

Two Small Engagements That Saved the Revolution

Petticoat Bridge and Ironworks Hill

December 21-23, 1776

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Americans of all generations are familiar with age old legend of General Washington and his band of rag-tag, starving soldiers who crossed the mighty Delaware River on a stormy Christmas night and delivered one of the most shocking and awe-inspiring victories of the war the next morning at Trenton. Yet what most do not realize, is that events could have gone very differently, or perhaps worse for the American cause not at all. The truth is, the great victories at Trenton and Princeton were made possible by the most unlikely of characters in what has been interpreted to be an almost obscure action by historians. The battles of Petticoat Bridge and Ironworks Hill and their immediate results set the stage strategically for George Washington to successfully launch his raid on Trenton. Without these two small but very important engagements occurring when and how they did, the American War for Independence most likely would have ended at the end of that December.

In order to understand why Petticoat Bridge and Ironworks Hill had such a drastic impact, it is necessary to understand the events that led up to the actions. The American cause in the latter half of 1776 was faltering severely. Beginning in New York in the late summer the once proud and arrogant Continental Army had met defeat after defeat,

disaster after disaster, and had begun to crumble organizationally from the top down. General George Washington in November had no choice except to cede New Jersey to the British and remove his battered and desolate army to the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River. Here Washington hoped to rest his men and catch his breath before what he thought to be the inevitable attack on Philadelphia. However, fortunately for the American cause British General Sir William Howe chose to halt his operations, and established a series of outposts through New Jersey, the two most southerly being at Trenton and the Bordentown – Burlington area.

The forces in Bordentown and the surrounding area consisted of several regiments. The Hessian Bloch, Minnigerode, and Linsing Grenadier Battalions, along with the Scottish 42nd of Foot, better known as the Black Watch, under the overall command of Hessian Colonel Carl von Donop.¹ Donop's forces totaling close to 3,000 men initially had the objective of occupying Burlington for the winter. However, the town's location along the Delaware River made any garrison susceptible to attacks from Patriot schooners and other "navy" vessels. Therefore, the decision was made to move the bulk of the force to Bordentown several miles upstream, and in closer proximity to the garrison at Trenton. Bordentown had its own challenges, but the largest being space to house the troops. As a result, Donop was forced to divide his men, scattering them in the immediate area around the town. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Stirling's 42nd Regiment of Foot was sent the furthest from Bordentown to the small hamlet of Black Horse (modern day Columbus), where the Highlanders established a series of outposts in the direction of Mount Holly, a larger village several miles south. The troops under

¹ David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, Oxford University Press, 2004. 390.

Donop's command quickly settled in the routine of patrols and guard mounts in what was shaping up to be a fairly uneventful winter in Southern New Jersey.²

While the Hessians and Scottish soldiers roamed about Burlington County, a movement across the Delaware River was taking shape that set out to challenge them. Colonel Samuel Griffin, a lawyer from Richmond, Virginia had served as Major General Charles Lee's Aide-de-Camp until he was wounded at the battle of Harlem Heights in September. As a result, he was transferred to the Department of Philadelphia in order to recuperate from his wounds. While he rested and regained strength in the Patriot capital, the American army under Washington was beginning its retreat across New Jersey.³

Griffin wouldn't have long to rest, as fate was soon to bring him back into the action. The district commander in Philadelphia at the time was General Israel Putnam, who received a message from General Washington, instructing Colonel Griffin to take a command and "create a distraction" against Donop's command in Southern New Jersey. In order to achieve this, Griffin was authorized to organize and command the combined militia forces of Cumberland, Salem and Gloucester counties, totaling some 500 men.

When the call went out, men like Joseph Ellis assembled their militia battalions and marched north to meet Griffin. Ellis, a former Quaker, who served the British cause in the French and Indian war as a captain, became heavily involved in protests against parliament in the days leading up to the war. Ellis proved to be a natural leader which led to his appointment as colonel, then eventually a brigadier generalship of all the militia in

² Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*, 187-188.

³ United States Congress, "*Samuel Griffin*." Biographical Directory of the United States Congress: Retrieved on 2010-01-05.

