

**Military History of  
Joseph Hancock, Jr.  
Revolutionary War Veteran**

*8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment*

**August 20, 1776 – April 3, 1780**

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**4<sup>th</sup> Great Grandson of Joseph Hancock, Jr.**

**Publication**

**August 20, 2004**

Revised October 2008

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## **Introduction**

*This research paper concerning the military history of Joseph Hancock, Jr. during the American Revolutionary War was motivated by a strong desire to understand the historical period that defined this country and an avid curiosity regarding this ancestor's contribution to American independence. The author also had a desire to leave a historical legacy for descendants, descendants of the men in the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and historical societies that are interested in these men. This research paper is thus published for a limited audience of interested parties and is not a commercial for profit endeavor. A number of excellent publications were used and are credited as references in the bibliography. Joseph Hancock's military history is therefore integrated, to the level of detail possible, in history derived from sources of published and public information. Reading some of these publications is highly recommended.*

*The author wishes to thank a number of individuals that have contributed immensely to this work. First is grandfather, Homer Hancock, of Pontiac Michigan, who instilled an interest in the study of Hancock family history, a subject he investigated. Thanks to family records he was able to construct a family tree that aided immensely in the research for this manuscript. Distant cousin, Jerry Bowen, of Hagerstown Maryland, a descendant of Joseph Hancock's second wife, published a book entitled "Joseph Hancock of Revolutionary War Fame." It provided an excellent history of Joseph's life and the important anchor points from which this author was able to do research. Cousin Leona Falls, of Yorktown Indiana, has been an avid family researcher and has assisted in several important ways. First, she was given the text of this research paper as it was composed and provided invaluable suggestions and corrections. She also showed my sister and me where the family burial sites are located. From burial information, Homer's family tree is validated through the direct descendants of Joseph Hancock, Jr. to the author. Marion Golden, of Hancock Maryland, a founding member of the Hancock Historical Society and a descendant of Joseph's first Captain, Andrew Mann, has been of great help and inspiration. It is likely the town's name evolved from the area once known as Hancock's Ferry, then Hancock's Town, and eventually Hancock. Edmund Joseph Hancock Sr. and his son Joseph ran the local ferry from which the name originated prior to the later enlisting in the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment in August of 1776, Marion has provided valuable documentation and personal insight concerning the Hancock history in the town.*

*The paper is focused on Joseph's military history. There are numerous opportunities for further research, including the genealogy of Joseph Hancock Sr., and what Joseph Hancock did for the decade following the War, before purchasing his first property near in Kentucky, and detailed documentation of Joseph's post-military history, farming and raising a family in Maysville Kentucky, Centerville Ohio, and Wayne County Indiana.*

*This paper was designed to tell a story of one rank-and-file man who was, along with a few thousand others, essential to the success of American liberation from British colonial rule. It does not debate all of the nuances of historical fact but reflects what the author believes to be the mainstream thinking or evidence contained in the sources used. Further research may require revision of some of the text as old documents from the period are discovered and released providing new insight. Therefore, from time to time this manuscript may be improved with new or more complete information. Anyone interested in contributing to this work is encouraged to contact the author.*

*Best Regards,*

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# I

## Hancock Maryland

### Hancock's Home Prior to Enlistment

Joseph Hancock, Jr. was born on July 21, 1758 to <Edward J. (Joseph)> and Mary (Bush) Hancock in Bedford County Pennsylvania. The events of Joseph's first seven years of life are unknown. The story begins with the history of the town of Hancock Maryland where Edward Hancock purchased property from William McClary sometime after 1765. (Hancock, Web) History indicates Joseph Hancock, Jr. operated a ferry for which a petition was requested in 1774 until enlisting in the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the Continental Line August 20, 1776. The ferry was known as Hancock's Ferry. The Hancock property was sold in 1782 and became part of what was later known as Rowland's Addition. The Hancock home was located east of the ferry, and the ferry west of a tract of land later known as William's Town.

The historical perspective provided on the Hancock Maryland web site indicated that William Russell laid out the town along the main road from Fort Frederick to Fort Cumberland a short time before 1789. He called it William's Town, for which no reason was given. Confusion existed for a number of years as the area was known as both William's Town and Hancock's Town. This confusion may have been due to two areas of development that were proximate but adjacent to each other until, for unknown reasons, William's Town was dropped from any deeds written after 1810. Interestingly, a map Of North America published in 1771 for Carrington Bowles in London, shows a site on the "Powtomac" [sic] in the general area as "WilliamssFer" [sic]. Likewise, two other map sources, published before 1772, mark Williams Ferry, however, there were also several other ferries nearby, one of which was west but close to Williams Ferry. A map published in 1795 refers to the area as "Hancocks T." the T. standing for "town". The mixed naming of the town may be due to the two ferry names under Williams and Hancock. Whether Hancock bought out Williams or there were actually two ferries has yet to be determined. The Hancock web site further indicated the town was incorporated 1853, by an act of the Legislature, and that no other name was considered but Hancock. "Town" was dropped from the name.

It is known, through Joseph Hancock's daughter Cynthia Reeder, that the Indians killed Joseph's father Edward J. or Joseph Hancock, Sr. The year this happened and at what age has not been determined. The age of Joseph, Jr., when his father was killed, is also not known. Edward made the land purchase in 1765, at which time Joseph Jr. would have been approximately seven. It is therefore safe to assume that he was very aware of the circumstances surrounding his father's untimely death. After his fathers death Joseph's mother married Lewis Castleman. There were no children. According to family record, she lived to 106. The sale of the property owned by Edward J. Hancock in Hancock's Town may have been associated with her remarriage and relocation to Pennsylvania. After the war Joseph Hancock Jr., the only child of Edward Joseph and Mary Hancock returned to the area and married Catherine Baltimore. Ten years after leaving the military he moved to Kentucky, the first of three locations in the west, and raised his family. He left no descendants in Hancock, Maryland or Pennsylvania.

## II Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment Authorization

Pennsylvania was Quaker and therefore a pacifist State with a religious conviction against the authorizing and use of military forces. Nonetheless, being one of the more populous states, the Pennsylvania Legislature fielded one of the largest continental armies participating in the War. The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was authorized by the State government July 15, 1776 and was chartered to defend against western frontier Indian attacks. (PA) They were recruited to man forts at Presque Isle, Le Boeuf, and Kittanning located in western Pennsylvania. Seven companies were recruited from Westmoreland County and eight companies from Bedford County. Joseph Hancock enlisted August 20, 1776, six weeks after the Declaration of Independence. The first commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was Colonel Aeneas Mackey, who had been an officer in the British Army and served in the French Indian War. He died, according to Trussell February 14, 1777 and was replaced by Daniel Brodhead who was promoted from Lieutenant Colonel to Colonel, transferred from the 4<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment, and given command until Jan 17, 1781.

Lieutenant Colonel, George Wilson, died in February of 1777. The second Lieutenant Colonel, Richard Butler, was transferred to Colonel Daniel Morgan's special task force of riflemen June 9, 1777. Morgan and his men supported General Gates in New York and were returned that winter to Valley Forge. The third Lieutenant Colonel, James Ross, transferred in grade from the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment and resigned September 22, 1777. The fourth Lieutenant Colonel, Stephen Bayard, remained in that position until January 17, 1781. Bayard's promotion to Lieutenant Colonel brought the promotion and transfer of Frederick Vernon from Captain, 5<sup>th</sup> Penn. Regiment to Major. He served with the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment until January 17, 1781. Rosters indicate Joseph served under Vernon and signed his discharge from the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment on April 3, 1780. (PA)

Joseph was initially attached to a company under the command of Captain Andrew Mann, referenced by Trussell as Company E. Mann was listed as sick and in quarters May 2, 1777 and reported to have died in June of 1777. This was contradicted in *a History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties*, published in 1884, in a footnote that states as follows:

*“In 1730 the brothers Jacob, Andrew, and Bernard Mann emigrated from the German side of the Rhine and landed at Philadelphia. Soon afterward they settled in the “Tolonoway settlement” a region now embraced by Fulton County, Pennsylvania.....(the two brothers moved) Andrew alone remaining an inhabitant of Bedford county. He was married to Rachel Egnor, a native of Wurtemberg, Germany, in 1760. He was commissioned captain in Col. Mackey’s regiment September 14, 1776, and he died January 13, 1818.”*

This agrees with family oral history. Trussell's account states Mann was replaced by Thomas T. Cook, supernumerary. He left the army October 11, 1777, just after the Battle of German Town. The Pennsylvania Archives indicates *“Mann, Andrew; on return of June 9, 1777, is marked sick in quarters since May 2”*. He apparently returned home shortly thereafter.

In Company F, Nehemiah Stokely became supernumerary January 31, 1779, replacing Captain Wendal Query. Records indicate that Joseph served under Stokely when sent to the frontier. Since there was no replacement for Cook, it would appear that Companies E and F were combined (the letter of the companies' designations being Trussells). The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was consolidated with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment January 17, 1781 and remained on the frontier. The companies assigned to the regiment that were assigned to Fort Pitt were disbanded November 15, 1783.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was one of two regiments of the Continental Army under Washington that fought on the seaboard as well as the frontier during the War. The men were exposed to the extremes of conventional warfare on the seaboard and guerilla tactics in the west. Characteristic of the military at the time, command was loose and the men highly undisciplined, at least at the beginning of their service. Recruiting at the frontier was difficult due to the small population and the fact that the frontier men were needed to defend and operate their homesteads. Low recruitment meant there was no justification for new officers, which in turn seriously hurt the morale of the existing officers. The provisioning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, after it went to the frontier, was even more deplorable than the depravity suffered by the Main Army. If the abnormal mortality rate for non-combat deaths of officers is any indication, this was a deadly outfit in which to serve.

### III

#### Joseph Hancock, Jr. – Colonist Enlists as a Private to Fight the Indians

Joseph Jr. enlisted in the service in August 20, 1776, at age eighteen. His regiment was specifically formed to fight the Indians in the western frontier, not far from his home in western Pennsylvania. Many joined with only the clothes on their backs; the uniform was a standard hunting shirt and the leggings in common use at the time. Few had decent footwear, and if they had weapons at all, they were rifles not muskets. The following description of uniforms obtained from a web site on Uniforms of the American Revolution by Dorothy C. Barck, provides insight on the rebel's appearance and the practicality of the Continental Uniform Standards:

*“The picturesqueness of the rifle dress worn by the expert marksmen of the Carolinas, Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania has made it well known, but the very general use of the hunting shirt by all American troops is not generally recognized. Lieutenant Lefferts wrote: ‘The rifle dress or hunting frock was preferred by Washington, and was worn by most of the army throughout the war. It was the field dress of almost the entire army. The hunting shirt was made of deer leather, linen, or homespun, dyed in various colors, in the different regiments, such as tan, green, blue, yellow, purple, black or white. They were all of the same pattern, but some had capes and cuffs of different colors. With the hunting shirts were worn long leggings or overalls, also preferred by Washington in place of breeches and stockings. They were made of linen or duck un-dyed, or of deer leather, and later in the war were furnished in wool for the winter. They were shaped to the leg, and fastened at the ankle with four buttons and a strap under the shoe.*”

*“Washington recommended hunting shirts as part of the clothing bounty to be provided by the Continental Congress, and as the most practicable garment for troops not supplied with uniform coats. He pointed out the several advantages of the rifle dress in his General Order of July 24, 1776: ‘No dress can be cheaper, nor more convenient, as the wearer may be cool in warm weather and warm in cool weather by putting on under-clothes which will not change the outward dress, Winter or Summer -- Besides which it is a dress justly supposed to carry no small terror to the enemy, who think every such person a complete marksman.*”

*“Pennsylvania troops were also known to have long brown coats that were apparently a distinction of their dress. “Washington’s order of October 2, 1779 indicated blue coats of the infantry regiments, which were all to be lined with white and have white buttons. States were distinguished by different colored facings; Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia had red facings. This order could not be immediately complied with as many troops continued with brown until the end of the war. This would have been particularly true of the 8th since it was by this time of this order, on the frontier having a greater than normal difficulty getting supplied.”*



Sufficient information is available to allow speculation regarding Joseph's physical stature. A medical exam for Joseph's pension application, taken when he was in his 70's, determined him to be 5 feet 9 inches tall. Allowing for age and based on available anthropometric data, Joseph's height would have been in the top 15% and more likely closer to the top 5% of the privates enlisted in the Pennsylvania Line. Long brown coat, frontier brown shirt, rifle, and standing above most of his fellow soldiers, Joseph went to war.

He did not necessarily enlist to join the revolution since his regiment was authorized to defend against the Indians. Whether Thomas Payne's *Common Sense* was familiar to him at the time of his enlistment is unknown. He could not write and therefore likely was unable to read. He perhaps became more familiar with the cause after he joined. The marauding Indian parties, who were now being encouraged by the English to attack American settlements, were his primary concern. He was also young at heart and may have wanted an adventure. Whatever his motivation, he assuredly experienced a great deal more than he bargained for.

#### IV Military, Political, and Economic Conditions - 1776

As a general statement of conditions in the Continental Army after his appointment to General and Commander in Chief of the Armies of the United Colonies, Washington stated:

*“Powder was to be obtained, not from officers under the control of Congress, but from committees and other local powers, who had collected small parcels for local defense. Arms, too, were deficient in number, and inferior in quality. The troops were almost destitute of clothing, and without tents. A siege (Boston, Massachusetts circa September 1774) was to be carried on without engineers and almost without entrenching tools. In addition to these defects, many were discontented with the general officers appointed by Congress: and the mode of appointing regimental officers, in some of the colonies, where they were elected by the soldiers, was extremely unfavorable to discipline. Yet under all these disadvantages, the General observed with pleasure, ‘the materials of a good army.’ There were ‘a great number of men, able-bodied, active, zealous in the cause, and of unquestionable courage.’ Possessed of these materials, he employed himself indefatigably in their organization.”*

Washington recognized the need immediately for a more established and disciplined military force establishing the Continental Army. With battle experience, training and discipline, the Continental soldiers improved. They became “professional” American soldiers. State Militias, on the other hand, were often formed and disbanded in days or weeks, seldom disciplined, and generally untrained. This is not to deny their importance in the war effort. On the contrary, they provided essential support in many battles for without them, there would not have been sufficient numbers of soldiers to face the formidable British Army.

The organization of States as sovereign entities voluntarily supporting the Union placed many political burdens on maintaining an effective continental fighting force, as stated by Marshall:

*“As the season for active operations approached, fresh difficulties, growing out of the organization of the American system, disclosed themselves. Every state being exposed to invasion, the attention of each was directed to itself. The spirit incident to every league was displayed in repeated attempts to give to military force such various directions as would leave it unable to affect any great object, or to obstruct any one plan the enemy might form. The patriotism of the day, however, and the unexampled confidence placed in the commander-in-chief, prevented the mischief’s(sic) this spirit is well calculated to generate. His representations made their proper impression, and the intention of retaining continental troops for local defense was reluctantly abandoned. The plan of raising additional regular corps, to be exclusively under state authority, was substituted for yeomanry of the country, as more effectual and convenient mode of protecting the coasts from insult.”*

Once the organizational problems were settled, food, clothing, blankets, and shoes became an immediate and continual problem. Many men were forced to march barefooted. Particularly bad in winter weather, the army often left a trail of blood in the snow. Shelter for the rank and file was often non-existent. They often slept unprotected in rain, and suffered the cold under the stars. Disease was rampant, reducing the effective force more than casualties from battle. Smallpox was particularly devastating, as well as forms of dysentery that could lead to death. Conditions at Valley Forge, for example, were so bad that many accounts avoided the cruel reality of an army living in unimaginable squalor, unfit to defend itself against the British. Joseph and his compatriots were promised food and clothing as part of the compensation for joining. Instead, they shared in mutual deprivation for their service.

The Continental Congress had no taxing power and was left to pleading with the States to provide for the Continental Army and militias. Washington and his officers constant requests to Congress and State Legislators often went unfulfilled. America and the respective states did not have an economy sufficient to support a war. Soldiers were often not paid and, when they were, it was often in paper that rapidly depreciated. The parsimonious conduct of the various state congresses and treasuries was out of necessity. The country borrowed heavily during the war. Fortunately, for the outcome of the war, American allies provided cloth, arms and naval support at critical junctions in the long campaign. The men suffered nonetheless.

The political realities of the time were as harsh as the military realities. As a rule of thumb, one-third of the country opposed the war and separation with England, one-third favored independence, and one-third switched position with the ebb and flow of the war effort. Thomas Paine, in *Common Sense* published in February 1776, stated that the most efficacious time was the present to fight the British. He argued that after years of fighting in the French Indian war, Americans were armed, many had seen military action, and military officers with experience were available. These conditions would not continue to exist indefinitely. *Common Sense* was widely read, providing a needed stimulant and justification to pursue the war for independence. Therefore those that sought America independence went to war with colonial citizens divided in their support.

It should be noted however that the French Indian War was much different than fighting an established army like the British. Guerrilla tactics that often favored the use of the long rifle, preferred for its utility in hunting as well as warfare, were utilized. The use of rifles against a large and organized British force was another matter. These rifles could not mount bayonets and took five times as long to reload as the muskets in use at the time. Special rifle companies, regiments, and brigades were formed and used for special purposes; they were highly feared by the British, but muskets were far more useful with forces facing each other in the conventional battle formations that often ended in hand-to-hand combat. Few muskets were available at the beginning of the war.

The British Army was the most powerful and disciplined army since the Roman legions. Washington knew that he could not lose his army and often made battle decisions that would preserve it. Accordingly the battle outcomes were often judged to not have been in his favor. As will be discussed later, he allowed the British to occupy Philadelphia in order to save his army and an important store of ordnance and iron works. Although he made a number of brilliant moves, such as the Christmas attack on Trenton, he fought a war largely of attrition. The cost of the war was enormous for the British. It

was, from an English citizen's point of view, distant, and not as important as continuing conflicts with France and Spain on the mainland. The British public eventually became weary of the war with the colonies and more concerned about their own backyard. Washington had only to wait for an appropriate opportunity to execute a decisive victory. When he achieved it at Yorktown with the help of the French Army and Navy, the British surrendered. After Yorktown, the British recognition of America as an independent and sovereign nation took lengthy negotiations, but was eventually accomplished with no further military confrontations except on the frontier. The British remained in control of such places as Detroit and from there encouraged Native Americans to keep up the hostilities. After Yorktown the frontier continued to be at war.

The Native Americans in the western frontier were encouraged by the British to attack the Americans, which initially gave rise to the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment. Native Americans were often recruited as warrior soldiers and fought with the British. Many Native Americans were sympathetic to the British, because they appeared to be a superior adversary after having won the French Indian War. Moreover, Native Americans believed they would receive better treatment from the British than from Americans, who were more land acquisitive. In short, the Native Americans wanted the British to win because it would improve the probability of protecting their lands from settlement.

The greatest deficiency of the American economy at the time was a shortage of labor to build and produce. Diverting labor to military service took manpower away from a farm production economy. Much of the instability of the various militias that were formed was based on the need for the men to return home to plant and harvest their crops, or take care of pressing family material needs. The economic impact of war greatly disturbed the successful operation of family enterprises. Essential manufactured goods were no longer available from Britain. In the short run, without manufactured goods, many were hobbled in their daily pursuits and moreover believed it unlikely in the long run that a confrontation with the British would yield favorable results.

No matter how fragile the conditions were, America had a cause and a purpose that seemed to manifest itself as the revolution progressed. The founding fathers were able to put substance to long-debated political and philosophical issues. No republic the size of America had ever been established. The most instructive attempts had been Greek city-states. No one was entirely sure whether a republic would work on the scale that would be required in America. But these concerns, although actively debated, were put aside to first establish that the citizens of this country had certain inalienable rights that were being denied by unenlightened British policy. Although reconciliation with Britain was sought, it eventually became apparent that there was no choice but to seek independence. Unlike many revolutions that were lead by thugs, America's was unique for its exceptional if not divinely inspired leadership. The founding fathers were a unique breed of men. So were their military officers.

## V

### Change of Marching Orders and Command

The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment assembled in Kittanning, Pennsylvania during the fall of 1776. Orders were issued November 22, 1776 and received by the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment December 4, 1776. These orders officially made the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment part of the Continental Army. Shockingly, they were not directed to proceed against the Indian enemy that was an immediate threat to the settlers. Instead, they were ordered to find and join Washington's army. The orders were not well received by an outfit that was undisciplined and committed to frontier causes. Nonetheless, they were forced to march six weeks in winter weather to link up with Washington. Lt. Col. George Wilson wrote the following to a member of the Continental Congress, Col. James Wilson, on December 5<sup>th</sup> expressing his willingness to comply with the order:

*“Last Evening We Rec Marching orders, Which I must say is not Disagreeable to me under ye Sircumstances of ye times, for when I enter'd into ye service I Judged that if a necesety appeared to call us Below, it would be Don, therefore it Dont come on me By Surprise; But as Both ye Officers and Men understood they Ware Raised for ye Defence of ye Westeran Frontiers, and their fameleys and substance to be Left in so Defenceless a situation in their abstence, seems to Give Sensable trouble, altho I Hope We Will Get overit, By Leaving sum of ower trifeling Officers behind to Pirtend to Have More Witt than seven men that can Rendar a Reason. We are ill Provided for a March at this Season, But there is nothing Hard under sum Sircumstances. We Hope provisions Will be made for us Below, Blankets, Campe Kittles, tents, arms, Regementals, &c. that we may not Cut a Dispisable Figure, But may be Enabled to answer ye expectation of ower Countre.*

*“I have Warmly Recomendend to y officers to Lay aside all Personall Resentments at this time, for that it would be construed By ye Worald that they made use of that Sircumstance to Hide themselves under from ye cause of their countrie, and I hope it Will have a Good Effect at this time. We have ishued ye Necessary orders, and appointed ye owt Parties to Randevous at Hanows Town, ye 15<sup>th</sup> instant, and to March Emeditly from there. We have Recomendend it to ye Militia to Station One Hndred Men at this post until further orders.*

*“I hope to have y Pleasure of Seeing you Soon, as we mean to take Philodelphia in ower Rout. In ye mean time, I am, With Esteem, your Harty Wellwisher and Hble Ser.”*

The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment joined Washington at Quibbletown, now known as New Market, New Jersey. The march began January 6, 1777. During this arduous six-week march that started with 684 men, 36 were captured, 14 were missing, 15 were dead, 15 were discharged, and 126 deserted. Although these were the recorded figures, Washington's letters state a different view. At the time, Washington was convinced the Pennsylvania Colonels pocketed bounty money and listed men that had never enlisted as deserters. Washington did not believe bounties were a way to raise an army. He

preferred a draft for which the Tory, timid, or wealthy could hire substitutes. To improve the quality of commissioned officers, he insisted they be “gentlemen” in an aristocratic sense. Washington would later hold the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the highest regard for its bravery and fighting ability.

