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THE YEARS 1776 – JANUARY 1777



THE REVOLUTION REACHES CULPEPER



February 1776 – MILITARY ENLISTMENTS: First authorized in December 1775, the 3rd Virginia Regiment of Foot began actively recruiting to fill its 10 companies in February. The 4th Company of the Regiment was headed by Captain John Thornton and raised in **Culpeper County** on February 12, 1776. Among those who enlisted in the company were James Monroe, future President of the United States, and John Marshall, future Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, as lieutenants, and **David Baker** as corporal, a rank he held throughout his two-year enlistment. [E.M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution, 1774-1778*, Richmond:Virginia State Library (1978)]

Thornton's company was redesignated as the 5th Company in January 1777.

Even in the matter of David Baker's enlistment, the family entanglements continue. In his application for a pension, filed in 1832, David Baker said he enlisted "at the home of Captain John Strother." At least one Gambill cousin, Thomas, was in the same unit (it is unclear whether this is Thomas the son of Henry Gambill and Mary Davenport Gambill or Thomas the son of William Gambill and Mary Wash Gambill – both would have been of age to serve). At least one Covington – William – and one White – Armistead – also served in Captain Thornton's company.

According to Wikipedia: "The 3rd Virginia Regiment was raised on December 28, 1775 at Alexandria, Virginia for service with the Continental Army. The 3d Virginia's initial commander was Colonel Hugh Mercer, who was quickly promoted to brigadier general. Its second commander was George Weedon, who was also promoted to brigadier general. Weedon was succeeded in command by Colonel Thomas Marshall, the father of Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall. The regiment saw action in the New York Campaign, the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth and the Siege of Charleston. Most of the regiment was captured at Charlestown, South Carolina on May 12, 1780 by the British and the regiment was formally disbanded on November 15, 1783. James Madison and John Marshall served as lieutenants in this regiment."

Colonel Mercer, the commander of the 3rd Virginia, was a colorful character—a rebel in two lands. He was born in 1726 in Scotland, and served as an assistant surgeon in the 1745 uprising there on behalf of "Bonnie Prince Charlie." When that rebellion collapsed, Mercer was a hunted rebel, and lived in hiding for nearly a year until he bought passage to America in 1747. He died of wounds suffered at the Battle of Princeton (see below) and became a rallying point for the rebellion in his chosen land.

8-10 July 1776 – BATTLE OF GWYNN ISLAND: **David Baker** and others from the 3rd Virginia Regiment saw their first action in the Battle of Gwynn Island. It was a small but significant American victory.

As described on the uswars.net website [The American Revolution 1775-1784](http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com) (<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com>):

On January 1 (1776), Lord Dunmore, Virginia's royal governor, set fire to Norfolk and established a base at Gwynn Island. Gwynn Island was located just south of the mouth of the Rappahannock River. The island of 2,000 acres was 500 yards from the mainland. With his small British fleet and about 500 Tory troops, including runaway slaves, Dunmore had hoped

to maintain a foothold in his province and establish a base from which to raid the neighboring plantations.

On January 8, Gen. Andrew Lewis arrived with a brigade of Virginia troops to eliminate this last vestige of royal authority.

On July 9, at 8:00 A.M., from 500 yards away, Lewis opened fire with 3 rounds from an 18-lb. gun on the HMS Dunmore. With an 18-lb. gun and a second battery of lighter guns, Lewis bombarded Dunmore's fleet, camp, and fortifications. For an hour, the bombardment continued. Most of Dunmore's fleet tried to escape. Some were run aground and burned by their crew. A few ships fired back at the American position but they were quickly silenced. Lewis stopped his bombardment and gave Dunmore a chance to surrender.

At noon, Dunmore never answered back so Lewis started the bombardment again. Dunmore and his remaining ships managed to escape from the bombardment. The victorious Americans found numerous graves and dead and dying victims of smallpox when they crossed to the island.

Many years later, David Baker filed a pension application based on his Revolutionary War service. In it, he wrote that after Gwynn Island, "We were then marched on by Dumfries to Alexandria. I was there stationed some little time and were then marched to the north crossing the Delaware at Trenton and joined the main army at White Plains under General Washington."

15-16 September 1776 – BATTLE OF HARLEM HEIGHTS: The 3rd Virginia Regiment was also present at the Battle of Harlem Heights, although **David Baker** does not mention it in his pension application. (It is entirely possible that not all companies of the 3rd Virginia headed north at the same time.)

According to the [American Revolution](#) website:

The Battle of Harlem Heights, though a minor engagement, showed the American troops they could win in battle after the loss on Long Island and the embarrassment of Kip's Bay.

On September 15, after the British landed at Kip's Bay, Gen. William Howe and his army advanced on the east side of Manhattan while the Americans advanced on the west side.

On September 16, Gen. George Washington was in considerable anxiety at the inability of his troops to stand up to the British and Germans of Gen. William Howe's army. Step by step, the Americans were being driven off the Island of New York, now Manhattan. Washington now held only the northern plateau of the island, around the fortification of Fort Washington on the Hudson shore. He sent a party of New England Rangers under Capt. Thomas Knowlton to scout the British movements to the South of his position. He descended from the northern plateau into an area of lower ground known as the Hollow Way and on to the next plateau. There, his party of around 120 men encountered the British light infantry pickets

and firing broke out. More British troops came up and the small party of Rangers was forced to retreat in some haste, with the British in pursuit.

