

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. Newark.
2. Although reports of rape and molestation of women by soldiers abound, virtually all are hearsay. Sexual assaults have always been one of the more nasty byproducts of war; while there is no question that British and American troops abused numerous women, it is equally certain that reports of such incidents far exceeded their actual occurrence. Word of atrocities committed by lustful soldiers was excellent propaganda.
3. Ogden (1705-1795), lawyer and assemblyman from Essex County, 1751-1771.
4. General Sir William Howe, commander of the British army in America, sought to take advantage of the demoralized state of the population after Washington's crushing defeats in and around New York by offering on November 30 to pardon those who had taken up arms against the king provided they now take an oath of allegiance to the crown. According to Howe, more than 2,700 Jerseymen took the oath during the winter of 1776-1777.
5. Subalterns are men holding the ranks of captain lieutenant, 1st lieutenant, 2d lieutenant, and ensign lieutenant. Any one of them could serve as substitute for a captain as commander of the company.
6. Colonel Sir William Erskine, who served as quartermaster general for the British army in New Jersey.

5 Ebenezer Hazard, Journey Through Wartorn New Jersey

[Fred Shelley, ed., "Ebenezer Hazard's Diary: New Jersey During the Revolution," *New Jersey History*, (Autumn 1972), 90:171-79. Unless otherwise indicated, the diary appears as edited by Shelley; the footnotes, however, are mine.]

In November 1776, Ebenezer Hazard (1745-1817), postmaster of New York, traveled across New Jersey in advance of Washington's retreating army en route to his native Philadelphia. In August 1777 he left the Pennsylvania capital on a ten-day trip through central Jersey, presumably in conjunction with his current position as surveyor of the post office. The diary of his journey graphically depicts the kinds of physical destruction brought to communities and the countryside by massive troop movements and warfare. The devastation of war not only had a direct impact on the welfare of individual people, but also had a profound effect on public morale. As the War for Independence dragged on, it became increasingly a matter of endurance in which Jerseymen tested their ability to withstand the ravages of war.

IX WAR AND PEACE

August 5-14, 1777

August. 5th. [1777]¹. Set out for Morris Town, & rode to Mrs. Morris's,² where I dined, and was detained the Remainder of the Day by Rain.

[Aug.] 6th. Rode to Princeton. Trenton has suffered by the Enemy but not near so much as might have been expected: all the Fences about it have been destroyed. The Ferry House was burned down.—I am credibly informed that when Genl. Washington attacked the Enemy at Trenton,³ Numbers of the Hessians hid themselves in Cellars, and others wanted to do so, but were driven out by the Inhabitants. Princeton looks like the Picture of Desolation. Several Houses have been burned there: Not a Pew is left in the Meeting House, & a large Brick Chimney has been built where the Pulpit stood; the Windows of this House have all been broken. The College⁴ is in a very ruinous Situation, but this suffered more from the Licentiousness of our own Troops than from the ravages of the Enemy; The latter knocked down a Study in each Room, but the former destroyed the Library, damaged the Orrery,⁵ broke down the Pews and Rostrum in the Hall, cut the Pillars which supported the Gallery, stole all the Pipes of the Organ, destroyed an elegant whole Length Picture of George 2d & defaced that of Govr. Belcher.⁶ All the Windows of the College are broken, & every room in it looks like a Stable. The philosophical and electrical Apparatus are destroyed or carried off.—The neat Brick Wall which surrounded the Court Yard is much damaged. There are no fences left in Princeton. Lodged at Hyer's⁷ where I saw a Child, the Son of a Negro Woman but of a white Father, who could not be distinguished either by his Color, Skin or Hair from the Children of white Parents; in short, he appeared to house nothing of the Negro in his Composition.

