

THE PEOPLE

The winter encampment impacted everyone in the Morristown area, in a variety of ways. During this time, Morristown was host to a wide-range of military personnel that numbered in the thousands. And the local population was in no way sheltered from the army's existence as residents were asked to make sacrifices for the cause. Here are some of the people who experienced the "Hard Winter" at Morristown.

HEADQUARTERS

The Ford Mansion, Morristown's largest private home, essentially became 1780's Pentagon – the command center for the military effort. But it also remained the home of Theodosia Ford

George Washington

In the seven and one-half years George Washington served as Commander in Chief, he faced many problems trying to sustain a newly-born professional army. But in 1780, he faced the greatest challenge yet, as unprecedented weather conditions paralyzed the transportation of supplies. Men were starving, and some were stealing food from local farmers. If the army was left to starve, the war was over. Washington wrote New Jersey's county magistrates, establishing quotas of grain and cattle to be supplied to the army. If there were not enough voluntary contributions, the army would have to use a "different mode, which will be disagreeable to me on every account" ... that is, impressments. With tact, Washington demonstrated skill as a leader of a new kind of army—a "republican army"-- where his army's desperate need was carefully balanced with a respect for the citizenry. He later reported "... my requisitions were punctually complied with, and in many counties exceeded. Nothing but this great exertion could have saved the army from dissolution...."

In June, Washington summed up his stay at Morristown:

"To tell a (*distant*) person...that an Army reduced almost to nothing (by the expiration of short enlistments) should, sometimes, be five or six days together without Bread, then as many without Meat, and once or twice, two or three without either; that the same Army should have had numbers of Men in it with scarcely cloaths enough to cover their nakedness, and a full fourth of it without even the shadow of a blanket severe as the Winter was, and that men under these circumstances were held together, is hardly within the bounds of credibility, but is nevertheless true." *Washington to John Augustine Washington June 6 - July 6, 1780*

Martha Dandridge Custis Washington

Martha Washington proved her devotion to her General-husband during the war, as she faithfully travelled long distances to be with him for at least a portion of all seven winter encampments. She traveled by carriage in December, 1779 towards her husband's headquarters at Morristown, but at Philadelphia, the snow depth would prohibit her from reaching her destination. Major Gibbs (Commander of the Guards) was then sent with Washington's sleigh to transport her from Philadelphia to Morristown. There, Martha provided encouragement for her husband and also boosted morale by engaging in various social activities. She attended one occasion at an officer's hut at the Stark's Brigade site in Jockey Hollow. Richard Lord Jones, a thirteen-year old army fifer, remembered this years later: "Colonel Webb...directed me to sing a certain song. I paraded up and down by the Company two or three turns-when I sung (God Save America.) Colonel Webb then directed me to go to Colonel Jackson's Hut where Mrs. W (Washington) and some ladies were and tell Mrs. W. that he had sent me to sing her a song. I did so sing the song when she presented me with a bill of three dollars-Continental Currency. The bill has been kept, folded as she gave it to me."

Mrs. Washington remained in Morristown until mid-June 1780: "I suffered so much last winter by going late that I have determined to go early in the fall before the Frost set in. There was not much pleasure thar, [sic] the distress of the army and other difficultys [sic] th'o I did not know the cause, the pore [sic] General was so unhappy that it distressed me exceedingly."

Alexander Hamilton

Alexander Hamilton came to New Jersey in 1772 after a very difficult early life, being orphaned by age eleven. By 1779, Hamilton was rising in the military and had been an aide de camp to the Commander in Chief for over two years. Hamilton would spend much of the time at the Ford Mansion dealing with communications, planning, and counseling Washington. While at Morristown, Hamilton began a romance with Elizabeth (Betsy) Schuyler, daughter of General Philip Schuyler of Albany, New York. Betsy was in Morristown living with her uncle, Dr. John Cochran, Washington's personal physician. The young couple were engaged by spring, marrying later that December in Albany.

