

Forgotten

The Battle of Connecticut Farms (Union) June 7th, 1780



Victory



The Battle of Springfield June 23rd, 1780



The Battle of Elizabeth town Jan 7th, 1780

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Dedicated to the Minutemen who saved the Union

Issue 2 - Oct 2024 - Forgotten Victory Trail

Inside- Sons of Liberty in Springfield, uncovering forgotten minutemen, War at the Shore, Indian King Tavern, lost Hessian journal records burning soldiers alive in Springfield church and more.

Forgotten New Jersey

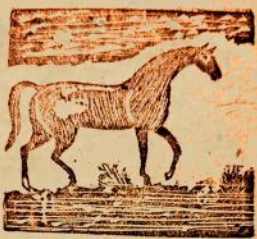
We read to learn about the past so that we don't make the same mistakes in the future. While many know about the southern war theater of the American Revolutionary war, the northern 'last stand' was often forgotten. After the townships were burned by the British, records were lost, and the area was fractured into smaller townships. If you didn't grow up in Union County, you might not even know about it's tiny towns with big histories. One of our primary goals is to make sure this action packed story is not forgotten, because it's the story of America, of why the fighting took place, and the unity of counties and even other states which joined as one force to defend Morristown the Headquarters of Washington in 1780. The "Last Stand" of the North was made at Hobart Gap, where the Hessian and British soldiers could not pass without certain death. The gap situated between the Watchung and Newark Mountain range was packed with Continental and Minutemen by the hundreds, with a total around 2,000 estimated on the high ground with canons and bullets for any who dared step forward. Maj. Gen. Greene, Maxwell, Dickinson, & Shreve defended.

250th America initiatives

- Conducting Forgotten Victory Trail presentations to the general public across a trail spanning from east to west New Jersey
- Educating students and grammar schools on the story of American history of New Jersey's Forgotten Victory Trail.
- Sharing recently uncovered forgotten facts
- Building a State wide historical trail
- Preservation of historic Forgotten Minutemen tavern which was a large part in the defense of the Hobart Gap on June 23, 1780
- In alliance with Kean and Monmouth professors uncovering our Forgotten diverse history of many cultures and races involved with the establishment of New Jersey
- Building a comprehensive public archive of historical information along with an interactive map for children on historical hunts across NJ.

New Jersey's State archives

Exploring the revolution from a new point of view- in the vaults,



Our research quest took us to the New Jersey State Archives rare book vault with the help of Caitlyn Cook & her staff at the reference services in the state library. The New-York Historical Society librarian Crystal Toscano also shared with us some rare copies for reference. Without

these institutions and research librarians we would not even be able access such information. A big hearty thanks to everyone helping us along with our deep research into 1780! You have all added tremendously!

Marquis de Lafayette in Millburn

and in Springfield during the Battle of Connecticut Farms (Union)



Born from a lineage of knights in southern France, Lafayette brought a strong force to aid Gen. Washington. He was with the good Rev. Caldwell & Gen. Washington on June 7th, 1780, when Hannah Ogden Caldwell was murdered & the town set alight. They were in Springfield, what today is Millburn, on the Newark Mountain. He later adopted two of Caldwell's son's after the Rev. too was assassinated before wars end. Lafayette like Rev. James Caldwell, was a student of the Enlightenment.

The Minutemen that saved America

The Minutemen Flying Camp, led by Gen. Maxwell, was a fierce alliance forged in the heat of revolution. Among them was Colonel Bonnell, a 1765 Sons of Liberty stalwart who organized the 2nd Reg Hunterdon County minutemen for NJ. In 1773 his good friend David Reynolds faced the gallows for counterfeiting under British rule. This brave group defended Springfield & also connected with key figures like Livingston & even George Washington's Spy network. The tavern they gathered

in wasn't just a place—it was a symbol of resistance. It was where minutemen rallied to march to the NJ Provincial Congress, igniting the very spirit of rebellion in 1775 and where they left to defend the Hobart Gap, acting as a lifeline to Jockey Hollow, the refuge for the Continental Troops sheltered by the Wick family during the grueling winter of 1779-1780. In that tavern, amidst the whispers of strategy & courage, history was being made. This was not just a fight for independence; it was a testament to the unyielding spirit of those who dared to stand against tyranny.

Do you know? Histories Mysteries- The last account of General George Washington using the Ford Mansion as his headquarters was on June 23, 1780, the Battle of Springfield. He left to go north with the Marquis de Lafayette to defend Westpoint from Benedict Arnold's betrayal & join the French ships arriving in Newport, R.I. to defend America from the Royals & Aristocrats.



