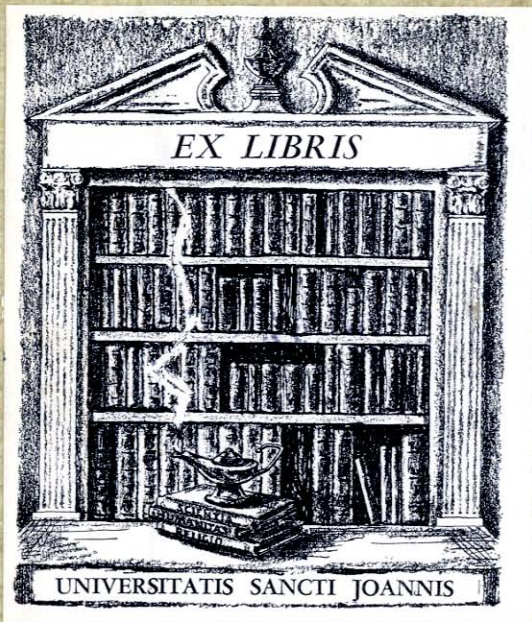


Eyewitness Accounts of  
the American Revolution





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Eyewitness Accounts of the American Revolution



A Brief Narrative  
of the Ravages of the  
British and Hessians at  
Princeton in 1776-1777

Edited by

Varnum Lansing Collins

The New York Times & Arno Press



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A  
**BRIEF NARRATIVE**  
OF THE  
**Ravages of the British and Hessians**

AT PRINCETON IN 1776-77

A CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLES  
OF TRENTON AND PRINCETON

EDITED BY  
**VARNUM LANSING COLLINS**  
Reference Librarian of Princeton University

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.....	vii-x
A BRIEF NARRATIVE.....	1-51
INDEX.....	53



## INTRODUCTION

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**T**HE manuscript which is here printed for the first time was purchased in 1901 by the Library of Princeton University at the sale of the late General William Scudder Stryker's collection. It had been given to General Stryker by Governor Charles S. Olden of New Jersey who believed it to have been handed down in his family from the day of its composition a hundred and thirty years ago. It consists of twenty-four folio numbered pages, the final paragraph of which was written on April 18, 1777. The manuscript is brown with age and has suffered severely from exposure and careless handling. It has been folded in the middle and the outer leaves have crumbled along the fold, while the upper right-hand quarters of the first and last leaves are wanting altogether, causing gaps in the first two and last two pages. The handwriting is well formed and regular, and is evidently that of an old man. The document is unsigned.

General Stryker, who in his *History of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton* was the first to note in print the existence of the manuscript, followed the Olden family tradition by referring to it as the "diary of Thomas Olden of Princeton." Mr. Olden lived in the little frame house which is locally well known as the lodge of "Drumthwacket," the residence today of M. Taylor Pyne, Esq., and formerly of Governor Olden.

It is not pleasant to destroy family tradition; but the fact is that the first page of the Narrative—it is not a diary—



contains the proof that Thomas Olden did not write it. For there the author plainly states that in the winter of 1776-77 he was in his eighty-fifth year; and according to indisputable family records Thomas Olden was born in 1735, and therefore could not have been more than forty-one or forty-two at the time in question. This of itself is sufficient to put him out of court as the author. But a second bit of internal evidence also discredits the traditional view. It will be noticed that although a large part of the Narrative is devoted to an account of the damage done to property in and around Princeton, the author does not mention any losses he himself sustained. Now Thomas Olden did suffer at the hands of the British and Hessians and his claim is duly filed in the Middlesex County Book of Damages preserved in the State Library at Trenton, N. J. If he were the author of the Narrative his omission to mention his own losses would be inexplicable.

The impossibility of admitting Mr. Olden's authorship is the more regrettable to me because every effort to supply his place has proved unavailing. The author's allusions to himself are so vague that no clue has been found satisfactory, and I fear that until some well authenticated manuscript turns up in the handwriting of the present document the latter's authorship must remain a mystery.

The Narrative throws no specially new light on the battles of Trenton and Princeton. Its author was not present at the former and witnessed but the beginning of the latter. His account of the Trenton affair is made up from second-hand information. He watched the Princeton fight from his own door until the ubiquitous shot compelled him to take refuge in his cellar. It may be noted that he was not living in the same house when he wrote his story. (Cf. pp. 4, 15, 17 and 21 of his MS.) The Narrative is valuable chiefly as a

firsthand account of the conditions prevailing in Princeton and its vicinity during the "twenty-six days tyranny" of British and Hessian occupation; and its comments on the causes leading to the Revolution and on the methods adopted by Great Britain for suppressing it represent very accurately the views entertained by the majority of the intelligent agricultural population of New Jersey. The author was a man of very fair education and probably was a farmer; he knew his Bible well; he read the newspapers and at least some of the pamphlet literature of the day; and his knowledge of American colonial history was accurate. He was a man of high ideals, honest thinking, grim humor and rugged speech; and he had many friends. His style shows the faults of that of any old man whose profession has not been the scribe's; his thoughts often run away with his pen. But after all he waxes rhetorical only once or twice and in the main his story is told simply and in homely language. That it is a severe arraignment of the conduct of the British and their mercenaries is not surprising, but considering how warmly its author felt its tone is remarkably calm. He has made no effort at fine writing but scattered through his pages are unconscious touches of striking power. For instance, his very casual allusion to the scene at his cottage after the battle is one that sticks in the mind—the house filled and surrounded by American soldiers, some laughing outright, others in their weariness only smiling, all of them hungry and thirsty, Washington himself "on horseback at the door," ". . . .and not a man among them but showed Joy in his countenance." No wonder the old blood tingled in his veins.

The manuscript is printed as written, spelling and punctuation—or rather the lack of it—being carefully observed.



I have endeavored to be as conservative as possible in my attempted restorations of the missing portions, and all words or parts of words supplied are italicized. Where I have failed to fill gaps the approximate number of lines or parts of lines unfilled is stated. The pagination of the original has been preserved in brackets throughout the text.

I am indebted to Mr. Walter Hart Olden of Princeton and to Dr. Charles C. Abbott of Trenton for many interesting suggestions and much real help in my unsuccessful effort to track down the authorship of the Narrative. Their pains deserved a better result. My notes are based chiefly on W. S. Stryker's *History of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton* (Boston 1898), John F. Hageman's *History of Princeton* (Philadelphia 1879) and on the *New Jersey Archives*, 2d Series, Vol. I (Trenton 1901). I have also used John W. Barber and Henry Howe's *Historical Collections of New Jersey* (New York 1847), Thomas F. Gordon's *History of New Jersey* (Trenton 1834), Richard H. Lee's *Memoir of the life of R. H. Lee* (Philadelphia 1825), William A. Whitehead's *East Jersey under the proprietary governments*, 2d edition (Newark 1875), and one or two other works to which credit is given in the footnotes, where corroborative manuscript material will also be found fully indicated.

VARNUM LANSING COLLINS.

*Library of Princeton University,  
April 12, 1906.*

## A BRIEF NARRATIVE

## A BRIEF NARRATIVE

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A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE *Ravages committed by* THE REGULAR AND HESSIAN SOLDIERS *at Trenton & Princeton* AND ALSO OF *these* BATTLES WITH SOME REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS.

I have Often Read and heard of *the horror of war but was never near it* Until I was in the Eighty fifth Year of my age and I was born the 25th of September 1691<sup>1</sup> Old Stile. *The regular army left Brunswick* on the 7th of December 1776. *The Remainder of our men left Princeton and Marcht to Trenton* (for the most of them had gone on before) and Were followed by Gen<sup>l</sup> How with his army in the afternoon of the same day Within a Short time after Passing *Stony Brook, our men delaying* their Pursuit by Pulling up *Stoney Brook Bridge. But they finding the ford* past Over one of their light horsemen was shot on his horse from over the brook, and the man who shot him being on rising Ground beyond him, *escaped. . . .* [half line]

The next Morning, *having crossed the Delaware in the night, when the Regulars came to the River our men saw them and fired at the Regulars* Which we heard at Princetown the Same morning, Which Prevented their crossing the River (and it is said) Killed and Wounded Several of their men.

Most of the Inhabitants of Prince Town a Day or two before that and some on that day others after left their Dwelling Houses and went where they Could go with their

<sup>1</sup> 1692 ? The last figure in the date is practically illegible.



Familys to Escape <sup>1</sup> From the Regular Army and left a Great Part of their goods behind them in their Houses for want of Carriages to take them away, Great part of Which fell into the regulars hands, and They not only Burnt up all the fire wood that the Inhabitants had Provided for Winter, but Stript Shops, out Houses and Some Dwelling houses of the boards that Covered them, and all the loose boards and Timber That the Joiners and Carpenters had in Store to work up, they Burnt with all their Fences and Garden Inclosures with in the Town & After sent their Carriages and Drew away the Farmers Fences adjoining within a mile, and laid all in Common. They also cut down Apple trees and other fruit bearing trees and burnt them, And Either by Accident or Wilfully burnt a Large House lately finisht belonging to Jonathan Seargant <sup>2</sup> Esq<sup>r</sup> in Prince town.

<sup>1</sup> For example cf. the story of Mrs. Jonathan D. Sergeant's midnight flight from Princeton at this time in Miller's *Life of Dr. Samuel Miller*, I, 147, etc. Dr. Witherspoon in a letter to his son (*Christian Advocate*, II, 443) tells how he left Princeton on his sorrel mare, Mrs. Witherspoon riding in the old family chair with young Benjamin Hawkins of North Carolina at the reins. The hurried disbandment of the College of New Jersey is described in the journal of an anonymous undergraduate, published in the *Princeton Standard* for May 1, 8 & 15, 1863 and quoted in part by Hageman (I, 124). Dr. Benjamin Rush describes Princeton at this time as "a deserted village; you would think," he says, "it had been desolated with the plague and an earthquake, as well as with the calamities of war." (*Lee's Life of R. H. Lee*, II, 164.)

<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, the noted lawyer and patriot, Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant grandson of President Dickinson, and son of Jonathan Sergeant of Princeton, the treasurer of the College of New Jersey. The house referred to stood on the lot at the junction of the modern Stockton and Mercer Streets, subsequently owned by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller and now by the Nassau Club. Mr. Sergeant's brilliant but brief

And at new New Market <sup>1</sup> about two short miles from thence they burnt the best Gristmill in these Parts, with a Quantity of Wheat and flower in it, and with it a Fulling mill with a large Quaintity of Cloth in it. *The fuller* told those Soldiers that set it on fire that he might be Accountable to

career—he died in 1793 at the age of 47—is given in the various American biographical dictionaries, in Hageman I. 67 (with portrait) and in the *Princeton Press* for March 30, 1901. His portrait by Peale is in possession of his grandson Jonathan D. Sergeant of Philadelphia, who in 1901 presented a modern copy to Princeton University. On page 278 of the MS. "*Damages done by the British*" in Middlesex County, preserved in the State Library at Trenton, N. J., is the following claim:

Jonathan D. Sergeant.			
To 1 Large Dweling house New 1 large Kitchen	}	600.	0. 0
new Smoak house & Necessary house . . . . .			
A Large Garden with new seder palings 6s per do. . .		10.	0. 0
To 75 Panel of Post & Rail Fence mostly 5 Rails			
almost new . . . . .		8.	2. 6
To 100 <sup>wt</sup> of Flax in Bundles undress'd . . . . .		1.	19. 2
		£620.	1. 8

Jonathan Baldwin being sworn saith he verily believes & by Good information that the above said building &c. was burned and Destroyed by the British Troops and there adherents and that he further believes there has not any Satisfaction been made.

Sworn by Joseph Olden.

JONATHAN BALDWIN.

Benjamin Plum being Sworn Saith he was present in Princetown and saw the Building of Jonathan D. Sergeant Esq<sup>r</sup>. burning and that he has Sufficient Reason to believe the British Troops was the Cause of the said building being burnt.