Alexander Hamilton's unique vantage point as a member of Washington's staff gave him a clear understanding of the effect of a weak Continental Congress had on the finances of the country, not to mention the inability to finance the army. In an extensive letter written at Morristown but never sent, Hamilton spelled out his own plan to solve the economic problems of the young United States. The plan centers around the creation of "an American bank, instituted by authority of Congress for ten years under the denomination of The Bank of The United States." Lessons learned at Morristown about government and finance would serve Washington and Hamilton well. Years later, they would be key players in creating and managing a stable financial system and a new Federal Government.

Theodosia Ford

Theodosia Ford was born in 1741 to the Reverend Timothy Johnes, the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Morristown. In 1762, Theodosia married the prosperous Col Jacob Ford, Jr. His wealth from iron mining and other ventures made possible the construction of a fine mansion, Morristown's largest home. They eventually had five children. Theodosia's husband, an active patriot and colonel in the Militia, died of pneumonia on January 10, 1777, after returning from duty. At that same time, Delaware troops were quartered on the first floor of her mansion as the Continental began its first winter camp in Morristown. Her father-in-law Jacob Ford Sr. died only nine days after his son's death.

Three years later, Theodosia permitted the army to rent most of her home as a headquarters. General Washington would bring five aides, eighteen servants and various other visitors for over six months. The only known letter by Theodosia Ford is an appeal to Washington about a month after he left her home. She writes the General seeking a "certificate" (receipt) to show officials so she can receive the rent money and other such compensation due her because of Washington's stay. A certificate Mrs. Ford received after the encampment, sent by one of Washington's Aides de Camp, Col. Richard Kidder Meade, states: "I certify that the Commander in Chief took up his quarters at Mrs. Ford's in Morris Town the first day of December 1779,...and that he occupied two Rooms below, all the upper floor, Kitchen, Cellar and Stable." Though she is sent the document, we do not know what recompense Mrs. Ford finally received. Theodosia never remarried, and remained in the mansion house until her death on August 21, 1824.

Hannah Till

A receipt in the Washington Papers in the Library of Congress reads: "Morristown 23rd June 1780. Received of Major Gibbs eighty six dollars in full for two months wages at His Excellency General Washington's family. 86 dollars Hannah Till her mark." Hannah Till was a black servant, and she and her husband worked as cooks for Washington and Lafayette during the Revolution. Further investigation shows that a black slave named Isaac was hired to cook at the Ford Mansion. The records of accounts for General Washington's housekeeping tell us that an arrangement was made in 1777 for some of Hannah Till's wages to be reserved so she could save up the 53 pounds required to purchase her freedom. All this additional information adds to the significance of the aforementioned receipt, as it seems to indicate that Hannah had saved enough money to purchase her freedom by the end of the Morristown encampment of 1779-80; she appears to receive these wages outright. Another indication of her new status is that instead of being called (as in previous receipts) "negro Hannah" or Hannah Mason (the surname of her then-master) she is now Hannah Till, apparently her new name as a free woman.

Hannah Till would eventually move to Philadelphia and continued to reside there for the remainder of her life. Till was over 102 years of age in 1825 when the French hero Lafayette visited with her in Philadelphia during his return trip to America. Hannah Till died later that year.

OFFICERS

Living conditions for the officers may have been better than what the private soldier experienced, but the "Hard Winter" was a challenging experience in the lives of officers too.

Nathanael Greene

When the Continental Army was created, Nathanael Greene was chosen to be a Brigadier General, where he demonstrated his talents in gathering and conserving military supplies and encouraging troops from different states to work together. He became a trusted officer to General Washington and led troops in important battles at Trenton, Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth. In 1778, he became Quartermaster General, in charge of various responsibilities such as movement of supplies and the organization of the army's camps.

General Greene arrived in Morristown in November 1779, and spent weeks searching for a place for the army's winter camp. After difficult travel and work, he gave Washington two alternatives: Aquakinunk (near present-day Passaic, NJ) and Jockey Hollow, near Morristown. After Washington's decision to camp at the latter, General Greene supervised the organization and setup of the winter camp. Greene had to locate homes and other buildings in the area to rent for officer's quarters. He was very frustrated due to the high inflation of the paper money the army had to use to pay for

food and other expenses, particularly wagons and drivers to transport supplies. His wife Catharine Greene would arrive in Morristown in November, 1779 and stayed at the Arnold Tavern in the center of the town. On January 29, 1780, Catharine Greene gave birth to a boy, Nathanael Ray Greene, their fourth child.

