













Diary of  
Samuel Richards

Captain of Connecticut Line

War of the Revolution

1775-1781

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Diary of Samuel Richards



## REVOLUTIONARY INCIDENTS

TO MY SON:—Recollecting how much I was entertained in my youth in hearing my father narrate incidents which occurred at the siege of Louisburgh on the island of Cape Briton, in the year 1745, where he acted a part—I conclude it would not be less interesting to you to learn from me some of the many incidents with which I became personally acquainted during the revolutionary war; through which I served from the commencement to the end, and coming from an eye witness in whom *you* can confide; leaving it to you to consult the many able historians for *general facts* and results as they arose in this eventfull period, and which will be long remembered and passed down to posterity; and will loose none of their interest for many generations, but will rather expand with the advance of empire in this extensive republic:

In narrating incidents it will naturally be supposed that in many instances circumstances which led to them, as well as the results which followed—will necessarily be involved: in which it is my design to be as laconic as the nature of the case will admit: the field and the incidents are sufficiently ample without much digression or studied remarks.

Those I have selected, and the manner of my treating them you will judge of by the sequel.

In the year 1774 I had arrived to the age of 21, and of course able—in some measure, to understand

the accounts of passing events, and to witness their effects on the public mind.

The shutting up of the port of Boston, after the destruction of the tea on board the ships: the arrival of an additional number of regular troops, with the accompanying circumstances, as narrated by the historians of the day, sufficiently opened the drama to the view of even common observers—of a set'led design of the british government to persevere in subjecting the colonies to a system of taxation, and an equall fixed design of resistance on the part of the colonies.

this system of taxing the colonies commenced in 1765—only two years after the peace of paris in 1763—the reasons held up in the discussions in Parliament on the subject were principally that it was right that the colonies should help to reimburse the expense of the war which was carried on principally for their defence and protection. The colonists abjected [sic]—pleading their charter rights, and the common right of citizens and subjects that none are to be taxed without their own consent, and the colonists not being represented in Parliament, could have no voice in the case: The stamp act—of 1765—repealed in 1768—the succeeding duties on paper, paints &c. and the strong effort by the duty on tea in 1773—were tests to try the right & the power of the mother country to tax the colonies; and the resistance of the colonies was in principle to oppose that right, as not existing. After the destruction of

the tea at Boston the british parliament came to the strong resolution that they had a right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever. this was the climax at which the subject had arisen—the british government persevering in these measures—and the colonies uniformly resisting. Those things are fully treated on in history, and only inserted to keep in mind the foundation of the war of independance and the seperation of the colonies from the mother country. The firing of the british soldiery on the unarmed citizens of Boston: the burning of the Gaspee schooner—a government vessell—in the harbor of Newport—the constant custom of the british of impressing our seamen wherever found on the high seas, all served to keep up and increase the acrimony between the mother country & the colonies.

One of our whale vessels arriving into the harbor of Newport while the Gaspee schooner was lying there one of her officers came on board & declared his design of impressing one of the crew: the captain made a mark in some salt, and declared to the officer if he passed that he would harpoon him: the officer regardless of the threat advanced on which the Captain thrust the harpoon at him which caused his death.

In the autumn of 1774 and during the succeeding winter, companies of *minute men* were formed in most of the towns and villages of New England, which were drilled and exercised with great attention.

The colonies received regular information of the plans maturing in parliament during the winter 1774-5—for bringing the colonies to submission—of the reinforcement of the army in Boston: the appointment of Howe, Clinton & Burgoyne—as lieut. generals—to command: of hiring 12,000 hessian auxilliers to be employed jointly with the british against us. The news of the action at Lexington, which was on the 19th of April '75 operated like electricity on the public mind—already prepared for the bursting of the volcano.

By the 5th of May a company of 100 men, including officers, was enlisted in the town of Farmington in Connecticut to serve seven months, and in ten days were on their march towards Boston, which was then compleatly shut up: this company was composed principally of the sons of the yeomen or farmers, who furnished their own arms and clothing—and was commanded by Capt.—afterwards Colonel—Noadiah Hooker. It was not necessary to urge anyone to enlist, it was only to receive the most promising of those who offered themselves to compleat the number. I hold this up as a sample of what was transacted in almost every town in Connecticut, and probably through New England to shew the spirit which pervaded the mass of the people. And I presume that female influence in society was never more evident than at this time: they appeared to vie with their brethren in sustaining the idea of a fixed and determined resistance to the tyranical



measures carrying on against us. this spirit was continued by them in a good degree thro' the war. The few days previous to their marching were occupied in preparing clothing and necessaries for the service. a few of the men had served in the last french war and therefore could instruct their comrades how to conduct and manage in their new vocation. Previous to their marching a day was set apart for religious worship, the minister prepared and delivered an appropriate discourse to the company at the church. this—like all other public addresses of the day—was calculated to add a stimulus to those engaged for the service before them; to admonish and urge them, while persevering with firmness and fortitude, to put their trust in God for succes in so righteous a cause.

The last week in May the company began their march, and I accompanied them as a volunteer with the same enthusiastic feelings of almost every one—a small proportion of *tories* excepted—and amidst the benedictions of friends and connexions.

The parting scene, the mutual adieus of connexions was very interesting and impressive: the men had a fixed expectation and a strong desire of meeting the british in real combat. those feelings absorbed the more *tender* ones.

two waggons were furnished to convey the baggage and the provision, which was abundantly furnished by families gratuitously.

1775

The first day carried them to East Hartford—fifteen miles, where they were received and lodged in the most friendly manner in the houses with the families, all striving how to best accomodate them.

They marched about 30 miles a day through Bolton, North Coventry, Pomfret, Ashford, Thomson, Douglas & Dedham, colours flying and music playing as they passed through a town, much apparently—to the gratification of the assembled spectators; this being the first regular company passing to the scene of action on that road.

Arriving at Jamaica plains, a parish in Roxbury—they fell under the command of Genl. Ward of Massachusetts who was stationed there to command and recive the troops as they should arrive.

This company formed part of the regiment commanded by Colonel Wyllys, of Hartford—Connecticut, and with the other companies on their arrival, were cantoned in the houses and out buildings of the inhabitants who treated them with the greatest kindness & attention.

The orders were for the troops to parade at day break and march to their alarm post, the summit of the hill in the center of Roxbury—looking towards Boston neck, there remain till about sun an hour high, awaiting the movement of the enemy—should he make any; then return to quarters for breakfast. This continued untill the morning of the 17th of June when our repairing to our alarm post was hastened by information that the enemy was ad-

June

vancing across the neck towards us. on reaching our post we saw them retreating back on the neck.

They then opened a severe fire upon us from their batteries on the neck which killing but one of our men—we moved back beyond the range of their shot: we being now informed of the real object and designs of the enemy, and placed on an elevated situation could plainly see all their movements in crossing the ferry over to Charlestown; advancing through the town to Breed's hill—since called Bunker hill.

Our troops having the previous night commenced a slight breastwork there, the enemies object was to dislodge them—which occasioned the severe battle which ensued.

This battle being an important point or link in the great chain of events which accompanied our arduous struggle for independence—deserves particular notice.

It appeared that some time was occupied in crossing the ferry—an arm of the sea which seperates Boston from Charlestown—and forming into order for battle: I saw their advance up the hill by the cloud of dust which was raised.

In this interim—if it may be so called—the enemy kept up a constant cannonnade on our troops from a battery on Copps hill at the North end of the town of Boston (& Charlestown which is situated on a peninsula) on one side of which lay a british ship of the line—the Somerset of 64 guns & a ten-

1775

Copp's  
Hill

der—and on the other, or Mystic side was placed several Gundaloes—from both of those a constant cannonnade was kept up across the neck to prevent our troops from reinforcing the party on the hill. You may judge in some measure of the intensity of our feelings while viewing the passing scene in all its complicated points concentrating in the great conflict then commenced: tho' I am sure no one but a soldier can fully realize those feelings—to view our brethren in arms momentarily awaiting the attack—which I can assure you from experience is a moment interesting in the extreme—to see and hear the roar of the musketry which commenced about ten o'clock: to see the enemy fall back twice before the deadly fire of our musketry—and then the dispersion of our troops and the shout of the victors; the beautiful town of Charlestown in flames—which general Burgoyne's letter that I subjoin, as giving a lively picture—and a counterpart of the scene on the British side—will add to the impression, if not already arrived to a climax.

EXTRACT OF A PRIVATE LETTER  
WRITTEN BY GENL.  
BURGOYNE.

(Copied from a London newspaper.)

“Boston is a peninsula joined to the main land only by a narrow neck which in the first of the troubles Gage fortified: Arms of the sea and har-

bor surround the rest. On the other side of one of these arms to the north is Charlestown, or rather was, for it is now rubbish, and over it a hill, which is also like Boston, a peninsula. to the South of the town is a still larger slope of ground containing three hills, joining also to the main by a tongue of land and called Dorchester neck. the heights above described both to North and South, in the soldier's phrase, command the town, *i. e.*, give an opportunity of erecting batteries above any you can make against them, and consequently they are much more advantageous. it was absolutely necessary we should make ourselves masters of these heights, and we prepared to begin with Dorchester, because from particular situations of batteries (too long to describe and unintelligible to you if I did) it could evidently be effected without any considerable loss: everything was accordingly disposed. My two colleagues and myself\* (who by the bye have never differed in an iota of military sentiment) had in concert with Genl. Gage formed the plan.

Howe was to land from transports on one point, Clinton in the center, and I was to cannonade from the causeway on the neck—each to take advantage from circumstances. the operation must have been very easy. This was to have been executed on the 18th.

On the 17th (of June) at dawn of day we found the enemy had pushed entrenchments with great dil-

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\* Howe, Clinton and Burgoyne.

igence during the night on the heights of Charlestown, and were there in force, and we evidently saw that every hour gave them new strength. it therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side. Howe as second in command was detached with about 2000 men and landed on the outer side of the peninsula covered by shipping and without any opposition, was to advance from thence up the hill which was over Charlestown, where the strength of the enemy lay.

1775 He had under him Brigadier-general Pigot. Clinton and myself took our stand, for we had not a fixed post—in a large battery directly opposite Charlestown and commanding it, and also reaching to the heights above it and thereby facilitating Howe's attack.

Howe's disposition was extremely soldierlike, and in my opinion it was perfect. As his first line advanced up the hill they met with a thousand impediments from strong fences, and were much exposed. They were also exceedingly hurt by musketry from the town of Charlestown though Clinton & I did not perceive it till Howe sent us word by a boat and desired us to set fire to the town. No sooner said than done: we threw in a parcel of shells and the whole was in flames. Our battery afterwards kept up an incessant fire upon the height, it was seconded by a number of frigates and floating batteries and one ship of the line. And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be con-

cieved. If we looked to the right—Howes Corps ascending the hill in the face of entrenchments and in very disadvantageous grounds warmly engaged; to the left the enemy pouring in fresh troops by thousands over the land: and in the arm of the sea our ships and floating batteries cannonading them; straight before us a large and noble town in one great blaze: the church steeples being all of timber were great pyramids of fire above the rest; behind us the church steeples & heights and our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of our army which was disengaged; the hills all around the country crowded with spectators of the enemy all in anxious suspense.

The roar of cannon, mortars and muskets, the crash of churches ships on the stocks and whole streets falling together in ruin, to fill the ear: the storm of the redout with the objects above described to fill the eye; and the reflection that perhaps a defeat was a final loss of the British empire in America to fill the mind, made the whole a picture and complication of horror and importance beyond any it came to my lot to be witness of. I much lament Tom's absence. it was a sight for a young soldier that the longest service may never furnish again: and had he been with me he would likewise have been out of danger, for except two cannon balls that went a hundred yards over our heads, we were not in any part of the direction of the enemy's fire. a moment of the day was critical. Howes

1775

left was staggered: two battalions had been sent to reinforce them on the beach seeming in embarrassment which way to march. Clinton then next for business took the part without waiting for orders—to throw himself into a boat to head them: This reinforcement moved to our left and poured their fire down through our entrenchment, which was the point on which the battle turned. he arrived in time to be of service: the day ended with glory, and the success was most important, considering the ascendancy it gives the regular troops, but the loss was uncommon in officers for the number engaged. Howe was untouched, but his aidecamp captain Sherwin was killed. Jordan a friend of Howe's who came to see the campain, a shipmate of our ours on board the Cerberus and who acted as aidecamp, badly wounded. Pigot was unhurt but behaved like a hero. You will see the list of the loss. poor Col. Abecrombie who commanded the grenadiers died yesterday of his wounds. Capt. Addison our poor old friend who arrived but the day before, and was to have dined with me on the day of the action was also killed; his son was upon the field at the time. Major Mitchell is slightly wounded. Young Chetwynde's wound is also slight. Lord Percy's regiment has suffered the most, and behaved the best—his Lordship was not in the action. Lord Rawdon behaved to a charm, his name is established for life.

Col: Grosvenor who performed a very active part on that day being in the heat of the battle, nar-



rated to me many striking incidents which occurred during the battle—Major Pitcairn of the British marines—mounting the top of the ditch—our works having arrived to no greater point than that—exclaimed “disperse ye rebels” when one of our men instantly shot him through and he fell in the ditch. A soldier just by the side of general Putnam had levelled his gun at Major Small—aide de Camp to Genl. Howe—on which Putnam struck it aside with his sword exclaiming “don’t kill that man I love him as I do my brother.” Col. Trumbull told me that Genl. Small repeated this to him in London with tears in his eyes on enquiring if Putnam was still living. I little thought on that day of the important results which the battle of Bunkers hill was to produce in this our beloved country, thro’ Europe and the whole civilized world both in a political and a religious view.

The british official return stated their loss at 1052 killed and wounded: our loss as published was between 300 & 400. during the whole day & the ensuing night the enemy kept up a constant discharge on us with cannon & mortars. the next day we heard a continued tolling of bells in the town from morning till night, while they were burying their dead who fell in the battle.

Three days after this we received our tents and pitched them on *Heath’s hill*—a part of Genl. Heaths estate—in the western part of the town of

Roxbury, in full view of the town of Boston & the vicinity.

Usual camp duty now became constant: General Washington arrived a few weeks after the battle and established his headquarters at Cambridge where the greatest body of our troops lay.

1775 I occasionally saw Genl. Lee—accompanied by his two hounds. On becoming known to Genl. Spencer—I accepted his invitation to reside in his family as private secretary. I here found Dr. Cogswell as one of the family and regimental surgeon.

Here I first became acquainted with Captain—since Genl. Henry Champion and Dr. John Watrous, and my intimacy with them has continued thro' life so far.

Many gentlemen from the interior of Massachusetts and Connecticut visited our encampment.

I found Doct. Gordon the officiating minister of Roxbury a well informed & talented man: he wrote a concise history of the pending war. Almost every night the enemy would open a cannonnade from their batteries on the neck. the balls were 24 pounders and almost every house in the center of the town was pierced by them, or shatter'd by the bursting of their bombs.

Our advanced guards occupied some buildings near the gorge of the neck. The enemy knowing this directed their shott towards them. One night their fire was uncomonly severe towards one of those guard houses, and being informed that 3

or 4 of the guards were killed I went in the morning to view the place, the bodies were removed, and where one man was dashed to pieces by a cannon ball I saw pieces of his entrails and the blood sticking against the adjoining wall where he was standing.