BENJ<sup>n</sup> PLUM.

Sworn before me Jos. Olden 21<sup>st</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup> 1782.

<sup>1</sup> I have not been able to identify "new New Market." New Market itself is in Amwell township fully five miles from Princeton.



the owners of the Cloth and Intreated them to let him take it out, Which they [p. 2] refused to do and burnt all together. They also Burnt the grist mill and a Framed dwelling House that had Six rooms in it and which Belonged to Major William Scudder<sup>1</sup> and his fulling mill they burnd. These are

<sup>1</sup> William Scudder (b. April 6, 1739, d. Oct. 31, 1793) had succeeded his father Jacob Scudder as manager of the mills in question, his older brother Nathaniel, a graduate of Princeton (1751), having gone into medicine. Jacob Scudder, son of Benjamin, grandson of Thomas and great-grandson of Thomas, a descendant of William Scooder of Darenthe, Kent, whose will was dated July 27, 1607, and probated Nov. 4 of that year, was born at Huntington, L. I., Nov. 29, 1707, and married Aug. 5, 1731, Abia Rowe of Huntington (b. May 23, 1708, d. May 5, 1791). In 1749 he sold his Huntington property and came to Princeton with his wife and 6 children (Nathaniel b. May 10, 1733, Phoebe b. Aug. 2, 1734, Lucretia b. Mar. 19, 1737, William b. April 6, 1739, Lemuel b. Sept. 10, 1741, Ruth b. Oct. 17, 1743). On Nov. 25, 1749, he bought for £1400 the farm and mills of Josiah Davison at Mapleton, near Princeton. The property, subsequently increased by further purchase from Davison's son John, then consisted of 100 acres, two grist mills, a saw mill and a fulling mill, situated at the juncture of Stony Brook and the Millstone River. It is known now as the Aqueduct Mills. William Scudder received a commission as First Major of the 3d Middlesex Regiment of militia Aug. 9, 1776, and was promoted to a lieutenant-colonelcy of the same regiment on Sept. 6, 1777. His mills were destroyed on Dec. 31, 1776. In July, 1782, he was elected a member of the committee of the Princeton Association to prevent trade and intercourse with the enemy. (Hageman, I, 55-56, 156, 180; Stryker's *New Jersey in the Revolution* and Hannah L. Cooley, *Genealogy of Early Settlers of Trenton and Ewing* (Trenton, 1883), 249 *et seq.* The unfortunate inaccuracy of the last named work necessitates the use of corroborative data whenever possible. For the unpublished genealogical data of this note I am indebted to the courtesy of Col. William Scudder's great-granddaughter, Miss Mary C. Scudder of Princeton.

On page 235 of the MS. volume of "*Damages done by the British*" in Middlesex County is the following affidavit:

said to be Burnt by the Regular army who took from the Neighbouring Farmhouse not only the wood but also Straw, Part of it the soldiers slept on and used in various ways to defend them from the cold and the rest they took and burnt and the wheat lost These are some of the ruins made by fire in and near Princetown contrary to that Justice which is due to

William Scudder of Windsor

Dec 31 1776

To 1 Grist Mill in good Repair with 2 P <sup>r</sup> Stones, & all the Apparatus for Carrying on the Business in the most Extensive manner.....	900.	0.	0
1 Fullery House & Mill, Press, House and all the Aparatus for finishing Cloth.....	200.	0.	0
90 Bushels Wheat @ 5/. 120 do. Ind <sup>n</sup> Corn.....	40.	10.	0
5 Tons Hay—1 Load Flax in Sheaf.....	11.	5.	
65 Pannels Post & 4 Rails fence, new.....	8.	2.	6
18 Ditto pal'd Garden Ditto, old.....	1.	16.	
1 Set Waggon Gears, Traces Iron.....	3.		
1 Suit New Superfine Regimentals.....	9.		
2 Shirts Froks & over Halls fring'd.....	3.		
115 Pannels Post & 3 Rail fence old.....	8.	12.	6
A number of Weaving Utensils 80/-.....	3.		
	£1188.	6.	0

Col. William Scudder being Sworn saith that the above Inventory is Just & true to the best of his knowledge And that he has just Reason to believe that the British Troops has taking & Destroyed all the above Articles. And that he has not received any Satisfaction for any of the above S<sup>d</sup> Articles contained.

Sworn Oct<sup>r</sup> 19: 1782, before Nath. Hunt. W<sup>m</sup>. SCUDDER.

Benjamin Oppie being Sworn Saith that he knew the Mills of Col<sup>n</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Scudder As Mentioned in this Inventory, And that he does adjude the said Mills was Worth £1100, to the best of his Knowledge.

Sworn Oct 19 1782 by N<sup>l</sup> Hunt BENJ. OPIE.



all men. It is said that at a house a little out of the Western end of the Town where were a number of Regulars, for Gen<sup>l</sup> Sterling's <sup>1</sup> Brigade belonged to the British, part of them one very cold night before the battle stripped both Wheat fields and upland Meadows setting fire not only to firewood and Carriages but to all sorts of timber and specially fences, So that if they were Refenced this spring to guard their foder and feed, that that they will cost them (?) . . . [half line] . . . . . and much more than this in labor and time. . . . . [one line] . . . . .

I am informed that they went to tanners and robbed them both of their Tanned, as well as their untanned Leather taken from their Vats. What use the latter may be to them I Know not, Unless it be to make leather Scarce in the Country and impoverish the owners.<sup>2</sup> I am Also Inform'd That they have taken great Quantitys of Unbroken Flax Whether

<sup>1</sup> The allusion here seems to be to Lieut. Col. Thomas Sterling of the 42d British regiment (Royal Highland Watch). He was at this time commanding a temporary brigade consisting of the 42d and 71st regiments. The author has I think wished to distinguish him from General Lord Stirling of the American army.

<sup>2</sup> Quartermaster Robert Stockton of Princeton swore to the loss of 146 hides, 5 dozen calf skins and 35 cords of tanning bark. His claim is in the MS. Somerset County volume of "Damages" in the State Library at Trenton. The same volume contains the claim of Capt. James Moore of Princeton whose chief losses were 275 hides "near Tan<sup>d</sup>," 142½ hides "part tan<sup>d</sup>," 10 dozen calf skins "Tan<sup>d</sup>," 5 dozen calf skins "part Tan<sup>d</sup>," 4 dozen sheep skins, 17 cords of bark, 10 sides of curried leather, 1 dozen curried calf skins—valued in all at £628. 11. 0. Besides this stock in trade Captain Moore lost £126 worth of other goods. We can easily imagine with what grim energy he led the charge on Nassau Hall, at the close of the battle of January 3, 1777, and bursting open the door demanded the surrender of the British soldiers still within the walls.

Rotted or not, To use in makeing Fortifycations and that from several they have taken all they had.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day the 8<sup>th</sup> of December there followed the Regular Army a Parcel of Hessians and took away four Horses from the People to the westard of the town, One of them was said to be valued at a 100 pound, and committed Several other Outrages the same day In pulling of mens hats from their heads, Though the Regular Officers had given them Protections as they went before, In these Words or near it, Viz. Let no Man Presume to Injure A; B. In his Person or Property.<sup>2</sup> Yet these men had no Regard to it But Directly to the Contrary Injured the Protected Men both in their Persons and Propertys, by Insulting their Persons and by Robing them of their Propertys. Two of these men came to David Oldens<sup>3</sup> (where I then was) Mounted on Poor horses, and in an Insolent maner Demanded his Horses:

<sup>1</sup> Among the claims in the MS. Middlesex and Somerset Counties "Damages" are those of Jonathan D. Sergeant for a hundredweight of undressed flax in bundles, Robert Stockton 200 bundles, Thomas Olden 20 bundles, Thomas Stockton a hundredweight, and Col. William Scudder a load.

<sup>2</sup> A Protection bearing Col. Rall's signature in Stryker (24) reads: Tis his Excellency General Howe's Express orders that no person presumes to molest or injure John Harcourt in his person or property.

By order of his Excellency

Headquarters

RALL

Dec<sup>mbr</sup> 16 1776.

<sup>3</sup> David Olden was son of John Olden and grandson of William Olden the first settler in Princeton by that name. He married Elizabeth Laurence. He was doorkeeper of the N. J. Assembly at Princeton in August 1776, and a member of the committee of the Princeton Association to prevent trade and intercourse with the enemy, in July 1782. His name does not occur in the volumes of "Damages."



But as it hapened he had sent them *away*, before the Regular Army came with all his Household goods and provisions Except what was absolutely Necessary for present use, and [p. 3] many of his Neighbours In and about Princetown had done the like and by that means Saved a good part of their Property. This Method was the very best (if not all) the Safe Protections that could be obtained so much better it is for any Man to be Protected by himself or his friends then to trust his Enemys, Yet this Method did not allways avail as I design to to show hereafter.

There went four of these Hessians to a Gentleman's House (who is called a Quaker) And after they had treated him and his Family in an Insolent Manner a Stout fellow among them laid hold of his Hat on his head and puled it of And he (though but a Smal man and between Fifty and Sixty Years of age) laid hold of their Champion and Struck up his heels and threw him on the Ground and clapt his foot on his Sword and Prevented his drawing it, And took his Hat again from him Upon that the three Other Paltroons Drew their Swords, and he was oblinded to Yield up a very good Hat Though he had a Protection several days before, which was of so little Effect that Afterwards the Regulars Robed him of a *fine mare*, and broke the door of his Stable to get her out, They also Robed his four Store Hogs<sup>1</sup> being all he had before his face, And (as

<sup>1</sup> This may have been Joseph Olden whose losses are listed on page 256 of the Middlesex County volume of "*Damages*":

To 1 Mare 14 hands high 12 y <sup>r</sup> Old.....	12.	0.	0
5 Hogs 6 monts Old.....	3.	15.	
1½ of 4 Horse Loads Corn tops.....	3.		
1 Ton Hay 50 /. 1 p <sup>r</sup> blind bridle & lines 12/6....	3.	2.	6
1 p <sup>r</sup> Quilers with Chains & neck yoke.....	1.	5.	
1 Cut Saw & 1 handsaw.....	2.	7.	6

it is said) Three of their Generals were Present Cornwallice,<sup>1</sup> Grant,<sup>2</sup> & Leshly<sup>3</sup> looking on to see how the Regular Soldiers ran After the Hogs about the Pen to Catch them. This is

1 Bushel Hardsalt 3 / - 10 D° Potatoes 15 / -.....	18.	0
150 Rails 22 / 6 1 Coopers Adze 5 / 6.....	1.	8.
1 P <sup>r</sup> Woomans new Cotton Stock*.....		6.
1 New Beaverrett Hat.....	1.	15.
1 Quart <sup>r</sup> Beef Wg <sup>t</sup> 75 <sup>lb</sup> @ 3 <sup>d</sup> .....	18.	11
2 Cords of Sapplen Wood.....	1.	

£31. 15. 11

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Cornwallis (1738-1805) General Howe's subordinate. See *Dictionary of National Biography* for a long sketch of his career as a soldier, as Governor General of India and as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His Princeton headquarters were at Morven, the Stockton homestead.

<sup>2</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Sir James Grant (1720-1806) of the 55th foot. For a sketch of him see *Dictionary of National Biography*. His portrait is published by Stryker (p. 49).