Whether corrupt or not, the conditions were severe and contributed to the death of the Commanding Officer, Colonel Mackey, February 14, 1777. Lieutenant Colonel George Wilson, who prophetically predicted the outcome, also died in February. A new command structure was not fully in place until June 9, 1777. The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, with the exception of three rifle companies detached to Daniel Morgan, was placed under the new command of Brigadier General Anthony Wayne.

Anthony Wayne was promoted to Brigadier General on February 21, 1777. He had been in command of the garrison at Fort Ticonderoga and became weary of the relative inactivity of the command. He desired to be under the direct command of Washington and after asking for a transfer, was ordered by Washington to join him in Morristown. Wayne was at once placed in command of the Pennsylvania Line effective April 12, 1777. Based on the size of the division, which was re-reorganized into a force of approximately 1700 men, Wayne should have been commissioned a Major General. There were two Major Generals the allotted number from Pennsylvania. Apparently, neither Mifflin nor St. Clair were considered for the position. St. Clair succeeded Wayne at the garrison at Fort Ticonderoga, and Mifflin became Quarter Master General. Wayne was a Brigadier General when he joined Washington’s army and remained such for the duration of the war. During this time he had independent command with all the burdens associated with administration of the division, but never complained, although friends suggested he write to request a proper commission. He does not appear to have done so.

General Wayne was said to have had a very enthusiastic personality and a pleasant demeanor. He was aggressive, and a great tactician in military planning. He was able to read battle engagements instantly and deploy his troops often in counter attack against the enemy. He succeeded in planning the capture of enemy positions thought by other officers to be near impossible. Washington usually included Wayne in his war councils and sought him out for advice even though he was not officially part of Washington’s immediate staff and of sufficient rank. Washington respected Wayne’s instinct, wit, aggressiveness, and tactical ability. He could always count on Wayne to provide an ambitious military option. Although Washington was not always willing to take Wayne’s advice, he recognized Wayne as an exceptional leader and ordered him to spearhead or lead imperative deployments during the war. The Pennsylvania Line attained an elite reputation as Wayne led them into successful enemy engagements throughout the war. Joseph Hancock served under Wayne until detached to the frontier May 1778.

Joseph had no choice but to accept the decisions of superiors that marched him off to a different war than that for which he enlisted, although he would in the end serve on the frontier fighting Indians. At the start of his enlistment he was a member of a highly undisciplined army, marched unmercifully through the harsh winter in January and February of 1777. Unlike many others he did not allow the tribulations and disaffections to motivate him to desert or become insubordinate. Given what he encountered, he would have had to be an exceptionally hardy, strong, clever, disciplined, and committed person to have survived. The character of the man that emerged during this period persisted as he married, pressed west, again fought the Indians, acquired land, farmed,

and raised a large family. Joseph Hancock was a man who did great service for his country, enabled his own prosperity and secured the well-being of future generations so they could also live a remarkable and prosperous life. In a country with a population of less than three million people at the end War, he can be included as one of the bricklayers for the foundation of this great country.

**VI**  
**New Jersey - Winter 1777**  
**Washington Assembles an Army Decisively Containing the British**

Washington had secured the high ground in Morristown, New Jersey to hold defensive positions after driving Howe's superior force back into New Brunswick and Amboy after winning battles at Trenton and Princeton. Washington stood at the right flank of the enemy's position and, unless Washington was dislodged, Howe's army could not move towards Philadelphia without great risk. Howe was forced to withdraw from advanced positions, as Marshall's detailed review of the circumstance will reveal:

*"The effect of the proclamation published by Lord and General Howe, on taking possession of Jersey, was in a great degree counteracted by the conduct of the invading army. The hope that security was attainable by submission was soon dissipated. The inhabitants were treated rather as conquered rebels than returning friends. Whatever may have been the exertions of the General to restrain his soldiers, they indulged in every species of licentiousness. The loyalists as well as those who had been active in American cause were the victims of this indiscriminating spirit of rapine and violence. A sense of personal wrongs produced a temper which national considerations had been too weak to excite; and, when the battles of Trenton and Princeton relieved the people from the fears inspired by the presence of their invaders, the great body of the people flew to arms. Small parties of militia scoured the country, and were collecting in such numbers as to threaten the weaker British posts with the fate which had befallen Trenton and Princeton.*

*"To guard against this spirit, the British General found it expedient to abandon the positions taken for the purpose of recovering the country, and to confine himself to New Brunswick and Amboy.*

*"This militia and volunteers who came in aid of the small remnant of continental troops, enabled General Washington to take different positions near the lines of the enemy, to harass him perpetually, restrain his foraging parties, and produce considerable distress in his camp."*

Washington charged Wayne with the task of preventing Howe from joining up with Burgoyne in the Hill Country of the Hudson. If Howe join Burgoyne, the Colonies would have been split and severely weakened. Washington needed a leader to cover the territory between the Delaware and West Point. "A general of extraordinary activity and intelligence was needed, in command of troops of such spirit and discipline as to be able to move at a moment's warning" according to Stille. General Washington's choice was Wayne and the troops in the Pennsylvania Line under Wayne's command.

Consequently, the Pennsylvania troops were engaged in a number of conflicts, harassing the British to keep Howe contained in Amboy. There was action in Quibbletown (New Market) New Jersey, January 24, 1777. Pennsylvania troops were active at Ashswamp in early February. Family records indicate that Joseph Hancock was



at this conflict. Trussell's compilation of the records does not indicate this. In Trussell's account, Patton's regiment was the only Pennsylvania detachment recorded in this area. Prior to or during the British buildup at Brunswick Joseph Hancock received a musket ball in the right shoulder during an attack on Sir Henry Clinton's regiment guard on March 16, 1777. His recovery period is unknown. There is no indication in Trussell's accumulation of detailed injury records of a March injury. This perhaps is further evidence that the record keeping was very loose or not preserved and accordingly, was often inaccurate. The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was surprised and somewhat battered by the British near Boundbrook on April 12, 1777. The following is a list of confrontations in which the Pennsylvania Line engaged prior to Howe taking to sea:

Quibbletown, NJ January 24, 1777  
Ash Swamp, NJ February 1777  
Boundbrook, NJ April 12/13, 1777  
Bonhamtown, NJ April 15, 1777  
Piscataway, NJ April 21, 1777  
Amboy, NJ April 25, 1777  
Piscataway, NJ May 8  
Piscataway, NJ May 10, 1777  
Metuchen, NJ May 17, 1777  
Middletown, NJ May 26 & 27, 1777  
Somerset Court House, NJ June 14, 1777  
New Brunswick, NJ, June 22, 1777  
Short Hills, NJ June 26, 1777

The Pennsylvania line began to acquire an excellent combat reputation. Stille provides a brief account of a Battle at Brunswick on May 2, 1777:

*“On May 2, 1777, Washington attacked the British at Brunswick. No details were given but a letter from General Wayne to the Pennsylvania war Board dated June 3, 1777, regarding clothing and supplies included, ‘The conduct of the Pennsylvanians the Other day in forcing General Grant to Retire with Circumstances of Shame and Disgrace into the very eyes of the Enemy has gained them the Esteem and Confidence of His Excellency’ (Washington).”*

An account by Tucker is as follows:

*“Wayne brought enthusiasm and confidence to Washington's army at a moment when the cause of independence faltered and friends in Great Britain despaired that a raw aggregation of men from scattered colonies could ever stand against British regulars in open combat. In the spring of 1777, the army was reorganized and strengthened by host of newcomers. Wayne was assigned to take command of the large body of troops lately recruited and now officially designated the Pennsylvania Line of the Continental Army.”*

Washington remained encamped and heavily entrenched at Middlebrook, New Jersey near the Raritan for the month of June 1777. According to Stille:

*“Various devices were resorted to by Sir William Howe to induce the Americans to evacuate their strong position and to meet him on the plains. Washington knew too well the great advantage he held to be tempted into making any such false step. Not only was he safe in his entrenchments, but he could move with equal facility to prevent Howe’s advance towards Philadelphia or any movement of his intended to form a junction with Burgoyne on the Hudson..... At length Sir William Howe, despairing of forcing Washington to meet him in a pitched battle, decided to approach Philadelphia by sea, and for that purpose embarked his troops at Staten Island immediately upon the evacuation of New Jersey.”*

Washington had another problem. Disease was a constant threat to maintaining a fighting force and was often a bigger problem than casualties from battle. In his words he faced a more dangerous threat from the “fear of calamity which had proved more fatal than the sword.” In Marshall’s words:

*“The small pox had found its way into both the northern and middle army, and impaired the strength of both to an alarming degree. To avoid the return of this evil, the General determined to inoculate all the soldiers in the American service. This determination was carried into execution, and an army, exempt from the fear of a calamity which had, at all times, endangered the most important operations, was prepared for the next campaign.”*

The method of inoculation at the time was to swab an open cut with live disease. The patient experience up to a month of symptoms closely approximating the disease, and occasionally ended in death. The suffering of the troops would have been dreadful, particularly if they were forced to march to new encampment while recovering from the inoculation. Colonists volunteered for small pox inoculations and were bedridden and nursed through the dreadful experience. It is certain that such care was not to be the soldier’s fate.

Joseph Hancock’s confrontations with the British after joining Washington in Morristown in January 1777 were perhaps the most vigorous of his war experiences. Washington needed successful containment of the enemy as proof positive that a stable continental force was preferred to decentralized State defenses. The winter New Jersey campaign was significant by the very fact that the British failed to overcome the combined continental forces and subsequently retreated. Joining the main Army under Washington certainly enhanced the military insight of Joseph Hancock and his comrades. They saw the big picture and participated with thousands of other men in military maneuvers. In addition, they served under Anthony Wayne, who along with Morgan and Greene were the most able, bold, and aggressive generals in Washington’s army. If Wayne had commanded the British at this juncture of the war, Americans in all likelihood would have remained British subjects for a very long time and, with that, the entire fragile and serendipitous series of events that lead to the American form of government would have been lost.

Wayne’s typical tactic was to attack the British foraging parties and pickets at every opportunity to weaken not only their resolve but also their fighting capability. Unfed horses and troops made a poor army. Since in all probability the Pennsylvania

Line had not yet been furnished with the preferred musket for conventional battle, it can be reasonably assumed that skirmishes at American instigation were with rifles. These would tend to be ambushes with the capability to attack from greater distances than would have been possible with muskets. Although Wayne, and most of the other Generals, despised rifles because of their lack of utility in being reloaded quickly and outfitted with bayonets for use in close combat, the rifle was still highly feared by the British. The reputation of the long brown-coated Pennsylvania troops put trepidation in the British for it was widely believed that all riflemen were excellent marksmen. Given his skill and the equipment he would most likely possess at this point in the war, in addition to the tactics common to Wayne, it is very likely that Joseph's activity was lively, wrecking havoc on the enemy. His near miss with a fatal wound substantiates the danger he was in. After marching six weeks in the dead of winter, fighting the British, being wounded, and suffering from an inoculation in early summer, he marched on to much bigger and bloodier conflicts that were pivotal in deciding the ultimate outcome of the war.

## VII On Land Washington Shadows Howe's Moves by Sea

British General Burgoyne was in the North and threatening the colonies. Although Howe was to meet up with Burgoyne and split the colonies, Howe, put out for Sea from Sandy Hook, his destination unknown by Washington. This presented Washington with two fronts as Marshall stated:

*“While the British Troops were embarking at New York, the utmost exertions were made by General Washington to strengthen the army of the north, which was retreating before Burgoyne. He not only pressed the Governors of the eastern states to reinforce it with all their militia, and hastened the march of those generals who were designed to act in that department, but made large detachments of choice troops from his own army, thus weakening himself in order to reinforce other generals, whose strength would be more useful.*

*“On receiving intelligence that the British fleet had sailed, the American army, under his command, commenced its march southward. On the 30th of July, the fleet appeared off the capes of Delaware, and orders were given for assembling all the several detachments in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. Scarcely were these orders given, when they were countermanded. An express brought the information that the fleet had sailed out of Delaware Bay, and was steering eastward. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, it was again seen a few leagues south of the capes of Delaware; after which it disappeared, and was not again seen until late in that month, when it appeared in the Chesapeake.*

*“The original design had been to proceed up the Delaware; but on entering that bay, its obstructions were found to be so considerable, that this design was abandoned, and the resolution taken to transport the army up the Chesapeake. The fleet sailed up that bay, and proceeded up Elk river as high as it was safely navigable. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, the troops, estimated at eighteen thousand effectives, were landed at the ferry.”*

Howe's long sea route had taken its toll on the men and horses. Three hundred horses were sick and thrown overboard during the journey. The men fought extreme heat exhaustion from the hot summer aboard ship. While in a weakened state, unfortunately, Washington was unable to interdict the British and by August 28, 1777 Howe had regained sufficient strength to began moving out.

Meanwhile, Washington's officers easily persuaded him to parade his confident army, buoyed by recent victories, through the streets of Philadelphia on the way to meet Howe, according to Rankin:

*“Clothes were washed, arms burnished, and to offset the shabbiness of his uniform, each man was ordered to wear in his hat a ‘green sprig, emblem of hope.’ General Orders insisted that all men ‘carry their arms well,’ and that ‘none should leave ranks on the march. Drums*

*and fifes were to play a quick step, 'but with such moderation that the men may step to it with ease and without dancing along, or totally disregarding the music.' The Commander-in-Chief already, on the fourth of August, had issued an order planned to spare the respectable citizens of Philadelphia embarrassment: that day he 'earnestly' had recommended the officers 'use every reasonable method in their power to get rid of all such as are not absolutely necessary' of "the multitude of women in particular, especially those who are pregnant and have children."*

There were a large number of women who stayed with the army to be with their husbands and lovers. They washed clothes and cooked for the men. Some were there to practice the oldest profession known to mankind.

The parade began outside the city at 3:00 a.m. and reached the city at 7:00 a.m. on the August 24, 1777. John Adams was present and reported by letter, as often was his custom, to his wife Abigail, at their home in Braintree Massachusetts.

*"The rain ceased, and the army marched through the town between seven & ten o'clock. The wagons went another road. Four regiments of the light horse, Bland's, Baylor's, Sheldon's and Moylan's. Four grand divisions of the army and the artillery ...marched twelve deep and yet took up above two hours in passing by. General Washington and the other general officers with their aides on horseback. The colonels and other field officers on horseback.*

*"We have now an army well appointed between us and Mr. Howe, and this army will be immediately joined by ten thousand militia, so that I feel as secure as if I were at Braintree, but not so happy. My happiness is nowhere to be found but there.*

*"The army ... I find to be extremely well armed, pretty well clothed, and tolerably disciplined... There is such a mixture of the sublime and the beautiful, in military discipline that I wonder every officer we have is not charmed with it. Much remains to be done. Our soldiers have not yet quite the air of soldiers. They don't keep step exactly on time. They don't hold up their heads quite erect, nor turn out their toes so exactly as they ought. They don't all of them cock their hats; and such that do, don't all wear them the same way.*

The Continental Army marched up Chestnut, turning to the Common, and then over Middle Ferry to the Heights of Derby according to Ranking. Rankin states:

*"The next morning two divisions moved toward Wilmington, and the horse was ordered there. Washington rode ahead and at Wilmington learned that the enemy had begun landing that morning six miles below the Head of Elk. The next day, after breakfast, Washington, accompanied by Green and Lafayette and his aides, personally reconnoitered the country within two miles of Howe's camp."*

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*“As the American army gathered at Wilmington, Washington was in the saddle constantly, personally reconnoitering toward White Clay Creek, where his advance parties lay and occasionally skirmished with enemy patrols. Advance American pickets were out as far as Christina Bridge, and on the seventh the whole army moved up to the village of Newport, eight to ten miles from Iron Hill, to which Howe had advanced seven miles since landing.*

*“At three A.M. on the eighth, the general alarm sounded; tents were struck, and the regiments paraded and kept under arms until nine. A line of battle was then established on the east of Red Clay Creek, and Washington waited all day for an enemy attack he felt sure would come. In the evening, the enemy halted two miles from the American position. Washington scouted them warily and supposed that their intention was to amuse him in front, while turning his right flank and getting between him and Philadelphia. To prevent this, he set his army in motion at two in the morning of the ninth, put Brandywine Creek between his men and Howe’s and took a position on the high grounds behind one of the principal crossings, Chad’s Ford.”*

Wayne & the Pennsylvania line were given a position at Chad’s Ford where the main attack was expected to take place. Wayne’s troops were on the right, Greene’s in the middle, Armstrong to the left with Maxwell in front and Stephen’s in reserve. These positions were within a mile of Washington’s headquarters.

## VIII Battle of Brandywine

The American Army received a large supply of French weapons and ammunition in May of 1777 fortunately prior to their next large engagement at Brandywine. The Continental Troops that still possessed rifles and not assigned specifically to rifle companies were provided muskets for the impending battles in late summer. Reequipping the army with muskets also armed the troops with bayonets. Tucker provides an account of Wayne's philosophy on the use of bayonets, as follows:

*"Wayne was devoted to the bayonet. For the type of warfare being waged in North America in 1776 -1781 he favored that arm because muskets were erratic, rifles heavy, and because the bayonet struck more deadly fear in the heart of the enemy than the whine of bullets or the bark of artillery. Many who have studied the wars of the American Revolution and the Northwest Territory have been struck by Wayne's mastery of the bayonet and his use of it on every occasion when opportunity offered. His object in battle was to close and engage in hand-to-hand combat. For this he trained his soldiers intensively. Nothing, in his view of warfare, gave more confidence to the infantryman than a bayonet on his musket.*

*"The bayonet was relatively new. It had not been in use by the leading armies for much more than half a century when Wayne formed an affection for it. He had observed at Three Rivers that glistening steel on the barrel of a gun was like a ramrod up a soldier's backbone, and though the thrust might never reach an enemy's abdomen, the gleam of it readily operated on his kidneys. Before Brandywine, Wayne wrote to the Philadelphia authorities requesting that the long, heavy squirrel rifles many of his men carried, which would not hold the ordinary type bayonet, be traded in for muskets around which bayonets could be fastened..... He received the muskets and regularly employed the bayonet."*

Rifles not only could not mount bayonets but also took five times as long to reload as the muskets in use at the time. Special rifle companies, regiments, and brigades were formed and were useful in specific instances and were greatly feared by the British. Muskets provided a more effective weapon in close combat.

Prior to The Battle of Brandywine, Washington rode among the troops to inspire them with the drive to win the battle. He addressed every brigade, stating the British could be defeated and if they were, it would bring an end to conflict resulting in independence for the country and early discharges from service for the men. The men revered Washington, wanted an end to the war and responded to his admonitions. Joseph Hancock was among them.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September Howe began to position his forces under Knyphausen for a feint against the American front at Chadds Ford while the main body under Howe and Cornwallis would attempt to turn the American right flank by following the Great Valley Road north to Tremble's Ford. This Ford was apparently unknown to Washington but was detected by Howe's superior reconnaissance of the area prior to forming the battle

plan. This was the same strategy successfully employed against Washington the previous year on Long Island. Marshall provides the following account of the battle plan:

*“In the evening of the 9th, Howe moved forward in two columns, which united next morning at Kennet’s Square; after which his parties were advanced on the roads leading to Lancaster, to Chadd’s Ford, and to Wilmington.*

*“The armies were now within seven miles of each other, with only the Brandywine between them, which opposed no obstacle to a general engagement. This was sought by Howe, and not avoided by Washington. It was impossible to protect Philadelphia without a victory; and this object was deemed of such importance throughout America, and especially by Congress, as to require that a battle should be hazarded for its attainment.*

*“In the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup>, soon after day, information was received that the whole British army was advancing on the direct road leading over Chadd’s ford. The American’s were immediately arrayed in order of battle for the purpose of contesting the passage of the river. Skirmishing now commenced between the advanced parties; and by ten, Maxwell was driven over the Brandywine below the ford. Knyphausen, who commanded this division, paraded on the heights, and appeared to be making dispositions to force the passage of the river.”*

Lieutenant Colonel Ross provided intelligence that Washington initially dismissed:

*Great Valley Road  
11 o’clock a.m.*

*Dear General,*

*A large body of the enemy, from every account five thousand, with sixteen or eighteen field-pieces, marched along this road just now.*

*..... We are close in the rear with about seventy men and gave them three rounds within a small distance....*

*Yours,  
James Ross, Lieutenant Colonel*

The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment saw Howe and Cornwallis’s movements as they headed north to outflank the American troops. Ross had 70 privates from the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and it is likely that Joseph Hancock was among those that took aim and fired at the British. These soldiers likely rejoined Wayne’s force around midday. As a side note, Ross resigned not long after Brandywine. The reason for his resignation is not determined but it could have been due to the perception that he was not trusted by Washington, or disgusted that had his warning been heeded, the outcome of the battle might have been quite different. Joseph Hancock, private under Ross’s command didn’t have a choice to resign. Instead, he faced more conflict despite whatever his personal thoughts might have been.



Marshall's account of the confusion regarding intelligence follows but it should be noted that he was inaccurate in the rank of Ross:

*“About eleven, Colonel Ross of Pennsylvania brought the information that a large column, estimated by him at five thousand men, with many field-pieces, had taken a road leading from Kennet's Square directly up the country, and had entered the Great Valley Road, down which they were marching to the upper fords on the Brandywine.”*

*“On receiving this intelligence, Washington is said to have determined to detach Sullivan and Lord Sterling, to engage the left of the British army, and to cross Chadd's ford in person and attack Knyphausen. Before this plan, if formed, could be executed, counter intelligence was received inducing the opinion that the movement on the British left was a feint, and that the column which had made it, after making demonstrations of crossing the Brandywine above its forks, had marched down the southern side of the river to reunite itself with Knyphausen.*

*“The uncertainty produced by this contradictory intelligence was at length removed; and about two in the afternoon, it was ascertained that the left wing, commanded by Lord Cornwallis, after making a circuit of about seventeen miles, had crossed the river above its forks, and was advancing in great force.*

*“A change of disposition was immediately made. The divisions of Sullivan, Sterling, and Stephen, advanced farther up the Brandywine, and fronted the British column marching down the river. That commanded by Wayne remained at Chadd's Ford. Greene's division, accompanied by General Washington in person, formed a reserve between the right and left wings.”*

Knyphausen was to give the appearance of a frontal assault and with most of the British artillery in his possession, had the firepower to create the diversionary illusion. Knyphausen was not to press the engagement at Chadd's Ford until it was apparent that Howe was succeeding on his flanking maneuver. Meanwhile a fierce cannonade convinced Wayne's troops they needed to prepare for a direct attack across Chadd's Ford. Tucker states:

*“Knyphausen spread out along the heights west of the creek. The assault that Wayne momentarily expected degenerated into a peculiar defensive. Wayne had studied the long red column as it advance on the dusty roadway, winding here and there behind the hills and woodlands, and found his own excitement mounting. Combat exhilarated him but he would have to wait for it. While Knyphausen was taking his position on the opposite heights, Washington was riding along his front receiving cheers wherever he came upon a new detachment. He had issued an address some days earlier telling the army the consequence of the impending battle to the colonial cause, saying that after their struggles of two years the prospect had*

brightened, and suggesting that if they were victorious, this campaign would be their last. Hopeful words - the war had some of its most despondent moments, as well as inspiring triumphs ahead. Wayne was perhaps even more sanguine. This was the occasion on which he exhibited to his caller and friend, Captain Alexander Graydon, the Quaker soldier-author, his feeling of utmost contempt for the enemy.