After the serious defeats of the American forces in South Carolina in 1780, Washington asked General Greene to rebuild the shattered American army in the South. His persistence (“We fight, get beat, and rise up to fight again”) caused him to not win many battles, but it wore out the British, and would lead to their major defeat at Yorktown.

Dr. James Thacher

James Thacher was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts in 1754 to a Cape Cod farm family. He was apprenticed to a local physician at 16 years of age, which was typical for the start of a medical career at the time. After his training in 1775, Thacher joined the army, working as a surgeon's mate at Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the provincial hospital for the newly created Continental Army surrounding the British in Boston. Thacher served with distinction in the Continental Army and was eventually promoted to the position of surgeon.

He may be best known for having written an interesting wartime journal: *Military Journal*. During the Revolutionary War, first published in 1823. In his book, he provides recollections of incidents based on his personal experiences. These experiences include his service in Colonel Jackson's Massachusetts Regiment during the “Hard Winter” at Morristown in 1779-1780. His presence in Jockey Hollow is also confirmed by the contemporary drawing of Stark's Brigade—an officers' hut is clearly identified as the home of “Doctor Thacher.” Thacher's role allowed him to stay in close touch with many soldiers and to be keenly aware of their lack of food and daily conditions. His journal entries reveal a great respect for the level of sacrifice and suffering endured by those in the lower ranks.

After the Revolution, he moved to Plymouth, Massachusetts. He maintained a large medical practice, and became one of the most prolific medical writers of his era. After his professional retirement, he took an interest in researching the first settlers of his town, and helped found the Pilgrim Society. He died at his home in Plymouth in 1844 at age 90.

Jeremiah Greenman

Jeremiah Greenman was believed to be the only child of Jeremiah Greenman, Sr. and Amy Greenman. He received a basic education, but he did not learn to write until after he joined the army at age 17. He participated in a number of battles, including the Battle of Monmouth Court House, near present-day Freehold, New Jersey. During the war, Greenman kept a diary of his time as a soldier, which was preserved by his family. Today, it can be found as *Diary of a Common Soldier in the American Revolution, 1775-1783: An Annotated Edition of the Military Journal of Jeremiah Greenman*.

In the winter of 1779-80, Greenman's regiment (the Second Rhode Island Regiment, commanded by Colonel Israel Angell) was part of General Washington's winter camp at Jockey Hollow. This regiment was part of Stark's Brigade, whose huts were built on the east side of the hill called “Mount Kemble.” which was part of the property of wealthy merchant Peter Kemble. Greenman participated in the unsuccessful attack on Staten Island in January, 1780, and the Battle of Springfield later that June.

Long after the war in 1818, Jeremiah Greenman applied for the pension offered for veterans of the American Revolution but was rebuffed, because the government made the veterans provide proof that they really were poor and needed the assistance. Greenman eventually sent a number of letters to officials with details about his limited finances and his sacrifices as a soldier during the Revolution, adding stories about the various battles and experiences he endured. The government finally restored Greenman's pension in 1822. He died in 1828, and the newspaper announcement about his death remembered his service in the war of American independence.

Arthur St. Clair

St. Clair was born in Scotland and participated in important battles in the French and Indian War, only to resign from the British army and later oppose Great Britain as a colonel in the Continental Army. He helped organize New Jersey's militia and fought in the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, protecting the troops in their retreat to Morristown by destroying the bridges behind them.

During the winter of 1779-1780, St. Clair was Major General of the two Pennsylvania brigades camped in Jockey Hollow, and he stayed at the home of the Wick family. Letters and records today show he was in camp only seventy days out of the six month encampment, due to trips home, outpost duty, and meeting with the British to discuss a prisoner exchange.

