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PELHAM MANOR:

The Forgotten Battle of the Revolution

Near Mount Vernon, New York



Published by

THE BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE
TOWN OF PELHAM, NEW YORK

PELHAM MANOR:

The Forgotten Battle of the Revolution

Near Mount Vernon, New York

by

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of

Mount Vernon, New York

Revised 1966

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The Bicentennial Committee of the Town of Pelham, New York gratefully acknowledges the generosity of Dr. Franko who wrote in his letter of authorization for republication of this booklet:

“I am very glad that your committee is going to commemorate the Battle. It sure did save the Revolution! . . . The facts then will get out to more and more people and the residents of Pelham can justifiably feel proud of what the community contributed to our nation. . . . I wanted the truth to get out as widely as possible. Let folks quote it or copy it — who cares as long as the truth got out.”

* * *

Republished October, 1975

To my wife,
RUTH HINSPETER FRANKO



The statue is that of John Russell who fought in the Battle of Pelham Manor. It is on the monument at Trenton and is one of the rare statues of a Revolutionary soldier made from real life.

Introduction:

Perhaps it was the man's obscurity or painful reticence. Maybe he truly believed that great deeds speak for themselves without need of dramatization by publicists skilled in the arts of creating an "image." Whatever the reason, the Battle of Pelham, one of the more important engagements of the Revolution, "might without flippancy be described as lost, strayed, or stolen from the pages of history."

The latter characterization is from the pen of Lynn Montross, historian of the U. S. Marine Corps. It is taken from his *Rag, Tag and Bobtail* (1952), a fascinating, absorbing, and accurate story of the Continental Army. He writes:

"At dawn on the 18th (Oct., 1776) the future of the (American) cause depended for a few hours on the judgment of a stocky little man, hard as an oaken knot, who stood upon a hilltop with his telescope and watched the approach of the enemy transports. For it was up to Colonel John Glover to delay the advance as long as he could with his fishermen and three other Massachusetts regiments."

The hilltop was in the back of Memorial Field in Mount Vernon, N. Y.; the transports were in Eastchester Bay and numbered "upwards of 200 sail, all manned and formed in four grand divisions" containing the vanguard of the British and Hessian invading force of some 13,000. To face this horde, Glover had only 750 men and three field pieces. Washington's entire army in a slow and toilsome retreat from Harlem Heights with artillery, baggage and supplies was stretched out thinly over fifteen miles of roads in the wooded ridge west of the deep but narrow Bronx River. Should Howe break through and outflank the exposed Americans this time, as he had done in Long Island, the Revolution would have been over then and there. Glover and his small band had to buy time even with their lives.

But let Montross continue: "It is one of the oddities of American history that the ensuing all-day action should have been ignored by chroniclers or dismissed as a skirmish. British historians without exception give it scant attention, and even such a standard American work as Carrington's *Battles of the American Revolution* devotes a single sentence to the contest. Yet the British defeat at Pell's Point involved larger numbers and greater strategic consequences than a dozen other engagements dignified with the name of battles."

Gen. Rufus Putnam, aghast at the vulnerability of the American army and overjoyed at its escape from encirclement, declared in his *Memoirs* that "the American Army was saved by an interposing providence from a probable total destruction." The "inter-

posing providence" to him was the "stupidity of the British general" in delaying his advance for several days after the Battle of Pelham Manor and thus allowing Washington to reach the entrenchments at White Plains. What Putnam had no way of knowing was that Glover's 750 had fought so aggressively that the British general leading the invasion, General Sir Henry Clinton, believed the enemy opposing him "to have been at least 14,000" and was awaiting the reinforcement of two additional Hessian divisions from Staten Island.

The enemy had lost heavily in the all-day battle but how heavily is a matter that can never be ascertained with certainty. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Howe, in his report to the home office in London admitted to have lost three British soldiers killed and twenty wounded. He significantly said nothing about the losses of the Hessians who comprised three-fourths of the 4,000 troops engaged in the battle. Howe always minimized the losses of his own troops and exaggerated the American losses because of the political situation in Parliament. It would have been impolitic too and actually embarrassing to have notified the folks back home that the vaunted Hessian mercenaries, the most highly trained professional soldiers in the world, had suffered very heavy casualties in their first open engagement with the despised "amateur army" of farmers and fishermen.