It is said that the Americans on the northern plateau were particularly enraged to hear the British using derisive fox hunting calls. Washington ordered a force forward to lure the party of British further onto the plateau, while a second force moved around the British right flank and cut them off from the southern plateau and further reinforcement.

The British took the bait and moved further onto the northern plateau as the Americans fell back before them. As they moved south, the American flanking party encountered some British troops and firing broke out, warning the light infantry that they were in a perilous position.

The fighting ranged north before Washington decided to send troops forward in 2 flanking maneuvers, one under Maj. Leitch and the other under Knowlton. A third force of Americans made a feint to attack the British in their front.

One of Howe's subordinates made a critical mistake during the fight. A "fox horn" was sounded before the fight was over. A "Fox Horn" was used by fox hunters and signaled to other hunters that the fox had given up and was ready to be killed. The American force heard the horn and all this did was to motivate the men to fight even harder. Although the Americans attacked before the British were surrounded and Leitch and Knowlton were both mortally wounded, the British found themselves attacked on 3 sides and began their retreat. Under persistent attack, the British retreated to a field in the Hollow Way. The fighting continued for an hour until the imminent arrival of more British forces caused Washington to call his troops back.

The number of troops grew to nearly 5,000 on each side as the British were pushed back. Washington called off the attack after 6 hours because the Americans were not ready for a general engagement with the full British army.

The importance of this action for the Americans was that it was the Virginia militia who had fled the British the day before who fought steadily and effectively alongside the Northern Rangers, going a long way to restoring the confidence of the American army in itself.

stronger in upstate New York. Westchester County was considered to be the neutral ground though lower Westchester was more loyalist- oriented.

Washington had concentrated his forces in Ft. Washington and Kings Bridge and slowly moved north to White Plains. On October 18, the American rear, brought up by Gen. Charles Lee's Virginia Division, laden by baggage and provision, started out traveling the west side of the Bronx River and took 9 days to reach White Plains.

On October 22, Washington and his army arrived at White Plains, in Westchester County. They joined their advance unit, which started arriving the day before, and began fortifying the 3 surrounding hills.

At White Plains, Washington deployed his army along a width of 3 miles through town. The right flank was commanded by Brig. Gen. William Heth, the center was commanded by Washington, and the left flank was commanded by Brig. Gen. Israel Putnam. Howe was at New Rochelle, where he was not in any hurry to move against Washington's army. This gave the Americans time to arrive safely at their new position.

On October 23, About 8,000 Hessians, commanded by Lt. Gen. Wilhelm von Knyphausen, arrived at New Rochelle and reinforced Howe's army. Howe decided to leave some 4,000 Hessians to garrison New Rochelle.

On October 27, the British advance guard arrived at White Plains. Chatterson's Hill rose 180 feet above the plain and the top was gently rounded and the sides were wooded and steep. The hilltop was divided into cultivated fields by stone walls. It was located to the right of the American line, across the Bronx River. At the time, Washington had not fortified this position.

On October 28, a general alarm was sounded and the Americans forced the British off Chatterson's Hill. It was now that Washington realized that this was critical terrain. Washington sent 2 cannon and a 1,600-man detachment, under Col. Joseph Reed. Reed had the front line manned by the Massachusetts militia and the second line was manned by the Delaware Continentals. Howe moved his army out in 2 columns and headed towards White Plains.

Washington sent out a delaying force forward to make contact with the British. Once they made contact, they returned around 9:30 A.M. and informed Washington that the British were approaching in 2 columns along the East Chester Road.