South Jersey, of which he humbly denied. Ellis would lead the 2nd Battalion of the Gloucester County Militia during the coming campaign. ⁴

Some men such as Private James Giberson made their way independently to the rendezvous at Haddonfield, where he joined up with Ellis's regiment.⁵ Eventually more battalions from the Cumberland County under Colonel's Silas Newcombe and David Potter arrived. Colonel Richard Somers raised another battalion from Gloucester County, while the final battalion under Colonel Samuel Dick arrived from Salem County. In all this force would contain between 500-800 men. ⁶

The leaders of these battalions each had their own unique and very American stories. Silas Newcombe is a colorful character, amongst many that would be involved in the coming campaign. Silas was born in Dukes, Massachusetts in 1723, then relocated to Fairfield, in Cumberland County New Jersey. In 1758 the 36-year-old Newcombe was commissioned a Lieutenant and led men in the Campaign for Quebec. He next served as the Sheriff of Cumberland County in the 1760's, a post he held until the Revolution. In 1774, a town near his residence known as Greenwich was one of the five original "Tea Party" towns. Newcombe and his son Ephraim took part in the act of defiance toward the Crown. It was likely that Ephraim and possibly his other brothers, Silas, Dayton and Webster all also served in their fathers' regiment, as they were all of military age in the 1776. Colonel Newcombe (and possibly his sons) saw service at the Battle of Long Island, the war's largest engagement and dramatic American defeat. After this September

⁴ "Joseph Ellis." Crossroads of the American Revolution. Accessed November 25, 2018. <http://revolutionarynj.org/rev-neighbors/joseph-ellis/>.

⁵ Pension Application of James Giberson, "Page 4 Revolutionary War Pensions." Fold3. Accessed November 25, 2018. <https://www.fold3.com/image/246/21406521>

⁶. David Bonk, and Graham Turner. *Trenton and Princeton, 1776-77: Washington Crosses the Delaware*. London: Osprey Publishing, 2012.

battle he and his men returned home, whereupon they would muster once again under Griffin.⁷

David Potter, whose background is slightly more obscured, was the son of Irish immigrants who moved around before finally settling in Philadelphia. His brother Matthew owned and operated a tavern in the town of Bridgeton New Jersey known as Potters Tavern built in 1773. The tavern housed and hosted the “*Plain-Dealer*” which was a newspaper that discussed local politics and issues of the day. The tavern was known to have harbored known rebels and was directly involved with the Greenwich Tea Party. David also moved to Bridgeton and worked as a merchant. In this profession he found great success and established himself as a prominent citizen in Cumberland County. He fiercely supported the Whig cause in 1775 and was elected captain of a volunteer company. In the autumn of 1776, he was commissioned a colonel and given command of the 2nd Battalion of Cumberland County Militia.⁸

Richard Somers born in 1737, in what is now Atlantic County near the Egg Harbor Bay, yet this area was still part of Gloucester County for all of Richards’s life. Somers was engaged in privateering and held stakes in schooners and then the militia.⁹ He was also considered a man of extraordinary parts and surveyed a great deal of land in modern day Atlantic County. Before and in the early part of the Revolution, Richard was a judge on the county court, and his name appears on the Provincial Congress for the year

⁷ "Brig. Gen. Silas Newcomb." Miner Descent. October 04, 2015. Accessed November 25, 2018. <https://minerdescent.com/2013/09/06/brig-gen-silas-newcomb/>.

⁸ "REVOLUTIONARY WAR SITES IN BRIDGETON, NEW JERSEY." Mount Holly, New Jersey Revolutionary War Sites | Mount Holly Historic Sites. Accessed November 25, 2018. http://www.revolutionarywarnewjersey.com/new_jersey_revolutionary_war_sites/towns/bridgeton_nj_revolutionary_war_sites.htm.

⁹<http://www.somerspointhistory.org/uploads/3/1/7/4/31743223/trailofrichardsomers2014.pdf>

1775. With all this influence he was named Colonel in the Gloucester County Militia.¹⁰ Lastly Samuel Dick, originally from Prince George's County in Maryland, commanded the lonely Salem County battalion. He emigrated to New Jersey, pursued a medical career as a doctor, and was elected to New Jersey's Provincial Congress in 1776. He was then appointed Colonel of the 1st Battalion of Salem County Militia.

