: *The Spirit of Seventy-six*, Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, eds. (New York: Harper and Row, 1958, 1967); *Rebels and Redcoats*, George F. Scheer and Hugh R. Rankin, eds. (New York: World Publishing Co., 1957; and in paperback, New York: Mentor Books, 1959). *George Washington in the American Revolution*, by James Thomas Flexner (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1968), is both complete and authoritative. *The Encyclopedia of the American Revolution*, by Mark M. Boatner III (New York: David McKay, 1966), is a one-volume, alphabetically arranged work which provides good detail even on many minor actions and participants.

More localized coverage is to be found in such works as *The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley; The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground* by Adrian C. Leiby (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962). This is one of the most completely detailed and capably written local histories ever offered. *New Jersey in the American Revolution, 1763-1783: A Chronology*, by Dennis P. Ryan (Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1974) gives a

bare but useful listing of most pertinent events during the period. *Mutiny in January*, by Carl Van Doren (New York: Viking Press, 1943), in telling the full story of the Pennsylvania Line's revolt at Morristown, gives a clear picture of conditions otherwise glossed over. *New Jersey from Colony to State, 1609-1789*, by Richard P. McCormick (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964) offers broad but thoughtful coverage of New Jersey history through ratification of the Constitution. *New Jersey and the Revolutionary War*, by Alfred Hoyt Bill (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1964) treats many New Jersey military activities in detail, while *Cockpit of the Revolution: The War for Independence in New Jersey* by Leonard Lundin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940; reprinted New York, Octagon Books, 1972) gives excellent descriptions of even minor incidents. Useful material, skillfully presented, is to be found in *The Forgotten Victory: The Battle for New Jersey-1780*, by Thomas Fleming (New York: Reader's Digest Press, 1973). Finally in this category, reference should be made to the other pamphlets in this series, *New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience*. Concentrating on specific aspects, they offer more complete detail in the areas covered. Especially useful are Mark E. Lender, *The New Jersey Soldier*; Thomas Fleming, *The Battle of Springfield*; Samuel S. Smith, *The Battle of Monmouth*; and Kemble Widmer, *The Christmas Campaign: The Ten Days of Trenton and Princeton* (all Trenton: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1975).

Among the books, long out of print, which add detective-story spice to the digging for history, several works are well worth the effort. *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*. 2 vols. (New York, 1850), was written and exhaustively illustrated by the indefatigable Benson J. Lossing. Its footnotes alone contain more fact than many full histories. The letters of an active campaigner in New Jersey as well as elsewhere contain many nuggets in *Major General Wayne and the Pennsylvania Line*, by Charles J. Stille, (Philadelphia, 1893), while the British commander's view is often of interest in William B. Willcox, ed., *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954).

New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience

Larry R. Gerlach, Editor

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