“Part of Wayne’s animation was due to the circumstance that the position of his troops, not far advanced from army headquarters seemed to give assurance that he would fight under the commanding general’s eye. When Maxwell re-crossed to the American side at 10 a.m. pressed closely by Knyphausen, and took a position downstream from Wayne, the Hessian general put batteries on the western heights above the ford and opened on Wayne’s entrenchments. Proctor’s guns replied and a desultory battle begun in Washington’s center, where the commanding general still confidently expected the main British assault to be delivered.”

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“Several of the Continental officers recognized the imminence of a flank movement, which all the time was underway, but not Washington. An element of stubbornness seemed to dominate his thinking. The British had made a frontal assault under Howe at Bunker Hill, and that is what he was confident they would deliver in their march on Philadelphia. He surely could not have forgotten their strategy on Long Island, where Grant amused the Americans under Putnam and Lord Stirling in front while Cornwallis was on his long flank march to reach their rear, but that did not influence his calculations at Brandywine as the morning wore into afternoon.

“All through the morning Washington was riding over the hills, reconnoitering personally, watching the dust clouds rising to the north-west. His question during Knyphausen’s indifference was whether to stand firm and await development, or to assume the offensive, cross the Brandywine, and launch an attack in force against Knyphausen’s corps that appeared to be isolated. Each time the temptation arose to cross he resisted it and waited. When the early afternoon brought no new developments, an offensive move appeared more and more inviting. Knyphausen had about 5,000 men at Chadd’s Ford, but where was the balance of Howe’s combat troops, comprising some of the Great Britain’s finest regiments, led by Cornwallis among the more capable officers the home government had sent to the North American war.”

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“Washington at length cast his decision in favor of the counter-offensive. Some critics of the battle have found merit in it. If the British had divided their forces, he reasoned, he would take advantage of it. Knyphausen would be assailable in front of Chadd’s Ford. The

*waters were low and fording easy. He prepared his orders for Wayne and Maxwell, supported by Greene, to cross to the west side and attack Knyphausen.*

*“Wayne was elated. He had engaged all morning in long-range battle and wanted to close. Viewed in the light of the British overall strength and the lack of resolution of elements of the American army, the maneuver would have been hazardous even with Wayne to spearhead it.”*

The enthusiasm Wayne had briefly been allowed was dashed according to Tucker.

*“Knyphausen had his men well posted on the heights. Fortunately for Washington, intelligence was received from Sullivan in time to prevent Wayne from crossing.”*

Washington's order put Wayne and Maxwell the primary deterrent to Knyphausen's advance. When the right flank collapsed they were forced to make an orderly retreat. Wayne left no cannon for the enemy to capture. Moreover, he was able to withdraw his men with few casualties.

Marshall summarizes the conclusion of the battle as follows:

*“The troops detached against Lord Cornwallis, formed hastily on an advantageous piece of ground, above Birmingham meeting-house. Unfortunately Sullivan's division, in taking its ground, made too large a circuit, and was scarcely formed when the attack commenced.*

*“About half-past four the action began, and was kept up warmly for some time. The American right first gave way. The line continued to break from the right, and in a short time was completely routed. The commander-in-chief pressed forward with Greene to the support of that wing; but before his arrival, its rout was complete, and he could only check the pursuit. For this purpose the tenth Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Stevens, and a regiment of Pennsylvania commanded by Colonel Stewart, were posted advantageously to cover the rear of the retreating army. The impression made by their fire, and the approach of night, induced Sir William Howe, after dispersing them, to give over the pursuit.*

*“When the action commenced on the American right, General Knyphausen crossed at Chadd's ford, and forced a small battery, which defended it. The defeat of American right being known, the left also withdrew from its ground. The whole army retreated that night to Chester, and the next day to Philadelphia.”*

Had the flanking maneuver been addressed sooner, the battle would have certainly been fully engaged. Although in more recent times it has been fashionable to criticize Washington for not identifying sooner the flanking of his troops, the battle would have by no means been a sure victory for the Americans. As it turned out, Washington was able to effectively engage the enemy winning sufficient recognition to

garner more French support. Moreover, he was able to preserve the American Army and fight another day.

According to Wood, 11,000 American troops were engaged. 1200 to 1300 men were casualties, perhaps 400 of this number were taken prisoners. Eleven pieces of artillery were captured. Howe was in overall command of 12,000 men; 577 were killed or wounded, and all but 40 were British regulars. The Pennsylvania Line suffered 18 deaths, 47 wounded and 9 captured. The 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment had a major and a sergeant wounded but no losses. The Pennsylvania losses were minor considering the extent of the engagement Wayne commanded.

## IX Maneuvers after Brandywine

Those who fought in the Battle of Brandywine shared the opinion that they were not defeated outright. In fact, they wanted to engage the British at the earliest opportunity to render what they believed would be a decisive victory in favor of the patriots. Washington was beset by Congress to decisively engage the British and defend Philadelphia. It was also imperative that he kept his army intact and preserved stored military supplies in the Reading Magazine. No matter what the army thought, the general consensus of the population was that the Battle of Brandywine was a defeat for the Americans. The commitment to independence was very fragile and subject to sudden mood and morale shifts, as those who were not firmly committed to one side or the other wavered in their loyalty. Washington focused on the objectives and attempted to outmaneuver and confront Howe.

The militias, particularly of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland, began to fall apart immediately after Brandywine, desirous of not being part of the losing side. Militia soldiers who had signed up for 60 days or less left to tend fields rather than risk their lives in what appeared to them to be a lost cause. Although the militias as stand-alone fighting forces were not dependable, they became much more capable when combined with regular continental forces. They were essential to establish the critical mass necessary to evoke a decisive engagement of the British. They were of little use at Brandywine.

Howe moved toward Philadelphia after Brandywine but was thwarted in his effort to cross the Schuylkill River, which was un-bridged with all boats secured on the other side. Howe would have to go up river to find fords that he could cross. In addition, Howe needed to take care of the wounded, which required the use of wagons that carried the army's military supplies. He chose to stay around Tredyffdrin to repair and regroup. In addition, Howe was having problems securing supplies. He had sent his fleet back to sea and had to forage for food. The population in the area was largely unfriendly and was not cooperative in offering help. This provided Washington with an opportunity to maneuver into a battle formation against the British.

Washington's first move on September 12, 1777, was to cross the Schuylkill to the Philadelphia side and guard the fords upstream in defense of the city. He deployed along the river to prevent Howe from crossing unchallenged. He camped at Germantown six miles to the north. From there he could challenge Howe's attempt to cross at any of the fords. Washington was acutely aware his army believed that they had not been defeated at Brandywine, just outmaneuvered. Many complained they had not fired a shot. The willingness of the troops and particularly his officers to re-engage the enemy was not lost on Washington. After reconsideration of his position, he re-crossed the Schuylkill on the west bank on September 14, 1777. He waited near Malvern, about two miles west of Paoli, which then was a popular tavern. Howe and Washington moved forces such that they confronted each other on September 16, 1777 near Warren's Tavern, twenty-three miles west of Philadelphia on the Lancaster Road. Each was determined to stage a decisive battle. During the set up of battle lines for an attack, Wayne with Maxwell and the new chief of cavalry, Count Casimir Pulaski, provoked skirmishes with Knyphausen's Hessians, some of whom were nearly captured.

Howe's main army approached. Washington ordered Wayne to head the attack. Wayne threw out skirmishes that were quickly engaged, as a second large battle seemed imminent. Suddenly a tremendous storm of hurricane origins rolled in providing a downpour that lasted for over 24 hours. The weather advantage was on the side of the British since their cartouche boxes were superior to the American variety, which were hastily put together, causing all the American gunpowder to be wet. The rain penetrated into the muskets used by the Americans, also not well protected from the rain, causing them to not spark. The British, on the other hand, were capable of firing some of their weapons even after the heavy downpour. Also, as fortune would have it, the rear of Washington's position was not as well drained as Howe's. The roads for both armies became difficult but in Washington's rear the roads were soon so muddy that the men sank halfway to their knees in places. The deep ruts made movement of wagons and artillery nearly impossible. Washington, with the smaller army, had concern about retreat if it became necessary. Both sides had suspended operations throughout the storm but Washington was in no position to resume the battle. He abandoned all intentions of a confrontation until he could get dry powder. He had deposited his baggage train at Parker's Ford and moved his army out of position ending what became known as the Battle of the Clouds.

On September 17, 1777 Washington dispatched Wayne to move behind enemy lines and threaten the British rear. Also ordered to join up with him was Brigadier General William Smallwood, who, prior to Brandywine, had been on the Maryland East Shore assembling a new brigade. Colonel Mordecai Gist with the Baltimore Independent Company was likewise to rendezvous with Wayne. Wayne was put in charge of the entire force. His orders from Washington were to move forward toward the enemy and attack them in the rear with reinforcements from Gist and Smallwood. Generals Maxwell and Potter were ordered to do the same. Washington expressed his desire for Wayne to make his attack formidable but not to waste too much time in delay in meeting that objective. Washington also suggested taking the enemies baggage as a prize.

Wayne, waiting for Smallwood and Gist, camped for three days, September 18 - 20, in a wood near Paoli several miles from the main road, which he regarded as secluded from the British. No one was more familiar with the area than Wayne for this was his childhood playground. He was off the road 2.5 miles from the British and about 4 miles from Waynesborough.

With the entire Pennsylvania Line well hidden, Wayne personally reconnoitered the enemy position getting within 1/2 mile of Howe's position. He observed Howe's troops laundering their clothes and preparing meals. He felt that they could be caught off guard and dealt a severe blow if Washington's main force attacked from the north, while he, with Smallwood and Gist, attacked from the west and Maxwell, with his light infantry, from the east. He wrote an enthusiastic letter to Washington on September 19, 1777 encouraging him to take his suggested course of action.

Meanwhile the British, knowing that they were close to Wayne's residence, sent out a military party to capture him, assuming that they would find him home. They were mistaken, but very polite to Polly, Wayne's wife and left disappointed in their mission.

Wayne never visited his home during the campaigns even though he was nearby, citing that he was too busy to take the time. Wayne knew that he had an opportunity

along with Washington to deliver a decisive blow to the British and would not be distracted.

But unknown to him, Washington was moving his army north September 18, 1777, to cross at Parker's Ford during the night and then south along the banks of the Schuylkill, which was brimming from the recent rainfall, to assume positions on the east side of the Schuylkill in defense of Philadelphia. He divided his army, leaving Wayne behind enemy lines. Howe was provided excellent intelligence and was aware and alarmed that Washington's forces in effect surrounded him. There were a number of couriers intercepted with communications between Washington and his generals. Also, Howe had been informed that General Wayne commanded the Pennsylvania Line, which was considered the most elite of Washington's Divisions. Howe therefore would not underestimate Wayne's ability to fight or his reputation for taking the bold action. Howe also recognized an opportunity to deal a decisive blow to one of Washington's elite division made more vulnerable as the American armies separated further from each other.

Wayne's general location and mission had not only been severely compromised by interception of couriers but also by local loyalists. Joseph Galloway, a wealthy loyalist providing intelligence during Howe's campaign since the landing at head of Elk had learned from informants of Wayne's approximate position. He thus informed Howe.

Newspapers at the time were passionate in their words, whichever side they were on. A Philadelphia newspaper vilified Galloway with satirical verse in a typical patriotic expression of disgust:

*“Galloway has fled and joined the venal Howe  
To prove his baseness, see him cringe and bow.  
A traitor to his country and its laws,  
A friend to tyrants and their cursed cause.  
Unhappy wretch! Thy interest must be sold,  
For continental, not for polished gold;  
To sink the money, thou thyself cried down,  
And stabbed thy country, to support the Crown.  
Go to and fro, like Lucifer on earth,  
And curse the being that first gave thee birth...”*

After the War with his substantial wealth confiscated, Galloway was found ranting in Britain against Howe whom he essentially accused of treason for not acting more decisively against the Americans during the Philadelphia campaigns.

One dispatch in particular sent from Washington to Wayne on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September passed into Howe's hands revealing Washington's battle plans to the British high command:

*‘By the advance of the general officers, I have determined, that the army, under my immediate command, cross the Schuylkill at Parker's ford, and endeavor to get down in time to oppose the enemy in front, whilst the corps under your command, in conjunction with gen. Smallwood and col. Gist, act to the greatest advantage in the rear.’*

Joseph Hancock, with the entire Pennsylvania line, was behind enemy lines, waiting for the orders to attack the British. Colonel Daniel Brodhead was dining with Wayne over the next few days, discussing tactics. These table conversations between officers would not have been passed on to the troops. However, Brodhead's demeanor and the instructions would alert and prepare them for offensive battle. Joseph with the other privates in his company must have had interesting discussions as they prepared to attack the most formidable army known at the time. Their experience at Brandywine may have emboldened their resolve, but none of them could have taken their circumstance lightly. As they rested and prepared for battle, General Wayne was impatiently waiting for the much-needed forces of Smallwood and Gist to arrive with their troops September 18, 19, & 20. In the waiting he moved his troops into hiding anticipating that with additional forces, they would gain sufficient strength to attack Howe's rear in what he believed would be an all out effort to crush the British, not knowing that Washington had moved out of the line of battle Wayne had proposed.



## X The Paoli Battle

In the evening of September 20, 1777 Wayne had intelligence of an impending attack by the British. The first intelligence indicated that it would be the following morning. The second report originated from an overheard discussion at Paoli Tavern stating that the British were to attack that night. Wayne and some of his officers, including Col. Daniel Brodhead, were present during these intelligence reports but somehow Wayne's second in command, Col. Richard Humpton was not present or informed. It was suspected that Humpton harbored angst and jealousy towards Wayne, and that he was not considered one of Wayne's confidants. In addition to being unprepared, Humpton, was suspected of being intoxicated if not incompetent. Wayne ordered two additional pickets in the evening, having placed four during the day. They were placed strategically around the camp at distances of one half to one mile out. Later in the evening Wayne added twelve light horsemen in teams of two and one team of four to perform reconnaissance between designated pickets. The pickets were to observe anyone in the area and provide an advance warning of impending danger. Wayne ordered booths be made in camp to keep the gunpowder dry and later required the men to lay on their weapons, not only to keep them dry, but to provide more rapid deployment of the troops should it become necessary. Accordingly, in keeping with military practice at the time, Wayne had taken appropriate measures to defend his position. Wayne had made a decision to stay put so that Smallwood, who was expected to arrive at any moment, would not miss Wayne's location.

Howe had decided to march his army early the next morning, but not towards Swedes Ford as Washington expected. Instead he planned a move towards Valley Forge. From this position he was able to threaten several targets. He could attack the American supply base at Reading, the iron works at Warwick, or he could reverse course and march to capture Philadelphia keeping Washington guessing as to where he would cross the Schuylkill. Meanwhile for Wayne in the rear, Howe had plans to launch a surprise night assault to neutralize the intended rear guard action and destroy one of Washington's best divisions.

Major General Charles Grey, headquartered near Swedes Ford Road at the rear of the British camp, was chosen to lead an elite force of British light troops to attack Wayne. Capt. John André's described the makeup of the force:

*'Intelligence having been received of the situation of General Wayne and his design of attacking our Rear, a plan was concerted for surprising him, and the execution entrusted to Major General Grey. The troops for this service were the 40th and 55<sup>th</sup> Regiments, under Colonel Musgrave, and the 2d Battalion of Light Infantry, the 42<sup>nd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> Regiments under General Grey. General Grey's Detachment marched at 10 o'clock at night, that under Colonel Musgrave at 11.'*

The detachments, according to McGuire, totaled about 2,000 British troops. All of the troops had experience as light troops or "special forces". Musgrave's assignment that night was to march with about 500 troops toward the Paoli Tavern to block any rebel movement in that direction. Grey's force was to provide the main attack. McGuire states:

*“Grey’s force, the main column, was escorted by twelve light horsemen from Maj. Francis Gwyn’s Troop of the Queen’s Own Light Dragoons and numbered between 1,200 and 1,500 infantry. For this type of operation, a larger number was unnecessary and might actually jeopardize success. The column was headed by about 500 troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion of Light Infantry, commanded by Maj. John Maitland of the Royal Marines. Following the light infantry was the 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment, led by Maj. Henry Hope and numbering about 350. Bringing up the rear of the column were two battalions of Scottish Highlanders from the 42<sup>nd</sup> or Royal Highland Regiment. This unit numbered between 500 and 600 men and was under the command of Lt. Col. Stirling.*

*“The 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry Battalion was composed of light companies from thirteen different regiments. These soldiers were well trained in light, or “ranger” tactics. Special missions that required swift movement and stealth were the specialty of light troops. Their uniforms and equipment were modified for the campaign: short jackets, long canvas trousers or “overalls,” light accouterments, and “round” hats, broad-brimmed felt hats turned up on the left and ornamented with ostrich plumes. These elite soldiers were often posted at the danger points both in camp and in battle: in front of the line of march, on the flanks, and covering the rear of the army.*

*“General Grey ordered the troops to unload their muskets or remove their musket flints so that no British troops would fire; tradition indicates that he was given the nickname “No-Flint” Grey for this order. Captain Andr`e wrote that “no firelock was to be loaded & express orders were given to rely solely on the Bayonet” He explained, all too accurately:*

*‘It was represented to the men that firing discovered us to the Enemy, hid them from us, killed our friends and produced a confusion favorable to the escape of the Rebels and perhaps productive of disgrace to ourselves. On the other hand, by not firing we knew the foe to be wherever fire appeared and a charge [of bayonets] ensured his destruction; that amongst the Enemy those in the rear would direct their fire against whoever fired in front, and they would destroy each other.’”*

Grey’s troops headed out as planned at 10:00 p.m. followed by Musgraves at 11:00 p.m. Grey captured all inhabitants temporarily, so that they could not inform Wayne of their approach. An unnamed blacksmith pointed out picket #4 to Grey and was coerced into cooperation as a guide. McGuire states:

*“...the Blacksmith pointed Grey’s force eastward on the Lancaster Road toward the Warren Pass in the South Valley Hill, beyond which lay the upper Long Ford Road.”*

Had the Blacksmith lead Grey’s troops up the Road to Chester they would have hit Wayne’s troops from the west and formed a pincer movement between Grey and Musgrave. Fortunately that did not happen or the entire Division likely would have been

cut off from their subsequent retreat route. Instead they came in from northeast. Gunfire from picket 4 and observation by one of the vadttes alerted Wayne to the approach of the British. The attack began around midnight of September 20, 1777. Wayne's aid rallied the troops riding horse back behind the two brigades with Wayne not far behind giving orders and words of encouragement. McGuire states:

*“As the regiments formed a front on the parade, the open area in the front of the camp, ‘they faced the great Road [the Lancaster Road]. Humpton’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade formed on the left, and Hartley’s 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade formed on the right: 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade - Butler’s 4<sup>th</sup>, Brodhead’s 8<sup>th</sup>, Mentges’s 11<sup>th</sup>, and Johnston’s 5<sup>th</sup>; 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade - Hubley’s 10<sup>th</sup>, William’s 2<sup>nd</sup>, Connor commanding Hartley’s Additional Continentals, Grier’s 7<sup>th</sup> and Chamber’s 1<sup>st</sup>. To the right of the 1st Brigade was Randall’s Independent Artillery Company with four light cannons.*

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*“Light rain began to fall just as the troops formed. To protect the ammunition, Wayne in Person Ordered the Whole [force] to take off their Coats and put their Cartridge Box’s under to save the Cartridges from Damage. Once this was accomplished, Wayne next issued orders for a maneuver to evacuate the camp Wayne gave the order to ‘wheel to the right by sub-platoons,’ a maneuver that would take the infantry from their line facing the front and wheel them into a column of subplatoons, or half companies, facing the right of the camp. The next command, “to the left, face,” would have them again facing the front of the camp, only this time in narrow two-man files. From this formation, the regiments could march off either to the right or to the left in a long, thin “column of files.” This maneuver sounds complicated, but it was a quick way for troops to move in an orderly fashion through fenced areas, on narrow roads, or on paths through thick woods.”*

Wayne ordered Randall's artillery on the right flank to evacuate left. They instantly obeyed and headed left out of the rear of the camp. In addition, 25 commissary and quartermaster wagons followed the artillery. These wagons pulled by teams of four horses each and driven by civilian teamsters slowly lumbered left towards the exit. Wayne ordered a retreat for the main body of troops and then ordered the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Light Infantry to advance to Longford Road on the right and form a battle line. The British advance guard had neutralized the pickets and over a short time period, approached the battle lines of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania. Behind the advanced guard General Gray ordered his light infantry to “dash” into battle. They quickly and quietly entered into the woods guided by the light from the pickets and the campfires. Lieutenant St. George recalled ‘We rushed in thro a thick wood and received a smart fire from another unfortunate Picquet - as the first {it was} instantly massacred.’ Wilson’s 1<sup>st</sup> Light Infantry of 200 men with Wayne in command was overcome.

It is interesting to note Wayne's comments the next day to General Washington: “By this time the enemy and we were not more than Ten Yards Distance - a well directed fire mutually took Place, followed by a charge of Bayonets - numbers fell on each side.” The British had not fired a shot and what Wayne described was what Captain Andr'e had

predicted, that the enemy would fire on each other. Contrary to Wayne's note, Colonel Thomas Hartley wrote the following day "Many were killed on both sides - some times by Enemys and some times by Friends." Needless to say, there was great alarm among the Pennsylvania troops. Those that ran in confusion, not staying part of their company, stood the greatest risk of injury and death.

Meanwhile the retreat of the main body of troops was headed off in the correct direction but was stalled. Wayne rode to Col. Humpton and gave him a second order to move out the troops. The pickets had bought precious time with their lives and time was running out. Wayne again observed that the retreat was still stalled, gave Humpton a 3<sup>rd</sup> order and rode off, with the light horse following, west into the dark to see what was holding up the troops.

As the British came forward to get within bayoneting distance, the 1<sup>st</sup> backed out of the woods into the camp in disorder. As the British Light infantry faced right and charged bayonets routing the 1<sup>st</sup>, they approached the rear of the 7<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment who were facing away from the line of attack. They were illuminated in the light of the campfires making easy targets for the British. The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment was ordered to turn right and face the attack and immediately witnessed the disorderly retreat and hot pursuit of the 1<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment. The 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment ended up taking the brunt of the attack, losing a considerable number of men. As the hand-to-hand battle raged between the Americans and British first wave of 500 light infantry, 350 of the British 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot formed with a dozen of the Queens Own Light Dragoons. It was after midnight and the second wave of the attack was about to start.

By early Sunday morning September 21, 1777 the attack was such a bloody mess that any disciplined veteran might break and run. The British tactic was calculated to take advantage of darkness and surprises causing panic, confusion, and flight. Joseph Hancock was standing, facing left or roughly west, stalled in an exit line near the front of the retreating troops. He heard the carnage and had some idea of the impediment blocking their retreat.

