

This is NewsLetter Issue №. Three ~ For the year 2019

## Boston In July 1775

The British occupation of the city of Boston prior to the outbreak of war has often been noted as a time of oppression. While the severity of the British troops against the townspeople has been described in historical accounts, the reality of it is difficult for modern readers to comprehend.

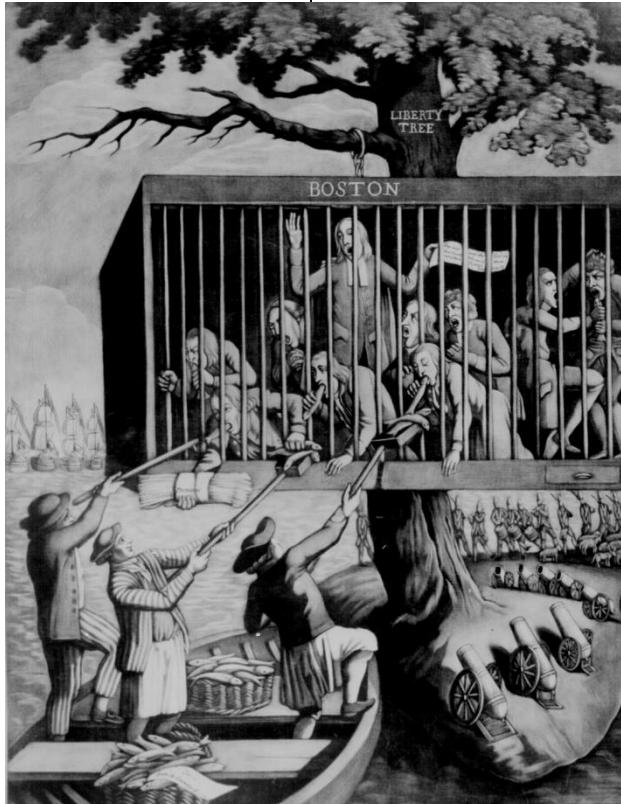
Two articles were published in the *Pennsylvania Journal* which provided graphic accounts of daily life in the city.

On the 10th of July, an article stated: "A gentleman who came out of Boston to-day, says the inhabitants have been numbered, and amount to six thousand five hundred and seventy-three. The soldiers number, women and children, thirteen thousand six hundred. Three hundred Tories are chosen to patrol the streets; forty-nine at night. It is very sickly there; from ten

to thirty funerals in a day, and no bells allowed to toll; Master Lovell has been taken up and put in jail, in consequence of some letters found in Dr. Warren's pockets."

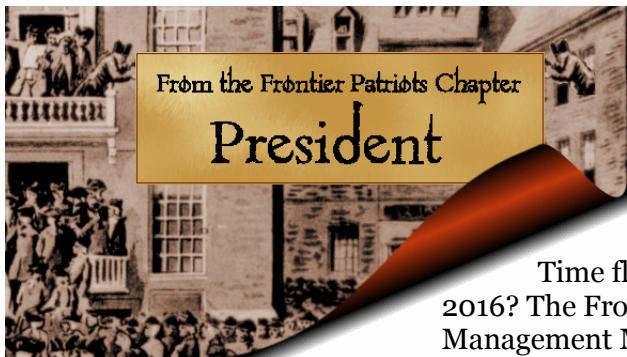
On 16 July, an article noted: "As to intelligence from Boston, it is seldom we are able to collect any that may be relied on; and to repeat the vague rumors would be endless. We heard yesterday by one Mr. Rolston, a goldsmith, who got out from Boston in a fishing schooner, that the distress of the troops increases fast, their beef is spent, their malt and cider all gone; all the fresh provisions they can procure, they are obliged to give to the sick and

wounded; that thirteen of the provincials who were in jail, and were wounded at Charlestown, are dead; that no man dared to be seen talking to his friend in the street; that are obliged to be



within every evening at ten o'clock according to martial law, nor can any inhabitant walk the streets after that time without a pass from Gage; that Gage has ordered all the molasses to be distilled into rum for the soldiers; that he has taken away all licenses for selling of liquors, and given them to his creatures; that he has issued an order that no one else shall sell under a penalty of ten pounds; that the spirit which prevails among the soldiers is that of malice and revenge; that there is no true courage to be observed among

them; that their duty is hard, always holding themselves in readiness for an attack, which they are in continual fear of; that Doctor Eliot was not on board of a man-of-war as was reported; Mr. Lovel, with many others, is certainly in jail; that last week a poor milch cow was killed in town and sold for a shilling sterling a pound; that the transports from Ireland and New York arrived last week, but every additional man adds to their distress."



