

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Elizabeth Town, June 20, 1780

Sir,

... Whilst the troops were advancing to Connecticut Farms, the rebels fired out of the houses, agreeable to their usual practice, from which circumstance, Mrs. Caldwell had the misfortune to be shot by a random ball. What heightens the singularity of this lady's unhappy fate, is, that upon enquiry it appears beyond a doubt, that the shot was fired by the rebels themselves, as it entered the side of the house from their direction, and lodged in the wall nearest to the troops, then advancing: The manner in which the rebels aggravate this unfortunate affair, in their publications, is of a piece with their uniform conduct, plausible, but fallacious, nor is it to be wondered at, if a rebellion which originated in falsehood, is prosecuted with deceit: a soldiery received with smiles one moment, and the following instant butchered (for in a military view it merits no other name) by a set of people, who by their clothing and appointments cannot be distinguished from the quiet inhabitants of the country, may well be supposed to be exasperated; nor need we be surprized at their using the torch to dwellings, which they find hourly occupied by armed men, who either want the generosity or the spirit to close the present unhappy contest, by a manly, open soldier like decision; whatever may be the humane wishes of the Commanders, human nature at times, steps over the barrier of discipline and men of judgment and candour, in the great scale of political reasoning, do not wonder at occurrences, which their private feelings shrink at; such are the effects of intestine divisions; miserable is the fate of that country, which is the theatre of such a quarrel, and accursed is the man, or the set of men, who from motives of private lucre, or inordinate ambition have fanned a flame, which if they were willing, they are now perhaps unable to extinguish.

A BRITISH OFFICER

11 Residents of Trenton Celebrate the Victory at Yorktown

[*New-Jersey Gazette*, October 31, 1781.]

After the battle of Monmouth there were no more major military campaigns in the North. Clinton sat tight in New York, Washington doggedly watching his every move. The action shifted to the South, where the British army under Lord Cornwallis launched an ambitious plan first to conquer and pacify the southern states (where potential Loyalist support was greatest) and then move northward to take on the rebel strongholds. The fall of Savannah (December 1778) and Charleston (May 1780) coupled with the humiliating defeat of the Southern Army under General Horatio Gates at the battle of Camden (August 1780) won the momentum for the British and seemed to confirm the wisdom of the strategy. American resistance picked up considerably in 1781, thanks to the

IX WAR AND PEACE

efforts of guerrilla leaders Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter and the frontier riflemen of Daniel Morgan, but Cornwallis's damaging raids into Virginia (May-August), sandwiched between British victories at Guilford Courthouse (March) and Eutaw Springs (September), augured ill for the future of the American cause. But then fortunes shifted. Cornwallis, hampered by inadequate troops and supplies as well as ambiguous orders, moved on August 1 to the Virginia port of Yorktown, where the sea afforded better opportunities to maneuver and communicate with Clinton in New York. Shortly thereafter Washington received word that Admiral de Grasse and his French fleet had sailed from the West Indies and would be available for naval operations. At once Washington joined forces with Rochambeau's French army and raced south. Besieged by an Allied army of some 17,000 soldiers (nearly half of whom were French) and blockaded after September 28 by de Grasse's fleet on the York River, Cornwallis surrendered his entire 8,000-man army on October 19. To all intents and purposes the demoralizing defeat ended the military phase of the revolutionary war and set in motion events leading to the negotiation of the peace treaty ending the war (see Doc. 12.) The people of New Jersey, fully aware of the profound significance of the victory at Yorktown, held joyous celebrations throughout the state such as the one at Trenton described below.

Trenton, Oct. 31, [1781]

On Saturday last¹ the great and important event of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army, to the combined forces commanded by His Excellency, GENERAL WASHINGTON, was celebrated here with every mark of joy and festivity.

The day was ushered in with the beating of drums, and the American colours were displayed in various parts of the town.

At 11 o'clock in the forenoon His Excellency the Governor,² the Honourable Council and Assembly, with the inhabitants of the town and vicinity, attended divine service at the Presbyterian Church, where a discourse adapted to the occasion was delivered by the Reverend Mr. Spencer.³

At noon a proper discharge of cannon was fired by the corps of artillery belonging to the town, in the presence of the Governor, General Dickinson,⁴ the Members of the Legislature and the Gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood, assembled on the common.

At three in the afternoon, the company repaired to an elegant entertainment, at which the following toasts were drank, and severally accompanied with a discharge of artillery.

1. The United States of America.
2. The Congress.
3. The King of France.⁵
4. General Washington and the American army.
5. The Count de Rochambeau⁶ and the French army.
6. The Count de Grasse⁷ and the French fleet.
7. General Greene⁸ and the southern army.
8. The friends of liberty throughout the world.

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

9. The memory of Generals Warren,⁹ Montgomery,¹⁰ and all the other heroes who have fallen in the defence of the liberties of America.

10. Peace on honourable terms, or war forever.

11. The great and heroic Hyder Ali,¹¹ raised up by Providence to avenge the numberless cruelties perpetrated by the English on his unoffending countrymen, and to check the insolence and reduce the power of Britain in the East-Indies.

12. The Governor and state of New-Jersey.

13. The glorious 19th of October, 1781.

At seven in the evening the company retired, and the rejoicings were concluded by a brilliant illumination.

Every thing was conducted with the greatest good order and propriety; and we mention it with pleasure, that not the least disturbance or irregularity happened during the whole festivity. What greatly added also to the joy inspired by this glorious event, was the pleasing recollection of the advantages already reaped from our alliance with that magnanimous Prince whose troops have had so great a share in executing the important enterprise. An alliance now more firmly cemented by the united effusion of French and American blood, in a conquest the more agreeable to both nations, for being obtained by their combined efforts as fellow-soldiers and fellow-victors in the same triumphant cause.

1. October 27.
2. William Livingston.
3. The Reverend Elihu Spencer.
4. Brigadier General Philemon Dickinson, commander of the New Jersey state militia.
5. Louis XVI.
6. Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau, commander of the French army in America.
7. Francois Joseph Paul, Comte de Grasse, French admiral whose West Indies-based fleet first defeated a British squadron off the Virginia Capes and then arrived at Yorktown in late August to implement the crucial naval blockade of Cornwallis's garrison at Yorktown.
8. General Nathanael Greene, who replaced Horatio Gates as commander of the Continental army in the South in October 1780.
9. Joseph Warren, radical leader and major general in the Massachusetts militia, who was killed during the battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1776.
10. Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, who fell during the ill-fated assault on Quebec in December 1775.
11. Hyder Ali, who revived the state of Mysore during the general Hindu uprisings against British imperial control in India during the 1760s.