British troops surrounded the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment while other British troops pursued the 1<sup>st</sup> and those that broke rank. Hartley's Additional Continental Regiment, just ahead of the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, was also attacked. Some continentals loaded and fired by platoons, while hand-to-hand fighting erupted.

McGuire indicates that along the exit route three separate fences and related fields were involved in the main battle. When the location of the camp was determined, Wayne had insisted that the fences be left intact as much as would allow and that the fence wood not be used for fires respecting the local farmers. The opening in the fence made to occupy the camp was apparently the least intrusive that it could be and therefore, with the sudden need to retreat with some swiftness, posed a bottleneck.

Back at the camp there was a thunderous roar, trumpet blast, and loud shouts announcing the arrival on the battlefield of the Queens Own Light Dragoons. A dozen troopers on horseback with three foot long drawn sabers glistening in the firelight, swept through the main camp and swarmed around the rear of the already shaken 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment causing even more panic. McGuire quotes Lieutenant St. George of the British Light Infantry's description: ' a dreadful scene of Havock - Light Dragoons came on sword in Hand[.] The Shreiks Groans Shouting, imprecations deprecations The Clashing of

Swords and bayonets &c &c &c ... was more expressive of Horror than all the Thunder of the artillery &c on the Day of action.' Men were not only cut down they were cut up. By way of example, Drum Major Daniel St. Clair of Hartley's 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade suffered numerous serious wounds, the nature of which suggests someone on horseback cut him at close quarters. St. Clair received multiple slashes on his body and head, lost his left eye, and all the fingers on his left hand. He apparently put his left arm up in an attempt to ward off a deadly saber blow to the head or neck. Drum majors were usually young boys, and by military custom, not to be intentionally injured during battle.

The 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot entered the engagement with another loud huzzah ringing out, presenting a wall of 300 bayonets to the now frenzied Pennsylvania troops. This attack headed toward the camp recognizing the rear had been sufficiently surrounded by the first wave of the attack. The 44<sup>th</sup> & Queens Own Dragoons moved to the left of the column and toward the fence where Wayne's Troops had made their entrance the day before. The 44<sup>th</sup> approached the position held by Joseph Hancock and his regiment seizing opportunities to strike at the column and provoke individual flight. Although none of the 8<sup>th</sup> regiment was recorded as killed, at least nine were wounded. Those breaking from the lines fleeing throughout the camp were cut down in their ill-fated effort to reach the woods. Colonel Hartley's description of this phase of the battle is instructive. McGuire quotes:

*'After we had gone 200 or 300 yds several Attempts were made to rally the Men - but the Enemy pressing so close upon the left of the Retreat, which was chiefly my Brigade & so many Interruptions of Fences that it was impossible to rally Any Men 'till we had got to some Distance from the Enemy - the Men were extremely intimidated with the Noise of the Enemys Horse[.] at the Fences considerable opposition was made by some of the best Men - but many of them suffered.'*

The advantage of Grey's attack not coming in from the west was rapidly disappearing, as the troops moving off to the left were unable to move as ordered. Wayne was to subsequently blame the slow retreat on Humpton, based on his alleged neglect and misapprehension. However, McGuire's recent analysis indicates that the main body of troops was out paced by the horse-drawn wagons and artillery. The artillery and wagons had the advantage and started for the fence opening. The troops halted to let the artillery and wagons pass. The stalled retreat was further complicated with a cannon that in the rush had lost its wheels, blocking exit. The cannon was eventually pulled out of the way allowing the retreat to continue.

Butler's 4<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment had a dark and deep strip of woods on their right with no light from campfires, and a fenced-lined road in front blocked by stalled wagons and artillery. Joseph, behind the 4<sup>th</sup> along with the rest of the retreating troops, was momentarily trapped. He was among the shouting officers, swearing artillerymen, and skittish horses as aides barked orders in desperate attempts to move the cannon and disassemble more fences. As he stood waiting to retreat or get new orders, Joseph heard the blood-chilling roar of the cold steel bayonet charge into the rear of the column when all hell broke loose in a third wave of attack. During the attack, the British took no prisoners (showed no quarter).

Wayne ordered the 4<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment, the first unit in the retreating column of troops, to deploy right into the woods and form a line of battle. This put Joseph and his Regiment at the front of the retreating troops which were now exposed to British attack by being pinned at a bottleneck at the fence row. The movement of the 4<sup>th</sup>, however, allowed the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade to move forward about 100 yards. The 4<sup>th</sup> then provided cover for the rest of the troops by firing volleys at the British troops from the woods. The British were now exposed and silhouetted in the light of the campfires and burning booths. They continued, under orders, to not load or fire their weapons. McGuire states as the King's men closed in on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Major Marien Lamar of the 4<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania shouted: 'Halt boys, and give these assassins one fire!' Lamar was bayoneted on horseback and fell mortally wounded.

The 4<sup>th</sup> fell back through the woods and into an open field near the crossroads where Wayne yet again rallied troops to cover retreat. Major Calab North of the 10<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania helped Wayne form the rear guard. After doing so Wayne ordered North to ride down Sugartown Road to see if the enemy was crossing and coming up from behind. He did so and reported back that the road was clear. Wayne then ordered him to ride the opposite way and find General Smallwood to tell him of the attack. As he rode past the retreating troops he observed some troops moving out and retreating in good order and others who were so affected by the brutality of the attack, that they fired at or fled from anything that moved. The wounded made their way out as best they could, some being carried by their comrades and others on their own. The British Light Infantry continued to move about in the dark causing more chaos.

Smallwood was cognizant of the need for the militia to get into position and join up with Wayne. They had an arduous march over rutted roads made worse by the recent torrential rain. They were behind their schedule to link up with Wayne and intelligence indicated that if they were to act soon they needed to move into the theater of operation. Therefore, he was marching his men the night of the Paoli attack. He was coming down Lancaster Road west of Wayne by the White Horse Tavern where they turned on Goshen Meeting. They then turned east on King Road toward Wayne's camp, which lay 3 miles ahead. When they were within a mile of the camp, the firing began. Smallwood retreated to some higher ground he had previously observed.

Soon many of the retreating Pennsylvania Continentals were approaching the militia. The British troops still out and on the hunt, moved far enough away from their commanders and, against orders, began firing at the retreating Continentals and by chance some of the militia. Not being battle hardened and refusing to take commands to hold their formations, many broke and caused a great confusion. That night 1000 of the 2100 militia that Smallwood brought to bear against the British rear vanished into the night.

The atrocities that took place that night caused the battle to become known as the Paoli Massacre. There are no records indicating that General Grey or his officers ordered British soldiers to deny quarter or commit atrocities. There is substantial evidence that barbaric acts occurred well beyond what was acceptable military practice. The brutal nature of the battle signified that Howe and Grey not only wanted to remove the possibility of an American attack against the British Army from the rear but also sought to devastatingly and convincingly destroy the elite of Washington's troops. If the Pennsylvania line were left unfit for duty it was believed the resolve of the remaining American Army as well as the American people would be seriously damaged. James

Murray, a British historian stated the following in 1783 in *An Impartial History of the War in America*. McGuire quotes:

*'General Grey conducted this enterprise with equal ability and success though perhaps not with that humanity which is so conspicuous in his character.... A severe and horrible execution ensued.... The British troops as well as the officer that commanded them gained but little honor by this midnight slaughter. - It shewed rather desperate cruelty than real valour.'*

Colonel Adam Hubely of the 10<sup>th</sup> later testified that he heard the British troops calling out "no quarter" as his regiment rallied in the second field. He also wrote, per McGuire: 'The greatest cruelty was shew on the side of the Enemy [.] I with my own eyes, see them, cut and hack some of our poor Men to peices after they had fallen in their hands and scarcely shew that least Mercy to any, they got very few prisoners from us.' The British did in fact take prisoners, seventy-one in all with about forty seriously wounded. There was no doubt in the minds of the Continentals that there was no quarter being granted after witnessing these attacks. Those that survived this battle and were not injured, including Joseph, would see another day soon after, in which they put the fear of revenge for these atrocities into the hearts of the British.

## XI Paoli after the Battle

September 21, 1777 the Paoli camp was littered with both the living and the dead. The British troops were the first to return to the smoking ruins of the camp to account for losses. The British losses were light as one might expect. One account was about 20 killed in action. Captain John Andr`e estimated that about 200 killed and wounded remained on the field. Also eight wagons and teams were captured. He further stated that about 80 prisoners were taken which was close to other counts. The British were convinced they had disabled Wayne's elite by brutally wounding and killing great numbers of his men and assuming, after all the bloodshed, many of his soldiers would defect.

The wounded were picked up, both British and American, and taken back to the Tredyffrin Camp, along with the bodies of the British killed in action. The badly wounded were left at different homes along the way back to camp. The British continued to search for wounded soldiers who were well enough to take back to camp as prisoners. There was no further organized military action taken by the British believing their work had been satisfactorily completed. Had they again attacked the day after and caught Wayne and Smallwood in disarray, they could have finished off the corps and taken what was left of the militia.

Howe, by the military "civilized war" custom of the time, sent a trumpeter on horse with a truce flag and a note providing Washington the first notification Wayne had been attacked and requesting direction on what to do with the severely injured. The trumpeter took a circuitous route, obviously collecting intelligence data concerning the depth of the river at Long Ford, here-to-fore not known to Howe. The trumpeter also rode along Washington's left flank from its outermost edge taking in the American deployment. Washington was infuriated with this event and issued orders to keep any enemy on the other side of the river and retrieve immediately whatever they were wishing to send to the General. Washington responded as etiquette required. McGuire quotes:

*'Your Favor of this date [September 21, 1777] was received this Evening & agreeable to yor request, I have set Doctor [Lewis] Wilson to take charge of the Wounded Officers & Men of the Army under my command who have fallen into your hands at Howels Tavern & the Neighboring Houses. The Doctor has directions to give a receipt for All that are delivered him, and they will be considered as Your Prisoners.'*

Howe put his troops in motion the next day and broke camp at 6:00 a.m. marching northward on the same route the trumpeter had taken the previous day. The British were very aware Americans would retaliate if given the chance. McGuire quotes Lt. Martin Hunter of the 52 Light Company as saying: 'The Americans ever after call us *The Bloodhounds* I don't think our battalion slept very soundly after that night for a long time.'

While the British searched the camp early Sunday morning September 21, 1777, Wayne was at the crossroads covering the withdrawal of his force. He rallied troops around the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which was fortified with cannons presenting a strong front. The



crossroads were north of the camp and through the long strip of woods passed by his troops during the night retreat. Few British troops wisely pushed in that direction, but moved westward through open fields halting at Sugartown Road with light infantry pushing as far as Chester Road. Wayne, apparently not fully aware of the disarray of his own troops or the desertion of considerable militia, considered briefly a counter attack. Intelligence indicated the British were now moving on his left flank. In response Wayne gave orders to march toward the Red Lion Tavern across the road from Umchlan Friends Meeting. Wayne had found Smallwood and brought him and the remaining militia with him to Red Lion.

Wayne was clear from the very beginning that he was not surprised by the attack. His second in command, Colonel Humpton, however, was never aware of a missing picket or the two intelligence reports giving warning of the impending attack. He remained ignorant of these events for several days after the attack and later stated that he was not only in Wayne's disfavor but Wayne did not have the esteem of his subordinate officers either. This included Colonel Brodhead, Joseph's Regimental Commander. The animosity between Humpton and Wayne would eventually provoke Wayne into requesting a military review of his actions that night at Paoli.

Wayne wrote a letter to Washington briefly reviewing the battle and indicated he had reason to believe that several letters from Washington had fallen into enemy hands. Wayne told Washington he would provide a count at a later date. This document has never been found.

It is noteworthy that the Pennsylvania line held together after this battle and was not affected significantly by desertion. The discipline and courage of the men was seriously tested. The soldier's obedience reflected well the elite nature of these troops as part of Washington's Main Army. The lessons of bravery and persistence in this battle would reappear in subsequent conflicts against the enemy and nature herself. The 8<sup>th</sup> had only begun to be challenged.

## XII Washington's Dilemma

Howe moved up through Valley Forge stretching his troops over seven miles but did not attempt to cross the Schuylkill River. Washington joined Sullivan to push further north up the river to prevent Howe from turning his right flank as he had done twice before. The Main Army was now stretched over a nine-mile front. Under these circumstances Washington could not afford to be outflanked. The significance of Wayne's defeat at Paoli became painfully clear. The plan of preventing Howe from crossing the Schuylkill while Wayne made a lightning attack on Howe's rear had been foiled. Howe was again in full control of the military options. Furthermore, no matter in which direction Washington moved he would lose something significant. Philadelphia was about 25 miles to Washington's one side and Reading was 35 miles on the other. Reading contained valuable military stores that could not be lost without seriously affecting the American Army's fighting capability. For Washington to stay put would mean taking the risk of being outflanked and trapped against the Schuylkill River, with the possibility of total defeat. The loss of Philadelphia would be a major political blow and contribute to mounting public defeatist attitude but the loss of Reading would be a significant military setback. Howe had numerous options as to how he could take Philadelphia with Wayne momentarily disabled and not of sufficient troop strength to repel the entire British Army. Therefore, Howe could choose the route he preferred.

Wayne now commanded approximately 1500 men with fewer effectives along with 1100 of Smallwood's Marylanders, many of who were unarmed. With thunder rumbling in the clouds, Wayne wisely decided to stay at the Red Lion and Uwellan Meeting on September 21, 1777. Wayne moved September 22<sup>nd</sup> towards David Jones Tavern 20 miles west of the British Army. Those that were wounded but strong enough to march made an arduous journey to further remove the possibility of another British attack.

Meanwhile, Howe was in no apparent rush to take Philadelphia. He would instead attempt to defeat Washington by maneuvers and attrition. Washington began shifting north towards Reading and away from Philadelphia. He continued to be concerned that the British would try to outflank him on his right. He made a decision that the military value of the magazine in Reading was more important than the capture of Philadelphia from which the Continental Congress would be begrudgingly forced to vacate. The loss of Philadelphia would be a humiliation, but not a significant British achievement. General John Sullivan was left to cover the rear should Howe decide to cross the river fords.

Howe coveted Philadelphia. The American army's move towards Reading made the taking of the largest city in American a low risk endeavor. Crown forces crossed the Schuylkill River simultaneously at Garden's Ford and six miles down stream at Fatland Ford. Sullivan's pickets were quickly disposed of by jaegers and abates placed by the American Army were subsequently removed. Howe ordered his troops across the Schuylkill beginning about 2:00 a.m. The troops took up ground as they crossed and built campfires to warm and dry themselves out.

A lone soldier on reconnaissance for Wayne and near the top of Mount Joy observed the British movements. He also observed the illumination of the sky from the

British fires set at Valley Forge burning the factory and army supplies for which the British Army had no use or time to salvage.

On August 24, 1777 Philadelphia saw the American Army march proudly down their streets. Little than a month later, on September 26, 1777 Philadelphians were witness to the triumphal entry of the Royal Army. Howe finally achieved his goal of seizing the rebel capital leaving Washington high up in the country at Faulkner's Great Swamp near Pottsgrove. The Crown forces occupied Germantown on September 25, 1777. Lord Cornwallis took possession of Philadelphia the next day. Washington had spared the total destruction of ordinance in the French Creek Valley but he took heavy criticism for his handling of recent events even from his most ardent supporters.

Wayne's reconnaissance of the battlefield from Mount Joy brought reports the British had crossed the Schuylkill with no resistance, befuddling him and many of his officers. At the time, Wayne was 40 miles west of Philadelphia. He broke camp with Smallwood on September 24, 1777 and marched east to Trappe to rejoin the main army. Colonel Hartley would march on to Reading with the wounded from Paoli. The next morning Hartley had breakfast with the exiled John Adams and several other members of Congress. John had the following to say, as quoted by McGuire:

*'Rode this Morning to Reading, where We breakfasted, and heard for certain that Mr. How's Army had crossed the Schuylkill. Coll. Hartley gave me an Account of the late Battle, between the Enemy and General Wayne. Hartley thinks that the place was improper for Battle, and that there ought to have been a Retreat.'*

Adams was not a military man and his note may not have been an accurate depiction of what was said. Nonetheless, it again hints at the tensions between Wayne and his staff. Adams was the least upset of his fellow congressman with the evacuation from Philadelphia, was unsettled by the lack of information concerning the state of the military and decided to make his forced evacuation productive. In general, Congress was so unhappy with Washington's failure to protect Philadelphia that some were calling for his removal. By contrast, Franklin later agree with Washington, commenting when he heard the news in Paris that "No - Philadelphia had captured Howe." This essentially proved to be true as events later proved.

During Wayne's march to rejoin Washington tensions were mounting among some of the Pennsylvania Line officers. As they moved through the hilly townships of northern Chester County towards Packers Ford, Colonel Richard Humpton, second in command of the Pennsylvania Line and commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> brigade, had a confrontation with General Wayne. Humpton later claimed that he first became aware of the missing picket and warnings that had taken place the night of the Paoli Battle on the march to Trappe. After the confrontation Wayne felt betrayed by a cabal of disloyal subordinates and fired off a letter to Washington demanding a military inquiry. Washington reluctantly granted Wayne's request at a time he determined was appropriate.

### XIII Battle of Germantown

As events worked out, the Army was on the move the following day, requiring Wayne to wait for his day in court. On September 28, the continental army shifted camp to Pennibacker's Mill about 30 miles north west of Philadelphia. Over the next several days, Washington moved his army closer to the main British Camp at Germantown hoping to seize the opportunity to attack.

The British Light Infantrymen on outpost duty knew Wayne's troops were out for blood. Lt. George of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Light Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry Battalion referred to the scene as quoted by McGuire:

*'They threaten retaliation, vow that they will give no quarter to any of our Battalion. We are always on the advanced Post of the army - our Present one is unpleasant.....'*

*'There has been firing this Night all round the Cetrys - which seems as if they endeavor to feel our situation - I am fatigued - must sleep - Coudst Thou sleep thus? ... No, more than I ... I wake once or twice ... My Ear is susceptible of the least Noise.'*

The British rightly feared retribution. Joseph Hancock and his regiment as well as his brigade had been spared heavy attack by the British steel that infamous night at the Paoli Camp. He was fit, well trained, battle hardened, armed and galvanized by a need to avenge the suffering of his fellow Pennsylvanians in arms. They were, as one might expect, predisposed to provide no quarter. As for Wayne, Washington demonstrated that he had not lost faith in his aggressive and ever-eager general allowing him the honor of leading one of a four part, planned attack against the British at Germantown on October 4, 1777.

Germantown was north and slightly east of Philadelphia. Howe had strung his forces from 2 miles north of Germantown into Philadelphia virtually dividing his forces in two. He could not put the entire army in the city, at least immediately, and thus left forces in Germantown to fend off any attack by Washington. Howe's lust for Philadelphia and belief that its capture would break the resolve of the rebels persisted in his planning. Washington realized that he had his greatest opportunity since the beginning of the war to level a crushing blow against the British. He designed a daring and elaborate battle plan with four distinct frontal attacks and encirclement of Howe's forces in Germantown. The plan of attack, broken into four main attack columns and a 5<sup>th</sup> diversionary force to draw off the pickets, would require marching 12,000 men between fourteen and twenty miles, depending on what assigned attack route they were to take.

In the time period just proceeding the attack on Germantown, Washington's Main Army had been constantly on the move crossing the Schuylkill 3 times and marching over a 100 miles. The long march to take up battle positions was at least twenty miles and would take a great deal of time and exceptional physical strength. The first troops to deploy would begin their march at 6:00 p.m. on October 3, 1777 with some troops beginning their march at 9:00 p.m. All were to be in position by 2:00 a.m., rest till 4:00 a.m. and be ready to attack by 5:00 a.m. None were. The march lasted all night.

Officers permitted no lights and enforced strict silence. The night was cloudy and the air chilly. Men were issued pieces of white paper to place in their hats so that they could see each other in the dark. By morning, patches of fog from the damp air hitting cold ground made visibility in places intermittently impossible. Later the fog became mixed with smoke from musket and cannon fire making visibility even worse. Some troops, getting lost along the way, would march nearly 45 miles to get into position with the fight still ahead. Wayne's troops were to be in the main frontal attack on the left next to Sullivan on the right. General Greene was to be on the far left of Wayne's division coming into Germantown from the west and comprising the largest force to be brought to bear against the British encampment.

At 5:30 a.m. October 4, 1777 two cannon shots were heard in the morning fog. They were from royal artillery 6-pounders stationed at Mount Airy, two miles north of the main British camp in Germantown. The picket post from which the shots were fired was manned by sentries from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the British Light Infantry, the very same troops that comprised the first wave at Paoli only days before. The main body of the light infantry camped on Mount Pleasant 400 yards away from the picket where the cannon was fired. They were posted to give the British army ample time to assemble and defend against a rebel attack. The British troops spent several uneasy nights, were a bit nervous and greatly fatigued from the constant threat of danger. They were hyper alert and responded by firing the warning reducing the element of surprise.

Continental from the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment assigned to General Conway's brigade with fixed bayonets and a troop of light dragoons with drawn sabers, were approaching the British picket quietly when the cannon were fired. They intended to surprise and silence them without a sound. This did not happen announcing the attack all the way to Philadelphia. The light infantrymen were well aware they had been singled out to receive the vengeance of the Pennsylvania troops. They responded rapidly and were out under arms in a minute. Many remembering Paoli rushed out of the back of their huts. The sky would lighten briefly and darken again with cloud cover and fog. The British pickets fired several volleys and then fell back to rejoin the battalion. There was no support for them nearer than Germantown.

Conway's four Pennsylvania regiments led the American column on Germantown Road. They fanned out to the immediate left and right of the road. General Sullivan's division of Maryland and Delaware troops followed Conway's brigade and moved to the right of the road forming battle lines. Next Wayne came through with two brigades eagerly deploying on the left side of the road in position to engage and seek revenge on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Wayne's forces thrust themselves forward and were heard shouting "Have at the bloodhounds! Revenge Wayne's affair." A volley was immediately fired at the British. The "bloodhounds" returned the fire and charged Conway's men with bayonets. The Americans fell back, reformed, and counter attacked. The light Infantry again charged and drove Conway back, suddenly discovering that two American columns had nearly gotten around their flanks. The 2<sup>nd</sup> light Infantry Battalion was severely hit by Conway's and then Wayne's troops reducing them sufficiently so that for the first time since their inception, the pride and joy of Howe's army sounded a bugle retreat. Had they not done so, the Pennsylvania troops would have killed them all. Wayne's troops were showing no quarter and descended on the British hot for revenge. Wayne later claimed that Pennsylvania line officers tried to save many of the suffering crying for mercy but to no avail. In his own words, as quoted by McGuire: 'The Rage and fury of the Soldiers was not to be restrained for some time - at least not until Great Numbers of the Enemy fell by

our Bayonets.’ Joseph Hancock fought with the Pennsylvanians who nearly annihilated the British 2<sup>nd</sup>. They would pursue and kill them as they fled all the way into Germantown. The attack was of such severity, the panic so great, that the British Light Infantry lost all semblance of order, broke ranks, and ran for their lives.