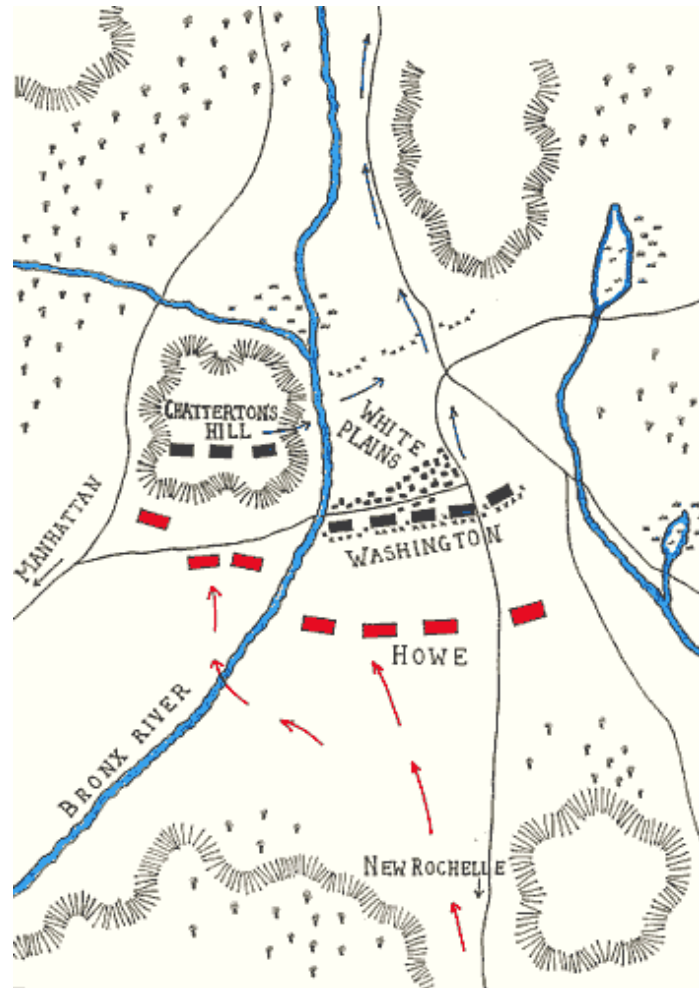
Once at White Plains, Howe deployed his army in an open area about 1 mile in front of the American line. Howe spotted Chatterson's Hill and recognized that it as critical terrain. He planned the main attack against Chatterson's Hill while the rest of his army kept the rest of the American line busy. At Chatterson's Hill, Howe started out with an artillery bombardment, then sent a 4,000-man detachment to attack the American position. First, he sent 3 German regiments across the river, where they took up positions at some ridges about 1/2 mile from Chatterson's Hill. Next, the rest of the attacking force crossed a ford downstream, the made

their way up the hill. Finally, the 17th Dragoons were sent on a cavalry charge, the first cavalry charge in the Revolutionary War.

The militia was hit first. They panicked at the sight of the cavalry charge, and were quickly routed. The Continentals stayed and fought, putting up a stout resistance. They were soon forced to make an orderly retreat. After the loss of Chatterton's Hill, Washington had little choice but to withdraw farther north, beyond the Croton River, to Castle Hill. The battle ended at 5:00 P.M. Howe was content to hold onto Chatterton's Hill. Howe planned for a general assault on October 31, but it was postponed due to heavy storms.

On November 1, the British advanced but found out that Washington and his army were long gone.

On November 4, Howe inexplicably turned his forces south to move onto a 2,000 man continental detachment holding Ft. Washington. Washington's army once again escaped intact.



(Source: Reprinted with permission from uswars.net)

in the crossing of the Delaware and Battle of Trenton. According to the American Revolution website:

In the fall of 1776, Washington was in desperate straits, having been defeated at the battle of Long Island, and having to retreat from New York City. New York City, being surrounded by water, was found to be indefensible from the British with their naval mobility and larger force. Fort Washington, on Manhattan Island, was captured by the Hessians, and Fort Lee, opposite the Hudson River on the New Jersey shore, was about to be attacked. Washington ordered the military stores removed and the troops to prepare for evacuation. Leaving most of the army under Maj. Gen. Charles Lee in Westchester, Washington crossed into New Jersey.

Gen. William Howe, the British commander, moved quickly and the American troops had to rush out of the fort barely ahead of the British. The British failed to move on New Bridge over the Hackensack River, and the American force escaped. Before the war, Howe had supported the American efforts in reducing their grievances, and hoped to have victory without a great deal of bloodshed.

On November 21, Washington moved south with the troops from Fort Lee, desperately ordering the rest of the troops, under Brig. Gen. Charles Lee in Westchester, New York, to join him. Lee, probably seeing a chance to make himself look good in comparison to Washington and also wanting an independent command, acted very lackadaisically, and moved very slowly to join him. Lee wanted to show he could succeed against the British where Washington could not, by attacking their flank and rear, and leaving Washington out on a limb.

Washington moved south first to Newark, and waited for the New Jersey militia to rally. Few showed up. For the past several months, they were supposed to alternate serving a month on duty in the militia, and now they were fed up with it, and stayed with their families. Many states had a hard time getting anyone new to serve in the army, as the British forces seemed to be unbeatable. The revolution seemed to be failing, and most people decided not to get involved, faced with the invasion by the famed British Regulars. Support of the war was failing, and all over, troops even had a hard time getting permission to sleep in barns or buying food and clothing.

On November 28, Washington moved to New Brunswick, leaving Newark with the British entering the town as the Americans left. While in New Brunswick, 2 Brigades of the "Flying Camp" a unit set up to respond quickly to attacks from Staten Island by the British, had their terms of enlistment expire, and 2,026 demoralized men refused to reenlist, even with the British just a short march away. Many more men just deserted. This left Washington with just 3,000 men left, not all of them being fit or able.

On December 1, the British forces moved to New Brunswick, and Washington ordered the troops to begin moving to Princeton. While a few units held the bridge, the rest escaped, finally followed by the rear guard. Washington himself led the pioneers at the rear of the march, destroying bridges and cutting down trees, to delay any pursuit.

Once at Princeton, Washington, with less than 400 men with him, fell back to Trenton along the Delaware River, the border with Pennsylvania, on December 2. Lee was very slowly moving across the state. General Greene had a force covering Washington at Princeton, and other units were scattered around the state.

