

# NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

## *From Saratoga to Valley Forge: The Diary of Lt. Samuel Armstrong*

The following is a transcription of the diary of Lt. Samuel Armstrong of the Continental Army. The original manuscript, Mss C 1058, is in the New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. Manuscripts Curator Scott A. Bartley provided permission for publication.

One page contains a note indicating that "This Book is the remains of a journal, kept by the late Major Samuel Armstrong, an Officer in the Revolutionary War, who served in the 8th. Regt. Masss Infantry Continentals commanded by Colo. Mich'l. Jackson & Lt. Colonel John Brooks (late [Gvr] Brooks of Medford, Mass. also Adjutant Genl. of Masssts Militia in the [War] of 1812.)" The diary also contains the name George W. Armstrong with several street addresses, possibly in Boston. This is the G. W. A. whose notes regarding lost pages appear in several places in the text.

Samuel Armstrong became an ensign in the Eighth Massachusetts on January 1, 1777, and a second lieutenant on October 7, 1777. He was the regimental adjutant from June 1, 1778, to April 26, 1780, and paymaster from April 27, 1780, until June 1783, when he transferred to the Third Massachusetts and served until November 3, 1783. He died November 10, 1810. The diary begins July 17, 1777, and ends June 19, 1778. If he kept other diaries during his military service, they are not known to survive.<sup>1</sup>

For the time period covered by the diary, the Eighth Massachusetts was in Brigadier Ebenezer Learned's Brigade. This unit served in the relief of Fort Stanwix, the Battles of Saratoga, and then marched to Pennsylvania to aid Washington's army against Gen. Sir William Howe, who had twice defeated Washington in Pennsylvania and had occupied Philadelphia, then the capital of the United States.

<sup>1</sup> Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution* (rev. ed., 1914; reprint, Baltimore, 1973), 75.

With the exception of the page showing the order of battle at White Marsh, in December 1777, and some songs at the end, the entire diary has been transcribed. Brackets indicate letters and words that are uncertain or unreadable. All spelling remains as found in the original. Numerous sections were underlined in the original document, but this may have been added later and the underlining has been omitted here.

In 1776 the British first attempted to split the colonies by an offensive from Canada down the Lake Champlain-Hudson River corridor. This effort failed in large part due to Benedict Arnold's creation of a fleet on Lake Champlain. Although the fleet was lost in battle, Arnold delayed the British so long that Gen. Sir Guy Carleton decided to retire to Canada. In 1777 this strategy was renewed, with Gen. John Burgoyne leading the main column from Montreal to Albany as a secondary column, under Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger, advanced down the Mohawk River. General Howe in turn led an expedition by sea from New York that landed in Cecil County, Maryland, defeated Washington at Brandywine and Germantown, and held Philadelphia for nearly nine months. The best overall summary of that year of the war is John S. Pancake, *1777: Year of the Hangman* (1977).

For the campaign in New York, Hoffman Nickerson's *The Turning Point of the Revolution or Burgoyne in America* (1928) is outdated but still useful. More recent works include Rupert Furneaux, *The Battle of Saratoga* (1971); John Luzader, *Decision on the Hudson: The Saratoga Campaign of 1777* (1975); John R. Elting, *The Battles of Saratoga* (1977); and Max M. Mintz, *The Generals of Saratoga: John Burgoyne and Horatio Gates* (1990).

Howe's expedition to Maryland and Pennsylvania, the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, and the capture of Philadelphia are all covered in John Reed's *Campaign to Valley Forge, July 1, 1777 - December 19, 1777* (1965).

The encampment of Washington's army at Valley Forge has had a vast amount of coverage, but a comprehensive history has yet to be published. The best studies are John W. Jackson, *Valley Forge: Pinnacle of Courage* (1992) and John B. B. Trussell, Jr., *Birthplace of an Army: A Study of the Valley Forge Encampment* (1983). Unfortunately both of these works contain some of the myths that cannot be substantiated by the documents. Wayne Bodle's *The Seat of War: Civilians, Soldiers, and Society during the Valley Forge Winter* (forthcoming) will be a significant addition to the literature.

Armstrong's diary begins uneventfully in July 1777. He appears to be

responsible for moving baggage or supplies from Massachusetts to New York State. By August he is voyaging up the Mohawk River to help relieve Fort Stanwix and the next month joins the battle against Burgoyne's invading army.

*July 1777*

Stayed at Stebbens Tavern [ ] nights

Thursday morning the 17th. of July sit out from Stebbens's at Sunrise & travlled about twelve miles[.] Stopt about half a Mile to the Eastward of the Mountain & Cook'd provision. Sit out about two OClock to go thro the mount but one of our Waggon had broke the Axle-tree which detained us till Sun hour high when we got a Team the Western side of the Mount & made out to reach Gray's Tavern by Sun-Set; upon the road we met severall families coming from ye Hampshire Grants being drove off by the Indians and British Troops, leaving everything almost behind.<sup>2</sup>

Friday the 18th. After Dinner Sit out for Pease's Tavern in Branford<sup>3</sup> or Glases [?] Where we had Sent the Q<sup>c</sup>Master to press Waggon, unless he could make out otherwise, here we arrived about four O'Clock in the Afternoon, when I was sent out with the Q<sup>c</sup>M. to press Teams, & in about half an hour returned with the promise of two, which made the Number we wanted, with one the [La]nlord Pease had bought for to Assist us along.

Saturday morning The Teams did not come therefore I was sent off to find them & fetch 'em along, but one of our Genius's had as I suppos[ed] [b]een Bundling all Night & had not got the Snarls out of his head, for I catch'd his Girl Combing it as I entered the door (the fellow look'd as if he'd nev'r Seen me before & Quite forgot his promise he'd made the last Evening; besides that his Oxen were lame; the Cart did not belong to him, & more than that the Owner of the Cart said his Cart should not go) upon which I told him his Oxen & Cart Should Both go & if he was amind to go with them he might, if not one of the men Shoud drive them as farr as we wanted to go & he might come after them upon which he began to Scratch

<sup>2</sup> Hampshire Grants refers to the territory of Vermont, ownership of which was claimed by New York and New Hampshire.

<sup>3</sup> Blandford, Massachusetts.

his head and in went and Yoked up his Cattle & Come off with me, a few Rods from his house I left him & Sergt. Eaton, where I Sit out for our Quarters; took breakfast and was order'd off with four Teams and about 20 men to go forward while the Lt. brought the other two along. Sit out from Pease's about ten OClock this Morn[ing] and March'd about six miles & put up at a private house to Bait our Teams [to provide feed and drink] but could get nothing to Eat nor drink except Water, after baiting Sit out and went about four Miles further and put up at Spring's Tavern in Sandersfield<sup>4</sup> and in a Quarters of an hour's time, word came that one of the Carts was broke. when I Sent a Waggon and Yoke of Oxen back to bring along the Load, but it being too late we left the Stores & cart in the woods till the next morning.

Sunday Morning. Sit out with about 24 Men and three Teams[.] traveled away fast Leaving the Guard to take care of the Carts. Walked six miles and took breakfast at Brewer's Tavern in Tyringham, about 11 OC. Sit out Stop'd but at one house 'till we came into Great Barrington,<sup>5</sup> where we draw'd provisio[ns] and Cook'd it by Sun[se]t: We put up at one Mansfields Tavern near the Meetinghouse which was Nine miles from Brewer's.

July Monday 21st. draw'd provisions to make up 5 days with what we drew the Night before; here we had to find three Teams to relieve other three, here I left the Lieut. to provide teams. I march'd off with 24 Men to Guard three Teames that came on: about 10 OC. Sit out and march'd 8 miles to Kenyon's Tavern in Noble Town and Eat dinner of baked Pigg[.] Walked about 2 Mile and was Catch'd in the Rain, kept on a Mile further and put up at Capt. McKenster's Tavern [w]here we tarried all night.

Tuesday morning about 11 OClock left McKenst[er's] and march'd as far as Kinderhook mills,<sup>6</sup> here we put up.

Wednesday, march'd within two miles of the ferry and put up at a private house[.] this day we met great numbers of Militia going home which made the Entertainment very poor, besides but a very few houses upon the Road, Especialy of Entertainment.

1777. Thursday ye 24th of July Sit out and Mar[ch'd] about two miles & came to the Ferrey, where we waited with the Waggons 'till 10 OClock for

<sup>4</sup> Sandisfield, Massachusetts.

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts.

<sup>6</sup> Kinderhook, New York.

a Scow to cross with. Sent a Sergt. and six men to prepare Barracks and provisions, which he did—we marched to the Barrack where I tarried 'till Saturday Evening when I took Lodgings at Mr. Br[um][ey's] back of the Town.

*August 1777*

Tuesday, 8th. of August 1777 left Albany about four OClock in the Afternoon, march'd Nine Miles and put up about 10 OClock.<sup>7</sup>

N.B. G.W.A. Leaves are missing

*Editor's note: There are duplicate entries for the next few days. Apparently Armstrong went back on August 12 or after and made further notes.*

Wednesday Morning, it rained; which detain'd us till 9 OClock when we [Sit] out & Marched to Schen[asa]da<sup>8</sup> and got into Barracks about Noon, tarried here 'till Friday Morn'g when we Sit out and march'd Eleven miles and put up. Sit out Saturday morning the 12th. August 1777 and March'd as far as The Town of Palentine—Sit out Sunday Morn when I was ordered to the care of the Battoes,<sup>9</sup> this day we had to go as far as Fort Dayton on the Germain Flatts,<sup>10</sup> which was about 25 miles from the place where we Sit out; we went about 14 Miles and came to the Carr[y]ing place which was

<sup>7</sup> Major Henry Dearborn noted that Learned's Brigade marched this day for Fort Stanwix, which was besieged by Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger, who commanded a force of about 1,800 British, Germans, Tories, and Indians. St. Leger's forces had left Montreal on June 23 and advanced down the Mohawk River. This was the second part of Burgoyne's planned campaign to split the United States. Fort Stanwix was under siege from Aug. 2 to 22. A relief force of New York militia under Gen. Nicholas Herkimer was attacked at Oriskany by St. Leger on Aug. 6. During the fight the garrison of Fort Stanwix sallied out and looted St. Leger's camps. Herkimer lost about 70 killed and 75 wounded and the relief column withdrew. Heavy casualties among the Indians and the losses from their camps contributed to their decision to desert St. Leger, who was forced to give up the siege. Lloyd A. Brown and Howard H. Peckham, eds., *Revolutionary War Journals of Henry Dearborn, 1775-1783* (Chicago, 1939), 100-101; John Albert Scott, *Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany*, (Rome, N.Y., 1927); John Luzader, Louis Torres, and Orville W. Carroll, *Fort Stanwix: History, Historic Furnishing, and Historic Structures Reports* (Washington, 1976), 30-54; Howard H. Peckham, ed., *The Toll of Independence: Engagements and Battle Casualties of the American Revolution* (Chicago, 1974), 38.

