



NEWSLETTER

#3 2001

A Chronology Of The Revolutionary War

with emphasis on Bedford County, Pennsylvania's role

Continued

1776: Trenton ~

A Much Needed American Victory

General Washington moved his army out of his camp near Hackensack on 21 November, 1776. The evacuation of Fort Lee was prompted by word received from a patrol with General Nathaniel Greene's army that an army of British troops were making their way toward the fort. That British force was commanded by Major General Lord Charles Cornwallis, who had crossed the Hudson River during the night of 19/20 November. Cornwallis lost little time in marching his force of 4,000 British and Hessians toward Fort Lee. He hoped to cut off any escape route for the Americans, but in that he failed.

Washington and his army of about 3,000 men headed southward through the Jerseys, leaving the British in control of New York. Some

3,200 men were left at Peekskill under the command of Brigadier General William Heath. He also left between 5,000 and 6,000 men at North Castle under the command of General Charles Lee. Lee, who felt that the Continental Congress should have named himself to the position of commander of the American Army instead of Washington, balked at taking orders from Washington. Despite the urgings of Washington for him to move his force to the New Jersey side of the river, Lee dallied in New York, and did not cross the Hudson to rejoin the main army until 02 December.

On 21 November, General Washington wrote a letter to William Livingston, governor of the Jerseys, in which he noted:

"Sir: I have this Moment arrived at this Place with Genl. Beall's and Genl. Heard's Brigades from Maryland and Jerfey, and part of General Ewing's from Pennsylvania; Three other Regiments, left to guard the Pafses upon Hackenfack River, and to ferve as covering Parties, are expected up this Evening. After the unfortunate

Lofs of Fort Wafhington, it was determined to evacuate Fort Lee, in a great Meafure; as it was in a Manner ufelefs in obftructing the Pafsage of the North River, without the afsiftance of Fort Wafhington. The Ammunition and fome other Stores were accordingly removed; but, before we could effect our purpofe, the Enemy landed yefterdoy Morning, in very confiderable numbers, about Six Miles above the Fort; Their intent evidently was to form aline acrofs, from the place of their landing to Hackenfack Bridge, and thereby hem in the whole Garrifon between the North and Hackenfack Rivers. However, we were lucky enough to gain the Bridge before them; by which means we faved all our men, but were obliged to leave fome hundred Barrels of Flour, moft of our Cannon, and a confiderable parcel of Tents and Baggage. Finding we were in the fame danger of being pent up between Hackenfack and Pafsaic Rivers, that we had been between the North and Hackenfack; and alfo finding the Country, from its levelnefs and openefs, unfit for making a ftand; it was determined to draw the whole of our Force over this fide of the River, where we cna watch the operations of the Enemy, without danger of their furrounding us, or making a Lodgement in our Rear. But, as our numbers are ftill very inadequate to that of the Enemy, I imagine I fhall be obliged to fall down toward Brunfwick, and form a juntion with the Troops, already in that Quarter, under the Command of Lord Stirling. As the term of the Inliftment of the flying Camp, belonging to Jerfey, Pennfyvania, and Maryland, is near expiring; it will occafion fo great a diminution of my Army, that I fubmit it to your judgement, whether it would not be proper for you to call together fuch a number of Militia, as, in Conjunction with the Troops I fhall have left, will ferve to cover the Country and ftop the Progreffs of the Enemy, if they fhould ftill attempt to penetrate. If the weather continues favorable, I am apprehenfive they will attempt to make amends for the Slownefs of their Operations the begining of the Campaign."

With Cornwallis at his heels, General Washington moved his army on to Newark, arriving there on the 23rd. On the 25th, Washington received news of resolves of the Congress that troops from Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, who were in the northern army under General Philip Schuyler, should rendezvous with Washington's main body. Seven regiments responded to those resolves; four joined General Lee's army and three joined Washington.

Washington rested his men for five days, leaving on the 28th for Brunswick, and arriving there the next day. The van of Cornwallis' army

entered Brunswick just as the rear of Washington's army was leaving.