We had a small horn work raised of earth for the defence of our sentinels: when the enemy was firing briskly a soldier peeped over the parapet to look out, when a ball just pierced the edge of the parapet and entered his body at the upper part of the breast bone, its force being nearly spent it remained in his body; I had just arrived when two men took hold of his feet and raised him up, when the ball dropped out at the place where it entered: it appeared to be a twelve pounder.

1775

The almost constant fire of the enemy produced one effect, probably not contemplated by them; it hard'ned our soldiers rapidly to stand and bear fire; when their balls had fallen and become still the men would strive to be the first to pick them up to carry to a sutlor to exchange for spirits.

At one time they came near paying dear for their temerity; a bomb had fallen into a barn, and in the day time it could not be distinguished from a cannon ball in its passage, a number were rushing in together to seize it when it burst and shattered the barn very much without injuring any one. The barn was emptied of hay & used as a barrack.

July

Our guards now performed duty with the utmost vigilance, the patrols were alert, watching if the enemy was making any movement. The capture of two of the enemys vessells in Boston bay by our cruisars—loaded with warlike stores of almost every kind—proved a very seasonable supply to us as we were very deficient in those articles.

1775  
July

We were highly rejoiced on the capturing of two of the british vessels in Boston Bay—loaded with all kinds of warlike stores—by Capt. Manly and Capt. Mugford—while we mourned the loss of Capt. Mugford: who on boarding the enemy had one or both of his hands cut off and he fell back and was lost.

The arrival of Capt. M. afterwards Genl. Morgan with his company of Virginia riflemen in their hunting shirts was rather a novel sight to us. about the middle of August we had erected somewhat of a regular fort on the summit of the hill in Roxbury in which was placed three 24 pound cannon—which being all discharged at once carried their balls quite into the works of the enemy on the neck, and one at least must have taken effect as I saw the next March where a ball had entered their guard house breaking & carrying away a beam—and I saw the marks of blood around the place. This was the first instance of our shewing the enemy that we had heavy cannon, and it gratified our men to see it.

The season passed on from this time without anything more than the ordinary occurrencies of a siege.

One day the enemy sent out two floating batteries upon the bay and advancing in full view towards our encampment opened their fire, but their balls all fell short of us, much to our amusement.

1775

As the autumn advanced a considerable number of our men fell sick of dysentery that scourge of camps and some of fevers, but there was not a very great number of deaths, tho' some fine youth fell victims to those diseases.

As the term our soldiers enlisted for was about expiring Genl. W. strongly pressed them to remain a month or two longer—untill the militia which were order'd in—should arrive: to this they reluctantly submitted.

1775  
Nov.  
& Dec.

I will therefore take a stride to the closing of the campaign, as it might be called.—the beginning of December the troops abandoned their tents and occupied the various buildings, which the inhabitants had left vacant—as temporary barracks—untill February when a line of slight barracks was completed as near the gorge of the neck as prudence dictated, just in the front of which stretched a narrow marsh, and the barracks placed on the rising bank just East of it, and partially covered by the bank: the enemy knowing our position would almost every night open their fire from their batteries on the neck, with shott and shells, which generally passing over us—fell in the marsh, where the bombs bursting gave us much amusement, which however was sometimes interrupted by a ball passing through a

barrack. One night a ball passed thro' my apartment in the barrack a few feet over me as I lay in my berth. but such things having become so common we thought little of them.

I was now serving under my first commission as a subaltern—with all the ardor which I suppose is usually felt by ardent youth in similar circumstances.

Our advanced guard were posted quite on the neck: no buildings were then standing there, and no fires could be kept up, as it would draw the enemies fire towards them, the winter being severe it was rather uncomfortable to pass a whole winter night there: but without being accused of boasting—I think I may say that patriotism had its share in stimulating us. Our only way to avoid freezing was to be constantly walking, running, or jumping. Our immediate duty was to watch the movements of the enemy at the neck, supposing they might make a *Sortie* from there: but we knew that any general movement would be by attacking at some point where we were not so well prepared to receive and oppose them. The planning we knew must be by our commanding officer of the army.

1776

The eventfull year '76 now opened, and information being transmitted to us by our friends in England that very active measures were taking there for our subjugation; that the army and navy employed against us was to be greatly reinforced, that 12,000 german troops were hired to be employed against

us: that in parliament—among other strong measures—a resolution was passed “That parliament had a right to bind the colonies in all cases whatsoever.” such information—instead of disheart’ning us—served to nerve us for the struggle to maintain our charter rights or “die in the last ditch.”

The british government appeared very solicitous in selecting their ablest and most experienced generals to command their armies in subjugating the colonists.

1775-6

Howe—whose brother Gen. Robert Howe—had fallen in a small action near Ticonderogue—in the french war, in 1758-9—possess’d the affections of the nation—much increased by those recollections.

Clinton and Burgoyne had distinguished themselves, and acquired laurels by their services in Portugal. Richard—Viscount Howe was Admiral of the fleet, which displayed a very formidable appearance when assembled together in the outer harbor of New York. The number composing the fleet and land army was estimated at about 56,000—of which about 35,000 composed the land army.

I recollect the brilliant appearance they made in forming their line in our front on Haerlem plain on the morning of the 16th of September 1776—we being on the heights near two miles distant from them. they were formed from the North river and stretched across towards the East river, or Long Island sound, and—as I afterwards learned—consisted of about 24,000, besides artillery.

It was heart cheering to witness the ardency ardor [sic] of our men in prospect of the expected ensuing battle.

**Feby.** In February things became more active with us, a considerable number of militia arrived from the country, parties were sent into the swamps to prepare materials and to make up facines. On the

**Mch.** night of the 1st & 2d of March our batteries both on the Roxbury & Cambridge side commenced & continued discharge of shott & shells on the town, some of the balls fell in the town, for after we had entered it—a gentleman, in whose house Genl. Pigot had lodged, shewed me the hole where one of the cannon balls had pass'd a little way over his bed which he was sleeping in. a fourteen inch mortar which among other military stores was captured in the ord'nance brig by Capt. Manly—was burst in firing from our lines on the enemy in Boston. we had set a high value on it—call'd it *the Congress*. it wounded one or two, in bursting, but killed none.

**Mch. 3d  
1776**

during our fire—on the night of the 4th of March a detachment from our army moved on to the hights of Dorchester point—this is also a peninsula joined to the main by a narrow neck; on this was placed—on the side looking toward the enemy—a line of bundles of pressed hay to defend our troops from the enemies fire while passing it.

This detachment proceeded to the top of the hill and immediately commenced making a redoubt, entrenching tools & facines being carried there &



ready: the next morning at 8 oClock a relief was sent on—of which I was one—in passing the neck the tide having overflowed it I found my boots filled with mud and water, but we had no dry clothes with us, nor any time or opportunity for changing.

Of this event I think some remarks more than a mere passing notice are proper. In perusing the various histories of the revolutionary war I have ever thought that this [sic] was passed over in too summary and slight a manner. readers of history generally seem to be looking for descriptions of bloody battles and counting the number of killed and wounded: but the real philanthropist must experience a higher gratification in contemplating a series of firm, prudent and judicious arrangements tending to effect a great object without one of those sanguinary conflicts which so strongly interest the feelings of most readers. the facts and results now under consideration afford a striking exhibition of that foresight and arrangement alluded to. Having carried you to the top of the hill on Dorchester point I found a redoubt considerably advanced in a position well calculated for defence. Outside the parapet were casks filled with sand and so placed that a slight touch would set them rolling down the hill which was very steep on every side, and thus break the ranks of the enemy on their advance. On the afternoon of the 6th we very plainly saw the enemy in motion in the town: dense columns of troops moving down the main street to the wharf and em-

barking on board the ships which moved down the harbor and formed in a kind of crescent at considerable distance from the hill.

1776 most of the next day was spent by those ships in beating up nearer to our post—the wind being a head: we continued our work incessantly in completing the redoubt, being urged to exertion by a full expectation of being attacked by the enemy's troops we had seen embark on board the ships; we had no time to spare for reflecting on and counting the cost of the issue of the expected battle. we did not work literally with arms in our hands, but they were lying by our sides, and it is presumed that every one ardently wished for the opportunity of shewing the enemy what freemen would do when contending for their just rights. No one needed stimulating to the performance of his duty as every one possessed the inclination.

As night approached an uncommonly severe South East rain storm came on with very high wind, and in that elevated situation, surrounded by the sea, it was felt in all its force, but the severity of the storm did not stop our work, which we pushed forward with the utmost alacrity. The next morning presented to the view of the enemy a regular fort, far advanced to completion—and to our view their ships below apparently in a very disorderly condition: the day passed without any thing worthy of particular notice. You may form some faint idea of our situation; thoroughly drenched by the copious

rain, exhausted by severe exertion and want of refreshment, & of course without cover.

At evening we broke ground on Nook, or Nuke point, a small hill very near the water oposite South Boston. The enemy could plainly hear the sound of our entrenching tools, on which they opened and continued an incessant cannonade with a general direction towards this point. I counted the number of discharges up to about 1500 during half an hour and then left off counting; this firing was continued through the night, and the morning shewed a novel sight; the ground all around where the work had been carrying on appeared as if it had been plowed irregularly, and a very great number of cannon balls were picked up: but strange as it may seem there was but a surgeons mate and two privates killed during the night.

By the enemies inactivity for several succeeding days we concluded they had abandoned the idea of attacking our fort.

This comparative inactivity continued until the 17th of the month when the whole of our troops were paraded and commenced our march into Boston, it being announced that the enemy were evacuating it. I had the gratification of being selected to carry the American flag at the head of the column which entered from the Roxbury side.

When arrived in the town numerous incidents crouded upon our view: I can particurize [sic] but few of them. The burst of joy shown in the counte-

1776  
Mch. 17

nances of our friends so long shut up and domineered over by an insulting enemy: the meeting and mutual salutations of parents and children and other members of families having been separated and continued separated by the sudden shutting up of the town after the battle of Lexington: the general delapidation of the houses: several churches emptied of all the inside work—and turned into riding schools for their cavalry: all the places which had been previously used for public resort torn to pieces: and at the stores around the wharves groceries—particularly salt—were in a state of destruction. As I had no particular command I rambled at my pleasure—and being the carrier of the flag attracted some attention, was almost constantly pressed with invitations to “call in and take a glass of wine with me”

I saw the last boat of the enemy put off and proceed to the shiping.

It was generally understood that an informal—not an official—agreement was made between the british commander and the select men of the town, that in case the troops were not in any way interrupted at their departure—the town should not be burnt.

## March

The next day I went and viewed Bunker hill, and the works appeared as if they had been dictated by *Vauban*, at least the plan: The walls were of earth but regularly constructed. a variety of associations of ideas crowded on my mind on recalling the scenes of the 17th of June of the last year, too

numerous and impressive to dwell upon, as not coming within my present plan.

The next day I went and viewed the works on Castle island. the enemy had endeavored to blow up every usefull part of the works; in many instances they had succeeded, in others but partially. they had broken off the trunnions of all the heavy cannon, and in addition had spiked them up. In general every thing was mutilated and rendered useless.

I was invited to take lodgings at the house of a respectable widow lady Mrs. C. and treated with the utmost hospitality during the few days of my stay in the town.

On the 25th of the month the troops began their march by regiments toward New York, and by the 4th of April 21 regiments had moved on, ours being one of the number: five regiments being left to garrison the town. we passed through Dedham and proceeded on the direct rout through Attleboro', Seaconk plain a sterile region—and arriving at Providence enjoyed a pleasing view of that flourishing town at the head of navigation of that river.

We proceeded on thro' a barren part of Rhode Island to the border of Connecticut where the lands, buildings & general improvements appeared much better; on arriving at New London we found we had to wait for vessells to be procured to transport us to New York, we there waited five days, still enjoying the hospitality of the citizens, but the men

1776  
April

drawing their own rations and cooking for themselves. I was hospitably entertained during our stay—at the house of a namesake.

1776  
April

While at New London went on board Commodore Hopkins' ship, he having returned from his expedition to the Island of New Providence, where he siezed a considerable quantity of millitary stores belonging to the British. the powder taken was particularly needed. every thing about the ship appeared in a forlorn condition, having had no repairs since a runing fight she sustained with a british ship on her way home; she having succeeded in capturing the ships tender.

the fifth day I went on board a sloop with about 100 of the regiment—on the commencement of a N. East storm and were driven rapidly on through the sound: in passing thro' Hurlgate, or as it is popularly called Hellgate—our vessell ran on *the middle rock*, an unpleasant and dangerous circumstance indeed. As the vessell ran on at high tide, when it ebbed she slid off without our sustaining any injury. On our arrival at New York we were at first cantoned in the empty houses of the citizens, many of them having left the city to be away from the ensuing scene. we were soon furnished with tents and encamped on an open area of ground called the Jews burying ground, given up for cows to graze on—now entirely covered with elegant buildings, the populous part of the city not only covering it but extending far beyond it. For two or three weeks

we were actively employed in constructing fortifications around the city, on Governors & long islands, besides furnishing guards at the various points. Incidents were not wanting to occupy our attention. Being on guard one day and walking in the front of a large sugar house filled with british prisoners—recruits—captured in a transport ship,—seeing the serjeant relieve the sentry I heard a female voice making a pityfull moan, I stepped to the door and asked her the cause of her mourning. she replied that it was for the loss of all their farming tools, such as axes, hoes &c &c—on board the ship when they were captured. I asked what they were going to do with those articles had they kept them she said that after they had subdued the rebels and taken possession of their lands, they were going to work with them on the land.

1776  
June

I saw with pain the execution of one Thomas Hickey a soldier who had been retained in the family of Genl. Washington. he was convicted of being concerned in a plot either to take the life of the general, or to assist in taking him personally to deliver up to the enemy. July 12th being on guard on the grand battery I saw two of the enemy's ships get under weight and passing our batteries—proceed up the Hudson under full sail, not appearing to receive any injury from the shott from our batteries: those were the Phœnix 44 & the Rose 28 guns. they anchored in Tapan bay: their object appeared to be to reconnauter, to find the position and strength of

July

our works. in our firing on them we had a 32 pounder burst killing three men.

The British commissioners having now arrived with Admiral Lord Howe at their head—to propose terms of accomodation with the colonies—being on guard at the battery I saw a barge approach from the Admirals ship, and meeting our barge—delivered a package, and returned. this being the first step taken by the commissioners, it attracted much notice, and the terms proposed and offered were soon published: they were a submission on our part: on their part offers of pardon for the past, and a pacific arrangement to take place between the british government and the colonies: this being published in history I need not go into detail of it.

August  
1776

I used frequently to go on board the fire ships—small vessells preparing with a design to blow up or destroy some of the enemys ships—On the night of the 3d of August five of our row gallies proceeded up the river under the command of Col: Tupper and commenced an attack on one of the enemy' ships: but without much effect.

On the night of the 16th our fire craft succeeded in burning one of the enemy's armed vessells in the North river, in which Serjeant Smith of Connecticut after applying his match to the train—jumbled [sic] overboard to one of our boats, but was so severely burnt that he died of his wounds. The effects of our fire crafts here ended, and operations on a greater scale commenced.