<sup>3</sup> Brigadier General Alexander Leslie of the 2d Brigade. He is not in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. He seems to have been the "general officer" named in Burke's *Peerage* as son of Alexander Leslie 7th earl of Leven and 4th earl of Melville by his second wife. He was thus an uncle of the Hon. William Leslie mortally wounded at the battle of Princeton. According to W. C. Ford, *British officers serving in the American Revolution*, 109, he was commissioned Lieut. Colonel January 30, 1762, Lieut. Col. of the 64th, Aug. 28, 1766, Colonel Oct. 19, 1775, Major General Feb. 19, 1779, and Colonel of the 63d foot Jan. 2, 1782. With the 2d Brigade he was posted on January 2, 1777, at Maidenhead (Lawrenceville) and according to orders from headquarters was to be joined the next morning by Mawhood and to proceed to Trenton to assist in the capture of Washington. On the morning of the 3d, hearing the heavy firing at Princeton he hurried back to aid Col. Mawhood, but arrived too late. (Unpublished Journal of Ensign Glyn of the British army, Library of Princeton University.)



one Instance among many to show the Power of their Protections And Wether they are given to Protect, Or to Allure People to depend on them that they may be Plundered the Easier I shal leave to Others to Determin.

The Regulars and Hessians together Robed and Plundered two wealthy Farmers (that were brothers) of the Greatest part of their moveable Estates About four or five miles from Princetown, and not only took away their Cretures but robbed their Houses and ript open their Beds and turned out the feathers and took away the Ticken and left the owners but very little to cover them, or even to live on.

They had yet some other ways to Plunder and Distress the People besides these two that I have Already Mentioned of fire and sword. They go out late in the night and Steal and Kill Sheep and cattle Even Milch Cows and skin them, leave their skins and hides and take away the meat. Another method is this their Officers Bargains with the Inhabitants for forage *and* [p. 4] other Necessarys and upon the Delivery gives the owners Receipts of the sorts and Quantitys with the Prices,<sup>1</sup> but pays no money thus many Farmers are served. Others are ser'vd in a different manner the Regular Officers with their Soldiers Are by Orders boarded out at the

<sup>1</sup> The official British list of prices for supplies obtained from inhabitants is given by Stryker (p. 343). Some further idea of prevailing prices is gained from the closing paragraph of the first letter in the anonymous *Historical Anecdotes Civil and Military in a series of letters written from America in 1777 & 1778* (Lond. 1779, 85 pp., 8vo). After describing the battle of Princeton the author concludes in philosophical strain: "It is now near one o'clock, Feb. 10, 1777. My fire is out, and wood very scarce. It has been £5 the cord. Beef is from 12 to 18 pence the pound; mutton the same; veal from 18 to 24 pence; a couple of fowls 10 shillings; trade entirely ruined, and my purse almost empty: And so God save great George our King!"

Farmers Houses, and they take their Horses with them and take the Farmers Indian corn, Oats, and the very best of his fodder to feed them on.

At a Gentleman Farmers house the next to that where I now live There was with Officers and all one hundred and Seventy of those Genteel Unwelcome Guests. His best Rooms and beds in his House were taken up by the Officers who was fed upon the best Diet that the House afforded. In the mean time The Soldiers took and wasted what they Pleasd of his stalk tops and Oats in the sheif in Makeing *sheds* to keep them from the Cold when they Stood on Gaurd, besides what their Horses Devoured,<sup>1</sup> And at their Departure he Desired the Officers to give him Receipts for what they had and damage done Which they Refused and only paid him twenty shillings for fifty Pounds Damage as he Computed it.

Another officer went to another Farmers House And Imperiously Demanded two of the first Rooms in *his* house *each* with a good bed in it for him to lodge in *and another* to *Receive in* which he accordly took and the owner with his family was Oblidged to live in his Kitchen, While their horses were Eating and Destroying the very best of his Provender and hay for Which the owner never was paid a farthing.

To give a Particular Account of Every Robery and outrage comited by the Hessians and Regulars In and within five miles of Princetown (which is the Extent of these Observations of villanys done) would fill a Volumn therefore I have only Mentioned a few particulars out of a Multitude and most of those that I have given an Account of are Quakers

<sup>1</sup> The executor for Joseph Skelton of Princeton affirmed that "the Dragoons 1 Night fed hay & Corn till Morning." Skelton lost 5 stacks of hay and 500 sheaves of wheat, besides 4 sheep, 24 horses, 3 team horses, 2 cows and a wagon. (Middlesex "Damages," 279.)



a People that never bore Arms against them which they Knew well and therefore had some right to their favour and Yet used them in that manner. It cannot Reasonably be Expected that they would use those that had bore Arms against them in a more favourable maner. There was a Wicked company of talebearers that Informed the Regular Officers of their names that had born arms against them, and also of their names that was chosen Officers by the People This gave them an Advantage to call them Rebels and to say that their Estates were Forfeited to the King and that those that were missing (as many of them was) was gone to the Rebel Army. Whereupon Orders were sent by their chief Officers to those that [p. 5] those Wretched Informers had found out had the Keeping of the absent Mens goods or Cretures to Deliver them up so that they lost most (if not all) their Cattle, horses, sheep, swine, and Poultry Besides ravageing their Houses that had left For after they had had got what was needful to them they Broke Destroyed and burnt Tables chairs looking glases and Picture Frames that they Could find, hiding will not protect where there is wicked Informers.

The Damages Done by these Plunderings and Desolations must amout very high and Occasion much Trouble to the Sufferers. Yet they are Vastly short of Another Horrid Outrage that I had not yet mentioned I mean the Ravishing of Women (Which by a Great Defect in Human Nature that is against both Justice and Reason) We Despise these poor Innocent Sufferers in this Brutal Crime Even as long as they live, In time of Peace to avoid so miserable and lasting Reproach I am of the Opinien That many honest virtuous women have suffered in this Manner and kept it Secret for fear of making their lives misserable and so many of those Capital Crimes escape Punishment In time of War When those Un-

natural Miscreants are sure of Getting of with Impunity *they* commit *them the* more frequently. *Many* of them has been Already mentioned in the Friendly Post.

Taken from an Extract of a Letter Wrote by a Worthy Officer in the Continental army Wherein he gives an Account of some Crimes of that Kind being committed within five miles of Princetown To which I shall only ad Another Tretchorous Villany There was two of Gen<sup>l</sup> Hows<sup>l</sup> light Horsemen Quartered at Pensneck about two miles from Princetown Who Pretended to a Young Woman That they was Searching for Rebels, and had been Informed that some of them were Secreted in the Barn and desired her to go with them and Show them the most Secret Places there, and She (Knowing that no body was there) to convince them, Went to the Barn with them to show them that no body was there And when they had got her there, one of them Laid hold on her Strangled her to Prevent her crying out while the other Villain Ravisht her, and when he had done, he Strangled her Again While the Other Brute Repeated the horrid crime Upon her again She is a Farmers Daughter but her name with her Fathers must be kept Secret to Avoid the Reproach above Mentioned. This is far Worse in this Respect then an Indian War for I Never heard nor read of their Ravishing of Women Notwithstanding their cruelty to their captives In the above mentioned case These Death deserveing men as well as many others that are guilty of the like Crimes Escape with Impunity as I before Observed.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir William Howe, commander in chief of the British forces.

<sup>2</sup> Parallels to this incident may be found in the letter published by the Council of Safety in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Dec. 28, 1776 (N. J. Archives, 2 series, I, 245) and in the affidavits of the women abused, collected by the Congressional committee on British



[p. 6.] There was a Farmer that dwells about a mile from Princetown at the Place where the Battle was fought, Whose Mother is a widow and lived with him, and had half the Rooms in the House for her own use But was Oblidged to leave them, for a captain of the Regulars and his company of Soldiers to come in that was Quartered there. And soon After that they had got in, There came another Captain of the Regulars of an Overgrown Size and Terrifying Countenance and with Insolence equal if not Superior to the huge bulk of his body Demanded a Room with a bed and fire Place in it for him to lodge in. (The man of the House not being Within) the Woman<sup>1</sup> told him that they had none but that her husband and She lodged in, and that they could not Spare, upon that he swore and curst that he must and would have it, and this Monstrous Destroyer of human race before they are born Went on so Horribly with his Threats oaths and curses That he so Affrighted the poor Woman that she fell into a violent disorder and soon after Miscarryed. She was so poorly the day that the Battle was fought in the field and about that house that she could *not stand*, and after a Shot *came in the window* where she lay her husband and her *nurse* were Oblidged to take her in her bed, down cellar to keep her from the Shot. And as soon as the Battle was over they brought her up again in her bed. And towards night<sup>2</sup> When a part of the Regular Army was come from Trenton some of them

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and Hessian atrocities, and now contained in vol. 53 of the MS. Papers of the Continental Congress, in the Library of Congress, pp. 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, etc. Dr. Witherspoon was a member of this committee and some of the testimony gathered is in his handwriting.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, the farmer's wife.

<sup>2</sup> The vanguard of Cornwallis' army, Alexander Leslie's 2d Brigade, reached Princeton about noon (Stryker, 291).

came into the field where the Battle was fought, and sent for the man out of his House to ask him some Impertinent Questions, and others of them in the Mean time were Insulting of his sick and feeble wife and Robed her of the Cloak that she wore over her shoulders in bed, She asked them if they Robed Women of their Cloaths and one of them swore that if the Dam'd Rebel Bitch said a word more he Would run his bayonet threw her heart and they Plundered the House of Most of the Valuable goods, and then Drew their Bayonets and Run them threw the feather Bed that the sick woman lay on and swore that there was Rebels that was hid under it, but damn them they would fetch them out. This they Continued to do untill they Spoilt the Bed. And all the While there lay above Twenty wounded men upon Straw in the Next Room,<sup>1</sup> That were carried in by Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons Men Imediately after the battle most of them were Regulars all Groaning with the Pains of their Wounds and some of them in the very Agony of Death for two of them Dyed Either at that time or very soon after. Thus those Hardened wretches Went on without having the [p. 7] least Compassion Either on their Wounded fellow Soldiers or the helpless woman That they made the Object of their Brutal Sport, whereby they have Shown themselves to be a Pack of Insolent Poltroons Rather then then valient English Soldiers.

Another of their Pranks was this The same day that the battle was fought, one of their Captains in the morning compelled a man that lived near Princetown to go with him and his company to show them the way to Trenton The Man was very loth to go and went Slowly, Upon that the Captain bid him Step a long nimbly, for if he did not he swore he would run

<sup>1</sup> This seems to identify the house as William Clark's, cf. p. 38.





him threw with the drawn Sword that he had in his hand, and the Sergant swore that if he did not lead them right he would shoot him. They went on about a mile & Genl. Washingtons Army being Discovered put them into a Consternation and he got from them. This captain was found in the field of battle Dead, and carried into the mans house that he had Insulted in y<sup>e</sup> morning

On that same day towards night When that part of the Regular Army that was at Trenton was Return'd, four or five of the Soldiers went to an old Blacksmiths Shop (about 59 years of age) and Perceiving that he had a good pair of new shoes on his feet, they took him Prisoner and conveyed him about a mile back to the Rest of their company. There they *confiscated* his shoes, being more fit for *one* of their own Men to wear then for *him* (Whether it was the sentance of a Court Martial or not I have not heard) The Sentence was Immediately put in Execution, His Shoes was pulled of and one of their own men put them on his feet and Compel'd the poor Old captive to march with them without shoes in his stockings all the way from Princetown to Brunswick (no matter whether his feet froze or not) There they kept him a Day and a night, And no Other crime Appearing against him but only that of wearing good new Shoes of his own Which he had done Severe Pennance for They Dismist him with the loss of his shoes, and very sore feet, and he by the help of a friend procured another pair of shoes, and came limping home again, and left them to Triumph on that Days Victory the noted third day of January 1777 when they took two men and a Woman that could not stand Prisoners one of the men being much younger then the other & haveing shoes on made his Escape The Woman being unable to march they left her so they had in truth none from Princetown to Crown their

Conquest with but the poor Old Captive without shoes. This is the Renowned Victory Obtained that day near Princetown Which (it is said) is amply set forth in one of the New York news papers<sup>1</sup> to be a Compleat victory obtained by the Regulars over the Continental Army so far as I have Related is true according to best Information that I can get, And so far I agree with that news Paper that the Regulars gained a Victory over two men and one [p. 8] woman But no further, And that they gained by that part of the Army that came from Trenton After the Other part had Received a very Severe Drubing and total Defeat with the loss of all their Cannon in the fore part of the day. How far a news Paper is to be Credited that tells but part of the Truth and leaves the most material out is Easily decided, And taken by many to be the most Pernicious way of Lying and if it is so Then how much more is that vast Deviation from the truth in saying that the Regulars on that day<sup>2</sup> Prisoners when in truth they took but three at or near Princetown, and they were taken in the Ignominious manner as I have set forth and not

<sup>1</sup> Hugh Gaine's *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* for Jan. 13, 1777, where is told a wonderful tale of the victory obtained by the 17th Regiment, numbering less than 300 men, over the rebel army of between five and six thousand. The British losses are placed at about 20 killed and 80 wounded, the American at more than 400 killed and wounded. The story is quoted in Stryker (p. 471), in the *N. J. Archives*, 2 ser. I, 253, and by Paul L. Ford in his *Life of Hugh Gaine*, I, 59. Fables like this gave plausibility, as Ford remarks, to the *Pennsylvania Journal's* "New Catechism" question and answer: "Who is the greatest liar upon earth? Hugh Gaine of New York, printer."