Samuel Griffin along with a small contingent of Virginia artillery arrived at Haddonfield to personally take command and brief his leaders as to what their objective was. Griffin likely outlined what he knew of Washington's retreat and current situation along the Delaware River, and the Commander in Chief's desire for this command to deliver some sort of blow to the southern outposts at Bordentown. Unfortunately, the roughly 500 men would be all that was available to counterattack Donop's force of 3,000. However, Griffin's orders were clear in the sense that Washington expected him to distract and draw Donop down away from Bordentown, widening the distance between the garrison at Trenton. Griffin wasted no time waiting for additional men, and marched his small ragtag brigade to Moorestown, then onto Eayrestown several miles south of Mount Holly either on December 18th or 19th where then encamped.¹¹

As early as December 13th, rumors of a massive militia force operating in Southern New Jersey began to filter into Colonel Donop's headquarters in Bordentown. On December 19th, Donop along with Captain Johann Ewald traveled out to Black Horse to inspect the left wing of his forces. After inspecting the area around Black Horse, Donop then proceeded to reconnoiter Mount Holly accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel

¹⁰ Life of RICHARD SOMERS, A MASTER COMMANDANT IN THE U.S. NAVY, Collated by J.B. Somers, M.D. (Philadelphia, Collins, 1886, 2004, ACHS).

¹¹ Fischer, 200-202.

Stirling, 12 mounted Jaegers, and some Scottish troops. While in the village the party was informed by a local Tory that Colonel Griffin with 2,000 men was then encamped at Eayrestown, seven miles south of Mount Holly. The alleged Tory either received false news on the American numbers or he was a Patriot spy feeding the Hessian colonel false information. At 8 P.M. that same evening Donop now concerned about the alleged threat made his way back to Bordentown. ¹²

Not long after arriving back at his headquarters, the Hessian colonel sent orders to an exhausted Captain Ewald at 3 A.M. on the 20th to take a detachment of 30 Jäger's and 50 grenadiers immediately to Burlington to ascertain the truth about a rumor of American row galleys operating along the Delaware River and if the town offered any military advantage. Donop informed Ewald that he was waiting on several heavy 18lb guns of the Klobach Battalion he had requested to arrive. Once they arrived, he planned to send these big guns into Burlington to fend off the galleys and occupy the town, which coincided with his original orders from General Howe. Ewald and his men set out on their mission predawn hours of the 20th, the weather was stormy as they marched south along the Burlington Road, the men doing whatever they could to fend off the crisp winter air nipping at their exposed features. Along the march common citizens discussed the wretched condition that Washington's army was in on the other side of the great river with the detachment's officers. Although Ewald was correct in his thinking when he wrote that he felt, "Washington would still undertake something."

The Hessians patrolled the road to Burlington thoroughly. They eventually reached Hancock's Bridge; a position that made Ewald fairly nervous. He halted his

¹² Ibid.

detachment and sent a patrol over to reconnoiter the other side where there was a deep defile and good ambush site for the supposed thousands of militiamen crawling about the region. Ewald then continued on, leaving a small outpost behind to guard his rear. The detachment next arrived at the Yorkshire Bridge, which spanned the Assiscunk Creek only a mile outside of Burlington. Here a few houses lined the road, and local citizens informed him that the galleys still maintained their station and were anchored off at Bristol directly across from Burlington.

Ewald was on edge as he crossed over the Yorkshire Bridge into the fringes of town. The Captain left the bulk of his detachment on the bridge in order to watch his rear and gave instructions to its commanding officer that if attacked by a large enemy force they were to make their escape up the banks of the Delaware River back to Bordentown. Ewald, accompanied by only two grenadiers and two jäegers, cautiously entered Burlington heading south on Broad Street. The 4 soldiers' sole purpose was to keep their eyes open for any suspicious activity or firing from the houses that lined the street. Should Ewald be captured or killed, they were to retreat back to the officer at Yorkshire Bridge. Ewald rode into the center of town in order to ascertain a solid report on the supposed galleys. Throngs of curious townspeople lined the streets and looked at the five Hessians as if they were as Ewald put it, "weird." Receiving a flurry of different answers, the Hessian captain quickly became annoyed at the inconstancy of the answers, eventually he discovered there were in fact galleys present and that two schooners had reinforced them. He then rode over to John Lawrence's house, the mayor of the town who lived in the center of town and knocked on his door. When the mayor answered the Hessian frustratingly demanded that he provide quarters for 2,000 men and enough

provisions to match and informed the mayor that these 2,000 soldiers would be marching for Burlington within the hour. Ewald then made his way back to the north side of the Assiscunk Creek where he rested his men briefly. While lounging in the bitter winter air a wagon containing a town councilor arrived seeking permission to speak with the commanding general. Ewald laughed in his face but took the American as company back to Bordentown. Arriving back around midnight, he reported his findings to Colonel Donop, who was greatly displeased with the news of the galleys and schooners.¹³