<sup>8</sup> Schenectady.

<sup>9</sup> A bateau or batteau is a light river boat with a flat bottom. The length varied from 26 to 34 feet. Armstrong is now moving up the Mohawk.

<sup>10</sup> Fort Dayton was built in 1776 by Col. Elias Dayton. The present-day town of Herkimer stands on the site.

about a Mile in length which we Sit out from about 7 OC. in the Evening and Arrived at the flatts about 11 OClock which is about 64 Miles from Scheneckada and 80 Miles from Albany. Going up this river put one in mind of [ ] [Pleasure] for I thought it the most delightful of all places[.] going up [then] was [ ] Indian [Castles] which [must] draw attention from a curious mind[.] the [ ] or bank of the River is about [5 or 6] feet from the surface of the Water, and from thence a Quarter to a half mile it is as level as a floor, which yeild Wheat, Rye, Indian Corn, Oats Barley, Pease & [are] the greatest quantities I ever saw before in a place[.] The river was 8 or 10 feet deep in some places and others not more than one or two, [t]hat can use any other boats than Battoes—I was told by an Inhabitant of a Salt Spring and [of] another kind of grain which the Indians make use of.<sup>11</sup>

Wednesday 9th Arived at C[anonihida].<sup>12</sup>

Thursday 10th. tarried in Barracks.

Friday 11th. Sit out for fort Dayton and Lodged in Willigate.

Saturday 12th. march'd by the Indian Ca[stle] and lodged in Cognawogah<sup>13</sup> about a mile beyond Major F[un]days'.

Sunday 13th. Went to Breakfast at Santantannon, and Lodged in Wormwood's house in Connejoharry.<sup>14</sup>

Monday 14th. Arrived at Fort Dayton.

N.B. Some leaves are missing & lost G.W.A.<sup>15</sup>

Monday 18th. [found out] about one Butler an [Indn.] in the British Service (& son to the famous Colo. Butler who came to Fort Stanwics with St. Ledger) and pretended to come as a Flag [of truce] to the Inhabitants for to lay down their Arms and against them, and take up for them take away

<sup>11</sup> There were a number of villages of the Iroquois along the Mohawk. These had rough palisades around them and were commonly referred to as castles. The ground was very fertile for farming as Armstrong noted. Isabel Thompson Kelsay, *Joseph Brant, 1743-1807: Man of Two Worlds* (Syracuse, 1984), 46-47.

<sup>12</sup> This may have been Tiononderoga, an Indian village on the Mohawk River, and the barracks referred to the next day at nearby Fort Hunter. *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>13</sup> Caughnawaga.

<sup>14</sup> Canajoharie.

<sup>15</sup> On Aug. 16 the Battle of Bennington (Vermont) was fought. The Americans under John Stark decisively defeated a foraging expedition Burgoyne had sent out. This was Burgoyne's first serious check and the campaign's turning point. American losses were 30 killed and 50 wounded; they captured some 696 of the enemy and killed about 200. Peckham, *Toll*, 38; Max M. Mintz, *The Generals of Saratoga: John Burgoyne and Horatio Gates* (New Haven, 1990), 167-77; John R. Elting, *The Battles of Saratoga* (Monmouth Beach, N.J., 1977), 42-43; Rupert Furneaux, *The Battle of Saratoga* (New York, 1971), 114-32.

our arms &c or else they might depend there would be no Quarters given, but the Indians wou'd be [let] loose and kill Men, Women, and [Children]!<sup>16</sup>

Tuesday 19th. Went over the river and took Butler and his party, consisting of Twenty Indians and Regular Troops.

Wednesday 20th. A Court Martial was called (as Genl. Arnold arived Yesterday) for the trial of Butler: he was sentenced to die.<sup>17</sup>

Thursday 21st. There was a Gallows erected for the Execution of Butler, but he was reprieved, and we march'd over the river to join the Regt.

Friday 22d. Nothing Extraordinary

Saturday 23d. March'd about 12 miles & lay down in a meadow this night without tents

Sunday 24th. March'd at Gun firing [ ] made a Stop at old Fort Schuy[ler] march'd from thence to Fort Stanwix.<sup>18</sup>

Monday 25th. a Scout of 500 men were ordered out in order to go to Anida Lake<sup>19</sup> & Canada Crick—Return'd without any intelligen[ce] of the Enemy—

Tuesday 26th. Left Fort Stanwix in order to join Genl. Gates; embarked in Battoes, and got down as far [as] Old Ft. Shuyler.<sup>20</sup>

Wednesday 27th. Arived at Fort Dayton.

<sup>16</sup> Walter Butler, son of the notorious John Butler, leader of Tories and Indians, was captured while holding a meeting exhorting the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley to join the British. He was sentenced to hang on Aug. 20 but was reprieved and escaped in 1778. He continued to serve in operations against the patriots, most notably the Cherry Valley Massacre in November 1778, until he was killed in 1781. Richard L. Blanco, ed., *The American Revolution 1775-1783: An Encyclopedia* (2 vols., New York, 1993), 1:224-26; for a history of the Butlers and their operations, see Harold Swiggett, *War Out of Niagara: Walter Butler and the Tory Rangers* (New York, 1933).

<sup>17</sup> Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold had submitted his resignation to Congress on July 11, due to a disagreement over seniority. Word of the British invasion reached Congress the same day, as did a letter from Washington requesting that Arnold be ordered to help repel it. Congress shelved Arnold's resignation request and he hurried up to join the Northern Army. Willard Sterne Randall, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor* (New York, 1990), 334-44.

<sup>18</sup> Old Fort Schuyler had been built during the French and Indian War, near present-day Utica. Fort Stanwix, at the site of present-day Rome, was named for British Brig. Gen. John Stanwix. Work began in 1758 but it was not completed by the end of the French and Indian War. After the war it fell to ruins but was reconstructed in 1776-77 under the direction of Col. Elias Dayton. Its capture was necessary before St. Leger could advance down the Mohawk River to join Burgoyne. Luzader, Torres, and Carroll, *Fort Stanwix*, 8-18, 22-29.

<sup>19</sup> Oneida Lake.

<sup>20</sup> Horatio Gates had been commander in the Northern Department until early July 1777, when Congress replaced him with Philip Schuyler. Congress then reversed itself and Gates was back with the army on Aug. 19. Paul David Nelson, *General Horatio Gates: A Biography* (Baton Rouge, 1976), 75-112.

Thursday 28th. Left fort Dayton and Lodg'd in Conojaharry.  
 Friday 29th. Lodged at Major Fundays'.  
 Saturday 30th. Arrived at Schenachada.

*September 1777*

Monday July [*sic*] 1st: March'd to Lowd[e]n's Ferrey.<sup>21</sup>

**New York State**

N.B. Leaves are missing—

Monday 8 Septer. March'd from Loudons ferrey about one mile and waded thro' the River where it was (in some places) th[ree] feet deep, then March'd about Eight Miles further and Encamp[ed].<sup>22</sup>

Friday 12th. Marchd three or four Miles further and about 3 miles above Stillwater; This day I join'd Major Dearborn's Light Infantry with 1 Sergt 1 Corpl. and 14 Men.<sup>23</sup>

Saturday 13th. This day I was something [poorly] and Nothing Extraordinary happened.<sup>24</sup>

Sunday 14th I felt somewhat better and about Noon was Ordered out to Escort Genl. Arnold and Reconnoiter the Woods, we March'd about four Miles up the Road, when Colo. Morgan<sup>25</sup> (who had the Command) ordered us into the Wo[ods] thro' which we march'd as far as Sarat[oga] where I

<sup>21</sup> Armstrong apparently wrote July for September. Loudon's Ferry was built in 1755, five miles from the mouth of the Mohawk River. Dearborn noted that Arnold, with Learned's Brigade, arrived that day. Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 102-3.

<sup>22</sup> On Sept. 8 Gates began to move his army up to Stillwater on the west bank of the Hudson River and started to fortify Bemis Heights on Sept. 12. Elting, *Battles*, 48; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 151; Nelson, *Gates*, 112-13.

<sup>23</sup> Henry Dearborn was major of the Third New Hampshire. He was appointed to command a force of 300 light infantry the day before to act in conjunction with Daniel Morgan's riflemen. He was later promoted to lieutenant colonel and served until March 1783. He was secretary of war from 1801 to 1809 and a major general from 1812 to 1815. Heitman, *Register*, 190; Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 104. The move was to Bemis Heights, a spur of hills through which ran the only road to Albany on the west bank of the Hudson, "the one Burgoyne would have to take." Mintz, *Generals*, 184-85.

<sup>24</sup> On Sept. 13-15, Burgoyne's force crossed to the west bank of the Hudson and camped on the heights of Saratoga. Elting, *Battles*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Morgan was colonel of the Eleventh Virginia and had been sent by Washington with a contingent of riflemen to help stop Burgoyne. Promoted to brigadier general in 1780, he was victorious over Tarleton at Cowpens in January 1781, and voted a gold medal by Congress. Heitman, *Register*, 401.



discovered the Enemy a head [of] us Paraded on a hill, ready to receive us but it being almost Sundown and but about two hundred of us, he thought no[t] proper to advance any further, but Counter-March'd and came home.<sup>26</sup>

Monday 15th. We were Alarmed by the firing of a [Gun] it being fired by an Indian at one of our own Centries, I went out but could not discover any.

Tuesday 16th: Nothing Extraordinary happened.

Wednesday 17th: We were Alarmed, by a moveme[nt] of the Enemy, four miles down the River from Sarratoga.

