

A CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ACCOUNT OF
GENERAL SIR WILLIAM HOWE'S
MILITARY OPERATIONS IN 1777

CONTRIBUTED BY ROBERT FRANCIS SEYBOLT

THE "Journal of the proceedings of the Army under the command of Sir W^m Howe in the year 1777" deserves a place among the documentary materials relating to the American Revolution.¹ Apparently, it is the diary of an officer attached to the British General Staff, an eye-witness of many of the events which he chronicles. The writer gives an abbreviated, but circumstantial account of General Howe's military operations from the beginning of the year 1777 to the capture of Fort Mifflin. Every engagement during this period, including the raids at Peekskill and Danbury, the Paoli "massacre," and many minor skirmishes, appears in his record. He enters the orders of the day, and comments on the tactics of the "rebels" and their desertions, the casualties on both sides, the nature of the country, the entry into Philadelphia and the appearance of the city. The battle of the Brandywine, the rout at Germantown, the attack on Red Bank, and the reduction of the American defences of the Delaware are described in detail. With its narrative of daily events, this little journal is an interesting supplement to the contemporary sources which have already been published.

Journal of the proceedings of the Army under the command of Sir W^m Howe in the year 1777.

It may be proper in the first place to mention the situation of the troops during the winter season. The army was in three

¹A small leather bound manuscript volume, in the Harvard College Library.

divisions,—one in York Island and its dependencies:—one at Rhode Island;—and the other, the most considerable, in New Jersey. The commander in chief resided in the city of New York. Lord Cornwallis commanded in the Jerseys; his lordships head quarters were at Brunswick, where the grenadiers of the whole army lay—from whence the troops formed a chain to Perth Amboy—occupying the landing or bridge, Piscataway, and Bonham town, besides other smaller posts on the bank of the Rariton river.—All strengthened by redouts and other field works.

Our line in the Jerseys, was upon first going into winter quarters, much more extended—It included Newark, Elizabeth town, Woodbridge, Princetown, and Trentown; but the infortunate affair that happened to the Hessians, under the command of colonel Rall just at the conclusion of the last year at Trentown¹—and the people of the country being found not so well affected to Government as they at first pretended to, the Gen^l thought it proper to bring his troops into a narrower compass; and thereby render them more compact, and capable of sustaining each other upon occasion. The rebels were scattered about the country, and took up their quarters in the different towns our troops had withdrawn from. They were frequently very troublesome to us, and every foraging party that went out, was pretty certain to have a skirmish with them—

Besides which, they made a practice of waylaying single persons, or very small bodies on the roads and killing them ^{like} from behind trees or other cover, in a most savage manner. Large detachments were often sent out to surprise them, and sometimes succeeded; but in general their fears kept them so alert that when we shewed in any force, they disappeared till we returned to our quarters. During the course of the winter, great numbers of the rebels (mostly irish) deserted to us—in consideration of which, if they brought their arms with them, they received dollars, and if without only ²; besides according to proclamation, they might either enlist into any of our

¹Colonel Rall was surprised at Trenton, by General Washington, on the morning of December 26, 1776.

²Blank spaces in the manuscript.

provincial corps (a number of which had been and were then raising) or be sent (at their option) home, at the governments expence orders were given for building thirty wood pontoons at New York, and a proper apparatus prepared for forming floating bridges; which we were at a great loss for in our march through the Jersies the last campaign. Likewise carriages were constructed for travelling twenty flat boats by land.

In the month of february, the flank companies of the regiments at Rhode Island were ordered from there, and joined the battalions of grenadiers and light infantry at Brunswick. And soon afterwards, one of the two companies of Artillery on the Island came away to New Yorke.

The beginning of March, the commander in chief visited the posts in New Jersey—he continued ten days at Brunswick, and if the roads had not then been unpassable for the artillery, it appeared that he meant to have made a push at the rebels; who were collecting themselves more together than hitherto.

The 22^d of march a detachment of five hundred ^{men} with four field pieces, under the command of Lieu^t Col. Bird, were sent in light vessels up the North or Hudsons river; in order to destroy a large magazine of stores and provisions, the rebels had formed at Peek Kill (fifty miles from New York) which was happily executed; and the detachment returned on the 26th without any loss.¹

The begining of April some pontoons were sent to Brunswick, and all officers belonging to the Jersies were ordered to join their respective regiments by the tenth of the month. This proved only a faint to take of the rebels attention from an expedition, that was going up the East river under the command of Major Gen^l Governor Tryon, together with Brigadiers S^r W^m Erskin and Agnew—This detachment consisted of

¹Lossing, B. J. *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (2 vols. N. Y., 1860), I, 741 (General McDougall's MS. Letter of March 29, 1777): "They had nine of their number killed in the skirmish with Willett, and four at the verge of the creek, while attempting to burn some boats. The Americans had one man killed by a cannon shot."