Two thousand Pennsylvania militia men joined Washington at Trenton. Washington had all the boats available along the river taken and held on the Pennsylvania side of the river, with his supplies, then moved back to Princeton on the 7th. Repeatedly he called for Lee to come to his support, and called for the NJ militia to rally to him.

The militia showed up in disgustingly small numbers. Most men stayed home to protect their families from the advancing invaders, moving possessions out of the way of the British and Hessians. The British and Hessians destroyed Jersey homes, farms and possessions wantonly, and saw little difference between loyalist and rebel, treating most the same.

As Washington moved to Princeton. General Greene was faced with the advancing British and forced to retreat. Joining Washington, the combined army now moved back to Trenton and then across the river. Washington had every boat that could be found moved to safety across to the Pennsylvania side. The scene was set for the Battle of Trenton.

Lee continued to refuse to come to Washington. Finally, he was captured in Basking Ridge by Lt. Col. Harcourt leading British dragoons, on December 13. Under the leadership now of Sullivan, the troops then quickly made their way to Washington. At the same time, Gates had moved down from Fort Ticonderoga with 800 men to Washington's aid. Both units crossed the Delaware around Phillipsburg and reached Washington on December 20.

On December 8, upon reaching the Delaware, Howe was cannonaded from across the river. After a fruitless search for boats up and down the river, Howe decided to stop for the winter. The American army was virtually helpless at this point, ragged, demoralized, greatly outnumbered, undertrained and badly equipped. Howe lost a major chance to end the war by stopping for the winter instead of "foreclosing the mortgage" as one of his officers called it.

Howe placed his troops across the state, with major commands at Trenton, Burlington, Princeton, Perth Amboy and New Brunswick. The Hessians, who had borne the brunt of the assault on Fort Washington in NY, showing courage and discipline, had the honor of being to the front in Trenton and Burlington. Howe recognized that his men were too spread out, but the American army was in such poor shape, and so demoralized, they were not considered a threat.

The British forces had crossed the state almost unopposed. The militia had refused to join Washington, many of his troops on hand were under short enlistment due to expire at the end to the month, desertion was rampant, everyone was discouraged. Half the people had never really

supported the rebellion, and now they infected the rest. The new republic looked to be on its last legs, and Washington perhaps wondered if he would be hung, drawn and quartered as a traitor under British law.

Still everything was not going all the right way for the British. The Jersey men, while not joining Washington, had not reacted passively to being invaded, and the poor behavior of the British and Hessian troops enraged many. Ambushes of British patrols became a standard tactic. Morris County had several units of militia assembled, with some Continental troops, and more troops were around Paramus in the Northeast.

New Jersey irregular troops, acting in small groups, uncoordinated, and fueled by anger at the horrible plundering by both the Hessians and British, raided the enemy to capture supplies, ambushed patrols, harassed communications and movement.

On December 18, Grant, under Cornwallis in New Brunswick, ordered that nothing belonging to the army, even officers, leave New Brunswick without an escort. The local men of New Jersey couldn't seriously hurt the British, but they could make them cautious, and reduce their ability to get information by patrolling.

Along the river, von Donop was placed in charge of the Hessians, stationed at Burlington, Trenton and with posts at Mansfield Square and Black Horse Tavern. In Trenton, 3 regiments of Hessians, about 1 thousand men, were under the command of Colonel Rall (sometimes spelled Rahl). Rall was ordered to build field works needed to defend the town, but did not. Rall told one of his officers who wanted to build redoubts- "Let them come! We want no trenches! We'll use the bayonet!" Small raids worried his troops, and ambushes distressed his dragoons. He was forced to increase the size of his picket posts, which created a lack of rest for his troops. Still Rall had no fear of the American army, which seemed ready to dissolve in the face of winter.

Indeed, everyone in the American camp felt the situation to be desperate. Col. Joseph Reed wrote Washington "that something must be attempted to revive our expiring credit, give our cause some degree of reputation, and prevent a total depreciation of the Continental money, which is coming in very fast- that even a failure cannot be more total than to remain in our present situation." Washington admitted in a letter that "the game was about up."

On December 22, Washington had 4,707 rank and file troops fit for duty. His fall campaign had been little more than a series of retreats and morale was very low with the successive defeats and the loss of New York City. At the end of the year, more enlistments would run out and reduce his force to under 1,500 men. Winter was coming fast and the British would be able to continue their pursuit once the Delaware River froze over.

Washington decided to attack the unsuspecting British forces who had entered winter quarters and were celebrating the holidays. He hoped to salvage a victory at the end of a disappointing campaign. He first wanted to

attack the Hessians at Bordentown, but the local militia in that area was too weak to offer support. He then chose the isolated Hessian garrison, under the command of Col. Johann Rall. The Hessians in Trenton were in an exposed position, and it was known that they would heartily celebrate Christmas on the night of December 25.

Rall had not heeded orders to build fortifications and send out patrols. Even though he was a skilled soldier and able commander, Rall had a low estimation of the rebels, calling them "country clowns." Washington decided on a predawn attack on December 26, while the Hessian troops and officers would be drunk and tired, and hopefully some suffering hangovers.

