

**Col. Richard Somers’
“Atlantic County” Regiment
Nov. 1776 through Jan. 1777**



The Rising of Southern New Jersey: “the story was more tangled with underplot than an old Spanish tragedy. It involved 3 marching American armies (+ a “patchwork 4th army) , two quarreling Hessian colonels, one incompetent British commander and a beautiful widow in the village of Mount Holly. Ordinary people in New Jersey came together to do something about their lost liberty. They were unable to break the grip of the conqueror in their state, but they created an opportunity for the Continental Army....bands of New Jersey militia were roaming the countryside, and the Pennsylvania Navy controlled the river itself below Trenton Falls.”

“Washington’s Crossing” by David Hackett Fischer

“The chain, I own, is rather too extensive, but...trusting to the general submission of the country to the southward of this chain, and to the strength of the corps placed in the advanced posts, I conclude the troops will be in perfect security.”
Sir William Howe, December 20, 1776 from New York City

**“...many people in New Jersey were growing very angry against the British and German invaders who were attacking their houses and plundering their property.” Maj. Gen. Philemon Dickinson,
Commanding General of the New Jersey Militia,
December 1776**

**“They were not above 800 (at Mt. Holly),
near one half boys, and all of them
Militia, a very few from Pennsylvania
excepted...that he knew many of them
who came from Gloucester, Egg Harbour,
Penns Neck and Cohansey. They were
commanded by
Col. Griffin.”**

**The report of Tory agent Barzella Haines on Dec. 21st
to Col. Von Donop.**

From the Donop Papers, Marburg Hessian Transcripts

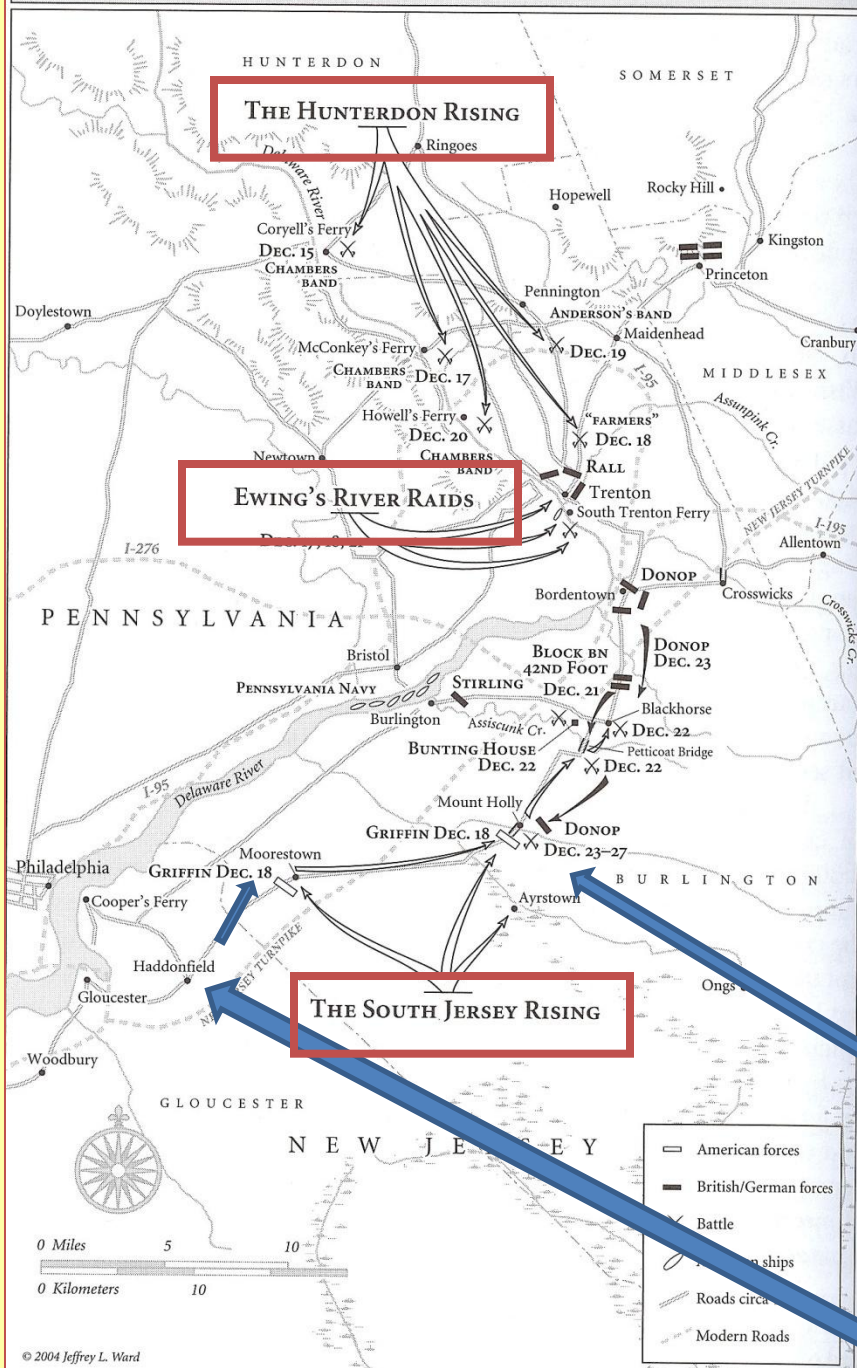
“There was a call for all the militia to go out. The British were overrunning much of the Jerseys. I volunteered for 6 months in a company under the command of Capt. David Weatherby and Lieut. Richard Higbee; I was the Sergeant. We were accompanied by Col. Richard Somers. Elijah Clark was Lieut. Col., Richard Westcott was Major. We went to Mount Holly.” Pvt. Cornelius McCollum, from his pension application 1832. John Tilton’s pension application adds that the company marched from Wrangleboro to Haddonfield and then on to Mount Holly.