[Aug.] 7th. Passed through Kingston, Rocky Hill, Grigg's Town and Somerset Court House⁸ to Morris Town. These are small Villages. Kingston is so shabby a Place that even an Enemy could hardly deface it; the Fences, however have been destroyed. Rocky Hill consists of but very few Houses[,] which do not appear to have suffered at all. The Case is the same with Grigg's Town. The Road runs (from Rocky Hill to beyond Somerset Court House) through a fertile, pleasant, thick settled Country, along the Bank of the River Milstone, which empties into the Raritan. Great Devastation was made by the Enemy at Somerset Court House: The Dutch & Presbyterian Churches (framed Buildings) were stripped of their Pulpits & Pews, their Doors & Windows were broken, & the Boards torn off the Outside, so as to leave the Frames bare. Several Dwelling Houses were destroyed;—the Thatch was torn off of Barns & Barracks, & two Orchards were cut down that Booths⁹ might be made for the Soldiers, of the Branches of the Trees. The Enemy's advanced Guard was kept in an Orchard just back of the Court House; their main Body laid about half a Mile farther on a beautiful rising Ground: their Booths still remain there. Crossed Milstone twice and Raritan once, by Bridges; our Army threw up a small Breast Work & had one Gun to defend this Pass. The Road, all the way to Steel's Tavern[,]¹⁰ is very good but immediately upon leaving Steel's I had a very steep Mountain to cross; here our People had felled Trees to obstruct the Enemy should they attempt to cross the Mountain in any Way but by the main Road, which was defended by a Battery. Upon my Arrival at the Foot of the Mountain I crossed a Brook a little beyond which we had an Encampment. This was called Middle Brook.—Crossed another Mountain: these are distinguished by the Names of the first and second Mountains. From Steel's to Bullion's Tavern¹¹

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

the Road is bad, from thence to Morris Town it is midling. Lodged at Mrs. Bleecker's.¹²

[Aug.] 8th, 9th, 10th. At Morristown. This is a very pleasant Village, surrounded with Hills; it is situated partly on a Hill, & partly in a Valley. On the Top of a Mountain at the Back of it we have a Breast Work and a Guard House: from thence, there is a beautiful & extensive Prospect;—Part of New York Government¹³ may be seen from it.—Heard Mr. Jones¹⁴ preach. Genl. Washington's Head Quarters & a great Part of our Army were a long Time at Morris Town: the Enemy never came here but the Licenciousness of our Troops had damaged the Town a great Deal.—Morris Town is the Capital¹⁵ of Morris County. The Govr. & Council¹⁶ are sitting here at present for the trial of disaffected Persons.¹⁷

[Aug.] 11th. Rode through Bottle Hill¹⁸ (a small Village) Chatham, Springfield & Connecticut Farms¹⁹ to Elizabeth Town. Chatham is a small Village upon the River Passaick which I crossed here by a Bridge. Springfield is a small Village too, situated between two Brooks which, on Account of the Mud at Bottom, are impassable except at the Bridges. To this Place the Enemy came, but had not Time to do any Mischief[,] being disturbed and driven away, before Night, by the Militia. In their Way from Elizabeth Town to this Place the Enemy took out of their Houses a Mr. Nathaniel Morris and William Richardson, as Rebels (as they termed it): they pinioned them & brought them to Springfield. When they found an Engagement was likely to come on, they tied them both together, and placed them in Front; they remained there during the Battle, & neither of them received any Damage. The Enemy being driven off[,] they were released. The Officer who ordered them to be placed there is supposed to have been killed or mortally wounded (& carried off), as he has not been heard of since.

A Lady who lives at Elizabeth Town, and at whose House some of the Hessian Officers lodged, told me that after the Defeat at Springfield they drove into Eliz. Town with all possible Expedition, & were so excessively frightened that they hardly dared to go to Bed. One of them appeared to be frantic, clapped his Hands together, & exclaimed "O! de Rebel, de Rebel, de Rebel!!" He told the Lady they were in close pursuit of him, pointed to the Place where he thought he saw them, and upon her denying they were there, took her up-stairs & threw up the Sash of the Window in order to shew them to her more distinctly. This Lady's House was plundered of almost every Thing in it. She had 30 Hessian Soldiers besides Officers, Quartered there.

Connecticut Farms is a small Village which has nothing remarkable about it. Not far from it is a large bed of rich Marl.—A great Deal of Rain has fallen today, accompanied with severe Thunder and Lightning. At Night much more Rain fell & Thunder and Lightning were incessant. I could not help observing as I rode through New Jersey a Prospect of amazing Crops of Indian Corn & Buck Wheat. Upon my mentioning this to a Gentleman at Springfield, he told me that the oldest Man living amongst them could not remember having such Crops of every Kind in that Country as they have had this Year. He said that he had observed in his own Field that one Grain of Wheat had produced 40 Stalks, each having a good full Ear, and that in many Instances, Meadow which for 11 Years past has produced but one Burthen of Grass per Ann. has this Year yielded two.—A Field in the Town of Newark which had been fed upon both by the Enemy's Horses and ours, & over which their & our Baggage and Artillery Carriages had been driven, & which was

IX WAR AND PEACE

not fenced in, after the Army's Departure, before the Middle of May, produced an amazing Crop of Wheat. Thus Heaven provides for the Support & Comfort of those who have suffered so much by the War, & had every Reason to expect a Famine amongst them!

