

TOMS RIVER
BLOCK
HOUSE
FIGHT

March 24, 1782

By
Wm. H. Fischer
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Toms River *Block House* *Fight*

Man takes curious and special pride in the brave deeds of his forebears. For this reason it is well that a state should hold in memory its sons who in past years have given of their effort and of their lives for the state's well being, the commonweal, and for the life of the state. Such remembrance, such honor of the heroes of the past, makes for patriotism amongst the young, inculcates high ideals of citizenship and its responsibilities, yes, and its privileges.

It is unfortunate from this viewpoint that New Jersey has not cherished the memory of her brave sons as have some other states. Every pupil in the public schools, no matter in what city or state that school may be, learns of Paul Revere, of Ethan Allen, of Nathan Hale, (New Englanders all) of Lighthouse Harry Lee of the Virginias, of Sumter and Marion, the partisans of the Carolinas. But how many pupils in the Jersey schools know of Governor Livingston, that staunch upholder of freedom in the darkest of dark days? How many know of Maxwell, Lord Stirling, who led the Jersey line in Washington's army? How many, think you, of the pupils in the schools of Toms River could tell why we call the little park on the island just down this street, Huddy Park, or why the other little park, a few feet down the river, is called Robbins Park. I fear there are few of the pupils in our schools, and few people in our streets and homes who so much as know that patriot blood was spilled—that men in the prime of life gave up that life within a stone's throw of where we now are, in the cause of human freedom.

But allow me to say, that if New Jersey has not, as she might have and should have cherished the brave deeds of her gallant sons, it is not because

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there were no brave sons and gallant deeds to honor. New Jersey was indeed the "cockpit of the Revolution." Across her rich plains, over her swelling hills and through her fruitful valleys swept the turbulent tides of war. Located between two chief cities of the colonies, it was a strategic point at which to drive the mailed wedge from sea to frontier, cut in two the narrow strip of seaboard colonies and roll up either flank at leisure. But the genius of Washington and the patriotism of the bulk of New Jersey's population made that strategy of no avail.

This part of the Jersey shore (then in Monmouth County) was in those days sparsely settled, rough and uncouth; but peopled by patriots who would have none of the Tory sentiment in their hamlets. It was out of the track of the armies that surged across the plains of middle Jersey to lock in death grips at Trenton, Princeton, Monmouth Court-House and less bloody fields; but that life on this shore in those stirring times was full of strife and violence, the meagre records coming down to us, show full well. On four distinct occasions was the little hamlet of Toms River the objective point of armed expeditions from the British stronghold in New York. Compared with the last war, or even with the war of the Rebellion, the Revolution was but a series of skirmishes; and these attacks on Toms River were among the smaller and least known of these skirmishes. But the last attack, which resulted in the burning of the hamlet to the ground, also brought on results that involved not only Britain and America, but France and Holland (those two friends of the colonies) in a diplomatic struggle for the life of young Captain Charles Asgill, of the British army, selected by lot to be hanged as a reprisal for the murder of that sturdy partisan and bold patriot, Capt. Joshua Huddy, captured at Toms River Block-house. Thus the action at Toms River furnished one of the keys upon which turned the negotiations of Franklin and Jay, and won for the colonies a fuller measure of freedom in the final treaty of peace than they might otherwise have obtained.

During the Revolution, Cranberry

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Inlet was open at the mouth of Toms River and furnished a good harbor for small craft. It was at once seized upon by whaleboatmen and small privateers, when the British occupied New York—privateers which preyed on supply boats carrying provisions to the British forces in that city.

Besides the privateering, another reason why the British and Tories attacked this settlement, was that it was the location of a considerable salt industry. Salt was one of the articles that Great Britain would not allow the colonies to make, but required them to buy at "home", or in England. When the colonies rebelled, this supply was cut off. Salt was indispensable in those days, as the one means of preserving meats and fish—was as necessary as gunpowder if the war was to be fought to a successful issue. And at once salt works sprang up along the shore—on both banks of Toms River, at Waretown, Forked River, on both banks of the Manasquan, and at Shark River.