<sup>2</sup> Marginal note in MS.: "One of their Batalions broke threw some three or four thousand of the Rebels and took a great number of Prisoners."



in the battle. How many more they took on that day from other Places in the like Shameful manner I Know not, but this I Know that they did not take one Prisoner that day in the battle. But on the Contrary all the Prisoners they had in Princetown were set at liberty by their total Defeat Amounting to the number of . . . .<sup>1</sup>. In takeing these three Prisoners they violated three of their Officers Protections for the two men had Each of them one, and the Womans Husband had another Besides they are all Reputed Quakers, and never bore arms against them. I hope that this will be Sufficient Warning to the New York Printer of that News Paper not to suffer his Press to be again Polluted by the Regular Officers falsehoods for a Printers News Press Ought to be as an Oracle for the Readers to Enquire the truth by. But when in Expectation of the Truth the People find that the Press has Degenerated into the most Glareing Contradicting falsehoods Then the Oracle has ceast and men may search for truth where they can find it.

On the first day of January 1777 from the door of our house we saw a skirmish on the other side of Stoney brook. The light Horsmen Rideing backwards and forwards heard the firing of their guns and saw the Smoke and two men was found Dead there That as it is supposed were Murdered in a barbarous manner. I shall Relate the matter as it was told to me, Some of the Regular Officers boarded at a house near Princetown. An Old Gentle Woman being in y<sup>e</sup> Kitchin with the Adjutants Servant, The Regular Soldiers came in from the Gaurd and she heard one of them tell the Servant That he could not do as Brown Did to day The Servant askt him what that was, and he said there was a wounded man that could not Stand and Prayed Brown not to Kill him, upon that

<sup>1</sup> Blank in MS.

Brown clapt the Muzzle of his gun to his breast and shot him Dead the Servant said it was murder and so they all said that was Present except one and [p. 9] he said he would have done the same. This is verified by two Dead men being found near Stoney brook, one of them was shot in his groin and again threw his breast very probable the man that Brown murdered. The other was shot in his hip and again threw his head and the Palm of his hand and the wrist band of his shirt on the other arm very much burnt with Gun Powder. It is very Probable that this man seeing his murderer point his gun at his head clapt up both his hands to defend it as it natural to us to defend against a blow The bullet entered his head a little above his eye brow and dasht out his brains so that some of them lay on his face. This concerning these men was told to me by a very Reputable Gentleman who saw their Dead bodys, took notice of their wounds, and helpt to bury them.

It is very Probable that these two murders were Committed either in obedience too or at least were Protected by two Cruel Bloody Orders made by Gen<sup>l</sup> How, one of them I take from the America Crisis<sup>1</sup> page 17. wherein it is thus Writen. His Excellency the Commander in Chief orders that all Inhabitants Which shall be found with Arms not haveing an Officer with them shall be Immediately taken and hung up. The Other Order I take from a book of their own that they left in the field when they fled from the Battle near Princetown Which is thus. Head Quarters Trenton 12th December 1776

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Paine's *The American Crisis*, Number II, Philadelphia (Styner & Cist), 1777. The quotation on page 17 of this number and given above in the text is from a folio general order book belonging to Col. Rall's battalion taken at Trenton.



G. O. { Parole BRIDGEN  
C: S: BURFORO

Smal Stragling Partys not drest like Soldiers and without officers not being admissable in war Who Presumes to Molest or fire upon Soldiers or Peaceable Inhabitants of the Country will be Immediately hanged Without Tryal or as Asasings.<sup>1</sup>

In the abovesaid case Gen<sup>l</sup> How Did not see so far as his bloody Ruffians did that Murdered the two men, for they not haveing hanging Matterials with them found that if they left the Wounded men to go and get them the men might be carryed of Secretly or themselves attackt When they came back, And if they took them with them which was very Difficut having no carriage and the danger of an Attack the greater. Therefore shooting must of necessity be done In- stead of hanging being much the safest as well as quicker and Easier done, and no matter which way so that Innocent men are but put to death as these two men was by Ruffians much below the dignity of a Common hang man for he Executes none but what has had a tryal and and found Guilty and even for doing that is Detested by Mankind, then how much more do these Wretches deserve their Abhorrence who by these abominable Orders put men to death without any tryal And the Wretches that performs [p.10] the bloody Drudgery to be both Judge and Executioners such a horrid task that no

<sup>1</sup> These orders form part of the "proofs and illustrations" published by the Congressional Committee as an appendix to their report of April 18, 1777. A copy of them in Dr. Witherspoon's autograph and better spelled is in the MS. Papers of the Continental Congress (Vol. 53, p. 45). They are quoted by Stryker (p. 484) and with the full report and other documents are found also in *N. J. Archives*, 2 ser., I, 347-353, 362, as extracts from the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* of April 24, 26 and May 10, 1777.

man can undertake unless he is Stript of Humanity. The Objects of Cruelty by the first Order were to be found with arms And it may be that Gen<sup>l</sup> How finding the Defect in this order, that but few (if any) would be found with Arms, and so the Inhabitants would Escape his wrath, made the latter to Supply that defect which Enlarged the power of the former to that degre, That I can compare it to nothing better then to where we read that Hell Opened her mouth without measure,<sup>1</sup> for by the latter it is no matter whether they have arms or not (no mention of arms is in it so as to make them the objects of Death) If they do but molest or even Affront a Tory Or mollest the Soldiers when they come to Plunder it is Enough they are Immediately to be taken and hanged without any trial Gen<sup>l</sup> How Knows very well by the Numbers of Prisoners that he has taken that but few (if any) of the Millitia are cloathed like soldiers.

What a Deplorable State was a Great part of New Jersey in when by these bloody cruel Orders the vilest of men were made Judges of the lives of the Inhabitants and they Knew nothing of it, For Gen<sup>l</sup> How all the while Kept Allureing them into the Danger of their lives by his Proclamations Protections and Kind Admonitions to his Officers in Respect to the Inhabitants to use them Kindly. By this Serpentine Method he drew the People into the most Dangerous Security, while his Officers and Soldiers were Spiting his venom upon them by their Insults, Roberys, Plunderings, and even Murdering some of them. And their Danger Perhaps would never have been Discovered had it not been for the Success of two Battles in takeing two of their books of Orders.

On the first day of January 1777 some Regular Soldiers came along the main road from over Stoney brook One of

<sup>1</sup> Isaiah v. 14.



them was very Strangely Wounded for he was shot with an Iron Gun rammer in Stead of a bullet, Which entered under his chin and came out again at his nose near his eyes one end of it, and the other end lapt round his thigh (as it is said) Whether he was a Horsman or not I Know not, but it is very likely he was, and rideing up to his Eenemy before he done charging, and perceing that he was like to be shot with the Rammer, lean'd back on his horse to avoid it, and so received his wound in that manner, as to the Other end laping round his thigh, one end being Stopt, and the other end being heavy would continue its force until it met with something to stop it, and happened to meet with his thigh [p. 11] He Languished a few days and Dyed. I Remember when we first had the news which was the same day it was said That the Regulars said that the Rebels were so Damd cowardly that they shot their gun Sticks at them, and run away. It is generally thought that this was done in the skirmish where the two men were murdered as abovsaid.

There was four Gentlemen Farmers that lost considerably by the Regular Army for they took from one of them two Wagons three Horses and a Negro man that he gave a hundred pound for some years agoe. From another of them they took one wagon one horse, and a Negro man, from another, they took, one Wagon, two horses, and a negro man and from the other they took one Wagon one horse and one Negro lad, Besides their Plundering of them as they did their other Neighbours.

Under all these Treacherous Dangers and losses we have been and Still are Defending our Just Rights and lybertys against the Arbitrary Power of Great Britain Who in the last war against France and Spain Used us as Brethren and Requested us to assist them in that war Which we Read-

ially and Willingly Did to the Utmost of our Power, (for which the State of New Jersey is Still in Debt) and in Return from them we Received a handsome Gratuity,<sup>1</sup> This brotherly Kindness seemed to Continue Untill Great Britain Received a new Administration of Government and they Degenerateing into an Arbitrary power Prevail'd with the King and Parliment to Declare that they had a Right not only *to tax (but to) Bind us*, in all cases Whatsoever, For they Alledge That they are our Parent Kingdom, and we are Derived from them and therefore we ought to do *even* to them as an Obedient child ought *to its* Parent.

We being thus made a Political child, in the most humble manner only Claimed an Equal Right with our other Brethren To be taxt by our selves or by our own Representatives Exclusive of any other and this we clame as our Natural Birthright, And if I am not very much Mistaken the Inhabitants of Great Britain claim the same Right. Our Just claim so Offended the King and his Parliment that they declare that we have no Right to the Priviledge that our other brothers has But on the contrary they have a right to make us pay to them as much money (and as often) as they Pleas, was ever such an Unnatural Parent heard of When a child desires no more then to be Equal with his other brethren, to Declare him Illegetimate and therefore has no Right to their birthright, is not this Enough to Convince any child that he is Disown'd by his Parent made a Bastard and thereby he is fully discharg'd from his filial duty by his Unnatural Parent, and has

<sup>1</sup> Evidently referring to the £9166 which seems to have been New Jersey's share of the appropriation voted by Parliament in 1760 for distribution among the northern and middle provinces. (See *Acts of the General Assembly of the Province of New Jersey*, edited by Samuel Allinson (Burlington, N. J., 1776), p. 237 note.)



a good right being thus discharg'd to break of all Connections with his lordly brothers and set up for himself as we have done, and Should be very well contented if they would Permit us to Enjoy the like Privilege that Generally Bastards have that is to shift for themselves and to be Independent of all the family that we are said to belong too. But they will not allow us Neither a lawful Childs Right nor a Bastards Independance What Kind of Progeny They would have us to be I Know not. For we are Neither allowed to be a Lawful Child nor a Bastard and yet must be Derived from the same Parent with the Lawful [p. 12] Children. What Mungrel Relation they would have us to be I cannot find out for I Know of no word or Term in the English Language to distinguish it by (and I Know no Other) Therefore I must leave it to them that are more learned.

I have Already set down Gen<sup>l</sup> Hows Cruel Orders, and if I do not mention his Kind ones in Respect to the Inhabitants I expect to be Charged with Partiality, therefore I shal set them down as follows viz: The Commander in Cheif calls on the Commanding Officers of Corps to exert themselves in Preserveing the greatest Regularity and Strictest discipline in their Respective Quarters particularly attending to the Protection of the Inhabitants and their Property in their several Districts.

It is Strongly Recommended to Officers to Preserve good Orders in the several Farm houses to Prevent the men doing any damage to the Inhabitants not only for their sakes but in Compliance with the General Order given out Yesterday.

