

Proposed SAR Patriot Grave Markings

Ebenezer Tucker 1757 – 1845

Buried – Old Methodist Cemetery, North Green St (Rt 539) & Church St., Tuckerton

Revolutionary War-

- 1- Served with George Washington at the Battle of Long Island & other engagements.
- 2- Privateer with letter of Marque at Chestnut Neck
- 3- Was a witness to the burning of Chestnut Neck
- 4- After the Battle of Chestnut Neck his Surveyors House and Sawmill in Bass River were burned by the British.
- 5- Signed Petition to Governor William Livingston for Protection from the notorious refugee John Bacon
- 6- Later as Chief Judge of the Court of Common Pleas he advocated for and certified patriot application for pensions.
- 7- He served in Congress from 1824 – 1828. During this time he only made one speech on the House Floor. On May 7, 1828 he gave an impassioned plea to support a Bill in Committee providing relief to surviving Revolutionary War officers.

Reuben Tucker 1720 – 1810

Buried – Old Methodist Cemetery Tuckerton

Revolutionary War – Participated in a Tea Party off Absecon Island at the time of the

Boston Tea Party.

Ebenezer Tucker (1757 – 1845)

Reuben Tucker (1720 – 1810)

By M.T. Mangum

Ebenezer Tucker was born 15 NOV 1757 (1758) on Tucker's Island, NJ which sat at the mouth of Little Egg Inlet where his father had built a hotel, the first seashore resort on the Jersey Shore. His father Reuben came here from Orange County, NY around 1745. His mother Ruth Hulse was from Long Island but related to other local families (including the Headley's) who had settled on the Jersey Shore. By the time he was 8 in 1765 they had moved to the mainland. That area on the mainland which was part of Little Egg Harbor Township, than Burlington County would later be named in Ebenezer's honor. It is unknown where he obtained his education however he was a surveyor as well as a lawyer.

The most formative event of Ebenezer's life was the Revolutionary War. In his later years this would often be on his mind. His father Reuben played a role in the Revolutionary War but details are scarce. Ebenezer told a story that at the time of the Boston Tea Party there was a lesser known Tea Party off the coast of NJ near Absecon Island which his father participated. At the time of the War the Tucker's were not a rich family but of some means. Although only 23, Ebenezer obtained a Letter of Marque in 1780 as the Captain of the privateering bark, Kitty (Hetty) operating out of that "Nest of Rebel Pirates" at Chestnut Neck. His name is engraved on one of the memorial's there today. He was an eye witness to the British burning of Chestnut Neck including the burning of Bass River where the British burned his surveyor's house and sawmill. Earlier in the War he was said to have participated in the Battle of Long Island in August of 1776 with George Washington along with other engagements. His father appears to have enlisted in the downstate New York State Militia's in the Counties of Orange, Ulster & Westchester. Because of the family ties to the southern New York and the Orange County area they both probably returned to this area to enlist. There exist no documents (militia records were often very poor) to verify Ebenezer's claim however his Congressional biography, his obituary and the obelisk marking his grave spells out this and other details of his life. According to his obituary he held several appointments of honorable trust (It is unknown what they were) during the War. During his lifetime, his service was well known among his contemporaries. On 12 NOV 1781 he signed a petition along with other patriots to his Excellency

William Livingston, Governor of New Jersey asking for protection from the notorious loyalist refugee “Bloody” John Bacon.

After the War Ebenezer purchased most of the property that would become the town of Tuckerton. Ebenezer through his shrewd business dealings, involvement in the coasting trade, ship building and other pursuits became the richest and most prominent citizen of his time in this region. As a surveyor he surveyed part of the Old Main Shore Rd. (Rt. 9) in the late 1700's. He held many offices, locally, regionally and nationally. Leah Blackman one of his contemporaries described him in her History of Little Egg Harbor “as handsome and distinguished, known for his sociality, gentlemanly deportment, having the style of manners and address peculiar to an old school aristocratic gentleman”. Miss Sara Thomson on an 1808 visit to Tuckerton described the Judge as “Monstrous polite”. All this must have served him well with his dealings with the Founding Fathers.

In 1791 Congress made Tuckerton one of the first Official Ports of Entry into the United States and George Washington appointed Ebenezer the first Collector of Customs in the Little Egg Harbor District. When the politics changed and John Adams became president there was an effort to remove him from office. Tuckerton became the first postal town in Burlington County which at the time was one of only twelve throughout the state. Through his influence in 1798 his father was appointed postmaster, later he would assume this post. He was a Burlington County Freeholder, became Justice of the Peace in Little Egg Harbor because of his knowledge of maritime law and became the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas as well as Orphan's Court and Justice of the Court of Quarter Sessions. It was here in his judicial role he would fight for destitute Revolutionary War Veteran's to receive pension's that were justly due them. In 1824 he was elected to Congress and was reelected in 1826. During his four years in the House of Representatives there exists only 1 record that he ever came to the House Floor to comment on legislation. On 07 May 1828 he rose to give an impassioned plea for support for a Bill in Committee providing relief for the surviving officers of the Revolutionary War. He argued promises had been made and broken by Congress. A few days later Congress passed legislation that even exceeded Judge Tucker's pleas. After his 2nd term was up he returned to Tuckerton and resumed his position as Post Master and continued to serve the people of the area. He was active up to his death at 88 in 1845 and is buried in “The Old Methodist Cemetery” on Church St. in Tuckerton.