Indian King Tavern Education partnership across New Jersey

In conjunction with Haddonfield's Indian King Tavern, we will be working on ways to extend this mostly 'Forgotten Flag' history onto the Forgotten Victory trail, restoring the symbol revered during the New Jersey Revolutionary War. Our friends at the Crossroads of the American Revolution have also worked with them, creating a small sign dedicated to the old tavern, which in 1777 was the home of the NJ Provincial Congress, where Gen. Washington and Continental Congress delegate and designer Francis Hopkinson drew up the original United States flag, which consisted of a constellation of '6 pointed' stars. Today this flag continues to stand in the tavern. It also flies at Gen. Knox's first artillery military academy in Pluckemin and in the 1778 encampment site in Middlebrook, NJ. This forgotten flag is remembered across New Jersey and forgotten else where.

Washington's commander-in-chief banner was blue with a constellation of thirteen 6 pointed stars. Every symbol has a meaning and there was a reason it was chosen and later designed again in the United States Seal, which Hopkinson began in 1780. The reverse of the seal shows the unfinished 13 step pyramid with an eye above it. That too was adopted from Hopkinson's



\$50 Continental Currency note from 1778. Since ancient times the 6 pointed star represented the sun, while the Pentacle was represented as occult. The Masons & Templar descendents, like Lafayette, were taught the meaning of symbols and in the mystery schools this was the symbol of 'light & life', while 5 was the 'might is right.'

Finding the 'Forgotten' Patriots

As we work on trail signage, and maps, and plan out our interactive experience for children on their history hunts, we have also been deligitly reading through old papers & pensions; we found the US Senate insurance filings for the Springfield church with witness testimonies, and have actually come across multiple descendants of minutemen who fought in the Battle of Springfield. From the Beach family, the Bonnell family, the Quick family, and others, we were able to find soldiers long since forgotten and regiments maybe never before seen in it's whole story. It's almost like the spirits of the Minutemen brought people to us on our search to uncover these names in ways that would not have been possible without them. Out of 2,000 soldiers, only a handful had been known until now. Since these guys fought and died for what we have today... New Jersey... Union County... and America...we were moved to do our best to put the puzzle back together again & be a beacon honoring their sacrifices & struggles so they will no longer be forgotten.

Forgotten Victory Trail



A time to remember America's 250th

We are in the final steps of registering as a non-profit 501c3 association, which will support our educational initiatives, historic trail across the state, & our preservation goals where we hope to engage New Jersey and the public to save our past. This will take the help of people who care and foundations which support these goals. We need help building funding for classrooms & state signage, along with assistance in restoring sites along the historical trail. This is our past, will you help us build our future? Stay tuned for ways to celebrate & support.



Signage on the Trail

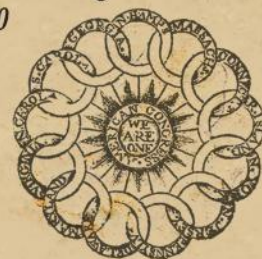
While at the Young Patriots day at Princeton Battlefield in September our Crossroads signage rep Ashley Abruzzo and our educational department head Bob Gula got to share knowledge with the youth. We have been working together on our first series of signs that will be installed in Millburn. We have enhanced a large period map, which was found in the National Archives, perfectly showcasing key points of topography and towns. Warning beacons and Washington's Headquarters along with the new names of towns have been edited while we work on the text. It's important to tell the right story from the local view as well as the larger American view, since our story has encounters with many famous characters who created the foundations of our society today. We are excited to share our first sign soon!

"The Rebels occupied every favorable situation, and fought in a manner that shows honor may be got by destroying them, but a double advantage to the state by bringing them to be good subjects." - British Gov. James Robertson July 1, 1780



Revolution NJ

1776 - 2026 | ENGAGE THE PAST. SHAPE THE FUTURE.



The Currency Act of 1764 abolished the colonies' paper currency for a system based on the 'City of London's' British Pound. Benjamin Franklin's first 'Union' was expressed in his design for the Continental currency, "WE ARE ONE."



Forgotten Patriots

For decades, the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution has worked to identify African Americans, Native Americans and individuals of mixed heritage who supported the struggle for independence during the American Revolution.

This effort was inspired, in part, by Lena Santos Ferguson, a woman of African American descent, who traced her family ancestry through her mother to the American Revolution. Her ancestor, Jonah Gay, had supported the Revolutionary War effort as a member of the town committee of Friendship, Maine.

In 2002 a well-received DAR Museum exhibition, "Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Service in the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783," was opened. For more information please contact the DAR library.