See also Sparks, Jared, editor. *The Writings of George Washington* (12 vols. Boston, 1834-37), IV, 371, n. Contemporary American and British accounts in Moore, F. editor. *Diary of the Revolution from newspapers and original documents* (2 vols. N. Y., 1863), I, 409-413; and Ford, P. L. editor. *The Journals of Hugh Gaine, Printer*. (2 vols. N. Y., 1902), I, 24.

two thousand men and six field pieces—they sailed from New York the 15th, landed about thirty miles up the river,¹ and marched immediately for Danbery thirty miles up in the country where the rebels had a considerable store; and entirely destroyed it, a large body of the rebels endeavoured to cut them off from their ships, and the country being by nature very strong and favourable to such designs harrassed our troops very much on their return; and the matter became very serious; which S^r W^m Erskine perceiving, with his usual spirit and alacrity easily prevailed upon the soldiers exhausted as they were with extream fatigue, to charge the enemy; this had the desired effect, and they no longer opposed the reimbarcation.²

Brunswick bridge (commonly called the landing) being a mile and a half above the town, it was determined after the river was clear of the ice and the freshes, to have a bridge thrown over at the town; and in order to shorten the communication with the posts on the other side, Piscataway, Bonham town &^o. As we had not a sufficient number of pontoons for the purpose, hollow piers composed of green logs were placed at twenty feet distance from each other, and joined at top with long spars, by way of sleepers, which were covered with what boards we could get, from barnes, stables &—and so formed a bridge in this manner³ of three hundred and ten yards long, with about one hundred men in ten days. In the meantime great preparations were making at New York for the ^{ensuing} campaign—the number of transports was increased ^{all the} and victualled for three months—and small craft that could be got was fitted up for the reception of the horses. A very large transport was cut down and prepared to mount sixteen twenty four pounders, and six nine pounders—the

¹Dawson, H. B. *Battles of the United States* (2 vols. N. Y., 1858), I, 212 (citing Gen. Howe's dispatch to Lord Geo. Germain, "N. York. April 24, 1777."): "He [Tryon] left New York, under convoy of two frigates on the twenty-third of April, and landed at Crompo Point (or Cedar Point, as it was sometimes called), about four miles east from Norwalk, on the afternoon and evening of the twenty-fifth of the same month."

See also *The Journals of Hugh Gaine, Printer, op. cit.*, I, 29-30.

²Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 216 (citing Lieut. Hall's *Civil War*, 279; Gordon, II, 466; *Connecticut Journal*, April 30, 1777): "The enemy lost about two hundred men, killed and wounded, including ten officers: the Americans, about twenty killed and forty wounded."

³Pen and ink sketch in original manuscript.

vessels draft being but small she will be useful in shoal water, where our men of war cannot come.

The begining of June, twenty flat boats came up the Rariton river to Brunswick, and were immediately mounted upon their travelling carriages, ready for a march. A great number of horses and waggons were also sent from Long and Staten Islands, for stores and baggage.

On the 9th June, the commander in chief arrived in New Jersey; and a few days after, the troops marched from Brunswick, with twelve pontoons, leaving the flat boats behind. The front of the army halted a little beyond Sommerset court house, in Hillsborough township, about ten miles advanced; and the head quarters were taken up at Middlebush. Nothing material happened here—some of our flanking parties now and then skermished with detached bodies of the rebels, but their main force kept at a distance, very strongly situated amongst the blue mountains, where they had taken post some time before. Orders were given for throwing up some redouts—three at middle bush, and one farther on the road, near sommerset court house. These works we looked upon as intended posts of communication, when the army should move forward—but before they were compleated the work was suddenly stopped; and the fifth day we returned to Brunswick. M^r. Washington did not seem inclined to quit his strong situation, and meet us in the field—and perhaps it was thought advisable to attack him there. The day after our return the pontoons were sent under a strong escort to Amboy, and immediately embarked on board a ship waiting there for them. The next day the stores and baggage were sent, and the day following the troops quited Brunswick. Some parties of the rebels hung upon our rear at first, but did us no damage. On the arrival of the troops at Amboy, the baggage waggons &^c were conveyed across the ferry to Staten Island as fast as possible—Whilst this was doing, intelligence was brought that very large bodies of the rebels were coming down and were near at hand—Upon which the troops (leaving a sufficient number to guard Amboy) were ordered to advance in three columns, by different ways; in hopes of geting round them. Lord Cornwallis fel in with a body of them, between two and three thousand

under the command of Lord Sterling (as he is called here)—they were very soon dispersed with considerable loss of killed and wounded, and three pieces of their cannon taken with seventy prisoners.¹ It seems M^r Washington had not moved his main body, which consisted of about eight thousand men, as was at first imagined, and much wished for—therefore the troops again returned to Amboy. The stores and baggage being by this time all got over to Staten Island, the troops immediately followed—marched across the Island, and encamped near the watering place, when the ships were ordered to rendezvous to receive them.

On the 8th of July they began to embark. Just at this time Sir Henry Clinton arrived from England²; and during the commander in chiefs absence, he was in orders to take the command of York Island and its dependences, together with Rhode Island. An express arrived from Rhode Island, with an account of Major General Prescotts being surprised there in the night, and carried off prisoner, by a small party of the rebels.³

On the 21st July the fleet weighed anchor and dropped down to the hook. It consisted of two hundred and sixty sail including the horse vessels—And according to the imbarcation list, there were on board twenty seven battalions of British, and eight ^{of} foreigners; one regiment of light dragoons; a detachment of Artillery, consisting of five hundred and fifty men; a corps of british rifle men, the Queens rangers, and four comp^{ies} of Pioneers.⁵ The wind being unfavourable the fleet did not sail till the 23^d; and on the 28th we were close in with

¹Greene, F. V. *The Revolutionary War and the Military Policy of the United States* (N. Y., 1911), 81, says that Howe "drove Stirling back." Lossing, *op. cit.*, I, 331: "On the approach of Cornwallis with a considerable force, Stirling retreated to his camp with considerable loss."

²Clinton arrived in New York, July 5, 1777, with Lord Rawdon. He succeeded General Howe as commander-in-chief, May 11, 1778.

³Major General Robert Prescott, was captured at his headquarters near Newport, R. I., July 10, 1777, by a detachment under the command of Colonel Barton.