One thousand and two hundred Patriots under Lord Stirling intercepted the American army on the 29th of November. Despite that increase, the army shrank in size the following day when the enlistment period of some two thousand men was up and they started leaving for their homes.

As if the dwindling number of troops due to their enlistments ending was not enough, the Patriot cause was threatened by a proclamation issued by the Howes in New York City on the 30th of November.

By Richard Vifcount Howe, of the Kingdom of Ireland, and William Howe, Efq; General of his Majefty's Forces in America, the King's Commiffioners for reftoring Peace to his Majefty's Colonies and Plantations in North America, &c.

PROCLAMATION.

Whereas by our declarations of the 20th of June and 19th of September laft, in purfuance of his majefty's moft gracious intentions towards his fubjects in the colonies or provinces of New Hampfhire, Mafsachufett's-Bay, Rhode-Ifland, Connecticut, New York, New Jerfey, Pennfyvania, the three Lower Counties on

Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, South-Carolina, and Georgia, all persons speedily returning to their just allegiance were promised a free and general pardon, and were invited to accept, not only the blessings of peace, but a secure enjoyment of their liberties and properties, upon the true principles of the constitution:

And whereas, notwithstanding the said declarations, and the example of many who have availed themselves of the assurances therein made, several bodies of armed men, in open contempt of his majesty's proffered clemency, do still continue their opposition to the establishment of legal government and peace; and divers other ill disposed persons, pursuing their own ambitious purposes in the exercise of a lawless influence and power, are using fresh endeavors, by various arts and misrepresentations, to alienate the confidence and affection of his majesty's subjects; to defeat every plan of reconciliation, and to prolong the unnatural war between Great Britain and her colonies:

Now, in order to the more effectual accomplishment of his majesty's most gracious intentions, and the speedy restoration of the public tranquility; and duly considering the limiting the time within which such pardon as aforesaid shall be granted, and of specifying the terms upon which only the same shall and may be obtained, We do, in his majesty's name, and by virtue of the powers committed to us, hereby charge and command all persons whatsoever, who are assembled together in arms against his majesty's government, to disband themselves, and return to their dwelling, there to remain in a peaceable and quiet manner; And we also charge and command all such other persons as are assembled together under the name of the General or Provincial Congresses, committees, conventions, or other associations, by whatever name or names known and distinguished, or who, under the colour of any authority from any such Congress, committee, convention, and other association, take upon them to issue or execute any orders for levying money, raising troops, fitting out armed ships and vessels, imprisoning, or otherwise molesting his majesty's subjects, to desist and cease from all such treasonable actings and doings, and to relinquish all such usurped power and authority, so that peace may be restored, a speedy remission of past offences quiet the apprehensions of the guilty, and all the inhabitants of the said colonies be enabled to reap the benefit of his majesty's paternal goodness in the preservation of their property, the restoration of their commerce, and the security of their most valuable rights, under the just and moderate authority of the crown and parliament of Great Britain: And we do hereby declare, and make known to all men, that every person, who within sixty days from the day of the date hereof shall appear before the governor, or lieutenant-governor, or commander in chief, in any of his majesty's colonies or provinces aforesaid, or before the general or commanding officer of his majesty's forces in America, or any other officer in his majesty's service, having the command of any detachment or parties of his majesty's forces there, or before the admiral or commander in chief of his majesty's fleets, or any other officer commanding any of his majesty's ships of war, or any armed vessel in his majesty's service, within any of the ports, havens, creeks, or upon the coast of America, and shall claim the benefit of this proclamation, and at the same time testify his obedience to the laws, by subscribing a declaration in the words, following:

"I, A.B. do promise and declare, that I will remain in a peaceable obedience to his majesty, and will not take up arms, nor encourage others to take up arms, in opposition to his authority,"

shall and may obtain a full and free pardon of all treasons, and misprisions of

treafons, by him heretofore committed or done, and of all forfeitures, attainders, and penalties for the fame; and upon producing to us, or to either of us, a certificate of fuch, his appearance and declaration, fhall and may have and receive fuch pardon made and pafsed to him in due form.

Given at New York, this thirtieth day of November, 1776. Howe. W. Howe.