The most considerable of these seems to have been on the salt meadows at the mouth of Toms River, on the north bank, but a short distance from where the state bridge now crosses the bay. In 1776, June 24, the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, appropriated 400 pounds and made a contract with Thomas Savadge to erect saltworks at the mouth of Toms River, and Savadge was made the manager. These works are termed in the files of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety "The Pennsylvania Salt Works." At one time Mr. Coates, a Philadelphia merchant was connected with them, and the point is to this day called Coates Point.

Edwin Salter, the historian of the shore, says that November 2, 1776, the Pennsylvania Council of Safety ordered an officer and 25 men with two cannon to be sent to Toms River to guard the salt works erected there by that state. Gen. William S. Stryker, in his account of Toms River during the Revolution, mentions a similar action as taking place on February 5, 1777, when the Council sent a company of infantry with two cannon to protect the works. April 8, 1777, Continental Congress passed a resolution requesting New Jersey not to call to the

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field such militia, to the number of forty, as were employed in the salt-works now erecting in their state by the Governor of Pennsylvania; provided it be not inconsistent with the laws of the states. Governor Livingston replied that if Pennsylvania would send her own men, the exemption would be allowed, though inconsistent with the militia laws of New Jersey..

In March, 1777, on advice from Savadge, the Navy Board of Pennsylvania sent the armed craft Delaware (Capt. Richard Eyre) to cruise off the mouth of Toms River; and in the following July, Capt. John Nice and his company of the Pennsylvania State Regiment of foot were sent across New Jersey to garrison Toms River.

It was these saltworks that occasioned the first of the four expeditions against Toms River, by Col. John Morris of the New Jersey Royal Volunteers, a Refugee body of troops. Gen. Stryker says it was just before Christmas, and that Morris was sent by General Howe, then occupying Philadelphia. Sabine in his History of Loyalists, says the works were not destroyed because a man named John Williams "had placed the significant letter 'R' on them by order of Gen. Skinner." (Gen. Cortland Skinner was the last Attorney General of New Jersey under the Crown. He raised a brigade of 1100 Loyalists, and was a member of the Board of Associated Loyalists. He was also one of the packed court martial that we shall later see set free Captain Richard Lippencott, the murderer of Capt. Huddy.) The "significant letter R" is supposed to mean that R stood for Royalist. Lines were at that time not drawn hard and fast between patriot and loyalist, and some men ran with the hares and hunted with the hounds. The patriot cause was at a rather low ebb, New York and Philadelphia both held by British arms, and British protection and British gold were freely offered by British agents. It is assumed that some of the men connected with this salt works had taken the British protection.

The second expedition against Toms River was also directed at the salt works, in April, 1778, when Major Robertson, with a force of 135 men,

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"chiefly Greens, the rest Highlanders," entered Cranberry Inlet and destroyed the saltworks, and burnt the warehouses; the next day they destroyed the salt works on both banks of the Manasquan, and were driven off by the patriots when they landed at Shark River to destroy the saltworks there.

These works at Toms River were soon rebuilt by Savadge, who died in September 1779. The following December the works were bought by John Thompson of Burlington County for 15,000 pounds, perhaps showing the low values of Continental currency, as the war progressed.

The third armed force directed against Toms River was a cutting out expedition. Early in August, 1778, the British ship *Love and Unity* was beached, tradition says, purposely; was seized by the Toms River militia floated, taken into Cranberry Inlet, and held as a prize of war. She had a cargo of eighty hogsheads of sugar, and several thousand bottles of London porter, Bristol beer, and other valuables. After being sold as a prize, and renamed the *Washington*, she was recaptured. The British force was two armed ships and two brigs, which lay off Cranberry Inlet and sent in seven armed boat crews to "cut out" this vessel. They also took two smaller vessels in the bay or river. William Dillon, the Refugee, was the pilot of this expedition.

It is not however, these earlier attacks upon Toms River, but the Block House fight and the burning of the hamlet, that we here today to commemorate. In the spring of 1782, the real fighting of the Revolution was over and the victory won. New York was still held by the British, but most of the Atlantic terrain had been conquered. Everywhere the loyalists were withdrawing with the British troops, hard, revengeful, bitter against their old neighbors. The British ministry of Lord North had fallen, and the friends of America (the Whigs) were in the saddle at Westminster in London town. The colonies were beginning to know once the blessings of peace with honor.