On December 25, Washington ordered the crossing of the Delaware River to begin right after dark on Christmas Day. He wanted to be in position to launch his attack in the early morning hours. A storm blew up and the men were forced to cross in the ice and snow, which slowed down the crossing. Washington's aide, Col. John Fitzgerald, wrote at 6:00 P.M. as the troops started across: "It is fearfully cold and raw and a snowstorm is setting in. The wind northeast and beats into the faces of the men. It will be a terrible night for those who have no shoes. Some of them have tied only rags about their feet: others are barefoot, but I have not heard a man complain."



[In Emanuel Leutze's painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware," James Monroe, future President of the United States and then an officer in the 3rd Virginia, is depicted as the flag-bearer standing behind Washington.]

Washington led 2,400 men, horses and 18 cannon across the river at McKonkey's Ferry, which was 9 miles above Trenton. He would then attack the town from the north. Brig. Gen. James Ewing was to lead 1,000 militia

at the Trenton Ferry and block a retreat to the south. Col. John Cadwalader would lead 2,000 men, mostly militia, across the river at Bordentown and attack the garrison there as a diversion. However, with the storm, Ewing was unable to make it across, while Cadwalader was unable to bring his artillery and was too late to be of any assistance. The crossing was to be completed by 12:00 A.M., but the storm began at 11:00 P.M. and delayed completion of the crossing. These southern crossings were to prevent the escape of the Hessians and to prevent Von Donop from supporting Trenton. Fortunately, Von Donop was at Burlington, having moved south in response to the group of New Jersey Militia troops raiding towards him a few days earlier. He was out of position to support Rall in Trenton.

On December 26, at 3:00 A.M. the crossing was complete but the column was not ready to march until 4:00 A.M., well behind schedule for a predawn attack. However, Rall still felt unthreatened. Even with intelligence from Loyalists and American deserters, having told him the day and hour of the attack, he did not know how large the American attacking force would be.

At Birmingham, about 4 miles from their crossing, Washington's force split into 2 columns. Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene, along with Washington, led one column onto the Pennington Road to attack the Hessian garrison from the north. Maj. Gen. John Sullivan led the second column continued on the river road so it could attack the Hessian garrison from the west. By 6:00 A.M., the troops were miserable. Sullivan sent word that the men's muskets would not fire due to being exposed to the storm all night. Washington sent word back to rely on the bayonet, "I am resolved to take Trenton."

At the Hessian garrison, Rall had passed out and was sound asleep along with most of his 1,200 man force, which was divided into 3 regiments: under Knyphausen, Lossberg and Rall. Because of the severe storm, Maj. Dechow decided not to send out the normal predawn patrol, including 2 cannon, to sweep the area for signs of the Americans. Though the storm caused extreme misery for the troops, it allowed them to approach undetected.

At 8:00 A.M., Washington's party inquired of a man chopping wood where the Hessian sentries were, just outside of Trenton. He pointed to a nearby house, and the Hessians pored out and began to open fire. The battle of Trenton had begun.



The first shots were fired in the engagement. Only a few minutes later, Sullivan's column routed the Hessian sentries at the outpost a half a mile west of Trenton. Moving quickly and driving in the pickets, both columns moved in on Trenton.



The Hessians were caught completely unprepared. They turned out quickly and formed up, but their attempts to attack to the north were hampered by the flanking fire from the American western column and the artillery. The Americans positioned 2 cannon on a rise that guarded the two main routes out of town. The Hessians tried to bring 4 guns into action, but American fire kept them silent.

Knyphausen's regiment was separated from the other 2 regiments and driven back through the southern end of Trenton by Sullivan's column. Many of the Hessians were able to escape to the south where Ewing's troops were to have been located. Rall and Von Lossberg's regiments were forced out of town and formed in an apple orchard. Rall ordered a counterattack back into town, trying to force a hole to the road to Princeton. The Hessians had wet guns from the storm, and had a hard time firing. When they got back into Trenton's streets, the American troops, joined by some civilians from the town, fired at them from buildings and from behind trees and fences, causing confusion, while the American cannon broke up any formations.

Rall was badly wounded, and the Hessian resistance faltered. They retreated back to the apple orchard, but were surrounded by the fast moving Americans. They had no choice but to surrender.



The remnants of the Knyphausen Regiment were making for Bordentown, but they were slowed down when they tried to haul their cannon through boggy ground. They soon found themselves surrounded by Sullivan's men and they also surrendered. It was only 9:30 A.M. when the fighting died down. The battle had been an overwhelming victory for Washington. The fighting had lasted only 90 minutes.