Later on, the same day that Ewald was snooping around Burlington, Griffin with his small command reached the vital road junction town of Mount Holly at about 3 P.M., where they captured a suspected unnamed spy and a deserter from Major Mentzers Hessian Battalion. Griffin while here dispatched a note describing his current situation to General Putnum, along with the prisoner for further interrogation. However, before their arrival Local Tories informed Colonel Stirling who had a substantial force near the town of the American's approach. In response he hastily withdrew those Highlanders seven miles north to Black Horse to regroup. The Scottish troops near Mount Holly left in such haste that Colonel Griffin noted they left, "in great confusion, leaving their Beef &c., & Fires burning."¹⁴ Some of the Highlander's left their knapsacks behind as well, to which the militiamen helped themselves to the contents.¹⁵ The American commander, likely through the observant eyes of local patriots was informed that Stirling had 700 men and 3 pieces of artillery, only 100 more men than Griffin had at the current moment.

¹³ Ewald, Johann Von., and Joseph P. Tustin. *Diary of the American War*. 1979.

¹⁴ Samuel Griffin letter to Israel Putnum, dated Dec. 21st, 1776.

¹⁵ Giberson, Pension.

Griffin now attempted to seize the initiative with a forced march to catch Stirling before he reached Black Horse and possibly knock out a portion of the Crown forces in the area, but he soon learned he was too late to bag the fox, and withdrew his men back to Mount Holly for the night. The militiamen then constructed crude field works on a prominent height on the south bank of the Rancocas Creek known locally as “Iron Works Hill” and camped for the night. By the evening of the 20th, Colonel Donop, aware of Griffin’s presence was then making preparations to move and mitigate the potential threat once and for all. ¹⁶

Colonel Joseph Reed, Washington’s Adjutant General reported the situation to General Washington: “Col. Griffin has advanced up the Jerseys with 600 Men as far as Mount Holly within 7 Miles of Their HeadQuarters at the Black Horse—he has wrote over here for 2 pieces of Artillery & 2 or 300 Volunteers as he expected an Attack very soon. The Spirits of the Militia here are very high—they are all for supporting him—Col. Cadwallader & the Gentlemen here all agree that they should be indulged—we can either give him a strong Reinforcement—or make a separate Attack—the latter bids fairest for producing the greatest & best Effects—it is therefore determined to make all possible Preparation to day & no Event happening to change our Measures the main Body here will cross the River tomorrow Morning & attack their Post between this & the Black Horse, proceeding from thence either to the Black Horse or the Square where about 200 Men are posted as Things shall turn out with Griffin. If they should not attack Griffin as he expects it is probable both our Parties may advance to the Black Horse if Success attends the intermediate Attempt. If they should collect their Force & march against

¹⁶ Samuel Griffin letter to General Israel Putnum, dated Dec. 21st, 1776.

Griffin our Attack will have the best Effects in preventing their sending Troops on that Errand, or breaking up their Quarters & coming in upon their Rear which we must endeavour to do in order to save Griffin.”¹⁷

Colonel Donop in preparation for the coming showdown sent a local loyalist named Barzillia Haines to investigate the rebels. Haines managed to get into the militia camp at Mount Holly and returned reporting a force of, "not above eight hundred, nearly one half boys, and all of them Militia a very few from Pennsylvania excepted". Colonel Stirling also reported at least 1,000 rebels were at Mount Holly with rumors that an additional 2,000 more were en-route to support them. Colonel Donop sought Stirling's advice, to which he replied, "You sir, with the troops at Bordentown, should come here and attack. I am confident we are a match for them.”¹⁸

Colonel Donop concurred and set out for Blackhorse with his three grenadier battalions to link up with the Highlanders and brush aside the smaller militia force. Griffin wasn't content with just sitting on the hilltop in Mount Holly though and was acutely aware that he wouldn't be able to properly defend the location without reinforcements. After constructing the crude field works, he decided to act aggressively yet again and marched his men up to a small hamlet known as Slabtown (Jacksonville) a few miles north of Mount Holly. Here he established a new line on a small ridge behind Petticoat Run, roughly 2 miles southwest of Black Horse. The move was likely a front, to possibly deceive Donop and the Highlanders into believing he had much larger force than

¹⁷ Joseph Reed letter to George Washington.