But not so the outlying seaboard towns within striking distance of New

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York, towns from which the Tories had been driven, Tories who thirsted for vengeance and reprisal. At Toms River the saltworks were again in operation; and from Cranberry Inlet issued the swift-darting whaleboats that harried small brigs and sloops creeping up the coast from Delaware, Maryland or the Virginias, with provender for which the British paid a profiteering prices in real gold to tempt weak hearted but money loving patriots; or perhaps these sturdy privateers were on the lookout for the rum-laden craft from the Indies—a prize they dearly loved to overhaul, as we learn from the records. (There was no Volstead act in those days!)

Perhaps more than privateering or saltworks, Toms River was on the black books of the Board of Associated Loyalists in New York, for the reason that as in Monmouth Courthouse and other towns of old Monmouth, the Tory at Toms River was hated more than feared. The Tories in Old Monmouth were proscribed, their estates confiscated, and they were driven to New York, not daring to return except as they returned under cover of British guns.

From my cursory study of the Revolution in New Jersey, it seems to me that there was a decided turnover in the men who were Patriots and Loyalists during those long years of conflict. New Jersey, and the middle colonies, were the resort of many of the convicts sent from England to America, as numerous advertisements in colonial papers offering rewards for capture of escaped servants show. As indentured servants, these men were not so greatly desired in the south where black slaves were more profitable; nor were they tolerated to any degree by the social and industrial democracy in New England. Here, then, was a class of roughs, ready for any violence and welcoming insurrection as opportunity to release themselves from their indentures. When the revolution started, it is easy to see that such violent men would hail it as their opportunity, and proclaim themselves patriots, while the men of property, more conservative, took longer to make up their minds that they wanted to sever connections with the "home country." Thus we

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have violence, mobs, tarring and feathering, burning of houses and occasionally a hanging or a murder, at the outbreak of the Revolution, credited to the Patriots.

As the men of law and order and of property, the men of substance, and of thought, decided that in the new government was real freedom, they cast their lot with the Revolution. They inaugurated a representative government, enforced law and order, and respected property. The ex-convicts, the roughs, the lawless were thus crowded out of all control of the Patriot movement. Now came the British agent full of promises of British protection, and his pockets full of British gold, for all who would join the cause of the king. Along with those who from principle, from tradition, or from property interests had remained loyal to Britain, now were won over these roughs. And from the time Cornwallis marched across the Jerseys till the end of the war, the violence, the burnings, the murderings, were chiefly on the part of the invader and his Tory allies.

This part of the shore was the haunt of the Refugee or Pine Robber. There were long stretches of unsettled country, frequent inlets, waterways little traveled, and roads seldom patrolled. It was easy for Bacon, Davenport and others of that ilk to hold their hiding places in the recesses of the swamps, and sally forth now and again to plunder, burn and slay in the rich farm country of Monmouth, Burlington and Mercer; then quickly retreat to their fastnesses in the pines, and when occasion served, make their way to New York by sea, or to Sandy Hook, and get double reward in gold for their crimes. In upper Monmouth, the British fleet at Sandy Hook was the rendezvous from which the Refugee struck, and to which he fled for cover.

In the later days of the war, the Patriots began to shut down the hand of law and of justice on these marauders. It became as in a frontier town, that when Tory met Patriot, both shot to kill, and the quickest man with his firelock was the survivor. A pine-robber captured, was tried and hanged.

And the Board of Associated Loyal-

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ists listened to the demands of the Refugees and Tories, whom they represented, for revenge and bloody revenge.