“I entered the service in the month of November 1776, about the 20th of the month, as a private in the company commanded by Capt. Payne and Col. Somers Regiment. We paraded at Wrangleboro and marched from there to Blue Anchor and Haddonfield where we remained about a week. From there we marched to Mount Holly...” Pvt. Patrick McCollum, from his pension application, 1832.

**“He (Pvt. Lucas) afterwards
volunteered in the company of
Capt. Joseph Estell, belonging to
the Regiment of Col. Elijah Clark.
His brother was a lieutenant in the
same company and was wounded
in a skirmish with the enemy at
Petticoat Bridge.”**

**Pvt. Simon Lucas, on his pension
application, 1832.**

THE RISING OF NEW JERSEY



**Nov. 20, 1776 – Wrangleboro to Blue Anchor to Haddonfield to Moorestown to Mt. Holly:
Maj. Gen. Philemon Dickinson,
NJ Militia Com.**

**Col. Richard Somers, Batt. Com.
Lt. Col. Elijah Clark**

1st Maj. Richard Westcott

2nd Maj. Jeremiah Smith

Capt. William Smith, Adjutant

Capt. David Weatherby

Lt. Richard Higbee

Ens. John Tilton

Sgt. Cornelius McCollum

Capt. George Payne

Lt. John Adams

Capt. Joseph Estell

Lt. Simon Lucas

Capt. Zephaniah Steelman

Capt. John Somers

Lt. Samuel Snell

**** Capt. Robert Snell & men on guard duty in Somers Point**

**The 3rd
Gloucester
Battalion
under Col.
Richard
Somers
answer the
call!
(2nd Bat too
under Ellis)**

**Privates
Forrest Ballange
Stephen Ford
Enoch Gandy
James Giberson
Isaac Hickman
Jeremiah Leeds
Robert Leeds
John Lucas
Patrick McCollum
David Somers
Richard Steelman**

**+ about 175
others of the 350
3rd Bat. privates**

December 1776

- Nov. 20 – 3rd Regiment of the Gloucester County Militia is called up as Washington retreats across NJ.
- Dec. 7 – American Army retreats across to PA
- Dec. 8 - Hessians take Burlington & Bordentown – Americans retreat toward Mt. Holly
- Dec. 11 – Hessians divide their forces below Trenton
- Dec. 14 – Hessians occupy Trenton
- Dec. 17 – PA Col. Ewing harasses (4 x in 4 days) & Maj. Gen, Dickinson gathers intelligence
- Dec. 17 - VA Col. Samuel Griffin collects 800 VA Artillery, some PA infantry & the Gloucester County Militia & moves to Mt. Holly
- About ¼ of this force is from what is now Atlantic County – the 3rd Batt.
- Dec. 21 – 400 militia attack British at Petticoat Bridge
- Dec. 22 – British counter attack & militia withdraws
- Dec. 23 – British attack & move to Mt. Holly – Americans retreat to Moorestown
- Dec. 23 – a young widow of a physician kept Col. Von Donop “tied up” until the 26th – his troops stayed with him the only known widow of a physician within 100 miles was Betsy Ross 😊 (hypothesis, Fischer, p. 200)
- Dec. 24 – GW receives the good news of Griffin’s diversion and plans the American attack
- Dec 25 – a providential winter storm arrives
- Dec. 26 – Washington attacks Trenton

“Margaret Morris: Her Journal with Biographical Sketches and Notes”

Original in Haverford College Library; published 1949

Journal entry from Dec. 22, 1776: “All the women removed from the Town (Mt. Holly) except one widow of our acquaintance.”