The proclamation, timed to coincide with the eminent departure of many men whose terms of enlistment were soon to be completed, was troublesome to General Washington. He knew that not everyone agreed with the revolution that was taking place. According to the *Annual Register*, 1777, published in England, within a month after

the British secured control of the city of New York, a petition stating their allegiance, and praying for the restoration of English government in the colonies, was submitted to the Howes. The petition contained the signatures of 948 inhabitants. In response, General Washington issued his own proclamation:

Whereas feveral perfons, inhabitants of the united ftates of America, influenced by inimical motives, intimidated by the threats of the enemy, or deluded by a proclamation ifsued the 30th of November laft, by Lord and General Howe, ftiled the king's commiffioners for granting pardons, &c. (now at open war, and invading thefe ftates) have been fo loft to the intereft and welfare of their country, as to repair to the enemy, fign a declaration of fidelity, and in fome inftances have been compelled to take the oaths of allegiance, and engaged not to take up arms, or encourage others fo to do, againft the King of Great Britain. And whereas it has become necefsary to diftinguifh between the friends of America and thofe of Great Britain, inhabitants of thefe States; and that every man who receives protection from, and as a fubject of, and State (not being confcientioufly fcrupulous againft bearing arms) fhould ftand ready to defend the fame againft hoftile invafion; I do, therefore, in behalf of the United States, by virtue of the powers committed to me by Congrefs, hereby ftrictly comand and require every perfon, having fubfcribed fuch declaration, taken fuch oaths, and accepted fuch protection and certificate, to repair to head quarters, or to the quarters of the neareft general officer of the Continental army, or militia, (until further provifion can be made by civil authority) and there deliver up fuch protection, certificate and pafspports, and take the oath of allegiance to the United States of America: Neverthelefs hereby granting full liberty to all fuch as prefer the intereft and protection of Great Britain to the freedom and happinefs of their country, forthwith to withdraw themfelves and families within the enemy's lines. And I do hereby declare, that all and every perfon who may neglect or refufe to comply with this order, within thirty days from the date hereof, will be deemed adherents to the King of Great Britain, and treated as common enemies to thefe American ftates.

Given at Head Quarters, Morris Town.

By the 1st of December, Cornwallis nearly overtook the American army just north of the Raritan River. But Washington deftly maneuvered his troops out of harms way. After crossing the Raritan River, the Patriots destroyed the bridge's timber supports, thereby causing a delay for the British.

General Howe sent orders for Cornwallis to halt his army at Brunswick. Howe was not pleased with Cornwallis' failure to subdue the Americans. He decided to lead a detachment from New York, join with Cornwallis, and then complete the job himself. Buoyed by the response of hundreds of Pennsylvania and New Jersey residents who made the decision to take him up on

his offer of pardon, Howe changed his plans for his northern campaign (*i.e.* against Albany) and chose to divert troops toward a possible capture of Philadelphia. Howe's army arrived at Brunswick on the 6th of December.

The American army had arrived in the vicinity of Trenton on the 3rd of December, and was strengthened a bit on the 5th of December with the arrival of a detachment of Pennsylvania Associators that included the German Regiment under Colonel Nicholas Haussegger.

Reinforced, and believing that it would now be possible to confront Cornwallis, and unaware that Howe had recently reinforced Cornwallis, General Washington headed with 1,200 men back northeastward toward Brunswick on the 7th of December. At Princeton, about halfway between Trenton and Brunswick, Washington intercepted the Americans under the command of Lord Stirling. Stirling was in retreat before the combined forces of Cornwallis and Howe. Realizing that once more he would be outnumbered, Washington changed his mind about starting a confrontation, and headed back toward Trenton.

The British army arrived at Trenton on December 8, but the Americans had already ferried across the Delaware to the Pennsylvania side. In order to make their escape across the river quickly, the Americans had commandeered all the available boats up and down the river for some seventy-five miles. The British would have to construct boats before they could make the

crossing. Howe had assumed that he would crush the American army, which was estimated to number only half of his own British army, and end the rebel uprising once and for all. Whether he wanted to or not, Howe would have to establish a camp and be patient until enough boats could be constructed if he wished to engage the Americans. Instead, with the prospects of undertaking a winter campaign or nothing, Howe chose the latter and, on the 14th, ordered his army into winter quarters at outposts stretching from New York to Trenton. Not inclined to be uncomfortable, Howe headed back for the warmth and comforts of New York while Cornwallis made preparations to travel to England for the winter.