Toms River village, according to Rivington's Gazette, the Tory journal of New York, had about a dozen houses. Tradition and other sources would seem to make it a larger village, at least double that number of homes. General Stryker, in his address at a Memorial celebration on May 30, 1883, in the M. E. church, Toms River, mentions among the homes those of Capt. Ephraim Jenkins, Aaron Buck, Mrs. Sarah Studson, Daniel Randolph Esq., David Imlay, Jacob Fleming, and Major John Cook. Joseph Salter and James Lawrence seem to have lived here at some time during the war. Daniel Grigg's house is mentioned as the place of a prize court sale in April 1779. Capt. Samuel Bigelow lived up Wrangle Brook. Squire Abiel Akins "kept tavern," according to tradition, on the south side of the river, southeast of the present railroad station, though General Stryker places the tavern on our Main street where the Marion Inn stands. (I hardly think Stryker right, as the Blockhouse stood on the hill to command the bridge, and this would put the tavern between the fort and the bridge. It must be remembered that Toms River bridge then, as now, was the only thoroughfare up and down the shore, which accounts for the strategic importance of the Blockhouse, when set to command the bridge.) James Randolph and Moses Robbins are mentioned as "of Toms River" in a prize court record of 1781, and Robbins, wounded in the Block House affair, had a home from which another prize was sold in 1783. James Johnson lived on Dillon's Island or Money Island; Garret Irons is named as the head of a scouting party, and the Dillons doubtless lived on Dillon's Island, now Island Heights. Thus we have enumerated more than the dozen homes, and tradition tells us that the Robinsons and the Applegates were among those burnt out that fateful Sunday.

Across the river on the south side were the grist and saw mill, on Jake's Branch. Stryker says these mills were owned by Paul and Abram Schenck.

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The Block House, as said before, stood on the hill about where the Town Hall now stands on Robbins St. Main street of today was the Freehold road of those days, and continued across the bridge as the shore road. Along the river, under the hill, wound a road to the eastward from the Freehold road. Another road came up from the bay, probably to the north of the present road to the Bay bridge (Washington street), and joined the Squan road northeast of the village, coming down the hollow over the present school house hill, and entering the Freehold road somewhere in the business block. There was also a salt warehouse, where the salt was stored, awaiting its journey across state (through the pines) to Philadelphia by four mule team.

The block house which protected this hamlet, was not strictly speaking a blockhouse. Tradition makes it a palisado, built of logs, standing seven feet out of the ground, the stakes sharpened at the top, and to be entered only by means of ladders. Inside at the four corners were platforms on which were mounted in embrasures small brass swivels, such as the whaleboat privateers bore in their bows when running down prizes. Inside the palisades were two houses, one a log barracks for the garrison, and on the opposite side a roofed over cellar, known as the magazine.

Such was the hamlet of Toms River, on Sunday morning, March 24, 1782, though you might perhaps add to it a rude wharf, with a small fleet of craft in the harbor, and one or more stocks or ways along the sandy beach of the river, on which the whaleboats and sloops were built.

With its saw mill and grist mill, its salt works and the men to cut the wood needed for fuel to boil down the salt, with its garrison of soldiers, and its visiting crews of roystering privateersmen, Toms River must have been a bustling little port.

This Sunday, March 24, 1782, was a fateful day for the few dwellers in this small village. The morning opened with the shouts of the assaulting Tories and Refugees, the defiant cheers of the Patriot band, with gun shots, the moans of the wounded, the

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gasps of the dying—one short sharp death struggle, followed by the crackling and roaring of flames.

That night at sunset, when the raw March winds swept in from the sea, there were huddled groups about the smouldering embers of what in the morning had been homes; but now, with father dead, or a prisoner in the grasp of the hated Refugee, headed for the British stronghold of New York, with but two houses in all the little hamlet standing, the widows and orphans watched their dead by the dying fires of their once happy homes.

The Block House was commanded by Capt. Joshua Huddy, tavern keeper, living at Colt's Neck, Monmouth county. His garrison was twenty-five militia, or twelve months men, though they probably were veterans of the war, and had seen active service during the Revolution. The roll call that fateful morning showed this roster as returned to Governor Livingston after the action: Capt. Joshua Huddy: Sergeants, David Landon, Luke Storey; matrosses, Daniel Applegate, William Case, David Dodge, James Edsall, John Eldridge, John Farr, James Kennedy, James Kinsley, Cornelius McDonald, James Mitchell, John Mitchell, John Morris, John Niverson, George Parker, John Parker, Joseph Parker, John Pellmore, Moses Robbins, Thomas Rostoinder, Jacob Stillwagon, Seth Storey, John Wainwright and John Wilbur.