⁴Elking, Max von. *The German allied troops in the North American War of Independence* (Trans. by Rosengarten, J. G. Albany, 1893), 109: "the fleet of 264 sail started." Greene, *op. cit.*, 82: "Howe returned to Staten Island, put his troops on board transports and men-of-war, 228 in number." Lowell, E. J. *The Hessians and the other German Auxiliaries of Great Britain in the Revolutionary War* (N. Y., 1884), 197: "The fleet of two hundred and thirty-four sail arrived off Cape May on the 30th of July."

⁵Elking, *op. cit.*, 109: "The army numbered 17,000 men." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 168: "eighteen thousand strong." Lowell, *op. cit.*, 197: "The force consisted of about eighteen thousand men, of whom less than a quarter were Germans."

the southern cape (Henlopen) of the Delaware bay; which we imagined we were to run up immediately, but the roebuck man of war came down from her station there and spoke to the admiral (Lord Howe) which seemed to occasion a delay—we stood off and on the cape all the next day, and then stretched out again—the Roebuck accompanying the fleet. The wind continuing unfavourable, with frequent thunder squalls, we did not reach cape Charles, the southern one of Virginia, till the 13 of August; then stood up Chesapeak bay: which is a wonderful inland navigation, of one hundred and sixty miles long, with almost an innumerable numbers of rivers falling into it, some of which are very considerable indeed. Great precautions were taken, and the fleet admirably well conducted up the bay; much to the honour even of Lord Howe himself. We past close to the town of Annapolis in Maryland; the rebels there had the impudence to hoist two of their flags, but no notice was taken of them—

On the 23^d the fleet came to anchor off Turkey point, at the head of the bay—and on the 25th, by three o'clock in the morning, the first division of the troops got into the flat boats, and proceeded up Elk river; they were followed by the other two divisions in their transports. A number of sloops of war, and frigates attended the boats—the Vigilant (the large transport that had been fitted at New York and made a Kings ship of) lead the way, with the Admirals flag on board her.

Opposite to Cecil court house, about twelve miles up the river, the troops landed, without any kind of obstruction. Two days were taken up in landing horses, stores, provisions &c.—On the 28th the commander in chief, with the most considerable part of the army, advanced towards the head of Elk; leaving General Knyphausen with his own corps, and a brigade of british to cross the river, and come up on the other side of it. The head quarters were taken up at Elk town, about seven miles from our landing—but we had a post two miles farther, on Greys hill; where about thirty of the rebel light horse had shewn themselves in the morning. It seems M^r Washington had been in the town a day or two before with only a reconoitering party.¹ This place was almost ^{intirely} deserted by

¹Elking, *op. cit.*, 110: "On the morning of the 28th, a small knot of American officers were seen reconnoitering, and Washington was recognized at their head."

its inhabitants, and they had carried away all their effects with them. Here it was necessary to halt a few days, to refresh the horses; for they had suffered very much and many of them lost on the passage—besides getting other matters in marching order. The fleet were directed to wood and water ready for sea—It is thought their ships are going round to meet us up the Delaware river.

On the 3^d of September, Major Gen^l Grant being ordered with a considerable detachment, taken from the different brigades, to remain at the head of Elk—The commander in chief advanced, about seven miles, on the road towards Cristeen bridge.¹ At the entrance of a wood, five miles from town, the rebels began to fire upon the advanced corps of Rangers and Chasseurs; and a smart skermish continued for some time; till a few shots from one of our field pieces drove the rebels entirely off. The first battalion of light infantry endeavoured to turn their left flank, and just when they thought it was compleated unluckily met with an unpassable swamp, and were obliged to return by the way they went. This part of the rebels was a detachment of fifteen hundred men (according to their own account); seven hundred of which were picked, from their different brigades; to check our passage through the wood, and at iron hill, a post just by it. When the party in the wood gave way, those on the hill immediately abandoned it, and we took possession without any trouble. The rebels in this affair had upwards of thirty men killed. Our loss was trifling.² An elbow of the Delaware river (at Reedy Island) is seen from iron hill, about seven miles distant. A little in front is Goughs Mill and bridge, over a part of cristeen creek—the light infantry were posted beyond the bridge, and our line extended thence backwards, to one Aikins house, the present head quarters, between four and five miles from Elk; and there we halted a few days.

General Knyphausen's detachment came up, and brought with them a number of horses, and cattle for the use of the army.

¹Christiana.

²Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 170: "the patriots lost forty in killed and wounded." Lowell, *op. cit.*, 197: "On the 3d of September the chasseurs forming the advance guard had a sharp skirmish with the American rear-guard, losing about twenty men killed and wounded. Between thirty and forty Americans were buried on the field."

Sept^r 4th All the soldiers with what baggage could possibly be spared by the officers, were sent to the head of Elk, in order to be conveyed on board the ships, and the waggons returned loaded with provisions and rum. It is said that the main body of the rebels are between white clay creek, and the brandy wine—and they have a small detachment only at Cristeen bridge, on the road to Newcastle. This part of the country is mostly in its natural state, and the houses are but thinly scattered; they are in general new and neatly built of brick, but the inhabitants have totally deserted them, and carried off all (or as much as they possibly could) of their stock. This is chiefly owing to the false representations the rebels make of our army, and terrify the country people out of their senses.

The 6th General Grant with troops under his command, came up from the head of Elk, and joined the army.

7th In this mornings orders, the army is put into three divisions—1st commanded by Lord Cornwallis; 2^d Major Gen^l Grant; 3^d, Lieut Gen^l Knyphausen; and to be in readiness for marching at an hours notice. Several of the rebel light horse have lately deserted to us—some of them very well appointed.

8th At day break the army marched, turning at the bridge to the left and about noon halted at Cascat in Newcastle county. Here it was reported that the rebels had taken post at the Brandy wine creek.

