

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Greene). But the valiant effort was in vain. Fort Mifflin fell to the superior forces of General Cornwallis on the night of November 15-16, and Fort Mercer was abandoned on the night of November 20-21.

5. During the winter of 1777-1778 a number of Jerseymen joined the West Jersey Volunteers, a Loyalist unit commanded by former Gloucester tavern owner Daniel Cozens and attached to General Howe's forces.

6. Martial law prevailed in the region. In December the Continental Congress, which had fled to York, Pennsylvania, instructed General Washington to bring to trial by court-martial anyone apprehended within thirty miles of any British garrison in Pennsylvania, New Jersey; or Delaware on suspicion of trading with or supplying information to the enemy.

7. Collin's congregation.

8. Now Swedesboro.

9. Bodo Otto, German-born Continental army surgeon whose residence in Pennsylvania was interrupted by a brief sojourn in New Jersey, 1760-1766. His son Bodo, Jr., served as surgeon with the Jersey militia during the war.

10. John Hatton, customs collector of the port of Salem and Cohansey from 1764 to 1776, who was despised as much because of his obnoxious personality as because of the controversial position he held. He earned the title "King of the Tories" for his Loyalist activities; his son, John, Jr., joined the British army. The elder Hatton was imprisoned in Pennsylvania August 5-20 for complicity in the escape of an inmate from the Philadelphia jail; he was released on bond.

7 General George Washington Recounts the Battle of Monmouth Court House

[John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington, D.C., 1931-1944), 12:156-58.]

Pursuant to revised British strategy calling for major campaigns in the South and only limited coastal raids in the North, General Sir Henry Clinton, who had replaced General William Howe as commander of crown forces in May, evacuated Philadelphia on June 18 and began to march his troops across New Jersey to New York City. Washington followed a parallel course thirty miles to the north with the finest army he had ever had in the field. Hampered by American snipers and inclement weather as well as an enormous baggage train, Clinton's progress was slow. After covering a mere sixty miles in eight days, he halted on the twenty-sixth near Monmouth Court House (now Freehold) to rest. Opportunistic as always, Washington ordered an advance unit under Major General Charles Lee to attack while he brought up the main army. At 10 a.m. on Sunday, June 28, the Americans attacked Clinton's rear

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guard. But when subjected to pressure by British reinforcements Lee, who disapproved of his orders, to the amazement of fellow officers ordered a retreat. Washington, who arrived on the scene at about noon, just in time to witness the confusion and panic that ensued, tongue-lashed Lee and regrouped his forces. The pitched battle raged on in ninety-seven degree heat; nightfall brought an end to the fighting and enabled Clinton to steal away toward transport ships at Sandy Hook. Thus ended one of the longest and bloodiest engagements of the war—American losses have been set conservatively at 365 (72 killed, 161 wounded, 132 missing) while the British suffered more than 200 killed and three or four times that number wounded and missing. Although the battle was a stalemate, Washington's action had averted an American rout and demonstrated that his Continentals could more than hold their own against the British army. In fact, Monmouth was the only time that Washington's army challenged a complete British force in open battle; it was also the Continentals' best performance of the war. Here in a letter to his favorite brother, John Augustine (Jack) Washington, the American commander recounts the battle of Monmouth.

Brunswick in New Jersey, 4 July, 1778¹

Dear Brother:

...before this will have reached you, the Acc[oun]t of the Battle of Monmouth probably will get to Virginia; which, from an unfortunate, and bad beginning, turned out a glorious and happy day.

The Enemy evacuated Philadelphia on the 18th. Inst[an]t; at ten oclock that day I got intelligence of it, and by two oclock, or soon after, had Six Brigades on their March for the Jerseys, and followed with the whole Army next Morning. On the 21st. we completed our passage over the Delaware at Coryells ferry,² (ab[ou]t 33 Miles above Philadelphia) distant from Valley forge about 40 Miles. From this Ferry we moved down towards the Enemy, and on the 27th. got within Six Miles of them.

General Lee³ having the command of the Van of the Army, consisting of fully 5000 chosen Men, was ordered to begin the Attack next Morning so soon as the enemy began their March, to be supported by me. But, strange to tell! when he came up with the enemy, a retreat commenced; whether by his order, or from other causes, is now the subject of inquiry, and consequently improper to be descanted on, as he is in arrest, and a Court Martial is sitting for tryal of him.⁴ A Retreat however was the fact, be the causes as they may; and the disorder arising from it would have proved fatal to the Army had not that bountiful Providence which has never failed us in the hour of distress, enabled me to form a Regiment or two (of those that were retreating) in the face of the Enemy, and under their fire, by which means a stand was made long enough (the place through which the enemy were pursuing being narrow)⁵ to form the Troops that were advancing, upon an advantageous piece of Ground in the rear;⁶ hence our affairs took a favourable turn, and from being pursued, we drove the Enemy back, over the ground they had followed us, recovered the field of Battle, and possessed ourselves of their dead. but, as they retreated behind a Morass very difficult to pass, and had both Flanks secured with thick Woods, it was found impracticable with our Men fainting with

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fatigue, heat, and want of Water, to do any more that Night.⁷ In the Morning we expected to renew the Action, when behold the enemy had stole off[f] as Silent as the Grave in the Night after having sent away their wounded.⁸ Getting a Nights March of us, and having but ten Miles to a strong post,⁹ it was judged in expedient to follow them any further, but move towards the North River¹⁰ lest they should have any design upon our posts there.