Soldiers are Possitively forbid to Molest or Stop the Inhabitants who have Protections given them. Much less are they to Injure them in their Propertys.

Here is all of them that I can find in Respect to the In-

habitants, in two of their books of General Orders and it seems very likely that these were some of the old Standing orders that was made and Observed by the British Army in Europe when they had the Character of being the best Soldiers in that part of the world but let that be as it may be, Gen<sup>l</sup> How has made no other use of these good and kind orders, but only to serve us as Joab served Amasa<sup>1</sup> when he took him fast by his beard with his right hand to Kiss him, while with the Other hand he Smote him in the fith Rib and shed out his bowels to the ground, so here Gen<sup>l</sup> How had fast hold of us by the beard of conquest with one hand to kiss us with his good orders while, with his Cruel bad orders he gave us a Mortal Blow and shed out our bowels to y<sup>e</sup> ground by their Insults Roberys & Plunderings These good orders was so little Observed, that I defy them to show one Instance where they was obeyed with in five mile of Princetown.

[p. 13] I shall Venture to give a brief Account of three Battles and of some things that Preceded them Though I can do it but very Imperfectly for want of proper Inteligence both from the State of the Army and Matters of fact Therefore I shall leave it to others that are more Knowing to Supply my defects

On the 8th day of December 1776 The Regulars towards Night<sup>2</sup> came to Trenton and were fired upon by Gen<sup>l</sup> Wash-

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xx. 10.

<sup>2</sup> "Towards noon" would be more accurate. December 8, 1776, was a Sunday, and the American army took the entire afternoon and night of the 7th and up to daylight on the 8th to cross to the Pennsylvania side of the river. The British and Hessian advance guard reached Trenton early in the morning of the 8th. When the rest of the Hessian battalion arrived at about 11 and marched down to the river bank they were welcomed with American grapeshot from the opposite bank. Cf. Stryker, 27, 28.



intons Army that had but Just got all of them over the River Delaware. The firing of Cannon was heard from thence to Princetown Every day more or less untill fryday Evening when the Guns was heard untill it was almost dark This was the 13th day of December, 1776. Here the Regulars Despairing of geting over the River Designed to put an End to the Campaign As appears by their Books that was found among their Bagage that they left in the field, when they fled from the Battle The words in one of their Books is thus viz. Head Quarters at Trenton the 14th of December 1776. G: O: The Campaign being Closed with the Pursuit of the Enemys Army near ninty miles by Leif<sup>t</sup> General Lord Cornwallaces Corps much to the Honour of his Lordship and to the Officers and Soldiers under his Command The *approach* of Winter puting a Stop to any further Progress the troops will Immediately *retire* into Quarters and hold themselves in *readiness* to Assemble on the shortest *notice*.<sup>1</sup> There is another of their books found in the field of battle In which it is thus Entered viz. Brigade After orders 9 at night 13<sup>th</sup> of December 1776 The Bagage of the Brigade to be sent of at 7 in the Morning. The gaurd ordered for the Rear Gaurd to Escort the Baggage to Princetown The captain to send in the morning for the Prisoners Confined in the town gaurd and March them with the Baggage.

Head Quarters Trenton 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1776 Here in this book is set down the same words as in the other book that I have before set down with this addition, after the last word notice is aded. The Comander in chief calls on the

<sup>1</sup> Gens. Howe and Cornwallis left Trenton on December 13th, the former to return to his comfortable quarters at New York, the latter to sail for England to tell the king how he had driven the rebels out of New Jersey. The order in the text is quoted by Stryker (48).

Commanding officers of corps to Exert themselves in Preserving the greatest Regularity and Strictest Discipline in their Respective Quarters Particularly attending to the Protection of the Inhabitants and their Property in their Several Districts<sup>1</sup> In what manner these good orders was obeyed appears by the foregoing Relation.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of December 1776 In the night Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington with a great deal of Difficulty by Reason of the Ice Got over the Delaware River from Pensilvania with a Considerable part of his Army, and the next morning Attackt the Hessian Troops that was at Trenton and gave them a Total Defeat and took between 8 and 9 hundred prissoners with six field peices of Cannon Mortally Wounded their Chief Commander that they had there the number of Slain and wounded I have not heard, there was Some of them that came to Princetown the night after the Battle very much Affrighted having Escaped upe assanpink brook Threw very muddy Swamps and Water.<sup>2</sup>

[p. 14] They had before sent Partys of their men down this side of the River to Crosswecks, Bordentown, Burlington, Blackhorse, and Mount Holly, (As I suppose) to be Quartered out dureing the Winter. How'er the Remaing part of the

<sup>1</sup> Both of these orders are quoted by Stryker (48).

<sup>2</sup> Starting as soon as it was dark on the evening of the 25th, it was after three in the morning of the 26th before Washington got his army over the river. He reached Trenton at about 8 A.M. According to official German returns quoted by Stryker (195) the Hessian losses were 106 (5 officers and 17 men killed, 6 officers and 78 men wounded). Washington reported to Congress that he had taken 918 prisoners, and Gen. Howe sent the same figures to the king. Washington also reported the capture of six brass field pieces. The Hessian commander, Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall, died at Trenton on the 27th in the house of Stacy Potts, his own headquarters.



Army and some part of Pensilvania Millitia found means at Several places to get over the River that then was full of Ice and all those parts was Soon cleared of those devouring Guests but in what manner I can give no Accounts for want of Particular Information.

A few days before the Battle at Princetown a Commisary with nine men for his Gaurd was Provideing Indian Corn for their Horses at a farmers house on the south side of Stoney brook. The Commisary and the Farmer were together in the Barn measuring the Corn When five of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons light horse men came up and took the Commisary Prisoner and then went to the Farmers House and took Eight of his Gaurd by Rideing up to the door and Ordering them to ground their arms and come out, which they all did Except one and he Escaped at a back door (It is said) that these Soldiers in Stead of being on guard to Defend the Commisary and themselves were employed in a much Pleasanter business, that was, in attacking and Conquering a Parcel of Mince Pyes<sup>1</sup> yet many of them (if not some of these) do frequently say (and Often Swear to it) In their way of Insulting the People That they would hang any Rebel let him be who he would for a mug of sider.

A farmer about five miles from Princetown took two Armed Hessians prissoners with no other Arms then his Pitchfork and Dog In the following manner. They were discovered in his Stable among his horses by his boy who told his master and he ran to the Stable before it was light in the morning and got his Pitch fork and commanded them to yield themselves Prisoners which one of them obeyed, and while he was Secureing of him, the other ran away, and the

<sup>1</sup> Footnote in MS.: "This shows That they fared well among the farmers." The story of the capture is given in Stryker (250).

farmer set his dog after him, and he Catcht him by his coat and held him fast until he was Secured, and both of them sent away Prissoners They said that they had fled from the Battle at Trenton.

The Regulars Advanced gaurds were frequently fired uppon about the first of January in the night; which Alarmed them to that degre that they Inceast their Gaurd upon Alentown Road with one hundred men, and lay on their Arms three nights Successively before the Battle, on the first day of January at night they made many fires on the side of the Main Road that Extended from the turning at Clarks corner down to the bridge, or near it and so up on the other side on the rising ground as far as we could see it and how much farther I Know not. The next morning early the Second of the month they left their fires and marched towards Trenton and some where in their [p. 15] way threw Maidenhead came upon a Parcel of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons men who fough<sup>t</sup> them on a Retreat and more men being sent to cover their Retreat until they got to Trenton and had past over the bridge when the Regulars and Hessians appeared and the latter being very Eager to follow the Pursuit as they called it Receiv'd a Smart Rebuke from one of our Generals field Pieces, which kild and wounded Ten or twelve of their men and at the same time Received a Volly of smal arms they only stood another fire and then Retreated, what number of the Enemy was Kild and Wounded I have not heard, though it is said that many of them was kild by the Retreating Partys geting behind trees and fences and fireing upon them as they advanced along the road.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On January 1st Washington had detached Brig. Gen. de Fermoy's brigade, Col. Edward Hand's Pennsylvania Riflemen, Col. Hausegger's German battalion, Col. Charles Scott's Virginia Con-



It being near night<sup>1</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> Washinton with his Army marcht up the Mill pond and the South side of Assanpink brook, and when they came to the woods he ordered many large fires to be made on the sides of the road, and marcht on with his army up the brook to the bridge Rozels mill and past over there and came to Stoney Brook near Isaac Clarks about a mile and half below the bridge on the main road, Where they were hindered some time in making a bridge over the brook for the Army to pas with the Artillery<sup>2</sup> This was done Unexpected to the Regular Army who to Annoy Washintons men as they thought now and then all night from over the brook<sup>3</sup> fired a Cannon shot *at the* fires that was left, this bring us to the *third* day of January 1777.

When as soon as it was well light we saw the Regulars<sup>4</sup> that was left at Princetown Marching towards Trenton, and in about half a hours time we saw them comeing back faster then they went, a Party of them came into our Field, and

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tinental Regiment and two guns of Capt. Thomas Forrest's battery to dispute the advance of the British on their way to Trenton. The Americans posted themselves at Five Mile Run just outside of Maidenhead (Lawrenceville). So ably did they do their duty that it took the British advance guard from 10 A.M. until 4 P.M. on January 2 to make Trenton. The narrative of the day's skirmishing is told by Stryker (258 *et seq.*). The British official reports make no mention of losses on that day. Lowell's *Hessians* (301) gives the Hessian losses at 4 killed and 11 wounded. Stryker (265) makes the American losses 1 killed and 6 wounded.

<sup>1</sup> Washington started his march at about 1 A.M.

<sup>2</sup> Other accounts make no mention of any delay here to repair the bridge.

<sup>3</sup> *i.e.*, Assanpink brook.

<sup>4</sup> The 17th and 55th regiments of the British line. The 40th had been left at Princeton to guard the stores.

laid down their Packs there and formed at the corner of our Garden about 60 Yards from the door and then marcht away Immediately to the field of Battle Which was in William Clarks wheat field and Orchard Round about his house and how much further to the westard I Know not It was plain within sight of our door at about 400 Yards distance I can give no Account how the battle was ordered on Either side for want of Proper Information only this

Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons army was so hindered in makeing and passing the bridge that the Battle was begun before their field Pieces could be brought up, where upon they Retreated and Rallyed again with their Artillery towards the last of the battle seven Regulars was seen from our door to fall at once and in about three quarters of an hour from the begining of the battle the Regulars were put to flight with the loss of two brass field Pieces took from them in the field. The Exact Number of their men that was Slain wounded and took prisoners [p. 16] I Know not there was thirty Six dead men the next day buried in a Stone Quarry among whom there was 15 of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons men, the Other 21 were Regulars besides three of them that lay dead in and near the main Road which Gen<sup>l</sup> Washinton seeing Ordered them to be put in the Waggons and carryed to town. And desired the Country People to bury the dead, besides these there was several others found Dead near the field of Battle and buried in other places, Which side they belonged to I do not Know, But it is said that most of them was Regulars<sup>1</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons

<sup>1</sup> The losses on each side cannot be accurately given. Hageman (I, 141, 142) following Barber and Howe (271, 272) vaguely says the American loss was not exceeding thirty, twenty of whom (6 officers and 14 privates) he admits were killed. There were certainly more than 10 wounded. The British losses he places at 200 killed and wounded



army took all the Regulars in town Prisoners,<sup>1</sup> and discharged their Continental Prisoners that they had Confined in the Colledge to the number of . . . .<sup>2</sup> among whom (as it said) was about 30 of our Countrypeople that were Accused Either of being Rebels or aiding and Assisting them They took their Stores in which (it is said) was a very large number of new blankets<sup>3</sup> They took all the Enemys Cannon in town and

and 230 prisoners. Washington's report gives his estimated loss at 8 or 9 officers and 25 to 30 privates killed, the British loss at over 100 killed, about 300 prisoners, making with the wounded a total of about 500. Dr. Jonathar Potts, surgeon in the American army, writing from the field of battle January 5th says that the American killed were 16 and the British 23 (Stryker, 445). The author of the anonymous letter, wrongly attributed by Stryker to someone in the British army, gives the British killed at about 100 and the American at about 14 (Stryker, 470). Gen. Howe's report of January 5 placed his loss at 17 killed and nearly 200 wounded and missing; but later advices led him to increase his figures to 18 killed, 58 wounded and 200 missing. This return omits 10 other killed, so that the total British loss would seem to be 286 (Stryker, 293, 458). Stryker's own estimate that the British loss was about 400 killed, wounded and prisoners, "one-fourth of whom were left dead upon the field" (p. 292) seems to lack confirmation. His estimate that the American loss was about 40 killed and wounded is more conservative.