General Howe heard the cannon fire and was riding out to the post to determine for himself what was going on when he saw, much to his surprise, the pell-mell flight of his most cherished and elite troops. Howe attempted to get the troops to re-form, shaming them by saying it was only a scouting party that they had encountered. It was said that it was one of the few times that cannon fired at them was welcomed when grape shot from the American army scatted about a chestnut tree next to Howe. Howe rode off immediately at full gallop.

One mile south of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions camp was Colonel Musgrave with the 40th Regiment on foot, employed at Paoli to prevent Wayne’s possible escape to the east. They were posted at the entrance to Germantown and were placed to support the two light infantry outposts in case of attack. Musgrave saw the retreating infantry and detached half his regiment forward to support the retreating troops. Musgrave’s men were soon notified by the retreating troops that the Pennsylvanians were giving no quarter. Musgrave also learned that Wayne’s troops were already in their camp approaching the rear of a large and substantial mansion owned by Chew and named Cliveden. Musgrave ordered his remaining troops into the house. Wayne and Conway’s troops fired a few volleys at the house and then moved on to attack the main British camp a mile down the road.

Washington followed behind Wayne and after much debate among his staff, took the advice of his artillery commander; General Knox ordering a bombardment of the house. The 40<sup>th</sup> held on for approximately two hours from the bombardment, repeated infantry assaults, and attempts to burn the house down. The “no quarter” shown by the Pennsylvanians in the opening attack provided the necessary incentive for them to stand firm against overwhelming odds. The Americans became preoccupied and distracted by bombarding this house. It would have been more prudent to leave a detachment to keep the 40<sup>th</sup> holed up and get on with the main battle.

Wayne was in Germantown when he heard the cannon fire behind him coming from General Knox’s bombardment of Cliveden. With obscured visibility due to fog and smoke, Wayne mistook this for being British troops and after successfully pursuing the 2<sup>nd</sup> into the main camp, turned his division. During the turn in dense smoke and fog he presented what appeared to be a battle line to General Adam Stephen’s troops that were out of position and behind Wayne’s troops. General Stephen’s was inebriated, later judged incapable of command, and subsequently dishonorably discharged from service. General Stephen ordered his troops to halt, dress the line, lower their muskets and fire a volley at Wayne’s troops. Wayne returned the volley and after an undetermined number of exchanges, the friendly fire terminated. The fog and confusion left Sullivan’s left flank uncovered and Greene’s entire right wing was out of position. Worse yet, American reserves wasted their time trying to dislodge the 40<sup>th</sup>.

It has not been determined exactly what started the retreat. Some continental forces shouting for more ammunition were overheard by British who then formed an immediate assault. Some saw their flanks uncovered and thought it best to withdraw. Some faced the brunt of the British counterattack and did not have the men or

ammunition to hold the line. In some parts rumors of counterattack, outflanking, and imminent capture caused an unstoppable retreat. The troops would not receive much needed training to hold the line and regroup until the following spring. Even though these were battle-hardened veterans, after three hours of heart pounding success, the attack rapidly disintegrated. It crumbled so fast that the British were cautious in their counterattack fearing a bait and trap ambush. The spirited American attack made a sudden collapse seem impossible. The British respect for the American attack and reluctance to believe that it had come undone so easily allowed the American army to escape. What was left of the 40<sup>th</sup> was liberated from the fortress of a home in which it had defended itself and joined in the pursuit of the American retreat, at a respectful distance.

Although the battle was a defeat for the Americans, it was seen as a bold, if not audacious move on Washington's part and proved the American army was a force to be reckoned with. When the news was received in continental Europe there was a sense of celebration over the outcome of the battle, particularly in France where sentiments were still smarting from the British defeat in the 7 Years War. It convinced the French that Americans were worthy of further support that was subsequently forthcoming in the successful siege and surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Wayne and his Pennsylvanians were pleased with their exploits and didn't share a sense of defeat. After all they had overcome some of the King's finest and run them out of camp, killing and maiming many on the way. Had the weather been better or the timing of Green's force - which included Stephan's troops - been on schedule or the diversion of the bombardment of Cliveden been avoided, the British may have been completely overcome and crushed. Unfortunately, American victory would have to wait for another opportunity.

The engagement was conducted with 11,000 American actives against about 10,000 British actives of an army of 15,000. The edge appeared to be in favor of the Americans however the militia was almost useless. In addition, General McDougal was never engaged and General Stephan fought Wayne. Therefore the British had a superior force engaged. The losses at Germantown were unequal with the exception of Generals. The American lost 152, including 30 officers. 521 were wounded, including 117 officers, and 400 were missing, mostly from desertion. The British claimed they had buried 300 Americans and took 438 prisoners, an exaggeration. The British were ultimately estimated to have lost 58 men including 13 officers. There were 395 wounded. Since the American Army was the attacker, their losses would be expected to be greater.

## XIV Wayne's Affair

Joseph Hancock happened to find himself at this point far from the frontier fighting Indians, the reason for which he joined the army, and now a veteran of many big and small confrontations with the British. His reputation was that of elite American soldier led by the audacious General Wayne. However, Wayne was plagued by a need for vindication of the events at Paoli even though Washington had displayed confidence in Wayne's ability as demonstrated by the prominent assignment given him for the battle of Germantown. Joseph would have been a weatherbeaten, hardened soldier watching from the sidelines, but he was involved in one of the biggest controversies of the war. Wayne would insist Washington grant a military inquiry of his conduct at Paoli.

Joseph and the army rested at Pennibackers Mill until October 9, 1777 when Washington moved, making camp at Skippack Creek. Washington lost a general officer, Brigadier General Francis Nash of North Carolina, who was critically wounded by a cannon ball at Germantown. He was buried with full military honors on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. A deserter and enemy collaborator was convicted and hanged until sunset on the same day. Washington had his priorities.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, Wayne's request was granted. The court convened on October 13 and 14, 1777. A total of 16 Pennsylvania Line officers testified at the inquiry. Of the officers Humpton, Hay, Ross, Huffnagle made censoring statements. The actual decision of the court of inquiry has never been found but it was obvious that Wayne was not satisfied with the result. He wrote several letters to Washington explaining himself and ultimately requested a formal court martial. Washington had lost five Generals for various reasons and could ill afford to lose another, particularly one so able. Nonetheless a full court martial convened with five generals, five colonels, and three lieutenant colonels on the court with General John Sullivan as president. The court was held October 25, 26, 27, and 30, 1777 in weather that was appropriate to the season. Cold temperatures, wind, and rain provided the ambiance for the occasion. Again, documents concerning the details of the court martial are not available, but it is known that Wayne went over his actions in detail. The outcome of the court martial was unambiguous. General Wayne was not guilty of the charge exhibited against him. Thus on November 1, 1777 the military record closed on "Wayne's Affair." What Joseph thought about General Wayne will never be known however the commander of his regiment, Colonel Brodhead, as quoted by McGuire, said the following in a letter to major general Benjamin Lincoln:

*'I have long wished to write you... Yet through the Alternate want of Pen, ink, Paper & Convenience, I confess this is the first Letter I wrote you ... Since you left us your Division has suffered greatly and that chiefly by the conduct of Gl. - W. Most of the officers are unhappy under his Command and as to my own part I have had very little satisfaction since the Command devolved on him.'*

This would not be the last time Colonel Brodhead would be critical of superior officers. However, the private feelings of the officers had to be put aside. They were highly professional honorable men and much larger problems of maintaining the war effort required their attention. Yet the question is to what affect these attitudes were imparted to the rank and file. Were they able to detect the rancor among the officers?



Did it affect their morale? Did they have a belief in the cause? Their true commitment was demonstrated by their loyalty to stay together, preserve the army and endure, the winter of 1777 – 1778.

## XV Winter Encampment at Valley Forge

In December of 1777, Joseph Hancock was in bitter cold weather like the rest of his fellow soldiers, without sufficient clothing, blankets, and perhaps without shoes. Rations were little to non-existent. In mid-December, he had again been prepared to fight the British but the battle dissolved. For unknown reasons, after marching his troops into position to form a battle line, Sir William Howe abruptly returned with his entire army to the comforts of Philadelphia. Although desertion and resignations were becoming more frequent Washington successfully prevailed on his patriotic army to join him in winter camp. Had these men faded away, there would have been no opposition to the British Military ending the conflict by default in favor of the British. The fact that the troops stayed with Washington at Valley Forge was implicit statement that spoke volumes about the strength of the American resolve for independence. Within the ranks Washington's presence was palpable as he met with the troops one battalion at a time. Through his charisma the army held together. In a written General Order to the troops December on 17, 1777 Washington thanked the troops for their fortitude and patience in sustaining the recent campaigns:

*“The Commander in Chief with the highest satisfaction expresses his thanks to the officers and soldiers for the fortitude and patience with which they have sustained the fatigues of the Campaign. Altho’ in some instances we unfortunately failed, yet upon the whole Heaven hath smiled on our Arms and crowned them with signal success; and we may upon the best grounds conclude, that by a spirited continuance of the measures necessary for our defence we shall finally obtain the end of our Warfare, Independence, Liberty and Peace. These are blessings worth contending for at every hazard. But we hazard nothing. The power of America alone duly exerted, would have nothing to dread from the force of Britain. Yet we stand not wholly upon our ground. France yields us every aid we ask, and there are reasons to believe the period is not very distant, when she will take a more active part, by declaring war against British Crown. Every motive therefore, irresistibly urges us, nay commands us, to a firm and manly perseverance in our opposition to our cruel oppressors, to slight difficulties, endure hardships, and contemn every danger. The General ardently wishes it were in his power to conduct the troops into the best winter quarters. But where are they to be found? Should we retire to the interior parts of the state, we would find them crowded with virtuous citizens, who sacrificing their all have left Philadelphia and fled thither for protection. To their distresses humanity forbids us to add. That is not all: we should leave a vast extent of fertile country to be despoiled and ravaged by the enemy from which they would draw vast supplies and where many of our firm friend would be exposed to all the miseries of the most insulting and wanton depredation. A train of evils might be enumerated but these will suffice. These considerations make it indispensably necessary for the army to take such a position as will enable it most effectually to prevent distress and to give the most extensive security, and in that position we must make ourselves the best shelter in our power. With activity and diligence Huts may be erected that will be warm and dry.*”

*In these the troops will be compact, more secure against surprises than if in a divided state and at hand to protect the country. These cogent reasons have determined the General to take post in the neighborhood of this camp; and influenced by them, he persuades himself that the officers and soldiers with one heart and one mind will resolve to surmount every difficulty with a fortitude and patience becoming their profession and the sacred cause in which they are engaged. He himself will share in the hardship and partake of every inconvenience.”*

These were hardly encouraging words. The location was difficult to provision and Congress believed the first resort for food should come from the local inhabitants. Washington was reluctant to take these measures, wishing to avoid local enmity toward the Army. The site selection has been attributed to General Washington and to Brigadier General Anthony Wayne with a notion the location was an ideal choice. It was not. Washington preferred a more remote location and shortened lines of supply in an area that had not been recently scavenged for food and forage. Unfortunately, Washington had to accept the political realities of the moment contributing to a much harsher winter encampment for the American Army than might otherwise have been the case.

The Pennsylvania Executive Council sent a letter to the Continental Congress insisting the Army remain in the vicinity of Philadelphia to provide protection from British foraging parties that was (correctly) feared would ravage the citizens. The Executive Council made it clear that it would withdraw financial support and troops if Washington failed to remain in the area providing a deterrent to British activity. The Council's threat was made public by the Continental Congress and resulted in Washington's acquiescence to locating in the vicinity. The selection of Valley Forge was the best choice given the political limitations. The Executive Council's intervention in military affairs left two opposing armies to forage the area rather than one. This led to many unintended consequences placing greater burden on the local populace than would otherwise have been the case. The American army, due to the lack of food and the consequent weakened physical condition of the men, proved of little value in deterring the British. The Pennsylvania Executive Council's meddling in military affairs did little to avert the very conditions they were trying to avoid while assuring the impoverishment of the army during winter camp at Valley Forge.

The conditions of the soldier was clearly recalled by Martin:

*“The army was now not only starved but naked. The greatest part were not only shirtless and barefoot, but destitute of all other clothing, especially blankets. I procured a small piece of cowhide and made myself a pair of moccasins, which kept my feet from the frozen ground, although, as I well remember, the hard edges so galled my ankles, while on a march, that it was with much difficulty and pain that I could wear them afterwards; but the only alternative I had was to endure this inconvenience or to go barefoot, as hundreds of my companions had to, till they might be tracked by their blood upon the rough frozen ground. But hunger, nakedness and sore shins were not the only difficulties we had at that time to encounter; we had hard duty to perform and little or no strength to perform it with.”*

On December 18, 1777 the army was ordered to march to Valley Forge and make winter camp. General Washington had specified the design of wooden huts and gave orders to erect them. Winter had begun and without these huts, many more would have perished. The site for winter camp was heavily wooded and provided the necessary material for making these dwellings. When the men arrived cold and hungry they did the one thing they had control over and immediately began building fires, which, of course, were made of green wood. In short order the entire camp was smothered in smoke. In clouds of choking smoke, in winter weather, poorly fed, and hardly clothed, the troops were ordered to build their quarters. In the words of private Martin:

*“We were now in truly forlorn condition, to go into the wild woods and build us habitations to stay in, in such a weak, starved and naked condition, was appalling in the highest degree....”*

The oppressive winter thus began at Valley Forge.

John Marshall summed up the fighting condition of the army and Washington’s ability to disrupt Howe’s foraging parties as the Pennsylvania Executive Council had conceived:

*“The army under the immediate command of General Washington was engaged through the winter in endeavoring to stop the intercourse between Philadelphia and the country. One of the first operations meditated after crossing the Schuylkill, was the destruction of a large quantity of hay, on the islands above the mouth of Darby Creek, within the power of the British. Early in the morning, after orders for this purpose had been given, Sir William Howe marched out of Philadelphia, and encamped so as completely to cover the islands; while a foraging party removed the hay, Washington, with the intention of disturbing this operation, gave orders for putting his army in motion, when the alarming fact was disclosed that the commissary’s stores were exhausted, and that the last ration had been delivered and consumed.”*

Light parties were dispatched to harass the enemy but Howe kept his army compact leaving little opportunity to annoy him during the ensuing winter months.

The commissary system was grossly incompetent and failed the army. The few provisions that made it were usually unfit to eat although they were eaten anyway. There was paper money available for local procurement but it was of dubious value as compared to British currency. The provisions carried into Philadelphia were paid for in specie (British currency which had stable value) at fair market price. The temptation by locals to profit from circumstance was too great for them to resist. Washington had no choice but to use what he considered his last resort, although Congress considered it his first, ordering the seizing of supplies from the farmers and merchants within reach of foraging parties that he ordered dispatched. It should be noted that the American seizure of necessary provisions from locals, although very infuriating, didn’t leave them destitute or result in capture, destruction of property, and rape as in the case of the British. Many of the British soldiers were conscripted criminals whose service was a punishment. Although Howe made many firm admonishments to his troops to properly conduct themselves, these elements, when opportunities arose, were not controllable. British

behavior left an appalling impression on the local inhabitants that further weakened British support.

One of the privates selected for seizing provisions for the American Army turned out to be J.P. Martin. He related his story as follows:

*“Our party consisted of a lieutenant, a sergeant, a corporal and eighteen Privates.”*

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*“This day we arrived at Milltown, or Downingtown, a small village halfway between Philadelphia and Lancaster, which was to be our quarters for the winter. It was dark when we had finished our day’s march. There was a commissary and a wagon master general stationed here, the commissary to take into custody the provisions and forage that we collected, and the wagon master general to regulate the conduct of the wagoners and direct their motions. The next day after our arrival at this place we were put into a small house in which was only one room, in the center of the village. We were immediately furnished with rations of good and wholesome beef and flour, built us up some berths to sleep in, and filled them with straw, and felt as happy as any other pigs that were no better off than ourselves.”*

Martin spent the winter well fed and much more comfortably housed than those at Valley Forge. By comparison, Joseph Hancock, under the direction of General Wayne, had it much worse. Wayne was determined to get his men into winter quarters, the prescribed wooden huts, as soon as possible. He believed that keeping his men active was essential to their moral and moreover wanted them out of tents as soon as possible with the onset of winter. His command was the first to have their huts completed. Of course Joseph, with his regiment and the rest of Wayne’s division, had the “honor” of being stationed at the first line of defense in the event of a British attack. From their location, the slope in front of them descended gracefully for several miles. From this high perch the Americans had an excellent defensive position.

Had the British attacked, however, it is questionable whether the number of men fit for duty could have put up an effective resistance, given their weak and destitute condition. In customary British tradition winter campaigns were rarely undertaken. Fortunately, the British did not discover the unfit condition of the American Army otherwise they might have made an exception to the rule. More to the point, the delights of Philadelphia kept the British officers entertained and distracted. Contrary to Howe’s disposition toward winter engagements, General Washington had planned a Christmas attack on Philadelphia but had to abandon the idea when he discovered the troops were unfit for duty. He was unable to mount anything more than light skirmishes during the winter while the British lived in relative comfort enjoying the good food, amenities and diversions of the city.

The citizens, unaware or unwilling to appreciate the deplorable condition of the troops, complained bitterly that Washington lacked concern about their trepidations and hardships. The seizing of provisions by both armies didn’t help matters. They pitilessly claimed the encamped troops were spending the winter in amusements, drinking, gambling, and carousing instead of defending their property and personal safety. Disgust

and even hostility toward the Continental Army generally prevailed during and after the war.

While trying to keep the army together, Washington was fighting a battle on two fronts, both political. In the first instance, certain officers with access to Congressional members began plotting to replace Washington with General Gates, who had recently been successful in defeating British General Burgoyne in the North. The intrigue wasted a great deal of Washington's time. He was at a particular disadvantage by insisting that he stay with his troops, as he had promised in his General Orders of December 17, 1777. He was often the last to receive letters involving him due to the difficulty of carrying letters a formidable distance in the middle of winter. In the end, Washington prevailed and over a short period of time, those that were inciting the matter were cowed into more respectful behavior. The rank and file likely never knew their Commander in Chief was subtly rebuking General Gates for his duplicitous behavior in the matter and thereby containing the political ambitions of others hoping to profit from General Gates proposed ascendancy to Commander in Chief. In the second instance, Washington did not resolve the commissary shortfall.

As spring began, Washington was pleased to receive a new officer from Prussia recommended by Benjamin Franklin, ambassador to France. He was an oddity, arriving with his small entourage and clothed in a brilliant new blue uniform. He was Frederick William Augustus Henry Ferdinand, Baron von Stuben who claimed to be a Lieutenant General with many years of experience. He misrepresented himself both as to rank and service, and likely was no more than a captain. Nonetheless he was widely read, and an army-trained officer who was the son of an accomplished high-ranking Prussian Officer. He had the requisite skills Washington needed regardless of his true background, and was willing to work temporarily without commission or pay. He was ordered to begin immediately.

Von Stuben toured the troops and talked to the officers of all the brigades through interpreters. He spoke initially in French and German and knew few English words. He found an army in shambles. He determined the first order of business was to compose uniform rules that became the Continental Army Regulations. The army had used a mixture of French, Prussian, and English tradition commands, formations, and marches depending on the background of the officers. Von Stuben wrote the new regulations in French, modifying the Prussian system. They were immediately translated to English and published in what became "The Blue Book" which standardized military regulations. It should be noted that Washington had developed the company size, officer rankings, regiment size and command structure prior to Von Stuben, but the detailed commands had not been completed and various maneuvers, formations and marching cadences had not been drilled into the men. The commands were simplified to ten such as Poise Firelock, Fix Bayonet, Make Ready, Fire, etc. Although there were a number of sub commands within each of the ten commands, the reduction in the number of commands reduced to ten made it much less baffling to the ordinary soldier. Von Stuben began with teaching the position of each soldier, the facings, the steps, file marching, and wheeling by the individual, company, regiment and brigade. He drilled the troops to march in formation compactly so they could immediately form a line of battle. Previously the army marched strung out and had to scramble to get into position to form a line. Von Stuben succeeded in implementing the formal training and discipline necessary to make the American troops a much more formidable force.

American Generals previously recommended and Washington approved the template for regimental command structure and company size in early 1776. This provided for fewer officers and larger companies. Expense for officers was reduced, while at the same time the responsiveness of the troops was improved. The British deployed companies in three ranks to achieve the density needed for a bayonet charge in keeping with their experience in the Seven Years' War (French Indian War). The Americans, from lessons learned in the same war, formed only two ranks of aimed fire. The American approach provided more than twice the battalion firepower of the British. The Americans presented 320 men as opposed to the British 150 men and delivered 640 accurate shots as opposed to the British delivery of 300 (the 3<sup>rd</sup> rank being ineffective) not well-aimed shots. Von Stuben inherited the superior American firepower, forming it into a well-disciplined fighting force that had nothing to fear from the legendary British.

According to a few prominent sources, the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment - including Joseph Hancock- were ordered to the frontier in March 1778. Stronger evidence indicates the orders were not issued until June 1778. The significance of the date of departure determines whether Joseph Hancock received Baron Von Stuben's drill instruction. The entire army was under drill by March 25<sup>th</sup> and completed by the June departure. Most assuredly, Joseph Hancock was one of many to receive Von Stuben's training.

Von Stuben's training was very uncharacteristic of an officer in the American Army. He personally trained 100 men that became drillmasters to train the rest of the army. By British and American tradition, it was beneath the dignity of a commissioned officer to drill men. There were few sergeants with sufficient training to effectively drill the troops. Lack of proper formation was part of the problem at the Battle of Germantown as well as other battles. The troops had not been drilled and disciplined to form or reform properly. This resulted in uneven battle lines, precipitated disorder and the tendency, when lines were broken, to end in disorderly retreat.

Von Stuben's drilling of the first 100 men made an exceptional impression on the private soldiers as well as the officers. It was not only highly unusual for a commissioned officer to drill but also in Van Stuben's case, the training was an instructive and colorful event to watch. At first the Baron could not speak English and his commands had to be translated. The translators were not acquainted with military drills and had difficulty in translating properly the Baron's commands. While still learning the soldiers would occasionally not perform the commands as instructed causing the Baron to roar with curses in French, then German, and then in both languages. He would order his translators to translate his invectives but the translators most often refused. The men were amused by this behavior but respected Von Stuben for his earnest and sincere efforts to train them. In short order, he had these first 100 soldiers ready to drill and train the rest of the American Army.

The drilling of the entire army began in late March 1778. The Baron rode from parade ground to parade ground supervising the instruction at the brigade level. Despite the desperate condition of the Army, it was at Valley Forge that the Baron instilled a new spirit in the Army. For Joseph Hancock, the training would have much less consequence. The type of fighting he was about to engage in was not battle line to battle line, but tree to tree. The frontier had an entirely different way of fighting, the nature of which he would become very familiar. In a few months, encouraged by the improving weather and the recent training, he would part with the company of the Main Army and its officers,

including the Commander in Chief. Redirected the previous winter from the frontier at Kittanning to New Jersey, and then on to the Philadelphia campaigns culminating in the winter at Valley Forge, Joseph was now a seasoned and well-trained soldier who had been in the company of some of the most famous officers of the Revolutionary War. During Joseph's frontier assignment, Washington and his staff continued to be apprised of his most esteemed regiment's activities, but Joseph would never again during his military service be in the presence of these revered men. The 8th Pennsylvania became part of the first Continental forces to be sent to the Western Department under General McIntosh and Colonel Brodhead.