August  
1776

On the landing of the enemy on long Island on the 22d of the month—and the *general* succeeding transactions consequent on it—at this important crisis—the historian has been copious and undoubtedly correct so far as he goes: yet a sufficient number of *incidents* remain to occupy the attention.

Probably no period of our revolutionary struggle was more critical than this. It is well known that at none had the enemy concentrated a more numerous or better appointed army than at this: their foreign mercenary—as well as their own regular troops having all arrived and landed, and began their operations. The day after their landing our regiment—among others was ordered on, and myself—being in full health—of course marched with it and remained there on active duty untill the memorable retreat on the night of the 29th. The part falling to me to act was one of the detachment of 2400 posted at the woody heights of Flatbush, and overlooked the plain where the enemy lay. the detachment was divided so as to occupy the only three passes through which the enemy might advance, if not secured. Their advanced guards were posted so near us that their shott reached us from their german rifles. they also annoyed us with their grape shott from their field pieces. The soldier well knows that when the smoke from the muzzle, and the vent of the gun is seen in the same line with himself—the piece points directly towards him. being in such a situation at this time I remember I stepped behind a tree to avoid

1776

the shott discharged from one of their pieces. when the grape had passed I perceived that one of them had struck the tree behind which I stood.

Those being the only passes through which the enemy could approach directly, and as our force so posted was viewed sufficient to defend them—both bodies remained in that position till the night of the 26th. I well remember that all the former part of the night their front guards appeared very active, frequently passing and repassing us and their fires doubtless to attract our attention from their principal movement, which was during the night—moving round and turning our left flank, approaching by the Bedford road: the remainder of the night passed as usual; not indeed very quietly—untill just at day break when we were attacked in front by the enemy which we soon repulsed, and almost at the same time an attack commenced on our rear: on which a retreat was ordered, and a scene most disastrous ensued. Those from the three posts retreating seperately were met by the enemy in solid body and driven back alternately on either body of the enemy. during the night another strong body of the enemy had landed, which moved and joined the first assailants thus heming in our troops—except about 700 or 800 of the 2400—of which number I was one—who made our way thro' the enemy's fire—to our entrenchment at Brooklyn.

As I at seting out, informed you my narration should be of *Incidents* not mentioned by the general

1776  
August

historian, and altho' he has been somewhat particular in describing the several points of attack by the enemy and the general results, yet the scenes of this memorable day were so complicated that enough remains to be told to occupy an inquisitive mind.

Huntington's—a Connecticut regiment, falling under the command of Genl. Lord Stirling—he being general officer of the day—this body of about 1000 being bro't together sustained the attack of the enemy with firmness, drove them back and made a number of prisoners; the enemy being reinforced at that point our troops surrendered. We being called rebels the most barbarous treatment was inflicted by the enemy.

Capt. Jewet of Huntington's regiment, an officer much respected and beloved, of elegant and commanding appearance and unquestionable bravery—was murdered in cold blood—having surrendered his sword when demanded—the officer on receiving it instantly plunged it through his body. Our wounded were principally put to death by the bayonet. This I did not see—as you will notice by my remarks, but it was told to me by an officer of that regiment who was present and witnessed the transaction, and on whose veracity I could depend.

We were indeed hardly pressed by the enemy: one of my soldiers near me fired on one of those murderers and brought him down, leaving his own black gun—he siezed the brighter one of his fallen enemy, the bayonet of which I perceived was bloody

1776 more than half its length. Our loss on that day you will see stated in history. No mention being made of the wounded, it is presumed they were dispatched by the bayonet.

No one unused to such scenes can form any just idea of the confusion and vicissitudes of that day. in the flight of those who broke through the enemy, numbers plunged themselves into a millpond and other marshy places which intercepted them, rather than to fall into the hands of the enemy, and were principally either drowned or shott.

Those of this advanced body who escaped—joined their regiments, and the main body formed on the swell of ground in Brooklyn behind the slight entrenchment which had been hastily thrown up and rails cut in two and stuck in the earth on the top, as at Bunker hill in that battle.

Between nine and ten in the morning the enemy appeared in force in our front, and advanced to about 300 yards distance from us, and an attack was momentarily expected; indeed a firing had commenced on our right. at this interesting crisis General Washington having arrived rode slowly past our rear, animating and encouraging our troops. When passing the place where I was posted he said in an animating tone—which I distinctly recollect “Remember what you are contending for.” The bulk of his speech at this memorable crises, which is preserved—I did not hear, he being too far on my right to be heard. The enemy instead of commencing the attack moved by

1776  
Augt.

their right—round the swell of a small hill and were soon out of sight. I could never conceive of any good reason for general Howe's retrograde movement as it appeared by his official letters that he commanded in person through the day, except his recollection of the Bunker hill battle: our troops being similarly situated to receive him, and his known tenderness of the lives of his men, added to a confidence of his ultimate success.

Things lay apparently still for the two succeeding days: on the 29th just at dusk we commenced our memorable retreat across from our position at Brooklyn, to New York, and an interesting and busy scene it was: but from the regularity and order which was preserved—no untoward accident occurred. A dense fog arose early in the evening and continued all night, and till late in the morning: and it appeared afterwards that the enemy knew nothing of our movement untill it was completed.

The enemy were now in full possession of our works on Long Island, and Governors Island: and I noticed from day to day the removal of our military stores from the city: and it soon became evident to a common observer that things were in a train for evacuating the city.

Sept.

On the evening of the 14th the greatest part of the troops marched out and took post on the bank of the East river just below Kip's bay—about three miles from the city. Myself being one of the body—we were posted behind a slight entrenchment re-

1776  
Sept. 15

cently thrown up, opposite and near which lay five ships. on the 15th as the morning advanced we saw the road opposite to us—the sound not being two miles wide at that place—filled with a dense column of the enemy moving down to the waters edge and embarking on board flat boats. knowing their object we prepared to receive them.

As soon as they began their approach—the ships opened a tremendous fire upon us. the column of boats on leaving the shore proceeded directly towards us; when arriving about half way across the sound they turned their course and proceeded to Kip's bay—about three quarters of a mile above us—where they landed: their landing there being unexpected they met with no opposition: the firing from the ships being continued—our slight embankment being hastily thrown up—was fast tumbling away by the enemy's shott. Our troops left their post in disorder, and before being rallied the enemy had completely formed in the road on the adjoining hill. our regiment with some others being ordered on the Bloomingdale road and to march towards Kingsbridge. the weather being unusually hot for the season, the men suffered severely from thirst, not finding any water untill we arrived at a spring near Kingsbridge. On passing by the body of the enemy on the hill road they opened a sharp fire on us with their field pieces, but they being on higher ground than we, their shott—as usual in such cases—passed over us.

On arriving at the spring I found a great number around it contending for the water. I was shewn a man lying dead who I was told had died from drinking the water; he proved to be a captain Crosby of the militia from Connecticut. I was shewn by the side of a fence, a soldier who they said was dying, or was dead, from drinking the water: I had him raised up and thoroughly rubbed, his mouth pried open—his jaws being set—and some brandy poured down his throat—I left him recovering, with my heart glowing with the reflection that I had been the instrument of saving a fellow man from immediate death.

1776  
Sept. 15

We were employed principally thro' the succeeding night in throwing up a slight entrenchment on the brow of the hill called Haerlem heights, in full expectation of being attacked by the enemy in the morning.

When the morning arose—at about 9 or 10 o'clock I saw the enemy in the plain below us, at the distance of about three quarters of a mile—forming in a line: by accounts afterwards their number was said to exceed twenty thousand—they indeed made a brilliant display: by the reflection of the suns rays on their arms in wheeling.

Sept. 16

The sharp action which took place that day under the command of Col. Knowlton is so circumstantially detailed by the historian I need not repeat it. here I first saw Lt. James Munro, he had volunteer'd to go to the attack on our right under command of

Sept. 16

**Sept. 17** Col. Knolton. The next day I had a mournful duty assigned to me—the command of a covering party over the fatigue men who buried the dead who fell in the action the previous day. I placed myself and party on a small eminence so as to see the men at their work, and to discover the enemy should they approach to interrupt them. there was 32 or 33 bodies found on the field, and were drawn to a large hole which was prepared for the purpose and buried together. One body of a fine limbed young man had been brought into the camp with a bullet hole in the breast near the region of the heart. I was struck with reflections on the force of habit: to see those fatigue men performing this duty with as little concern as they would have performed any common duty. Two days after this we marched across King's bridge and took post on the high ground a little beyond it.

**Oct.** After our army had passed Kingsbridge Eastward and lying a short time, a detachment of about 250 was ordered to proceed in the night—down Haerlem creek and endeavor to capture an out post of the enemy on Monterures Island, near the mouth of the creek: the crew of the front boat landed promptly at the signal, when the sentinels fell back, but the other boats unaccountably laged behind—when the enemy rallied and fell upon the party which had landed and very much cut them up: a few got on board their boat and effected their retreat: a number of



our men remained prisoners: a Major Henly was killed—thus the enterprise wholly failed.

Two of the enemys ships of a 44 & a 28 guns were lying in the straight just south of Hurlgate—a detachment of artillery with two pieces of cannon was ordered to go in the night & post themselves abreast of them, they lying within the range of cannon shot from our shore: the artillery opened their fire on them as soon as light, which was briskly returned by the ships. I had the command of a covering party of 35 men taking our station on a knop a little above the artillery so as to watch the motion of the enemy in case of landing.

the enemies fire being brisk we lay flat on the ground—their cannon balls passing over us. As we lay at the foot of a large rock one of their balls struck the rock above our heads & fell down just by me & within my reach. when it became still I felt on it with my hand & found it very hot, it was a 24 pounder. The two ships fell down with the tide and hauled round behind Blackwell's island out of the reach of our shott. we did not know the damage we did to them. As they lowered down a boat & filled it with men one of our shot capcized the boat & the men were thrown into the water. We could plainly discover that our shot told against the sides of the ships, but we did not learn the effect. Capt. Crane—afterwards Col: Crane received a slight wound in his heel from one of their shot, which was all the injury we sustained.

✓ 1776  
Oct.

In hasty retreat from N. York our tents were left behind and for some time we lay without cover.

I was ordered with a small detachment—to take charge of sixteen hessian soldiers who had been captured a few days before—and crossing the North river into Jersey proceeded down to fort Lee, delivering the prisoners to the care of Genl. Green. Those were well built young men, very athletic. As they were the first Hessians we had taken—as we passed along the road they attracted much attention, and procured for me many civilities & some substantial refreshment.

On my return I found the battle of White plains had taken place and much to my regret I could act no part in it.

1776  
Oct.

As the enemy landed at Frogs neck, up the sound from us, we in a few days were ordered to cross the river into Jersey. Here for a few weeks few incidents occurred under my notice worthy of remark. Our regiment was left to cover the country, and repel any small foraging party of the enemy; the main body of our troops moving southward towards Philadelphia.

Nov.  
'76

As the enemy had landed above us and were in full force—our army retreated across King bridge—a large number of craft of different sizes being collected in Haerlem creek—were set on fire & burnt to prevent their falling into the enemies hands. the sight of this occasioned a very disagreeable sensation in my mind: but the loss of fort Washington—

a few days after—with its garrison of 2700 men filled us with deep melancholly—for the time. still our fortitude and fixed determination was unabated.

As we passed fort Lee—on the West bank of Hudson river the fort was evacuated & the garrison joined us—marching into New Jersey.

I should be glad to narrate to you from personal observation—the circumstances attending the capture of the enemy at Trenton and Princeton: but those transactions, being so important are circumstantially detailed in history as are others—the most important battles: and the regiment to which I belonged was, among others—left near New York to watch the movements of the enemy in that quarter. Common prudence dictated to have a strong body of troops kept up in & near the Highlands at all times to be ready to repel the incursions of the enemy either by land—from New York, or by the Hudson river.

A very prominent position which our army occupied was Peekskill—a village 40m. above New York, and properly at the commencement of *the Highlands*: it seemed formed by nature as a defensible place; a chain of hills ran from the S. West or North river side—North Eastward several miles with a mural like front to the Southward; might be easily defended from an attack in front, and with proper precaution the flanks might be secured from being turned.

This post was frequently occupied by our army in its various marches and countermarches after the year 1776, tho' mentioned but cursorily by the historian, as no important battle was ever fought near it. Keeping this in view as a rallying point whenever occasion occurred—was among the evidences of Genl. Washington's sagacious and solid judgment in carrying on his Fabian system in the prosecution of the war, which from almost the necessity of our case forbid our rashly pushing onward to battle. As I have elsewhere remarked—a respectable body of our army were necessarily kept in that vicinity, notwithstanding their strong desire to act in a more extended and active sphere.

A Soldier has, of course, to remain at the post where he is ordered to, and it was the order of the commander in chief for the regiment to which I belonged, to be much employed in the country between New York & the highlands; which prevented my being present at the great battles of Brandywine, Germantown, & Monmouth, as well as at the Southward. but from those who were present at those several points I used to obtain on their return and joining us a particular narrative of the transactions.

**Decr.**

The surprise and capture of the 800 or 900 Hessians at Trenton, and the successful battle at Princeton you will see recorded in history.

In the bay below N. York the British fleet made a great display; the no. of the vessels of all sizes

amounted to about 300; and as they spread their sails to dry—after a rain—they covered a large extent of the water.

The admirals ship—the Eagle of 64 guns appearing in full sight, known by her flag, and Capt. Bushnell—of the sappers & miners—having prepared his submarine engine—it was sent one night, with a magazine of powder attached to it—under the command of a serjeant and 12 men—the party proceeded to the ship and the engine was let down under the ship—having a pointed rod at top designed to be stuck into the ships bottom; but this point not taking effect—the tide which was strong—wafted the engine away from under the ship & the enterprise failed. The serjeant who had the command gave me a particular narrative of the proceeding, and said that he was of opinion that the projecting point struck the head of a bolt which prevented its success: but I judged it as probable that the point was prevented from penetrating the ship by the copper sheathing. A similar engine was used in the Delaware river in 1777—which awakened such alarm among the british shiping.

The period of our mens enlistment having arrived and returning to their homes in Connecticut I went at the same time, and while at Hartford lodged in the same house with a Capt. Peters of Massachusetts, who had the charge of the british and hessian officers captured at Trenton & Princeton, on their way to the interior of Massachusetts: he shewed me

Genl. Washington's instructions, in which was this clause "treat them as gentlemen while they behave as such."

**1776** did not realize it that we had entered on a serious war until the declaration of independence in July 1776. but our spirits were highly elated on that occasion—our determination fixed to persevere.

**1777** I passed the rest of the winter in re-enlisting men and preparing to go into the field at the opening of the spring.

**June** Collected my recruits which being joined by others made a command of about 100—marched to join the army in Jersey.

**1777** Passing through New Haven Genl. Parsons informed me that I had orders to take under my command one Robert Thomson of Newtown and gave me a warrant for his execution in his own town. He having been regularly tried and convicted of having been into New York and came out with enlisting orders to raise men among the disaffected—to join the british army. the order being positive I could do no other than to execute it however unpleasant and mournfull. I forwarded a serjeant with a small party to the place of execution, to make the necessary preparation: and on the 9th of June superintended his execution in presence of a large concourse of spectators, among which were his own family.