Hessian and British deserters placed their losses as between 800 to 1,000; American eye-witnesses estimated them to be from 200 to 400. Consider that Glover's brigade had fired more than 25 volleys, or about 4,000 musket balls, at close ranges of 30 to 50 yards into compact enemy columns along a narrow roadway. Moreover, the muskets rested on stone fences, the men were considered excellent shots even by the British, and—according to one of the American regimental commanders—were "Calm as though expecting a shot at a flock of pigeons or ducks." The minimum of Hessian and British killed probably equaled or exceeded Howe's acknowledged losses in the Battles of Long Island (392 killed), Harlem Heights (14 killed and 78 wounded), White Plains (a fifteen minute affair in which the British lost 299 men), Princeton (18 killed and 58 wounded) and Germantown (70 killed). After the battle the Hessians used St. Paul's Church as a hospital and its records indicate that about a hundred more Hessians died there and were buried in a large sandpit in the church's cemetery. The Americans, well protected behind stone fences, lost only 6 killed and 13 wounded. Incidentally the 4750 men engaged in the Battle of Pelham was a larger number than those in the far better known battles of Trenton, Stony Point, Bennington, King's Mountain, and the Cowpens.

In 1960 Glover finally rated a full-length biography, Prof. George Athan Billias' *terce*, swiftly paced, and thoroughly re-

searched book, *General Glover and His Marblehead Mariners*. In the chapter, "Pelham Bay: a Forgotten Battle," he points up important information which for decades had been buried in letters, diaries, journals, newspapers, and official army reports, not usually the reading matter of writers of general history text-books, "popular" reviews, or novels. Billias, after going over the same primary sources as Montross, arrives at the same conclusions:

"Judged by the criteria normally employed by historians to evaluate the importance of a military engagement—be it strategic results, number of combatants involved, or casualties suffered—Pelham Bay deserves to be ranked among the more decisive battles of the Revolutionary War. Paradoxically, it is often ignored or at best given but a few scant paragraphs in comprehensive military works. The reasons for this are two fold: Glover has been disregarded by most historians except for the important role he played in the two brilliant amphibious operations at Long Island and Trenton. The best account of the battle was contained in a letter written by the little colonel four days after the fight and has been overlooked by many writers. In short, the man's obscurity has served to dim the luster of the event. The second reason is that losses inflicted upon the enemy have never been established with any degree of certainty."

Billias concludes that "the true significance of this battle lies in the fact that it has saved the American army from encirclement and complete destruction."

This renewed interest in the Battle of Pelham Manor and the resultant truer appraisal of its significance after decades of neglect, obscurity, and down-grading should be highly gratifying to those of us living in Mount Vernon and our neighboring Pelhams. The Battle of Pelham Manor is a part of the heritage of all Americans, of course, but most particularly of those who live on or near the very soil where it was fought. Propinquity to sites where great and noble events transpired does give a person an intimate identification with the characters and causes involved. In this sense the Battle of Pelham Manor becomes the rather unique "possession" of the inhabitants hereabouts along with Anne Hutchinson, John Peter Zenger, the Great Election of 1733, and the other momentous events which took place on soil that is now Mount Vernon or in its immediate environs.

This little booklet is an effort to acquaint our Mount Vernon inhabitants with the details of the battle, the personalities involved, and its proper place in the War of the Revolution. It is written almost entirely from primary sources, the references to which will be given in the Appendix for the benefit of students and others who might desire to explore the matter further. A special effort has been made wherever possible to quote eye-witness reports, descriptions, comments, and the like. In short, the writer will let

the participants on both sides speak for themselves as much as possible.

The reader will note that the title presently employed varies somewhat from the wonted appellations of the "Battle of Pelham Bay" and the "Battle of Pell's Point." The actual fighting, as Hufeland first pointed out, took place in Pelham Manor, a full mile and a half north of the Bay and Point. From the maps and eye-witness descriptions of the engagement, the reader will also perceive that the boulder called "Glover's Rock" and the tablet set upon it to commemorate the event are located in a place where absolutely no fighting took place. The appropriate place would have been the "Split Rock" boulder, a mile and a half to the west on Split Rock Road where the fighting was most spirited.