Washington deployed his troops along a twenty-five mile front along the west bank of the Delaware River, and planned his next move.

The delegates assembled in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia had been receiving dispatches from Washington. The reports of Howe's troops reinforcing Cornwallis' army, and thereby making the army that was traveling southward roughly 10,000 strong, arrived at Philadelphia around the 10th of December. The news threw the delegates and the inhabitants of the city into a panic.

To deal with the threat of being taken by the British, the Congress passed a number of resolutions during their session of 12 December. According to the *Journals Of The Continental Congress*:

Resolved, That the Marine Committee be directed to employ one or more fast failing vessels, to proceed on a cruise immediately off the Capes of Delaware, to give notice to all ships or vessels inward bound of the fate of this port, in order that they may proceed to some other place or places of safety.

Resolved, That General Putnam, or the commanding officer in Philadelphia, be desired to appoint suitable persons to make proper provision of combustibles, for burning such of the frigates and other continental vessels as may be in imminent danger of falling into the enemy's possession should this city come into their hands.

Resolved, That the continental general commanding in Philadelphia, be directed to defend the same to the utmost extremity, against the attempts of the enemy to get possession of it; and that, for this end, he apply, from time to time, to the council of safety of Pennsylvania for their aid and assistance.

Resolved, That the arms, ammunition, and cloathing, in or near the city of Philadelphia, be put under the direction of General Putnam; and that Mr. J. Meafe, Mr.

Towers, and all other persons having continental stores in care, make immediate return of the same to General Putnam, of the quantities and kinds of each, and where the same are placed, that the general may take proper order therein, whether for safety or use, as he shall judge proper.

General Putnam and Brigadier General Mifflin being called to a conference, and having, by strong arguments, urged the necessity of the Congress retiring, it was, therefore, Resolved, That Mr. Wilson be desired to inform the assembly and council of safety of Pennsylvania of the (proposed) adjournment of Congress, and the place to which they have resolved to adjourn; and to inform them, that Congress will, at all times, on their application, be ready to comply with their requisitions for the security of this city and state against the common enemy.

Whereas the movements of the enemy have now rendered the neighborhood of this city the seat of war, which will prevent that quiet and uninterrupted attention to the public business, which should ever prevail in the great continental council:

Resolved, That this Congress be, for the present, adjourned to the town of Baltimore, in the state of Maryland, to meet on the 20th instant, unless a sufficient number to make a Congress shall be there sooner assembled; and that, until the Congress shall otherwise order, General Washington be possessed of full power to order and direct all things relative to the department, and to the operations of war.

General Charles Lee, who had postponed his rendezvous with the Washington, holding his large detachment in northern New Jersey under the artifice that he planned to attack the British from the rear should they follow Washington, was surprised and taken captive. While lodging at White's Tavern in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, about three miles from Morristown where his troops were encamped, on 13 December, Lee and a number his staff officers were hailed to surrender by a patrol of the Queen's Light Dragoons led by, then, subaltern Banastre Tarleton. Lee refused, and instead attempted to escape. Lee was taken prisoner and all of his officers were either killed or wounded.

Lee's command was assumed by Major General John Sullivan. Sullivan lost no time in heading to join the rest of the American army; arriving on 20 December at Newtown, Pennsylvania where Washington had made his encampment. Sullivan brought approximately two thousand men into Washington's army. Also arriving at about the same time were 500 men, under the command of General Gates, previously attached to General Schuyler. Washington's army now stood at roughly 5,000; his original 3,000 reduced by 2,000 who left because their enlistments were up, but reinforced with the 1,200

troops under Stirling; the 2,000 troops under Sullivan; and the 1,000 Philadelphia Associators and Germans under Colonel Haussegger.