The 9th, Gen^l Grants division was ordered to join Gen. Knyphausen's, and the army to march in two columns. This evening they moved by different roads—the first column, which the commander in chief was with in person, halted at a place called Ocassan¹ a quakers meeting house, on an elevated situation, little more than two miles from Cascat. Here the rebels had a body of their forces, consisting (as the quakers told us) of fifty or sixty light horse and about a thousand foot. They were but just got away, for many of their fires were still burning when we arrived.

The next morning, this column marched through Newark, directly to Kennet square in Chester county, where General Knyphausen was already arrived, with the baggage of the

¹Hockessin.

army and provision train. Certain information was given of the rebels being only six miles off, on the other side the brandy wine creek—where M^r. Washington with all his force was very strongly posted. Orders were given this evening for the army to march at four o'clock next morning.

11th The commander in chief, with Lord Cornwallis's column, marched by the high road (for there are three that cross the brandy wine creek from Kennet square) taking a large sweep, in order to get round the rebels right flank; whilst Lieu^t. Gen^l. Knyphausen together with Major Gen^l. Grant, advanced by the (lower or) most direct road for Shadd's ford.¹ General Knyphausen's advanced corps soon fell in with large parties of the rebels, that occupied a wood between us and the Creek—A very severe skirmish ensued in which the british rifle men and Queens rangers distinguished themselves much to their honour; and dislodged the rebels with the points of their bayonets. The troops then took post upon the heights along the Creek, and the guns were placed upon the most commanding spots to cover their passage over it, and silence the enemy's batteries on the other side. In this situation we waited some hours for Lord Cornwallis's column—but were by no means idle during that time—a smart cannonade was kept up—and upon our right the rebels had still a post, which was very troublesome to us; till the 10th regiment charged and drove them intirely over.

On the other side the Creek, and directly opposite to us, the rebels presented themselves, drawn up in order of battle—With every advantage in point of situation that nature could well afford—The ground is extremely broken and the risings from the creek (some of very considerable height) most happily disposed for defence—flanking the vallies between them, and covering a morass in their front. The commander in chief, at the head of the first column, got round about four o'clock in the afternoon—having marched seventeen miles of very dusty road. The account of this columns magnitude perplexed the rebels very much—as they expected a faint only here, whilst the principal attack was carrying on at their front. This we (in the second column) perceived very plainly by their with-

¹Chadd's Ford.

drawing immediately several battalions from thence, to re-enforce their flank, and form a front sufficiently strong beyond the village of Dillworth—The situation was indeed very favourable (as the country is in general to those on the defensive) and they had a strong battery before them. The column formed the line within about half a mile of the rebels. The foot guards on the right; the light infantry with other corps on the left; and the Grenadiers in the center—They advanced with such impetuosity, that the right wing had scarce time to get up before the enemy broke—but on our left, there was a much more severe struggle; the rebels being strongest, and most obstinate in that part—however at last they gave way to the bayonet.

General Knyphausen (tho' perhaps it might with propriety have been done sooner) gave orders for the english regiments of his column, to advance, and cross the creek—A most violent cannonade commenced from our side, and continued till the head (fourth regim^t) of the attack appeared close in with their first battery. The light artillery immediately passed over and played upon some rebel pieces situated on a retired hill at their left flank, that gauled us much at first.

The rebels now gave way on all sides—but it growing dark, together with the vast fatigue the first column had gone through, prevented any farther pursuits, and our troops took post upon the field of battle. The hessians were to have supported the british, but as there was no occasion for their assistance, they had not the least share in this victory—having fired neither gun or musket ^{shot whole} the day.¹ The numbers of the rebels are not clearly ascertained, but the lowest account makes them out eighteen thousand—twelve of which were continental (or their regulars) and the rest militia—with sixty two pieces of ordnance.² It is impossible to say what number of them was killed and wounded, as they constantly carry off

¹Lowell, *op. cit.*, 199: "There were Hessian soldiers on this day in both columns of the British army." Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 274-276; Eelking, *op. cit.*, 111-113; Greene, *op. cit.*, 84-87; and Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 175 state that the Hessians were actively engaged.

²Howe's dispatch to Lord Geo. Germain, Oct. 10, 1777 (quoted by Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 281-283): "the strength of the enemy . . . was not less than fifteen thousand men." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 178: "The British effective force, on the day of the battle, was probably not less than seventeen thousand men, and that of the Americans did not exceed eleven thousand.

so many as they can, to hide their misfortunes from the rest—A thousand we may say to be sure. We have taken eleven pieces of artillery including one royal howit—five french guns; two hessian, that were lost at Trentown last year; one english, and the others of their own casting at Philadelphia. Our loss consisted of sixty four killed, with three hundred and twenty wounded.¹

The number of prisoniers taken in the whole amounts to about six hundred and upwards.

12th The first and second brigade advanced within five miles of Chester, which is situated on the banks of the Delaware river, about sixteen miles below Philadelphia.

13th The Grenadiers and light infantry commanded by Lord Cornwallis, proceeded within two miles and a half of Chester; and some advanced parties went close up to the town, but found no one in arms there, as was reported. It seems the rebels after their defeat were to have assembled here—but their fears never suffered them to halt, till they got across the schuykill river, which falls into the delaware a few miles below Philadelphia.

14th The sick and wounded were escorted to Willmington (a few miles below Chester); near which we have a squadron of men of war; and the general hospital is established there.