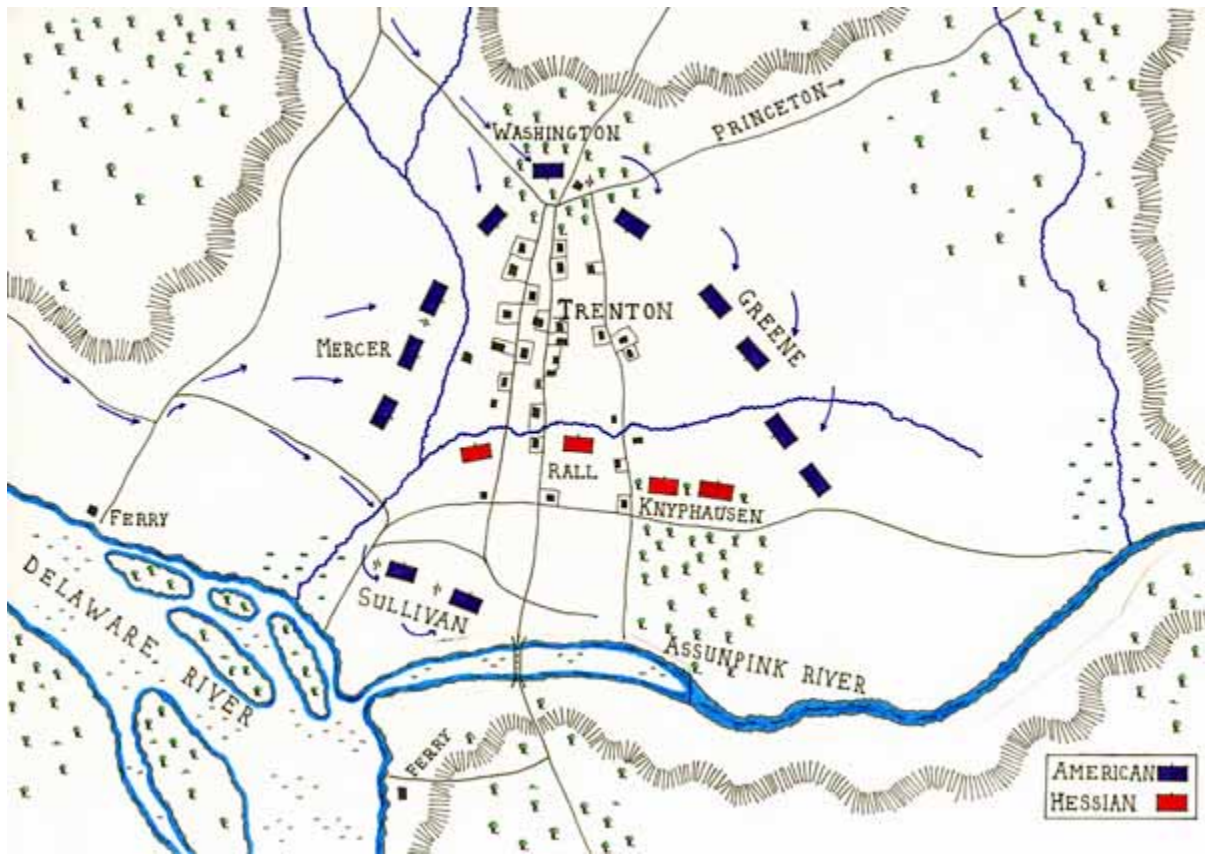
Many Hessians escaped in small groups, but 868 were captured and 106 were killed/wounded. The Americans lost perhaps 4 men wounded and 2-3 frozen to death, captured 1,000 arms, several cannon and ammunition and stores. About 600 Hessians, most of which had been stationed on the south side of the Creek, had escaped. Following the battle, Washington had the captured men and supplies shipped back across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania, then followed with his army at 12:00 P.M.

On December 27, by 12:00 P.M., all of Washington's men were back in their camp in Pennsylvania. He had succeeded in his goal. The American victory lifted the morale of his troops and the battle was the first major victory against British Army regulars.

After the battle, Washington had the captured men and stores shipped across the river, then followed with his army across to Pennsylvania. The next day, 1,000 men reported ill. Von Donop, commanding at Burlington, learned of the battle from fleeing Hessians who had escaped. Rumors of an impending American attack were being passed around, based on partial spy reports of Washington's plans. Continuing rumors had all the British and Hessian garrisons across New Jersey on alert for several days.

Washington had turned the tide, from desperate waiting for the axe to fall, to aggressive victor, chasing the British forces from the Delaware river and putting them on the defensive, for a few days. When the

Continental Congress heard of Washington's victory, they had renewed confidence in their Commander-in-Chief and it bolstered enlistments and reenlistments for 1777.



(Source: Reprinted with permission from uswars.net)

For the Baker family, the great American victory had been a tragic loss. David Baker stated in his pension application: "I had a brother by the name of Richard killed in that action." Richard Baker was just three days past his 23rd birthday.

Particularly tragic is the fact that few if any American soldiers died due to enemy fire in the engagement.

According to David McCullough in his masterful 1776 (Simon & Schuster, 2005), no American troops died in the fighting, but two froze to death in the terrible winter conditions. If true, then Richard Baker was one of those two. But other sources do not accept the no-battle-casualties conclusion.

In Rebels & Redcoats by George F. Scheer and Hugh F. Rankin (Da Capo Press, copyright 1957, paperback reprint), the authors quote a relatively contemporaneous account attributed to an aide to General George Washington, probably Col. John Fitzgerald, as stating that there were "two killed and three wounded" and the wounded included Captain William Washington and Lieutenant James Monroe – both assigned to the 3rd Virginia Regiment, the regiment in which David Baker did serve and in which Richard Baker most likely served (there are no extant records to establish for certain Richard's regiment).