After hanging the hour—the body was taken down and a request was made from his family that

the body might be delivered to them, which—of course—was readily granted.

As I have previously informed you, I shall not make many digressions: but I cannot avoid stopping for a few moments to reflect on such a scene, which I am happy to reflect but rarely occurred during our war. but this was a crime which when fully proved, never escaped a similar punishment, and perhaps the peculiar state of our country at the time warranted it.

That night I passed on to Danbury where I took quarters and lodged; the next morning I went round and viewed the marks of the destruction of the town by burning in April previous.

Proceeding directly onward—passed North river into Jersey, joining our regiment and brigade, at the village of Bound brook where the our [sic] army was encamped: the british lying in and around New Brunswick. The enemy being superior to us in numbers duty was very vigilant.

The small action at Scotch plains, or shorthills took place, on which our army made a hasty movement to the summit of the hill, in the rear of our encampment, expecting the enemy to attempt to turn our left flank: finding us formed & prepared to receive them, they made no farther advance, but fell back to Amboy, after burning the village of Springfield, and the adjoining villages.

When the enemy advanced toward any place the women with some of their children would flee to

1777  
June

our rear generally carrying bundles of clothing and some victuals with them. Essex and Middlesex counties suffered severely by their depredations. The enemy gradually withdrew their out posts: and as it afterwards appeared—in order to move with their main body to Philadelphia: but as a strong body remained in New York, which by their shipping might be removed up the several rivers so as to attack or ravage—a part of our army was left in the vicinity to oppose their predatory excursions. Our regiment was part of the force thus left; and most of the summer passed in our moving from one post to another as the movements of the enemy dictated. This kind of service was very harrassing, but afforded but few incidents enough interesting to deserve particular insertion.

1777

We marched three times across Jersey from the North river towards the Delaware, and back.

Scpr.

In September duty became more arduous and pressing. General Burgoyne's army being in motion towards compleating the plan of forming a junction with Genl. Clinton of the british army at Albany,—the enemy's troops in New York frequently presented the appearance of attacking us at some point: probably with a design of preventing reinforcements being sent from us to Genl. Gates who commanded that part of the army opposed to Genl. Burgoyne; this occasioned our frequent removal from one post to another.



Being one of a detachment of 80 men under the command of Major Clift—which was ordered to pass below Peekskill around the country—as a kind of scouting party we found in the morning a party of the enemy had landed from the North river and was advancing into the country.

This was undoubtedly intended by the enemy as a decoy to attract our attention from their main object, the troops being in motion—proceeding to the attack on fort Montgomery. We lay on our arms that night: the next day was a very interesting one to us, knowing the enemy to be near us in force;

We marched to several points where it was judged the enemy might approach. It appeared that they had landed at Verplank's point at evening, and the next morning they crossed over the river & landed near Stoney point, five or six miles below fort Montgomery, the capture of which was the object of their movement: it being necessary for them to possess it both to prevent the fire from it on their ships passing, as well as to remove a massive chain drawn across the river. They advanced towards it in two columns, one on each side of bald, or thunder mountain, their movements being regulated by a flag held by a man on the top of the mountain. this a man told me afterwards—who lived at its foot, and observed all their movements after they came in sight of the fort. Fort Montgomery is situated on the North side, and fort Clinton on the south side of a creek which falls into the river at that

✓  
**Sepr.**  
**1777**

1777

place, the one commanded by Genl. George Clinton and the other by Genl. James Clinton. Fort Clinton, being weak was soon carried by the enemy, but fort Montgomery—commanded by George Clinton made a very stout resistance. General Putnam who commanded the troops in the highlands had ordered a detachment of 400 picked men under the command of Col. Meiggs to move across the river and reinforce the garrison. I being one of this body had an opportunity of seeing the movements; the river being less than half a mile wide at that place: we moved quietly down to the waters edge where flat boats were waiting for us: it being now near sunset, the battle raging between the combatants in the fort and the assailants, and just as we were stepping into the boats the firing ceased and we heard three cheers, which convinced us that the fort had surrendered: this had an instantaneous and very strong effect on the brave men of this party, whose feelings were wrought up to a high pitch in hopes of sharing in the defence of the post. I never knew chagrin and disappointment more strikingly exhibited than on this occasion by the men both in their words and countenances.

We soon rejoined our respective Corps, and lay on our arms through the night. two ships of ours lying just above the fort were set on fire on the surrendry of the fort, and the balls from their guns passed over us in the tops of the trees during the night. The second day after we—with the rest of

General Putnam's command amounting to 5,000 or 6,000—after being joined by some of the militia—commenced our march up the river to assist in capturing the army under Genl. Burgoyne. After we had proceeded to nearly opposite the armies at Saratoga we being on the East side the river—a horseman came galloping along proclaiming that Burgoyne had surrendered with his army. Octr.

In the afternoon the troops were formed into a hollow square and the official news having been received—was read to us by the Adjutant General while on horse back. A note was also read, taken from a spy—from General Sir Henry Clinton who remained in fort Montgomery after the capture—to Genl. Burgoyne informing him of his situation.

The circumstances attending the apprehension of this spy were somewhat singular: he was a young subaltern officer who for a promise of promotion had undertaken to pass through the country with this note. The day he set out he fell in with a small scouting party of ours under the command of a serjeant of Webb's regiment who, with his men, were dressed in British uniform which had been captured in a transport ship; their speech and appearance being the same, and our serjeant managing with the utmost address, proposed to shew themselves to general Clinton who—our serjeant said—was out from the fort and not far off. On seeing the American general Clinton he instantly discovered that he was deceived and swallowed something hastily, which 1777  
Octr.

being noticed, the general ordered the regimental surgeon to administer a strong emetic, which in its powerfull operation occasioned his throwing up a silver ball of the size of a pistol bullet, which on being cleansed and opened was found to contain the note. He was tried the next day, and the proof being full and compleat—was condemned and executed as a spy. Our warm and joyfull feelings were dampened the next day by a severe North East rain storm which continued two or three days, and being without tents, and in an open country where cover could not be obtained we suffered severely, being previously worn down by severe duty and exposure.

After the ending of the storm the militia were discharged, and we commenced our march back toward the highlands. during this time general Vaughn with his detachment was burning and destroying the towns and villages in the vicinity. I saw the old village of Eusopus while burning, and though not very compact, the number of buildings was considerable, and the conflagration brought mournfull ideas to mind. those facts, of the burning—you may see in history. For a few days after we saw the enemy's shipping falling down the river, conveying their troops from fort Montgomery and their other posts.

1777  
Novr.

The troops who had been the captors of Burgoyne's army were moving Southward to join our army near Philadelphia: our regiment with some others were retained at and near the highlands:

the enemy's force in New York being considerable, and the depth of water in the river being sufficient to admit of ships of 700 or 800 tonns as far up as West Point.

We had now an opportunity of seeing the effects of the enemy's ravages and burning at Continental village, Peekskill, and the parts adjacent. As winter sat in we were ordered to the edge of a woods back of Robinson's plantation—to build log hutts for our winter cantonment. this was the first of the kind which our army experienced, tho' resorted to for several winters afterwards.

We had but just made ourselves what we called comfortable when our regiment was ordered to remove on and occupy West Point: government viewing it absolutely necessary to have a strong post established on the river Hudson to serve as a barrier against the enemy's cutting off communication between the Northern and Southern states. This was in the month of February 1778.

I being, at the time, senior officer of the regiment present—of course led on the regiment, crossing the river on the ice, the winter proving severe—the ice had formed very firm. Coming on to the small plain surrounded by high mountains—we found it covered with a growth of yellow pines ten or fifteen feet high: no cottage or improvement on it, the snow waist high—we fell to lopping down the tops of the shrub pines and treading down the snow, spread our blankets and lodged in that condi-

Feb.  
1778

1778  
Feb'y.

tion the first and second nights. had we not been hardned by two years previous severe service we should have thought it difficult to endure this. The pines not being large enough for logs for huts, we were under the necessity of making temporary covers of those scanty materials untill we could draw logs from the edge of the mountain, and procure the luxury of log hutts: this we effected but slowly, the winter continuing severe. In two or three weeks we had erected our huts—and a french engineer by the name of La. Radiere arriving the snow being removed for the site of—the present main fort, the works were traced out, and parties sent out every fair day up the river to cut timber and drag it on to the ice to be ready to float down to the point when the river should be clear of ice. this service was rather fatiguing to the men, but as they had a cabin to lodge in at night, and provision served out with tolerable regularity, they thought themselves comparatively happy, though their work was incessant.

Our line of huts were built just below the summit of the upper bank that they might be partially sheltered from the North West wind. As spring approached we set ourselves to collect the rough stone which we found on the surface of the ground—to use in erecting the fortification.

Two other regiments coming on and Brigr. General Parsons arriving the brigade was formed and a regular routine of duty was established. The

duty of Brigade Major devolving on me—those of us of the staff—had a tolerable sized log hut erected near the centre of the plain—of the point—

La. Radier the engineer was very assiduous in planing and laying out the fort: and as soon as the frost was out we broke ground under his direction. He was a young gentleman educated at a military school in France, and like many other ambitious men of his nation—was attracted by the celebrity our cause had gained by the capture of the army under Burgoyne—to come and act a part with us: but his delicate frame was not equal to sustaining those hardships which were so familiar to the soldiers of the revolutionary army: he caught a severe cold which ended in consumption of which he died about midsummer following. On his leaving the point he was succeeded by the well known Koziusko as engineer. I quartered a considerable time with him in the same hut, and soon discovered in him an elevation of mind which gave fair promise of those high achievements to which he attained. his manners were soft and conciliating, and at the same time elevated. I used to take much pleasure in accompanying him with his theodolite measuring the heights of the surrounding mountains; he appeared to be very ready in the mathematics.

our family now consisted of brigadier General Parsons, Doctor—afterwards—President Dwight Kosciusko and myself with the domestics.

1778  
April

As spring advanced orders and injunctions were communicated to us almost every day to press forward the works. we soon began to erect fort Putnam far up the mountain. on beginning the work we found plenty of rattle snakes, which of course—we dispatched as soon as discovered. We were in daily expectation of a visit from the enemy, but they did not see fit to interrupt us. When the weather had become mild and pleasant in April—I went one day with Dr. Dwight down to view the ruins of fort Montgomery, distant about eight or ten miles. There was a pond just North of the fort where we found the british had thrown in the bodies of their own and our men who fell in the assault of the fort. The water had receded leaving a number of the bodies entirely out of the water, while others lay covered at different depths.

I saw many fine setts of teeth bare and skeleton like, by the destruction of the skin and flesh around. Mournfull and impressive reflexsions arose in my mind. There lie the youth who stood in the hour of their countries trial; they fought and fell to purchase the independance of their country, and there they lye without a burial—I thought too of the vicissitudes to which the soldier is subject. had the fort held out a little longer, I very probably might have lain among them.

Those scenes made so deep an impression on my mind that the lapse of time has not obliterated them, though the fleeting objects of the day pass unheeded.



1778  
May

One day having been to Fishkill I found on my return my temporary hut which I first built had taken fire and was burnt down, with a number of my articles which remained in it, the roof being thatched with straw.

In May General Gates came on and took the command, he had been for several weeks at Robinson's plantation, where I once dined at his table: here I first saw Major Armstrong, his aid-decamp who afterwards wrote the famous *Newburgh letters*, which came so near causing much trouble. Some pieces of fine brass artillery which had been captured with Burgoyne's army were brought here and engraved with the time of their capture.

Baron Steuben having arrived in the country to introduce into our army the prussian discipline, a french officer was sent from him onto the point and 200 men were selected to pass through the exercises, as a model; of which I had the command: and two days in a week we used to go through the exercises, with manoeuvring and firing: this was a pleasant part of duty, and was like sunshine after a severe storm.

The men were employed under the direction of the engineer in compleating the fortifications, which had now arrived to a point somewhat respectable; beside the main work, which took the name of Fort Clinton we had erected several redoubts furnished with cannon, to resist and annoy the enemy should they approach. Thus the time passed untill

1778  
July

the 29th of June, the day after the Monmouth battle. the main army of the enemy being advancing toward New York, we were ordered to march, leave the point and move on towards White plains. we were joined by a body of other troops in the highlands and advanced in two columns under the command of General Gates; arriving at White Plains a regular encampment was formed; the troops amounting to 5,000 or 6,000. Here I first saw Genl. La Fayette, his person and manners were prepossessing. At parading the guards in the morning, and their moving off for their several stations he was generally present, and my official duty causing me also to be present and near him, I had a fair opportunity of noticing his personal appearance. I was glad of the opportunity as he had become a favorite to the army. The news of the treaty between France and the United States having arrived and been published—much raised our spirits. On our part of the war it was policy to act on the defensive, of course watching the movements of the enemy and going to meet them whenever they pointed their operations or made their approaches—was what employed us principally.

**August** In August general La Fayette was detached with a body consisting of 1,500—of which I was one—to be posted in New Jersey. we had no fixed station but for 3 or 4 weeks we were placed, one night on one small hill loping down the bushes for a cover; the next night removed to another hill—to prevent

a surprise—and watching the movements of the enemy, who always having superior numbers to us were able to send out marauding parties, either for foraging or to harass and plunder.

One afternoon genl. La Fayette invited some half a dozen of us to his bush hut to spend a social hour with him on account of his having heard of the birth of a dauphin—son of the King of France. We enjoyed such an hour of relaxation with a high zest, as the occurrence was so rare.

Augt.

The enemy not appearing to make any movement in that quarter the party was ordered back to join our several regiments. A few days after a detachment of 400 was selected for *service* commanded by Genl. Parsons: we—of course, did not know our object untill we arrived at Norwalk, on Long Island sound where we found boats in which we embarked and passed over across the sound landing near the village of Setalket: where a considerable body of the british were posted in a meeting house, stockaded around and within the stockade a parapet was raised and planted with a few cannon. It seems a surprise was intended: but the water at the landing place being shallow, and we having two *iron* field pieces to unlade took up considerable time: then to drag the cannon up the beach, where the sand and pebbles was over shoes increased our delay: the noise our movement made awakened all the dogs in the village, their noise gave the alarm to the garrison who were ready to receive us, and as soon as we had

1778  
August

approached within the range of their shott they began their fire on us, day break having arrived—we indeed returned their fire, but they being sheltered by their works probably did not receive much injury: we had two men wounded—only, except Genl. Parsons' receiving a slight graze on his arm. Genl. Parsons finding his object so far unsuccessful ordered a retreat, tho' there was little doubt but the place might have been carried by assault: but the object to be gained would not have compensated for the loss of half a dozen men, and as they were picked men prudence dictated that their lives should be held dear.

After the battle of Monmouth, and the return of the British army to New York things lay comparatively still for some time. Our position being in the middle department, the enemy's force being concentrated and powerfull they might approach us by the rivers, or along the coast of the sound and arrive at a point we did not expect them. this kept us constantly on the alert but without producing any particular incidents to attract attention. You are to keep in mind my suggestion on seting out, that I am narrating incidents which came under my own observation; for other transactions carrying on upon a larger scale I must refer you to history, cautioning you against some things in Botta, which on reading I was led to the conclusion that he had not been sufficiently diligent in his collection of facts. Thus the rest of the year passed away, we marching and

countermarching with full confidence in our commander in chief that he would point out our steps to the path of duty and honor.