## XVI The American Frontier in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

**Introduction:** The culture, geography, and military operations under which Joseph Hancock fought in 1777 are well documented. The battles were in recognizable locations with battle scenes in and around the towns and cities along the eastern seaboard of America familiar to most Americans. The frontier to which Joseph Hancock was transferred is not as well known and was vastly different from the military operations on the coast. Therefore, to understand Joseph's reassignment to the frontier, the context in which he found himself follows. He participated for a short but significant period in a long frontier conflict lasting 60 years.

**Geography and demographics:** Settlers began occupation of the lands on the west side of the Appalachian Mountains shortly before the Revolutionary War. This included what is now Western Pennsylvania, at the time called Wyoming. Virtue of its original charter Virginia laid claim to Western Pennsylvania, and what is now West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Michigan, as well as the uncharted territories west to the Pacific Ocean. The conflicting claims of Pennsylvania and Virginia made for a highly charged political environment on the frontier.

An ill-fated attempt to reach accord with the Native Americans and define the region was articulated in a 1768 treaty made by Sir William Johnson with the Iroquois Nations located primarily in the northeast. This treaty established a boundary from Fort Stanwix in New York to Fort Pitt and from there followed the Ohio River. The area north of this line was preserved for the Native Americans in the region and the area south was opened for settlement. There were major problems with the treaty. The Iroquois Nations were not the sole occupants of this region and in fact did not extend beyond what is today western New York. The Iroquois claimed they had feudal ownership over the entire region. However, the Indian tribes who actually inhabited most of the territory rejected the Iroquois authority. Moving east to west were the following Indian tribes:

### Iroquois Nation

Western New York: Seneca (one tribe of six that were part of the Iroquois Nation)

### Non-confederated Algonquin tribes

Western Pennsylvania: Wyandotte, Mingo, and Western Delaware

Ohio: Miami

Ohio & Kentucky: Shawnee

Michigan: Mississauga, and Ottawa

Northern Michigan and Canada around Lake Superior: Ojibwa

Wisconsin: Menominee, Winnebago, and Sauk

Illinois: Potawatomi and Kickapoo

The Iroquois Nation tribes did not speak the same basic language as the Algonquin tribes. Historically there had been no cooperation between them. There was no federation among the Algonquin tribes similar to the Iroquois Nations. However numerous sub-tribes formed alliances. When settlement of the frontier became a mutual concern, these tribes ceased warring against each other and gave their attention to a common threat. Another problem with the treaty was that the Shawnee considered their ancestral hunting ground to be south of the Ohio River. Needless to say, these tribes did

not consider the Stanwix Treaty legitimate, but, for decades, even as the boundary was disputed, both parties acknowledged it. Only the most desperate or foolish would attempt to settle north of the Ohio until after General Wayne's successful expedition to remove the Indian threat took place in 1794. It was not until the war of 1812 that the region including Canada was at peace and became as we know it today.

Settlers had been moving over the Alleghany mountains and settling in Western New York and Pennsylvania for more than a decade before the Revolutionary War. By 1776 settlers had struck out past Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) and begun locating in what is now West Virginia and Kentucky, along the Ohio River and its tributaries. Settlers around western New York and Pennsylvania were subjected to Indian atrocities primarily from the Seneca and Mingo tribes. Those further west of Fort Pitt suffered raids from all of the Algonquin tribes.

***History of Western Expansion:*** French traders in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries penetrated the regions that are now Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin. They began a vigorous trade with the Native Americans. The French had superior access to the area due to French domination of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. They built forts at key locations along the seaway, at the straits of the Great Lakes, and at significant fords between navigable rivers to secure trade. British traders began competing with the French by land routes through the mountains in the mid eighteenth century. The British goods were of higher quality and lower cost. The Native Americans were quick to take advantage. The French considered this to be an intrusion into territory they claimed as French. The conflict provoked the French Indian War or Seven Years War between the British and the French.

The War began in 1754. The British won and took over the French forts and trade routes, laying claim to the surrounding territory. The British were not the only nations to make a claim on this territory. The Native Americans also claimed sovereignty over the region. This did not stop the provincial aspirations of Pennsylvania and Virginia, resulting in land surveys being commissioned. These colonial governments chartered land companies to survey and sell Indian lands. Land ownership was totally alien to the Indian culture. Interestingly, George Washington was a big land speculator during this period and purchased various large tracts of land, including a section north of the Ohio River. The tract north of the Ohio was Indian Territory, under the Stanwix treaty. Washington obviously was not concerned about who would ultimately control this land. The mix of opposing interests assured bloody conflict for years to come.

In addition to forts at Detroit, Michilmackanac, and along the Saint Lawrence, the French built forts on the interior of the region at key river locations. This was an effort to bolster their territorial claims by erecting permanent structures inside the region. One of the more important was Fort Duquesne (pronounce do cane), later renamed Fort Pitt by the British. This was the same claimed by the Ohio Company, a land company in Pennsylvania.

In greater detail, George Washington led an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate a claim for the frontier territories on behalf of Virginia in 1754. He approached the fort, was politely hosted by the French, and presented territorial claims from the Virginia Governor. He was respectfully informed, partially as a dodge, that these matters would have to be referred to the Governor of New France. The French provisioned him and sent

him on his way. This was the beginning of 60 years of conflict in the region, and a prelude to the French Indian War.

In an effort to claim the western territory the British attempted to capture Fort Duquesne in July of 1755, which resulted in the Battle of the Monongahela, also known as Braddock's defeat. Braddock marched his army in traditional British columns ignoring admonitions to respect the different methods of warfare the Indian employed. Short of reaching Fort Duquesne, Braddock was attacked by the Indians and overwhelmingly defeated. In command of his rangers George Washington was able to prevent the defeat from becoming a massacre. This battle was part of the French Indian War, which lingered indecisively until 1757 when William Pitt became Prime Minister.

Pitt refocused the Royal Military away from European fronts, concentrating military activities on the New World and India. In a series of brilliant strokes, the British took Forts Duquesne (later renamed Fort Pitt) as well as Ticonderoga, a fort of strategic significance on the Saint Lawrence. In 1759 the British won the decisive battle for control of the Great Lakes. The whipping Pitt gave the French would later benefit the Americans during the Revolutionary War. The French sought any means to avenge their defeat and along with Spanish allies subsequently supported the American Revolution.

The Peace of Paris in 1763 significantly changed political power in North America. The French gave up vast territory. The Native Americans lost their ability to play two European empires against one another. The Iroquois Confederacy east of the Ohio Valley had long been a British ally, however years of conflict in the expanding frontier had changed the balance of power. The British were less concerned about their relations with the Iroquois who had been allied. The larger and more hostile Indian populations were among the Algonquin speaking tribes of the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley. It became acutely apparent they held power in the region that had been traditionally allied with the French. The French penetration did not bring settlers with it. Now that British military power prevailed, the aggressive land-grabbing efforts of the colonists would only get worse. In defiance, an Ojibwa Chief told the first Englishmen that reached Fort Michilimackinac "although you have conquered the French you have not conquered us." Ottawa Chief Pontiac made it clear to the British that the whites did not understand the Indian way, and based on a vision, determined all settlers should be pushed back over the mountains. This vision included giving up the new traded goods and returning to their previous, more primitive ways. Pontiac's rebellion (1763 to 1765) was fought to implement this vision, but was defeated. As a result of this rebellion, the British learned that they could not dictate policy and made concessionary agreements with the Native Americans.

Lord Dunsmore's war was fought in 1774 and resulted in the Treaty of Camp Charlotte, which eliminated the Shawnee claim to their traditional hunting grounds south of the Ohio River. Both sides had begrudgingly begun to recognize the boundary established in the Stanwix Treaty. In the same year, the British drafted an imperial policy known as the Quebec Act that would have combined modern Quebec, Ontario, and the American Frontier Region into one colony. The policy had its merits, particularly by opening access to the waterways for trade, which the settlers failed to appreciate in their obstinacy against the idea. Quite to the contrary, it offended Anglo American settlers for various reasons, not the least of which was allowing the Catholic Church into the region. Moreover under this act the colony would not have a legislative council but an autocratic governor instead. The grievance emanating from the proposed creation of this colony

was of sufficient merit to be included by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. Shortly afterwards the region became a dark and bloody battleground. The Revolutionary War aggravated the already hostile situation leading to the necessity of committing troops from the American Army to the region.

At the behest of the Continental Congress Washington ordered the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> and the Virginia 13<sup>th</sup> Regiments to the frontier in the spring and summer of 1778. Washington was specifically instructed but reluctant, due to his specific knowledge of its superior fighting ability, to detach the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment from the Pennsylvania Line from the main army to the frontier. Washington put General McIntosh in charge of the Western Department and the aforementioned troops. The original objective was to reduce Detroit and eliminate British influenced Indian attacks on the frontier settlers. It was also politically important to establish formal American presence in the region for territorial claims in any future peace negotiations. Ultimately, active military presence in the region would persist beyond the British surrender at Yorktown.

Logistics and internal politics prevented the taking of Detroit and reduced the activity in the region largely to a holding action for the duration of the war. However, against all odds, McIntosh made a sincere effort to press Detroit and built Fort McIntosh and Fort Laurens in 1778. Brodhead replaced McIntosh in the spring of 1779 as commander of the Western Department. In 1779, General Sullivan's expedition up the Susquehanna River and Colonel Brodhead's nearly simultaneous expedition up the Allegheny River resulted in the destruction of Indian crops and dwellings under a policy of scorch and burn. The expeditions did not result in large numbers of Native Americans being killed, but it checked them for a period of time as they repaired the damage. In fact, it may have made them only angrier and more determined to stop and push back white settlement.

Independent of the command at Fort Pitt, militia campaigns were conducted. George Rogers Clark's campaign with the Virginia militia penetrated deep into Illinois territory and was successful. For the first time, the British began to feel threatened in Detroit. The shame of the Gnadenhutten massacre of peaceful Christian Moravian Indians took place. Then the gruesome defeat of Colonel William Crawford took place during the Sandusky Campaign ending with his savage torture at the stake by the Delaware.

In 1781, the Delaware – the only tribe in the region to support the American effort, changed their allegiance to the British, causing Brodhead to campaign against them. His mission was successful, however the matter ended with a brutal tomahawking of a number of Indian Chiefs after their capture. Whether Brodhead was actively involved or just careless is uncertain, but the murders of these chiefs in addition to accusations of graft and corruption ultimately lead to Brodhead's undoing by Washington's direct order, removing him from command of the Western Department in the same year. Joseph Hancock was fortunately discharged from service by this time.

From another perspective, during the early stages of the Revolutionary War military and political efforts were made by the Americans to win over Montreal and Quebec. Americans sought Canadian inclusion in the Revolutionary War believing they would join in fighting for independence, but they were not at all interested. A number of battles took place, culminating in the British defeat in the north at Saratoga in 1777. This defeat however did not deprive the British of control of the waterways, allowing them to

stage offensive operations from Detroit. Support for Indian warfare against the settlers continued after the British surrendered at Yorktown. Eventually, as a result of the British surrender and negotiations with the Earl of Shelburne, concessions in the region turned out to be far greater than expected. There were several territorial concession options on the table but release of the claim to the Ohio valley and surrounding territory was the least disagreeable to the British. American military presence in the region assured westward expansion was negotiated and became American territory.

The Native Americans who had allied with the British were now left on their own. The colonists under British control in what is now Canada were furious that the source of furs and skins was now under American control and, at best, would have to be shared. Jay's treaty a 1783 agreement reached to resolve unfulfilled British and American disputes following the Revolutionary War, in pertinent part, evacuated the British from forts at Niagara, Detroit, and Mackinaw. Now that the region was firmly under American control it became apparent to the Native Americans that they had to either accept whatever fate would result from settlement of their territory by the ever-increasing flow of settlers from the east, or take a stand. They choose to take a stand and formed the largest Indian confederacy ever assembled. Engagements took place between 1790 and 1794. The first at Kenionga in 1790 (Fort Wayne, IN) resulted in the decimation of a force led by General Josiah Harmer. Similarly, Major General Author St. Clair received the worst defeat to ever take place on the American Continent at the hands of the Indians at the battle of the Wabash (Fort Recovery, Ohio) in 1791. The success emboldened the Indians spirit to the point that they began to believe they could drive the settlers out. Attempts to make peace with the Indians failed. The Indians reasoned the British had no right to give Indian lands to the Americans, since it was not theirs to begin with, and saw no point in discussions. It should be noted that Joseph Hancock bought his first property on the frontier in 1790 at Maysville, Kentucky.

George Washington, President of the United States, promoted Anthony Wayne to Commander in Chief of the American Army, specifically to address the Indian problem. Wayne prepared an expedition to resolve the ongoing conflict. In his typical disciplined military habits, Wayne trained exhaustively for battle, maintained double pickets to avoid an Indian surprise, held off campaigning until he had the men and supplies he deemed essential, and successfully executed an expedition deep into Indian held territory. Wayne destroyed the Indian Confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and negotiated the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. The last effort was taken by Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh allied with similarly inclined Wyandotte, Potawetami, and Ottawa Indians. Joseph Hancock was a Kentucky militia officer during Tecumseh's rebellion. Without British support, the Shawnee were unable to sustain a successful military effort, which ended in the defeat at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. This effectively ended Indian conflict in the region.

The War of 1812 between America and Britain was the final chapter in the settlement of boundaries between Canada and the United States, which defined the boundaries known today. The Native Americans were relegated to reservations in the region for a period of time. Under pressure by Whites to acquire reservation land for farming, the Indian for the most part was coercively removed and relocated to lands farther west by the mid nineteenth century. White settlement not only removed the native Indian from the land but also stripped the indigenous forest. The exposed lush and fertile ground supported the new economy, the agricultural business of today.

***Indian Cultural:*** The Native Americans in the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes region had, long before the Revolutionary War, become accustomed to improvements in their standard of living through trade. Iron pots and pans, knives, tomahawks, tools, and of course guns, gunpowder, and lead became a necessity. What had been called trinkets such as beads were important for Native Americans to possess since they brought status with the successful receipt of gifts from Western Europeans, an Indian expectation as proper show of hospitality and respect. Ornamentation and western cloths were worn in a display of pride and was similar to the vanity seen in the male custom of body painting. Use of the bow and arrow became a lost hunting and martial art. The French traders penetrated deep into Indian Territory selling these wares but were not intrusive, supplying the Native Americans with useful trade goods that allowed them to live much as they had for centuries, but with improved technology and a higher standard of living.

Prior to white encroachment, tribes in the area often fought against each other, the Shawnees being the most fearsome warriors in the region and most inclined to tribal war. The young Indian brave was respected for good hunting skills but a greater status was attached to warrior behavior. At its greatest extreme, this would entail battle and heroic efforts that would be honored at council meetings extolling the skill and bravery of the individual Indian warrior. War chiefs were drawn from the best warriors.

The Native Americans had religious notions of creation and the ever after. Of particular note in their religion was the god Manitou that provided them abundant land and wild game which was hunted as the main source of food. The Native Americans had great respect for the land and believed that they had a sacred obligation to insure it continued to provide abundance for future generations. The Native Americans never took more from the land than was needed to feed their families. The notion of shooting an animal such as a buffalo for sport or for only the choice meat, leaving the rest to spoil was unthinkable, yet the early settler, seeing such abundance, thought nothing of it. The Native Americans observed this and over time also observed that the buffalo disappeared and hunting parties had to go much farther from camp to hunt food. The settler was a menace to traditional food sources.

The Native Americans had established rites that allowed “adoption” of captives from other tribes. It was an easy transition to apply this to whites, which facilitated their assimilation as captives into the tribe. When capturing many whites at a time, warriors would satisfy their blood thirst and revenge by ritualized killing some of the more important captives, but usually returned to the village with prisoners whereby the women would decide the fate of most survivors. Children would often be adopted and mature men and women taken as spouses. Those for whom there was no use were killed. In this way, as had been the case of Indian captives, the tribe was increased in size to its presumed betterment. If a captive were an officer, notorious Indian fighter, or captured escapee, a much more brutal fate awaited him. A captured escapee, man or woman, was automatically burned at the stake to set an example. Men of renowned warrior skills, even though a mortal enemy, would often be spared the stake and told to run the gauntlet sometimes multiple times. If successful in reaching the end of the line, the captive would be allowed to live if adopted. However, if knocked to the ground the poor captive would likely be beaten to death.

Being burned at the stake was an infrequent event. Nonetheless, it put fear in the settler’s hearts that such savage brutality was a possibility. The burning was not a quick process. Fires were built at some distance from the captive slowly barbecuing the

individual. With very notable captives, the burning would take place at a major Indian village and runners would announce the forthcoming celebration to surrounding villages. Death could take 24 hours.

***Settler Culture:*** The first Euro-Americans to arrive over the mountains and explore lands along the Ohio River were frontiersmen such as Daniel Boone and Simon Keaton. These men and others became famous for the frontier skills, Indian fighting, and encouragement of white settlement in the region. As a young man, Simon Keaton preferred to be in the wilderness alone and would venture far into unexplored lands in what is now western Kentucky. He marveled at what he saw. He found abundant game, vast forests and cane lands. He would often stay in the wilderness by himself through the winter, living off the land and residing in a small lean-to hut. Behind these rugged outdoorsmen came families in search of a life of abundance and prosperity. The desire to own land was a powerful attraction and the stories spread by land companies in the east spoke of untold riches. Some arrived with little or nothing and assumed that if they developed a piece of land, they would be granted title. Others came in organized groups, having purchased land from land companies, and started small communities. Many left desperate circumstances, and went west in search of a new beginning or to avoid the law. Some groups were religious communities in search of a promised land.

The reality of surviving on the frontier even without Indian attacks was a serious matter. The first year was critical. A bad crop or a bad winter could wipe out a family. In addition, Indian raids often deprived them of their livestock, their children, and their lives. Yet they kept coming. There were periods of relative calm but the tensions brought on by the mass migration of settlers would lead to many bloody conflicts. Naturally, the settler loathed the Indian, and the Indian loathed the settler. Regretfully this occasionally led to the deaths of friendly Native Americans including chiefs further aggravating a bad situation.

The government agents and the leadership of the Western Division of the Continental Army were presumably more enlightened, respectful of the Native Americans and attempting to make peace. They were largely successful with the Delaware Indians during the Revolutionary War. However the rest of the Indian tribes preferred to resist the onslaught of settlers and sided with the British. The Native Americans believed the British had less land avarice and were a more steadfast source of trade goods on which they had become dependent. During the War, the Native Americans remained on the British side.

Some settlers were isolated from one another and in extreme danger at times. Most lived in some type of community with a fortified blockhouse for defense in case of attack. Small forts were built in some of the larger communities. Many women and children spent years within the confinement of forts and blockhouse communities, fearful of being captured or killed. The men tended fields in armed groups. There was not much but toil to occupy their time. Even if they had the ability, there was little or nothing to read. Communal social skills were an imperative. Many settlers considered going back and would have done so if there had been a place to go back to. Men could be reckless and quick to mount attacks to retaliate against Indian raids on fellow settlers. Women were much more cautious and put some temperance in male aggressiveness. Frontier settlers personified the rugged individualist much admired philosophically at the time.

Criminal elements notwithstanding, the settlers developed their own sense of law and order and appointed natural leaders to positions of authority. Necessity wrought social cohesiveness, often influenced by Christian beliefs. All shared an indissoluble sense of independence and a strong contempt for governmental interference. They believed they could take care of their own business. On the other hand, the civilized world along the seacoast was of the opinion that settlers were as wild and savage as the Indians. It was known that frontier heroes had learned the Indian methods and skills and used them to their own advantage. Furthermore, it was widely believed that people were not capable of living a civilized life without some form of government to prevent lawlessness. The settlers among themselves proved otherwise.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, many Native Americans were resigned to the fact that it was only a matter of time before the Euro-Americans would succeed in taking their lands. Alternatives for the Native Americans were few, for they were not at all interested in the white man's ways of farming, which they saw as degrading for the male and fit only for women. Moreover, the concept of land ownership was a total anathema to them. It made no matter since the settlers would never accept coexistence, much less assimilation, of the Indian into white society. One culture would lose.

***Economics:*** Trade goods for furs and hides originally attracted the French to the region and continued to be the primary form of commerce at the time of the Revolution. The "Interior French" or the French traders, who intermarried within Indian tribes, had essentially infiltrated the Indian culture and in many cases became powerful, influential and rich. These French infiltrators used and were used by the Native Americans to enhance their economic power and prestige. The Frenchmen became Indian, if they were not born Indian, and participated in the Indian culture, customs and ceremonies while maintaining some of their own. Of cross cultural importance was learning Indian languages by the Interior French. By speaking both French and Indian, these men became powerful brokers. They were essential to the French trade and later made their services available to the British after the French Indian War. They often became chiefs within the tribal system and participated in tribal meetings. The Interior French had great influence in establishing Indian alliances against the settlers.

Settlers lived by substance farming, a different economy. Initially the lands that were settled were forested requiring extensive labor to clear. An acre of uncleared land was worth approximately \$1.00. Often settlers with no capital to purchase property would work to clear land and be paid in kind, giving them a start. Labor was much more dear than land, and an acre of cleared land would bring approximately \$5.00 or 5 acres of uncleared land. Farming formed the basis of the settler economy. By the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century grain would become the primary export of the region. However, this economic transition was in direct opposition to the Indian economy based on hunting and trapping. In addition to the offensive taking of sacred hunting land the settlers were also taking their share of game from the land to supplement their food supply. As game became scarce, settlers would break the Stanwix Treaty, form hunting parties and cross the Ohio. This increased the distrust and hatred between settler and Indian, eventually leading to the exclusion of one economy for the other. George Washington's policy on the matter after the Revolutionary War virtually assured the Indian would be systematically bought or forced out of their land by perpetual "permanent" treaties as the frontier pushed westward.



## XVII March to the Frontier

General McIntosh left Valley Forge in late May with the 13<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment, headed for Fort Pitt. Colonel Brodhead left Valley Forge in late June with the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, heading through Lancaster and on to Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The troops received new uniforms and footwear including customary hunting shirts and leggings. By this time most had received muskets as a result of General Wayne's insistence that it was preferred to the rifle. There were a few sharpshooters however that retained the rifle as the weapon of choice. The refreshed troops were prepared for an expedition to reduce Detroit.