Thursday 18th Paraded by 5 in the Morning, the Whole Army and marched General Learnards & Poore's Brigades<sup>27</sup> with the Riffle and Light Infan[try] Battalions, about three miles from the Lines, where we were posted from Eight in the morning 'till half past five that Evening, These two Brigades composed Genl. Arnold's Division, of which he had the Command.<sup>28</sup>

*Margin note:* There was about 40 Prisoners took this Day—

Fryday 19th: about 12 OClock we were Alarm'd by the firing of two or three Musketts from the Enemies Scouts, upon which the Riffle and Light Infantry Battalions were Ordered off to Scour the Woods. We forwarded down to our Picquet Guard where we had no sooner got Sight of than we saw the Enemy surrounding them. The Riffle men being rather a head of us, the Enemy discovered them & gave them a Shot, upon which Riffle and Infantry rushed on & obliged them to Retreat: but a reinforcement soon came up to their assistance and obliged us to Retreat to get from their flank Guard which were coming down upon us. We retrea[ted] about 50 Rods upon a hill where we cou'd make a Stand, 'till a Reinforcement came, which soon came, We then began the Attack afresh; the Enemy it was suppos[ed] Rallied their whole force to sustain the attack of about Eight or Nine hundred Men, but their fire grew too heavy for us, but we stood our ground for Some time, when we gave them ground, then on turn they gave us ground & so on Alternately, till after Sun-Sit, when the main body of our

<sup>26</sup> Dearborn, apparently scouting in another area, "made No great Discoveries." Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 105.

<sup>27</sup> Ebenezer Learned of Massachusetts and Enoch Poor of New Hampshire.

<sup>28</sup> Burgoyne had been slowly moving south from Saratoga since Sept. 15. He decided not to attack along the road but to ascend Bemis Heights and outflank the American left wing. Mintz, *Generals*, 189; Elting, *Battles*, 50-51.

troops gave ground and the Enemies Main Body Ceased firing. These had not done before we came up with the Enemy's flank Guard And had a very Sharp fire with them 'till it grew So dark that we cou'd not discern our own men from the Enemies and thoug[ht] proper to quit the ground, but the Enemy first Quit firing. This Battle was the longest battle ever fought in America and though the fire never ceased from the time it began 'till after Sundown which was six or seven hours and all the Skirmish happened within the Circumference of 70 acres of Groun[d]<sup>29</sup>

Saturday 20th: This Day we were kept in all possible readiness in case of Attack. There came from Albany about 120 Indians and in the Afternoon the Riffle and Infantry Battalions were ordered out with them—but cou'd not discover anything of the Enemy.<sup>30</sup>

Sunday 21st: We were Alarmed by the firing of two Cannon. We Sent out Scouts to discover the meaning but could give none but Sent in word that the Enemy had Evacuated three Redoubts and were on a March, but they march'd but a little way & Encamped our Indians brought in two Tories & the scalp of another.<sup>31</sup>

Monday 22d: This morning the Indians brought in two Regulars.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This was the First Battle of Saratoga or Freeman's Farm. Burgoyne moved against the American position at Bemis Heights without knowledge of the ground as his scouts had been held within their lines. The British advance was driven back by the American left under Arnold, but Burgoyne rallied them and, with fresh troops, attacked again. The struggle surged back and forth for more than three hours and the Americans were eventually pushed in toward their center. As the day ended, the British held the field, but Gates still blocked Burgoyne's advance. Great courage and obstinate fighting were displayed by both sides, but Burgoyne lost 566 men to American losses of 313. Mintz, *Generals*, 178-97; Elting, *Battles*, 50-55; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 162-90; Peckham, *Toll*, 41. Dearborn called the action "one of the Greatest Battles that Ever was fought in Amarrca." Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 107.

<sup>30</sup> These were friendly Iroquois sent by Philip Schuyler. Dearborn mentioned that about 100 Oneidas arrived on Sept. 20; Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 107. Information from a deserter indicated an imminent attack, but instead the British began fortifying a two-mile line of defense. Mintz, *Generals*, 201; Elting, *Battles*, 55; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 191-93, 197-98.

<sup>31</sup> The celebration was a 13-gun salute in the American camp on news that Col. John Brown had captured several British posts and threatened Fort Ticonderoga, vital to Burgoyne's supply line from Canada. Mintz, *Generals*, 200.

<sup>32</sup> Burgoyne was ready for another attack but delayed when he received word that Gen. Henry Clinton planned to advance up the Hudson from New York. Unfortunately for Burgoyne, Clinton did not leave New York until Oct. 3. Although Clinton was successful in capturing two American forts, he was too late to help Burgoyne. Mintz, *Generals*, 203-5.

Tuesday 23d: This Afternoon the Indians brought in Eight Tories Prisoners. General Lincoln came & Joined with two or three Thousand troops.<sup>33</sup>

Wednesday 24th This morning the Indians brought in three Tories Prisoners, in the Afternoon We Sent out severall Scouting Parties but cou'd make no discoveries.

Thursday 25th: This Morning there happened a [S]kirmish betwixt the Enemy's and one of our Scouting parties in which We kill'd and wounded six and took one Prisoner.

Friday 26th: This Morning the Indians brought in three Hessian Prisoners and two of our Men that were taken Prisoners at Ticonderoga; and in the Afternoon they brought in one Tory & an Indian Scalp.

Saturday 27th. Nothing Extraordinary happened.

Sunday 28th: This morning we were Alarmed about 10 OClock, but nothing Extraordinary happened.

Monday 29th This day there was Eleven prisoners brought in, six of which were Hessians.

Tuesday 30th. This Day there was six Canadians brought in Prisoners.<sup>34</sup>

#### October 1777

October 1st: 1777 Wednesday—Nothing Extraordinary happened.

Thursday 2d. In the Evening our Scout brought in Twenty-four Prisoners at one time and six at another.

Friday 3d. This day two Hessians Deserted to our Camp.

Saturday 4th This Day we took two of the British Troops and One Tory.

Sunday 5th. This Day Nothing Extraordinary happened.

Monday 6th The Light Infantry & Rifle Battalions with about 400 other Troo[ps] were ordered off to take a Circle round the Enemies Encampment, Whil[st] our people Attack'd them in front of their lines (I supposed) to draw them out of their Lines and move their Army up in their front when

<sup>33</sup> Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln received the thanks of Congress for his leadership in this campaign. He surrendered the garrison at Charleston in 1780 and was secretary of war from 1781 to 1783. Heitman, *Register*, 351. See also David B. Mattern, *Benjamin Lincoln and the American Revolution* (Columbia, S.C., 1995).

<sup>34</sup> The Americans had been reinforced with "at Least 3,000 Militia" since the fight on Sept. 19. Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 107.

we were to give them Batt[alle] & Retreat, & in the mean time our party in their Rear to take possession of their Works and give it them in thir Rear!—but they declined.

Tuesday 7th This Afternoon the Enemy Marched out of their Lines and placed themselves just in the skirt of the Wood front of their Encampment. When orders came for the Rifle & Light Infantry Battalion[s] were Ordered out, we March'd about one Mile when we Discovered them and they us, they sent out their flank Guards, and by this tine we were Reinforc'd when we took our post in the Left Flank and when we had March'd out far Enough to the Left to flank their flank we tack'd abo[ut] and march'd towards them, which in a few moments [Caus'd] Warm Work, it being about half after four, & lasted 'till dark—in the first of this Skirmish the Enemy gained Ground considerable fast, but our Men having a Reinforcement sent, they soon made the Enemy give ground and kept them Retrating 'till they got into their Encampment, when seeing our people Still Pursuing they Still went on till our people give over pursuing, it being very dark in the woods—We took six, six pounders & two twelve Pounders, all brass, being all they had out. Horses and all compleat and fired Some them—several times upon them, one we took out of one of their Breast Works & also their Encampment, on their Right Wing, Tent, Camp-Equipage with all their Baggage, where their Kettles were boiling on the fires! Genl. Arnolds pushing on and forcing their Works, was wounded in the leg; when they were all gone Except here and there a Scatering one behind a Tree.<sup>35</sup>

Wednesday 8th Early this morning the Enemy Evacuated their works on

<sup>35</sup> Burgoyne waited 18 days after the action of Sept. 19 before he sent out a reconnaissance in force to determine if an assault on the American left could be successful. During this critical period his army grew weaker and Gates's stronger. Gates now had nearly a three-to-one superiority. The Americans attacked in three columns under Morgan, Learned, and Poor. The British line broke and rallied repeatedly. As the British retired, Arnold, who held no official command, dashed onto the field and led Learned's Brigade against the enemy center which retreated. He then led Poor's Brigade against British fortifications until he was wounded. The engagement, usually called the Battle of Bemis Heights, was a British disaster: Burgoyne lost over 600 men, 10 guns, and a key defensive position. The Americans lost about 30 killed and 100 wounded. Mintz, *Generals*, 205-13; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 222-42; Peckham, *Toll*, 42. After the fight on Sept. 19, Arnold had become embroiled in controversy with Gates, who stripped Arnold of his command on Oct. 1. Although Arnold had no official position, his personal leadership on this day was vital to the American victory, while Gates remained two miles from the fighting. The contributions of Gates and Arnold to the victory have been argued ever since the battle. Randall, *Arnold*, 358-68; Elting, *Battles*, 60-61; Nelson, *Gates*, 122-32; John F. Luzader, "The Arnold-Gates Controversy," *West Virginia History* 37 (1966), 75-84.

the Heights & betook themselves in those they had on the Rivers Bank, near the Bridges. We had a Large Body of Troops out all day and Nearly Surrounded them, with some Artilly we kept playing upon them all Day; We also had a Number of Small Scouting Parties Out, which kept picking every one off that was out of their Works.<sup>36</sup>

Thursday 9th. This Morning the Enemy retreated as far as Sarratoga, which is about Six Miles from their former Encampment & it being a Stormy, Rainy Day our Gen'l. did not think proper to follow them, also I suppose the want of Amunition, as I heard the Genl. Say that day. He did not know what to do for the want of it. Genl. Burg[oy]ne Sent in a Flagg, desiring Genl. Gates to take care of the Sick and wounded he left behind, as he lay under a Necessity of moving his Army, which consented to [be] take[n] as prisoners of War, being in Number about four Hundred—(We had about 40 or 50 Deserters come to our Camp this Morning.<sup>37</sup>

Fryday 10th. This Morning our whole Army Marched as far as Sarratoga, Excepting a few that was not well and Some to take care of the Baggage. We took Considerable of Provisions from the Enemy and three peices of Cannon.<sup>38</sup>

Saturday 11th: This Morning Orders came for the Baggage to follow up which it did—It was [ ] that the Enemy left their former Encampment in the utmost Confusion, as they left great Quantities of flour in the Road, besides 20 or 30 Battoes full in the River, also near a hundred Dead Horses they had kill'd either from want of Provender or else worked to death! This Day our people took about one Hundred Prisoners & had about the same Number Deserted. Also a Surgeon came to us, we th[rew] up Severall Breast works against the Enem[y].<sup>39</sup>

Sunday 12th: We opened two Batteries upon the Enemy and kept up a

<sup>36</sup> Burgoyne withdrew somewhat after the engagement of Oct. 7, as his position was indefensible. On Oct. 8 Gates ordered Lincoln to advance. Lincoln sent out three brigades, including Dearborn's infantry, that circled behind the British right. This left Burgoyne little choice but to withdraw even farther on Oct. 9. Mintz, *Generals*, 212; Elting, *Battles*, 63–64.