We of the Connecticut line moved to Redding in Connecticut where we established our log hut encampment for the winter, and were but once interrupted by the enemy's pushing out a party—into the country, which proved only a foraging party.

In the month of May 1779 we left our huts and marched to Peekskill. The movement of the british up the North river the beginning of June—when they took possession of Stoney point—made it necessary for us to be on the alert: we advanced near to their main body—when discovering some troops on a hill in our front—we were ordered to form and load our guns; but they proved to be a party of our own, returning from reconnoitering. All this time we lay on our arms in rediness to meet the enemy at whatever point they should attack. When it was discovered that the enemy was making their attack on the Connecticut coast, burning the town of Norwalk &c. we were ordered to make a forced march to Fairfield.

Part of our regiment only—arrived in season to have an opportunity of firing on the enemy, and that in a cornfield. I was not so fortunate as to arrive in season to share in the conflict. as I was advancing I was met by Capt. Eells who with his advance party had been firing on the enemy's rear as they were retreating. he told me he had just lost one particu-

**Dec.**

**1779**

**June**

**1779**

larly valuable man, John Robinson father of Reuben, shot through the breast at his side, he was a neighbor of mine, and left a wife and three young children. It gave me pleasure to see the enemy's ships depart after having taken their party on board.

July

Marching back to the highlands, and arriving near Stoney point on the 16th of July we heard a heavy firing during the night in the direction of Stoney point; and in the morning were informed of its capture by Genl. Wayne and the light infantry under his command. The date I take from my journal of the time.

Capt.—afterwards General—Champion who led in the second battalion, told me the second day after the capture many particular circumstances of the assault, but I dont recollect as he mentioned that the men had orders to take the flints out of their locks, as is mentioned by some in history.

I was present at the auction sale of the articles captured and saw the coat of a Captain Tew who fell in the assault—and noticed a *bullet hole* in it near the breast.

I was much gratified to find that our soldiers gave quarter to all after the surrendery, it being so different from the custom of the british towards us *rebels* in similar cases.

A few days after this was the first interview I had with Capt.—since Judge—Marshall, while taking orders at the markey of the adjutant general. After leaving the office—as several of us were walking

1779  
July

together he walked a head by himself appearing in a contemplative frame; I found his habit and manner to be reserved.

Count D'Estang's arrival on the American coast about this time with a land force as well as naval occasioned the british to withdraw their troops from their out posts. New York being the central point of their main army, and a communication by water opening to every point there from kept us constantly on the alert during the remainder of the season.

The last of October we crossed the Hudson at Dobb's ferry and lay several days on its Western bank. from here I was ordered to New Burgh with a small detachment to draw clothing for the brigade. having obtained it I put it on board a large Peria-gue, and as no time was to be lost—proceeded just before night, down the river in a severe North East snow storm.

Our boat runing on a rock at flood tide she lay there untill morning when a higher tide enabled her to slide off. After remaining near Dobbs ferry two or three days that the clothing might be issued to the men—the 5th of November we resumed our march towards Morristown in New Jersey, the snow being five or six inches deep.

Nov.

This snow remained on the ground through the succeeding memorable cold winter. We proceeded by slow marches to the place of our winter cantonment at Kemble's farm, a village five or six miles from Morristown, Head quarters of the Army being

1779  
Decr.

established in Morristown. The winter having commenced, increased in severity and proved the most intense of any winter for the last half century. Our army—as usual—lay out uncovered until the enemy had retired to their winter quarters, and about the 20th of December we were marched on to the ground for our winter cantonments. It was on the southern side of a hill thickly wooded, a brook running in the front: here our men went to felling trees to procure logs for building their huts, and in about a week a line of huts was formed sufficient to cover the army. For want of proper tools our huts were constructed in a rude and coarse manner even for log huts: before the mud, or mortar could be applied to fill the vacancies between the logs—it was frozen. All those things could have been endured—accustomed as we had become to them—had not our rations of provisions failed; for some time the daily allowance was curtailed: then for three days it was entirely cut off. This situation was indeed gloomy in the extreme. during the previous curtailment our family consisting of Major C. the surgeon and myself—had drawn some corn for our horses from the forage master; we directed the waiters to hull it and prepare it for eating for ourselves. to facilitate the process they used weak ley, and not cleaning it sufficiently it produced extreme pain by corroding in the stomach and bowels. During the entire suspension of our allowance of provision for three days—I having a young dog—though fully grown and fat we



held a consultation on the necessity of killing him to eat, and nothing saved poor Hector's life but the idea of the story's reaching the enemy's quarters, that the American officers were reduced to such straits as to eat dogs flesh.

On the request of the Pay Master general—I went to his quarters to assist him for a few weeks: he occupied a large roomy house in Morristown There being spare rooms Genl. Howe requested the use of one of them to accomodate the court martial of which he was president, on the trial of Genl. Arnold, accused of peculation in Philadelphia. General Howe used to spend some evenings in our room and narrated many details of the battle near Savannah, in which he commanded—The pivot on which the defeat turned, which he remarked would never come up to public view, but was like the cleaving of the air after the flight of a bird. The decision of this court is well known to have issued in the conviction of Arnold, and the consequent sentence of the Court, which is generally supposed to have laid the foundation in his mind for revenge which he afterwards found an opportunity to put in practice.

Seeing Arnold halt in his walk, from the fracture of his leg in [sic] battle made a strong impression on my mind occasioned by an association of ideas on a military life, which I had observed witnessed [sic] in its most active forms during the last five years.

1780  
Jany.  
Feby.

Winter quarters are generally supposed to give some repose to an army, the present gave us but little. part of the time on short allowance, or destitute; our clothes worn out, our pay suspended for months beyond the stipulated time, and when recd. was in depreciated paper. the winter extremely severe; no bright prospect before us of a speedy termination of the war: we spending the prime and vigor of our lives without laying any foundation for old age, and those who had families unable to afford them any thing for their present subsistence; those things kept our heads on a pillow of thorns rather than of roses. Added to all this our soldiers looked up to us urging a fulfillment of promises, or encouragement held up to them on enlistment—can it be said that any thing but patriotism sustained us?

May

On leaving our cantonments in the spring we marched toward the Hudson river; halted and remained some time in Essex & Middlesex counties in New Jersey. In May witnessed a very painfull spectacle, the execution of three young men of the vicinity convicted of having gone over to the enemy in New York and returning with enlisting orders to induce their comrades to join the army of the enemy. One of those was named Hutchinson, whose father—with his family emigrated from Yorkshire in England a few years before the war and brought with him some very fine horses and horned cattle—purchased a fine landed estate in the best part of Morris county where he lived in a good degree of

independance; but adhering to the royal cause, he left his estate, went over to the enemy, his family broken up and scattered, this son hanged and a brother remaining in New York; his estate afterwards confiscated. This item is one of the thousands which occurred during our unhappy struggle—if not issuing in so sanguinary a manner, yet accompanied with circumstances of great distress.

1780

Another season of starvation occurred: while remaining in New Jersey. for several days previous to the 25th of May the rations were curtailed; and then entirely suspended. on that day two Connecticut regiments—Wylllys' & Miegs' appeared paraded under arms without an officer to head them, and directed in their movements by serjeants: Their movements had been silent untill then. The officers all sprang out and enquiring the object of their movement and their designs; they replied thro' a leading serjeant, that their sufferings had become so great they could endure them no longer, and were determined to quit the service and return home: adding that from the commencement of the year they had received neither pay nor clothing, and now provision failed.

May

Col. Meigs who was a favorite of the soldiers—having his sword drawn—moved near to the serjeant, who was the speaker, and commanded him to fall into the ranks and return with the men to quarters; on this the serjeant levelled his gun with the bayonet fixed towards Col: M. saying their resolu-

1780  
May

tion was formed and they should not recede from it. The moment was a critical one and had Marshall witnessed it as I did I trust he would not have passed it over so philosophically as he has done in his history, unless he was restrained by motives arising from the honor of the army and of the country. A short season of calm ensued and the officers assured the men that if they would quietly return to their duty, and their pressing wants were not supplied by a given day, they—the officers—would not attempt to prevent their dispersing. The officers then retired and by midday all was apparently quiet.

A brigade of Pennsylvania troops lay near us, and one of the officers—a Mr. Stevenson—came to us and remained with us until the disorder had subsided. I presume his object was to watch our motions and report to his line, that they might pursue such measures as the case might require. The situation of the officers was very painful; themselves being in the same state of privation with the men, but pressed by motives of duty and honor to preserve discipline, and knowing that the demands of the men were just they still had to persevere in the performance of their own duty.

The army moved toward Pompton Orange County N J and encamped; advancing at time toward where the enemy pointed their movements watching their motions, and I presume waiting for an opportunity to strike some stroke to our advant-

age. The army was thus occupied until the beginning of September without any striking incidents.

At this time Genl. Washington went to Hartford in Connecticut to meet the french General Rochambeau who had come there for the meeting, from New Port, where the french troops of his command lay.

**Sepr.**

General Green remained as commander—during the absence of Genl. Washington. On one fine day the army which then consisted of about 11,000 was paraded and divided into two seperate bodies, one occupying a small hill and the other moved on to attack them. In this sham fight the various manoeuvrings common in a real battle were acted over ;

After the assailants had continued the attack for some time the reserve came up which turned the battle in their favor. The usual shouting of the victors ensued, while the defeated retreated: the victors then took possession of the hill and pitched their tents on the battle ground. The army continued near Pompton until the return of General Washington from the East, when the catastrophe of the defection of General Arnold ensued: that produced a strong sensation in the army. every thing was put upon the alert, expecting the enemy to approach and attack West point, or strike some important stroke. two days were spent in anxious suspense by the army. A board of general officers consisting of twelve was assembled and Major André was brought before it, heard in his defence, and the proof being full and

completely satisfactory he was adjudged to be a spy and sentenced to be executed as such.

1780  
Sepr.

General Patterson—with whom I was well acquainted—& who was a member of the board, stated to me the particulars of his trial and the impressions made on their minds and feelings while contemplating his situation and destiny. Andre appeared during the trial altogether firm and collected in his mind and manner.

In the interim between his trial and execution an informal proposal was made by Genl. Washington to Sir Henry Clinton who commanded in New York, that Andre might be restored back in exchange for Arnold. Genl. Clinton's refusing to comply with the proffer, and the intimation thereof being communicated to Capt. Ogden, who was the bearer of the message and returned during the night—an order was given for his execution. I was on my horse and of course outside of the line of infantry, and could plainly see Andre and all that passed; he walked up the hill in Pompton the place of his execution Arm in arm with Col: Hamilton with a firm and gracefull step. My feelings had been previously drawn out favorably towards him from what had passed, but when I come to view him, an elegant and fine person, every way gracefull, at the age of twenty eight, and to be thus publicly executed, almost overcame me, but I had to endure it while I contemplated the similar fate of my former acquaintance Capt. Nathan

Hale who was executed by the british in Brooklyn in 1776.

Sep. 1776. The british having landed on long island—Genl. W. wanting to find out their real position—after due enquiry Capt. Hale of the Connt. line was selected to be employed as a spy, & having proceeded on to the island, pursued his discoveries, taking plans &c—was returning and fell into the hands of the enemy near Brooklyn. The next day was examined by some board by the enemy and convicted as a spy, condemned, and order'd to be executed in two hours, was denied his request for an opportunity & time to write to his friends, & the sentance was carried into execution. was of Glas-tenbury in Connt. aged abt. 24 or 25: educated & of high promise.

1780

The remains of Major Andre were removed from the place of his interment in A.D. 1821—by order of the British government: he having been buried near the place of his execution. It was found that a red cedar tree had grown up over his grave; a piece of this tree was conveyed to England in the ship—with his remains; and the King ordered a gold snuff-box made, inlaid with a part of this tree—to be presented to the episcopal minister who officiated at the disinterment.

Altho' there was no particular battle in this department during the season, the incidents almost daily occurring were sufficiently interesting to occupy the attention. The army being pretty much

together, In midsummer a selection of 2,500 of the troops who were judged fit to make the best appearance were selected and prepared for review on a plain. a temporary stage was raised with seats to accomodate spectators, on which was seated General Washington, the other general officers present; the french minister Luzerne: the spanish minister Don Juan, and a large number of respectable citizens from the adjacent parts.

Baron Steuben ordered and conducted the review. the exercises were commenced by skirmishes in the adjoining woods as if scouts had fallen in with each other, and were returning: after they had joined the main body the evolutions were commenced, each one preceeded by discharge of a cannon. The weather being fine and no accident happening, the day passed off brilliantly. Not long after we were ordered out to attend the funeral of Don Juan the spanish minister who died of a fever. The ceremonies attending it were as shewy as circumstances would admit, and to those of us having been accustomed to plain republican simplicity were very impressive imposing [sic]. The body was placed in a coffin in a very rich dress trimmed with a broad gold lace; his sword laid conspicuously by his side: minute guns firing during the whole time, except while religious service was performing.

1780

1781

As the year opened and advanced brighter prospects for the U. States began to appear: a special deputation had been sent to the french court to lay



our case and situation fairly before the king, urging the necessity of some important effort being made which should bring the war to a close. the french king very promptly dispatched an agent Courier [sic] to the spanish court, the reigning king being uncle to the—then french king—strongly suggesting a co-operation [sic] with france and the United states to accomplish the object. The spanish government readily and promptly acceded to the proposed measures which issued in a compleat success.

As the spring opened our army left their cantonments in the highlands, took the field and advanced towards White plains; the first part of the season for the campaign was spent by our army in marching and counter-marching—it seemed as watching the movements of the enemy. The british army kept closely shut up in New York, and appeared looking sharply on the defensive for the time being; Genl. Rochambeau was with a body of about 5000 regular and choice troops lying in New Port Rhode Island—1781 and a french fleet commanded by Count D'Estang arriving on our coast effectually prevented the british army from attempting any considerable enterprise. Thus the season advanced untill the fore part of September when the great plan which had been concerted between Genl. Washington and our allies was put in operation. The period having arrived for the necessary movements to commence—General Washington formed the plan which so com-

pletely eluded the enemy—the detail of which is minutely described in history.

The french army at New Port was put in motion; at the same time the American army began its movements by crossing the river Hudson into New Jersey: hovering around New York and puting on the appearance of a design to attack it: parties were advanced forward of bakers with instructions to prepare ovens and other fixaments for the accomodation of the army in its meditated attack.—

An express was forwarded by Genl. Washington with his letter containing directions for the forming a camp &c to accomodate the army on its arrival: the bearer—it seems conformable with his instructions—passed so near an out guard of the enemy that he was captured by them.

The intercepted letter added strength to the delusion which was designed, and among other circumstances lulled the enemy from any apprehension of the real object contemplated. By a sudden movement our army marched onward toward Yorktown: the success which followed you will read in history.

Rochambeau with his five thousand soon moved on: as they passed thro' Farmington in Connecticut I being there at the time—had a fine opportunity of seeing them. they were said to be the flower of the french army, having been raised principally in Normandy and the North of France.

Beside the officers who held rank in the army—were many men of science, as Chatteilux & others who it seems were collecting & preparing materials for a practical description of things in the United States, and which were afterwards published by them.