During Colonel Brodhead's march through Pennsylvania, 700 Iroquois Indians and 400 British troops attacked settlers on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River north of Brodhead's position. He was diverted to Wyoming (Western Pennsylvania) settlements along the Susquehanna River. When he arrived, thirty settlers were killed or captured, panicking those remaining to seek refuge in Sunbury, Carlisle, and York. Sunbury was at the junction of the west and north branch of the Susquehanna River. Brodhead was given orders to drive out the enemy and bring sufficient safety to the area to encourage settlers to return. The raiders could not carry off all the booty and what was left was burned including the crops. On July 12, 1778 the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment arrived into the area with 340 men. Joseph Hancock would witness the enormous destruction that caused the widespread panic among the settlers. It would have stiffened his resolve to seek justice in the ongoing war between Indian and settler. The potential brutality of the ongoing Indian conflicts would certainly weigh heavy on his settlement plans after leaving the army.

Brodhead immediately took action to interdict any further Indian incursions. At Sunbury near Fort Augusta, Brodhead found 100 brave local volunteers who had stayed to defend what was left of their properties. He immediately sent out details to scout the area and rid it of roving bands of Native Americans. The large force of British, along with their Iroquois allies, was determined to head back to their villages with their white captives and stolen goods. The attack on the North Branch brought total ruin. On the West Branch however, the crops had not been burned and many cabins were left standing. The placement of detachments at principal centers provided enough incentive for the settlers to return and harvest their crops. The 11th Pennsylvania Regiment relieved Brodhead by the end of July 1778, at which time he resumed his original orders to report to Fort Pitt.

As it turned out, the Susquehanna Region was the home to the Brady family. John Brady was colonel of the 12<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and was wounded at Brandywine. He was honorably discharged, and had returned home. His son Samuel Brady was a lieutenant in the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment. The situation allowed for a family reunion, the first the family had been together in 3 years. Shortly after leaving for Fort Pitt with the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Samuel was informed that his brother was scalped by the Indians and died after 5 days of delirium. Not long after his father was killed by Indians. These personal loses inured an animosity against the Native Americans that would motivate Samuel to become one of the most skilled and notorious Indian fighters in the region. He would eventually kill one of the two Indian warriors involved in his father's death.

Colonel Brodhead succeeded General McIntosh in command of the Western Department in 1779. He promoted Samuel Brady to Captain and made him the head of an elite troop of rangers that would perform interdiction of the Indian raiding parties, rescue operations, and reconnaissance missions. He developed a reputation as a frontiersman and Indian hunter equal to or exceeding Daniel Boone and Simon Keaton, celebrated folk heroes of the time. When he accepted the assignment from Brodhead, at his request, he was given wide latitude over troop strength for any mission, how the rangers would conduct operations, and most importantly, absolute authority over ranger selection. The skill requirements would exceed most of the troops personal potential for endurance, marksmanship, and adoption of Indian warrior skills. There were very few who could meet his high standards, although many volunteered. Whether Joseph Hancock volunteered to become a ranger is not clear. Brady generally operated with as few rangers as possible to minimize detection by the Indians and reduce the risk of mistakes that could endanger his life. However, his exploits would have been well known and celebrated by every member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania and 13<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiments as well as the settlers. It is certain that all soldiers in the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> and Virginia 13<sup>th</sup> learned from and adapted the skills taught and exemplified by Samuel Brady. Although Captain Brady ran an elite core of men, other troops assigned to Brodhead were assigned to interdiction operations. These skills would serve Joseph Hancock well the future.

After he was relieved by the 11<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania, Brodhead marched to Carlisle Pennsylvania. There he rested his troops for a week, resuming his march in mid August. They were to travel through Bedford County, an area from which many of the troops had been recruited. There were many joyful reunions as parents, siblings, and girlfriends stood along the route of Brodhead's march, waiting to see loved ones. Whether Mary (Bush) Hancock was there to greet her son is unknown but had she been she would have been proud and very fortunate. Many were not fortunate, as three hundred of those that had joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment in 1776 did not return to the defense of the frontier. With Brodhead in command, the troops took an unhurried pace, reaching the mountains in approximately two weeks and arriving at Fort Pitt on September 10, 1778. The late departure from Valley Forge, the diversion to the Susquehanna, and the amble to Fort Pitt were symptomatic of many other diversions, complications, and missed deadlines that increased the risk of McIntosh executing a successful campaign against Detroit.

## XVIII

### McIntosh's Military Expedition and Command 1778 - 1779

McIntosh's original grant from Congress, originally near \$1,000,000, and later reduced to \$935,000, was for the reduction of Detroit. Detroit was key to the British strategy to use local Native Americans as insurgents against an American interior front during the Revolutionary War. The Continental Congress and General Washington assigned General McIntosh the task of campaigning against Detroit to eliminate the source of munitions, supplies, leadership, and encouragement that sustained the Indian aggression. General McIntosh was selected for this assignment for a number of reasons. He was considered by General Washington to be a very capable leader, having solid experience with the frontier, and being neutral with regard to the politics of Pennsylvania and Virginia. However, McIntosh did not get good odds to succeed in fulfilling Washington's orders.

There were a number of problems. First, the Delaware Indians were the only tribe friendly to the American cause. A treaty with them was required before military operations could begin. McIntosh needed their permission to cross their lands and more significantly, needed knowledge and scouts. The campaign did not begin until fall due to the delay in negotiations, making it late in the season to begin the campaign.

Second, the complexity of supplying a substantial military force 300 miles west over mountains was seriously underestimated. Delays, spoilage, theft, graft and other events resulted in derelict and negligent logistics support. In short, McIntosh was not supplied adequately to assure a successful campaign. Locals were very reluctant to provide scarce provisions to the military. The currency used by the military to buy local goods depreciated at a high rate. Locals, if willing to sell, charged excessive amounts as a hedge against devaluation of the currency. Many locals had little food to spare.

Third, locals were not favorably disposed to the accommodation of Native Americans by making treaties with them. The army, in their eyes, was part of the eastern seaboard establishment that imposed undesirable frontier policy by attempting to implement government objectives, including accommodation and support of friendly Native Americans. Accordingly, they were disinclined to be of much assistance. General McIntosh, against these odds, went after the stated objective as best he knew how.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Virginia and the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania were to be augmented by militia from Westmoreland County in Pennsylvania and three counties in Virginia, comprising the force to attack Detroit. The Delaware Indians were to provide guides and possibly warriors. First a treaty had to be negotiated. The talks were scheduled for July, however the troops and negotiators were unable to get there in time; negotiations were postponed until September. Virginia was reluctant to support a campaign if it did not start by early September, and Pennsylvania could not spare militia due to extensive Indian incursions in Westmoreland County. Nonetheless, the process went forward as if the delays were not serious impediments to success.

As stated previously, Colonel Brodhead took his time getting his troops to their post and arrived at Fort Pitt on September 10, 1778. Under his command, Joseph Hancock and the rest of the troops saw hundreds of Indian encampments surrounding the Fort with campfires burning and Native Americans milling around preparing for the upcoming negotiations, led by Chief White Eyes. This was in stark contrast to the

previous years experience. The military conquest was to change from the most advanced warfare known to mankind at the time to the most barbaric and savage warfare imaginable.

On September 12, 1778 negotiations began and on September 17, 1778 the treaty was signed. The treaty with the Delaware provided for an offensive and defensive alliance, recognition of the tribe as an independent nation with guaranteed territory, establishment of a judiciary system, and provisions for entry of a Delaware State into the American Union. Chief White Eyes was a visionary, believing the 14<sup>th</sup> State would be a Delaware Nation. The commissioners were deceitful in the negotiations, including a clause that required approval by the Continental Congress, knowing full well that it would not approve a Delaware State. Later, there was significant disagreement between the parties as to the commitment made by the Delaware to provide warriors, not just scouts, for the offensive maneuvers of the army.

Once the treaty was made, McIntosh began to execute his orders to reduce Detroit. Prior to the signing of the treaty he had rallied 800 Virginia militias. By the beginning of October McIntosh marched out of Fort Pitt with 500 regular troops from the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> and Virginia 13<sup>th</sup> Regiments and the Virginia Militia constituting a force of 1300 men. Westmoreland County could spare no militia, confronted as they were with Indian incursions they deemed a priority. McIntosh's troops moved along the Ohio River constructing a road as they went. When they reached the point where they had to leave the Ohio River, on the west side of Beaver River coming into the Ohio River from the north, McIntosh ordered a fort built that he named after himself. A French engineer following accepted French designs directed the construction. It was a substantial fortification for a wilderness outpost. To help make it formidable, six-pound cannons were mounted on the walls. The Native Americans were terrified of cannon fire. Making the fort enduring for the rank and file, barracks were constructed. Joseph helped build this fort and although he did not know it at the time, he would spend the winter there. He must have wondered what the future would hold, for Detroit was a long way off and a winter campaign was a grave possibility.

Fort McIntosh was designed as an advanced depot for munitions and provisions and could be supplied by water route on the Ohio River. It was also located where it was necessary to turn inland to march toward the objective. While building the fort, McIntosh attempted to move supplies forward to support the march into the wilderness towards Detroit. The going was very slow. The 60 Delaware Indians that accompanied the army did not understand why so much time was spent building a fort when it would not be needed once Detroit was taken. Many officers, including Colonel Brodhead, considered it a month lost and a waste of time. When he took command of the Western Department the following spring, Colonel Brodhead wrote General Washington with reproachful remarks concerning General McIntosh's conduct in the 1778 campaign against Detroit. Washington's return letter was a terse rebuke of Brodhead's allegations concerning McIntosh. Brodhead would later write letters to fellow officers in which he referred to Fort McIntosh as McIntosh's "hobby horse" stating that his men would have "rather fought than wrought." McIntosh's actions were conservative and may have been his way of recognizing, given the circumstances, that reaching Detroit was unrealistic. Instead he would do as much as possible to provide the platforms that would later make the reduction of Detroit possible. A large sum had been appropriated for the expedition in view of the beleaguered financial state of the colonies. McIntosh's sense of honor as an officer required something tangible be done to justify the expenditure.

In early November a herd of lean cattle driven over the mountains arrived at Fort McIntosh. On November 9, 1778 the army headed out. The cattle and packhorses were in such poor and weakened condition they progressed only five or six miles per day. On November 19, 1778 they reached the Tuscarawas River near present day Bolivar, Ohio. McIntosh, in keeping with treaty provisions providing for a fortification to protect the Delaware, had intended to build a stockade in their capitol of Coshocton. Coshocton was a substantial distance from the army's location. Mitigating circumstances intervened. According to most accounts, a reckless and opportunistic Virginia militiaman murdered Chief White Eyes. When informed of the event, 60 Delaware Indians left the expedition in disgust, making the army's welcome in Coshocton dubious at best. The murder of White Eyes was one of many senseless, reckless and destabilizing acts perpetrated by misguided whites against the Native Americans during this period. These incidents incensed a virulent hatred for the intruding military and settlers. In any event, McIntosh found himself deprived of the Indian guides upon which he was dependent. There was nothing but hostile uncharted Indian Territory between his location and Detroit, and without guides he had no choice but to end the march.

Faced with the reality that the campaign would go no further in 1778, McIntosh decided he could at least build a stockade at their present location. He believed the stockade would be useful in launching a campaign against Detroit in the spring. He also rationalized that this stockade would satisfy the treaty pledge to build a fortification for protection of Delaware elderly, women and children as stipulated in the treaty. McIntosh also envisioned launching war parties during the winter along the Sandusky. The stockade would be named after the President of the Continental Congress and personal friend of McIntosh, Fort Laurens. The fort penetrated the farthest of any American fort west into what is now Ohio, causing a great deal of apprehension in Detroit. Although later derided by Brodhead in letters to General Washington, the fort took on significant strategic importance the following year in keeping Detroit off guard and totally surprised by campaigns conducted by General Sullivan up the Susquehanna and Colonel Brodhead up the Allegany. Brodhead maintained the fort under orders from General Washington until it was no longer needed as a decoy. The location of the fort was deemed useless by the Delaware since it was not remotely close to their capitol.

The fort was a relatively small enclosure taking in about an acre of land. High embankments of land were topped with pickets made of logs set upright and pointed at the top. McIntosh discovered during construction that he could not provision the entire army at the fort during the winter. If he could not provision the entire army as he had planned then incursions into Sandusky towns would not be possible. Moreover, the militia was signed up only to the end of the year and the loss of 800 men would substantially reduce the size of the army. He decided to return to Fort Pitt and leave a contingent force of 150 men from the 13<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment to be commanded by Colonel John Gibson, a seasoned frontiersman. Brodhead and the Pennsylvania 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment were garrisoned for the winter at Fort McIntosh.

Joseph Hancock would spend a very difficult winter lacking provisions, adequate clothing and shoes, but however winter would be far less harrowing for Joseph than those left to man Fort Laurens. The winter provisions at Fort McIntosh were only marginally better than Fort Laurens. However Fort McIntosh did not draw the attention of hostile Indians and the British, as was the case during the winter at Fort Laurens. The relative calm would have allowed hunting parties to assist in provisioning Fort McIntosh, which

was not possible at Fort Laurens. Whether Joseph and his comrades merely survived the winter or were able to be on active duty is not known. However, they were fit enough to relieve Colonel Gibson in the spring, which would indicate that they were physically much better off than their compatriots at Fort Laurens. Assuming the 8<sup>th</sup> Regiment was active during the winter, it can be reliably speculated that Brodhead would have begun to train and deploy his men for reconnaissance and interdiction of Indian activities as well as forming elite rangers activities that would subsequently be lead by Samuel Brady. Brodhead was a professional soldier and would keep his command as active as conditions permitted.

After returning to Fort Pitt McIntosh concluded that he was not up to the task of commanding the Western Department and requested General Washington to reassign him. Washington reluctantly agreed in the spring and sent McIntosh to the South where he was a successful commander. Colonel Brodhead replaced General McIntosh as commander of the Western Department with no change in grade. Although Brodhead would frequently bluster in letters to his peers that he was ready and waiting for the order from Washington to campaign against Detroit, Washington and the Continental Congress decided to take a more defensive posture and disrupt Indian activities rather than again risk large expenditures of men and material to attempt to reduce Detroit. Accordingly, sufficient funds and manpower were not forthcoming to support such an endeavour.

The presence of the Army was required to demonstrate territorial claims in future peace negotiations and hopefully provide some assurance to the settlers. The settlers were not appeased, and were not happy with the continued threat of Indian raids. They petitioned state government to respond with the use of militia, mostly emanating from Governor Jefferson of Virginia. Some militia expeditions were launched independent of the Western Department's command. A few were very successful but many ended in torturous losses of life. Had there been a more cohesive blending of State and Continental forces, the capture of Fort Detroit might have been possible but there was little or no coordination or cooperation. American forces never threatened Detroit during the Revolutionary War. Meanwhile the settlers became more annoyed with the Continental Army as time went on.

During the winter the difficulty of provisioning troops west of the Allegheny Mountains was exacerbated by the addition of two new forts. In particular, Fort Laurens did not have sufficient supplies to last the winter and required nearly impossible provisioning from the other forts. Hunting parties were stopped due to hostile Indians around the fort. It drew a lot of attention from the Wyandotte, Miami, and Mingo tribes that were not pleased with an American military presence on their lands. Moreover the British at Fort Detroit had also become alarmed.

When he left Fort Laurens, McIntosh promised to provide provisions. On January 21, 1779 Captain John Clark arrived with 15 regimental troops and the promised supplies. By this time the men at Fort Laurens were boiling and eating their shoes and searching just outside the fort for edible roots. Clothing was inadequate. Many of the men were unable to stand to defend themselves. Clark's arrival with food was just in time. He stayed two days and left. Three miles from Fort Laurens, Simon Girty and a band of Indians ambushed the detail. Girty was an embittered American who defected to the British. He spent some of his childhood as an Indian captive learning the language and warrior skills of his tribe. He often planned and led war parties against the Americans. In this case, he attacked Clark and his party with 17 Mingo Indians, resulting

in two dead, four wounded and one captured. Clark and the remaining men made it back to the fort and several days later left again for Fort Pitt. They returned successfully and reported to General McIntosh. Meanwhile the captive was taken to Detroit for interrogation. He informed his captors that Fort Laurens was not well provisioned, which encouraged a winter assault. Despite providing the requested information he was ritualistically staked and burned. Later his scalp was displayed prominently on a pole.

Girty returned to Fort Laurens in the middle of February 1779 with a much larger Indian force of approximately 200 Mingo and Miami. Gibson first became aware the attack was in progress when on February 23, 1779 he sent 18 men to the outskirts of the fort to fetch wood previously cut in preparation for the winter. Unknown to the detail there were Indians taking cover out of sight behind a mound. As the men approached the mound on the way to the woodpile the Indians attacked from two directions. The troops inside the fort watched helplessly. The distance was too far for effective use of muskets from the fort or to send reinforcements in time. The Indians killed and scalped all but two who were taken captive. Gibson managed to get a messenger through the Indian lines to McIntosh alerting him to the impending danger. In the letter he vowed to “defend the fort to the last extremity.”

The Indians laid siege to the fort. At night the Indians built fires and cleverly walked about the fires in such a fashion that it created an illusion. Counts from the fort reached an estimate of at least 800 Indians which was three or four times larger than the actual force. During the day the Indians would wave the scalps of the slain soldiers from a safe distance taunting the soldiers in the fort to come out and fight. Due to the shortage of provisions, Colonel Gibson cut the food ration to one-quarter pound of meat and flour a day. He sent another messenger who was also able to elude the Indians and reached Fort McIntosh on March 3, 1779 seeking immediate relief. It took two weeks for General McIntosh to gather enough troops to support a relief effort.

Colonel Gibson meanwhile, was confronted with few options and in desperate straits. An attack in force was considered, but ruled out based on the estimated strength of the Indian warriors. British Captain Bird, who had accompanied Simon Girty on the raid, offered Gibson and his men safe passage if he surrendered. Gibson refused. Bird then promised to withdraw if Gibson provided them with a barrel of flour and meat. Bird believed correctly that the garrison was down to its last provisions and would refuse the request. A refusal to provide the provisions would embolden the Indians to continue the siege. Gibson called their bluff even though they were down to their last few barrels and rolled out the requested provisions. The Indians were also very hungry, ate the food, lost interest in the raid, and went home.

On March 23, 1779 McIntosh appeared at the fort with a relief force of 300 regulars and 200 militiamen. The garrison was elated at the arrival of McIntosh’s troops with the desperately-needed food. In their excitement the troops at Fort Laurens fired a volley of gratitude. The packhorses panicked and headed off in all directions. Only half of the provisions were recovered and many horses were never found.

McIntosh stayed several days and returned to Fort Pitt taking Colonel Gibson and his men with him. He left major Vernon, Joseph Hancock and 100 men from the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania to garrison Fort Laurens. These men took the remains of the 18 men killed in action and placed them in a deep pit with fresh red meat. The meat attracted the wolves that had previously fed on these men and trapped them. To help satisfy the need

for revenge the wolves were shot and buried with the men. As the days wore on conditions at the fort would repeat what Colonel Gibson's men had experienced. Due to the lack of food, the men became so weak they could hardly stand to defend themselves.



## XIX Brodhead's Command and Campaign 1779 - 1781

General McIntosh transferred 700 men of which 300 were regulars to Colonel Brodhead in April 1779. Recognizing Brodhead's limits plus the lack of funds, and unbeknown to Brodhead, Washington and the Continental Congress planed no major operations during 1779 all but precluding any attempt to reduce Detroit. Washington contented himself with the appointment of Brodhead to succeed McIntosh based on these limited expectations.

Brodhead was a reliable old guard officer, and as was common among officers, was of aristocratic upbringing. Washington and most high-ranking officers had the conviction that there should be a proper distance between officers and men. Rank brought privilege. Moreover, being too close to the men was not conducive to command and discipline. Brodhead also had a high opinion of himself and, to a fault, was critical of officers at or above his station. His letters to General Washington and other officers, particularly in the commissary, were often critical and at times offensive. In his defense, his repeated and often stinging requests to the commissary were due to a continual necessity to properly equip, cloth, and provision his deprived and desperately suffering men. Brodhead was an experienced frontiersman and due to his contemporary experience under McIntosh, was more aware of the demanding requirements of the post better than any other potential commander for the Western Department.

To his credit, Brodhead was the most active of the frontier commanders during the War. He immediately implemented ranger operations, with the most skilled and admired under the direction of Samuel Brady heading an elite core of specially selected men for the more advanced operations. The interdiction and disruption of Indian raids became a primary objective of Brodhead's troops. Rangers also become integral to intelligence gathering deep into Indian Territory. Brodhead's tactical foresight in using his limited resources, although not sufficient to entirely stop the onslaught of Indian raids, was nonetheless very effective. Ongoing ranger operations became a hallmark of the Virginia and Pennsylvania regiments under Brodhead's command.

Brodhead had ambitions for his command and, notwithstanding an attack on Detroit, wished to at least execute a military campaign against the Native Americans. General Washington approved a highly secret plan for General Sullivan's large force to attack Seneca tribes marauding the settlers along the Shenandoah River. Brodhead was at first made part of a cooperative plan with General Sullivan. As a consequence, Brodhead wanted to consolidate his forces proposing the closure of Forts Laurens and McIntosh. Washington persuaded him otherwise. In addition, upon reflection, Washington changed his initial instructions for a cooperative endeavor in a letter dated April 21, 1779.

*"Since my last letter, and upon a further consideration of the subject, I have relinquished the idea of attempting a cooperation between the troops at Fort Pitt and the bodies moving from other quarters against the six nations [Seneca]. The difficulty of providing supplies in time, a want of satisfactory information of the routes and nature of the country up the Alleghany (and between that and the Indian Settlements.) and consequently the uncertainty of being able to cooperate to advantage and the hazard which the smaller party [Brodhead's expedition] might run, for want of a cooperation are principal motives*

*for declining of it. The danger to which the frontier would be exposed, by drawing off the troops from their present position, from the incursions of the more western tribes, is an additional though a less powerful reason. The post at Tuscarowas [Fort Laurens] is therefore to be preserved. If under a full consideration of circumstances it is judged a post of importance and can be maintained without turning too great a risk and the troops in general under your command, disposed in the manner best calculated to cover and protect the country on a defensive plan.*

*“As it is my wish however, as soon as it may be in our power to chastise the Western savages by an expedition into their country; you will employ yourself in the mean time in making preparation and forming magazines (of provisions) for the purpose. If the expedition against the six nations [Seneca] is successfully fully ended, a part of the troops employed in this, will probably be sent, in conjunction with those under you to carry on another that way.”*

With regard to Fort Laurens, Washington had provided instructions that were subsequently followed in an earlier letter dated March 22, 1779 that states the larger strategy:

*“Colo. Gibson is to be ordered to hold himself ready to join you with his force when matters are ripe for execution. But he is to keep his intended removal from Tuscarawas [Fort Laurens] a profound secret, and when he receives his orders to march, let it be as sudden as possible. Because whenever the evacuation of the post at Tuscarawas takes place, it will plainly discover that our designs are up the River, and not against Detroit by that Route.”*

In mid-May, Brodhead ordered Major Vernon at Fort Laurens to release 75 of 100 men to Fort Pitt, due to the severe deprivations they suffered. They were again foraging for roots and eating boiled deerskins. Many were in desperate condition, some men too weak to defend themselves. Although it is not known for sure, it is likely Joseph Hancock was sent back in this company of men since he was fit shortly after for extraordinary duty.