Some of these names, Wainwright, Wilbur, Applegate, Robbins and Parker still stay in this neighborhood, and are as familiar now as they were 145 years ago.

Pellmore may have been Predmore or Pridmore. In the roster of Revolutionary Soldiers, collected by Stryker, there is no Pellmore. "John Pridmore of Middlesex" is listed however.

In the hurried action, and fierce struggle of that civil war which we call the Revolution, when brother was arrayed against brother, and father against son, no man stands out in bolder relief as sterling patriot, as brave partisan, as resourceful in handling men, as sturdy and bold in defence of the popular rights, than Joshua Huddy. Past the dash and enthusiasm of youth when the guns

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were fired at Lexington, he had even before that time been an ardent advocate of the Free America. Among all the Monmouth county men, not Black Dave Forman himself was more hated by Refugee and Tory, more admired by Patriot, than Huddy. His long fight for liberty, his death as a martyr in sight of his own rooftree almost, place him in the front rank of Revolutionary heroes, second not even to Paul Revere, to Nathan Hale, to John Stark, or to the partisans of the Carolinas.

He was commissioned a captain in the artillery service by an act in the legislature, passed September 24, 1777, and served in Col. Holmes' Monmouth County regiment. But the Revolution was fought by volunteers who came and went, and it was as a partisan that Huddy was best known. It is told of him that when surprised one night at his home in Colt's Neck, Monmouth County, by the Tories 72 strong, his women folks loaded muskets and he alone and singlehanded fired them with such telling effect from first one window then another, that the besieging Tories thought the house well garrisoned.

For two hours he kept the 72 at bay, then the house was rushed and he was made captive. None of his captors were sure whether or not they had the famed Huddy for whose head Sir William Franklin and General Skinner would have paid so high a price. Huddy refused to tell who he was. They hurried off to the landing, to put their prisoner in a boat, and start for a Tory rendezvous at Sandy Hook, among the British ships. While embarking they were fired on by the neighboring patriots who had been alarmed by the gunshots, hurriedly gathered to the attack, and hung on the flanks and rear of the retreating Tories. Huddy himself was wounded by the volley, but watched his chance, and in the confusion leaped from the boat into the water, shouting, "I am Huddy, I am Huddy," swam ashore and gained a thicket, and escaped.

That was one of the many exploits of which he was the popular hero. In December, 1781, the salt works at Toms River now being owned by citizens of New Jersey and no longer by

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the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvania troops withdrawn from the village, on December 10, the citizens petitioned the Legislature that Capt. Huddy should be sent there with his artillerymen as a garrison. It was done.

But the Board of Associated Loyalists, with headquarters in New York, of which William Franklin, the last Royal Governor of New Jersey was the head, had not forgotten the "piratical set of banditti," at Toms River. It was planned to make another attack on Toms River village. On Wednesday, March 20, the expedition left New York. It was made up of eighty men of the armed whaleboats crews under Lieut. Blanchard, with Capt. Evan Thomas and Lieut. Owen Roberts of Bucks County, Pa., Volunteers (Loyalists) and some thirty or forty other Refugees. They were convoyed by the armed brig, Arrogant, Capt. Stewart Ross, but were delayed by contrary winds at Sandy Hook till Saturday. They entered Cranberry Inlet after dark, that night, and landed about midnight, presumably near Coates Point.

Tradition says that they were guided by the notorious Tory, William Dillon, and that they surrounded each house between the bay and the village, taking every man prisoner, in their effort to surprise the post at daybreak. Huddy, however, was a careful commander. He got wind of their landing, from Garret Irons and sent a scouting party, presumably of volunteers from the village, down the river road to give the alarm on their approach. General Stryker says the Tories were joined not only by Dillon, but by the notorious Refugee and pine robber, Richard Davenport with his fell band of marauders; and that they evaded the scouts, by taking the route to the North, and coming down the Squan road into the village.

It was early dawn when they reached the Block House, and being challenged by a sentry, who fired as they advanced, the hopes of a surprise was abandoned. Blanchard called on Huddy to surrender the post. The response was "Come and take it."