We buried 245 of their dead on the field of Action; they buried several themselves, and many have been since found in the Woods, where, during the action they had drawn them to, and hid them. We have taken five Officers and upwards of One hundred Prisoners, but the amount of their wounded we have not learnt with any certainty; according to the common proportion of four or five to one, there should be at least a thousand or 1200. Without exaggerating, their trip through the Jerseys in killed, Wounded, Prisoners, and deserters, has cost them at least 2000 Men and of their best Troops. We had 60 Men killed, 132 Wounded, and ab[ou]t 130 Missing, some of whom I suppose may yet come in. Among our Slain Officers is Majr. Dickenson,¹¹ and Captn. Fauntleroy,¹² two very valuable ones. . . .

The Enemy's whole force Marched through the Jerseys (that were able) except the Regiment of Anspach,¹³ which, it is said, they were affraid to trust, and therefore sent them round to New York by Water, along with the Commissioners;¹⁴ I do not learn that they have received much of a reinforcement as yet; nor do I think they have much prospect of any, worth Speaking of, as I believe they Stand very critically with respect to France. . . .

Yr. most Affect[iona]l[t[e]] Brother
GO. WASHINGTON

1. After the battle, Washington repaired to New Brunswick to rest his weary troops; there, with a thirteen-gun cannon salute as accompaniment, a grand review was held to celebrate the second anniversary of American independence.

2. Now Lambertville.

3. British-born Charles Lee (1731-1782), soldier of fortune who served in America in the French and Indian War, moved to Virginia in 1773. He was soon drawn into the burgeoning rebellion and, because of his military experience, was named major general in the Continental army in June 1775 (third in command behind Washington and Artemus Ward). Lee was universally disliked because of his unkempt appearance and uncouth manners, his arrogant demeanor, and his suspected sympathy for his native country. He was captured at Basking Ridge, New Jersey, on December 13, 1776; his subsequent behavior as a prisoner of war fell clearly within the definition of treason. Unaware of Lee's conduct, Washington arranged for his exchange in April 1778. Two months later Lee bungled his first test as a field commander at Monmouth. The resultant court-martial and suspension from command effectively ended his controversial military career.

4. There is no indication that Washington intended to take formal action against Lee, but on June 30 in a series of intemperate and insolent letters Lee demanded a court-martial to clear his reputation. Major General William

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Alexander (Lord Stirling) presided over the court, which opened in New Brunswick on July 2 and closed in Paramus on August 9. Lee was found guilty of all three charges brought against him—disobedience of orders, misconduct in ordering the retreat, and insubordination—and sentenced to suspension from command for twelve months. On December 5, the Continental Congress voted that the sentence be executed.

5. A causeway linking the Middle and West Ravines.

6. Washington regrouped his forces on an elevation behind the West Ravine.

7. It is believed that at least thirty-seven Americans and fifty-nine British died from sunstroke or heat prostration. Many horses also succumbed to the debilitating heat and lack of water, including Washington's magnificent white charger presented as a gift that very day by Governor William Livingston.

8. Washington displayed uncharacteristic thirst for battle, perhaps because he felt Lee's conduct would lead to criticism of his command. At any rate, Monmouth was one of the few instances where Washington's emotions colored his behavior on the battlefield.

9. Clinton rushed to join General Wilhelm von Knyphausen, who had left Monmouth at 4 a.m. on the twenty-eighth with his division and the baggage train. Except for one foot brigade and the Seventeenth Dragoons, Knyphausen's forces did not participate in the battle. Clinton caught up with Knyphausen at daybreak and was in Middletown by 10 a.m. on the twenty-ninth, at Sandy Hook on the thirtieth, and in New York with his entire army by July 5.

10. After recouping in New Brunswick, Washington marched to White Plains to keep Clinton under surveillance; the North River is the Hudson River.

11. Major Edmund Dickinson, First Virginia Regiment, Continental army.

12. Captain Henry Fauntleroy, Fifth Virginia Regiment, Continental army.

13. The Anspach-Bayreuth battalions were shipped from Philadelphia to New York City because Clinton apparently thought they would desert; the remainder of the German troops (mostly Hessians) made the march across New Jersey under the command of Knyphausen.

14. The Carlisle Peace Commission. See Sec. X, Doc. 8, note 2.

8 Colonel Sylvanus Seeley Describes the Battles of Connecticut Farms and Springfield

[Sylvanus Seeley, Diary, Morristown National Historical Park.]

The last military engagement of any consequence to take place on New Jersey soil ranks among the most baffling enterprises of the entire war—baffling in terms of both strategy and execution. Except for minor patrol actions