The next meeting of the  
Frontier Patriots Chapter  
of the Sons of the American Revolution  
will be held at King's Family Restaurant,  
201 Sierra Drive, Altoona, PA  
on Saturday, September 14, 2019  
starting at 12 Noon.

Time flies . . . Do you remember what we did in November 2016? The Frontier Patriots Chapter hosted a Quarterly Board of Management Meeting of PASSAR on 12 November 2016. Now guess

what we are scheduled for on 02 November 2019? Yes, you probably guessed correctly ~ we are scheduled to once again host a quarterly meeting. The particulars of that upcoming meeting were discussed during our Chapter's March quarterly meeting. Any suggestions for activities or whatever that any of you who didn't attend the March meeting want to offer will be very welcome.

If you live in the immediate region, please consider attending the PASSAR Board of Management meeting ~ and/or assist with the registration desk.



## Don't Believe Everything You Read

We live in a time of advanced technology. One would assume that the information at our fingertips, or at least most of it, would be as accurate as possible. The accuracy of any of the information at our fingertips, though, is seldom checked. Most information that we read, view or otherwise digest is accepted without question. We believe everything that we read in books, magazines and newspapers ~ because 'they' wouldn't print it if it wasn't true, would 'they'? And then there's the internet where information comes not just in single doses, but in massive

quantities almost instantly to assail our visual and auditory senses. The sensory input flows from our cell phones, tablets and computer screens in a never ending stream. Many people have lost the ability to be patient in today's fast-paced world. The internet exploits that general impatience. The speed of computers, coupled with small-sized files enable webpages to load in matters of fractions of seconds. Heaven forbid that a person must wait even five seconds (one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, etc.) for a webpage to load. And as the content of webpages stream past our eyes and

into our brains, how much ~ if any ~ of the information's accuracy is checked, or even questioned? I would hazard a guess that the percentage is small ~ extremely small.

So what is this all about? The County of Blair has a website and one page on that website is devoted to the Veterans Affairs department. On the Veterans Affairs page, there is a link to a secondary page titled Veterans of Blair County. That page, in turn, bears a number of links to additional pages, each of which presents lists of individuals who gave military service to our country during different conflicts.

The earliest conflict included in the 'Veterans of Blair County' series is the "French / Indian War". The page presents two names: Adam Holliday and William Holliday Sr. This is in error. There were no individuals 'of Blair County' involved in the French and Indian War. None of the armies even passed through the region that would become Blair County during that conflict. William Holliday Sr's name does not appear in any of the published returns and Adam was born in the year 1757 ~ one year before the Forbes Campaign. What kind of family was the Holliday family that would send their one-year-old son to fight in a war? Couldn't they wait until he was at least five years old?

The next conflict for which there is a page listing the 'Veterans of Blair County' was for the Revolutionary War. The first page of the pdf file, titled *Blair County Veterans of the American Revolution* includes the name of Stephen Archer. Archer was a private in Captain John Boyd's company of the Bedford County Militia. He very well could have passed through the region that would become Blair County at some point or another. His name, though, was not included in the records of the troops who were with Captain Boyd when he encountered Amerindians in the Engagement of Frankstown in 1781. Stephen Archer is not known to have been born within the region that became Blair County, nor is he known to have been buried in that region. All that can be said of Stephen Archer, listed as one of the 'Blair County Veterans,' is that his presence in Blair County had a fifty-fifty chance of being accurate. Another individual named as a 'Blair County

Veteran' was Thomas Askey. Askey resided in Cumberland County. In the summer of 1781, Captain Thomas Askey's company was one from Cumberland County that was directed to Fort Fetter on a tour of duty. He never took up residence in the region of Bedford County that would, in 1846 become Blair County. He did not die within the bounds of present-day Blair County. He spent between two weeks and one month in Blair County. According to the person who compiled the list of 'Blair County Veterans,' the man from Cumberland County was a 'Blair County' veteran, not a 'Cumberland County' veteran who just happened to be in this region in the summer of 1781. The listing that is currently on the Blair County website is deceptive. While not completely untrue, some of the information is definitely inaccurate. The visitor should be wary of the information on the Veterans Affairs website ~ but let's get serious, probably no one (with the exception of someone like myself, who questions everything) will even think the information might be in error.