¹⁸ Fischer, 197-198.

his now roughly 700 men, which from the false reports the Hessian Colonel believed them to be somewhere between 1000 and 2,000. Samuel Griffin was an experienced officer, he had to have had an understanding that Donop thought his numbers larger than they were based off the Hessian's reaction. While it is unclear and only speculation, it makes perfect sense however, that Griffin was using locals to give Donop false numbers on his commands size, then maneuvering aggressively as if he had those actual numbers, all for the purpose of fulfilling his orders and creating a diversion and depleting the garrison at Trenton of its support. ¹⁹

The geography around Petticoat Bridge wasn't militarily impressive. The soon to be battlefield consisted of small ridges that gently crested about one hundred yards away from the creek. The creek in 1776 like today was likely shaded by a thin wood line, which offered some protection. The creek itself could be simply leapt over by infantry with little effort, however, the bridge that spanned it would be necessary to Donop's artillery should he choose to pursue the Americans further. The most prominent building on the immediate battlefield was a small Quaker meetinghouse, located on the Slabtown Road a few hundred yards east of the small village. The new position served one purpose, to simply flex a little muscle and draw out Donop's entire brigade from Bordentown.

The battalions of New Jersey militia arrived on the ridges south of the small creek, via the Slabtown road on the 22nd to discover an outpost of Hessian's across on the open ridge north of the creek. These Hessians were a detail from Donop's brigade that were now in Black Horse. Griffin studied the outpost, quickly realizing they were

¹⁹ Fischer, 200.

Hessian, which enlightened him to the fact he wasn't solely dealing with the 42nd of Foot anymore. He decided to strike first. A local Quaker woman named Margaret Morris wrote an account of the action: "the intelligence brought in this Evening is seriously affecting a party of our Men, about 200, Marched out of Mount Holly, & meeting with a party of Hessians near a place called Petticoat bridge, an engagement ensued, - the Hessians retreating, rather than advancing, a heavy firing of Musketry & some Cannon heard, we are informed that 21 of our Men were killed in the engagement, & that they returned at Night to their head Quarters at Mount Holly, the Hessians to theirs at the black horse." ²⁰ *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* also published an account of the fighting: "We hear from good authority, that on Sunday last, betwixt Slab Town and the Black Horse, in the Jerseys, a party of our army, under the command of Col. Griffin, had a skirmish with the Hessians, and that the enemy were forced to retreat with precipitation, having some killed, and leaving behind them many knapsacks and other necessaries, amongst which was a hat shot through the crown." ²¹ Griffin and his men scored a quick victory over the much smaller Hessian outpost. He surely was aware that more of the enemy would be back in the morning, and he was determined to occupy them. Griffin likely made his headquarters in Slab Town that night or in the Quaker Meetinghouse just a few hundred yards from the bridge.

A few miles to the east of Petticoat Bridge, Captain Ewald was reinforced with 50 more Hessian Grenadiers and took post at the "Bunting House" in the vicinity of Bustleton (modern day Florence). On the morning of the 23rd, American militia were

²⁰ Margaret Morris Diary.

²¹ Salvatore Gabriele, *The Battle of Iron Works Hill: The Forgotten Revolutionary War Battle of Mount Holly*. SoJourn Summer 2018.

spotted in a woodlot not far from the outpost. These men were possibly investigating the area on Griffin's orders or where local Burlington men acting on their own accord. In either case, a small scrap ensued in which Ewald and his guard drove the amateur soldiers away with the loss of several killed and wounded in exchange for the death of one Hessian and wounding of another. After pursuing this force, a short distance, Ewald was convinced the threat dispersed. No sooner had the scrap ended, then sounds of fighting, small arms and cannon in the direction of Slab Town could be heard. The noise was coming from Ewald's rear, which caused him to rush his command with hopes of coming upon the enemy's rear. By the time he arrived the grenadier battalions had driven back the militia to Mount Holly.²²

While Ewald was dealing with affairs west of Petticoat Bride, Colonel Donop could not let the routing of his outpost go unchecked. Upon hearing the shots fired at the outpost at the opening of battle on the 22nd, he quickly spurred his horse around and headed back to Black Horse, organizing his troops for an attack the next morning. On December 23rd, Donop launched a coordinated attack on the heavily outnumbered New Jersey militiamen who were holding the ridgeline behind the small creek. The fighting didn't last long; the militiamen had a full and impressive view of the deploying grenadier battalions in the open fields in front of them. Realizing to stay and fight would mean absolute destruction; Griffin withdrew his men after a brief firefight. As far as can be proven, only two militiamen Stephen Ford shot in the knee and Simon Lucas were wounded,²³ while two to three others were reported killed by Lieutenant Isaac Hickman

²² Ewald, Johann Von., and Joseph P. Tustin. *Diary of the American War*. 1979.