<sup>1</sup> The anonymous letter quoted by Stryker (470) gives the number who surrendered in Nassau Hall as 86; others being brought in increased it to 200. Stryker himself (290) gives the number as 194 "including several wounded dragoons." The rest of the two British regiments (the 55th and 40th) about 200 in all had fled toward New Brunswick, losing 50 on the way. Col. Mawhood with the remnant of the 17th escaped to Maidenhead, joining Gen. Leslie there, and later was conducted to New Brunswick by Joseph Stockton, a well-to-do Princeton loyalist. (Ontario Bureau of Archives. 2d Rept. (Toronto, 1905,) I. 111).

<sup>2</sup> Blank in MS.

<sup>3</sup> Washington's official report to Congress says "we took some blankets, shoes and a few other trifling articles." Stryker (298) says

was obliged to leave two of them for Want of Carriage to take them of one gun they threw into a well, and then they Marcht on with their Prisoners and plunder to Sommerset Court House that day, and left some of the prissoners, and of their own men to care of the sick and wounded men on both sides

Gen.<sup>1</sup> Washinton as soon as the battle was over Ordered some of *his* men to be plced near the bridge over Stoney brook on the Main Road to hinder the Regulars passing over and to pull up the bridge which was Scarcely done<sup>1</sup> when the Regulars Apeared Which caused a Second fireing about three quarters of an hour appart from the first in which there was no Execution done that I heard of. In a little time our men Retreated, and the Regulars were Oblidged to Cross the brook at the ford with their artillery almost middle deep in water (the back water of the mill being then up) and form'd on this side the brook and towards night<sup>2</sup> (when they Knew

the Americans "also secured two brass six pounders, a large amount of ammunition, a quantity of military stores, and some clothing, and camp equipage, loaded in wagons." Gen. Knox makes a similar statement in a letter to his wife (Stryker, 451); an anonymous writer to the *Maryland Journal* under date of January 7, 1777, near Princeton, and presumed to be Dr. Benjamin Rush, says that a quantity of ammunition and several wagons of baggage fell into American hands (Stryker, 467), and the anonymous letter already alluded to elsewhere states that "several Baggage Waggons, and some Ammunition & Stores" were captured at Princeton. These references and others of similar trend would seem to indicate that Washington's official report on the booty was unduly modest—if not inaccurate.

<sup>1</sup> Major John Kelly of Col. James Potter's battalion of Northumberland County, Pa., Militia was in command of this detachment, and his reckless bravery in delaying escape until he had sawed through the last plank of the bridge almost led to his capture by the British reinforcements. (Stryker, 287, 289, and Hageman, I, 141).

<sup>2</sup> More correctly "towards noon." Stryker, 291, 470, and Hageman, I, 138.



that the other Army was gone) marcht into Princetown Thus that poor and almost Wholly Desolate town of al its late Inhabitants had change of Masters two if not three times on that day, for they had the Regulars in the Morning The Continentals at noon the regulars again at night who left them to the Continentals that night again and have not yet returned to Assume their Conquest. So Unconstant is the State of War and so Certain and sure the mischiefs and miserys attending it That it is a Wonder that Wise men should ever depend on it

In the beginning of the forementioned Battle a Womans leg was shot of at her ancle by a Cannon ball she was in one of the houses<sup>1</sup> near the bridge on the main road in the hollow on this side Stoney brook it was thought to [p. 17] be done by one of Gen<sup>l</sup> Washintons field Pieces. The battle was Plainly Seen from our door Before any Gun was heard a man was seen to fall and Immediately the Report and Smoke of a Gun was Seen and heard, And the guns went of so quick and many together that they could not be numbered, we Presently went down into the Cellar to keep out of the Way of the Shot. There was a Neighbour woman down in the Cellar with us that was so Affrighted that she Imagined that the field was covered with Blood, and When we came out of the Cellar She called Earnestly to us to look out and see how all the field was quit red with blood. When none was to be seen at that Distance. This I mention only to show into What Strange mistakes Sudden frights with the fear of Death may put us into. Almost as soon as the firing was over our house was filled and surrounded with Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington's Men, and himself on horseback at the door. They brought in with

<sup>1</sup> Still standing.

them on their Shoulders two Wounded Regulars, one of them was shot in at his hip and the bullet lodged in his groin, and the other was shot through his body Just below his short ribs he was in very great pain and bled much out of both sides, and often desired to be removed from one place to another, which was done Accordingly and he dyed about three o'clock in the afternoon They was both Used very tenderly by the Rebels (as they call them) The other also bled much and they put a Cloth dipt in vinegar to the wound to Stop it and three of them Stay'd with the wounded men near an hour after the Others were gone, the man that lived was left at our house above two days and one night With his Wound not drest, before the Regulars that was left to take care of the sick and wounded would take him away, though they had notice that day after the battle.

Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington as he came from the field of Battle saw their packs lying in y<sup>e</sup> field Where they had left them, and set a guard over them with orders that no body should meddle with them until further Orders the guard stood by them until the Regulars that came from Trenton had formed and then left them Where they lay until near Sun set and then When all the men that left them there were Either slain Wounded taken Prisoners or fled from the battle the Other Regulars and Hessians from Trenton Begun to Plunder their fellow Soldiers Packs takeing out what they Pleased and leaving the rest in the dirt, the next day the Plunderers Inceast and continued from day to day until all was gone but What they refused to take some old Blankets they gave to the Wounded Man. It is Observable that in Plundering they Keep no Order, for one Plunderer will Rob another as Appears by [p. 18] an instance before our door Some of the Men that left their Packs to Secure them the better threw them



over the Garden boarded fence into it, and a Hessian seeing the Packs lying in the garden went in and threw them over the fence into the field Opened one of them and took out some things that a Regular had a mind too, and the other Refused to give him and then the Regular laid hold on him and took them from him by force and Kickt his breech when he had done, one or two more Scuffles of the like Nature we saw but at a far greater distance

As soon as the battle was over Gen<sup>l</sup> Mercer (who had his horse shot down under him, and then received several wounds by which in some days after he dyed) was carryed into Thomas Clarks house with several other wounded men, And above Twenty was carried into William Clarks house two of them dyed soon after they was brought in Sixty was carryed to Princetown but how many of them were regulars I know not. By an Account that a Neighbour Gentleman sent to me there was thirty one Regulars found dead In about the field of battle and nineteen Provincials, and one hundred and Seventy five taken Prissoners of the Regulars and Hessians.<sup>1</sup> This account of the Prissoners is confirm'd by what a Captain of the Millitia told me who was in the Battle and marcht with Gen<sup>l</sup> Washington to Morristown with the Addition that they were all Privates Besides Officers and how many of them he did not know.

Immediately after the Battle (as I said before) Gen<sup>l</sup> Washingtons Men came into our house Though they were both hungry and thirsty some of them laughing out right, others smileing, and not a man among them but showed Joy in his Countenance. It Really Animated my old blood with Love to those men that but a few minutes before had been

<sup>1</sup> See note p. 33

Couragiously looking Death in the face in Releiveing a part of their Country from the Barbarous Insults and Ravages of a bold and Dareing Enemy. By the Joy that I felt myself I cannot help but be of the Opinion that the most Strict of them all against bearing Arms in our own defence (if they have any love for their bleeding Country) but must in some degree or other Rejoice with the rest of their Neighbours and others for that days happy Relief that it Pleased God to bless us with

Since my Writing so far, I saw a Gentleman Farmer one of our Neighbours Who Informs me that on the ninth day of last December (the next day after the regulars had got to Trenton) he was taken Prissoner in his own house by a Party of them and conveyed to Trenton and kept there, for some time and [p. 19] then marcht him with other Prissoners through Princetown to *Brunswick* and so on from Place to Place till they got him into New York, he says that they was Cruelly used at one Place for they Crouded so many Prisoners into one Room that they could not lye down, And it being very cold that night They was some of them striking fire Which the Officers hearing, forced in with clubs and Knockt three or four of them down, They allowed one Parcel of their Prisoners but four pound and a half of bread, and a pound of Pork for Six men a Week, another company of them that they said were Prissoners of war fared a little better but not much, but he himself fared well Enough for he happened to have some hard money and Suplyed himself he was a Prissoner with them a little above three months and made his Escape with two others of Staten Island, They Plundered him Sufficiently at home, for besides plundering his house they took from him a wagon four horses, and the most part of his geers, with Several of his Cattle.



There was one Drake that the next day after the Battle saw four regulars standing together in a field between two and three mile from Princetown and went Boldly up to them (with a Stick under his great Coat which showed as if it was a *gun*) and ordered them to yield themselves his Prisoners which they did, and *did not try* for to Resist two of them had *Guns* but the other two being *fugitives* the day before had none, He haveing *the* four secured by y<sup>e</sup> Neighbours *went out* again with his stick as he did before and found another regular and took him *in* the like manner It is said that Several more of their fugitives were taken Prisoners by the Country People in Sommorset County and other places where they Stragled about in Search for their Army and got lost.

There was a farmer that dwelt about . . . .<sup>1</sup> miles from Princetown that was said to be a Tory, and had a brother that was a Schoolmaster in the Neighbourhood last Spring and left his School and got the Regular army where he said he was made an Officer and appeared as Such while he was here dureing their twenty six days tyranny, (and is Since taken prissoner by our People near Brunswick) and in that time it is thought he Prevailed with his brother the farmer to Join with the Regulars which he did, and not being at home, Some over Zealous Whigs abused his wife and Plundered his house to a great degree The particulars I have not heard Though I have many times been Informed of it in General (as I here set it down.) This woman is said to be a Strong Whig, but let that be as it may, her Father was [p. 20] one and suffered very Severely by being Plundered by the Regulars to that degree that he had not bed cloaths enough to keep him warm the night after he was rob'd and so got cold, fell sick and dyed.

<sup>1</sup> Blank in MS.

If it is a Provocation and grief to us to be Plundered by the Regulars our Profesed enemys. Then how much more must it be so to the Sufferers that are Plundered by their Pretended Friends. These blind Zealots (a zeal without Knowledge) that Plundered the Woman did not consider that they were committing that very crime of Oppression That the other Whigs have drawn their Swords against, and by that have Transformed themselves into Torys and did not know it. For the word Tory as it now is Understood among us Signifye Oppression or at least an accessory to oppression: and when any person is Oppresst the accessory in aiding or assisting is as guilty as he that does it, and therefore these Plunderers may properly be called Torys. What a Mallancholly sight it is to see our own People guilty of the crime that we are Opposing with the hazard of some of our lives.

No mans property ought to be taken from him without a Law first made and then a hearing, or at least an Oppertunity of being heard to know Whether he is guilty of a breach of that law or not, and if he is found guilty, and all or part of his goods are forfeited, they are to *be taken* by the proper Officer, and not by Private men, for they do not *belong to* them but to *the Public*. Therefore these whigs that Plundered *the* Woman (whoever they be) if the farmer deserves to be punished They have been Plundering the Publick, for if the goods that they Plundered was forfeited, they belonged to the People in General, and not to private Individuals.