I was particularly struck—while in conversation with Count D’Ponts, who commanded the regiment *Du Ponts*—to observe with what fluency and precision he spoke english. at a small distance one on hearing him, would not have supposed that he spoke any otherwise than a well educated English gentleman. I viewed their manner of encamping over night, the perfect mechanical manner of performing all they had to do: such as digging a circular hole & making niches in which to set their camp kettles for cooking their food, &c every necessary accomodation was performed in the most natural and convenient manner. They rose in the morning and paraded by day light; soon struck tents and began their march which they completed—for the day—about noon, then pitched tents and set about their cookery:

They marched on the road in open order, untill the music struck up, they then closed into close order.

On the march—a quarter master preceeded and at the forking of the road would be stuck a pole with a bunch of straw at top to shew the road they were to take.

Not being at the siege of Yorktown—I must refer you to the history of it in detail.

On the surrender of Yorktown all concluded it was the closing part of active war, which it ultimately proved to be.

Having served this the whole of our eventfull struggle for independance; and being preserved to the age of 78, I say with my feeble voice to my children and grandchildren of whom God has given me numbers, should an equal imperious call of duty ever press on you—go and do likewise.

1777

The irregularity and frequent destitution of supplies you will see adverted to in the history of the war: but the impression made by reading it falls far short of the reality of experience. when I recall to mind those scenes I am now astonished at the perseverance of our army under such circumstances.

had we money received for our pay the inhabitants of the country thro' which we passed would have brought articles of provision to us as a market, but by this time—1777—the paper currency had become of little value. The counterfeiting of our bills was carried on in New York extensively, and sent out into the country by agents employed for the purpose. I once saw in New Jersey a large bundle of these bills in the hands of a justice of peace, brought for inspection: he pronounced them counterfeit, another justice of peace had previously judged them genuine.

When I look back I find that the close of the year 1776 and the beginning of '77 was the darkest and most trying time of the war.

When encamped at Bound brook N. J. an officer of my acquaintance called on me—after how d'e he says how do you live? I replied—very well—says he we have nothing but indian meal & that sour—with salted beef in bad order—the teamster's having drawn out the brine to lighten their loads. I replied—do you think that we—of the same brigade fare any better? he said *he* could not and would not live so: I found he soon after obtained a discharge & returned home.

'77  
June

The details of a lawless set of banditti constantly in action between the lines of the two armies committing every kind of crime—robbery, house burning, murder &c. I have reserved hitherto that I might introduce it in more compact order. The various isolated acts of this kind would—if collected—serve to fill a small volume: nor can I pretend to give but a mere glance at some of them, they being so numerous.

They began as soon as the enemy became fully possessed of New York and the posts appending to it. A kind of lineway formed by their out posts looking towards us; and a similar one formed by us, looking towards them: this left a tract of country extending from the Hudson to long Island sound

of ten or fifteen miles in width, with a tolerable dense population previous to the war; the inhabitants did not at first leave their homes and become victims—pretty generally to these merauders: those who retained any moveable property in cattle or anything else were soon robbed of it.

The british commander appointed Lord Tarlton over a corps of rangers who were very active in making incursions on our most exposed places, making what prisoners he could, and his men considering themselves as free booters made light of lives which fell in their way, or in any manner opposed them.

Next to him one Barmore a native of Connecticut—had permission to raise a company of desperadoes to plunder and murder at their pleasure. A number of other voluntary companies were formed and acted in some concert, all following the trade of destruction. If the british commander did not directly authorize those things, he at least only winked at them: probably counting that they all came into the general plan of subduing rebels.

Beside those who were formed into somewhat regular companies—a considerable number acting without concert were springing up attacking the persons and property of all who were exposed to them. among those was one Joshua Houston a noted desperado who was a terror to all around him: he on attempting to enter a home for robbery was discovered & met by the keeper of the house, who

having provided himself with a bayonet fixed on the end of a stick or staff plunged it into him, which caused his death. Those for a time were called cow boys; having become very bold in driving off cows as well plundering other property.

The scenes of their depredations varied with the movemints and position of the armies, but wherever the armies were posted there was a space called *between the lines* infected by a similar banditta. New Jersey was grievously scourged by such me-  
raiders in the course of the war. Complaints being frequently made to Genl. Washington of those enormities, he remonstrated strongly to the british commander against them, and assured him if they were continued he should be forced to retaliate on the british prisoners—War operations becoming very pressing he did not have recourse to this measure untill the latter part of the year 1781, the circumstances of which I shall notice in its place.

In '78 when our troops were lying in New Jersey, an officer of the Connecticut line, on his return to his regiment, from whence he had been on some business—was shot down by some one concealed in the bushes by the road side. The assassin was never discovered, but was supposed to belong to one of those companies of banditta.

Soon after this I was designated to go to head quarters—then at Morristown—to draw money for the brigade as pay. On my return—approaching near the ground where I left the regiment—I found

1778

they had taken up their march for a distant place: as night approached I pursued on to overtake them. I was unexpectedly hailed by a stentorian voice *Who comes there*—I instantly put spurs to my horse, he being very fleet I shot ahead of two men also mounted—they constantly hallowing “stop or I will fire on you.” knowing the country to be infested by marauders and desperadoes I without minding their threats—pushed on untill coming to the foot of a hill they came up with me. it may well be supposed my situation was an unpleasant one: I had no arms but my sword, they two to one and armed with muskets: I asked them what they wanted of me—they replied—go to the next house and we will inform you: I of course went to a house when I told them I was an officer of the army dispatched on important business and—if they did not kill and conceal me—any other violence would be made known, and they would be pursued. they each produced a subalterns commission of the militia.—thus ended a scene which commenced rather abruptly. I felt indeed some solicitude for the money I had in my portmanteau, but my principal concern was for my own personal safety. This night I spent far less pleasant than the one previous: being acquainted with Col. Hamilton and Major Colfax who commanded the generals guard—I was invited to spend the evening in a room with an agreeable circle—the adjutant general of Burgoyne’s army being one; being on parole he was

1778



spending some time here; he was an Irish gentleman, highly polished, and appeared to enjoy himself & the society very well. Col. Scammell—whose memory I shall ever hold in high estimation—was one of the party.

As I previously remarked I shall attempt to give only a scetch [sic] of the outlines of their praeditory and murderous transactions.

The murder of Col. Baylor & Major Clough—of the cavalry, with a great part of the regiment was the result of one of their praedatory enterprizes. a detail of this you will see in the history.

The frequent open and private attacks, waylaying and murdering by hanging and otherways having become so numerous—and representations being frequently made to general Washington of them—he proceeded—late in the year '81 to put in force his threats of retaliation he had so often express'd. He selected from a great number of others—a case of much notoriety which occur'd on Staten Island. A party in their way siezed on one Capt. Huddy and as usual—without much delay hung him on a staddle which they bent down for the purpose—where his friends found him with a label on his breast “Up goes Huddy for Henry White.”

Those things having arisen to a climax—Genl. Wn. selected by lot—from among the prisoners captured at Yorktown—a Capt. Argill—son of Sir Charles Argill—of very respectable standing—as the victim for retaliation. He was kept in close con-

1781

finement for a considerable time, apparently awaiting his execution: His mother Lady Argill wrote a very moving letter to Vergennes—the then prime minister in France—uring him to intercede with Genl. Wn. to spare her sons life. Those things having become a subject of considerable notoriety the british commander order'd the companies he had commissioned—to be dissolved: thus those barbarities were in a considerable degree checked, and Capt. Argill released on parole. The feelings of the mass of the people were shewn to be strongly interested in favour of Capt. Argill, as they were for Major Andre—previously; and much to the praise of their humanity. A similar opportunity occurred to shew the general state of feeling; the two British ships—the Java and the Massadonian recently captured—were placed for safe keeping in the river Thames 8 or 10 miles from New London, and a number of British seamen—prisoners—confined in them. Orders were either given out or expected to be—to retaliate on those prisoners some of the severities practiced on our marine prisoners confined in the ship Jersey lying at Brooklyn.

The populace interfered which prevented the orders being carried into effect.

In the year 1783—the war being ended—I was travelling through East and West Chester counties, in the state of New York—and was forcibly struck by the appearance of this once beautiful sec-

tion of country. the inhabitants had acquired and collected around them—previous to the war—all the conveniencies and accomodations of rural life; and the country now appeared in a state of desolation. I stopped at an inn on the great road—which was reopened as a house of entertainment—and one I had lodged at in 1774—the year preceeding the war—it was a large stone building with out houses, surrounded with fruit trees, and appearing to possess every convenience of rural life: it then appeared almost in ruins, like every thing else around it.

I said to the hostess—Mother Day your place dont look as it did when I was here in '74: No says she then we had every thing we wanted: now we found the out buildings and all the fences burnt; all the fruit trees destroyed, with every thing else—and we as poor as the *free negroe*.

Being in Boston I saw the part of the french army which had acted in the siege of Yorktown in September & October previous—enter the town under the command of Baron *Viominel* to embark on board shiping which had arrived and were lying ready to receive them. I conversed with some of the officers and noticed the high gratification they appeared to feel in adverting to their fortunate success in this country.

Being in Boston I saw the arrival of the British transport ships in the harbour—come to receive the prisoners of Burgoynes army captured October pre-

1782  
March

1778  
April

vious. A prominent article in the capitulation was “that those troops should be delivered up to the British government, with a guarantee that they should not be employed against the United states again during the war.”

Our government waited for the british government to ratify the convention, or articles of capitulation agreed on at the surrendery. The British finding it would be recognizing our independance to ratify it—refused: and the ships returned without the prisoners.

1778

It being proved to Europe and the world by the battle of Bunker hill & the capture of Burgoyne’s army that the United States were able to sustain their independance—the treaty offensive and defensive between the French government and ours was ratified at Passy near Paris in February 1778: on which the British government immediately declared against France.

1775  
Apl. 19

Battle of Lexington. The british march out from Boston to Lexington to destroy some stores of the americans: they fired on a militia company—the fire returned. The british made a precipitate retreat toward Boston, being fired on by the militia of the country.

Boston shut up. The men from the adjoining towns assembled in arms and invest it: bodies of men hastily raised and formed round Boston to keep the British in.

May

The middle of May the new raised troops from Connecticut & the adjoining towns in Massachusetts arrive & something like military arrangements made. Cambridge fixed on as the head quarters: a strong body stationed at Roxbury.

slight fortifications erected on Roxbury side: alarm posts affixed, to which the troops repaired every morning at day break. Things remained quiet untill the night of the 16th of June, when a detachment of our army went on to Breed's hill—since called Bunker hill, and began to fortify.

June  
17

Battle of Bunker hill—the british marched out in force and attacked us in our trenches: they were repulsed three several times, but by the arrival of 2000 fresh troops as a reinforcement they succeeded in carrying our works: the enemy in his official report acknowledged the loss of 1052 men in killed & wounded. Our loss was between 3 & 400. This affair prevented an attack of the enemy on the south side of the town: as the 18th of June was fixed on to take possession of the hill on Dorchester point, by the british.

1775

June  
17

General Washington arrived in a few days after the action & took the command of our army.

troops continued to arrive to strengthen our army, which had become so strong that the enemy did not move out to attack it during the rest of the year. Our guards were extremely vigilant.

The enemy had very strong works on Boston neck mounted with a numerous train of heavy artillery,

1776  
March  
4th

and their firing from there was kept up almost every night, which killed some of our advanced guards. Both armies lay still untill the beginning of the next march; when on the 2d & 3d nights we commenced a heavy fire from all our batteries on the Cambridge & Roxbury side: and on the night of the 4th a detachment of ours moved on to Dorchester point & began to entrench.

6th  
1776  
March

during the most of the 6th the enemy were embarking troops on board their ships, and at evening they fell down to the outer harbor & formed round the point, intending to commence an attack on it the next day.

but that night the vernal equinoxal storm of rain sat in which continued with increasing violence dur- the night: and in the morning their ships appeared in disorder, and the troops were not landed, but the ships returned up the harbor. it subsequently appeared that they had abandoned the design of attacking us at our post, but to make preparation to evacuate the town and proceed for Halifax. Their preparations went on till the 17th of the month when they completely evacuated the town and harbor, and sailed for Halifax: and our army moved in and took possession.

(Original entry)

The 17th of March 1776 The enemy evacuated the town of Boston—the particular circumstances of which are too recent in every one's memory to need

a new recital. the American Army immediately marched in & took possession of the Town together with what stores the enemy had left—the night before they went away they destroy'd all the fortifications on Castle Island.—The enemy then proceeded with their fleet directly to Hallifax—the Towns along shore were in great consternation for some time, expecting the enemy would make some descent on them, nor was new York out of fear—the Inhabitants of it went to fortifying their streets &c —under the direction of Genl. Lee.—Our Army now prepared for marching to the Southward & Northward to meet the Common enemy—About the first of April Genl. Thomas arrived at near [sic] Quebec & found our Army but a handfull & those destitute of almost every convenience for subsistance—scatter'd twenty or thirty miles round on different Guards.

The reinforcements from different parts which he expected to find there had not arrived—the few who were really on the ground he set about collecting together so as to form them into something regular—but while he was giving such necessary orders & making proper distributions—he died of the small pox, after a very days illness—at this juncture two or three of the enemys frigates came in sight of the Town from Hallifax—to reconnoitre & find in what situation the garrison was, in the Town, & likewise to see if the river was clear of Ice so as to be navigable by larger ships—on their com-

1776

1776

ing in sight, our people supposing they had brought a reinforcement for the Garrison & thinking also that there were more on their passage—agreed to retreat while they could with safety,—accordingly they collected together, convey'd what Artillery & Stores they had, & march'd as far as the three Rivers & there made a fortification with a view to make a stand.—The fatigues our Army underwent in this department thro the winter was very great—the detachment under Col. Arnold had to perform a march of six hundred miles over a wild inhospitable Country in October & November—when they arrived they found themselves destitute of almost every necessary of life as well as warlike stores for attacking or Blockading a City like Quebeck—in a Country where the Cold is intense—the inhabitants unable & unwilling to supply them with provision—nor has there been a post in America of that importance so neglected as that for After the defeat our people were very dilatory in sending any kind of succour & relief either in men money or provisions. Quebec assaulted by Genl. Montgomery Dec. 31, 1775.—After the death of Genl. Thomas the Command devolv'd on Genl. Arnold who held it but a short time.