A fierce charge was made with overwhelming numbers. Huddy's men were armed, some with muskets, some

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with pikes. The powder gave out. The Tories swarmed over the palisade, and in heat of battle bayoneted the defenders giving no quarter. John Wainwright fell, pierced with six bullets. James Kinsley, working the swivel gun, was mortally wounded. John Farr dropped at the first volley. McDonald, Dodge and Rostoinder died at their posts in the hand to hand struggle, while Kennedy was wounded so that he died during the day. Major John Cook, a resident of the village, was bayoneted to death, so tradition says, after the post had surrendered. Huddy and 16 men, four wounded, were captured, five escaping from the rear of the Block House to the swamps.

Rivington's Gazette says that the rebels lost nine killed in the assault. 12 made prisoners, two of whom were wounded, and the rest escaped in the melee. Among the killed, says this account was a Major, two Captains and a Lieutenant. The Block House, the gristmill, sawmill, and all the houses but two were burned to the ground. The two spared were those of Aaron Buck, a cousin to the Tory Dillon, and of Mrs. Joshua Studson. It is supposed that John Bacon, the Refugee, out of remorse for having earlier in the war killed Lieut. Studson, saved his widow's home from the torch.

They also carried off two whale-boats, and set fire to a new one that was on the stocks, and spiked and threw into the river a large iron cannon.

They then embarked for New York with their prisoners, including besides Huddy and his men, Jacob Fleming and Esquire Daniel Randolph, who was a man of much prominence in Toms River in those days. Among the wounded was Moses Robbins; and tradition says that James Johnson, who lived at Money Island, and who had fought in the Jersey line, was captured by the British during their night march, and bayoneted by a Refugee after the Block House had surrendered, though a prisoner and not a combatant. Both recovered. Lieut. Iredell and Lieut. Inslee of the Tory troops were killed, Lieut. Roberts and five others wounded, by the British troop's report. Capt. Ephraim

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Jenkins, a Toms River patriot, was among the killed.

Edwin Salter quotes a brief account of the Block House fight, printed in Howe's Collections, the editor of which visited Toms River in 1842, in search of tradition.. In 1842, men who were youths of twenty in 1782, might still have been found to tell the story. This account says:

"In the American Revolution, a rude fort or blockhouse was erected a short distance north of the bridge, at the village of Toms River, on a hill about a hundred yards east of the road to Freehold, on land now belonging to the heirs of Elijah Robbins, deceased. In the latter part of the war this blockhouse was attacked by a superior force of the enemy. Its commander, Capt. Joshua Huddy, most gallantly defended it until his ammunition was expended and no alternative but surrender left. After the brave little garrison was in their power, it is said they deliberately murdered five men asking for quarter. From thence Captain Huddy, Justice Randolph, and the remaining prisoners were taken to New York, where, suffering the various progressions of barbarity inflicted upon those destined to a violent death, these two gentlemen with a Mr. Fleming, were put into the hold of a vessel. Captain Huddy was ironed hand and foot, and shortly after barbarously hanged on the shore of the Highlands of Navesink."

The one contemporaneous account of the fight published was in Rivington's Royal Gazette of New York, on the return of the expedition, an account covering with the glory the Royalist troops engaged therein:

"On Wednesday, the 20th inst., (March, 1782) Lieutenant Blanchard of the armed whale boats and about eighty men belonging to them, with Captain Thomas and Lieutenant Roberts, both of the late Bucks County Volunteers, and between thirty and forty other Refugee loyalists, the whole under command of Lieutenant Blanchard, proceeded to Sandy Hook under convoy of Captain Stewart Ross in the armed brig Arrogant, where they were detained by unfavorable winds until the 23d. About 12 o'clock on that night the party landed near the mouth of Toms River and marched

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to the Block House at the town of Dover, and reached it just at daylight. On their way they were challenged and fired upon, and when they came to the works they found the rebels, consisting of twenty-five or twenty-six twelve months men and militia, apprized of their coming, and prepared for defence.