DIED,

At Tuckerton, N. J., on the 5th instant, after a few hours' illness, the Hon. EBENEZER TUCKER, in the 88th year of his age.

Judge Tucker was one of the few remaining links that connect the present generation with the founders of our republic. During our revolutionary struggle, he was an active, zealous whig, and participated as a volunteer in several of the important battles fought for liberty and independence.

He filled many offices of distinction and trust, both under the State and general governments, among the latter, he represented his State in Congress with great ability and fidelity. He was regarded as the father of the section of the State in which he lived—being keenly alive to all that concerned its interests and its honor, and never tiring in his exertions for the promotion of its welfare and elevation of its character. He has decended to the grave full of honors and full of years, leaving several generations of his offspring to lament his death.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM JUDGE E. TUCKER

Original Letter Owned By The Library of Congress

Contributed by Olive C. Rundstrom

Tuckerton, N. J. August 17th 1837

Accompanying this you will receive an account of the destruction of the Tea ship as nearly as I can recollect, also of the destruction of the Ship Zebra of twenty guns, the flagship of the armament. A village called Chestnut Neck containing ten houses, and ten or eleven houses in Bass River Neck, including my Saw Mill and Surveyor's house, were burnt at the same time. I was an eye witness of these occurrences. The house in which I now reside was the headquarters of Pulaski when his picket guard was massacred.

Strange as it may appear, I have never seen any account in history of this notorious armament, the burning of the houses, the massacre of Count Pulaski's picket guard or the destruction of the British Sloop of War Zebra, although I believe, they were mentioned in the papers of that day.

Tuckerton, N. J. August 14th 1837

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter requesting to be informed whether I have any recollection of the destruction of a vessel laden with tea, which is said to have taken place on the coast of New Jersey, about the same time, that the tea ship was destroyed at Boston. I was then about fifteen or sixteen years of age, and have a perfect recollection of the occurrence,

as it was at that period a topic of general conversation. I did not participate in the affair, but am strongly impressed with the belief, that my father, Reuben Tucker, and a Major George Payne, did, as I have often heard them detail the circumstances with great minuteness.

Three ships, laden with tea, sailed from England about the same time for this Country, and information of their intention preceded their arrival, which occasioned great excitement; one was bound for Boston, another for New York, and the third for Philadelphia.

The ship destined to Philadelphia, was the last to enter our waters, and on her arrival anchored on the Coast of this State, about twenty miles to the south west of this town. The Captain, seeming to anticipate an unpleasant reception, wished to ascertain the fate of the two vessels that had preceded him, before he ventured to enter the Delaware; The news of the tea ship being on the Coast of Jersey, flew like wild fire, for ten or fifteen miles through the adjacent country, and the people, several from the immediate vicinity, assembled on the shore, to the number of one hundred, and resolved upon her destruction. They accordingly boarded her in open day, scorning all disguise, in the consciousness that they were discharging a duty which they owed their Country. They broke open the hatches, threw the tea overboard, cut the cable of the vessel and left her to float ashore, where she soon went to pieces. The beach was literally covered with tea, nearly as far as Cape May, and the people residing along shore collected it, and it lasted them for years. I have often heard my father say, that an old lady, familiarly known as Aunt Nancy Ridgley who kept a public House at Absecum, obtained a large

quantity of this tea. No doubt the Ship lay somewhere in that vicinity, which accounts for her success in collecting such a large quantity of the tea.

It is a matter of surprise to me, that, so far as I am informed, no historical record of this achievement exists, and I very much regret that I am unable to furnish you any better evidence, of its having taken place, than the recollections of my boyhood upon the subject.

One other extraordinary occurrence, took place in sight of this Town; during the revolution, not noticed in history. While the British Troops occupied New York and Philadelphia, this Port was a great rendezvous for the American privateers, which captured many valuable Ships from England, two in particular immensely rich. (Viz.) The Ships Venice, and Major Pearson, bound for New York. These captures caused an Armament of Shipping with 700 British troops to be sent from New York, which landed at Little Eggharbour, and burnt all the prize ships in Port (about twenty) and about 30 dwelling houses, and massacred General Pulaski's picket guard (about 30). On the Armament leaving the Port, the flag ship, Sloop of War Zebra, grounded on the bar of the Port, and as they could not get her afloat, the crew abandoned the Ship, and set fire to her; her guns being loaded went off as the fire reached them, in irregular order, to the great amusement, and merriement, of us the people, that saw her burn.

Respectfully yours

Ebn. Tucker

Doc. John B. Blake

Washington City



IN
Memory of
EBENEZER TUCKER.

Born
November 15th A.D. 1757
Died
September 5th A.D. 1845.

Patriot of the Revolution
He served under
WASHINGTON, sharing
the battle of Long Island
and other engagements
and held several important
posts during that eventful
period. Appointed by
WASHINGTON the first
Collector of the Revenue for
the Port. He was also
the first Post Master of
TUCKERTON.

For nearly half a century he
held the office of Judge of the
several Courts of the County of
SULLY, part of the time
presiding and filled other responsible
public stations, discharging their