Hessian Capt. Ewald’s diary (pub 1979, copy at PU Library): “The Colonel (Donop), who was exceedingly devoted to the fair sex, had found in his quarters the exceedingly beautiful young widow of a doctor. He wanted to set up his rest quarters in Mt. Holly, which to the misfortune of Col. Rall, he was permitted to do....This great misfortune, which surely caused the utter loss of the 13 splendid provinces of the Crown of England, was due partly to the extension of the corded, partly to the fault of Col. Donna, who was led by the nose to Mount Holly by Col. Griffin, and detained there by love.... Thus the fate of entire kingdoms often depends upon a few blockheads and irresolute men.”

(also at Atl. Cty Lib ML, Stockton & College lib)

**Freedom Fighters come in all sizes, shapes, sexes and races.
Passion and stupidity often go hand-in-hand!!**

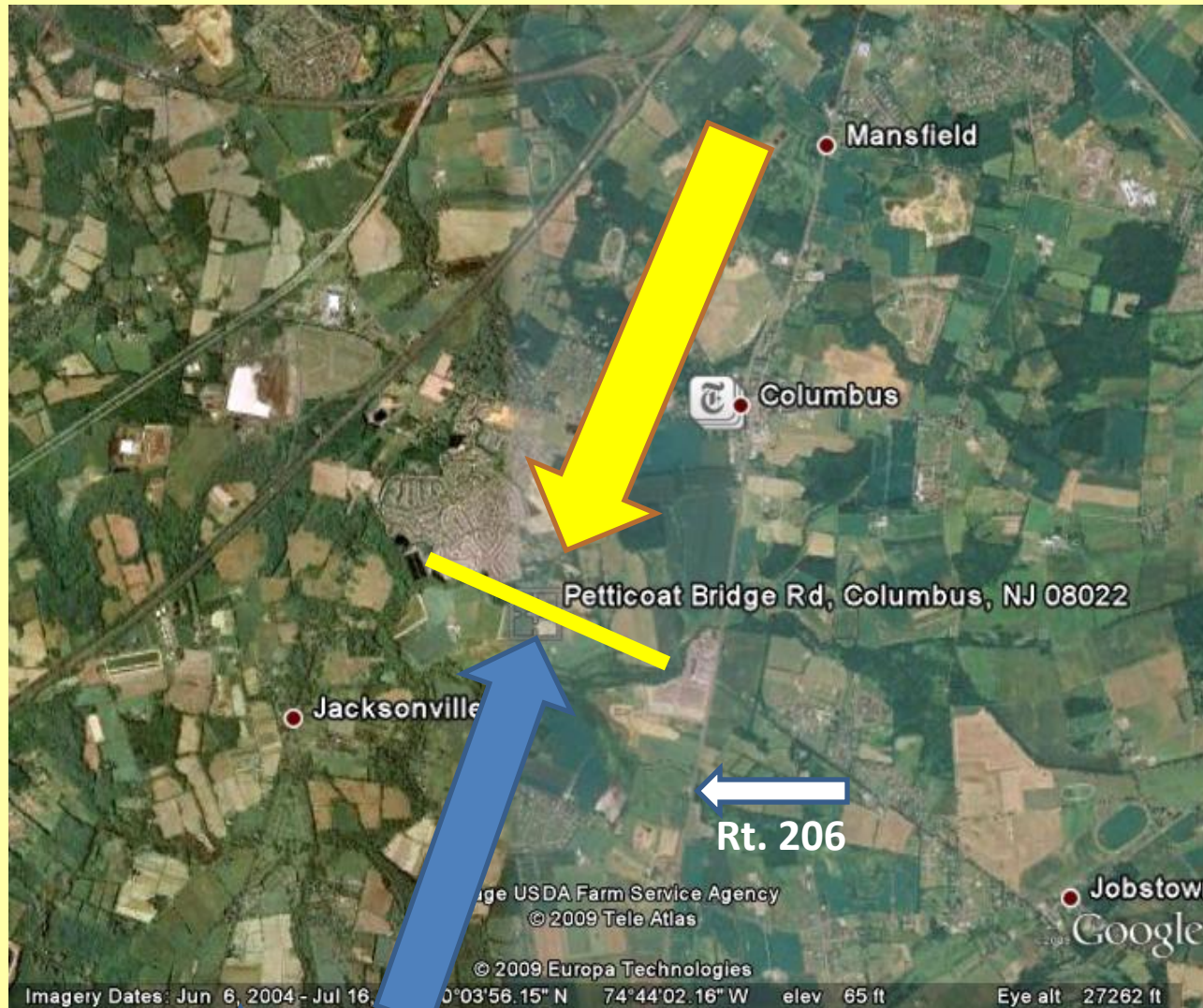