Some historians claim that Washington formulated his plan to attack Trenton because of a strong belief that the Patriot Cause might not survive through the winter. Perhaps he saw the movement of the British army into winter quarters as an opportunity to strike at a portion of it without having to take on the entire army. Regardless of the underlying motivation, General Washington held a council of war with his staff officers at his headquarters at Newtown on the 24th of December. Plans were made to attack the Hessians under Colonel Johann Gottlieb Rall holding Trenton the following day, Christmas.

The plan of attack called for Brigadier General James Ewing to take a division of 700 men across the river at Trenton Ferry to take possession of and hold the bridge over the Assunpink River. That would seal off any escape route for the Germans. Lieutenant Colonel John Cadwalader was to lead two divisions, about 1,900 men, across near Bristol; from there they would march on the Hessian garrison at Bordentown under the command of General Carl von Donop. General Washington would take the main body of

nearly 2,400 men across the river some nine miles upstream from Trenton at McKonkey's Ferry.

The plan sounded good, but the elements did not come together as they were supposed to. To start with, Cadwalader's march on Bordentown was intended to serve as a decoy, but after getting his men across the river it was proving too arduous to transport the artillery across. Without the artillery, it would be difficult to engage the enemy. So, Cadwalader took his men back to the Pennsylvania side of the river. Ewing didn't even attempt a crossing of the river; he felt it would be too hazardous. Only General Washington's own division made the crossing successfully, including the transport of their artillery. It would be 3:00am on the morning of the 26th before all the troops and artillery succeeded in crossing the river. They were formed into two columns; the right, following the River Road in order to come upon the town from the south, was led by Sullivan while

the left, which took the Pennington Road to enter the town from the north, was commanded by Greene.

According to General Washington, in a letter to the Congress dated 27 December, the division under General Greene "*arrived at the Enemy's advanced post, exactly at Eight O'Clock, and in three Minutes after, I found, from the fire on the lower Road that, that Division had also got up.*"

Legend has it that the Hessians were sleeping off hangovers from their Christmas Day partying. But that is now generally believed to have been a wrong assumption because the pickets delivered news of the advance of the Americans to Colonel Rall in time for him to begin to assemble his men into formation.

An account of the battle that followed was included in the *Annual Register* for the year 1777, published at London:

Colonel Rall, a brave and experienced officer, was stationed with a brigade of Hessians, consisting of three battalions, with a few British light-horse, and 50 chafseurs, amounting in the whole to 14 or 1500 men, at Trenton on the Delaware, being the highest post which the royal army occupied upon that river. Colonel Donop, with another brigade, lay at Bordentown, a few miles lower the river; and at Burlington still lower, and within twenty miles of Philadelphia, a third body was posted. The corps at Trenton, as well as the others, partly from the knowledge had of the weakness of the enemy, and partly from the contempt in which they held him, considered themselves in as perfect a state of security, as if they had been garriſon duty in their own country, in a time of the profoundest peace. It is said, and seems probable, that this supposed security increased that licence and laxity of discipline, of which we have before taken notice, and produced attention to the possibility of a surprize, which no success of situation can justify in the vicinity of an enemy, however weak or contemptible.

The circumstances, if really existed, seem not to escaped the vigilance of General Washington. But, exclusive of these, he fully saw and comprehended the danger to which Philadelphia and the whole province would be inevitably exposed, as soon as the Delaware was thoroughly covered with ice, if the enemy, by retaining possession of the opposite shore, were at hand to profit of that circumstance, whilst he was utterly incapable of opposing them in the field.

To ward off this danger, he with equal boldness and ability formed a design to prevent the enemy, by beating up their quarters; intending to remedy the deficiency of force by the manner of applying it; by bringing it nearly to a point; and by attacking unexpectedly and separately those bodies which he could not venture to encounter if united. If the design succeeded only in part, it might, however, induce the enemy to contract their cantonments, and to quit the vicinity of the river, when they found it was not a sufficient barrier to cover their quarters from insult and danger; thus obtaining that security for Philadelphia, which, at present, was the principal object of his

attention.