<sup>37</sup> Gates did not molest the British withdrawal. There was a heavy rain on Oct. 9 that meant the American superiority with rifles would be useless against British bayonets. Mintz, *Generals*, 214.

<sup>38</sup> Dearborn reported only one 12 pounder taken. Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 110.

<sup>39</sup> The Americans advanced this day under a heavy fog, ignorant of the British position. Fortunately several deserters told them they faced Burgoyne's entire force. The subsequent American withdrawal eliminated Burgoyne's last chance for a successful action. Mintz, *Generals*, 217–18; Elting, *Battles*, 65.

Cannonading all Day[.] We had a Number of Hessian Deserters come to us with their Wives!

Monday 13th: We Still kept up a Cannonading & a continuall firing of Small Arms—We took about 40 or 50 prisoners and had some Deserters come into our Camp.<sup>40</sup>

Tuesday 14th This day Genl. Burgoine desired a Sessation of Arms, which was granted, he also desired that an Officer of distinction might be sent as a flagg to him, when he sent one to Genl Gates to see upon what terms he wou'd Capitulate!!<sup>41</sup>

Wednesday 15th: This day three Deserters came to our Camp & brought News that they were determined to fight tho' they had but 3500 Troops on the Grounds—Also a Sessation of Arms continued—being poorly for [So]me time past, I Sit out to go down as far as the New City,<sup>42</sup> but could not reach more than 11 Miles & put up at Mr. Schuyle[rs] house, about one Mile from Still water.

Thursday 16th: This Morning I got up in a Waggon and Rode down as far as New City, where I arrived abo[ut] Eleven OC & cou'd find no house to put up at 'till I came to one Lt. Beams, where I Lodg'd this Night.

Friday 17th. Breakfasted at Mr. Beam's and Sit out to look for a place to board at, but cou'd find none 'till almost Sundown and then came to Mr. Van Orman's where I took Lodgings for me & my Waiter<sup>43</sup>—Genl.

<sup>40</sup> At a British council of war on Oct. 12, it was agreed that Burgoyne's force would retreat that night, abandoning artillery and baggage. But his army was pinned against the Hudson River with American forces on the opposite shore. Another council of war on Oct. 13 led to a unanimous vote for capitulation "upon honorable terms." Mintz, *Generals*, 219-20; Elting, *Battles*, 65.

<sup>41</sup> Gates initially demanded unconditional surrender, which greatly offended Burgoyne, who had requested the honors of war and passage of the surrendered army to Great Britain. Gates learned the same day that Clinton's fleet was sailing up the Hudson from Newburgh. He decided a quick surrender was essential and agreed to Burgoyne's conditions on Oct. 15. That night Burgoyne heard that Clinton had captured Esopus, now Kingston, on the Hudson and was probably at Albany. He wished to back out of his surrender agreement but was opposed by the majority of his senior officers. The surrender convention was finally signed only after Gates had sent Colonel Groaton to threaten an immediate attack. However Clinton's expedition never got beyond Esopus, 45 miles south of Albany, and was not a serious threat to the Americans at Saratoga. Nelson, *Gates*, 139-42; Mintz, *Generals*, 219-23; Elting, *Battles*, 65-67; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 261-62.

<sup>42</sup> New City was probably Newtown, now Halfmoon, New York.

<sup>43</sup> Each commissioned officer was allowed to take one soldier from the ranks as a waiter or personal servant, and "he is exempted from camp and other duty, except in time of action." James Thacher, *Military Journal during the American Revolutionary War* (Hartford, 1862), 60.

Burgoine marched out from Sarratoga.<sup>44</sup>

Saturday 18th This day Genl. Burgoine passed down toward Albany as a prisoner under the care of our Light Horse, upon the Western Side of the River & about 5 [of] the prisoners got down as far as half Moon, [ ] five Genls. came to New City.

An Acct. of Genl. Burgoin's Army & how they have been Destroy'd

Genl. Burgoin & Staff Officers

among whom was 4 Parliment men -----	12
British Prisoners by the capitulation -----	2442
Prisoners foreign troops -----	2190
Sent to Canada -----	1100
Prisoners of War before ye surrender -----	400
Sick & Wounded -----	598
Deserted -----	300
Kill'd between the 17th of Sept. & the 18th of October about -----	600
Lost at Benington -----	1220
Taken at Ticonderoga -----	413
Kill'd in Genl. Harkimmons Battle -----	300
Total -----	9575

N.B.

Brass Cannon Royals, Mortars, Implements & Stores -----	37
Stands of Arms -----	5000
Setts of Harnesses -----	400
Indians, Sutlers, Drivers, horses & etc. -----	
A number of Ammunition Waggons -----	

Sunday 19th: The British Prisoners went to Bennington and all our troops Excepting the guard to the prisoners went down towards the Southward Army.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Armstrong missed the surrender of 5,895 British and Germans to Gates. This decisive victory was indispensable to the American cause and convinced the French to recognize American independence and form an alliance with the United States. Mintz, *Generals*, 223-24; Furneaux, *Saratoga*, 261-73.

<sup>45</sup> Armstrong was incorrect. Troops from the Northern Army did not leave to join Washington until early November.

Monday 20th: This Evening the Brunswick Prisoners came to New-City on their Way to Boston as it was Reported.

Tuesday 21st: This day we had a Snow Storm and Nothing more Extraordinary happened.

Wednesday 22d. Thursday 23d. Friday 24th. Nothing Extraordinary happened

Saturday 25th: Rain.

Sunday 26th: Dull weather.

Monday 27th. Rain, hail and Snow.

Tuesday 28th. do. do. do.

Wednesday 29th. Some Rain.

Thursday 30th: Dull Weather.

Fryday 31. Dull Weather.

### *November 1777*

Saturday November 1st: This morning I Went down to Albany in a Waggon which was about 10 Miles from my Lodgings, but was very full of pain and Especially at my Stomach, so that I could hardly Walk about the City, took Waggon and came to my Lodgings where I arrived about six OClock.

Sunday November 2d: I found myself Something better than I was yesterday.

Monday 3d: I walked out as far as the New City, and got some Rhubarb. & Some drops to take.

Tuesday 4th: I took a large dose of Rhuba[rb] which work'd very gentle.

Wednesday 5th: This day was much better & free from pain.

Thursday 6th. We had Rain and Snow.

Friday 7th. Clear and Cold.

Saturday 8th. SomThing Cloudy.

Sunday 9th: Nothing Extraordinary happen[ed].

Monday 10th This day I Travilled as far as Albany City for to see our Pay Master, but it Rained so hard, that I did not return to ye New City that night.

Tuesday 11th: about 12 OClock I Sit out for New City and got there about Sundown.

Wednesday 12th: Sit out from New City about two OClock and walked abou[t] Seven Miles that Evening.



Thursday 13th: This Morning I walkd four Miles and Arrived in Albany, where I found a Boat just agoing down the River as far as the Fishkilln, In which I took Shipping and Sit out from Albany about 10 OC and [w]en[t] down about twenty Miles this Day 13th—<sup>46</sup>

Leaves are lost—

*Editor's note: The following undated entry below, probably for November 20, finds Armstrong in New Jersey.*

[Mr. Armstrong's Son to Mr. George Armstrong] near the Cross Roads (so called) and about 7 miles to the Eastward of Lamberton River,<sup>47</sup> [&] March'd on about Nine Miles & put up at a private House about two miles to the Westward of the River.

Friday 21st: Sit out this morning & march'd two Miles, then took Breakfast and marched Nine Miles and took Dinner and Marched seven Miles and put up in the Town of Ambull.<sup>48</sup>

Saturday 22d: March'd Six miles and cross'd Currells Ferrey;<sup>49</sup> from thence March[ed] six mile further and put up at Bennett's Tavern, where I cou'd get no Dinner 'till night & so tarried the[re] till next morning.

Sunday 23d: This morning my Waiter came up to me at Bennett's Tavern where I waited for him 'till Nine O'Clock and then Sit out & marche[d] about ten Miles, and took a Drink of Water and march'd about

<sup>46</sup> On Oct. 30, Washington wrote to Gates congratulating him on his victory. The letter was carried by Alexander Hamilton, who had been ordered to "point out, in the clearest and fullest manner to Genl. Gates, the absolute necessity that there is for detaching a very considerable part of the Army at present under his command to the reinforcement of this." Twenty regiments, including Armstrong's, were requested. Washington to Gates, Oct. 30, 1777, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington, 1931-44), 9:465-68. Hamilton met with great difficulties in persuading Gates to send the men requested. There were also delays due to lack of pay and supplies that caused a mutiny. Hamilton to Washington, Nov. 2, 10, 12, 15, 1777, Jared Sparks, ed., *Correspondence of the American Revolution; Being Letters of Eminent Men to George Washington* (4 vols., Boston, 1853), 2:24-30, 32-38, 41-42. The preceding months' actions between Howe's and Washington's armies, including the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, are well presented in John F. Reed, *Campaign to Valley Forge: July 1, 1777-December 19, 1777* (1965; reprint, Philadelphia, 1980).

<sup>47</sup> Probably the Lamatunk or Allamatuck, which runs near the border of Morris and Somerset counties, New Jersey.

<sup>48</sup> Amwell in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

<sup>49</sup> Coryell's Ferry crossed the Delaware between present-day New Hope, Pennsylvania, and Lambertville, New Jersey.

two more and took Dinner by four in the Afterno[on] and by sun-down I reach'd the Camp.<sup>50</sup>

*Margin Note:* Our Camp is now at White-Marsh, about 12 Miles from Philadelphia.<sup>51</sup>

Monday 24th: Nothing Extraordinary happend.