16th The army marched by cross roads, and was joined on the way by Lord Cornwallis's and Gen^l Grants detachments. A most violent storm of rain prevented our getting farther than ^{the boat at} Goshen, in west white land township. Had some skermishing with parties of the rebels, from a brigade they have about here, commanded by one Waien.²

17th The rain incessant the whole of last night, and all this morning. Lord Cornwallis has however moved a little forward.

¹Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 278: "General Howe reported to his government a loss of ninety killed, four hundred and eighty-eight wounded, and six missing. General Washington, from the disconnected condition of the army, found it impossible to make a return of his loss." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 178, n. 2.: "General Greene estimated the loss of the Americans in killed, wounded, and prisoners, at about 1200; that of the royal army nearly 800. Howe . . . stated the loss of the Americans at 300 killed, 600 wounded, and 400 taken prisoners; about the number estimated by Greene." This statement appears also in Gordon, W. *The history of the rise, progress, and establishment of the independence of the United States of America* (3 vols. N. Y., 1801), II, 226; and in Marshall, J. *The Life of George Washington* (5 vols. Phila., 1804-07), III, 150.

²Major General Anthony Wayne.

This rain has been very unlucky to us, for we understand now, that had we been able to have proceeded yesterday, we should have fallen unawares upon M^r Washington; who was it seems on the Lancaster road, within a very few miles of us—but upon hearing of the armies being so near him, he faced about (leaving M^r Wain to watch our motions), and made the best of his way back, in the midst of the storm. He had the advantage of being upon the main road, provided with the best horses and carriages in the country; therefore it was impossible in our situation, to get up with him.

17th The army marched before daybreak, and got into the great road from Philadelphia to Lancaster at the white horse, which is twenty miles westward of Philadelphia. Here the rebels had their advanced brigades the night before. Lord Cornwallis joined; but soon after his Lordships column took an other road—however the army united again at a place called Trygiffen, a welch settlement, about three miles short of the great valley ford, over the Schuylkill river.¹

19. The army ordered to march tomorrow at daybreak. This evening some of the grenadiers and light infantry are to take post on the banks of the schuylkill.

20th The army did not march, but a number of waggons were sent for a large quantity of flour that had been discovered in a rebel store. The foot guards moved this morning near to the river.

21. A considerable detachment under the command of Major Gen^l Grey, went out last night on the intelligence of M^r Wains being very near us, (who has endeavoured for some days past to be troublesome to the baggage and rear guard) and compleatly surprised him—Upwards of three hundred of the rebels were bayoneted, besides other killed and wounded in their flight by the light dragoons: about sixty were taken prisoners, with a number of arms and quantity of baggage.²

¹Tredyffrin (Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 313), Tryduffin (Marshall, *op. cit.*, III, 159).

²The Paoli "massacre." Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 315: "Gen. Wayne says his loss was about a hundred and fifty killed and wounded." Marshall, *op. cit.*, III, 161: "The British accounts represent the American loss to have been much more considerable. It probably amounted to at least three hundred men." Gen. Howe's dispatch to Lord George Germain, Oct. 10, 1777 (Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 317; Greene, *op. cit.*, 88): "killed and wounded not less than three hundred on the spot, taking between seventy and eighty prisoners, including several officers." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 164: "One hundred and fifty Americans were killed and wounded in this onslaught . . . The loss of the British was inconsiderable; only one captain of light infantry and three privates were killed, and four men wounded."

The army marched this morning and past Valley forge, where the rebels have a large iron works, and some saw mills, on a small creek that falls into the schuylkill—and here they have a large store of iron shot, tom hawks, kettles, axes, &c &c—besides above four thousand barrels of four.

The army halted this evening on the banks of the river, the headquarters at Charlestown. We are making preparations at the forge for throwing a bridge over the river.

22^d M^r Washington instead of opposing our passage over the Schuylkill, as was reported he intended, is now said to be on his march towards Reading; which is fifty six miles to the northward of Philadelphia. We do not imagine there will be any occasion for a bridge, tho' the river is rapid; places sufficiently shallow have been discovered.

Some hessian grenadiers and Yagers past over the river this evening, a little above headquarters, and took post without opposition. The army is directed by the evenings orders, to march tonight as soon as the moon rises.

23^d The whole army past over the Schuylkill at great valley ford, and halted about noon—the head quarters at Norrenton, seventeen miles from Philadelphia. We distroyed the forge and saw mills before we left them, and the soldiers supplied themselves with the articles there designed for the rebel forces.

The rebels expecting that we should attempt to pass over the river at Sweeds ford (six miles lower down than we did) had made a breast work and placed some iron guns there. We knocked of their trunnions, and burnt their carriages; also destroyed a powder mill situated near the ford.

The country makes a much better appearance on this side of the river than any we have seen on the other; which indeed is easily accounted for; as being so much nearer to the capital of the province.

24th We hear that M^r Washington is at Pottsgrove, about twenty six miles on the Reading road; and that the congress are fled there from Philadelphia. The Army to march tomorrow by daybreak.

25th The army moved this morning in two columns—Lord Cornwallis by the higher, and L^t Gen^l Knyphausen by the

lower road to German town, where the army^{halted} and took^{a position} within five miles of Philadelphia. The rebel galleys are getting down the river below the city.