1776

But to return to affairs nearer home—about the twenty fifth of March the Troops began their March from Boston towards New York & by the 4th of April Twenty One Regiments had left that place—leaving 5 Regs. to Garrison the Town. On



arriving at New York five Regts. were order'd to March & join the Northern Army under the Command of Brigr. Genl. Thomson of Virginia, & the of April 6 Regts. more under the Command of Brigr. Genl. Sullivan of New Hampshire—march'd to join the Army in that department.—On their Arriving near there our people who were left at the 3 rivers met them near a place call'd the Cedars informing them that the Enemy had been reinforced at Quebeck by Genl. Burgoyne & about four thousand under him & that immediately on their arriving at Quebeck they pursued our Troops to the 3 rivers & obliged them to retreat—large numbers of them were sick with the small pox & in a dispirited situation—They immediately communicated the infection to them—The number of Troops now collected in this department amounted to about 9 or 10,000 & in a Months time near half of them were sick of the small pox & the fatigue of their march.—The enemy still push'd on & arrived at the Cedars, while our Troops retreated before them. while the enemy were at the Cedars Genl. Thomson agreed to attack them,—he accordingly went himself at the head of about 1500 men to execute his plan, but his guides missing the roads led them round about in swamps & Morasses till they were discover'd by the enemy, who were ready to receive them—a small action ensued—but our Troops not being able to come on properly to the charge by reason of the badness of the ground—Genl. Thomson was surrounded by a

1776

1776

superior number of the enemy & made a prisoner of, together with 4 field Officers & about 20 or 30 men—abt. this time a party of about 300 Under command of Majr. Butterfield was attack'd by abt. 60 Regular Troops & 400 Indians & Canadians—at a small breastwork they had erected, & surrender'd without any opposition—of this party a number were murder'd by the Savages under the connivance of the British Officers—Genl. Arnold found means to have those prisoners return'd by promising to give as many more in exchange, & left four Captains as hostages to bind him to the performance of his promise.—In the month of June Genl. Gates was appointed Major Genl. & Commander in chief in that department & set off immediately: On his arriving there he found Affairs in an unsettled confused way. The Army were sick & dispirited—fast retreating before the enemy—they made but a short stay at Montreal—Chambli—St. Johns—Isle Au Noix &c till they arrived at Ticonderogue

News arrived from Great Britain during the Spring—by the way of the West Indies—of the designs of Parliament; during the past Winter their whole attention seem'd to be taken up about America—People of all ranks were *inveterate* against us & viewed us as Rebels—while the most vigorous plan was adopted for our subjection:—& the most experienced Commanders by land & Sea appointed to Command: twelve thousand Hessian Troops &

1500 other Germans were taken into British pay—& sent against America. Levies were made in England & Ireland & the land Army by that means augmented to thirty odd thousand: Lord Howe was appointed to Command the fleet & his Brother Genl. Howe—the land Army—the plan of operation agreed upon was to send a part of their Army to Quebeck: a part to the Southward & the main body to New York—in consequence of which Genl. Burgoyne had been sent to Quebeck with abt. 4 or 5 thousand, to be join'd by a large number of Savages & Canadians & retake the fortifications on the Lakes & penetrate through the Country to the River Hudson, & go to New York & join the main Army there under the Command of Genl. Howe: & by that means cut off the communication between the Southern & the New England Governments & distress our back Settlements.

Genl. Howe with the fleet remaining at Hallifax Arrived at New York the 30th of June with a large fleet & about 12000 Troops—they came into the Bay & anchored under [sic] Straten Island shore where they form'd a Camp & landed a part of their men finding themselves too weak to attack us, they agreed to lye there & wait for a reinforcement of the foreign mercenaries—which they expected soon—the 12th of July the Ship Phoenix of 44 Guns & the Rose of 28—commanded by Wallace with three tenders went with a fair wind & tide up the River Hudson—thro' the fire from our Batteries—they went up past

Kingsbridge as far as Taupan Bay & there came to Anchor—their design was to reconnoitre & learn the strength of our Batteries & perhaps find the most convenient place to land their Troops—The Troops had been coming in & joining our Army this fortnight—which now amounted to about 30,000—but as the enemy did not attack us immediately as was expected—our Militia &c drew off, & left the Army to consist of about 22,000—

1776

The Commissioners now arrived with Lord Howe who took command of the fleet—Independancy was now declared by the Congress on the 4th of July The enemy sent two flags of truce to the General with a letter superscribed to Geo. Washington Esqr. which were rejected on acct. of the superscription—The 15th the Adjutant Genl. of the British army ask'd and obtain'd a conference with Genl. Washington—on the subject of exchanging prisoners.—The Congress now came to a resolve that if the enemy should commit any more inhuman murders on our soldiery whom they should take prisoners—that retaliation should be made on them—

The enemy on Staten Island now set vigorously to fortifying & laid out very large works; the General Officers of Our army held a Council of war to consult whether to attack them or not, but it was still concluded best to act on the defensive—A proclamation from Lord Howe was now publish'd offering pardon & protection to all who shou'd lay down their Arms & implicitly submit.—News now arrived from

Genl. Lee at Charlestown S. Carolina—that the enemy had been repulsed in attempting to Land—the particulars are that on the 2d of July two fifty Gun Ships & 6 frigates came over the bar & came close up to the fort on Sullivans Island & there commenced a most furious fire on the fort—our people returned it with equall spirit & had the satisfaction to see the fleet almost entirely destroy'd thereby—as they were within half musquet shott from the fort—almost every shott did execution—during the Cannonade the enemy attempted three several times to land at the end of the Island, & were as often repulsed—during the action the enemy had 172 kill'd & wounded—On our side were 10 kill'd & 20 wounded—

A plan was in the spring conjectured adopted [sic] to fix a number of fire ships & attempt thereby to destroy some of the enemy's fleet.—a number of Vessels & Chiveaux De frize's were made & sunk in the channell of the river to stop the Ships from passing.—They are now vigorously preparing.—

August 3d. Five of our Row Galleys went up the River & attack'd the two ships of the enemy's—after a brisk Cannonade of about three Quarters of an hour our Galleys moved off by order of Col. Tupper whò commanded—with the loss of 9 kill'd & wounded—seven shott had gone thro' the providence Galley as she lay nearest the Phoenix—which was within musquet shott—the whole was conducted with regularity & coolness & the enemy much dam-

aged. On the night of August 16th we had the good fortune to burn out one of the enemys Tenders in the north River.

On the 18th very early in the morning the Shipping came down the river thro' a brisk fire from our Batterys—

The whole of the enemys reinforcement now arriving except five thousand Germans, & the southern Army after their defeat join'd the Grand Army—the enemy opened the Campaine in this department by landing a large body of Troops on Long Island & march'd up to Flat Bush about 5 miles from New York ferry: which was on the 22d.—a detachment of our Army were accordingly sent to intercept them consisting of 2400 who were posted at three different places where the passage was very narrow between the hills—these were the only passes where they could approach directly from their incampment towards our lines in a direct course, & that body of men was sufficient to defend those passes had the enemy approach'd that way.—both Armys appear'd silent almost till monday the 26th when the enemy just at evening decamp'd & filed off from their right & by a forced march all night they came round the left wing of our Guards & just at day break of the 27th they appeared in the Bedford road between our out guards & the lines—just at the time of their coming in sight a considerable body of them attacked us in front at each post, for a diversion to us to prevent our discovering those in the rear, at the same

1776  
Augt.

time another body landed from the fleet between our out post & our lines & met those who came round our left: as soon as we perceived their design, orders were given for us to retreat to the lines, but in attempting it we found our retreat nearly cut off—abt. 7 or 800 cut their way through, the remainder join'd Genl. Lord Stirling who commanded on the right in consequence of his being Brigadier of the day—the remainder of Huntington's & Smallwood's Regts. reinforced him so that his little army consisted of about a thousand when after possessing the most advantageous ground—he received the enemy's attack with the intrepidity that becomes Heroes, & repulsed them, the enemy being Strongly reinforced, renewed the attack & most of those brave men were kill'd, wounded & or [sic] imprison'd, only about 150 or 200 got to our Army, some by the way of Hull Gate going round the enemy & some by going thro' their Guards—it was then expected the enemy would attempt forcing our lines which were well man'd; & march'd a column within musket shott of them but retreated without attempting them—Affairs remained in this Situation till the 29th when we evacuated the Iland [sic] intirely, but we brought off the most of the Stores—Governor's Island was evacuated the same night.—Removing the Stores & Artillery from New York was the next step to be taken, as the enemy then possess'd our front & both flanks the Army was therefore posted so as to favour a good retreat from the City—while we were prepar-

ing to evacuate the City—the enemy were preparing to land above us & cut off our retreat, the movements and manoeuvres of both Armies were therefore calculated to favour their designs—the enemy moved up & encamp'd opposite Horns hook, erected a battery there & play'd briskly on our battery, which was returned as briskly.

1776

Our army moved & encamp'd opposite the enemy along the bank of the East River—& made lines at the most defensible places—in this way the time was spent till the 14th of September when the General designed to evacuate the City, beginning at Seven oClock in the evening & at three the Guards to march off—but by the Solicitations of his other General Officers, he order'd that at three in the morning of the 15th we should repair to our lines & begin our march at day light—the 15th the enemy perceiving by our movements that the critical time was come when they were like to loose the opportunity of hemming us in on the Island—they drew up two 50 Gun Ships & 2 36 Gun frigates close under the shore & opened a most furious cannonade on us—which almost levell'd our lines as they were only proff against musquetry—favour'd by this cannonade they landed abt. 3000 of their best troops about a mile below Turtle bay Kipp's bay—the boats after they had come within about half a mile of shore—took a tack & rowed round a point of Land which projected out, which carried them a mile & a half above where we expected them to land as we did not in the least ex-



1776  
Sept.

pect them here—our lines were not so well man'd, for our force was mostly opposite the Shipping, & the fire was so surprisingly hot that we could not shift our post—so that they landed without much opposition & formed on the bank—orders were then given for us to secure a retreat, which was done with as much regularity as the situation would admit of—but not without the loss of some men & baggage, but the loss was inconsiderable.—

We then march'd & took possession of the heights of Haerlem & immediately flung up lines for our defence.

The enemy (the next morning) march'd on after us & encamp'd at the extremity of the plain, about 3 miles distant from us—from there they sent a detachment of abt. 500 along the bank of the North river, which our people attack'd with spirit with about an equall number & drove them back to their main body, The loss on our side was about 30 kill'd & 60 or 70 wounded—the loss of the enemy must a' been more than that, as we repulsed them after a warm fire of three quarters of an hour.—The two Armys went now to strengthening their lines—we made our lines so good across at the heights that the enemy dare not attempt to force them by Storm.—

The enemy having a small guard of abt. 100 on Montazures Island—it was proposed to take them off—accordingly a detachment of 1 Lt. Coll, 1 Majr. 4 Capts. 8 Suba. & 200 rank & file were sent to attack them—going in boats down Haerlem Creek—

1776

at day break they had orders to land—when only one boat out of the six landed with 46 men, who after a most obstinate struggle—were drove off—the other boats crews were so cowardly they durst not land, so those who landed fell a sacrifice to the enemy all except eight—among those who fell was Majr. Henly & Maj. Hatfield taken prisoner—This happened on the 23d of September—

On the 12th of October the enemy landed a body of their Troops on frogs point in East Chester—& another body landed on Rodmans point:—in marching up from the point, they were opposed by three Regiments which were posted behind a Stone wall near East Chester Church—who repulsed them three several times, but they having a strong reinforcement—our people left them the ground—with the loss of only three men.

The whole of the enemys reinforcement, which consisted of about five thousand Germans—now arriving they took the field with a strong Army of nearly 20,000 effective—& our Army retreated back to the White plains & posses'd themselves of the most advantagous heights;—the enemy took the heights opposite them & there lay in sight of each other.

1776

A detachment of our Army consisting of abt. 400 were left at Kings bridge—to secure that pass, but as the enemy were posted between them & our Army across to the North River, & that party being judged too small to defend the post, they were order'd to

retreat to Fort Washington—which they did after burning the barracks & removing the Artillery & Stores—leaving the enemy masters of East & West Chester & all New York Island except Fort Washington—which had a good store of provision, a good Artillery & a strong garrison.—

Skirmishes happened now almost every day between the two Armies, but they were mostly very small & the successes various—a party of Rogers's Rangers attack'd a party of Ours, but were repulsed with a number kill'd & 36 taken prisoners.—

On the 28th of October the enemy began their Manoeuvres early in the morning & show'd us that their design was to attack us—accordingly they posted a large number of field pieces opposite our right wing where was posted Genl. McDougle's Brigade—& opened a brisk fire on them, while their Infantry advanced in two Columns to the attack—our troops were formed on an eminence—& while one column of the enemy advanced & attacked in front—the other march'd round & attempted to gain our right flank as the enemy were superior in number & during the action which lasted with musquetry about half an hour—they were twice relieved with fresh troops—we having suffered considerably by the artillery—& no reinforcement or relief coming up—our troops left the ground to the enemy—after losing in kill'd & wounded—about 150—the loss of the enemy was not known—but as our troops

1776

behaved with coolness & spirit—the enemy's loss could not be less than ours.

at the time of our retreating Genl. Putnam was coming up with a reinforcement of 5,000—but I suppose his orders were to keep the enemy from advancing any farther, & so to cover the retreat of Gen. McDoules men—& not to join them in the attack which if he had, must have drawn on a General action—as both armies were in spirits & confident of their own strength & good disposition:—but our General in consequence of the directions of Congress, was obliged to shun a General action—if it could possibly be avoided with honor.—Nothing more of any consequence happened between the two Armies in the field—They march'd, countermarch'd & manouver'd—the enemy looking for an opportunity to attack us at a time when we were unguarded—as they had no opportunity for that—they decamp'd the beginning of November & moved towards Kings bridge—burning & destroying every thing in their way.—

1776

On the 15th they appeared before the lines near Fort Washington—on the South side of it, & at the bridge north of it—marching in Columns—The Garrison which then amounted to abt. 2,300 march'd out each way to attack them, leaving a proper Guard in the Fort: The party at the Bridge were repulsed with a very considerable loss—but while the action was at the hottest at the lines—the enemy landed a large body across Harlem Creek—east of the Fort &

moved briskly on & attacked our Troops in the rear while they were fighting them in front—in consequence of which they were obliged to surrender—being overpowered with numbers.

The party who had fought near the bridge, returning victorious—to the assistance of their brothers at the lines—found them surrender'd—they then repaired immediately to the fort & so many of them got in that the Guns could not play without killing more of them than of the enemy—Who immediately sent & demanded a Surrendery of the fort—the Garrison being in this disagreeable situation—the lines taken which was the key to the fort—the fort without either wood or water sufficient to hold out three days—the Enemy consisting of 10,000 determined to storm it if it did not surrender.

1776

Coll. M'Gaw surrender'd the fort, Artillery &c. & the Garrison prisoners of war, on conditions only that the Garrison should not be rob'd of their baggage.

The enemy now possessing all York Island—dismantled the fort & turned their force against the Jersey shore—Fort Lee was the first object of their attention—its chief design was to annoy the Shipping in passing up & down the river: it mounted thirty heavy Cannon on the water side, & but only two or three field pieces on the land side—

Our people knowing it to be untenable had resolved to evacuate it—they therefore moved off the

1776

Stores but left the heavy Artillery in it & evacuated it on the night of the 17th of Novr.—The same night the enemy landed about 3000 of their troops five miles above the fort,—& abt. the same number at Hackinsack (a River running past there)—marched those two bodys across with a design to hem our people in before they had left the fort—they then went & took possession of the fort.—Thus were both Fort Washington & Fort Lee reduced—they were built opposite each other on the banks of the river Hudson, where it was narrow, & a *Chivauxdefrieze* together with the hulks of old vessell sunk across the river to Stop the passage of Shiping, but on the forts being given up, the Chivauxdefrieses were render'd useless, which was the last effort we have try'd to impede the course of the ships—much dependance having been placed on the fire Craft & them & large sums expended in preparing them—but they have both disappointed us without answering any end except the burning one tender for the enemy by the fire Craft in the river.—

Our Army posted themselves across from Newark to the River—

1776  
Dec. 26

The Amn. army surprised a body of the enemy at Trenton, N. Jersey & captured 800 or 900 hesians.—

Two days after we attacked a body of the british at Princetown: & after a sharp action took 4 or 500 prisoners.