Tuesday 25th: Wednesday 26th: Thursday 27th: Nothing Extraordinary.

Friday 28th: This day we had betwixt Twenty and Thirty Prisoners brought in to Camp—12 Miles from Philad.

Saturday 29th. Sunday 30th: Nothing Remarkable.

### *December 1777*

Monday December 1st: 1777. Camp[.] This day was brought into Camp about Twenty Prisoners—12 Miles from Philad.

Tuesday 2d. Nothing Extraordinary happen'd.

Wednesday 3d: This morning by five OClock the Whole Army was Ordered to form the Lines of Battle.<sup>52</sup>

Thursday 4th: Nothing Extraordinary happened.

The Order of Battle—to be agreeable to the above Plan Morgan's Rifle Corps is to form on the Left wing: the Maryland militia and Webbs Regt. on the Right. (who are to act in Detachment and not in Solid or Corporral Bodies) are to Scurmish with and harrass the Enemy as much as possible taking special care to gain their flanks—Blands & Bailers Regt of Light Dragoons are to be annexed with the Right Wing & by small detachments

<sup>50</sup> Learned's Brigade arrived at Washington's camp on Nov. 21. Washington to Henry Laurens, Nov. 23, 1777, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:101.

<sup>51</sup> Washington's army had camped at White Marsh in what is now Montgomery County on Nov. 2. This was a strong position on three hills, connected by ridges. Reed, *Campaign*, 363. The story of this six-week encampment is told in John W. Jackson, *Whitemarsh 1777: Impregnable Stronghold* (Fort Washington, Pa., 1984).

<sup>52</sup> At a council of war this day, Washington asked his generals their opinions on the advisability of a winter campaign and calling out "a considerable body of Militia" for an attack on British-held Philadelphia. On Nov. 24, this had been considered by Washington's generals, who advised against an attack. However Congress appointed a three-man committee that arrived at White Marsh on Dec. 3 to meet with Washington and urge a winter campaign. For the Dec. 3 query, all 21 of the opinions Washington received were against attacking Philadelphia. These are found in Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Defences of Philadelphia in 1777* (1897; reprint, New York, 1971), 244-95. For several days Washington had been receiving reports that the British were planning to advance against him. The American army was now well fortified after a month in the same camp. Reed, *Campaign*, 369-71.

to watch the Enemies Motions and give Intelligence; Moylands and Sheldons, are to act in the same manner on the Left—the Park of Artillery to be Divided in the Rear of the front Line——<sup>53</sup>

Friday 5th: This Morning by 4 OClock we were Alarm'd by a movement of the Enemy from Philadelphia to within four Miles of our Camp. When we form'd the Line Expecting an Attack: here we tarried 'till after Dark and then went to our Encampment.<sup>54</sup>

Saturday 6th: This morning I was very Poorly with the Rheumatism and Ear-ach by the reason of standing in the Cold all ye Day before but turned out with the Rest by five in the Morning, where we tarried 'till Sun-sit and then Encamp'd.

Sunday 7th: This morning I was much better of my cold—Last Night the Enemy Moved upon our left Wing & continued their Movement 'till afternoon in which time our Guards & Scouts was skirmishing—Our Guards that were Composed of Militia from Pennsylvania left their Posts, but were sent back again by sun-down to take their Respective Posts.<sup>55</sup>

Monday 8th. Last Evening the Whole Army was Ordered to build fires a little below their Alarm-post & there to Encamp. This Morning we [per]cieved the Enemy had moved more upon our left & it seem'd by their Movement as if they intend to Attack Our Left Wing, but Colo. Morgan,

<sup>53</sup> A sketch similar to the two diagrams shown opposite page 138 in volume ten of the *Writings of Washington* is included. One difference is that the Maryland Militia is shown on the right flank and the Pennsylvania Militia on the left, the opposite of the published versions. Armstrong also shows Glover's Brigade in reserve and the North Carolina Brigade in the middle of the front line, which is how they appear in the first diagram of the published versions. Armstrong also indicates artillery between each brigade in the front line, the park of artillery in two sections, between the first and second lines as well as artillery on each flank of the reserve brigade. The location of the artillery is not shown on either of the other diagrams.

<sup>54</sup> General Howe marched out of Philadelphia the night of Dec. 4 and approached Washington's lines on Dec. 5. The Continental Army was well entrenched and Howe decided not to risk an assault. He marched back into Philadelphia on Dec. 8. Washington described the events in detail to the president of Congress. Washington to H. Laurens, Dec. 10, 1777, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:142-45. On Dec. 5, some 600 Pennsylvania Militia under General James Irvine skirmished with the British advance posts on the American right. Casualties were light but the Americans were driven back and Irvine wounded and taken prisoner. Reed, *Campaign*, 374; Jackson, *Whitemarsh*, 33-38.

<sup>55</sup> The British observed the Americans reinforcing their right wing and attempted to surprise the American left. Their march began at 1:00 a.m. on Dec. 7 but failed to surprise the Americans. Harry Miller Lydenberg, ed., *Archibald Robertson: His Diaries and Sketches in America, 1762-1780* (1930; reprint, New York, 1971), 160; Jackson, *Whitemarsh*, 38-42.

with his Party was skirmishing with them pretty warmly which seem'd to deter them.<sup>56</sup>

Tuesday 9th: Last Night the Enemy left the Ground and fled to Philadel'a. Undiscovered by our Scouts, 'till some time after, when it was too late to pursue them with our Army.

Wednesday 10th. Nothing Extraordinary happened—We had Orders to be in Readiness for a March and Orders Came.

De[cr.] Thursday 11th: 1777, This Morning the Whole Army was Paraded by four O'Ck. in order for a March, but did not start 'till Sun-rise, for the School Kiln River near Philadelphia, but had a bridge to Pass over, which, when we Came to the Enemy and our Advanced Guards met and Skirmished some, 'till they drove them; (they being the Maryland Militia) and after they had Retreated the Enemy cut down the Bridge that obstructed our way, but we Sent our Scouting parties, which brought in some prisoners and about two OClock we Retreated back two Miles, and about four OClock we took another Road & marched two Miles and there Encamped.<sup>57</sup>

Friday 12th: This Afternoon about four Oloc. [form'd] and began our march about five 'OClock and march'd three miles and Cross'd the Skool kiln ferrey, from thence march[ed] one Mile & Encamp'd.<sup>58</sup>

Saturday 13th: This day One man was kill'd and One Wounded so bad

<sup>56</sup> This action occurred on Dec. 7 and is called the Battle of Edge Hill. Colonel Daniel Morgan advanced his riflemen on the American left while the Maryland Militia moved forward in the center. Robertson stated Morgan was "immediately Drove off with a good deal of Loss" but admitted about 43 British casualties. Lydenberg, *Robertson*, 160; Jackson, *Whitemarsh*, 42-47. On Dec. 8, Washington's General Orders gave "his warmest thanks to Col. Morgan, and the officers and men of his intrepid corps, for their gallant behaviour in the several skirmishes with the enemy yesterday." Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:140. Reed, *Campaign*, 375-76. Total American casualties for the encounter were about 38 killed, 40 wounded, and 17 captured. Peckham, *Toll*, 45.

<sup>57</sup> Lord Cornwallis was out with a foraging party and encountered the Pennsylvania Militia under Gen. James Potter. John Laurens to Henry Laurens, Dec. 23, 1777, William Gilmore Simms, ed., *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the Years 1777-8* (1867; reprint, New York, 1969), 95. Washington felt that if the army had arrived at the crossing an hour earlier, "we should have given his Lordship a fortunate stroke or obliged him to have returned. . . ." Washington to H. Laurens, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:156-7. The militia lost about 6 killed, 20 wounded, and 20 captured, Peckham, *Toll*, 45.

<sup>58</sup> The crossing at Swedes Ford was on two bridges. These were an "ancient bridge, an infamous construction, which in many parts obliged the men to march by Indian file . . . and a bridge of waggons made over the Swedes Ford, but fence-rails from necessity being substituted to plank, and furnishing a very unstable footing, this last served to cross a trifling number of troops." J. Laurens to H. Laurens, Dec. 23, 1777, Simms, *Army Correspondence*, 96-97. From Dec. 12 until the march to Valley Forge on Dec. 19, the army camped at the Gulph in what is now Montgomery County.

his life is Dispaired of, which is happened by the falling of Trees.

Sunday 14th: Nothing more troublesome than the Smoke, & Nothing more Extraordinary than our receiving a Gill of Wiskey pr. man, Which we have been deprived of for a Week or more!<sup>59</sup>

*Margin note beside the entries for the 13th and 14th:* Encamp'd at this time in Uper M[err]y<sup>60</sup>

Monday 15th: Nothing extraordinary happened 'till Evening, for this Evening I Supp'd on a Couple of good fowls & a Brothe made of the same.

Tuesday 16th. We heard the Enemies Light horse was within four Miles of our Encampmt. and Rob'd a woman of £70—We had a great deal of rain upon which account we had our Baggage sent for.<sup>61</sup>

Wednesday 17th. Nothing Extraordinary happen[ed.] Somthing Rainey which deter'[d] our Marching.<sup>62</sup>

Thursday 18th. Thick Clouday Weather. We had neither Bread nor meat 'till just before night when we had some fresh Beef, without any Bread or flour, The Beef wou'd have Answer'd to have made Minced Pis if it cou'd been made tender Enough, but it seem'd Mr. Commissary did not intend that we Shou'd keep a Day of rejoicing—but however we Sent out a Scout for some fowls and by Night he Return'd with one Dozn: we distributed five of them among our fellow sufferers three we Roasted two we boil'd and Borrowed a few Potatoes[.] upon these we Supp'd without any Bread or anything Stronger than Water to drink!<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> A gill is a quarter pint.

<sup>60</sup> Probably Upper Merion.

<sup>61</sup> The men had been without their tents until they were ordered up on this date. Reed, *Campaign*, 392.

<sup>62</sup> This day Washington announced plans to go into winter quarters in the area. He thanked the troops for their fortitude and patience and held out the hope of improvements. General Orders, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:167-68. Why he decided on Valley Forge to spend the winter has recently been examined in two thoughtful articles: Benjamin H. Newcomb, "Washington's Generals and the Decision to Quarter at Valley Forge," *PMHB* 117 (1993), 309-29 and Wayne Bodle, "Generals and 'Gentlemen': Pennsylvania Politics and the Decision for Valley Forge," *Pennsylvania History* 62 (1995), 59-89. Although Washington never expressed his reasons, a good defensive position, political pressure, the ability to check British foraging parties and disaffected citizens, and protection for hospitals and supplies further inland were all factors.