²³ Private Stephen Ford Pension Claim.

at the Petticoat Bridge portion of the fighting on the 23rd.²⁴ The Hessian and Scottish troops reported four men wounded in this first action of the day.²⁵ The Petticoat Bridge action was brief; however, it was only the beginning of a fight that would last all day. Essentially the American line along the creek was bait to draw the Hessian force further south into Mount Holly, putting more distance between them and the garrison at Trenton. Colonel Donop couldn't let this sizable militia force just escape; he needed to destroy them to avoid any further insurgencies in the upper end of Burlington County, and therefore decided to pursue the Americans back to Mount Holly. As Griffin pulled back, Donop prepared his men to follow and deliver what he hoped would be the final stroke.²⁶

With the Hessians pressing the American rearguard, Griffin's men had arrived in Mount Holly and immediately hunkered down behind their pre-built field works on Iron Works Hill while some gathered around the Meeting House. Behind the works was a woodlot, where Griffin concealed most of his troops. From this position, perched up on a high elevation the rebel troops would have a good vantage point to contest the approaching Hessian's.²⁷ Colonel Donop determined to conquer, wrote, "In order to get rid of these troublesome guests I marched early.....in the morning toward Mount Holly with the 42nd Regiment and the Block and Linsing battalions. I met several hundred

²⁴ Lieutenant Isaac Hickman Pension Claim.

²⁵ Fischer, 200.

²⁶ Rev. Dr. Norm Goos, Earl Cain, *The Skirmish at Petticoat Bridge: December 23, 1776*

²⁷ Fischer 200-201.

rebels in front near the Meeting House. They took to flight after firing a few shots and retired with the others towards Moorestown.”²⁸

Captain Ewald now with the main force along with Captain Lorey’s company of the 42nd were dispatched to the front to act as an advanced guard for the attacking troops. It didn’t take long to find the rebels. Colonel Donop used the church as a guiding point for his attack, and ordered the Linsing Battalion to form on his right flank and attack the rebel left at the church. To the left of the Linsing Battalion formed the Bloch Battalion, while on the far right Colonel Stirling formed his 42nd Regiment of Foot and Ewalds Jäegers. The plan called for the Linsing Battalion to attack in the direction of the Meetinghouse, with the Block Battalion guiding on them. While the Hessians were attacking, the 42nd Regiment and the Jäegers were to swing around the American left flank and cut off their retreat route to Iron Works Hill at the bridge that crossed the Rancocas, trapping the militiamen in Mount Holly.²⁹ However, an artillery duel would precede the attack, and as result, Griffin satisfied that he drew Donop away from Bordentown far enough, quietly withdrew his command into the woods and down to Moorestown.³⁰

Exhausted and feeling that he accomplished his objective, Donop chose to rest his men in Mount Holly. While there the Colonel who was known to have lust for women met and enjoyed the company of an unknown widow. This widow without knowing

²⁸ Salvatore Gabriele, *The Battle of Iron Works Hill: The Forgotten Revolutionary War Battle of Mount Holly*. SoJourn Summer 2018.

²⁹ Ewald, *Diary of the American War*. 1979.

³⁰ Salvatore Gabriele, *The Battle of Iron Works Hill: The Forgotten Revolutionary War Battle of Mount Holly*. SoJourn Summer 2018.

played just as big a role as Griffin and his men did in keeping Donop away from Bordentown. Tactically the Hessians had the better day, however, strategically the Americans now had the upper hand. Donop was now at least 20 miles from the garrison in Trenton, which meant he was at least a day's march away. Therefore, Donop and his men as long as they remained at Mount Holly were effectively unable to support the garrison in Trenton should it come under attack. The importance of December 23rd has been lost on many historians in their interpretation of the "10 Crucial Days," yet Ewald himself might have captured it's importance the best when he wrote: "This great misfortune, which surely caused the utter loss of the thirteen splendid provinces of the Crown of England, was due partly to the fault of Colonel Donop, who was led by the nose to Mount Holly by Colonel Griffin and detained there by love."³¹ Ultimately, General George Washington after hearing of the results of the actions at Petticoat Bridge and Ironworks Hill would launch his infamous attack on the Trenton garrison which many historians have recognized as the major turning point in the war for American independence. Although the struggle continued on for almost seven more years, there can be no question that the forgotten names and faces of South Jersey yeoman and farmers through their brave and heroic actions saved the American Revolution and kept the light of liberty burning.

³¹ Ewald, *Diary of the American War*. 1979.