Whatever else may be accomplished by this little booklet, the writer hopes that seldom again will the Battle of Pelham Manor be dismissed by any of our residents and particularly by our public school teachers as "a little skirmish that occurred on Memorial Field and across Eastchester Creek in Pelham."

Mount Vernon, N. Y. September, 1963

Alfred M. Franko

CHAPTER I

A Job for His Worst Enemy

Washington was weary, despondent, and disgusted. To his half-brother "Jack" (John Augustine Washington) he wrote: "Fifty thousand pounds would not induce me again to undergo what I have done." ¹ And to his cousin Lund Washington: "Such is my situation that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead with my feelings. In confidence, I tell you that I was never in such an unhappy divided state since I was born." ²

The letters were written in September of 1776. The army was now in the northern hilly tip of Manhattan Island known as Harlem Heights. It had been chased out of Long Island and lower New York City and was in imminent danger now of being encircled. All depended on the militia: would it fight? Washington had little confidence that it would. He wrote to the President of the Congress that the strongly fortified Heights could be held against attack "if the generality of our troops behave with tolerable bravery. But experience, to my extreme affliction, has convinced me that this is rather to be wished than expected." ³

The "experience" which caused Washington to have serious doubts about the fighting qualities of his militia and some of his officers were the recent Battles of Long Island and Kip's Bay. Washington Irving describes the fighting around Flatbush, Long Island, as a "carnage." ⁴ Many of the militia there threw away their muskets without firing a shot and ran away to hide in thickets where they were flushed out like runaway slave fugitives. Col. von Heeringen, a Hessian officer, wrote home that "the rebels desert in great numbers and it is nothing to see colonels, lieutenant colonels, and majors come in with whole troops of men. They had all shouldered their guns upside down and had their hats under their arms. They fell on their knees and begged piteously for their lives." ⁵ At Bedford, Ward writes: "Through the woods, down the slopes, across the fields, singly, in groups, in companies they fled. Meeting here and there light infantry, dragoons, and grenadiers who fired at them, they ran for the fortified camp." ⁶ The flight of the militia left the right anchor of the American line near the Gowanus Road open to attack from two sides. The troops were regulars, mainly from Delaware and Maryland, the flower of the American army. They fought bravely, almost savagely, for several hours but were finally overwhelmed. "Some were cut down and trampled by the cavalry, others bayoneted without mercy by the Hessians," writes Irving. ⁷ The slaughter continued for hours; the Hessians used their bayonets even on prisoners with sanguinary fury. Von Heeringen reported that the American "riflemen were mostly spitted to the trees with bayonets.—The English attacked with

the bayonet and those they did not massacre they took prisoners.—The English did not give much quarter and constantly urged our people to do the like.”⁸ Washington had watched the slaughter from the main fortifications a mile or two away. A Maryland soldier recorded that Washington “wrung his hands in agony at the sight. ‘Good God’ cried he, ‘what brave fellows I must this day lose.’”⁹

To the President of the Congress, Washington reported: “The check sustained on the 27th (August 27, 1776, Battle of Long Island) has dispirited too great a proportion of our troops and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return (home). With the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops.”¹⁰

Washington rallied the demoralized men behind the fortifications and steeled them as well as he could to await the assault of the royal army spread out before them. The attack didn’t come. General Howe had learned the lessons of Bunker Hill and the terrific losses one must expect from a frontal attack up a hilly region impeded with almost impenetrable thickets and abattis and against an enemy well protected by entrenchments and redoubts. There was no hurry, not with his enemy cooped up within a two mile perimeter with a mile wide river at his back. He wisely decided on siege tactics. For his part, Washington perceived the extent of his extremely perilous position with a confident, well-equipped, and entirely professional army before him which outnumbered his own disorganized, demoralized, and amateur army at least four to one. Down the river in New York Bay and the Narrows, moreover, was the greatest armada seen in America just awaiting a favorable wind to sail up the East River and get into his rear. Washington decided to abandon Brooklyn while he still had a chance.