<sup>63</sup> On Nov. 1, Congress had set Dec. 18 as a day "for solemn thanksgiving and praise" in gratitude for the "most signal success"—the victory at Saratoga. Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (34 vols., Washington, 1904-37), 2:854-55. Unfortunately there were severe food shortages among the troops. Dearborn wrote "all we have to be thankful for is that we are alive & not in the Grave." Brown and Peckham, *Journals of Henry Dearborn*, 118.

Friday ye 19th. The Sun Shone out this morning being the first time I had seen it for Seven days, which seem'd to put new Life into every thing— We took the Remains of two Days Allowance of Beef, being a Shin and two fowls we had left, of these we made a broth upon which we Breakfasted with a half a loaf of Bread we Begg'd and bought, of which we Shoud have had made a tollerable Breakfast, if there had been Enough!! By ten OClock we [ ] to march to a place Call'd Valley Forge being about five or six miles— and about Eleven oCK we Sit out, but did not arive there 'till after Sun Sit. During this march we had nothing to Eat nor to drink, but when we arrived, our Boy went to work to Bake Bread and of this we Eat like Insatiate Monsters 'till they had made some Lilley P.<sup>64</sup> of which we eat 'till our Guts began to Ake when we thought it was time to quit and lay down to sleep.<sup>65</sup>

### Valley Forge

Saturday 20th. Decr.—This day we draw'd some provisions, but when it came to Camp, there was a Committee appointed to Examine the meat, and Judged it not Wholesome for to Eat. Report was made to the Genl. who brought the Commissary to account, but he plead off and the Genl. Ordered him to deliver out Salt Provisions as much as three Barrells to a Brigade, which turned out 1/2 a pound to a Man; with this the men seem'd a little Contented, & indeed Men never bore up with such bad Usage before, with so little Mutiny, for I believe it gratified them in a great measure to think that the Officers Endured the same and indeed there was more mutiny among the Officers than among the men.

*Margin note:* The Commissary tells the men that he shall have some fine beef and flour in two days.

Sunday 21st.—The Men not having their last Allowance of Provisions Regularly vizt. they draw'd their flour one day and their meat they did not get for 36 hours after, and not only that, but when they Received it, they

<sup>64</sup> Possibly a pie made from the jelly of the gillyflower, a clove scented pink or carnation. Karen Hess, *Martha Washington's Book of Cookery* (New York, 1981), 268.

<sup>65</sup> Despite the amount of material written on Valley Forge, there is no thorough objective history readily available. The best study is the unpublished three-volume "Valley Forge Report," by Jacqueline Thibaut and Wayne Bodle, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, 1979-82. See also Bodle, "The Vortex of Small Fortunes: The Continental Army at Valley Forge, 1777-1778," Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1987, and his *The Seat of War: Civilians, Soldiers, and Society during the Valley Forge Winter*, forthcoming.

were so hungry that their flour did not Answer for the time they draw'd it for, and they began to Grumble again for want of Bread & the Carrin Beef they draw'd did Answer to make Broth of, and indeed there was Scarcely any thing more than bones.<sup>66</sup>

Decr. 1777

Monday 22d.—Nothing Extraordinary happ[e]n'd] This evening about 10 OC. Orders came for a Detachment out of the left Wing of every Brigade—C1-S2-S3-C3<sup>67</sup>-50 Privates to receive their Orders at Genl Green's Qrs. and about 12 O'C. we march'd from thence to Join Genl. P[otters] and Colo. Morgan's Parties, Where we arrived by three in the morning.<sup>68</sup>

*Margin Note:* Pleasant Pilgrims day

Tuesday 23d: This morning, (being without Provision, all the day before) we drew two days Allowance of flour but could get no meat, and as soon as we had baked it into Cakes, we march'd for Springfield, within a mile & an half of the Enemy, here Stay'd 'till night when we kill'd Some Sheep & went to broiling in on the Coals & Eating it without any Salt, about 7 OC. we moved all but the Pickett back about 1/2 mile, and Lodged in Mr. Lewis' house.

Wednesday 24th. This morning we were Alarmed by the firing of the Enemy upon a Scouting party out of the militia and presently there came a man runing to us & told us that the Enemy had broke one party & was advancing, which put us upon our guard, but we Stood, Paraded sometime & our Centries Stood their ground when I was ordered out on a Scout, but could perceive no movements among the Enemy nor received any Molestations from them, but the fire of one of their Centinels—We had nothing to Eat 'till night when we went to Springfield Meeting house.<sup>69</sup>

Thursday 25th: Christmas Day. We was without provisions therefore I

<sup>66</sup> Food shortages were so severe that "a dangerous mutiny" the night of Dec. 21 "with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers." Without immediate supplies Washington stated the army must "Starve, dissolve, or disperse." Washington to H. Laurens, Dec. 23, 1777, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:192-93.

<sup>67</sup> One captain, two subalterns, three sergeants, and three corporals.

<sup>68</sup> The British had marched out of Philadelphia with about 8,000 men to the Darby area on Dec. 22 for a foraging expedition. Due to the food shortage all Washington was able to do was send out small parties to watch and harass the enemy. *Ibid.*, 10:193.

<sup>69</sup> In Springfield Township, now in Delaware County.

was sent out to procure some, but could not get Enough 'till three or four in the afternoon, when I got [49 wt.] of Salt Beef & 110 wt. of fresh Beef and two hundred & a half of flower and as soon as I returned, I was call'd out to go upon Scout & did not return 'till about 10 OC. in the Evening. This was my Christmas frolick.<sup>70</sup>

Friday 26th. This morning I was sent out after Provisions and returned by 10 OC. with a Bullock, about 4[00]. This afternoon we took a man Coming out from the Enemy that had been into Philadelphia to [Cimisting]. This Evening we march'd about a mile from the Meeting House.<sup>71</sup>

Saturday 27th. Last Evening it rained all night which Contributed to our fatigues. This morning we march'd to the Meetinghouse & from thence the whole Except Invalids marched down to the lines but I Stayed about, getting Provisions and by dark the party returned and Encamped in ye Same place as they did the night before. \*Major Hull joined us<sup>72</sup>

*Margin note:* \*[Got killd] war 1812

*Editors Note: Corner of page torn off and words are missing. The following entry appears to be that for December 28.*

[La]st night the Weather was [ ] [ ] [ni]ght before it Snowed [ ] [ ] [ ]nd all night [ ] [ ] night & Therefore [ ] [ ] [ ] closly to the House [ ] [ ] not; Suffer as the night before but Such times I never saw before!! for we could not get much Sleep at Night and Scarcely any time to Eat in the Day. The Majr Lodged out in the Snow last Night which seem'd to give me a little hopes of a Relief soon. This morning all Except Invalids was to march down to the Lines, but not finding the Enemy, they proceeded on to Darby and finding none there they Detached out Small parties of Thirty men, properly Officer'd to go down to the Ferrey, but o[ne] party being deceived by the Enemies Light Horse they got trapan'd, the whole was

<sup>70</sup> Washington had contemplated a surprise attack on Philadelphia while the British detachment was foraging in the Darby area. The shortage of food and clothing precluded this move. "Orders for a Move That Was Intended Against Philadelphia by Way of Surprise," Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:202-4.

<sup>71</sup> Washington also considered an attack on the British detachment at Darby but was advised it would be "exceeding hazardous, and the success doubtful." John Sullivan to Washington, Dec. 26, 1777, Sparks, *Correspondence of the American Revolution*, 2:64.

<sup>72</sup> William Hull was major of the Eighth Massachusetts. He served until June 1784. He was commissioned a brigadier general for the War of 1812 but was cashiered for failures in the field. Heitman, *Register*, 308.



taken Except two privates that made their Escape, the party Consisted of 3 Leiunt. 2 Sergt. 2 Corpl. & 80 privates.<sup>73</sup>

Monday 29th: This morning as the Enemy had gone into Philadelphia, we were ordered to march to our Grand Encamp't: Where we arrived about 4 O'Clock in the afternoon—This was a very cold day.

Tuesday 30th. This day we went to work on our Hutt, very cold day.<sup>74</sup>

Wednesday 31st: We continue to work on the Hutt. Cold Weather but pleasant.

### *January 1778*

Thursday begins the Year 1778.

Saturday 10th. Jan'y. This day we got our Hutt finished So as to move into it being ten days since we first began to work upon it, we Should have had it finished before if we could have got Stone & Timber handy, but was forced to fetch them near a mile—during this time I have heard nothing very Remarkable Except Genl. Smallwood's [p]arty taking a Vessell of the Enemies which was froze in the River in which they found Cloathing for four Regiments & [885] Stand of Arms This is something like Burgoining<sup>75</sup>—One Midship-man was taken by our light Horse, six Deserters came out with two Tories under Guard to our Camp and brought Intelligence that Genl. Howe gave orders for Nine Days provisions to be drawn & Cook'd in readiness, for Visit to Logg-Town, but has not yet appeared. This day there was a Man Hung here for Desertion and

<sup>73</sup> A dragoon pretended to be a "Rebel horseman." According to one account 29 men were taken. According to another it was 3 officers and 27 men. Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., *André's Journal* (2 vols., Boston, 1903), 1:134; Friedrich von Muenchhausen, *At General Howe's Side, 1776-1778: The Diary of General William Howe's Aide de Camp*, trans. Ernst Kipping, annot. Samuel Smith (Monmouth Beach, N.J., 1974), 46.

<sup>74</sup> On Dec. 18, Washington directed the erection of log huts. Armstrong's party was late in starting due to the detachment to Darby. One hut was to be shared by the officers of two companies so Armstrong lodged with seven other officers, if they were all present. General Orders, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:170-71.

<sup>75</sup> On Dec. 30, Gen. William Smallwood stationed with two brigades at Wilmington, Delaware, reported that a sloop with food supplies and an armed brig named *Symetry* were taken. The *Symetry* had over 1,000 stands of arms, ammunition, clothing for four regiments, and other welcome materials. This capture provoked squabbling between those at Valley Forge and those at Wilmington as to who was entitled to the spoils. Even at Wilmington, the commissioned officers tried to exclude staff officers from sharing the spoils, which provoked a threatened mass resignation by the medical personnel at Wilmington. Washington to H. Laurens, Jan. 1, 12, 1778; Washington to Smallwood, Jan. 13, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:245, 294-95, 302-3.