The war caused great personal loss to St. Clair. He moved his family from the frontier to Pottsgrove near Philadelphia, where he had to sell a large portion of his western lands at a great monetary loss. During the war, his wife became ill and St. Clair returned home frequently to be with her. The western land that he still owned was either destroyed from Indian raids or neglect due to the effects of the war. By 1782, St. Clair wrote to Washington, “I am not master of one single shilling, nor will anything that I am possessed command it; I am in debt, and my credit exhausted and were it not

for the rations I receive, my family would actually starve”. Arthur St. Clair would serve General Washington faithfully for the rest of the war. St Clair then served in the Continental Congress from 1785 to 1787, and in 1791 he was appointed Major General and commander of the United States Army. In November 1791, he was badly defeated by the Miami Indians, and later resigned from the army. In 1818, he died in poverty.

SOLDIERS

Soldiers came from towns all over the eastern seaboard, and by the time they reached Morristown many had been through numerous battles and marched hundreds of miles. Jockey Hollow would challenge not only their loyalty, but their will to survive.

Joseph Plumb Martin

Joseph Plumb Martin was born on November 21, 1760, in Becket, Massachusetts, and was sent to live with his grandparents when he was seven, to work on their farm. Though his grandparents disapproved, Martin enlisted in the Continental Army on July 6, 1776 when he was still only fifteen years old. He was eventually sent to New York, where he witnessed the American defeats at Brooklyn and Manhattan, which led to the capture of New York by the British, and he also survived the winter encampment at Valley Forge.

During the 1779-80 encampment in Morristown, Joseph Plumb Martin was nineteen years old, a private with the First Connecticut Brigade. Martin experienced the entire encampment—arriving the first week of December 1779 and departing June 7, 1780. Martin would recall vividly that “hard winter” many years after the war, when he wrote down his memories of serving in the American Revolution. The book was published in 1830 as *A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier, Interspersed with Anecdotes of Incidents that Occurred Within His Own Observation*. Now titled *Private Yankee Doodle*, Martin’s book is still considered one of the best books about the Revolution written by a person who served as a common soldier. The book is filled with fascinating details, humorous anecdotes, and wry commentary, and its information is considered accurate despite Martin’s recalling his stories years later.

Martin married Lucy Clewley in 1794 and settled in Maine, where they had at least five children. Joseph eventually became a member of the state legislature and a town clerk, in addition to being an artist, writer, and poet. He died in 1850 in Prospect (now Stockton Springs), Maine, at age 89.

Oliver Cromwell

Oliver Cromwell was born a freeman in 1752, in Black Horse, which is present-day Columbus in Mansfield Township, in southern New Jersey. Raised as a farmer, Cromwell joined the Continental Army in his early twenties and enlisted in a company attached to the Second New Jersey Regiment. He was with the army at the retreat of the Delaware, on the memorable crossing of the 25th of December, 1776. It is said that he could remember as an old man many details of this, and succeeding battles of Trenton and Princeton. He told an interviewer that they “knocked the British about lively” at Princeton. Cromwell was present at the battles of Brandywine and Monmouth, and also at Yorktown, where according to Cromwell he saw the last man killed.

Cromwell’s unit, Colonel Shreve’s 2nd New Jersey Regiment, was part of the winter encampment at Morristown. He served for six years and nine months; one source says that he was a drummer. Most of the information known about Oliver Cromwell comes from an article in *The Burlington Gazette* (of New Jersey) when the newspaper interviewed him when he reached one hundred years old. He was described as “... an old colored man, ... very aged; and yet comparatively few are aware that he is among the survivors of the gallant army who fought for the liberties of our country in the days which tried men’s souls.”

His honorable discharge from the army – with the distinction of receiving the Badge of Merit, awarded for “Six Years faithful service” – was signed by Washington on June 5, 1783. Cromwell often spoke of this document with the Commander-in-Chief’s own signature, “of which he was very proud.” He died in January, 1853.