26th This morning at eight o'clock, the british and hessian grenadiers under the command of Lord Cornwallis, preceeded by six medium twelve pounders, and four royal howitzers; marched in a kind of procession (with bands of music playing before them), and took possession of the city of Philadelphia. The rebels had not erected any kind of fortifications here— We found between twenty and thirty iron guns disposed about, but their military stores they had conveyed away, probably to the Jerseys, or on board their vessels in the river. This city is large, the streets spacious and regularly laid out, at right angles, and parallel to each other which together with the houses being built of good coloured bricks, gives it a very neat appearance in general. Its situation, however, so closely

^{as it is} pent up^{as it is} between two fresh water rivers (the Delaware and schuylkill) makes it unhealthy. The usual number of inhabitants are estimated at thirty three thousand, one third of which are said to have evacuated the city on various accounts, some engaged in the rebellion, some carried away by force, and others retired from the persecutions of the rebels; which has by all reports been very grievous to those not inclined to their infamous cause. The rebels have endeavoured with vast labour and expence, to stop up the navigation of the delaware river; by sinking several ranges of a kind of chevaux de frise across the channel: to prevent our fleet from getting up to the city. A number of small islands that extend from the mouth of the schuylkill, favoured this design very much. The first range runs from little Tennicomb Island (about ten miles below the city) across to the Jersey shore; where there is a large battery to protect it, called Billens fort. The second range is about two miles higher up—nine hundred yards below Mud Island, where the rebels have a considerable work called Miffens fort—But afterwards thinking this as too great a

distance; they sunk a couple of piers nearer^{to the fort} including that part of the channel and fixed a boom across—besides^{having} another range of chevaux de frise ready to sink occasionally—

This kind of chevoux de frise consists of a large timber, like the main mast of a ship at the top of which, are three branches armed and pointed with iron, spreading out fanwise in this manner¹ fifteen feet asunder. The main beam is fixt at an elevation to the frame of a float or stage, composed of vast logs, bound together as fast as possible; then covered with plank to top, and calked. When this machine is towed to its place, it is loaded with about thirty tuns of stones, secured in cases, which by takeing the plugs out of the deck, to admit the water into the float, sinks it down, and keeps it firm and steady. It then makes this appearance in profil¹—the points of the branches about six or seven feet under the surface of the water; and they spread in front thirty feet. A row of these chevaux de frise are sunk sixty feet asunder from each other and another row behind in their intervals, to form a range.²

Near to Mud Island, and just above the upper chevaux de frise, the rebel fleet are lying—and consist of the delaware frigate of twenty eight guns, 12 & 9 pounders, the province ship, of eighteen 9 pounders, two large briggs, of sixteen and ten guns; one schooner, of ten guns; two sloops, of ten and eight guns; two Zebic's of ten guns each³; eight smaller armed vessels; thirteen gallies, each one 18 pounder on board; two floating batteries, of ten and nine 18 pounders, seventeen fire vessels, besides a great number of fire rafts.

High up the river near Burlington, they have two large new frigates, the Effingham and Washington; but neither of them are maned or compleat with guns.

27th This morning two rebel frigates with a tender, and three gallies, came up the river, in order to cannonade the city—but we played upon them so successfully, with only four medium twelve pounders, and one royal howitzer, as to oblige them to give up their design. The frigates came pretty close up to the town, whilst the tender and gallies kepted on the Jersey side of Wind mill island. The tenders foremost was

¹Pen and ink sketch in original manuscript.

²See Ford, W. C. *Defences of Philadelphia* (Brooklyn, N. Y., 1897). Greene, *op. cit.*, 84: detail map of Delaware River, showing disposition of chevaux de frise, forts, and ships. Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 86: description, with pictures, of the chevaux de frise.

³Xebecks, Xebeques.

soon shot away, and the rebels ran her on shore—The headmost frigate in changing her broadside, mist stays, and in attempting to ware her, she touched the ground—this alarmed them so much, together with the hot fire, and number of shots and shells that had taken place in her, induced them to strike their colours: and she turns out to be the delaware. The other frigate, called the province ship, seeing her consorts situation; and being much damaged herself, as well as the gallies; they all got off as fast as they could back to their fleet. A flag of truce was sent down to the rebel fleet this afternoon, to let them know, that if they did not surrender themselves now—hereafter they must expect no quarter—To which they returned for answer—that they held us at defiance. Three barbet batteries were finished this day, for the protection of the city, against any farther attempts from the rebel fleet.

28th The commander in chief visited the city, and reconnoitred the situation.

29th A lieutenant of the navy, and fifty sea men arrived (by land without any opposition) from Chester—where the Roebuck (a forty gun ship) now is, with six frigates—Then people were sent express for, to man the delaware prise. This afternoon, the 10th and 42^d Regiments moved from the camp at German town, over the schuylkill ferry, towards Chester. Some of the rebel militia are a little troublesome now and then to our out picquets, but we have been otherwise very quiet. M^r Washington said to be moving this way, but these vague reports there is no dependence upon. An armed cutter deserted this evening from the chevaux de frise to us, as did also the crew of one of their gallies.

30th Last night the rebels attempted to distroy our men of war lying at Chester—they chained four fire rafts together, and made a good disposition with some of their fire vessels, and gallies—but being too late for the tide, they drove back; and had it not been for the alertness of a master of one of the gallies, would have burnt their own fleet. This man seeing the danger, went in his boat to the rafts—boldly jumped on board, and cut the lashing that suspended the anchor; by which he brought them up. In the mean time the boats were rowed

off, and deserted to us, leaving their master on the burning raft.

October 1st The 10th and 42^d Regiments immediately on their arrival at Chester, embarked on board the men of war there, and this day at noon were conveyed over the Delaware to the Jersey shore in order to attack Billins fort. It was this embarkation induced the rebels to try what they could do, with their fire rafts.

2^d Billins fort taken—the rebels made little or no opposition and deserted it. Some redoubts are constructing just without the city, to command the principal avenues leading to it from the country.

3^d Two lieutenants of the rebel galleys, with thirty five men, deserted to us today; and report that many more of them only want an opportunity, to follow their example.