The evacuation was entrusted to two regiments of fishermen and sailors, that of Col. John Glover, of Marblehead, Mass., and Israel Hutchinson’s, of the region about Lynn, Mass. Billias has by far the best account of the evacuation which has been compared by some to that of Dunkirk. Some excerpts: “The race against time was bound to be a tight one. The retreat had to be carried out in a single night, for if the British discovered the move by light of day they would attack the American lines immediately and take prisoner all those who had not managed to get off.—Navigating in inky darkness over an unfamiliar stretch of water—no lights could be used—these skilled mariners managed to nose their craft unerringly to the New York shore and to return for boatload after boatload of troops.”¹¹ The seamen managed to ferry about 9,000 troops across the one mile stretch of the East River in less than six hours. But when the dawn came, a part of the army still remained in the fortifications. Then providentially a

very heavy fog came up and these also were evacuated. Capt. Hall, a snob in the British army who wrote sneeringly of everything American, called it "a miraculous night with an opiate that brought on (our) stupor at Long Island."¹² The "stupor" was indeed deep: another British officer recorded: "In the morning, to our great great astonishment, (we) found that they had evacuated all their works—without a shot being fired at them."¹³ The evacuation was complete, men, field guns, and ammunition.

Within a few hours, on Sept. 15, 1776, Washington was to be driven almost insane by the most disgraceful exhibition of mass cowardice ever recorded in the annals of the American army. Washington knew the British would soon launch an invasion of New York City, but where? He deployed his militia in entrenchments along the shore; on the roads paralleling the shore he kept marching columns of the regular army in readiness to be sent to any point attacked. The force seemed adequate to meet at least the first British troops that landed provided the militia in the trenches would fight and the troops on the roads assembled quickly at the attacked spot.

On the 15th of September several British warships sailed up the East River and opened a paralyzing fire from seventy big guns on the entrenchments at Kips Bay (foot of present 34th Street). The cannonade lasted for more than an hour and a half. When the smoke cleared, the East River in front of the little inlet was filled with flatboats loaded with redcoats and looking "like a clover field in full bloom." The two brigades of militia manning the trenches were terrified by the cannonade and the martial array of Hessians coming toward them in flatboats. When a small advance guard of some fifty Hessians landed, the militia dropped their guns and ran for their lives. Their terrified screams spread the panic to the troops in the roads. They too broke ranks and joined the frenzied scramble for safety in the interior of New York City away from the waterfront.

Hearing the cannonade, Washington rode up at a furious pace with several of his aids. On the Post Road (near Lexington Avenue at about 42nd Street), he met the madly confused and hysterical militiamen. He tried to halt and rally them. "Take the walls!" he cried. "Take the cornfield!" and pointed to the positions. Only a few did; the others took a look at what was occurring in a nearby orchard and speeded their flight. There the Hessians were thrusting their bayonets with murderous frenzy on the militiamen advancing toward them with uplifted hands to surrender. Washington's wrath was monumental. General Heath writes that Washington "dashed his hat upon the ground in a transport of rage crying out, 'Are these the men with whom I am to defend America?'"¹⁴ He snapped a pistol at them; with his riding cane or sword, he flogged not only "soldiers but officers as well, a colonel and even a brigadier general."¹⁵

Nearer the landing place at Kip's Bay, Washington continued his attempts to rally his men. Just when it appeared that he might succeed, a party of 60 or 70 Hessians loomed up suddenly. At their sight, the militia again broke, flung away muskets, knapsacks, coats, and even hats and ran away, "as if the devil was in them." Washington was left almost alone within eighty yards of the oncoming Hessians. Whether transfixed with rage, or as Gen. Greene asserts, "so vexed at the infamous conduct of his troops that he sought death rather than life,"¹⁶ he sat motionless on his horse heedless of his imminent danger. An aid-de-camp seized the horse's bridle and "absolutely hurried him away,"¹⁷ thus saving him from capture or death. He soon recovered and gave orders to General Putnam to hurry up with his men to the fortifications on Harlem Heights before the British outraced him to them.