Carr[y]ing two Criminals away with him, he was a Roman Catholick & a very Ignorant fellow to look at, if one may Judge from appearance. he was allowed the priviledge of a Chaplin but as there was none of his persuasion they could not think it very Essential & at the time he [s]wung off.<sup>76</sup>

Sunday Morning 11th. It Snowed last night & continues to Snow this Mornng.

Monday 12th. Tuesday 13th.

Wednesday 14th. N.B. Some leaves are lost. G.W.A.

*Editor's note: The following partial entry may be for January 29.*

the Regt. Lendell was Corpl. of the Guard and was missing before they were suspected, 'till the Sentry began to call, which consequently required a Search to be made, but he was not to be found & coming to his tent inquiring of his wife where he was, She answered She did not know, but that She belived he had gone away for he had taken his Cloaths with him, & furthermore Said She heard him and some others talking about runing off, & that if She told of him, he would kill her; upon which there was Search made in the Regt. there only two missing. It seem'd that this was a premeditated Affair, betwixt near thirty of them, So that it was Reported, that there was a Subarl[tern] and his Piquett run off to the Enemy—It is reported that one Serjeant Roach commanded the runaway Party—the whole was old Country men & the one half near, was Deserters —There was severall parties sent out after them but cou'd hear nothing of them.<sup>77</sup>

Friday 30th: Nothing Extraordinary happened.

Saturday 31st: Rain: very muddy dirty Weather.

### *February 1778*

Sunday 1st: February, 1778,—This morning I mounted Guard and was destined for the Valley-Quaker meeting-house with Eighteen men One Sergt., One Corp'l. Nothing more Extraordinary happen[ed] than my being

<sup>76</sup> John Reily, a soldier in the Second Virginia, was convicted by a court-martial on Jan. 4. On Jan. 9 his execution was ordered for the next day. General Orders, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:273, 283. The role of the Irish in the Continental Army has recently been reviewed in a chapter titled "The Most Audacious Rascals Existing," by Charles Patrick Neimeyer, *America Goes to War: A Social History of the Continental Army* (New York, 1996), 27-43,

<sup>77</sup> Other references to this conspiracy have not been found. The army's return dated Jan. 24 lists a total of 29 deserters for the previous week. The return for Jan. 31 lists 45. Revolutionary War Muster Rolls, RG 93, National Archives, M246, roll 137.

supprised by the Grand Rounds, who come upon me before I could muster my Guard, but behaved so Gentlemen-like, that I being a Young hand at keeping Guard, that they advised rather than Reprimanded & left me to reflect on the bad Consequences of Negligence on Out posts.<sup>78</sup>

Monday 2d Nothing Extraordinary happen'd.

Tuesday 3d This morning it was Said there was 3 of our men deserted to the Enemy & that they were deserting from the Enemy very fast and also from our army.<sup>79</sup>

Wednesday 4th. Orders came out for Officers to take up Women that come out of Philadelphia what comed into Camp, if Suspected, and bring them to a trial; as it is supposed that they are sent out to insinuate those that have deserted the British Army & Inlisted into ours, that they will Receive a Pardon & Bounty to return, which Women come out under a pretence of bringing out many necessaries & also of carr[y]ing Provision in for their own support.<sup>80</sup>

Thursday 5th. Nothing Extraordinary.

Fryday 6th. Nothing Remarkable.

Saturday 7th. This morning there was two Men found dead in the Encampment of Genl. De Calb's Division, one with his head almost cut off, the other considerably bruised, but the latter came to life, Sun about two hours high, and was Escorted into our Guard house.<sup>81</sup>

Sunday 8th: Last Evening we had rain and this Morning Snow.

Monday 9th: It held on snowing 'till Midnight and cleared up; This day the Regulated prices came out, for which the articles is that are brought into

<sup>78</sup> The "Grand Rounds" refers to the officer of the day who had responsibility for inspecting all the guard posts.

<sup>79</sup> "There are daily Desertions from the two Armies, I don't know whether we or the Enemy have the most to brag of." Jedediah Huntington to Jabez Huntington, Feb. 20, 1778, "Correspondence of Jedediah Huntington," *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society* 20 (Hartford, 1916), 400.

<sup>80</sup> Washington ordered all officers "to exert their utmost endeavors to prevent such interviews in future by forbidding the soldiers under the severest penalties from having any communication with such persons and by ordering them when found in camp to be immediately turned out of it." General Orders, Feb. 4, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:421.

<sup>81</sup> Another report stated that "there was a man found in Frunt of our Encampment . . . pitched with his face into the mud dead Suposed to have ben in Licquor . . . there was Two more Murdered in the Camp . . . one of them Cut to peaces in a Shocking Mannor." Israel Angell, *Diary*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Camp will be Sold, Such as Vegetables, poltry &c.<sup>82</sup>

Tuesday 10th. This morning there w[ere] Nine Tories brought to the Grand Parade at Guard-Mounting; 5 or 6 of which was Sentenced to receive 200 or 250 Stripes & there was only one punished & 100 Lashes taken off the rest that were Sentenced to be whip'd were reprieved.<sup>83</sup>

Wednesday 11th. This afternoon it began to Snow and Snow'd 'till Midnight.—

Thursday 12th. This morning it began to rain very early and made it very bad walking & so wet in our hut, that we could keep no fire—the water being over Shoe[s] on the floor. about 12 OC. Capt. Cleaveland, Lieut Smith and myself went over the Schuykiln with Cap't. Eben'r Cleaveland,<sup>84</sup> Who was going home on Furlough, but the weather being so Stormy he tarried at [Mr. Ba]re's an old high Duchman's house.<sup>85</sup>

Friday 13th. Saturday 14th. Nothing Remarkable.

Sunday 15th. Raw cold & S[now].

Monday 16th. Snow, We Mustered.

Tuesday 17th. a very cold Day Lieut. Smith went o[ver] Schuykiln to board out whilst he recovered from the Small-Pox: for Seven or Eight Days

<sup>82</sup> On Jan. 21 the brigade commanders met to consider the opening of public markets for the troops. The three markets, at different locations adjacent to the camp, were soon opened two days a week each, on different days. General Orders, Jan. 21, Feb. 8, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:321, 436-37.

<sup>83</sup> The General Orders of Feb. 8 list eight civilians who were convicted by courts-martial for taking, or attempting to take, supplies into Philadelphia. Three were sentenced to receive 250 lashes and one to receive 200. This severe punishment was intended to deter other Pennsylvanians from trading with the British. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:434-36.

<sup>84</sup> Captains Ephraim and Ebenezer Cleaveland of the Eighth Massachusetts, Heitman, *Register*, 159-60.

<sup>85</sup> Although not indicated by Armstrong until later, there was great alarm by this time among higher ranking officers over the lack of provisions. Washington wrote William Buchanan, who was in charge of purchasing food for the Army: "The occasional deficiencies in the Article of Provisions . . . seem now on the point of resolving themselves into this fatal Crisis, total want and a dissolution of the Army." Washington to Buchanan, Feb. 7, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:427. General Varnum wrote: "the situation of the Camp is such that in all human probability the Army must soon dissolve. Many of the Troops are destitute of Meat and are several Days in Arrear. The Horses are dying for want of Forage. The Country in the Vicinity of Camp is exhausted." James M. Varnum to Nathanael Greene, Feb. 12, 1778, Richard K. Showman, Margaret Cobb, and Robert E. McCarthy, eds., *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene* (6 vols. to date, Chapel Hill, 1980), 2:280. To supply the army with food, and cut off supplies to the British, Greene was directed on a grand forage after "the Horses Cattle Sheep and Provender within Fifteen or Twenty miles west of the River Delaware between the Schuylkill and the Brandywine. . . ." Washington to Greene, Feb. 12, 1778, *ibid.*, 2:281.

back we have not received more than three or four Days Allowance of Meat which Occassioned much Desertion—We draw'd Yesterday, each Officer, one Quart of [Rum] & toDay, one Gill of Wiskey which I think created in me, an Appetite for to devour more provisions than I have dra[wn] these six days past—The fault has been Searched into and it seems to fall upon the Commissary Genl. who when the Debty [Deputy] Commiss[arie]s comes to him gives them a tickett to receive the meat applied for, he giving his Receipt for the Same, and when call'd to account Shows the Receipts Signed by the Depety Commissaries for the meat. But Coming to the Depety Commissy. ask him whether he has received his meat that he had receipted for, why not why? because the Butchers had none and upon the whole it seems Mr. Commissary Genl. had a notion to try whether [we] could not live two or three Days upon (which) a piece of paper about 4 by 6 Inches big!!<sup>86</sup>

Wednesday 18th: very Warm & pleasant.

Thursday 19th. Warm & rain—We hear that Yesterday a party of the Enemy came to Surprize a Pickett of Militia on the East Side of Schuykilm but they having intilligence of it drew off into the feilds and came upon the back of the Enemy, cut them off & took a Hundred [S]up[rised] Prisoners!<sup>87</sup>

Friday 20th: Nothing Remarkable—drizling Weather.

Saturday 21st: The Brigade Inoculated for the SmallPox—Pleasant Weather—A Remarkable instance happen'd to day—That a man Should appear on the Parade with his head pow[dered], an Old hatt, a Blankett Coat & an [ ] Shirt on, an Old pair of Boots on, [ ] pair of Breech[es] of a C[ ] & [Cooloured] [pip] [ ] [ ] a [ art] on [his] [ ope].

<sup>86</sup> On Feb. 16, Washington wrote: "The distress of this Army for want of provisions is perhaps beyond anything you can conceive." Washington to Smallwood, Feb. 16, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:467. On Feb. 17 he reported that: "The present situation of the army is the most melancholy that can be conceived. . . . A prospect now opens of absolute want such as will make it impossible to keep the army much longer from dissolution. . . ." Washington to Henry Champion, Feb. 17, 1778, *ibid.*, 10:474; John Laurens told his father: "We have lately been in a most alarming situation for want of provisions. The soldiers were scarcely restrained from mutiny. . . ." J. Laurens to H. Laurens, Feb. 17, 1778, Simms, *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens*, 126. Armstrong shared the belief of many that the commissaries responsible for purchasing and delivering food were inept and corrupt. However, weather that made rivers and roads impassable, lack of wagons, lack of money, and an ineffectual reorganization by Congress in 1777 of the Commissary Department, were all significant contributors to the famines in camp.