4th This morning by break of day, M^r Washington with all the force he could collect, amounting to upwards of twelve thousand men, having made a forced march, attacked our camp at German town in several places at the same time. His center column fell upon the second battalion of light infantry, posted in front of Beggantown (a continuation of German town)—this battalion alone kept them at bay for above an hour, till being outflanked on both sides, and nearly surrounded, they retired towards the line. The fortieth regiment, in their rear, threw six companies into a gentlemans house (M^r Chews) near the road¹—where they defended themselves a very considerable while, against all the rebels efforts to dislodge them—in the mean time some troops advanced from the line, and beat them entirely off—The right and left attack, meeting with the same reception; their rout became general; and some of our troops pursued them to a considerable distance; tho' not so far as could have been wished, on account of the uncertain situation some of our brigades were in: which could not be easily discovered, for a very thick fog that prevailed all morning. Numbers of the rebels must have been killed and wounded, we took 350 prisoners. Our loss amounted to forty killed (amongst which were Brigadier Agnew and L^t Col. Bird) and near three hun-

¹Benjamin Chew, Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

dred wounded.¹ M^r Washington certainly timed this attack well—the fog covered his approach—all the grenadiers of the army were at Philadelphia, and we had several considerable parties abroad—Circumstances which no doubt but he was acquaint^d with, and induced him to ^{make} the trial.

5th It is this morning reported that our ships have got up some of the first range of the chevaux de frise, a considerable firing was heard last night down the river which makes it very probable. A battery is erecting for two medium 12 pounders on Gloucester point near the mouth of the schuylkill; to protect it, and the ferry over to province Island, from the rebel gallies.

6th Two 7 inch mortars and two howitzers were brought up from on board the ordnance transports at Chester. Lord Howe is arrived there, and the fleet are expected very soon. A small passage is cleared through the first range of chevaux de frise, and the ships are at work upon the second—the rebel gallies keep up a hot fire upon them, but with little effect.

M^r Washington is said to be near the thirty five mile stone, at a place called the Trap, on the reading road.

The 10th and 42^d regiments are just returned from their expedition from Billins fort, which they have destroyed.

covered by a detachment of grenadiers

10th A working party [^]past over last night to province island, in order to erect some batteries against fort Mifflin (as the rebels call it) on Mud Island.

11th An alteration was made early this morning in the disposition of the army, the park of artillery and some brigades changed their ground. The commander in chief also moved his quarters, to a house more in front, near the market place at German town. The rebels have kept up a very heavy fire

¹Gen. Sullivan's letter to the President of New Hampshire, Oct. 25, 1777 (Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 326-328): "Our loss in the action amounts to less than seven hundred, mostly wounded." Gen. Howe's dispatch to Lord George Germain, Oct. 10, 1777 (Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 330-331): "By the best accounts, the loss [American] was between two hundred and three hundred killed, about six hundred wounded, and upwards of four hundred taken." Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 324 (citing "Return No. 3 appended to Gen. Howe's dispatch"): "The returns of General Howe show the enemy's loss to have been five hundred and thirty five." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 112, n. 4: "According to the report of the Board of War, the Americans lost . . . Total of killed, 152; of wounded, 521."

from the fort and galleys ever since daybreak; and a party of them landed under our intended batteries, in consequence of a flag of truce held out by the commanding officer of infantry there. An artillery soldier (for there was already one gun brought down) repeatedly attempted to put the white handkerchief away till the officer threatened him with immediate death. This man with some others then left the battery—in

the mean time, the alarm being spread ^{and} a detachment of hessian grenadiers coming down—the rebels made off; carrying with them two officers and about thirty men.

12th A redout for two hundred men, is now constructing on province island, for the support of the batteries. The rebels made another attempt to land this morning—but were immediately drove off. They kept up a constant fire upon us, from their galleys, floating batteries, and Mud Island.

14th Three batteries were opened on province island, consisting of two 8 inch howitzers, two 8 inch mortars, two medium 12 pounders, and two iron rebel 18 pounders. We soon obliged them to move all their vessels, and floating batteries, close under red bank; where they have now a strong post on the Jersey shore opposite to Mud island. Unfortunately one of the 18 pounders burst, and hurt several men on the battery.

18th Lord Roden,¹ aid de camp to Lieu^t general Sir Henry Clinton, arrived with an account of Sir Henrys having moved from New York, up the north river with three thousand men—and taken forts Montgomery, Independence, Clinton and Constitution by storm.

19th The army broke up their camp at German town, and took post near the city, behind the redouts; the line extending from the Delaware to the schuylkill rivers. We have lately fired but little at the fort, on account of the scarcity of ammunition—and indeed, till some men of war can get up to our assistance it appears to be only throwing away powder and shot, to no kind of purpose.

20th Some flat bottomed boats came up from the fleet in the night, with ammunition, and a thirteen inch mortar, to throw pound shot into the fort.²

¹Lord Rawdon.

²Blank space in the manuscript.

21st: A detachment of sixteen hundred hessian troops, under the command of Colonel Donop, and two english royal howitzers directed by Captain Downman, were conveyed by the flat boats over to the Jersey side, in order to attack red bank.

22^d: A detachment of grenadiers are ordered to be in readiness to storm fort Mifflin. The men of war having made their way through the second range of chevaux de frise; some of them are expected up the next tide, as high as the last range will permit.

23^d: Yesterday evening colonel Donop made his attack upon red bank, and drove the rebels from their outer works, but was in the sequel repulsed; with the loss of upwards of three hundred men killed and wounded—himself being amongst the latter, and left behind as dying.¹ This morning very early the first battalion of light infantry was sent over to Jersey, in order to cover the retreat of the hessians, and bring them off.