Richard Lord Jones

Born at Colchester, Connecticut in 1767. He enlisted in Colonel Samuel B. Webb’s Regiment of the Continental Army in June of 1777 and was put under the Master of the Band to learn to play the fife. He arrived in Morristown in 1780 and would later write, “On the 12th day of January, 1780, we struck tents and took possession of the Huts. The Inhabitants remarked that it was the coldest winter ever known by the oldest inhabitants. The troops drew no rations of meat for two days (hungry times).” Lord Jones would also recall memorable brushes with George Washington, Martha Washington, and Lafayette. In one instance, he performed a song in an officer’s hut: “I paraded up and down by the Company two or three turns-when I sung (God Save America.) Colonel Webb then directed me to go to Colonel Jackson’s Hut where Mrs. W (Washington) and some ladies were and tell Mrs. W. that he had sent me to sing her a song. I did so sing the song when she presented me with a bill of three dollars, Continental Currency. The bill has been

kept, folded as she gave it to me.” Lord Jones remained at Jockey Hollow until the end of camp. “A short time after, the Regiment left their huts and were marched down towards Springfield, New Jersey. My time soon after expired (June 20, 1780.) When I received my discharge I started for home with two men who were also discharged. I had to walk 150 miles. I reached home at Hartford, Connecticut without any accident.”

As an adult, Richard Lord Jones worked in the cotton-manufacturing business, and then eventually became a farmer near New Albany, Indiana, where he died in 1852. His grave is at the Fairview Cemetery in New Albany, where a modern marker notes that he was a “ten year old fifer” in the Revolutionary War.

Samuel Shelley

Shelley was born in 1760 in Hempstead Plains, Long Island. Shelley’s father was a ship’s carpenter who was subjected to forced labor by the British army. When his property was confiscated, he escaped to New Jersey with his family. Samuel worked as an indentured servant, and as the revolutionary conflict began to emerge, it seems that Samuel was not very interested in joining the military response to the British. Shelley was what we might refer to as a “draft dodger.” He was a very young looking man, so he claimed for many years that he was only twelve. According to his own account, “I was twelve years old for a good many years. I was always very small in stature.” He was eventually discovered when his aunt revealed Samuel’s true age to a sergeant in the Continental Army. Samuel was then forced into military service for a term of approximately nine months.

Samuel Shelley entered the New Jersey Brigade when they were at Morristown in early 1780. He was involved in only one skirmish, but he wrote an interesting narrative of camp life at Morristown. He remained with that brigade until his discharge at the end of 1780. Shelley moved several times after the war but finally settled in Wantage Township, New Jersey. At age 91, he applied for a pension, but he never received one.

CIVILIANS

Life changed for the citizens in and around Morristown when the Army started arriving in December 1779. The "Hard Winter" would ultimately create tension and even animosity between the civilian and military populations.

Henry Wick

Henry Wick purchased the land at present-day Jockey Hollow around 1750, after moving from Long Island. He and wife Mary Cooper Wick had five children: Henry, Jr., Mary, James, Phoebe and Temperance. The Wicks owned one of the largest farms in the Morristown area, and their home was used to house officers in encampments prior to the Morristown camp of 1780, and after as well.

During the Morristown encampment, only Henry, Mary and Temperance Wick seemed to be living in their farmhouse. The Wick House became the headquarters of Major General Arthur St. Clair, commander of the Pennsylvania brigades. The Pennsylvania brigades, Maryland brigades, Hand’s brigade and at least part of the New York brigade camped on Wick property. Most of the Wick’s timberland was cleared of trees by the troops so they could have shelter (building material for huts) and firewood (fuel for warmth and cooking.) One officer, Lieutenant Enos Reeves, would be a guest in 1780-1781, when a smaller number of soldiers came back to Morristown to camp. Reeves came with the Pennsylvania troops that returned to Jockey Hollow. Lieutenant Reeves would later write that Henry Wick and Dr. Leddell (his son-in-law) had lost six hundred acres of trees during the 1780 winter encampment, and that he expected another winter of soldiers camping on Wick’s property would use up the rest of his timber.

Temperance Wick inherited the family home and a portion of the farm, and in 1788 she married William Tuttle, a veteran of the Continental Army. The farm remained in the family until Wick descendants sold it in 1871.