"The post into which the rebels had thrown themselves was six or seven feet high, made with large logs with loopholes between, and a number of brass swivels on the top, which was entirely open, nor was there any way of entering but by climbing over. They had beside swivels, muskets with bayonets and long pikes for their defence. Lieutenant Blanchard summoned them to surrender, which they not only refused, but bid the party defiance; on which he immediately ordered the place to be stormed which was accordingly done, and though defended with obstinacy, was soon carried. The rebels had nine men killed in the assault, and twelve made prisoners, two of whom were wounded. The rest made their escape in the confusion. Among the killed was a Major of the militia, two Captains and one Lieutenant. The Captain of the twelve months men stationed there is among the prisoners, who are all brought safe to town. On our side two were killed—Lieutenant Iredell, of the armed boatmen, and Lieutenant Inslee, of the Loyalists, both very brave officers, who distinguished themselves on the attack, and whose loss is much lamented. Lieutenant Roberts and five others were wounded, but it is thought none of them are in a dangerous way.

"The Town, as it is called, consisting of about a dozen houses, in which none but a piratical set of banditti resided, together with a grist and sawmill, were, with the Block House, burned to the ground, and an iron cannon spiked and thrown into the river. A fine large barge (called Hyler's barge) and another boat in which the rebels used to make their excursions on the coast, were brought off. Other attempts were intended to have been made, but the appearance of bad weather, and the situation of the wounded, being without either surgeon or medicine, induced the party to return to New

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York where they arrived on the 25th."

Tradition says that the Refugee guarding Johnson, seeing a Tory officer fall, cried, "Damn you—they've killed our lieutenant," and lunged at Johnson, the bayonet entering his hip, so that he was lame ever after.

Another tradition says that Garret Irons and Bart Applegate, two Toms River men, who volunteered to help defend the blockhouse, were captured. The Tories took them a mile or two to sea, put them in a small boat without sail or oars, and set them adrift. They tore the thwarts out of the boat, and paddled ashore. This same tradition says that Isaiah Weeks, who is buried in the old burying ground at Cedar Grove church, along with Applegate and Irons, killed the captain of the head boat in the attacking party.

Arriving in New York, Huddy and his men were placed in the Sugar House prison, but he was moved to the Provost Guard prison on April 1. A week later, April 8, Capt. Richard Lippincott, a neighbor of Huddy in Shrewsbury township, Monmouth county, before the Revolution broke out, with orders from the Board of Associated Loyalists, took Huddy, Fleming and Randolph aboard a sloop, ironed them, and went down the bay to Sandy Hook, where they were placed on the man-o'-war Britannia. The fiction that Huddy was to be exchanged was carefully kept up in all the written orders, though it seems to have been well known among the officers and men that the "exchange" was to be for Phil White, a daring Refugee, captured by the Patriots, and shot while trying to escape his captors, as they took him to Freehold for trial.

April 12, Lippincott demanded Huddy from Capt. Morris of the Britannia. With a guard of sixteen Loyalists and six sailors, he was rowed to Gravelly Point at the foot of the Highlands. Here three fence rails and a barrel formed a gibbet. Huddy's old neighbors, now his executioners, allowed him to dictate and sign his will, and they also saw that it reached the Freehold courts for probate.

Tradition also says that Huddy shook hands with Lippincott, just as he stepped up on the barrel, saying "I shall die innocent and in a good

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cause." He stated that he was innocent, because to justify the murder of a prisoner of war, the Tories accused Huddy of having a hand in the death of Phil White, though White was shot four days after Huddy's capture at Toms River.

Lippincott's men were loath to pull the rope on Huddy, and cursing them, Lippincott seized the rope himself, and as others joined in, launched Josh Huddy off into eternity. Another story says that a black, a slave who had fled to the British lines, was Huddy's executioner.

That afternoon at four o'clock the Patriots found Huddy hanging on the gibbet, and pinned to his breast was the Tories' justification of their act. It accused the patriots of murdering Refugees, and said that they had made an example of Huddy, and would "hang man for man, as long as a Refugee is left existing. Up goes Huddy for Phil White."

Huddy's body was taken to Freehold, to the home of Capt. James Green (quite likely his son-in-law) and on the fifteenth, his funeral sermon was preached from the tavern steps by Rev. John Woodhull, pastor of the Presbyterian church. He was buried with the honors of war in old Tennant Burying ground, but the grave was not marked, and is now unknown.