Brodhead continued to prepare for an expedition and stated in a letter to General Washington dated June 25, 1779 that he had obtained over 400 head of cattle and nearly 1000 barrels of flour. In the letter Brodhead reviews successful intelligence gathering and incursions against the Indians by rangers under the command of Captain Brady and Lieutenant Hardin. Brady intercepted a raiding party of Muncie's, killed many of them and relieved them of their plunder, horses, guns and two prisoners. Captain Brady's success was used to demonstrate that Colonel Brodhead was militarily capable, could penetrate deep into Indian territory, and would be reliable in carrying out a campaign against the Indians. At the end of the letter Brodhead states his readiness to conduct operations as follows: *“(If) I had your permission I conceive I could make a successful expedition against the Seneca's.”*

The Seneca Tribe was the largest of the Iroquois League of Six Nations, the most western of the Confederation, and highly skilled warriors. These were not the same

tribes Brodhead confronted at the outer fringes of the western frontier north of the Ohio River. The earliest and more populous frontier settlements were in western New York and Pennsylvania, along and east of the Allegany. These settlers successfully lobbied for the attention of Congress and General Washington with regard to their plight at the hands of the savages. Although Brodhead had his hands full with the tribes north of the Ohio River, he saw an opportunity to engage an enemy that had a larger share of Washington's and the Continental Congress's attention. Although a successful expedition up the Allegany would have an effect on the Seneca's raiding western Pennsylvania and New York, it would have virtually no effect on the Indian Tribes north of the Ohio River, which were marauding the settlers west of Fort Pitt. As previously stated, these two Indian nations were not of the same descent, did not speak the same basic language, and had little contact with each other. These were in fact two separate fronts.

Brodhead received his instructions from General Washington in a letter dated July 13, 1779:

*Yours of the 25<sup>th</sup> of June was delivered me yesterday. I inclose you a duplicate of mine of the 23d. which gave my consent to an expedition against the Mingo. I am glad to hear you had received a supply of provisions and only waited my concurrence to make an expedition against the Senecas. I hope by this time you are carrying it into execution.*

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*"P.S. It may be well for you to endeavour to open Correspondence with General Sullivan that your movements, if possible, may be serviceable to each other."*

Washington had not completely given up on a cooperative campaign. Finding volunteers willing to hazard the risk of carrying the correspondence requested by General Washington was problematic and not a mission Brodhead would have initiated. However, as will be discussed, Washington's request was fulfilled. In the meantime, on July 17, 1779 Brodhead optimistically issued a letter to the Lieutenants of the Militia in the surrounding counties stating:

*"His Excellency, the Commander in Chief, has at length given me a little latitude, and I am determined to strike a blow against one of the most Hostile nations, that in all Probability will effectually secure the tranquility of the Frontiers for years to come. But I have not Troops sufficient at once to carry on the expedition, and to support the different Posts which are necessary to be maintained. Therefore I beg, you will engage as many Volunteers for two or three Weeks as you possibly can. They shall be well treated, and if they please, paid and entitled to an equal share of the plunder that may be taken, which I apprehend will be very considerable. Some of the friendly Indians will assist us on this enterprise.*

*“I cannot conceive that any of my Publick Spirited Country men will hesitate a moment on this occasion, nor suffer a temporary emolument to be put in the scale of universally Benefit.”*

Greater troop strength was needed and by offering the reward of plunder a few men volunteered but most men did not enlist. They were dedicated to the protection of their own families and needed to make sure they were available to harvest their own crops.

Colonel Brodhead wrote General Washington on July 31, 1779, stating that he was honored with the instructions to commence an expedition up the Alleghany to attack Seneca Indian villages. He reviewed the status of Fort Armstrong at Kittanning, which Washington requested he build, and the evacuation of Fort Laurens. He indicated that he would begin his expedition early, August 7 or 8, 1779, due to the impending expirations of 200 army servicemen in September, the need to start before harvest to increase the likelihood of militia volunteers, and also destroy the Indian crops before they were harvested. Brodhead also stated that he expected Wyandotte's, Chippewa, Tawas, and Potawatomi Indians to join with the expedition, as well as the Delaware. Only the Delaware were on friendly terms with the Americans and were willing to provide scouts. The rest were apparently an exaggeration to impress Washington. It also may have been an attempt to sustain his bid for authorization to reduce Detroit. Although Brodhead had been very positive about provisions in his earlier communications with General Washington, in this letter he was concerned about flour in particular, and as usual, shoes for his men. Brodhead explains that it had been necessary to give some of the shoes to the Indians, presumably to gain their cooperation. The net affect was that regular army privates again would be deprived. With regard to cooperating with the Sullivan Campaign, Brodhead states:

*“It would give me great pleasure to co-operate with General Sullivan, but I shall be into the Seneca Towns a long time before he can receive an account of my movement, I shall, however, endeavor to inform him, if a Messenger can be hired to carry a letter”*

Likely due to the danger of the mission and the greater likelihood that two men could succeed, two messengers volunteered to carry an “Express” to General Sullivan; Thomas Williams and Joseph Hancock. General Sullivan was based in Newtown, New York just west of today's Owego. The express letter dated August 6, 1779 to General Sullivan states:

*“Dear General*

*“I have obtained leave from his Excellency, the Commander in Chief, to undertake an expedition against the Seneca Towns, on the waters of the Alleghany, & he has directed me to open a correspondence with you, in order that our movements might operate in favor of each other.*

*“I shall be very happy in such a correspondence (if it can be effected without too great a loss of Messengers,) & an opportunity of favoring your designs against the enemy, but fear this will not reach you in time to form an useful co-operation.*

*“I have everything in readiness, and am only waiting for the Garrison of Fort Lawrens to come in. If no unforeseen impediment happens I shall set out for Cannawago in three or four days and expect to reach it about the 20<sup>th</sup> Inst. I do not intend to stop there, but expect to proceed nearer to the route I am informed you are going and will endeavour to write you again.*

*“I have twelve Delaware warriors ready, and have the promise of a number more. The Cherokee chiefs have entered into Articles of confederation here and received from my hand the War Belt and Tomahawk.*

*“Should you have a little leisure you will greatly oblige me with a long letter, I have but little news. The Indians sometimes take a scalp from us, but my light parties which I dress & paint like Indians have retaliated in several instances.*

*“They have destroyed one whole party of Munceys except two and they went home wounded and quite naked.*

*“I think they are willing by this time to make peace, but I hope it will not be granted them until they are sufficiently drubbed for their past iniquities.”*

*“With the most perfect regard*

*“And esteem, I have the honor to be,*

*“Dear General,*

*“your most obed’t Servt,*

*DANIEL BRODHEAD*

*“Col. Commanding, W.D.”*

Joseph and Thomas left Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) on August 9, 1779. It is highly unlikely that they took a direct route. Between Pittsburgh and Newtown were the very Indians that both Sullivan and Brodhead planned to neutralize. Direct routes would have been unknown. On the other hand, both men took part on the march from Valley Forge in 1778, when Brodhead was ordered to interdict Indian raids on the Susquehanna. The 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment had maneuvered in the general area that Sullivan and his troops were based. It is likely that Joseph and Thomas reversed the route they had marched to Fort Pitt, covering over 300 miles-much of which was under constant harassment by Indian war parties. In addition, General Sullivan had begun his campaign July 16, 1779, requiring them catch up with the expedition as it headed west along the Susquehanna.

This was not an assignment for the inexperienced or timid. Both men were by now experienced frontiersmen. They would have been well equipped and clothed. Most importantly, they would have decent shoes to enable them to make the journey. It is interesting to speculate on the personal characteristics that would have prompted their interest in this perilous assignment. It surely included personal confidence, a desire for autonomy, an opportunity for adventure and a sense of duty. Their motivation may have been as simple as a way of obtaining new shoes and the uniforms that were always in short supply. They likely were not well informed of impending action, per military

custom, and in this specific case, by the close secrecy surrounding the expeditions. They were perhaps vaguely aware of Brodhead's military plans. Accordingly, it may have been an opportunity to maximize their least regret calculating what was required to reach General Sullivan as opposed to trusting Brodhead's ambitions to plunge into the unknown. They most certainly wanted to avoid hard labor building more forts in the hinterlands, as they had done with General McIntosh. Patriotism to the cause most certainly was a major factor. This was an opportunity to serve on a special mission that bestowed personal recognition not unlike the revered reputation of Captain Samuel Brady and his closest associates. Whatever the motivation, they were certainly wild at heart and willing to take a risk doing their part for a legendary regiment of extraordinary men.

Brodhead's expedition left August 11, 1779 and numbered over 600 men. This was the largest force he could put together and was far short of the number McIntosh had the previous year. Unless Washington provided additional troops from the main army, the reduction of Detroit was not possible during the summer of 1779. A few Delaware accompanied the expedition and were assigned to Captain Brady and Lieutenant Hardin, the scouting vanguard of the expedition. Provisions were initially transported by boat up the Allegany River to the big Mahoning River. The men marched along the riverbank with the cattle following behind under heavy guard. They left the river and headed due north on an Indian trail into the forest wilderness. The path was extremely difficult for a large army to march upon and they became vulnerable by being strung out a great distance. Fortunately the advance scouts covered this weakness. The army eventually returned to the Allegany at an old Indian town that was abandoned and there crossed the river. They headed for the mouth of Brokenstraw Creek where Brodhead planned to attack the Senecas at their village of Conewago near present day Warren, Ohio.

A few miles below Brokenstraw Creek, the scouting party observed thirty Seneca Warriors coming down the river in seven canoes. The opposing parties recognized each other at the same instant. The Seneca, underestimating the size of the scouting party, threw off their shirts in customary form for battle, and began to engage the enemy. Both sides took forest cover and began a sharp fusillade. A few minutes had elapsed when the other scouting party came over a hill, flanking the Indians and pouring fire on them. Brodhead heard the exchange of fire, secured the pack train and hurried forward with reinforcements. He was just in time to see the Seneca retreat. Five Indians were killed and several seriously wounded. They left guns, canoes, and their provisions behind. Three of Brodhead's men were slightly wounded but were able to continue the expedition. This was the only armed conflict during Brodhead's enterprise.

Brodhead arrived at Conewago to find the huts falling into decay. This was as far as the Delaware Indian scouts were knowledgeable of the territory. Brodhead pushed on for another twenty miles and came again in sight of the Allegany River. He discovered an Indian village eight miles long next to the riverbed. Before them were large and abundant fields of corn, squash, beans, and melons. Brodhead swiftly marched his troops down into the village but the inhabitants, although surprised, made a hasty disappearance. The Indians left behind not only their crops but also abandoned valuable deerskins and their possessions. After taking all the booty they could, the troops were ordered to burn the huts and cornfields, destroying a primary source of food and shelter for the coming winter. Although this caused the Seneca Tribe great immediate hardship and stopped their incursions into white settlements for a short period of time, it also served to inflame the Indian's vengeance towards the settlers. Colonel Brodhead thought the campaign a

great success and reviewed the expedition in a report to General Washington dated September 16, 1779.

*“...we found seven other Towns, consisting in the whole of one hundred and thirty Houses, some of which were large enough for the accommodation of three or four Indian families. The Troops remained on the ground three whole days destroying the Towns & Corn Fields. I never saw finer Corn altho’ it was planted much thicker than is common with our Farmers. The quantity of Corn and other vegetables destroyed at the several Towns, from the best accounts I can collect from the officers employed to destroy it, must certainly exceed five hundred acres which is the lowest estimate, and the plunder taken is estimated at 30 m. Dollars, I have directed a sale to be made of it for the benefit of the Troops.”*

Brodhead also relates in this letter the bravery and condition of his men as follows:

*“Too much praise cannot be given to both officers and soldiers of every Corps during the whole expedition, their perseverance and zeal during the whole march thro’ a Country too inaccessible to be described can scarcely be equaled in history. Notwithstanding many of them returned barefooted and naked they disdained to complain, and to my great mortification I have neither Shoes, Shirts, Blankets, Hats, Stockings nor leggings to relieve their necessities.”*

With regard to Joseph Hancock and Thomas Williams Brodhead had this to say in the body of this letter:

*“The two soldiers I sent Express to Genl. Sullivan are not yet returned, and I apprehend they have fallen into the Enemy’s hands.”*

Later in the P.S. of the letter he states:

*“The soldiers I sent express to Genl. Sullivan are this moment returned and I enclose a copy of his letter.”*

Although not known by name to General Washington, Joseph Hancock and Thomas Williams’ deed was. As stated in the pay record:

*Hancock, Joseph*  
**8 PENNSYLVANIA REG’T.**

**(REVOLUTIONARY WAR)**

**RECEIPT**

Rec’d Fort Pitt Augt 9<sup>th</sup> 1779 of Colo Brodhead fifty Dollars for the Expences of Thoms Williams & myself gone Express to Gen’l Sullivan.

his

*Joseph Hancock*  
mark

In a letter to Brodhead dated October 18, 1779, George Washington complimented Brodhead's success and referenced a General Order sent to all of his commanders and the Continental Congress, which is of the same date. It reads as follows:

*"The commander in Chief is happy in the opportunity of congratulating the Army on our further successes.*

*"By advices just received, Colonel Brodhead with the Continental troops under his command and a body of Militia and Volunteers has penetrated about one hundred and eighty miles into the Indian Country lying on the Allegany River, burnt 10 of the Muncy and Seneca towns in that quarter containing 165 houses, destroyed all their fields of corn, computed to comprehend 50 acres besides large quantities of vegetables, obliging the savages to flee before him with the greatest precipitation and to leave behind them many skins and other Articles of value. The only opposition the savages ventured to give our troops on this occasion was near Cuscushing. About 40 of their Warriors on their way to commit barbarities on our frontier settlers were met here by Lieutt. Hardin of the 8<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania regiment at the head of one of our advanced parties composed of 23 men, of which 8 were of our friends of the Delaware Nation, who immediately attacked the savages and put them to the route with the loss of five killed on the spot, and of all their action, they had divested themselves, and also of several arms. Two of our men and one of our Delaware friends were very slightly wounded in the action which was the only damage we sustained in the whole enterprise.*

*"The Activity, Perseverance and Firmness which marked the conduct of Colonel Brodhead and that of all the officers and men of every description in the expedition do them great honor, and their services fully intitle them to the thanks and to this testimonial of the General's acknowledgments."*

Brodhead was instructed by General Washington to distribute this acknowledgement of duty through normal procedures to the troops.

Joseph returned to his regiment, and would be stationed at Fort Pitt for the winter. Brodhead continued to have ambitions, with designs on reducing Detroit. In a letter to General Washington on October 9, 1779, Brodhead states that he has enough provisions to supply 1000 men for 3 months. Although his provisions were very likely overstated, he was implying he had sufficient resources for a much larger force than the regular army and was tempting Washington to authorize a move against Detroit. He also cites certain Indian raids that had again taken their toll on the settlements, in this instance, in Kentucky. Brodhead states: "It would have afforded me great pleasure to have destroyed those Indian settlements, which was quite practicable, but I considered your instructions, which direct me to act on the defensive only, until further orders." Brodhead then



importunes Washington by stating: “Should you decline ordering an expedition against Detroit, I can have almost any number of Volunteers to go against the Indian Towns, especially Virginia.”

In General Washington’s letter of October 18, 1779, he wisely responds to Brodhead’s over-ambitious request for military conquest.

*“With respect to an Expedition against Detroit; I cannot (at this time) direct it to be made, as the state of the force at present with You, is not sufficient to authorize the clearest hopes of success and indeed to insure it, (an because it is not in my power circumstanced as things are at this critical moment to say how far it may be practicable to afford sufficient aid) from hence. In any other view than that of a certainty of success I would not undertake the reduction of the post, as a miscarriage would be attended with many disagreeable consequences. However, as it is of great importance to reduce it, and I shall willingly attempt it, whenever circumstances will justify it, you will turn your (closest) attention to the subject, and make such preparations (and obtain such necessary information) as may be in your power without exciting (much) alarm as may facilitate the work whenever it is undertaken, (either this Winter when the lake is frozen which appears to me to be the only season) when an effectual blow can be struck or next Campaign.”*

Brodhead continued to lobby for a campaign against Detroit during the fall and early winter of 1779. General Washington responds again to Brodhead’s repeated pleas for authorization in a letter dated January 4, 1780, which reads as follows:

*“Persuaded that a winter expedition against Detroit would have great advantages over a summer one, and be much more certain of success, I regret that the situation of affairs does not permit us to undertake it. We cannot at present furnish either the men or the supplies necessary for it. From the estimate you make of the enemy’s force there, your garrison with all the aid you could derive from the Militia would not be equal to the attempt; especially as it must soon suffer so large a diminution, by the departure of men whose terms of service are expiring, and (even were it not too late in the season to march men such a distance in time) the same circumstance and the detachment we are making to South Carolina put it out of our power to supply the defect of your number from this quarter. We must therefore of necessity defer the prosecution of the enterprise to a more favorable opportunity, but I would not wish you to discontinue your inquiries and preparations as far as convenient; for it is an object of too great importance to be lost sight of.”*

General Washington again states essentially the same in a letter to Brodhead on March 14, 1780. Had Washington failed to accurately estimate Brodhead’s capability to execute a successful campaign against Detroit and ordered an attack, the results would have been catastrophic. Not only was Washington correct in assessing Brodhead’s ability to mount a successful campaign, but an unexpected, mission-crippling event occurred. The most severe winter in the memory of the oldest friendly Native Americans resulted

in as much as four feet of snow. Wild animals could not move or forage for food, and died in place. The snow began to fall during the Christmas Holidays and did not stop for months. It was continuously and exceedingly cold through March. Had Brodhead been authorized to commence a campaign and made a significant advance on Detroit, the snow would have prevented his return to quarters. Unless Detroit was completely reduced, the weather surely would have trapped him. The men, if they had anything, would have only tents and they always lacked sufficient clothing, shoes and blankets. They would have been unable to hunt. They would likely not have transported ample provisions to last the winter. Few if any would have been likely to survive these circumstances and thus would have coldly ended the military history of Joseph Hancock. Thanks to Washington, this was not the case. Due to the severity of the winter there were no Indian raids, interdiction operations were not necessary if even possible, and all hunkered down for the long winter. If Brodhead's claim to Washington of the extent of his provisions were even half true, it is likely the winter was much better than the previous winter.

Brodhead's increasingly tempestuous relationship with the local community, and the diminishing enthusiasm of the Commander in Chief for Brodhead's command (which was never high in the first place) resulted in his stormy relief in 1781 by order from General Washington. Fortunately, Joseph Hancock was discharged April 3, 1780, and would not be around for the bloody conclusion of Brodhead's command.

Although there is some indication that Joseph served longer than three and one half years, there is sufficient evidence, including his own pension application, to support this date of discharge. Further circumstantial evidence, his first marriage in 1781, supports his discharge date in that his marriage would only be possible if he were relieved of duty. Leaves of absence were seldom granted for officers much less the rank and file. In April 1780, Joseph was free to return to private life. The British surrender at Yorktown was still more than a year away. Exactly what he did for the next decade is unclear except for his marriage to Catherine Baltimore. He must have learned the skills of farming back home, so to speak. He reemerges in 1791, purchasing his first farm near Maysville, Kentucky. Perhaps the reason he stayed on the other side of the Ohio River is that the same settlements he previously defended were still under Indian attack, the most aggressive raids being lead by Tecumseh. He would again live to fight another day.

**XX**  
**Conclusion**  
**Joseph Hancock's Military Career**

The essential military necessity of having a standing army of stable, trained and relatively disciplined troops escaped the understanding of the general public not intimately familiar with soldiering during the American Revolutionary War. While citizens had a fond opinion of their state militias that were often excessively and incorrectly esteemed for their bravery and military significance during the war, the regulars, contrary to their valuable service, were looked upon as parasitic vagrants. When camped nearby, it was widely held they confiscated local foodstuffs, lived in relative comfort, and amused themselves during lengthy interludes between battles with games, and liquor. Nothing was further from the truth. The regulars were starving, suffering from exposure to the elements, improvised from the lack of clothes, blankets and tents, marching often without shoes and conscripted with no choice but to fight the enemy, which they did with conviction. The various state militias on the other hand were voluntary, temporary forces comprised of free men who could choose to fight the enemy at their pleasure. They were usually an unstable force. Furthermore, they were not willing to endure the hardships of the regular army. It was precisely due to the characteristic lack of military discipline and force stability that General Washington insisted upon and the Continental Congress approved a standing army. In the militia's defense, they were essential to military victory and participated in many key battles. Without them there would not have been the critical mass necessary to confront the British. In addition, a few state militias conducted military conquests independent of General Washington's Main Army that resulted in some successes. The salient point however is that no American (United States) soldier has ever returned home to more public contempt. Instead of receiving the well-earned respect they deserved in prevailing against the most powerful army assembled since the Roman Legions, they were dishonored.

The condition of these men when they returned home was deplorable. Privates were emaciated and due to the usual absence of decent clothing, often came home in rags. They were seldom paid on time and often owed arrearages for months. Their pay was in government script that depreciated rapidly. The Continental Congress had no taxing authority and therefore was dependent on state governments to provide pay. The states governments were grievously dilatory in paying their soldiers. Congress, recognizing the debt owed to these men, offered substitute incentives such as 100 acres of free land reserved specifically for veterans. However veterans were not informed where these lands were located and were never informed as to how to procure them. Destitute for money, veterans often had their government script and land grants essentially misappropriated by selling government IOU's and grants to speculators at highly discounted prices. Joseph Hancock appears to be a case in point. He did not locate on lands reserved for veterans obtaining 100 acres free and in fact bought his first frontier property in Kentucky. He was also escheated of pay by April 1, 1787 in the significant amount exceeding 82 pounds. The state apparently made little or no effort to locate Joseph and he must have not known the process, if there was one, to claim back pay. Towards the end of their lives, due to infirmities and disability, many veterans applied for a government pension, which again piqued the ire of the general public. J.P. Martin, private in the Continental Army had a few words to say regarding pensions:

*“The soldiers consider it cruel to be thus vilified, and it is cruel as the grave to any man, when he knows his own rectitude of conduct, to have his hard services not only debased and underrated, but scandalized and vilified. But the Revolutionary soldiers are not the only people that endure obloquy; others, as meritorious and perhaps more deserving than they, are forced to submit to ungenerous treatment.*

*“But if the old Revolutionary pensioners are really an eyesore, a grief of mind, to any and all men (and I know they are), let me tell them that if they will exercise a very little patience, a few years longer will put all of them beyond the power of troubling them, for they will soon be ‘where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.’*

The specter of public disdain towards veterans and personal concern for his reputation is reflected in Joseph Hancock’s pension application:

*“.... the following are his only reasons for not making earlier application for a pension that he always thought it would be a degradation of himself and tarnish his reputation as a soldier of the Revolution to burden the country with his support whilst he could by any exertion of his own support himself by his labor.”*

He received his pension of \$8.00 per month beginning August 25, 1828, which was paid until his death September 2, 1834 when he ceased troubling the country anymore.

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