

**Patriotic Service Synopsis:** 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jeremiah Leeds served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucester County NJ Militia Battalion under Col. Richard Somers from 1776 through 1783 (1832 approved Pension Application). He served during the battles at Trenton (Dec 1776), Trenton and Princeton (Jan 1777), Red Bank on the Delaware River (Nov 1777), and Chestnut Neck (Oct 1778), as well as during many other skirmishes and defensive actions during his 7 years in the militia. He served primarily in Capt. Joseph Covenover's Company (Stryker, p. 438).

**Basic Facts:** Jeremiah Leeds was born 4 March 1754 at Leeds Point, Gloucester County, NJ to John Leeds and Sarah Mathis. His father and mother were active lifelong Quakers, both parents being Quaker ministers serving through the meeting house located at Leeds. He had 9 siblings and was probably the tallest of the litter at about 6'2" in height. He married Judith Steelman on 8 December 1776 and produced 8 children; he later married Millicent Steelman Ingersoll on 12 October 1817 when he was 63 years old and produced 4 more children. Jeremiah died from lip cancer in October 1838 at the Leeds Plantation in present day Northfield and was buried there. Today he is considered to be the first person to build a house in what is now Atlantic City, NJ.

**Family History:** Jeremiah Leeds came from a middle-class family of coopers (barrel makers) that immigrated directly to NJ before late 1676 when his great-great grandfather Thomas Leeds left Stansted, Mount Fichet, Essex, England, and after a possible stop in Long Island, he took residence at Little Silver Point, Shrewsbury, Middlesex, NJ. He left to avoid the religious persecution directed at the Quakers. His 3 sons probably left with him. Thomas signed the "Concessions & Agreements" in Shrewsbury in March 1677, meaning that he was in Shrewsbury by that date. In the account in the British official records, his wife, Mary Cartwright (listed as wife of Thomas), died 4 July 1677 at her sibling John's home on Westbury Street in Stansted of smallpox. The record says she was buried at Chequer Alley, London, England; the smallpox was possibly the reason she did not emigrate with Thomas. There is another family account, although without strong proof, that says Thomas' wife immigrated with him and died in Shrewsbury NJ on the same date in 1677, but there is no wife's name associated with this account and no proof of this burial in the Shrewsbury Friends records. The Stanstead death seems more probable. Nevertheless, Thomas and Mary had four children while in England, an unnamed child who was born and died in 1648, plus three sons: Daniel (1651-1720), William (1653-1753) and Thomas II (1654-1739). There may have been a daughter born to this family as well, Mary (1665-1727), but this woman was more probably a cousin. Mary's NJ will says that she died in Burlington NJ in 1727 in a financially comfortable state (NJ Wills, I:289) and was probably the daughter of Thomas' son William. Thomas married Margaret Collier on 6 August 1678 in Burlington and resided at Shrewsbury until his death on 23 November 1687. His NJ will mentions only his sons Daniel and William (NJ Wills, I:289), Thomas II presumably predeceasing his father. Thomas Leeds' family came to America as barrel-makers (coopers) with enough money in hand to buy property for both the father and two of the sons plus acquire extra land quickly. In his son Daniel's famous almanac there is both a family crest in the masthead as well as a mention that the family was related to a "gentleman" or nobleman from Leeds in Kent (Kent, Essex and London are adjacent counties). Daniel was criticized heavily by the Philadelphia Quaker hierarchy for his theology and his son Titan was likewise criticized by fierce almanac competitor Ben Franklin. It would

seem that the claim to a somewhat prestigious English family history would have been quickly and gleefully exposed as spurious if not true, especially in the case of the Quaker establishment who had easy access to the English records.

Thomas' sons Daniel and William came to Burlington in 1678. The story that they came on the *Shield* or the *Kent* cannot be verified. Most likely they came to Shrewsbury first and then Daniel moved to Burlington. William owned land in both Shrewsbury and Leeds Point, living in both places at various times. Daniel married Ann Stacey of Trenton on 21 February 1681 and she died in childbirth the following year. Daniel then married Dorothy Young of Burlington on 9 March 1683 and they had a "curiously premature" son Japeth. They went on to have 8 other children, all of which experienced the normal 9 month gestation period. Japeth was born 24 Oct 1683 in the family home in Springfield, Burlington County. Father Daniel was the Surveyor General of West Jersey, a member of the Governor's Council, a Judge and a shrewd businessman. His son Japeth married Deborah Smith in 1703 and produced 13 children, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of which was John (1708-1785). It is Japeth and Deborah that mythologically parented the Jersey Devil, a story that has proven to be a complete fabrication by competitors trying to demean Daniel's son Titan's successful almanac business. Japeth remained a devout Quaker while his father Daniel reverted to again become an Anglican. Japeth died 15 December 1748 and listed all of his children in his NJ will (NJ Wills, II:295). His son John married Rebecca Cordery in 1737 and Sarah Mathis about 1750; he resided the rest of his life in Leeds. John died 16 September 1785 and his NJ will lists his son Jeremiah, the subject of this essay.