Monmouth County cried for vengeance, cried night and day. There is not time to tell here of Capt. Adam Hyler's attempt to kidnap Dick Lippincott at his home in New York, and how Lippincott had gone to a cock fight, and thus escaped capture or other plans to secure that precious villain. Governor Livingston appealed to Washington and Congress. Washington demanded that Sir Henry Clinton, the British commander in chief, surrender Lippincott for punishment. While Clinton and afterwards his successor in command, Sir Guy Carleton, admitted that Huddy's death was murder, Lippincott was not surrendered.

Sir Henry characterized the murder of Huddy as a "barbarous outrage against humanity." He put Capt. Lippincott on trial, and Lippincott took refuge behind his orders from the Board of Associated Loyalists. The courtmartial held that while Huddy was "executed without proper au-

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thority," yet Lippincott was only obeying orders. General Skinner, the Refugee chieftian, was one of the court that acquitted Lippincott.

Unable to obtain Lippincott's surrender or punishment, in response to the demands of the citizens of Monmouth, backed by all the force of New Jersey, Washington convened a council of twenty-five general and field officers. They decided to select by lot from among the prisoners of war of equal rank as Huddy, one to be hanged in reprisal. This order was held back till after Clinton had refused to deliver up Lippincott, and was issued on May 3. Fourteen officers, prisoners of war in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, drew lots. Lieut. Charles Asgill of the First Regiment of Foot Guards, was the unlucky man. He was the only son of a wealthy English Baronet, Sir Charles Asgill, in his 20th year, brave, and much loved by his fellow officers.

"I knew it would be so," he is reported as saying, "I never won so much as a bet of backgammon in my life." Asgill was taken to Morristown, N. J., where he was held prisoner, awaiting response to another demand for Lippincott, or, if Lippincott was obeying orders from a superior, then the man who had ordered Huddy murdered.

Asgill's mother, Lady Theresa Asgill, made a brave fight for her son's life. She aroused King George, so that he issued an order for the surrender of Lippincott, an order that was not obeyed. She pleaded with the King and Queen of France, and succeeded in having them intercede for her son, and secured the intercession of Holland for his life also.

Washington and his officers revolted at the hanging of Asgill, as they had at the execution of Andre. Finally the pleas of the French King won Asgill's life, and he was released in the latter part of the year, reaching Plymouth, Eng., December 15, 1782 in the ship Swallow. The plight of Asgill interested the whole civilized world. In Paris and London plays were written about him, and he was the hero of the hour. Later he succeeded to his father's baronetcy, and was also a General in the British Army.

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And so, yielding to the dictates of mercy, Huddy's death was unavenged, and doubtless the brave Huddy, could he have spoken, would have had it so. But Huddy's death through the good feeling that the release of Asgill engendered, won for the infant United States valuable concessions in the treaty of Paris signed early the next year, ending the war.

Gen. Stryker says that among those who petitioned for the life of Asgill were Huddy's family. Huddy left two daughters, Elizabeth and Martha Huddy, as named in his will, who were afterward by marriage, Martha Piatt and Elizabeth Green. Huddy's will is said to be in possession of the New Jersey Historical Society, placed there by Judge Bennington F. Randolphe, who found it among the papers of Huddy's executor, Col. Samuel Forman. All the papers in the Huddy-Asgill matter are recorded in the New Jersey Archives.. In 1837 Congress investigated the matter with a view to honoring Huddy, but there is no monument to his memory, save the little Park called in his name in this village and his grave is unknown.

Daniel Randolph and Jacob Fleming, the two other prisoners taken to Sandy Hook with Huddy, were exchanged for Capt. Clayton Tilton and Aaron White, two Refugees, held by the Monmouth County Patriots..

Toms River, destroyed, was unregenerate. On June 20, 1782, a prize court sold at the house of Capt.. James Green in Freehold, the same house to which Huddy's body had been carried, the schooner Speedwell, taken by Capt. Adam Hyler from the British and brought into port at Toms River. And one year, less ten days, from the burning of Toms River, March 14, 1783, Moses Robbins, one of the wounded in that fight, had the satisfaction of seeing sold at his house in Toms River village, the sloop Rebecca, captured by Captain John Wanton, and brought into this port by his whaleboat crew, with her cargo of 330 barrels of flour, a few barrels of pork, etc.