Those who defended Springfield

At Springfield and Elizabethtown, barring Knyphausen's path to Hobart Gap, Major General Nathanael Greene had 1,500 Continental troops and 500 New Jersey Militia. Greene's Continentals comprised Brigadier General William Maxwell's New Jersey Brigade; Brigadier General John Stark's under-strength brigade (comprising the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment and a regiment each from Massachusetts and Connecticut) and the 2nd Partisan Corps, commanded by Major Henry Lee, numbering 400.

At 5 am on June 23, 1780 General Maxwell sent Colonel Elias Dayton's 3rd New Jersey Regiment to guard the Galloping Hill Road and Henry Lee's 2nd Partisan Corps to the Vauxhall Road. Connecticut Farms was to be held by Colonel Dayton's 3rd New Jersey and some militia under Brigadier General Nathaniel Heard. Behind Dayton, Colonel Israel Angell with his 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, reduced by illness and expiring enlistments to only 160 men, was to defend the Galloping Hill Bridge. Behind Angell, at a bridge over the west branch of the Rahway, Greene positioned Colonel Israel Shreve and his 2nd New Jersey Regiment which the heroic African American Oliver Cromwell was attached.

On the American right wing, Greene reinforced Major Lee and his 2nd Partisan Corps at the Vauxhall Bridge with Colonel Matthias Ogden and his 1st New Jersey Regiment. In reserve, at Bryant's (Byram's) Tavern behind Springfield on the higher ground on the hills, Greene retained the rest of Maxwell's and Stark's brigades along with a huge Minutemen force who defended the Hobart Gap.

"War at the Shore" NJ 1782

Last week we took a journey to the New Jersey Pine Barrens to visit the Cedar Bridge Tavern, site of the last land skirmish of the American Revolution in December 1782. Although not part of the Forgotten Victory Trail, it played a critical role in the "War at the Shore" here in NJ. Gloriously restored in 2018 by Tim Hart and his team at Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission, the tavern and the surrounding property have been brought back to life. Loyalist John Bacon and his band of "refugees", wanted for the brutal slaughter at the Long Beach Island Massacre, faced off against a local patriot minuteman. Check out the Cedar Bridge Tavern!

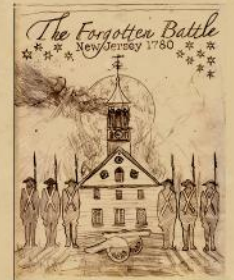


A New Jersey Editor, Designer, & Intellect rebel from a corrupted Empire

In 1779 Shepard Kollack opened the New-Jersey Journal, aiding Washington and Rev. Caldwell's initiatives in print. When the Battle of Springfield took place on June 23, 1780, Shepard left Chatham and dismantled his press, going closer to Morristown for safety. He didn't want to end up like the Reverend's wife.

Just before the Battle of Connecticut Farms (Union) on May 25th, 1780 Francis Hopkinson asked for a quarter cask of wine for his work designing the 'Forgotten Flag' with Washington himself; colonial script, "Labours of Fancy" as he called it; and the United States reverse seal with the 13 step unfinished pyramid with an eye at the top, the 'Eye of Providence'.

Thomas Paine, the rebel writer, published "Public Good" in 1780 advocating for a revision of the Articles of Confederation, America's first incorporation. A fierce advocate for individual rights, he challenged the status quo with his bold ideas and revolutionary thinking on freedom and equality. Paine embodied the spirit of the Enlightenment, championing reason and principle.



... Coming soon ...

The Forgotten Battle NJ 1780

This project combines illustrations, new research, and an epic story that's never been told before. It started with a murder. An uprising across New Jersey lit the fire of the rebellion, which stopped the British in their unholy war against the people who stood in defiance against a corrupt King... intent on burning it all away. The deeper meaning of the 'Battle of Springfield', its roots in the history of New Jersey, & the founding of America, tell a tale worth hearing. More to come soon!



25th CONGRESS,
3d Session.

[SENATE.]

[224]

MEMORIAL

OF THE

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SPRINGFIELD, NEW JERSEY,

PRAYING

Indemnification for the destruction of said church during the revolutionary war.

FEBRUARY 16, 1839.

Referred to the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled :

The memorial and petition of the trustees of the Presbyterian church of Springfield, in the county

STATE OF NEW JERSEY, } ss :
Essex county,

MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOW

That they have been informed by accompanying documents, that in the year 1780, the Presbyterian church of Springfield was occupied as a commissary store-house of American troops, and had been the house of Jonathan Skinner who was burned, and had been, likewise, burned on the day of the retreat of the British troops; and that their being so occupied as a store-house, was the amount of the loss sustained by the church, accompanying this petition. It is respectfully prayed that the honorable bodies will afford them such relief as shall seem meet.