For this purpose, General Washington took the necessary measures for assembling his forces (which consisted mostly of drafts from the militia of Pennsylvania and Virginia) in three divisions, each of which was to arrive at its appointed station on the Delaware, as soon after dark, and with as little noise, as possible, on the night of Christmas day. Two of these divisions were under the command of the Generals Erwing and Cadwallader, the first of which was to pass the river at Trenton Ferry, about a mile below the town, and the other still lower towards Bordentown. The principal body was commanded by Mr. Washington in person, assisted by the Generals Sullivan and Green, and consisted of about 2500 men, provided with a train of 20 small brass field pieces.

With this body he arrived at M'Kenky's Ferry, about nine miles above Trenton, at the time appointed, hoping to be able to pass the division and artillery over by midnight, and that it would then be no difficulty to reach that place long before daylight, and effectually to surprise Rall's brigade. The river was, however, so incumbered with ice, that it was with great difficulty the boats could make their way through, which, with the extreme severity of the weather, retarded their passage so much, that it was near four o'clock before it was completed. They were still equally delayed and incommoded in the march by a violent storm of snow and hail, which rendered the way so slippery that it was with difficulty they reached the place of destination by eight o'clock.

The detachment had been formed in two divisions immediately upon passing the river, one of which, turning to the right, took the lower road to Trenton, whilst the other, with General Washington, proceeded along the upper, or Pennington road. Notwithstanding the delays they met, and the advanced state of daylight, the Hessians had no knowledge of their approach, until an advanced post at some distance from the town, was attacked by the upper division, the lower, about the same time, driving in the outguards on their side. The regiment of Rall, having been detached to support the picket which was first attacked, was thrown into disorder by the retreat of that party, and obliged to rejoin the main body. Colonel Rall now bravely charged the enemy but being soon mortally wounded, the troops were thrown into disorder after a short engagement, and driven from their artillery, which consisted only of six battalion brass field pieces. Thus overpowered, and nearly surrounded, after an ineffectual attempt to retreat to Princetown, the three regiments of Rall, Lofsberg, and Knyphausen, found themselves under the unfortunate necessity of surrendering prisoners of war.

As the road along the river side to Bordentown led from that part of Trenton most remote from the enemy, the light horse, chafseurs, a considerable number of the private men, with some few officers, made their escape that way. It is also said, that a number of the Hessians who had been out marauding in the country, and accordingly absent from their duty that morning, found the same refuge, whilst their crime was covered under the common misfortune.

The loss of the Hessians in killed and wounded was very inconsiderable, not exceeding 30 or 40 at the most; that on the other side was too trifling to be mentioned; the whole number of prisoners amounted to 918. Thus was one part of General Washington's project crowned with success; but the two others failed in the execution, the quantity of ice being so great, that the divisions under Erwing and Cadwallader, found the river, where they directed their attempts, impassable. If this had not been the case, and that the first, in pursuance of his instructions, had been able to have possessed the bridge over Trenton Creek, not one of those who made their way to Bordentown could have escaped. But if the design had taken effect in all its parts, and

the three divisions had joined after the affair at Trenton, it seems probable that they would have swept all the posts on the river before them.

As things were, General Washington could not proceed any further in the prosecution of his design. The force he had with him was far from being able even to maintain its ground at Trenton, there being a strong body of light infantry within a few miles of Princetown, which by the junction of Donop's brigade, or other bodies from the nearest cantonments, would have soon overwhelmed his little army. He accordingly repassed the Delaware the same evening, carrying with him the prisoners, who, with their artillery and colours, afforded a day of new and joyful triumph at Philadelphia.

Although only alluded to briefly in the account above, Colonel Rall attempted to repulse the Americans by making a bayonet charge up King Street. Colonel Henry Knox had positioned his artillery at the head of King and Queen Streets, and effectively kept the Germans at bay. As they retreated back down King Street, Rall's troops were fired upon from the left by the men under General Hugh Mercer. The Hessians were driven back to an orchard at the southeast end of the town where Colonel Rall attempted to rally them. But he received a mortal wound. The troops saw the futility of their situation, and surrendered.