Bordentown

Petticoat Bridge

Blackhorse
is now
Columbus

Slabtown
is now
Jacksonville

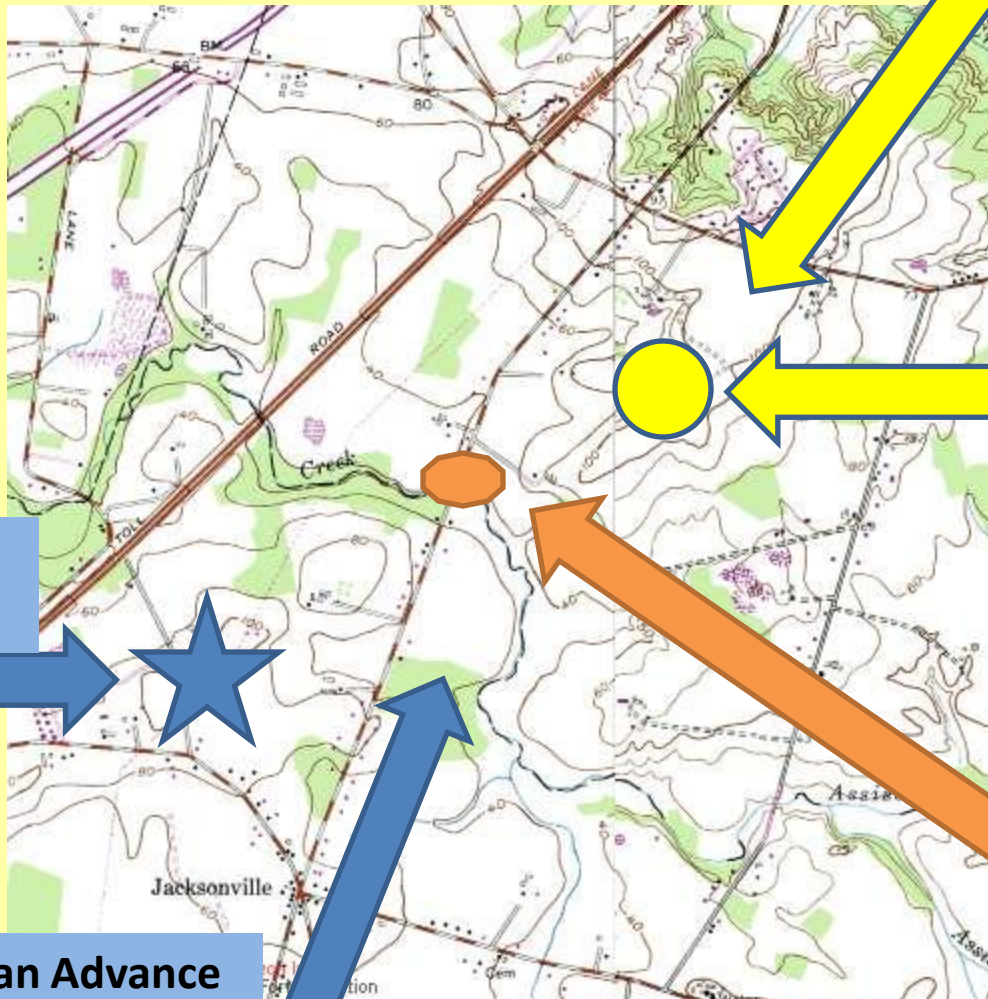


Mt. Holly 

1. Hessians set up at PB.
2. Our 400-500 guys hit them & win.
3. Hessians bring in all troops & our guys pull back.
4. They do it again at Mt. H
5. Our guys & the "widow" hold the Hessians at Mt. Holly

Petticoat Bridge

British Advance
From Bordentown



British Position
After 1st Skirmish

American Position
After 2nd Skirmish

Location of
Skirmish
40 3'52"N
74 45'26"W

American Advance
from Mt. Holly

Skirmish on
Assiscunk Creek

The Report

“Sometime after the battle of Petticoat Bridge, between the Americans and the Hessians, while stationed at the said village of Slabtown, and at a time when this declarant was standing a sentinel, he was wounded in the knee by a Hessian....being disabled by his wound from active service.”

