



This is NewsLetter Issue No. One ~ For the year 2025

“Extreme Cold In The Forecast”

Perhaps you were never taught about it in school ~ or perhaps you just never had an interest in American history ~ but by just being alive in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries you should know about one of the most famous events that took place during the American Revolutionary War. I am speaking about the encampment at Valley Forge which was undertaken during the winter of 1777~78 by the Continental Army with General George Washington at its head. It is amusing to hear or read when someone makes the claim that his or her Patriot ancestor ‘fought at Valley Forge’. The winter encampment at Valley Forge was not a ‘battle’ as many people describe it. If anything, it provided a respite from battle.

The art of war, at least for the English, during the Eighteenth Century, was very structured and formal. It is well known that the British Army fought according to ‘gentlemen’s rules’. The infantry soldiers were marshalled into formal ‘rank and file’ order. They

would fire a volley of musket fire against their opponent, who would then fire a volley at them. That manner of engagement was at odds with the ‘American’ style of unconventional fighting. The American rebels had learned a form of irregular fighting from their



Amerindian neighbors. While the redcoats marched in straight lines and columns, the American rebels sometimes met them in kind, but also sometimes flanked from the cover of surrounding trees and underbrush in what could be considered a form of

‘guerilla’ fighting.

One feature of the art of war that both, the British and the Americans generally respected was the pausing of campaigning through the winter. Both armies would go into winter encampment. Well, that is, for the most part. General Washington’s crossing of the Delaware River, in late December 1776 to attack the Hessians at Trenton, was an exception to the rule.

The winter encampment at Valley Forge took place between 19 December 1777 and 19 June 1778. According to the website ushistory.org, the winter of 1777 to 1778 was recorded as ‘moderate’.

Rating of the severity of a winter depends on a number of factors, such as the amount of snow, the



temperature and even the personal opinion of the person doing the rating. Ratings usually range from ‘mild’ to ‘severe’.

The winters of 1775-1776 and 1776-1777 had also been considered to be ‘moderate’. The winter of 1778-1779 was thought to be ‘mild’. And then there was the winter of 1779-1780 ~ when the Continental Army went into winter encampment at Morristown, New Jersey. That winter was said to be ‘severe’. It was followed by the winter of 1780-1781 being mild. In turn, that winter was followed, in 1781-1782, by another ‘severe’ winter.

So looking at this data, one would wonder why

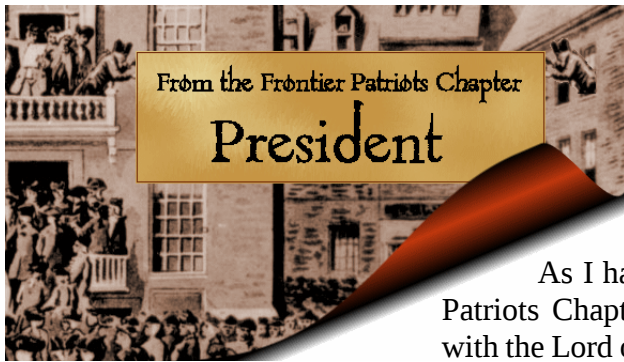
more attention would be paid to the ‘Valley Forge’ winter as compared to the ‘Morristown’ winter? The answer is simple. The appalling condition of the soldiers who went into the winter encampment at Valley Forge is the primary reason it is remembered more than the encampment at Morristown.

General Washington wrote a letter to Thomas Granberry on the 23rd of December 1777. He noted: *“few men having more than one Shirt, many only the Moiety of one, and Some none at all...”*. The word ‘moiety’ referred to a half. Washington continued: *“(besides a number of Men confined to Hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers Houses on the same Acct.) we have, by a field return this day made no less than 2898 Men now in Camp unfit for duty because they are bare foot and otherwise naked...”*.

Again, according to the website ushistory.org, during the winter of 1777-1778, there were two episodes of what would be considered ‘severe’ cold. There was a low of 6 degrees at the end of December and a low of 8 degrees at the end of March. The temperature in January and February remained in the teens. Also, on the 27th of December, just eight days after the troops arrived at Valley Forge, the region experienced the deepest snowfall of the season. They would probably have been still in the process of constructing their huts when that snowstorm hit. On the 12th and 13th of February the eastern part of Pennsylvania experienced a snowstorm that dropped snow to a depth of two feet.

Overall, the weather was not as bad as is often claimed. But it was bad enough to make life miserable for the ill-equipped troops encamped at Valley Forge. It was more the lack of good clothing that caused the men to remember that winter encampment at Valley Forge as being brutal.





The next meeting of the
Frontier Patriots Chapter
of the Sons of the American Revolution
will be held at Hoss's restaurant
at Business 220, Bedford, PA
on Saturday, 8 March 2025
starting at 12 Noon.

As I had reported to the Compatriot members of the Frontier Patriots Chapter, our Compatriot, David G. Hammaker went to be with the Lord on Tuesday, 18 February 2025. He had been ill for quite some time and had undergone extensive testing and numerous medical procedures over the past two years. Dave had served the Frontier Patriots Chapter as its President for eight (non-consecutive) years. He also served as the Chapter's Registrar for a number of years and most recently its Treasurer. He will be sadly missed and not forgotten. R.I.P.