Elizabeth Town was much plundered by the Enemy, the Fences were destroyed, but the Houses in general do not appear to have suffered as might have been expected; the presbyterian Parsonage has been roughly handled; the Meeting House escaped because the Hessians performed divine Service in it.—

Lodged at Mrs. Noel's.²⁰—

[Aug.] 12th. Went to Newark. Weather very hot, as it has been for several Days past. The chief Damage Newark sustained appears to have been the Destruction of Fences. The Enemy violated the Chastity of some of the female Inhabitants here & in the Vicinity. A Woman of 70 was among the Victims of their brutal Lust.—Rained all the Afternoon. I forgot to mention the 7th. Inst. that I saw the House in which Genl. Lee was taken.²¹ I should never have expected to find a General there.—Lodged at Dr. McWhorter's.²²—

[Aug.] 13th. Went to Wardsessing²³ & Newark Mountains in Quest of my Cloaths which I found safe notwithstanding the Enemy had been at the House in which they were. My Property has been remarkably preserved.—The City of New York may be seen from Newark Mountains in clear Weather. . . .

Returned to Elizabeth Town.

[Aug.] 14th. Set out on my Return (by the same Road I came) to Phila. where I arrived the 18th. . . .

1. My insertion.
2. Is this Margaret Morris of Burlington (see Doc. 1)?
3. The battle of Trenton, December 26, 1776.
4. The College of New Jersey, Nassau Hall (now Princeton University).
5. Planetarium.
6. Jonathan Belcher, governor of New Jersey from 1747-1757.
7. Colonel Jacob Hyer's Hudibras Tavern.
8. Now Millstone.
9. Temporary houses or sheds.
10. Situated near the gap in the first Watchung Mountain.
11. Bernardsville.
12. Mary, wife of Anthony Lisenard Bleeker.
13. That is, the state of New York.
14. The Reverend Timothy Johnes, pastor of the the First Presbyterian Church in Morristown.
15. That is, the county seat.
16. Governor William Livingston and the Council of Safety.
17. See Sec. VIII, Doc. 5.
18. Now Madison.
19. Now Union.
20. The widow of Garrat Noel, Hazard's former partner in a bookstore in New York City.

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

21. Major General Charles Lee, Continental army, who was later to earn infamy at the battle of Monmouth Court House, was captured by the British at the widow White's home in Basking Ridge on December 13, 1776.

22. The Reverend Dr. Alexander MacWhorter.

23. Wardsession, now part of Bloomfield.

6 The Reverend Nicholas Collin on the Ravages of War

[Amandus Johnson, trans., *The Journal and Biography of Nicholas Collin, 1746-1831* (Philadelphia, 1936), pp. 243-49. Bracketed material inserted by Johnson, my footnotes.]

Hoping to regain the momentum lost by the British army at the battles of Trenton and Princeton, General Sir William Howe assumed the offensive in June 1777 bent upon capturing Philadelphia. His march through New Jersey being thwarted, he returned to New York City, took to the sea, and landed at the northern end of Chesapeake Bay in late August. Inflicting defeats upon the American army at Brandywine Creek, Chadds Ford, and Paoli en route to the American capital, Howe occupied Philadelphia on September 26. After sustaining still another devastating setback at Germantown on October 4, General Washington and his discouraged army took up winter quarters at nearby Valley Forge. With British and American forces jockeying for position on the far side of the Delaware River, adjacent New Jersey became no-man's-land. As the Reverend Nicholas Collin, pastor of the Swedish Lutheran Church at Penn's Neck, observed, the tenuous state of affairs caused the simmering civil war to erupt with dire consequences for the people of southwest Jersey.

[February-June 1778]

On the last of February [1778] the American general Vain [Anthony Wayne] passed through here with a detachment of 300 men, of whom the greater part were miserably clothed, some without boots, others without socks.¹ He himself did not arrive until 12 o'clock at night and took up his quarters in my house. Just as he was about to go to bed, the sentries fired warning signals, but nothing happened, however. He was a well-bred gentleman and showed me great respect. He left the following day, and on the morning at 11 o'clock, a regiment of English infantry came to attack him, but he had then already escaped. These troops had come in running march the last [Swedish] half mile, and the militia in Swedesborough had hardly time to escape. I dressed in haste and stepped out, showed the Commander my commission² and requested not to be in any way molested. He answered