Pvt. Stephen Ford from his Pension Application in 1833. In this action he was serving under Capt. Joseph Estell. His wound healed and he served in other places.

WOUNDED & KILLED

Pvt. Stephen Ford wounded (PA)

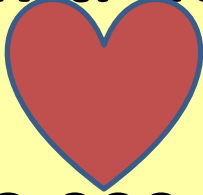
Pvt. Simon Lucas wounded (PA)

2 Hessians & 2 British soldiers wounded (Ewald)

100 Americans & Hessians killed at Mt. Holly (Ewald)

200 Americans taken prisoner in aftermath (Ewald) ????

An Interesting Equation

- Petticoat Bridge mini-victory & delay +
 - Mt. Holly delay & continued presence +
 -  + A stupid decision =
 - 2,000 + Hessians that could not help during or after Trenton >
 - A key American victory and a psychological turn-around in the War for Independence
 - Thanks to Col. Somers & his men.
- (Joseph Tustin. "The Mysterious Widow of the Revolution".
GCSHB #17: Dec. 1979. Tustin disc, trans & pub Ewald Diary)

The Capture of the Hessians at Trenton



- The Hessians lost 918 men, of which 22 were killed, 83 seriously wounded, and 896 taken prisoner.
- The Americans lost none, with only 4 wounded.

**From Col. John Cadwalader to Gen. George Washington
December 26, 1776, 9 PM**

Gen. Putnam was to cross at Philadelphia today, if the weather permitted, with 1000 men; 300 went over yesterday and 500 Jersey militia are now there, as Col. Griffin informs me today. These corps compose a formidable force. The plan would be more complete if Gen. Putnam was one day's march advanced. This would cause a diversion that would favor any attempt you may design in the future, and would expose their baggage and stores, if they attempt to cross. The militia will be easier kept together by being in motion and we shall have some service from Col. Hitchcock's brigade, whose time of enlistment will be up in a few days. I am, Sir, with great respect your most obedient very humble servant.

John Cadwalader

A Chaotic Week

- **Dec. 27 - Von Donop retreats to Princeton**
- **Dec. 27 – Cadwalader moves 1800 into NJ**
- **Dec. 28 – plan hatched to attack the British**
- **Dec. 29 – GW re-crosses the Delaware**
- **Dec. 30 – British prisoners help with info**
- **Dec. 30 – Delaying units sent up Princeton Rd**
- **Dec. 31 – All American units are in place**
- **Jan. 1 – Cadwalader & NJ Militia night march**

**Proclamation to the Friends of America in the State of New Jersey
Trenton, December 31, 1776**

The Army of the American States, under my command being lately greatly reinforced, and having again entered the State of New Jersey, I most warmly request the militia of said State in this important crisis to evidence their love to their country, by boldly stepping forth and defending the cause of freedom. The inhabitants may be assured that by a manly and spirited conduct they may now relieve their distressed State from the depredations of our enemies. I have therefore dispatched Col. Nielsen, Majors Taylor, VanEmburg, and Frelinghuysen, together with some other gentlemen of your State to call together and embody your militia, not doubting but success will attend their endeavors.