The Character of British *Soldiers* formerly was their Keeping of faith with and showing mercy to *their* conquered Enemys was Equal to their Valour, This brave *Character* hath very much Deceived some of the Torys as well as many others for they Imagined That if we should be conquered, that faith



would be kept with them and mercy shown to them by the Conquerers. But when that unhappy time came Alas they found directly to the Contrary, for to their Sorrow they found the saying in the Scripture true where it says, The mercys of the wicked are Cruelty.<sup>1</sup> This Puts me upon Enquireing What is become of these Noble Virtues Faith and Mercy for they are not to be found in the British nor Hessian Army here, Have they fled from, or are they Stifled [p. 21] under that vast Pile of Bribery and Corruption under which the Inhabitants of Great Britain now Groans. It is Certain that as soon as these Vices got into the Army they left it, for they never had nor never will have the least connexion with Treachery Cruelty or Oppression Then where must they be gone, have they left the world. I Answer no they have not for I saw them Exercised in their full Lustre by the Continental Army in the day of the Battle near Princetown, When they brought into the House where I then was Immediately after the Battle two wounded men of their Enimys on their shoulders and their Cloaths much besmeared with their blood. While their fellow Soldiers was doing the like with their wounded Enemys and caryed them in large numbers into Other houses that was near; not regarding the Spoiling of their cloaths Which they had rather bear then to leave their wounded Enemys that could not Stand by wallowing in their blood in the field

How very different is this from that barbarous Cruel Usage of the Regular Army when in the same Battle. Gen<sup>l</sup> Mercer having his horse shot down under him<sup>2</sup> they Insulted

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Footnote in MS.: "and they gathered thick round him while he defended himself with his Sword, he received a blow behind him with the but end of a gun which Stunded him and as he lay on the

him and repeatedly wounded him so that in a few days after he dyed. In the like manner they served Lieutenant Yeates (a very worthy Young Gentleman as it is said by them that knew him)<sup>1</sup> who when he was so wounded that he could not

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ground Stunded," The sentence originally read: "Gen<sup>l</sup> Mercer having received several very bad wounds and his horse shot down under him he intreated his Enemys to give him Quarter which instead of granting, They insulted him," etc., as in text. But on learning that Mercer did not ask for quarter, but fought on until so sorely wounded that he was left for dead, the honest author struck out his mistaken words and added the footnote given above. Hugh Mercer was born in Scotland in 1720. He died in the Thomas Clark house on the Princeton battlefield January 12, 1777, and was buried in Philadelphia at Christ Church January 16. In 1840 his remains were removed to Laurel Hill cemetery, Philadelphia. Sketches of him appear in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and in Stryker, 296, 459. Cf. also W. B. Reed's *Oration on . . . Hugh Mercer*, Phila. 1840, and Dr. Benjamin Rush's letters in Lee's *Memoir of R. H. Lee*, II, 163-165. His portrait is published in Hageman I, facing 143, and also appears in the group in C. W. Peale's portrait of Washington owned by Princeton University.

<sup>1</sup> A brief sketch of Bartholomew Yeates is in Stryker, 455. Dr. Benjamin Rush in Lee's *Memoir of R. H. Lee*, II, 165, writing January 14th, 1777, informs Col. Lee of Lieut. Yeates' death on the 10th, and describes the brutal treatment he had received after begging for quarter. The lieutenant's affidavit made the day before he died is in the Papers of the Continental Congress, Vol. 53, p. 47; a copy was sent by Washington to Gen. Howe on Jan. 13, 1777 (Hist. MSS. Com. Report on Amer. MSS. in the R. I. of Great Britain, 82) and it also forms part of the "proofs and illustrations" of the Congressional Committee's report on British and Hessian atrocities. (N. J. Archives, 2 ser., I, 363.) The affidavit is as follows:

PRINCETON, Jan'y 9, 1777.

Lieut<sup>t</sup> Yates of Col<sup>o</sup> Reads Regim<sup>t</sup> of Virginia forces, being sworn upon the Holy Evangelists, declares "That after he was wound-



stand begged for Quarter but the Barbarous Wretches would not allow it, But gave him new Wounds and one of them continued Insulting of him, and coming to him to see Whether he was dead or not, was shot down dead himself as it is said and fell *very near* the wounded young Officer who languished with his wounds some days and *died* but first told how Cruelly he had been used by the Regular Soldiers and took his oath of it. How many more wounded men have been denied quarter and murdered is not known.

Though these Regulars boasts that they are the best Soldiers in the World, Yet Experience hath Sufficiently Proved them to be no more then the Instruments of Cruelty and Oppression and are Strangely Degenerated from what their Predecessors were thirty Years agoe for they Cross the Atlantick Ocean & came here to do one of the oddest messages that ever was heard of. That was Either to put us to the sword, or make us submit to a Thralldom, much worse then we impose upon our Labouring Beasts for without the labour and care of Men those Beasts could have no Existence here For though we use the Strength of the Horses and oxen in bearing and drawing of Burthens and also in tiling our

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ed in the battle of 3<sup>d</sup> Jany 1777 near Princeton, a British Soldier came up to him, & said to him "Oh damn you are you there" and Snap'd his Muskett at him: Upon which M<sup>r</sup> Yates begged for quarters: The Soldier loaded his Muskett deliberately, & Shot him thro' the breast, & afterwards Stab'd him in 13 places with his Bayonett. Sometime after this, either the Same or another Soldier came up to him, who, perceiving some Signs of Life in him, Struck him with the Club of his Muskett."

Attested by BENJ<sup>n</sup> RUSH.

ANTH<sup>y</sup> W. WHITE.

A true Copy of the Original in the hands of his Excell<sup>t</sup>

G. JOHNSTON A. D. C.

lands for our own food, Yet they can do us no service without our guiding and attending them while they labour. And they in return for their labour Receive of us their Provender which we labour for as much [p. 22] if not more then they in Providing Stables and feeding of them with which they are contented food being all that a beast desires

Thus it hath Pleased God in his Infinite Wisdom to put as it were Recipocral dutys between men and their Labouring Beasts, But hath not Put any such dutys between The Regular Army and us, For are they to help and guide us in our labour, No, are they to Provide us food and feed us, No. Have they given us content as we do to our beasts of labour, very far on the Contrary. Did they Ever do us any Maner of good No. Then how can we be under any dutys or Obligations to them, or Even to them that sent them.

Great Britain Refused to hear our humle Supplications unless we would first give up our cause and Acknowledge that they had an Absolute Power over us. Their Parliment to Represent us though they know but little if anything of our Circumstances and therefore we Refuse to chuse them, For Which they (without hearing) have declared us to be in Rebellion and Denounced War against us and sent an Army *over the ocean* against us, and for fear that we should be to Strong *they have* at a *great expence* (which no doubt but they Expect that we shal *pay*) hired another army of Forreigners and attackt us with both Armyes at once in order to Reduce us the sooner into the most abject Slavery that they Please to Impose upon us. This is the Recompence that poor New Jersey Receives from Great Britain for all the Services that our Ancestors and we have done for them. If it is askt what them *Services* be I shal give a brief Account as folows,

New Jersey was first settled *in* the Year 1664 under a



Proprietary Government, being then a Wilderness overrun with Wolves Panthers Bears and other beasts of Prey besides Plenty of Venomous Serpents though the first Inhabitants sustained great damage by the beasts of Prey Destroying their Young Cattle, colts, sheep, and swine, and some times in Danger of their lives by the Poisonous biteings of the Rattle snakes Yet their greatest Danger was from Treacherous Indians That not Many years before had made war with the Dutch Settlers in the very next Collony of New York, and they often Assembled in great Numbers so that the Inhabitants to Secure themselves built smal wooden fortifications.<sup>1</sup>

Surrounded with all those Difficultys and Terrifying Dangers acompanied with many other hardships Our Courageous Ancestors went on in Clearing and subduing the Wilderness And buying their Land both [p. 23] of the Proprietors and of the natives. *Supporting themselves by farming hunting and fishing these first settlers with the Other settlers*

<sup>1</sup> The Royal Charter executed in favor of the Duke of York was dated March 20, 1664. Proprietary government began three months later when on June 24, 1664, he conveyed to Lord John Berkeley and Sir George Carteret all that part of his territory which is now New Jersey. Seventeenth century descriptions of the country, such as William Edmundson's *Journal*, Mahlon Stacy's letters in Barber & Howe, the *Brief Account of the Province of East New Jersey*, Gabriel Thomas' *Historical Description of the Province of West New Jersey* and George Scot's *Model of the Government of the Province of East Jersey*, do not give the impression that the country was overrun with wild beasts. The Indians too are almost uniformly mentioned in the early records as a benefit rather than an injury, and through their humane treatment by the proprietors, New Jersey was actually preserved from the collisions with the Indians which other colonies suffered. (Cf. Whitehead, 57, 58; Gordon, 63.) The quarrel with the Dutch of New Amsterdam to which allusion is made was due entirely to the misconduct of the colonists themselves. (Whitehead, 28-31.)

*that came From old England Scotland and north Ireland continued buying Lands Until they extended the Boundaries and confines of the Collony of New Jersey without an . . . . [half line] . . . this noble Extention of Dominion (which cost so many of the lives of the first adventurers) was not made by conquest but by an Honest Purchas from the Natives and proprietors and not with the Blood of the Conquered People. How is it England maintains title to our Lands must be given to her (and not kept by us) for our Title was Neither gained by invasion nor held by oppression and nothing Appears to the Contrary, but is held according to the liberty that God gave to Men When the mos. . . . [half line] . . . . as for instance, When he Separated the sons. . . . [half line] . . . . title cannot be shown to Lands in Old England Scotland & Ireland Besides this Extension of dominion the population is Inceast in Proportion.<sup>1</sup> New Jersey as early as in King Williams reign was Requested to Assist Old England in their wars against France which we complied with to the Utmost of our Ability, And in Queen Anne's Reign New Jersey was called upon to help Great Britain in their war against France Several times Which was very readily and Willingly complied with And in their last wars with France New Jersey was for Several Years Runing Requested by the Crown to Assist Which we did Yearly Willinly and Readily*

<sup>1</sup> In 1702 the Province was supposed to contain 20,000 inhabitants. In 1726 the official census showed a population of 29,861 whites and 2581 negroes; in 1738, 43,388 whites and 3981 "negroes & other slaves"; in 1745, 56,777 whites and 4606 "slaves"; in 1755, 75,000 whites, the negroes not being given; in 1772, 67,710 whites and 3313 negroes, with no returns from the five counties of Bergen, Essex, Middlesex, Monmouth and Somerset. (Barber & Howe, 29, N. J. Archives, 1 ser., V. 164; VI, 242; VIII, 132; X, 452.)



during the war, for Which we are yet in debt (as I said once before) Great Britain in their wars against the the Spaniards Requested New Jersey to assist them in the West Indies in an Expedition aganst Carthargene which we willingly complied with, Where we lost many Brave Men and Great Britain again in their war with both France and Spain together Requested the Assistance of New Jersey against them both, Which was as it always had been very Readily and Willingly Comply with though part of it was in the West Indies Where our Men Assisted in taking Havana.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1709 New Jersey entered reluctantly into the plan of the Crown for an expedition against Canada and Newfoundland; but of the separate little army of 1500 men to attack Montreal to be furnished jointly by New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey the latter State supplied her quota of 200 men, and in June of that year the Assembly passed a bill encouraging volunteers, another raising £3000 by bills of credit and a third enforcing this paper's currency. In 1711 when the colonies were again asked to co-operate New Jersey provided her quota of 365 men and the Assembly raised £5000 for the expenses and pay of the volunteers. In 1740 when a British fleet had been dispatched against the Spanish West Indies and aid was asked of the colonies the New Jersey Assembly levied £2000 for victualling and transporting the State quota of troops. In June 1745 £2000 was raised for the assistance of Shirley's Louisburg expedition and a year later when it became known that the conquest of Canada was to be attempted the New Jersey Assembly raised £10,000 for the equipment of 500 men and offered a £6 bounty. So popular was this enterprise that 660 men enlisted; 5 companies being charged to this State and one being transferred to New York's quota. In November, 1746, £850 more was raised for victualling the troops and in May, 1747, an additional £1000. The State had already spent over £20,000 on equipment and transportation. In March, 1755, £500 was voted for the use of the royal army on its march through the province and its baggage was furthermore transported at public expense. In April, 1755, the expedition to Crown Point being decided on New Jersey

