

Biography of Patriot John Abbit (Abbott), ACN 43494
P-100127

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Private John James Abbit (Abbott), a farmer in southern New Jersey, was among the first 10 volunteers for the Pittsgrove Company of the Salem County Militia on the company's muster rolls as of February 1, 1777. He served under Captain Jacob DuBois. While the specifics of Private Abbit's service are lost to history, the Salem County Militia fought ardently for the patriot cause.

The Salem County Militia reportedly helped General Anthony Wayne drive Salem County cattle to General Washington at Valley Forge in 1777-78, fought in the battles of Brandywine and Mount Holly, and help drive 2,000 Hessians from Bordentown and the vicinity of Trenton. After combat ended, the Pittsgrove troops helped guard the confiscated property of accused Tories while they were being tried in court.

In one notorious incident involving the Salem County Militia during March of 1778, General William Howe ordered 1500 British troops to forage for food and horses in South Jersey. The Salem County Militia blocked the British invaders at the Battle of Quinton's Bridge, thereby denying the British troops access to the crops and livestock of Salem and Cumberland counties. The furious British Commander retaliated against the Salem County Militia by ordering the slaughter of any patriots that could be found. Following these orders, troops under British Lt. Col. Mawhood and Major Simcoe arrived at the Hancock House at approximately 5:00 a.m. on March 21, 1778, where they knew the local militia was headquartered. British troops bayoneted everyone inside, killing 10 patriots and wounding 5.

Private Abbit was the great-grandson of James Abbott from Somersetshire in southern England who settled in Long Island, New York, circa 1690. Private Abbit was born on April 8, 1758 in Whig Lane, Pittsgrove, Salem County, New Jersey. Following the death of his first wife, Elizabeth Harden in 1787, he married Rebecca Chattin (1764-1818) in 1789. Private Abbit was the brother of Private Jephtha Abbott, 3rd Battalion, Gloucester County, New Jersey, Militia. Private John Abbit died in Wilmington, New Castle County, Delaware on April 4, 1834, and is buried in the Chester-Bethel United Methodist Church Cemetery.