<sup>87</sup> To the contrary, General Erskine led a British party that captured 34 men at Newtown in Bucks County and took a large cache of clothing. Von Muenchhausen, *At Howe's Side*, 48.

Sunday 22d. Nothing Remarkable.

Monday 23d: This Morning Lt Wade Ensn. Wetherill Ensn. Green, Ensn. Wily, Ensign Reading<sup>88</sup> & myself went on the East side of the Schuykiln & tarried 'till Next Evening, during which time we were frolicking & Dancing?!!

Wednesday 25th. There was a Rumor in Camp that the Enemy took One Hundred & Twenty head of Cattle at Corells' Ferrey on their way to Camp!!<sup>89</sup>

Thursday 26th. Friday 27th. Saturday 28th. Nothing Remarkable happened.

*March 1778*

Sunday 1st: March 1778. I felt poorly having taken a cold by reason of the Change of Weather, we have in this part of the Country vizt. One day will be like mayday & the Next so cold there will be no living in our Hutts with good fires and the next perhaps Snow or Rain. one third part of the time it either rains or Snows.

Monday 2d. Much as Yesterday.

Tuesday 3d. Wednesday 4th. Thursday 5th Fryday 6th. Saturday 7th. Sunday 8th Monday 9th Nothing Remarkable

Tuesday 10th. I was on Guard at the Valley Quaker meeting house, had a Good Guard, upon every Account, only the want of a house to Shelter us from the Rain & Viduals to Eat.

Wednesday 11th: This morning was Relieved and came home to Camp, and after breakfast Ensn. Green & his brother and myself went over the River to the Sutlers' upon Business; but falling into Company, we rather made a frolick, each fetching his Bottle of wine—This day we hear that Cap't.

N.B. some leaves missing.

Saturday 28th. March 1778 Sunday 29th. Nothing Remarkable

<sup>88</sup> Abner Wade, Obadiah Wetherill, John Green, Robert Wiley, William Redding, Heitman, *Register*, 562, 583, 260, 592, 460.

<sup>89</sup> This was more than a rumor. On Feb. 24 a drove of 130 cattle from New England were taken by a party of light horsemen that sallied 20 miles out of Philadelphia. Washington to Gen. Anthony Wayne, Feb. 28, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 10:524.

*April 1778*

Wednesday 1st: April 1778. This morning Capt. Baner[ ] Sit out for ShepinsTown,<sup>90</sup> with Mr. Adams & two of his sisters, also Miss Matty Majery, to bear him Company as far as Redding—

Thursday 2d: Nothing Remarkable

Friday 3d. This day we hear our Commissioners of Prisoners went to Germain town to meet Genl. Hows and it was agreed that no Hostilities should commence on either side. but when hows came they Said it was Genl Hows' orders that as soon as the business was done and the papers put up hostilities might then commence without failure of his honor. upon this they pack[']d up and came off.<sup>91</sup>

Saturday 4th. Gen'l. How sent out a flagg and desired that Genl. Washington would appoin[t] a place, any where he Shou'd think fitt and he wou'd agree to send—

Sunday 5th. Monday 6th. Tuesday 7th. Wednesday 8th. Thursday 9th  
Nothing Remarkable  
(Leaves Lost) G.W A

<sup>90</sup> Possibly Shippensburg, Pa.

<sup>91</sup> Prisoner exchange was a long-standing issue as the British refused to classify captured Americans as prisoners of war. To have done so would have indirectly legitimized the rebel government. Some partial exchanges began as early as 1776 between the military commanders. On Feb. 5, 1778, General Howe wrote to Washington proposing talks for an exchange. There were a variety of problems but eventually Col. William Grayson, Elias Boudinot, Lt. Cols. Robert Hanson Harrison and Alexander Hamilton were appointed commissioners for the United States. Lt. Col. Charles O'Hara, Lt. Col. Humphrey Stephens, and Capt. Richard Fitzpatrick represented the British. The commissioners first met in Germantown on March 31, but the British would not permit the Americans to remain overnight, which led to a break in talks. They resumed on April 6 at Newtown in Bucks County, but failed to reach any agreement. Had the military commanders alone negotiated, agreements would have been reached, but Congress tried to use the negotiations to enhance its prestige and gain tacit recognition of American independence. As the British prepared to evacuate Philadelphia in June, many prisoners were exchanged through direct negotiations between representatives of the commanding generals, although no general cartel was agreed on until the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Even then releases by the Americans were delayed. Larry G. Bowman, "The Prisoner Exchange Conferences, 1778," *Pennsylvania History* 45 (1978), 257-69; Martha Williamson Dixon, "Divided Authority: The American Management of Prisoners in the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1977, 259-72; Betsy Knight, "Prisoner Exchange and Parole in the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 48 (1992), 201-22.

*May 1778*

Sunday 3d. We had a [se]rmon preached to the Division by the Rev. [W]. Hitchcock.<sup>92</sup>

Monday 4th. all the Trees were in Blossom—

Tuesday 5th. I mounted the Provost Guard, there w[as] two Men brought in Irons under sentence of Death

Wednesday 6th. This day about ha[lf] past Ten [o'ck] the fue-de-Joy began and lasted 'till near One, and by two I was releived, when I came to my Hutt was informed that Genl. Washington gave all Officers an Invitation to dine with him, which I accepted!!!<sup>93</sup>

Samuel Armstrong

Thursday 7th. Friday 8th. Saturday 9th Sunday 10th. Monday 11 Tuesday 12 Wednesday 13 Thursday 14 Friday 15 Nothing Remarkable

Saturday 16 Joseph O'brian was taken prisoner.

Sunday 17th. Peter Bennett was carried to Hospital and died the same Night about 10 in the Evening.

Monday 18th. This morning by six O'Clock there was about 3 or four thousand under the Command of Genl. Marquis La Fayette, Marched for the Rising-Sun within 3 miles of Philadelphia.<sup>94</sup>

Wednesday 19th. Nothing Extraordinary

Wednesday 20th. We Were Alarm'd, as there were about 7 Thousand of

<sup>92</sup> General Orders the day before directed that divine service be held every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. Officers were expected to attend and set the example for their men. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 11:343-44.

<sup>93</sup> The entire army was drawn up and reviewed by Washington, followed by 13-gun salutes, and massed musket firing (feu de joie) to celebrate the new French alliance. The carefully arranged activities, organized by Baron von Steuben, demonstrated the vastly improved discipline of the army. J. Laurens to H. Laurens, May 7, 1778, Sparks, *Army Correspondence*, 169-70.

<sup>94</sup> Receiving information that the British planned to evacuate Philadelphia, Washington detached Lafayette with about 2,200 men across the Schuylkill. Lafayette was to gather intelligence, provide security to the camp at Valley Forge, and cut off enemy scouting parties. Lafayette took post at Barren Hill, near present-day Norristown. Washington to Lafayette, May 18, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 11:418-20; Stanley J. Idzerda et al., eds., *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776-1790* (4 vols. to date, Ithaca, 1977-), 2:6-7, 53-54.



the Enemy surrounding the Marquis De La Fayette[te]<sup>95</sup>

Thursday 21st: I went on Command [down] to Redner Meeting house<sup>96</sup>

Friday 22d. Mounted Guard & the Enemy came out.

Saturday 23rd. The Enemy went in

Sunday 24th. Nothing Remarkable

Monday 25th Mounted Guard. This day about 60 of Morgan's Riffle men went for fort Pitt in Virginia<sup>97</sup>

Tuesday 26th. Nothing Remarkable

Wednesday 27th. We march'd from Redner being Relieved—

Thursday 28th. Nothing Remarkable.

Friday 29th. Orders to get into readiness to march.<sup>98</sup>

Saturday 30th. Orders Continued upon that subject—

Sunday 31st. May—

Nothing Extraordinary happened during this Interval.

### June 1778

June 18 Thursday. This forenoon Poors', Vern[ums], and Huntingtons' Brigades Marched from Valley Forge, under the Command of Majr. Genl.

<sup>95</sup> Learning of Lafayette's expedition, General Howe hoped for one last triumph before leaving for England. At 11:00 p.m. on May 19, more than 5,000 men marched out of Philadelphia in three columns to encircle Lafayette's force and trap him against the Schuylkill. General Grant did not advance in time to block the ford at Conshohocken and Lafayette was able to safely re-cross the river. This failure may have been due to too much enjoyment of the *Mischianza* on the night of May 18, a party with "a Regatta, Fete Champetre, Tilts and Tournaments, Carosal, Procession through Triumphal Arches, Dancing, Exhibition of Fire works, musick, and Feast," honoring Howe before his departure. "Journals of Capt. John Montresor," ed. and annot. G. D. Scull, *Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1881* (New York, 1882), 492-3; Lydenberg, *Robertson*, 172. For details on this affair see William J. Wilcox, "The Comic Opera Battle that Made a General," *Pennsylvania History* 13 (1946), 265-73; John F. Reed, "Barren Hill," *The Valley Forge Journal* 1 (1982), 112-21.

<sup>96</sup> The Friends Meetinghouse at Radnor, which still stands, was used as a guard post throughout the Valley Forge encampment.

<sup>97</sup> Due to "Indian ravages upon the Western Frontier," Washington sent about 250 men of the Eighth Pennsylvania and Thirteenth Virginia to Fort Pitt. About a hundred men of the Eighth "have been constantly in Morgans Rifle Corps." Washington to the Board of War, May 23, 1778, Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 11:439-40.

<sup>98</sup> Rumors about the British evacuation of Philadelphia had been rampant for several weeks. General Orders on this date detailed the arrangement and route of the American army towards New York. Fitzpatrick, *Writings of George Washington*, 463-67.

Lee—[The] Pennsylvania Brigades & Late Conaway's, marched this Afternoon—

Friday 19th. About 5 OClock this morning the Whole Army marched from Valley forge over the East Side Schuykiln and halted about 9 Miles from thence, In a place called Norrington.<sup>99</sup>

N.B. Leaves lost G.W.A.

*Valley Forge*  
*National Historical Park*

JOSEPH LEE BOYLE

<sup>99</sup> The last British units evacuated Philadelphia on June 18. The bulk of the army was ferried across the Delaware River to march through New Jersey to New York. Washington followed and a major engagement took place on June 28 at Monmouth. The American army performed splendidly and they considered it a significant victory, although the British believed they had been successful in stopping the American attack.