The Present Rulers of Great Britain like Men Intoxicated with Power not Regarding Either Friendship or Services have Denied about [p. 24] thre- . . . . [half line] . . . . *but have treated us as malefactors that is to be punished* . . . . [half line] . . . . this that August Tribunal Whose Sentences *should act as laws* to the world, and often did as far as *its former history is concerned*, Would it be to offer as a Law to *the rest of the world and mankind*, that men should be denied a *hearing and a trial and should be condemned to death or to punishment unheard?* Surely not. Surely future Ages will not be . . . . [half line] . . . . Records do not show it there . . . . *time of Ship Mony was Ordered* . . . . [half line] . . . . *to be paid* . . . . [half line] . . . . ve of it might appear, and this only . . . . [half line] . . . . surely it must be absolutely Necessary *that the giving the rights of Comon Malefactors to millions of men whose lives and propertys are both Concered should be conceded and*

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raised 500 men and issued bills of credit to the amount of £15,000 for their maintenance. In the following August £15,000 in addition was raised; and for the campaign of 1756 £17,500. In October, 1757, the Assembly voted £30,000 for His Majesty's service and sent 1000 men to the front besides holding 3000 more in readiness for a call. The following spring, April, 1758, 1000 men were provided and £50,000 voted for their maintenance. The complement of 1000 men was kept up for the next two years with appropriations of £50,000 and £45,000 respectively. In 1761 and 1764 the quota was 600 men and the appropriation £25,000 each year, in 1764 666 men and £30,000, and it was in the latter year that Havana was captured. These figures show that the cost to the State during the half century of colonial warfare amounted to over £300,000 or an average annual cost of £6000. No account is here taken of moneys or troops raised for State frontier defence. The acts are best found in Allinson's *Acts of New Jersey* Chapters 8 and 9 of Gordon should also be consulted, with the 1st series of N. J. Archives, Vols. 1-10.



they be given a hearing. If Great Britains Rulers could be persuaded to grant this the American States no Doubt would yield what is known to the World to be the Cause of the present struggle which the British have called Rebellion

It will brand that Tribunal with Infamy when it is stated that them bloody Messengers that they sent to Enslave us, should be as Impiously guilty as they was here In Changing three Houses of Prayer into three dens of thieves That was the Colledge and the Presbyterians and Quakers Meeting Houses<sup>1</sup> From all these Places as well as many others they

<sup>1</sup> In his warmth the author loses sight of the fact that the first two of these edifices had suffered probably as much damage from the American soldiery as from the British and Hessian. The church had been used by both armies. Its pews had been burned as kindling wood, and a fireplace had been built in it with a chimney running up through the roof. In the Middlesex County "Damages" (p. 328) is the appraisers' sworn statement of the damages done by the enemy alone:

Inventory of Damages done to the Meting House in Princeton Middlesex County by the british troops & their Adherents in The Year 76 & 77 £160-4-2.

John McCombs being sworn saith he was requested in Conjunction with Thomas Stockton & Enos Kelsey to Vallu the Damages done to the meting House In Prinston at S<sup>d</sup> one vewing & making A Calculation of the S<sup>d</sup> Damages do Adjudg<sup>d</sup> it to £160. 4. 2.

Sworn the 22<sup>th</sup> Day of Oct<sup>r</sup> 1782 before me Robert Stockton.

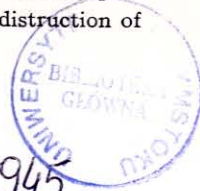
JOHN MCCOMBS.

Nassau Hall too had sheltered American as well as British troops. The minutes of the Trustees of the College of New Jersey for September, 1776, record the fact that Dr. Witherspoon was to move in Congress "that troops shall not hereafter be quartered in the College." And three months to a day after our unknown author penned his last paragraph, Dr. Witherspoon, Dr. Elihu Spencer and Richard Stockton, Esq., a committee from the Board of Trustees of the College, presented

made their Incursions upon the Inhabitants both here and elsewhere and committed all the Roberys and Villanys before Mentioned

The People in & about Princetown besides their Suffering the Calamitys of war had a greivous Sicknes Among them, Which begun about the middle of August 1776, with the bloody flux, and other Mortal Distempers that carryed of many People until late in the fall when the bloody flux was not so frequent the Pleurisy and Other fevers followed (and as far as I can hear) is not Yet abaited Aprill 18 1777 but continues and carrys many people of. Besides the Smal Pox hath got into the Neighbourhood the natural way and proved very mortal both to the Inhabitants and Soldiers there was fourteen of the soldiers that catcht it and was put out at one house and Seven of them dyed Just one half, There was Several familys and many Soldiers Innoculated and I hear of only one Child among them all that dyed.

a petition to Congress praying that no Continental troops be allowed hereafter to enter the College or to use it as barracks. The petition recites that every party of provincials marching through Princeton takes possession of the building, and partly through wantonness and partly under pretence of not being supplied with firewood "are daily committing the greatest ravages upon the Building, in breaking up the floors, and burning every piece of wood they can cut out of it." (MS. Papers Cont. Cong., 41, Vol. 7, p. 6.) And elsewhere it was the same story, as examination of Continental Army Order Books can prove. Compare e.g., the following passage dated Pompton, July 25, 1777, in an unpublished Order Book in the Library of Princeton University: "how disagreeable to the Army is it that peaceable Inhabitants of our Country Men and Fellow Citizens dread our halting among them, even for one night, and are glad when they get rid of us, this can only proceed from their distress at the plundering and wasting destruction of their property."



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INDEX



## INDEX

- ALLENTOWN, 31.  
*American Crisis*, Paine's, 21.  
Assanpink Brook, 29, 32.
- BALDWIN, Jonathan, 5.  
Blackhorse, 29.  
Booty captured, 34, 35.  
Bordentown, 20.  
Brown, —, kills wounded man, 21.  
Brunswick, 3, 18, 29  
Burlington, 29.
- CANNON taken at Princeton, 19, 33, 34; at Trenton, 29.  
Cattle killed, 12, 14.  
Clarke, Isaac, 32; Thomas, 38; William, 33, 38.  
Clarke's Corner, 31.  
College of New Jersey disbands, 4. *See also* Nassau Hall.  
Commissary captured, 30.  
Congressional committee on atrocities, 15, 22, 43.  
Cornwallis, Earl of, 11, 16, 28.  
Crosswicks, 29.
- DAVISON, John, 6; Josiah, 6.  
Dickinson, Jonathan, 4.  
Drake, —, 40.
- FERMOY, Brig. Gen. de, 31.  
Five Mile Run, 32.  
Farmers plundered, 10, 13, 14, 24, 40; taken prisoners, 39.  
Forrest, Capt. Thomas, 32  
Furniture destroyed, 14.
- GAINE, HUGH, 19.  
Grant, Sir James, 11.  
Grist mill burned, 5.
- HAND, Col. Edward, 31.  
Harcourt, John, 9.  
Hausegger, Col., 31.  
Hawkins, Benjamin, 4.  
Hessians steal horses, 9, 10; insult inhabitants, 10; kill cattle, 12; at Trenton, 27, 29; taken prisoners, 30; plunder fellow-soldiers, 37.  
Howe, Sir William, 3, 15, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 34, 43.  
Hunt, Nathaniel, 7.  
Huntington, L. I., 6.
- JOHNSTON, G., 44.
- KELLY, Major John, 35.  
Kelsey, Enos, 50.
- LAURENCE, Elizabeth, 9.  
Leslie, Gen. Alexander, 11, 16, 34; William, 11.
- Losses, American (Jan. 2, 1777), 32, (Jan. 3, 1777), 19, 33, 34, 38; British (Jan. 3, 1777), 33, 34, 38; British and Hessian (Jan. 2, 1777), 31; Hessian (Jan. 2, 1777), 32, (Jan. 3, 1777), 38.
- Loyalists, 14, 34, 40, 41.
- MCCOMBS, John, 50.  
Maidenhead, 11, 31, 34.  
Mawhood, Col. Charles, 11, 34.  
Mercer, Hugh, 34, 42, 43.  
Miller, Samuel, 4.  
Mills at Princeton burned, 6.  
Moore, Capt. James, 8.  
Morristown, 38.  
Morven, 11.  
Mount Holly, 29.



- NASSAU HALL, 8, 34, 50.  
 New Jersey, condition of, 23; in colonial wars, 24, 25, 47, 48; recompensed by Great Britain, 25; colonial history, 46; population, 47; Indians, 46.  
 New Market, 5.  
 New York, American prisoners at, 39.
- OLDEN, David, 9; John, 9; Joseph, 5, 10; Thomas, 9; William, 9.  
 Oppie, Benjamin, 7.  
 Orders, British army, 14, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28.
- PAINE, Thomas, 21.  
 Penn's Neck, 15.  
 Plum, Benjamin, 5.  
 Plundering by American troops, 51; by British and Hessians, 9, 10, 12, 23, 24, 37; by Whigs, 40, 41.  
 Potter, Col. James, 35.  
 Potts, Jonathan, 34.  
 Presbyterian Church damages, 50.  
 Prices, 12.  
 Princeton, deserted, 3, 4, 10; mills destroyed in, 6.  
 Princeton, Battle of, 11, 16, 17, 21, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36; *N. Y. Gazette's* fictitious account of, 19; prisoners taken, 18, 19, 20, 34, 38, 40.  
 Princeton Association, 6, 9.  
 Princeton University. *See* College of New Jersey.  
 Prisoners, American, at Princeton, liberated, 20, 34; at Battle of Princeton, 18, 19; taken to New York, 39; Hessian, 29, 30, 38; British, 34, 38, 40.  
 Protections, 9, 10, 20, 23.
- QUAKER Meeting House, 50.
- Quakers ill treated, 10, 13, 20.  
 Quartering of American troops, 50; British troops, 8, 12, 16, 29.
- RALL, Col. Johann Gottlieb, 9, 29.  
 Read, Col. James, 43.  
 Rowe, Abia, 6.  
 Rozell's Mill, 32.  
 Rush, Benjamin, 4, 43, 44.
- SCOTT, Col. Charles, 31.  
 Scudder, Col. William, 6, 7, 9.  
 Scudder family, 6.  
 Sergeant, Jonathan, 4; Jonathan Dickinson, 4, 5, 9.  
 Sickness in Princeton, 51.  
 Skelton, Joseph, 13.  
 Somerset Court House, 35.  
 Spencer, Dr. Elihu, 50.  
 Staten Island, 39.  
 Sterling, Lieut. Col. Thomas, 8.  
 Stockton, Joseph, 34; Richard, 50; Robert, 8, 9, 50; Thomas, 9, 50.  
 Stony Brook, 3, 20, 21, 23, 32, 35.
- TANNERIES robbed, 8.  
 Timber destroyed, 4, 5, 8.  
 Tories plundered by Americans, 40, 41.  
 Trenton, Battle of, 27, 29.
- WASHINGTON, Gen. George, 11, 17, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 43.  
 White, Gen. Anthony W., 44.  
 Witherspoon, Dr. John, 4, 16, 22, 50.  
 Woman wounded in Battle of Princeton, 36.  
 Women maltreated, 14, 15, 16, 17.  
 Wounded men killed, 20, 21, 22; at Battle of Princeton, 17, 19, 42.
- YATES, Lieut. Bartholomew, 43.



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A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF THE RAVAGES OF THE  
BRITISH AND HESSIANS AT PRINCETON IN  
1776-1777