I should note that I contacted the current Director of Veterans Affairs when I discovered the deceptively incorrect nature of most of the information on the website. I created an alternative list which listed not only the veteran, but whether he resided in the region, whether he was involved in the Massacre of Phillips Rangers in 1780, whether he was involved in the Engagement of Frankstown in 1781, whether he participated in a tour of duty into the region, whether he received a pension for his service in which he stated any involvement in the county and whether he was buried within the bounds of the present-day county. I sent a pdf file with the new list to the Director. I explained why I had redone the list and I welcomed him to substitute my list for the currently inaccurate copy online. I did not ask for any compensation for my efforts. My interest was only in providing visitors with accurate information. After nearly a year, the Director of Veterans Affairs for Blair County has not seen fit to replace the earlier list with mine.

So if you visit the Blair County webpage, don't believe everything you read.



## The Deteriorating Captain Phillips Rangers Memorial

In July 1780, the incursions of Amerindians into the valleys of Bedford County resulting in the killing of men and kidnapping of women and children called for a response by the Bedford County Militia. Colonel John Piper commissioned Woodberry Township resident, William Phillips to the rank of Captain and to raise a company of Militia. They were tasked with hunting for the marauding Indians and safeguarding the other Euro-American residents. Captain Phillips led a party of twelve Bedford County Militia men (including his teenage son, Elijah) southward through the Woodcock Valley.

The Bedford County ‘Rangers’ spent the night of 15 July 1780 in a log cabin deserted by the family of Frederick Heater. In the morning as the men began to rouse and prepare a breakfast, the door was opened and the Bedford County men discovered that they were surrounded by Seneca Indians led by British Lieutenant John Dochstedder from Fort Niagara. At least ten of the Indians were armed with muskets so the cabin was showered with musket bullets and arrows. The Indians failed to draw out the Militia men after a couple hours, so they set fire to their arrows and shot them onto the roof of the cabin.

With the cabin on fire and no hope for surviving the conflagration, Captain Phillips accepted the call for their surrender. They were assured that they would not be killed if they gave up their arms and surrender. The Indians insisted that the Militia men be pinioned ~ their arms were to be tied behind their backs. The captives were marched southward about a half of a mile to a clearing in the woods. A few Indians continued leading Captain Phillips and his son up and over the mountain. They were eventually sold to the British and kept in prisons in Quebec for two years. The rest of the troops were kept behind and when Phillips was out of sight, the men were tied to trees. Some were scalped and all were shot through with arrows and musket fire.

The monument that stands today on the site of the massacre was built in 1926. While expanding it in 1933, the remains of seven of the men were found eighteen inches below the surface. They were reburied in a proper manner and the monument was again refurbished in 1990.

During next year, on 18 July 2020, the site will be again re-dedicated during a ‘remembrance ceremony.’ I was contacted by Mark Phillips, a descendant of Captain William who resides in Connecticut, to organize an event. Coinciding with, and for the ceremony, I am writing a book on the incident and how it has been remembered over the past two hundred and forty years. So why is a new book necessary? Hasn’t the massacre been covered enough already? My answer to those questions is that although it has been covered by numerous historians, many questions have been raised by those very books which none of the historian authors have attempted to answer. One of the questions is: “Since no first-person account of the massacre exists, where did U. J. Jones (the first writer to do so) come up with the list of the men raised by Captain Phillips? Of all of the men identified by Jones, only two of them (Hugh and Philip Skelly) other than Captain Phillips and his son Elijah, are to be found on any tax assessment return for the region prior to the incident.

Besides the planning for the ceremony, the Chapter has been active in the guidance and funding of two projects. The monument is damaged, with some loose stones and there is no sign at the end of the road leading from Route 26 to the monument. At the meeting of 8 June, funds were approved to have the monument repaired by Swope Masonry and the sign prepared by SKEDesigns (both Bedford County businesses). One additional project, the casting and installation of a bronze marker, will be introduced and voted on at the upcoming meeting on 14 September. The marker would emphasize the British involvement in the massacre.

For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you sending it to us to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is very expensive. Please send to our Secretary Melvin McDowell at [melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com](mailto:melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com)

Frontier Patriots Chapter website: <http://www.motherbedford.com/FrontierPatriots.htm>