According to most estimates, the Americans losses included four killed and eight wounded, while the Hessians sustained twenty-two deaths and ninety-two wounded, along with

the capture of the 918. It is believed that another four or five hundred Hessians escaped to Bordentown by crossing over the Assunpink River.

General Washington wrote to Robert Morris from his camp at Newton on 27 December and stated that he regretted that the ice in the Delaware River had prevented Cadwallader and Ewing from making the crossing. He said that "*I am persuaded we should have been crowned with much success...not a Hessian would have escaped from thence.*"

Despite his regrets that the victory was not bigger than what it was, he underestimated the enormous value it had in terms of bolstering the public spirit. It was a much needed victory for the Patriot Cause.

This chronological history of the Revolutionary War will be continued in a future newsletter.

These Are The Times That Try Men's Souls.

An volunteer aid-de-camp to General Nathaniel Greene, by the name of Thomas Paine, was with the Patriot army that made its way from New York to White Plains and then southward through the Jerseys as the year 1776 ended. The Thomas Paine who served with the Patriots during the winter of 1776 was born an Englishman in the year 1737. He emigrated to America at the age of thirty-seven, arriving at Philadelphia in November of 1774. The America that this Englishman came to was just then beginning to writhe with dissatisfaction with the mother country. Paine found that the stories he had heard about the colonists' grievances against Great Britain were much more understandable on this side of the Atlantic.

Robert Aitken was a printer in the city of Philadelphia. He had recently started a newspaper titled *The Pennsylvania Magazine* and Paine talked his way into becoming its editor.

Under Paine's editorship, the newspaper gained popularity and prestige as a sounding board for the writers who were espousing liberty and freedom. But Thomas Paine was not content with the limited scope within which most of those writers framed their views. They were only interested in independence of thought and actions for the American colonies. Paine saw the ideal of independence as something that should be universal and the right of everyone everywhere. He left his job with Aitken and began to write his

first discourse on the subject of independence: *Common Sense*. He completed it in the winter of 1775. When he contacted his former employer, Robert Aitken, about printing the book, he discovered that there was a limit to Aitken's interest in such thoughts on independence. Paine's book dealt with ideas that went beyond commenting politely about the misdeeds of the British Parliament. He was calling for open rebellion if necessary.

The book, *Common Sense*, found a printer and publisher in the person of Robert Bell, and it appeared in January, 1776.

Paine had refused to accept any royalties from the sales of *Common Sense*, and in need of some sort of income, he volunteered as a secretary to the captain of a Philadelphia militia company. The company traveled northward through the Jerseys and at Amboy the company fell to pieces through desertions. Paine continued on with a few

others, and eventually arrived at Fort Lee. There he offered his services and was appointed to the staff of General Greene, as an aid-de-camp. From Fort Lee, Paine traveled with the American army to Trenton.

While enroute to the rendezvous with the Hessians at Trenton, Thomas Paine wrote the first of a number of discourses known as *The Crisis Papers*. Tradition tells us that General Washington asked Paine to write something to bolster the courage and resolve of his troops, and that *The Crisis Papers* was the result. The factual truth of that tradition cannot be proven, but what is known is that Paine was motivated to write. He produced the series of *Papers* between 1776 and 1783.

The first discourse, titled *The Crisis N^o. 1* was printed as a broadside dated 23 December, 1776. Its opening lines have become part of the common conscience of the United States of America:

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

2002-2003 Officers

The following is a list of the Compatriot members who were elected to serve as officers of the Blair County Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution during the 2002-2003 period.

President	David G. Hammaker
1st Vice-President	Jesse C. Williams
2nd Vice-President	Harry E. Chamberlain
3rd Vice-President	Ralph C. Nearhoof
Treasurer	John D. Faulds, Sr
Secretary	Edgar R. Hartt
Registrar	Edgar R. Hartt
Chancellor	Edgar R. Hartt
Historian	Larry D. Smith
Chaplain	Clair S. Hetrick

Note: A schedule of meeting dates for the year 2002 has not yet been finalized. It will be published in a future newsletter. Members will be notified as necessary.