**Military History:** Jeremiah Leeds began the war as a Quaker pacifist, a farmer with land at Leeds point and on Absecon Beach where he grazed cattle. After British forces landed on the Absecon Island (present Atlantic City) and took away his livestock, he and a few brothers angrily converted from pacifistic Quakers to fighting Quakers. Jeremiah was voted out of the Quaker congregation for becoming a militiaman. He entered Col. Somers' 3<sup>rd</sup> Gloucester NJ Militia Battalion in September 1776 in Capt. Nehemiah's Morse's company. His agreed upon service was one month on duty and one month off duty, unless the situation altered things. His first assignment was to help guard the "lookout fort" called Fox Burroughs to the rear of the Little Egg Harbor Inlet, watching for British and Loyalist intruders. His next month of service was November 1776 under Capt. Zephaniah Steelman in Moorestown, but Washington's Christmas Day battle after crossing the Delaware extended this to a two and one half month tour. His company, along with most of the rest of the Gloucester Battalion, was to act as bait, drawing off over 2,000 Hessian troops and British special forces from Bordentown to Mt. Holly so they couldn't help the Hessians at Trenton when Washington attacked on December 26, 1776. Jeremiah also participated in the Trenton and Princeton battles in January 1777 before returning home. He next served for the month of March 1777 under Capt. George Payne at Camden (Cooper's Ferry) guarding against British marauders. He performed the same service in May 1777 under Capt. Samuel Snell and in July 1777 under Capt. Christopher Rape. Jeremiah's Pension Application also informs us that he served in the Fall of 1777 as part of the group of companies that did the "mop up" for the battle at Fort Mercer in Red Bank in Gloucester County on the Delaware. He was voted out of the Quaker Meeting for his military service. He later became a Methodist.

Jeremiah was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. in Capt. Joseph Covenover's company and served the months of December 1777 and January 1778 in Haddonfield guarding Cooper's Ferry. We have no record of Jeremiah's "one month on/one month off" service from January through August 1778 but we can presume it involved guard duty near Cooper's Ferry since the British stayed in Philadelphia until then. Jeremiah was then called out in mid-September 1778 to prepare for the attack on Chestnut Neck NJ. He first paraded at the Forks and then moved down to the Chestnut Neck forts to meet the British. The militias completed an orderly tactical retreat while British burned the village. Thereafter the militia prevented the British from going upriver and destroying the cannon foundries and salt works. After this service Jeremiah seems to not have served actively again. We also learn that he hired himself out as a substitute once, but he caught the measles and could not serve. We have no record of Jeremiah serving for the rest of the Revolutionary War period. He received a \$60 per year pension plus an arrears payment of \$330.00. He received this pension from 1832 until his death in October 1838. His 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Millicent received it thereafter until her death in 1873. This pension amount gives the reader the impression that Jeremiah did serve in the militia until the end of the war, but we have no record of what he did and where it occurred. We can only surmise that it was comprised of a combination of Delaware River guard duty plus beach and inlet service.

**Family of Jeremiah Leeds:** The following is a list of Jeremiah's children and their children provided for those who wish to join the NJ SAR and DAR by using 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Leeds as their patriot ancestor. Since Jeremiah left no will, one's direct relationship to him must be proven via other documents. Known documents connecting the generations in this writing will be listed in parentheses.

**Jeremiah Leeds m. Judith Steelman (NJ Marriages)**

James Leeds (26 Feb 1778 – 20 Aug 1862) m.

Ruhanna Steelman Leeds (21 Jan 1779 – 20 Aug 1862) m. Joseph Conover 20 Feb 1801

Rachel Leeds (4 Oct 1782 – 22 Apr 1845) m. Jesse Steelman, m. Mark Read

Adah Leeds (25 Apr 1788 – 25 Oct 1792)

Sarah Leeds (26 Mar 1790 – 18 Oct 1792)

Andrew Leeds (1792-1865) m. Armenia Lake (1797-1853) 1 June 1817 (NJ Marriages/Glou Cty Marriages) – sonship proven by deed (in DocStar)

James L. Leeds (1818-1893) m. Abbigail S. Webb (1827-1907) 4 Sept 1847 (Ind in DocStar)

Armenia Lake Leeds

Sylvester Webb Leeds

Lydia Corson Leeds

Mary Elizabeth Leeds

Benjamin Franklin Leeds

Sarah Abigail Leeds

Ellen Bennett Leeds

Hannah Rachel Leeds

Augusta Eveline Leeds

Somers Edwin Leeds

John B. Leeds (1819-1867)

Steelman Leeds (1821-1896) (1850 census) – sonship by NJ will

Abigail Leeds (1831-1859) (1850 census) -

**Jeremiah Leeds m. Millicent Steelman Ingersoll**

Judith Leeds (1819-1869) m. Richard Hackett 16 Jan 1840

Matilda Hackett (27 Jun 1842 - )

Joseph Hackett (7 Dec 1848 – 4 Aug 1888) m. Tamar Oakley

Josephine Hackett (13 Jan 1850 - ) m. Samuel Reeve

Aaron Leeds (1820-?)

Chalkey Steelman Leeds (3 Oct 1825 – 10 Sep 1908) m. Margaret Holland Gaskill 1 Apr 1847

Amanda Elizabeth

Millicent

Jeremiah

Mary Rebecca

Charles Gaskill

Isaac Steelman

Laura

Robert Barclay Leeds (1828-1905) m. (2 May 1828 – 16 Mar 1905) m. Caroline English 29 Apr 1852

Lurilda

Honora

Neida

Harry Bellerjeau

Albert English

Alberta

Horace

Maynard