General Washington And Captain Asgill

In the year 1782, with the American Revolutionary War winding down, General George Washington was placed in a situation he did not want to be in.

American Captain Joshua Huddy, of the New Jersey Artillery and commander of a blockhouse on Tom's River in the Jerseys, was taken captive on 24 March 1782 by a body of the Refugees Corps, a Loyalist faction. He was then transported to New York where he was kept in irons. On 8 April Captain Huddy was put on board a sloop and taken to Sandy Hook and then on to Bergen, in the Jerseys, where he was confined on a prison ship until the 12th when he was hung by the Refugees. A Captain Lippincott ordered the hanging and affixed a label onto Huddy's breast that read: "*Up goes Huddy for Philip White*". The claim was put forward by the Refugees that White, one of their members, had been killed by Huddy. The claim was apparently false because, it will be remembered, Huddy was being held prisoner at New York at the time that White was killed. The Loyalist White was killed on 30 March, and therefore could not have been killed by Joshua Huddy.

General Washington was made aware of the sequence of events regarding Captain Huddy's hanging

by on 16 April by two Exchange Commissioners, Knox and Morris. They conveyed to the General that the inhabitants of New Jersey, including a number of respectable citizens, had drawn up a petition that justice be carried out. Washington immediately queried twenty-five officers under his command about their opinions on whether and how a retaliation should be made. All twenty-five agreed that retaliation was justifiable and expedient. According to Major General William Heath's *Memoirs*, the unanimous opinion of the twenty-five officers was that Captain Lippincott, the leader of the Refugees who had hanged Captain Huddy, should be made the subject for retaliation.

As Heath noted in his *Memoirs*: "*The Commander in Chief was pleased to approve of the opinion of the officers, and wrote to the British commander demanding justice for the wanton murder of Capt. Huddy, informing the British General at the same time that if justice was not obtained retaliation would most assuredly take place. At the same time arrangements were put in train for retaliation; the names of several British officers of equal rank and circumstances were thrown together, and a fair and impartial lot was drawn, when young Capt. Asgill was taken.*" In other words, a number of British officers, of

which Asgill was one, were required to draw lots to determine which of them would be hung in retaliation for Captain Huddy's hanging.

Charles Asgill was seventeen years old according to some accounts, and twenty-one according to others, when he drew the fateful lot to be the subject of the retaliation. According to General Heath's *Memoirs*, "he was of a noble family, his father was dead, and on him were the fond hopes of his mother, Lady Asgill, placed. Indeed, a more affecting scene than this can scarcely open; an innocent young man doomed to suffer for the wanton offence of another, which deed, no doubt, his soul despised; and the tender breast of a mother rent in twain on the fate of her darling son."

General Washington was not a rash and impetuous individual. He sent a letter to the British General Sir Henry Clinton on 21 April 1782. He informed Clinton: "*The inclosed Representation from the Inhabitants of the County of Monmouth, with testimonials to the facts (which can be corroborated by other unquestionable Evidence) will bring before your Excellency the most wanton, unprecedented and inhuman Murder that ever disgraced the Arms of civilized people. . . To save the innocent, I demand the guilty. Capt'n Lippicot therefor, or the Officer who commanded at the Execution of Capt Huddy must be*

given up; or if that Officer was of inferior Rank to him so many of the perpetrators as will according to the Tariff of Exchange be an Equivalent."

The British command proceeded to hold a court-martial of Captain Richard Lippincott, but the court acquitted him. The two British Commanders-In-Chief, Sir Henry Clinton and Sir Guy Carleton opposed the acquittal, but as General Heath noted in his *Memoirs*: "*It seemed that a kind of Board of Directors who had a subordinate direction of the refugee operations, were somehow concerned in this business, and that argument and some artifice were necessary to smooth it over.*"

In the meantime, Lady Asgill, in a frantic effort to prevent her son from being hung, appealed to the Comte de Vergennes, the French Prime Minister, to lay the matter before the King and Queen of France. The French King responded by suggesting to the delegates assembled in Congress that since the Americans, as well as the French, affected the victory at Yorktown, the French should have some share in the disposition of the prisoners. It was hinted that the French Court would be pleased if the young Captain Asgill were pardoned.

The request for pardon by the French King gave General George Washington a means to avoid hanging Charles Asgill while saving face.



Monument Rededication Planned For Spring

The new bronze plaque for the Phillip's Rangers' Massacre monument was received this past December ~ too late for it to be installed into the stone obelisk at the memorial in the Woodcock Valley of Bedford County. It is currently in the possession of Michael Stiffler of Stiffler Masonry. He assured me that when the weather warms in the spring, to the point where the temperature will not go to or below freezing overnight, he will get the plaque installed. Then a ceremony will be held to rededicate the monument. Keep this in mind and plan to attend the ceremony when it is announced.

For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you informing us of it to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is not that expensive, but it is time consuming. Please send to our Secretary Larry Smith at schmitt@motherbedford.com

Frontier Patriots Chapter website:

<https://frontierpatriots.com>