And your petitioners, as in and by the foregoing memorial and petition, more fully appears,
NOAH CLARK

Personally appeared before me, John Wade, one of the judges of the inferior court of common pleas in and for said county, Jacob Willis, who, being sworn, deposeth and saith : That he helped build the Presbyterian church in Springfield that is now standing on the same foundation of the former one burnt by the British in 1780, at the battle of Springfield. Deponent believes the one standing to be the same size as the one burnt by the British ; and the church now standing on the old foundation is fifty-seven feet in length and forty-seven feet in breadth ; in height, twenty-four feet posts.

JACOB WILLIS.

Sworn and subscribed this 25th day of October, 1838.

JOHN WADE, Judge.



Springfield Loyalists

Discovered near the June 23, 1780 battle area between Springfield and Connecticut Farms (Union), a British Loyalist button, which has an R.P. meaning Royal Provincial soldier. We were told many were found, which was rare to find in New Jersey battle sites.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY, } ss :
Essex county,

Personally appeared before me, John Wade, one of the judges of the inferior court of common pleas in and for said county, David Whitehead, aged seventy-six years and ten months, who, being sworn, deposeth and saith : That the Presbyterian church of Springfield was burnt by the British troops on the 23d day of June, 1780, on the retreat of the British after the battle of Springfield, and, to deponent's personal knowledge, was occupied as a commissary store-house, and had been for years previous to its being burnt, and Samuel Woodruff was either commissary or deputy commissary who attended said store. The church burnt was a wooden building, covered entire with cedar shingles. And deponent further believes the present church now standing on the old foundation to be the same size as the one burnt by the British as above specified. And deponent further saith that he was in said battle, under the command of Colonel Angel.

DAVID WHITEHEAD.

Sworn, or affirmed, before me, this 19th day of March, 1838.

JOHN WADE, Judge.

25th Congress Senate report on Springfield's church

Having been lucky enough to come into possession of a historical Senate document, we came across new witness testimonies, long forgotten in the archives. We now know David Whitehead and Benjamin Crane served under Col. Israel Angell in the Rahway river battle. 5,000 British and Hessian soldiers were taking part against only 2,000 Continental and Minutemen forces. We are preserving this document for future viewers and will include it in our permanent digital exhibit once established for the public.



* Art by Frank Thorne [June 1930-March 2021] New Jersey's comic book artist best known in Marvel Comics. Back in the 1950's, at age 19, Frank drew an educational comic strip, seen above, about Union County in the Elizabeth Daily Journal.

REMEMBERING JUNE 7th, 1780

On June 7, 1780 after Hannah Caldwell was murdered and Connecticut Farms was burned, the skies grew black and a violent rainstorm dramatically closed the evening. British officer George Mathew [his uncle was Gen. Edward Mathew] wrote in his journal that it was *"the darkest night I can remember in my life, with the most heavy rain, thunder, and lightning known in this country for many years...the houses at Connecticut farms, which WE HAD TO SET FIRE TO, in a blaze, the dead bodies, which the light of the fire or the lightning showed you now and then on the road, and the dread of an enemy, completed the scene of horror."*

Galloping Hill Road Monument

On June 23, 1780 the British and Hessians made two columns of soldiers once they marched over their boat bridge from Staten Island to Elizabeth-town again. One went north west to Vauxhall and Springfield/Millburn, while the other made it's way to Morris Avenue, the main road of the region. Before reaching Springfield or the burned Connecticut Farms, a small area then owned by Elizabeth, (now Roselle Park), witnessed enemy troops march up the road now called Galloping Hill road, which was named as such because that was the road which the horse riders took sounding the alarm bells as they traveled to the first Warning beacon in Kenilworth, designated a key site by Washington, which used to have a large high point called Tin Kettle Hill, 186 feet tall. By 1906 the hill was destroyed, used to elevate the Pennsylvania Railroad track. The beacon was made of logs erected as towers with a barrel of tar and tree leaves, which when lit filled the skies with black soot. Another beacon would light and then another and another, while small canon's, like the Hobart Gap's "Old Sow" echoed loud booms warning the farmers and rebels war had arrived.

On the corner of the road on a residential property, there is a large stone memorial with a plaque, which quotes Gen. Washington's praise of the New Jersey minutemen at the Battle of Springfield, which he wrote in his letter to Congress from his headquarters in Whippany two days after the battle: "They flew to arms universally and acted with a spirit equal to anything I have seen during the war." It also is inscribed that Gen. Wm. Crane's son was bayoneted to death. Crane was a militia general of the 5th N] Continental infantry regiment and a Major of the Essex (now Union) County infantry reg. He lost a leg at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. His tombstone inscription says "One of the firmest patriots of our revolution; in the darkest period of his country's oppression

& danger, he volunteered in her cause & was wounded in her defense. Probity, benevolence & patriotism characterized his life."