This closed the year in this department.

In the autumn previous—Genl. Montgomery had marched from New York at the head of about troops to proceed on to Quebec, it being known that the town contained a large quantity of military stores of all kinds, which were much wanted by the Amn. army—and the garrison weak.

Majr. Henly & Majr. Hatfield taken prisoner—This

Another body of about 1500 moved from near Boston under command of Genl. Arnold to join Montgomery at Quebec and when joined to assault the place: which they did on the night of the last of December, but were repulsed with the loss of Genl. Montgomery killed, with a considerable number of men, and a number made prisoners.

Was filled with important transactions.

the british capturing fort Montgomery and we capturing Burgoyne's Army—and in Novr. the enemy took Philadelphia.

1777

Through November no particular action took place the british army pressing forward, in New Jersey, & the Amn. army falling back.

1776  
Novr.  
&  
Decr.

Decr. 25 & 26—capture of the Hessians at Trenton & the british at Princeton.—I was not present at either.

Commenced with great exertions on our part to raise a permanent army—British in a very high ex-

1777

hulting state. the first of our army regularly taking the field—at Bound brook—N. Jersey.—the British at N Brunswick: their outposts extending some distance out.

June  
1777  
June

Amn. army was posted on the Southern side of the range of hills between the village of bound brook & scotch plains the front Southward towards the enemy: Genl. Grey with about 3 or 4,000 made a circuitous movement to turn our left flank: general W. had advanced a strong body of troops in that quarter, with two field pieces—Genl. Lord Stirling as officer of the day had the command a brisk action ensued, which lasted but a short time when our troops fell back and occupied the pass in the hills; the rest of the troops moved to join them—but the enemy did not proceed to attack them in that post. This a most critical time for our general cause.

Sepr.

important movements in the Northern department. Burgoyne with a strong army pressing down Southward: ours retreating before him, but reinforced by a general rally of the militia: a strong detachment of the enemy under Col. Baum defeated & mostly made prisoners at the battle of Bennington.

19th battle at Bemis heighth

Oct. 7th Another severe battle near Seratoga—enemy defeated.

16 Burgoyne's army surrendered.



At the south—

Octr. the british under command of Genl. Clinton move from New York up the river: capture fort Montgomery; burn Eusopus & other places. On hearing of the capture of Burgoyne move down the river again to N York:

thence proceed by shiping to Philadelphia, which surrenders to them, after the battle of Brandewyne.

Our main army passed the winter at Valley forge near Philadelphia.

The first Connt. brigade remained in the middle department & built hutts in the highlands.

Those troops of the middle department under the command of Genl. Putnam went on to West Point & began to collect materials to fortify it: Kosiesco engineer. Our regiment continued there till June following.

**1778**  
**Feby.**

The British main army moved from Philadelphia across New Jersey towards New York. Our army attacked them at Monmouth the 28th of June.

**June**

nothing decisive.

News of the treaty between France & the United states made last February much raised our spirits.

The british army after arriving at New York— did not attempt any thing considerable the rest of the year.

Wyllys' regiment & the rest of the 1st Connt. brigade were kept in the middle department principally during the rest of the year. And in Decr. went to Reading in Connt. where they built hutts & continued thro' the winter.

**Decr.** The enemy detached a strong body of their army to act against Charleston S. C.

**1779**  
**June** The enemy advanced up the Hudson river & took from us Stoney Point &c.

**July** A detachment of the enemy under Genl. Tryon made a descent on the coast of Connecticut: plundered the town of New Haven: plundered & burnt the towns of Fairfield and Norwalk.

**16th** At night our light infantry under command of Genl. Wayne stormed stoney point, made prisoners of 1 Lieut. Col. 30 other officers & 500 men, with the loss of 14 kill'd & 50 wounded: this occasioned the plundering party on our coast to return to N York.

**Sepr.** War declared by Spain against England.

**Decr.** Our army moved to Morristown N J.—head quarters at Kimball's farm—built log hutts—remained there during the winter which was very severe—suffered much for want of provision.

**1780**  
**May** left our winter cantonments & marched to the vicinity of Amboy & New Brunswick—observing the movements of the enemy.

marched & countermarched the remainder of the year.

Genl. Lafayette—who had marched the 18th of Feby. from the main army towards Virginia with about 1200 or 1500 men having arrived & entering the town of Richmond on James river—towards which the british were advancing with about 1500 men—they learning that our troops were there—returned to their former station near the mouth of the river.

1781  
Apr.

Genl. Green arrived before Cambden but finding the place too strong to attack moved back about a mile from the town & occupied an eminence expecting the enemy to sally out and attack him, which they did on the 25th & obliged Genl. Green to retreat with the loss of 1 Capt. & 17 rank & file kill'd: & 2 Lt. Col. 2 Capt. & 3 Lieut. wounded & about 200 privates wounded & missing.

May 2d

March 15 a small action happened between the french fleet consisting of 6 ships of the line & 4 frigates—commanded by and a detachment of the english fleet consisting of 7 ships of the line & 3 frigates commanded by

1781

at the mouth of cheasopeake bay in Virginia: the action continued an hour—in which the french lost one Officer killed: and eighty privates killed & 120 wounded. The english lost one Officer & 40 privates killed and 80 wounded.

the english having established a post at Portsmouth on the bay, and having but a small naval force to co-operate with it—the french—then at Newport embarked 2000 of their land troops and sail'd with an intention to operate in conjunction with the Marquess De La Fayette who march'd from the American Army for Virginia—with 1100 light infantry—against the english garrison at that place, then commanded by General Arnold:

The english fleet sailing immidiately after the french and not having to make so great an offing in passing New York as the french—arrived at the bay before them: the action happening near night—the english took advantage of the night & went into the bay: on which the french returned to New Port.

1781

March 16th. A severe action happened between General Green & Lord Cornwallis near Guilford Court House in

General Green's small army consisted of about 1400 regular troops & about 2000 militia of Virginia & North Carolina with which he attacked the english army consisting of 2500 regulars.—Greene was defeated with the loss of Major Anderson, Captn. Barret & about 90 killed & 200 wounded: four pieces of artillery fell into the enemy's hands with all the wounded.

The enemy having met with a severe loss, did not pursue.

Greene retreated three miles in good order to where his baggage had remained during the action.

The enemy's loss in this action was so severe that without attempting to pursue the advantages they before hoped to have gained by a victory—they immediately began a retreat towards Charlestown South Carolina,—where Greene pursued them.

Genl. Marion reduced fort Watson & made prisoners 3 officers & 100 Rank & file. **Apl. 23d**

Fort Mott reduced.

The post at Orangeburgh reduced.

**May**

Maryland having fully acceded to the articles of Confederation—that being the last State which has hitherto neglected to do it—the confederation was finally closed, by which Congress has fully become a legislative body.

By the United States in Congress Assembled March 16, 1781.

Resolved that all debts due from the United States which have been liquidated in specie [sic] value; and all debts which have been, or shall be made payable

General Washington marched from his winter cantonments in the highlands—& took post in Philipsburgh: the four French regiments & the legion which had been lying at New Port arrived there at the same time & encamped on the left of the American line. Some skirmishing happened between the advanced parties of both the English & Americans—the loss on each side was about 60; without any Officers.—

**1781  
June**

**Augt. 5** An action happened between Admiral H. Parker with 7 ships; & a dutch squadron of 8 ships—in the English Seas—it lasted near 4 hours very severe; the English owned the loss of 443 & it appears they were worsted—for after the action the dutch with their large convoy proceeded to the Texell.

**Augt. 30** General Washington with the French line & two regiments of Americans crossed the Hudson at Kings Ferry & moved on southward.

**25** Count DeBarras with eight ships of the line & frigates sailed from New Port to join the fleet of Count DeGrasse bound from the West Indies to the bay of Cheaseapeake.

**Sept. 3d** Admiral De Grasse arrived with 28 ships of the  
**1781** line & frigates in the bay of Cheaseapeake & sent two 64 Gun ships to shut in General Cornwallis at Yorktown on York River: on their arrival an English 22 gun ship fell into their hands.

**Sept. 6** Three thousand land forces were landed from the fleet to operate with the Marquess DLa Fayette against Cornwallis.

Brigadier General Arnold with two twenty gun ships, 40 transports & a detachment of about 1,500 troops made a descent at New London in Connecticut. About 130 of the inhabitants flung themselves into a small fort on the east side of the harbour—which the English attacked and after being

twice repulsed—carried by storm & the Garrison fell a sacrifice; all but about 20, 75 being killed dead, among the latter was Col. Ledyard of the militia. The enemy lost Col. Airs, Majors Stewart & Montgomery & fifty odd killed.

the towns of New London & Groton were then pillaged & burnt & about 20 vessells in the harbour.

An action happened off Cape Henry in Virginia between the French fleet, consisting of 24 Sail of the line commanded by Count De Grasse And the English fleet consisting of 18 ships of the line commanded by Admiral Greaves.

1781  
Sepr. 5

An action was fought between General Greene and the British forces under the command of Col. Stewart—at Eutaw 53 miles distant from Charles town in South Carolina [sic]. Greene defeated the English, killed & wounded 600 & took 500 prisoners: with the loss of 500 killed & wounded & 42 missing: Lieut. Col Campbell was the highest in rank killed.

8th

The enemy fled to Charlestown.

## REVOLUTIONARY RECOLLECTIONS.

### Battle of Bunker Hill.

Altho' this has been so often described, it is presumed a recollection of the scenes of the 17th of June 1775 will be felt with interest by the few re-

maining survivors of that day, as well as by those of the present generation.

At day break the road on Boston neck appeared fill'd with the enemy moving out from the town; this though a feint, designed to attract our attention from the real object, caused our instantly repairing to our *alarm post*, which was on the swell of the hill in Roxbury: as we were forming for the expected attack the enemy poured a heavy and constant discharge of shott & shells from all their batteries which would reach us.

By sun rise their troops appeared moving back, and the real object of the day discovered itself—the landing of their army on Charlestown side, which was covered by a tremendous fire from their ships, floating batteries, and all their works which could be brought to bear on our troops who wer [sic] entrenching themselves on Bunker hill. It is well known that a soldier has nothing to do but to obey his orders. My position was a most painful one: being on the hill in Roxbury from whence I could see all the general movements without the opportunity of sharing in the most active parts. every *real soldier* knows the extreme solicitude felt on such an occasion. As the scene progressed I saw the enemy advancing up the hill, heard the roar of musketry commence, the dense body of smoke ascending, by which I saw the enemy three times retreating before the deadly fire of our brave defenders of their country's rights. Burgoyne in his letter has drawn a veil over



this—but the arrival of the reinforcement of the 2,000 fresh troops completely turned the scale, as they moved to the left of our entrenchment and enfiladed it.

Col. Grosvenor who performed a very active part on that day described to me many striking incidents which occurred during the bustle of battle: such as Major Pitcairn of the marines mounting the top of the ditch and exclaiming *disperse ye rebels*; when one of our men instantly shot him thro' and he fell in the ditch. A soldier just by the side of General Putnam had levelled his gun at Major Small, aid de camp to Genl. Howe, on which Putnam struck it aside with his sword saying *dont kill that man I love him as I do my brother*. Col. Trumbull told me Genl. Small repeated this to him in London, with tears in his eyes. I little thought on that day of the important results which were to be produced by it in this our favoured country: thro' Europe and the whole civilized world.

The subjoined letter of Genl. Burgoyne will be read with deep interest. The return of this 4th of July has refreshed those things in my mind. R.

Extract of a private letter written by Genl. Burgoyne.

Boston is a peninsula joined to the main land only by a narrow neck, which in the first of the troubles Genl. Gage fortified; arms of the sea and harbor surround the rest. On the other side of one of these

arms to the North is Charles Town, or rather, was, for it is now rubbish, and over it a large hill which is also, like Boston, a peninsula. to the South of the town is a still larger scope of ground, containing three hills, joining also to the main by a tongue of land, and called Dorchester neck. The heights above described, both to North & South, in the soldier's phrase, commanded the town—i. e.—give an opportunity of erecting batteries above any you can make against them, and consequently they are much more advantageous. It was absolutely necessary we should make ourselves masters of these heights, and we proposed to begin with Dorchester: because from particular situations of batteries and shiping—too long to describe and unintelligible to you if I did—it would evidently be effected without any considerable loss.

Every thing was accordingly disposed. my two colleagues & myself—who by the bye have never differed in an iota of military sentiment—had in concert with Genl. Gage formed the plan. Howe was to land from transports on one point, Clinton on the center, and I was to cannonade from the causeway on the neck, each to take advantage from circumstances. The operation must have been very wary. This was to have been executed on the 18th (June) On the 17th at dawn of day we found the enemy had pushed entrenchments with great diligence during the night—on the heights of Charles Town, were there in force, & we evidently saw that every hour

gave them new strength. it therefore became necessary to alter our plan and attack on that side. Howe as second in command was detached with about 2000 men and landed on the outside of the peninsula covered by shipping, without opposition. he was to advance from thence up the hill which was over Charlestown, where the strength of the enemy lay: He had under him Brigadier general Pigot.

Clinton & myself took our stand (for we had not a fixed post) in a large battery directly opposite to Charlestown, and commanding it, & also reaching to the heights above it, and thereby facilitating Howe's attack. Howes disposition was extremely soldier like; in my opinion it was perfect. As his first line advanced up the hill they met with a thousand impediments, from strong fences, & wer [sic] much exposed. They were also exceedingly hurt by musquetry from the town of Charlestown; though Clinton & I did not perceive it till Howe sent us word by a boat, and desired us to set fire to the town. No sooner said than done. we threw in a parcell of shells and the whole was instantly in flames. Our battery afterwards kept an incessant fire upon the height. it was seconded by a number of frigates & floating batteries, & one ship of the line.

And now ensued one of the greatest scenes of war that can be conceived. if we looked to the right, Howe's corps ascending the hill in the face of intrenchments, and in very disadvantageous ground, warmly engaged: to the left—the enemy pouring in

fresh troops by thousands over the land: and in the arm of the sea, our ships & floating batteries cannonading them. straight before us a large & noble town in one great blaze, the church steeples, being all of timber, were great pyramids of fire above the rest: behind us the church steeples & heights & our own camp covered with spectators of the rest of our army which was disengaged: The hills all round the country crouded with spectators of the enemy, all in anxious suspense.

(Endorsed)

Bunker hill

1775.

AT the close of the war Captain Richards returned to Farmington, Conn., and served as postmaster for twenty years. He married Sarah Welles, of Glastenbury, Conn., daughter of Jonathan Welles and Katherine Saltonstall. Their daughter Cornelia married John Lord Butler, and lived in Wilkes-Barre, Pa. Captain Richards removed to Wilkes-Barre and lived there to be 87 years old. He is buried in the Hollenback Cemetery near Colonel Zebulon Butler, his comrade in arms and father of his son-in-law. He was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

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