John and Rachel Stephenson

John and Rachel Stephenson owned a store at the corner of Spring Street and present-day Martin Luther King Avenue. An advertisement in the New Jersey Journal in April 1780 shows that the merchants sold goods for cash or country produce due to the lack of confidence in Continental currency: “To be sold for cash, or country produce, as low as the times will admit of, by John Stephenson at his Store in Morris Town.” A small list of the kinds of things the Stephensons were selling at the time include: “Broad Cloths; Shoe and knee buckles; Mens and womens combs (sic); Irish linen and cambrick; Spellingbooks; Testaments; Rum by the gallon; Writing paper; Green Tea...”

The advertisement requests “cash or country produce, as low as the times will admit” because of wartime inflation due to the lack of confidence in the paper money printed by the Continental Congress. To pay for the war, Congress printed its own money, called Continental Currency. “Not worth a Continental” was a phrase often repeated during the war. Since there were no gold and silver mines in North America, coin (called “Hard Money”) was scarce, and the weak Continental Congress had no gold or silver coin to back its money. With over four years of the war over, the inflation rate had risen to sixty-to-one, and many people did not want to trade their valuable crops for nearly worthless paper.

Some held back their produce or livestock for higher prices to come—this was called “forestalling” and was illegal. They would also hold back to trade only with people who had hard money, because they were secretly trading with the British. This was called “London trade” and was also against the law.

Peter Kemble

Peter Kemble settled in New Brunswick and became a successful merchant. He purchased great amounts of land near Morristown where he built a large mansion which came to be called Mount Kemble. A Loyalist, he was appointed to the Council of New Jersey and went on to be its president as an important part of the royal colonial government of New Jersey. He was the acting governor in case of the governor’s absence and refused to swear loyalty to the new United States of America; normally this would cause the loss of his property, but his son Richard took the oath in his stead. Later, when reports were heard that Peter Kemble had been engaged in distributing British proclamations, he was called to appear before the patriot government. Kemble sent a letter instead to Governor Livingston, saying he cannot appear due to his age and ill health. “. . . if you are determin’d to oppress a poor innocent man, you have power, & in God’s name, use it. I have but a little time to live & am determined to end it with honour.” Kemble was ultimately left alone.

When Washington decided to camp his army at Jockey Hollow, he told General Greene to place them on the property behind Mr. Kemble. The Connecticut brigade, Stark’s Brigade of New England troops and part of the New York brigade cut down trees and built huts on his property, and Kemble’s house became officer’s quarters for General William Smallwood, commander of the Maryland brigades, for part of the winter. After the war, Peter Kemble led a quiet life at his mansion until his death in 1789.

Jacob Arnold

Arnold was a co-founder of the Speedwell Iron Works in 1776, the second slitting mill established in the entire country. The British law prohibited this industry in the colonies. Arnold became the Commander of the Morris County Light Horse Militia. During the war, he received ownership in the tavern on Morristown green, built by his father. Taverns provided food, drinks and lodging as well as being important places for gathering and exchanging information. Arnold’s Tavern appears to have been the most prominent in Morristown. In November 1780 the Marquis de Chastellux, a French officer, briefly visited admiring the dining room “adorned with looking glasses and handsome mahogany furniture.” In 1778, Captain Jacob Arnold was taxed on 202 acres, eleven horses, sixteen cattle, four hogs, one servant, and one riding chair. The Tavern served as Washington’s Headquarters from January 6 to May 28, 1777. The tavern was also the site of a Free Masons meeting by American officers (December 27, 1779) including Washington.

From December 1779 to June 1780, Arnold’s Tavern was General Greene’s quarters. During their stay there, Greene’s wife, Catharine Green, gave birth to a son in January 1780. Having the general and his wife quartered for such a long time in his tavern must have provided an inconvenience for Jacob; a letter later sent by Nathanael Greene to Arnold would serve as a stiff apology for the stay. Jacob Arnold was later charged the largest property tax in the Washington Valley community. He and his wife had ten children, but then in 1803, his wife Elizabeth died of consumption. Jacob, at the age of fifty-six, married a girl of twenty-four named Sarah Nixon and they had seven children. He died at the age of 78 in March, 1827.