

by a small body of wandering militia, and hastily gathering his forces he had easily beaten off the attacking party. He then strengthened his outposts and made everything as secure against surprise as necessity seemed to require, and gave himself up to enjoyment. That in the attack which followed he was completely surprised, was due not so much to lack of precaution as to the suddenness and fierceness of the American onset.

Bitter cold was the night when the time arrived for the movement of the American Army. A blinding storm of snow and sleet almost blinded the scantily clothed men, and the Delaware was filled with floating ice. Cadwalader succeeded in getting a portion of his infantry across the river, but finding it impossible to transport his artillery, reluctantly returned. Greene did not succeed in crossing at all. The determined commander-in-chief alone succeeded, but so great was the delay caused by the storm and ice that it was four o'clock in the morning before the troops were again in line and ready to move. Passing from the river up to the Bear Tavern and thence to Birmingham, the two divisions into which the troops had been formed, separated, one under Sullivan proceeded by the river road, and the other, under Washington himself, crossed over by the Scotch road to the Pennington road, and thence toward Trenton. It was sunrise before the town was in sight. Near the present toll gate on the Pennington road Washington's division encountered an outpost and the first gun was fired. The picket was driven in and the division marching down the Pennington road planted a six-gun battery upon the high ground at the Five Points on the spot where the Trenton Battle Monument is erecting. The Hessians completely surprised ran out of their quarters and endeavored to form in the street, but the battery swept the streets and the attempt to make a stand failed. In this attempt the Hessians made an effort to wheel two guns into position near where Warren street crosses the feeder, but Captain William Washington and Lieutenant James Monroe, afterwards President, at the head of some troops dashed forward, captured the guns and turned them upon the flying foe. These guns are now at the Arsenal. The Hessians in Warren street ran through Church alley in to Greene street and the open ground beyond. Rahl here attempted again to form his men.

Meantime Sullivan with the second division had reached the outer picket on the river road, and three minutes after the first gun had been fired by the first division, the firing was begun at the Dickinson house. The picket was driven in and the Americans rushed into the village, dislodged the Hessians from their barracks and amid a sharp fire of musketry drove them rapidly down Water Street to Greene, where about 150, including the Dragoons, crowded over the narrow