George Washington

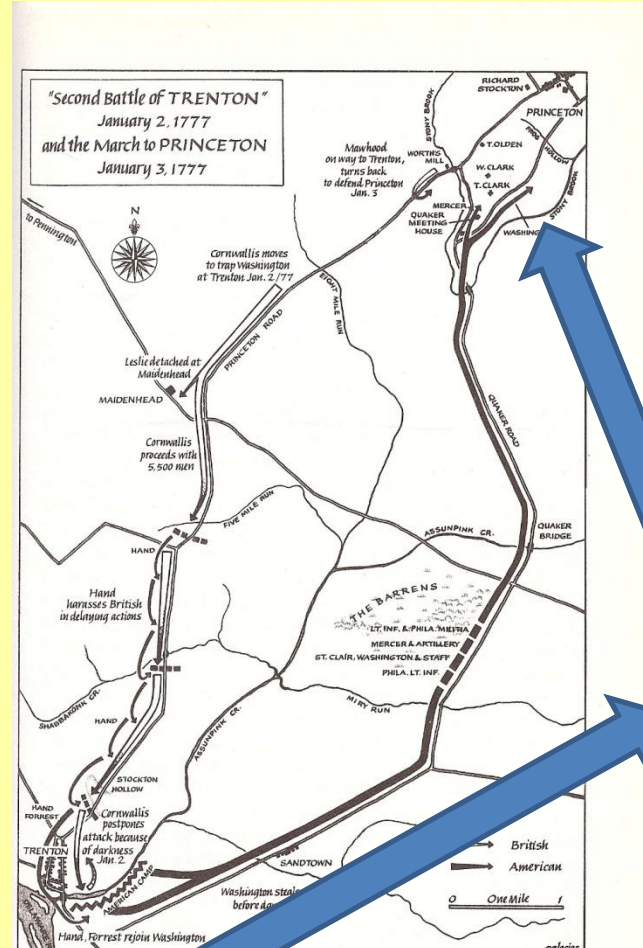
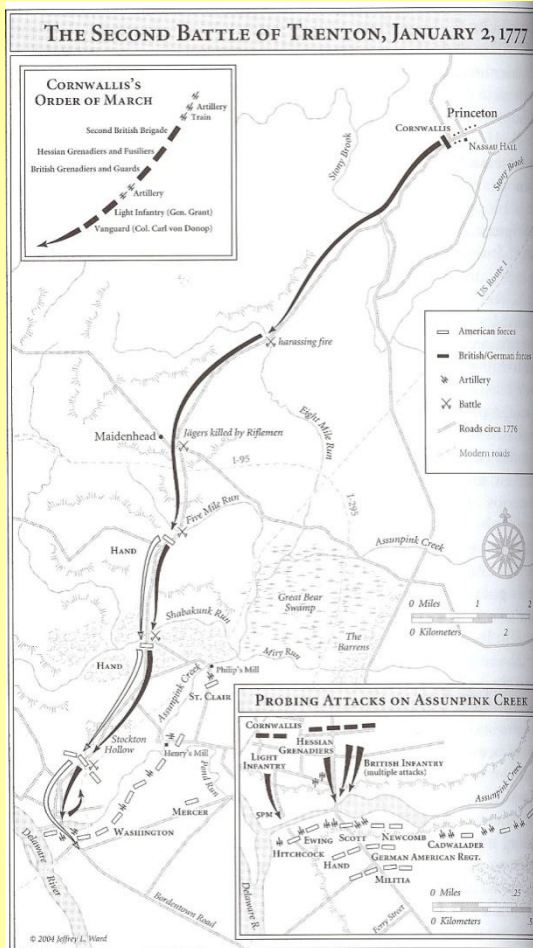
To John Hancock

Trenton, January 1, 1777

I have sent into different parts of Jersey, men of influence, to spirit up the militia, and flatter myself that the many injuries they have received will induce them to give their aid. If what they have suffered does not rouse their resentment, they must not possess the common feelings of humanity - to oppression, ravage and a deprivation of property; they have had the more mortifying circumstances of insult added.

George Washington

January 2-3, 1777 – Cornwallis Outwitted & Princeton Won



3rd Battalion Memories

“We retreated back to Haddonfield, staying one night in Moorestown, and remained at Haddonfield but a very short time. Then we marched to Bordentown, remaining all the morning of the Battle of Trenton; that morning we marched Trenton and were in the battle there on January 2, 1777. Early the next morning we marched to Princeton, our company being at the rear of the Army; we were not in the active part of the battle at that place.” Pension application of Jeremiah Leeds.

“We marched to Trenton and joined Gen. Washington’s army in the morning of the day after having marched all night from Bordentown and took part in the engagement with the British. The Americans had 14 field pieces on that occasion, 6 pounders and 9 pounders that Gen. Washington had taken from the Hessians. The British tried 3 times to force the bridge on that day and tried to cross the bridge below the village. Capt. Weatherby’s company was stationed to cover the artillery staying alongside the pond.... The Americans marched off in the night and went to Princeton and had a battle there that day. The American army under Washington got to Princeton about sunrise. General Washington took command of the New Jersey line and drove the British. The action lasted about 2 hours. Gen. Mercer was killed on this occasion. The Americans took about 450 prisoners beside the wounded there and sent them and the Hessians to Pennsylvania.” Pension application of Cornelius McCollum.

“We reached Trenton early in the morning; the engagement began in the afternoon and continued until dark. I was in it the whole time.”

Pension application of John Tilton.