David Hackett Fischer, author of Washington's Crossing (Oxford University Press, 2004), cites a similar count by Washington aide Tench Tilghman and contends that the bulk of the evidence supports a finding that two privates were killed in action and another four or five died of illness or exposure.

If these other sources are correct, then David Baker's choice of the word "killed" to describe his brother's death (as opposed to a more passive word such as "died") would suggest that Richard was one of those killed in action.

2 January 1777 – SECOND BATTLE OF TRENTON: The winter campaign continued in the early days of January 1777, and the 3rd Virginia Regiment continued to play its role in the battles. According to the American Revolution website:

Following his surprise victory at the Battle of Trenton, Gen. George Washington withdrew his army to the west bank of the Delaware River. He intended to return within a few days and attempt to recover New Jersey from the British. Meanwhile, hearing of the American victory at Trenton, Col. John Cadwalader crossed the river to the east bank where he found his force to be unsupported. Washington decided to use his momentum and grab another victory before entering the army's winter quarters.

Between December 27-31, Washington brought his troops back across the river into Trenton. He received information that Lt. Gen. Charles Cornwallis and Maj. Gen. James Grant were at Princeton, with 8,000 troops and artillery. The British were rumored to be ready to advance upon the Americans. Cadwalader was south of Trenton with 2,100 men, while at Bordentown, Brig. Gen. Thomas Mifflin waited with 1,600 Pennsylvania militia.

Washington faced the crisis that arose on several occasions during the war, that many of his soldiers enlistments were about to expire. That is their period of enlistment lapsed at midnight on December 31. Brig. Gen. Henry Knox and Mifflin pleaded with their soldiers to extend their enlistments for 6 more weeks. Washington even asked the soldiers to extend their enlistments. Once again, Washington spoke: "My brave fellows, you have done all I asked you to do and more than could reasonably be expected. But your country is at stake, your wives, your houses, and all that you hold dear. You have worn yourselves out with fatigues and hardships, but we know not how to spare you. If you will consent to stay only one month longer, you will render that service to the cause of liberty and to your country which you probably never can do under any other circumstances. The present is emphatically the crisis which is to decide our destiny." Washington offered a special bounty of \$10.00 to anyone who would reenlist. The regiments all agreed to stay for 6 more weeks.

Cadwalader, who had been unable to land on the New Jersey shore on December 26 due to the ice on that shore, reported he was crossing near Burlington. He was reinforced by some militia, which was turning up encouraged by the Trenton victory. Cadwalader was unaware that Washington had recrossed the river. He moved into the now empty Burlington and then to Bordentown, reporting that the local citizens were removing the red rags nailed to their doors as symbols of loyalty to the

crown. He asked Washington to join him in advancing on the British. Washington's troops were in no condition to advance and they were also was short of food.

On December 30, Washington had improved his supply situation and recrossed the river. Howe ordered Cornwallis to move to Princeton and gather all available troops for a counterattack. Washington crossed the Delaware River back into New Jersey.

On January 1, Washington had 1,600 Continental troops, with a number of New Jersey and Pennsylvania militia, who had come in after the Battle of Trenton. He knew the British had over 6,000 troops scattered throughout New Jersey with a large number of these at garrisons at New Brunswick and Princeton. Washington sent a covering force, led by Brig. Gen. Edward Hand, to delay Cornwallis' advance. He ordered his troops to concentrate at Trenton and sent Hand toward Princeton to delay an anticipated British approach. Hand's force was in position along Five Mile Run.

While the majority of the British were making their way to Trenton, Cornwallis left a 1,200-man force, under Lt. Col. Charles Mahwood, as a rear guard at Princeton. In the early morning of January 2, Gen. Charles Cornwallis left a force of 1,200 men, commanded by Lt. Col. Charles Mahwood, to guard Princeton and began the march to Trenton with 5,500 troops and 28 artillery pieces. Deep mud created by heavy rains the previous night slowed their progress.

At about 10:00 A.M., the British came upon the American advance guard, now commanded by Col. Edward Hand, as Brig. Gen. Roche De Fermoy had returned to Trenton. The Americans retreated slowly, stopping at advantageous positions to skirmish and thus delay the British advance – holding them for 3 hours at Shabbakonk Creek, and for another hour at the north side of Trenton. Finally, firing from behind houses and fences, the American force fell back to the ridge along the south bank of Assumpink Creek, where Gen. George Washington had positioned his force behind some earthworks.

By 5:00 P.M., a 1,500-man British advance guard reached the creek. Three times the American fire prevented the British from crossing the bridge. When Cornwallis arrived with the main body of the British army, he decided that Washington, with his back to the Delaware River, was trapped. So Cornwallis withdrew his men to encamp and prepare for an attack the following day. The American soldiers lit their campfires. Washington called for a council of war and he and his officers chose an audacious plan; to withdraw under cover of darkness, march around the British left flank, skirt Maidenhead, and attack Princeton and then New Brunswick.

Washington set 400 men to deceive Cornwallis by noisily building entrenchments and heaping the campfires with more wood. They would remain until daybreak then sneak off and hasten to Princeton.