"A son of Gen. William Crane is said to have been bayoneted to death by British soldiers near this spot."

Galloping Hill road, Roselle Park, NJ
erected in 1913 by the Boudinot chapter
D.A.R. of Elizabeth, NJ





BURNING HUNDREDS ALIVE!

A long forgotten Hessian soldier's journal, which was privately published in 1953 only came out after German relatives made contact with their family in America, who descended from Stephan Popp, mercenary who fought in the Battle of Springfield in 1780.

Stephan Popp's translated journal details a horrific historic point that has been left forgotten regarding the events in Springfield. He writes in his journal: "JUNE 4. The birthday of King George III of England and Great Britain was celebrated. All the ships fired their guns, as did also all the batteries. They also made a lively bonfire." This was 3 days before the attack on Connecticut Farms (Union) where the Royal Gazette Aug. 5, 1780 recorded that the corpse of Rev. Caldwell's wife, Hannah Ogden Caldwell, was "stripped" nude by the Royal soldiers, thrown off the bed and then tossed around onto her face after another entered the room. It took a British officer to prevent the soldiers from running off with her bloody clothes. Why would they want bloody clothes other than a sick trophy? That was the type of enemy New Jersey was facing. This is what he wrote down in part of a lengthy testimony, which if true constitutes a war crime:

"JUNE 23, 1780: The place was put to the torch and not even a pig-sty was left standing. About A HUNDRED MEN had taken REFUGE IN THE CHURCH, but THEY HAD TO BURN WITH IT. Their pleas for life were moving, but it did not help them.

-Stephan Popp, Hessian journal of what he witnessed in the Battle of Springfield

The Presbyterian Church, in Springfield, like others, was being used by the rebels for many of the wounded. As the British Royals and German Hessians marched through Springfield in battle with the Continentals and Minutemen militias, they reached the church where the last long firefight took place. Other skirmishes continued on the hills, but since the Hobart Gap was a death trap for the British. Gen. Greene, left in command after Washington's departure in Morristown, and Gen. Maxwell's flying camp of Minutemen, which included multiple NJ counties and even other state regiments from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, & N.H., held the high ground, which the enemy chose to retreat from.

However the wounded in Springfield who were unable to move, stuck in Caldwell's church, which also acted as a storehouse for the army, pleaded for their lives to British units with torches burning down the town. They were torched and burned alive, as per the Hessian's account. Considering how ruthless their behaviors had been across NJ, it's not hard to believe.

Other military letters suggest a 'preconceived plan' to destroy the towns in the region, which is why things burned so rapidly. The hatred for Rev. Caldwell by the British newspapers was very evident and it was rumored he was on an assassination list. In the end he was shot in the heart by a sentry who agreed to do the evil deed and extinguish Caldwell's light on November 24, 1781. The assassin was tried and hung in Westfield. We will not forget Caldwell and the British plot, which effected the entire region, still today.

Elizabeth's Continental President

Elias Boudinot, a member of Caldwell's church in Elizabeth, studied law in Princeton and practiced in Elizabeth town. He was elected to the New Jersey Provincial Assembly in 1775 and appointed in 1777 by George Washington as commissary general for prisoners, working closely with the Committee of Safety. From 1781-83 he was elected President of the Continental Congress. Elias made a speech over Rev. Caldwell's dead body in Elizabeth when they buried him in the church cemetery alongside his wife. Elizabeth was NJ's most important city during the revolutionary war & it shaped our future.

While at the State Archives, we found some New Jersey Journals, which added small details to our story. Where did Rev. Caldwell's papers go? Did Elias ever find them? If anyone knows please reach out: info@ForgottenVictory.com

SHOULD there be, as is supposed, any books of accounts, or other papers, of the late Mr. Caldwell's, lodged with any person, they will oblige the subscriber by sending them to him at Baskenridge, or giving him information of it.

ELIAS BOUDINOT,

August 21, 1782.



Officers of the Forgotten Victory Trail

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- Bob Gula, Vice President
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- Kevin Vancio, Vice President
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- Richard Veit, History Professor, Monmouth University
- Jonathan Mercantini, History Professor, Kean University
- Catherine Paretti, DAR chapt. historian & American Friends of Lafayette
- Hank Bonnell, owner of the historic Bonnell Tavern
- Lynne Ranieri, Thank you for your help!

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