“During the battle, a man from the neighborhood named Forrest Belangy had his leg shot off, while he was standing between Richard Steelman and me.”

Pension application of Patrick McCollum.

“At Trenton, after the skirmish was over, the Americans had orders to make themselves up fires and at the same time in the night, they were ordered to Princeton. We had an engagement at Princeton. The company to which I belonged was in the rear during the engagement....Fred Ballangee shot down by his side. (KIA)”

Pension application of Robert Leeds.

“A short time after we joined the Army, the British cannonaded Trenton, also in the state of New Jersey. I was not immediately engaged but was one of the reserve. Immediately after the battle of Trenton, we marched for Princeton, 10 or 12 miles above Trenton.”

Pension application of Enoch Gandy.

The Journey to Morristown

Companies that Went to Morristown for the Winter...

Capt. George Payne

Capt. David Weatherby

Companies That Returned to Egg Harbor for the Winter

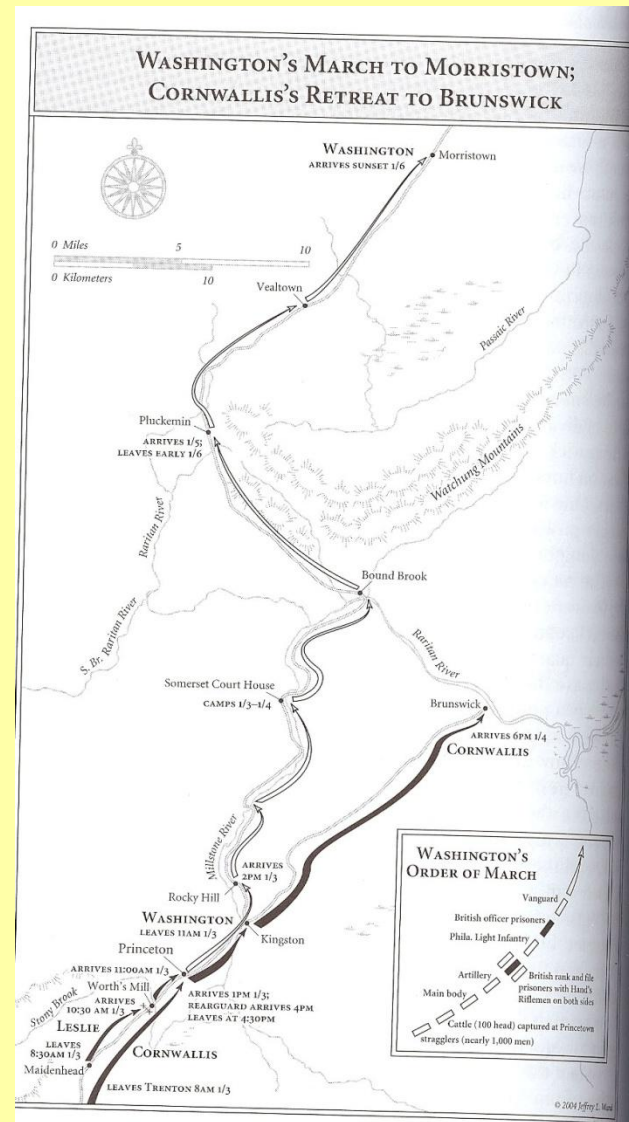
Capt. Joseph Estell

Capt. Richard Higbee

Capt. Zephaniah Steelman

Companies That Went to Burlington Afterward For Guard Duty

Capt. Richard Higbee



3rd Battalion Memories

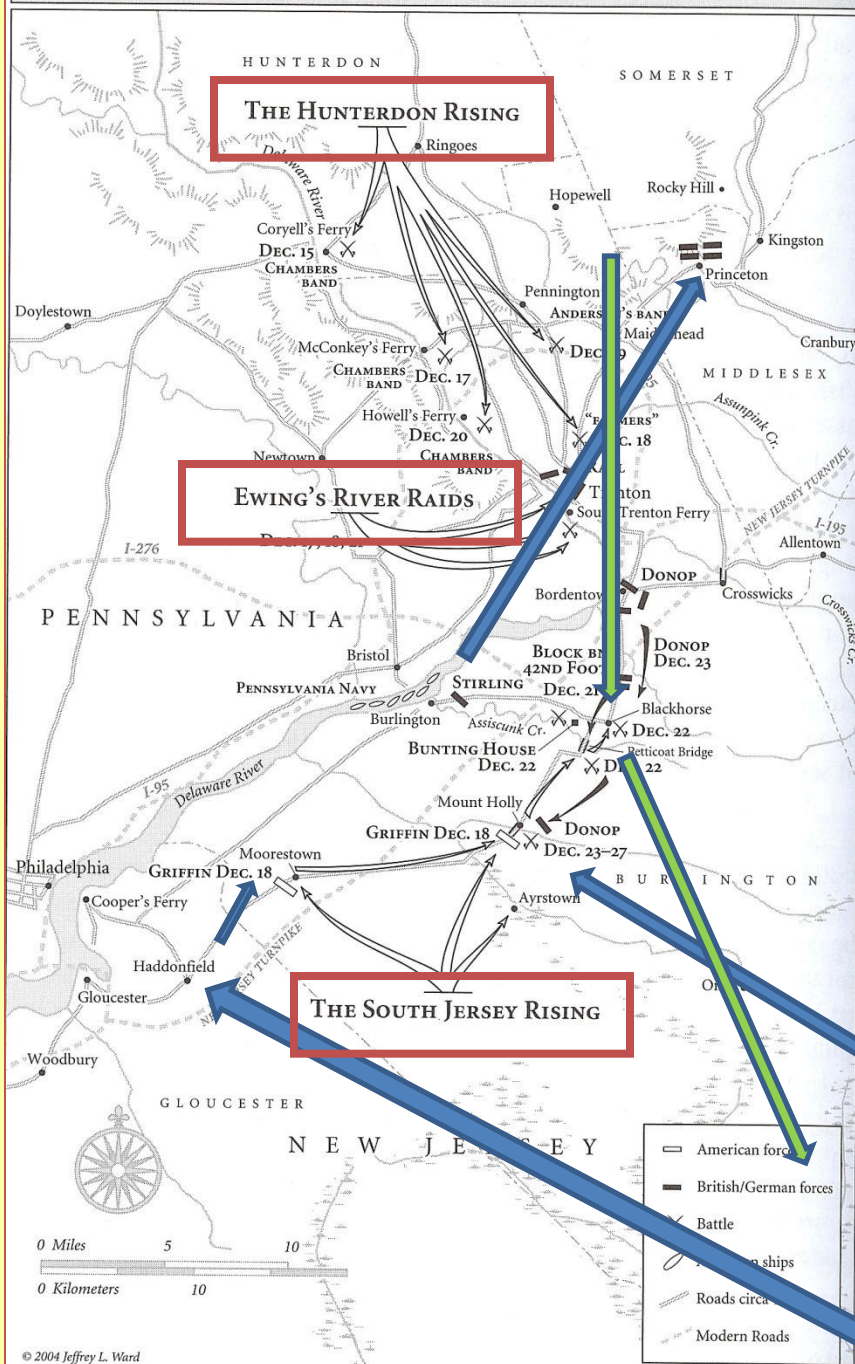
“After the battle of Princeton they went into winter quarters at Morristown. They did not cease Morristown until late in the spring of 1777, being engaged in chastising the Refugees whenever they could have an opportunity.” Pension application of Enoch Gandy.