3 January 1777 – BATTLE OF PRINCETON: One of the most significant engagements of the winter campaign occurred in Princeton, near Trenton in what was then Hunterdon County, New Jersey, the day after the Second Battle of Trenton. It was the

battle where then- General Hugh Mercer, commander of the 3rd Virginia, was killed—an event that **David Baker** specifically noted in his pension application. Note that in 1838, a new county including the area along the banks of the Delaware River, and including Trenton and Princeton, was created from parts of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties. It was named Mercer County to honor this Revolutionary hero.

According to the American Revolution website:

On January 2, at 4:00 P.M., when the British finally arrived at Trenton, they found Washington's army entrenched but outnumbered. Washington had only 5,200 men, and many were unreliable militia. He deployed his troops to the southside of the Assunpink Creek, which was a strong position. They repelled several British attempts to take the bridge. Since his troops were tired, Cornwallis decided to wait until morning to renew his attack, when he could "bag the fox," as he said. His officers wanted to attack now, fearful of Washington's known ability to retreat and escape.

During the night, Washington left a skeleton force of 400 men to keep the campfires burning, make entrenchment noises, and keep up appearances, while the rest of the army moved around the British forces toward Princeton. There, they could attack the rear of the British forces and maybe even capture the 70,000 pound sterling war chest. Washington ordered silence and orders were given in whispers. Taking the back roads, the Americans moved to the south around the British and swung towards Princeton. The main roads were poor tracks, some of these back roads were little more than trails which had already become unused. The troops staggered along in the dark all night. Luckily, a freeze had set in with nightfall and the roads were frozen, making them passable for both men and cannon.

On January 3, at 1:00 A.M., the rest of Washington's force set out. Secrecy and silence were maintained with only the generals knowing the expedition's destination. The cannon wheels were even wrapped in rags to prevent them from making any noise. Washington had a simple plan of attack for Princeton. First, a 350-man force under Brig. Gen. Hugh Mercer was to destroy Stony Brook Bridge, thus cutting Princeton off from reinforcement from Cornwallis' force at Trenton.

Around 8:00 A.M., Mahwood was marching his force to Trenton to join up with Cornwallis. In the morning fog, Mahwood spotted Mercer's force. At first, he thought they were a column of Hessians but soon realized that they were Americans. Mahwood's force fell back to a defensive position and the two forces met at Clark's Orchard. The Americans charged and drove the British back. The 2 forces then formed battle lines and the British launched an attack that drove the Americans back, mortally wounding Mercer. The American militia panicked and started to flee the scene. Washington moved forward with Cadwalader's Pennsylvania militia to prevent a complete rout of their forces. Washington, Cadwalader, and Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Greene then moved among the troops to rally them. Washington rode into the middle of the battlefield and rallied the fleeing militia.

Once the main body of his force had moved up, Washington led his men against the British line. At a distance of 30 yards, he halted and ordered his

men to fire and the British returned fire. Knox was able to bring up his cannon force and joined in the fight. The field was filled with smoke, obscuring Washington's view. When the smoke cleared, he was unharmed and the British line had broken. The British fought toward Trenton while the rest of the British force retreated back toward Princeton.

The rest of the action consisted after the British retreating through the town and then northward as the Americans moved behind them. Cornwallis had heard the fighting begin and hurried to bring up reinforcements from Trenton, but the last Americans were slipping out of Princeton as the first of Cornwallis' troops were arriving.

Washington resisted the impulse to pursue the fleeing British, knowing that they were headed toward Cornwallis. Washington continued to Princeton. There was a 200-man force that had barricaded themselves in Nassau Hall. The Americans fired 2 cannon shells into the building and then made a charge. The British force surrendered. Washington was unable to occupy Princeton because he knew that Cornwallis would be counterattacking soon. He wanted to push on to New Brunswick, but his troops were too tired. On January 4, after deciding not to attack New Brunswick, Washington continued north, and later that day they arrived in Pluckemin. Protected now by the Watchung Mountains to his east, and with Morristown units behind him, Washington was now safe. He marched to Morristown, arriving on January 5-6 and entered winter quarters.

The British were now ordered by Howe to abandon New Jersey, except for a line from Perth Amboy to New Brunswick. Washington had now driven the British from most of New Jersey, in what was called the "Ten Crucial Days," from December 25-January 3.

More importantly, the revolution now had a chance, morale was improved, and the people once again believed they could stand and face the British troops. The British outrages in the invasion of New Jersey had turned many previously on the fence to the side of the rebels, paper money was acceptable once more and the rebel government and army found support again. Washington had learned to fight not the main British army, but its outposts, forcing the British to give up any effort to control the hinterlands of America. The French government, encouraged by the British military defeats, released supplies to the American war effort. In England, the government started losing support for the war. The crisis was past, even if severe hardship and fighting were yet ahead, in a long and bitter struggle for freedom and independence.

The effect of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton were to clear most of New Jersey of the British presence. The battles impressed upon the European powers that the Americans were able to confront the British Army and the decisive intervention of France and Spain in the Revolutionary War came a step closer. Washington showed himself to be a leader of resource and decision.

