

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. In an essay published in the July 12, 1780 issue of the *New-Jersey Gazette*, "a Lady in New Jersey" expressed "the feelings of a woman" about the campaign to raise money for Continental soldiers. She supported the effort because "it is to this class of men we more immediately owe our defence and protection; they have born the weight of the war, and met danger in every quarter; and what is higher praise, they have with Roman courage and perseverance suffered the extremes of heat and cold, the attacks of hunger, and the pain of long fatiguing marches. . . . Their many sufferings so cheerfully undergone, highly merit our gratitude and sincere thanks, and claim all the assistance we can afford their distresses. If we have it not in our power to do from the double motive of religion and a love of liberty, what some Ladies of the highest rank in the Court of France every day perform from motives of religion only in the hospitals of the sick and diseased, let us animate one another to contribute from our purses in proportion to our circumstances towards the support and comfort of the brave men who are fighting and suffering for us in the field."

2. A report dated June 24, 1780, from the American army camp near Springfield indicates that the campaign was already under way: "The Ladies of this town and neighbourhood, animated by the ardour which daily prevails more and more among all ranks of people to distinguish themselves in the present conjuncture of publick affairs, have instituted a subscription to be applied as a donation to the soldiery, for the purpose of rendering their situation more easy and comfortable. A large sum has already been given, and we flatter ourselves that similar subscriptions will circulate throughout the state." *New-Jersey Gazette*, June 28, 1780.

14 Lieutenant Colonel Francis Barber to Colonel Jonathan Dayton

[Gratz Collection, Signers of the Declaration of Independence, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.]

Besides inadequate and irregular pay and provisions, New Jersey soldiers were angered by alleged improper extensions of tours of duty and discrepancies between their compensation and that of other state units, especially the generous bounties recently obtained by New Englanders. When the Pennsylvania Line mutinied on January 1, 1781, in a successful attempt to redress grievances, the example was not lost on Jerseymen. The legislature promptly appointed a special committee to compute back pay owed the troops and to investigate additional complaints. Nonetheless, a portion of the New Jersey Brigade at Pompton staged a minor four-day mutiny on January 20-23, a sorry affair that resulted in the execution of two ringleaders. Although possible

X CITIZEN SOLDIERS

further trouble of a more serious nature was avoided by removing most of the brigade to Virginia in February, the men in ranks still harbored deep resentments, as Lieutenant Colonel Francis Barber of the Third Battalion informed his commander Colonel Jonathan Dayton on the eve of departure. The march southward may have improved discipline among the troops under Barber's command, but through the rest of the year those left behind in New Jersey regularly deserted or disobeyed orders and were purposefully derelict in their duty and disorderly in their conduct. The realities of military life posed particular problems of adjustment to Barber (1751-1783), who, upon graduating from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1767, taught school in Hackensack and Elizabethtown prior to joining the army.

Trenton Feb 28th 1781

D[ea]r Sir

We imbarck tomorrow morning early for Philadelphia to proceed from thence to Virginia. It is certain that Arnold¹ is blocked up, and perhaps this expedition will contribute to his captivity. It is said the tour will be a short one and should we be successful, it will compensate for any accidental disagreeablenesses.

The Jersey troops have behaved scandalously thus far. Last night, when at Princeton, they created a small riot with the Eastern² troops. The grudge occasioned by the late subduction was the leading motive. After a little tumult they were dispersed to their quarters and all [was] quiet after. This night many of them are drunk & very turbulent. They are clamorous about their mony, meaning the fourth part of their depreciation, which they say is due tomorrow, the first of March. Several threaten not to march unless they receive it. This is the effect of liquor, and I hope when that is evaporated, they will be quiet. Our men I think are exceedingly altered for worse; from being almost the most orderly & subordenate soldiers in the army, they are become a set of drunken, and unworthy fellows. The situation of an officer among them is rendered more disagreeable than any other calling in life, even the most menial, can possibly be. I had ten thousand times rather be a private centenal in an Eastern regement than be the commander of such soldiers under such circumstances. This discription of their conduct and my situation I know will afflict you on their and my own account, and I should not have troubled you with it, had I not conceve it my duty. Nothing but the highest severity will reclaim them, and whether or not that will be affectual while they receive such contenance from the public, is very uncertain. I thank God, tomorrow is the last day, or rather this night. So soon as we get out of the State, I am determined they shall pay very severely for the least irregularity.

As I mentioned before, the expedition is to be a short one, and I persue it with the greatest alacrity, and animation. Until my return I beg leave to recommend Mrs. Barber³ & the little family to your care & protection. If She wants assistance, She will apply to you freely.

I am Dr. Sir, your very sincere
friend &c.

F. BARBER

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. Benedict Arnold who, fresh from his defection in September 1780, led a series of raids in Virginia from December 1780 to April 1781.
2. New England.
3. Mary Ogden Barber.

15 John C. Post, Pension Petition to the Legislature

[Department of Defense Records, 10,559, New Jersey State Library.]

Although narrowly conceived, the problem of the veteran troubled the states and the nation during and after the war. The obligation of government to the soldier was seen in limited economic terms—bounties of cash or land for enlistment, grants to widows, and pensions to Continental army officers. For the vast majority who served in the army the end of the war brought no compensation. There were no G.I. bills, no Veteran's Administration. But to men like John C. Post, a farmer of modest means who served long and well in the Bergen County Militia, military service was not its own reward. After the war such men appealed for a variety of reasons to the legislature for financial assistance, less as a reward than as compensation for time spent and hardships endured. Post's application was in vain; almost without exception, such requests were rejected.

[undated]

The Petition of John C. Post respectfully sheweth unto your Honourable Body, that your Petitioner resides in the Township of New Barbadoes¹ in the County of Bergen and State of New Jersey, that he was seventy one years of age on the ninth day of June last. That your Petitioner during the war of the revolution which freed our now happy Country from British bondage enlisted in the regular service under Captain David Marinus² in the regiment commanded by Col. Philip Cortlandt,³ during which time he was engaged in many skirmishes, in hard fought battles, and underwent much suffering and fatigue. And your Petitioner will content himself by mentioning to your Honourable Body those still fresh and alive in his recollection, to wit the battle at Flatbush Long Island,⁴ also the Engagement at Fort Washington⁵ and the ever memorable battle at White Plains⁶ in which your Petitioner was severely wounded in the knee. And that during the Encampment of the Army at White Plains, he assisted in the construction or making of the Entrenchment from the North⁷ to the East River. That he also assisted in the erection of Fort Greene⁸ and Fort Washington in the building of all which he laboured incessantly both night and day and underwent sufferings and privations to be properly conceived of only by those who were eye Witnesses or Actors in the scene. That