“After the battle of Princeton, he went back up the Delaware to a place called Millstone, and then up on the side of the mountain to a place called Pluckemin. He returned home from Pluckemin.” Pension application of Robert Leeds.

“The American army then went to Morristown. Stopped at Somerset the 1st night and the next night stopped at Pluckemin. The volunteer company under Capt. Weatherby was attached to Major Ellis’ battery and Gen. Dickinson’s brigade. The field officers who commanded them before had returned home with the militia under their command after the battle of Princeton, since their time was up.” Pension application of Cornelius McCollum.

“After the battle, we remained a few days at Princeton, and then marched back by Trenton and Burlington to Haddonfield where we were discharged after having served at least one month and a half.” Pension application of Jeremiah Leeds

THE RISING OF NEW JERSEY



THE HUNTERDON RISING

EWING'S RIVER RAIDS

THE SOUTH JERSEY RISING

Officers & NCO's

**Maj. Gen. Philemon Dickinson,
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Capt. John Somers

Lt. Samuel Snell

By: Norm Goos 652-2238

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**The 3rd
Gloucester
Battalion
under Col.
Richard
Somers
answered
the call!**

**Privates
Forrest Ballange
Stephen Ford
Enoch Gandy
James Giberson
Isaac Hickman
Jeremiah Leeds
Robert Leeds
John Lucas
Patrick McCollum
David Somers
Richard Steelman**

**+ about 175
others of the 350
3rd Bat. privates**