The augusta of sixty four guns, with the Roebuck of forty, and the marlin sloop of war, came up within less than a mile of Mud Island, this mornings tide; and began a smart cannonade—which was returned from the fort, floating, batteries, and gallies, by the rebels—They also sent down four fire ships, which being badly directed, and worse fitted out, did not the least damage—but unfortunately, by some accident on board, the augusta took fire, and was intirely distroyed—The crew suffered extreamly in their boat by the rebels inhuman fire upon them. The merlin sloop got around at high water, and was obliged to be burnt, to prevent the rebels taking possession of her—The roebuck after receiving the two ships crews on board, dropt down the river again. The grenadiers ordered to be in readiness to storm the fort, were countermanded, and so

¹Sam. Ward's letter to Gen. Washington, Oct. 23, 1777 (Dawson, *op. cit.*, I, 355): "The enemy's loss amounts to one lieutenant-colonel, three captains, four lieutenants, and near seventy killed; and the Baron Donop, his brigade-major, a captain, lieutenant, and upwards of seventy non-commissioned officers and privates, wounded and taken prisoners." Lossing, *op. cit.*, II, 88: "Marshall estimates it [British loss] at four hundred in killed and wounded . . . The loss of the Americans within the fort was eight men killed, twenty-nine wounded, and a captain taken prisoner while reconnoitering." Lowell, *op. cit.*, 207-208 (citing "Knyphausen's official report in the archives at Marburg; and the American official report, Washington, vol. v. p. 112, note"): "The number of Hessians killed, wounded, and taken at Redbank was three hundred and seventy-one including twenty-two officers. The Americans had thirty-seven killed and wounded."

ended this mornings business. This has been a most unlucky affair all together. The detachment that destroyed Billins fort (if they had had orders for it) might have taken red bank, without loosing one man, a fortnight ago; when the rebels had scarcely anybody there.

It is indeed surprising this precaution was not taken—as that post is immediately opposite to Mud Island, and in some measure commands the channel between them; where the rebel vessels now lie in security (with a range of chevaux de frise before them): which would in that case been impossible, and the island must have fallen of course. This circumstance surely was seen thorough—perhaps it was held too cheap; which is often a dangerous breach in a maxim of war—and gives consequence where it never existed before.

The attack also at red bank, appears to have been carried on with more resolution than conduct—for had colonel Donop contented himself for the present, with securing a lodgement in the outer work, and covered his flank from the fire of the rebel gallies, to which he was much exposed—he might very soon in that situation, by throwing a few shells from the howitzers into the work, have obliged them to surrender it to him. Besides this mistake the hessian officers themselves say, that they were not provided with proper implements for a storm; not even axes or saws to cut down the frise that runs round the parapet.

31st Nothing material has happened since the 23^d—the flat bottomed boats bring up salt provisions from the fleet almost every night, without molestation. Two floating batteries are preparing to carry two 24 pounders each; and some men of war are expected up very soon to make an other attack upon the rebel fleet and fort.

M^r Washington is said to be about sixteen miles of—he has been very quiet since the german town affair. An express is arrived from General Burgoyne, with an account of his having been obliged, from untoward circumstances, after fighting the rebels twice at vast odds, to sign on the 20th of October a convention; by which himself and army, are not to serve against the Americans during the present contest.

A violent storm of rain fell a few days ago, which swelled the

schuylkill river so much, as to carry away a bridge, we had formed of common boats, at the middle ferry.

Province island was intirely overflowed (for it is but a marsh) which distressed our troops there most exceedingly, and damaged most of the ammunition at the batteries. The engineers are very busy compleating a chain of redouts (ten in number), extending a long the front of the line, from the Delaware to the schuylkill; being two miles and near a quarter—the whole is to be abbitied.

November 3^d A large working party is gone this evening to erect a battery, for six 24 pounders, on province island, as near as possible to Mifflin fort—about seven hundred yards and upwards. Five regiments, one of the light dragoons, are just arrived in the river from New York, under the command of Sir Thomas Willson and brigadiers Leslie and Pattison.

Orders are given for a new bridge to be immediately thrown over the schuylkill, at the middle ferry; and as the pontoons cannot be got up from the fleet, it is to be formed upon any logs of timber—for which purpose, all the large masts lying in the different docks and slips are to be cut up. It will make this appearance;¹ and be composed of several lengths of forty four feet each joined together by lashings; so as to be easily taken up, either intire, or any part of it at pleasure.

10th The floating batteries are launched, but do not answer the intention, for want of a sufficient capacity to support so great a weight which the projector, who ever he is, does not seem to know how to calculate or acquainted with specific gravities—otherwise he could not have been so very much out.

We hear that M^r Washington is sending away his heavy baggage towards east town, at the forks of the Delaware.

The new battery is opened, and continues to play upon the fort, but the contrary winds have hitherto prevented the men of war from getting up. We have now sixteen pieces of ordnance—guns, mortars, and howitzers against the fort.

15th This morning the sommerset of sixty four guns, the Isis of fifty four, and the Roebuck, came up to the Chevaux de frise, and began a heavy cannonade—In the mean time, the Vigilant with twenty two 24 and 9 pounders, together with a

¹Sketch omitted from manuscript.

small sloop which had some 24 pounders put on board for the occasion, got up near to the fort, by a small channel between it and province island—The fire became now so hot and in such a number of directions, from our batteries and the ships, that the fort was totally silenced by noon. The grenadiers were to have stormed it the next morning, but the rebels between eleven and twelve at night—set fire to their remaining barracks, and retired in boats to red bank.¹

¹The journal ends with the silencing of Fort Mifflin, Nov. 15, 1777. On the following morning, the grenadiers occupied Mud Island.

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