If we are to believe an eye-witness, Dr. John Morgan, Washington's Director General of Hospitals, it was Gen. Glover's regiment which succeeded in doing what Washington could not, namely, stopping the stampede. He asserts: "They (the fleeing militia) were met by Glover's Regiment, which stopped their flight.—The officers of Colonel Glover's regiment, one of the best corps in the service—immediately obliged the fugitive officers and soldiers to turn into their ranks with the soldiers of Glover's regiment, and obliged the trembling wretches to march back to the ground they had quitted."¹⁸ It is true that Glover's men had refused to panic and had remained cool. But as Glover's biographer Billias states: "It was Howe's dilatory tactics rather than Glover's stand that eventually allowed the seizable part of the army under General Putnam to escape to the north and slip past the impending British trap."¹⁹ Instead of hurrying across the narrow waist of Manhattan Island to the Hudson and thus cutting off Putnam's escape route along the Hudson (the present West Side Highway) or hustling to reach the Harlem Heights, Howe was content to rest his troops.

As Freeman summarizes, "the action at Kips Bay was nothing but a skirmish in itself but was of high importance in that it precipitated the evacuation of New York and deepened the anxiety of Washington over the morale of his men and the competence of some of his officers."²⁰ To his brother "Jack", he wrote bitterly of the "disgraceful and dastardly" conduct of his troops.

The British at this time chose to taunt him on this touchy subject. It started as a small skirmish when a detachment of British numbering about 300 attacked an advance post held by 150 Rangers. The Americans were driven off but gamely charged back. While Washington was pondering the sending of reinforcements, the British came in sight and sounded their bugles, not with a command to halt, charge, retreat or to deploy, but with the call of the hunters who had killed the fox and ended the chase.

The Southern aristocrat recognized the call and was stung to the quick. His Adjutant General heard it too. "I never felt such a sensation before," Reed wrote to his wife. "It seemed to crown our disgrace." ²² Washington immediately ordered re-inforcements. The enemy was soon sent flying back to their own lines with happy Americans chasing them. This was the first time they had seen the backs of Redcoats! It was a new and exhilarating experience. Not wishing to bring on a general engagement, Washington recalled them. "This little advantage," he wrote, "has inspired our troops—; they found that it only requires resolution and good officers to make an enemy (that they stood in the most dread of) give way." ²³

The army was certainly in need of encouragement. It was in a most deplorable condition, mentally and physically. The militia began to melt away "like ice in the summer sun." Washington reported to Congress that "great numbers have gone off; in some instances by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time." ²⁴ Within a few days the Connecticut militia dwindled from 8,000 to 3,000 men. Almost all of the militia were levies supplied by the states for a short period of time, usually three months, or those who came to meet an emergency. When the emergency was over or their time expired, they high-tailed it home. Others just went A.W.O.L. They had a defender in Jonathan Trumbull, the governor of Connecticut. He explained to Washington: "The season (late September) indeed was most unfavorable for many of our farmers and laborers to leave home. Many have not even secured their harvest; the greater part had secured but a small part even of their hay, and the preparation for the crop of winter's grain for the ensuing year totally omitted." ²⁵ Washington offered the wholesale desertions as "one more melancholy proof how delusive such dependencies on the militia are" but since "the impulse for going home was so irresistible—it served no purpose to oppose it—and I was obliged to acquiesce." ²⁶

He continued to plea for an army composed of regular troops enlisted "for the duration." Almost daily he reported to the Congress, which had a mortal dread of standing armies, the evils being created by its insistence that the war be fought with a mixture of regular and militia troops. Not only did he frequently express his doubts about the militia's lack of stomach for a fight but he informed it that they "took liberties which the soldier (regular Continental) is punished for; this creates jealousy; jealousies beget dissatisfaction, and these ripen into mutiny." ²⁷ The militia's example "infected another part of the army (the regulars) which felt that it could defy discipline precisely as the militia did." ²⁸ Desertion and plundering increased. Reed writes of this period on Harlem Heights: "A spirit of desertion, cowardice, plunder, and shrinking from duty when attended with fatigue or danger prevailed too generally through the whole army." ²⁹ In still another letter to the Congress, Washington lamented that "Such a spirit has gone

forth—that neither public nor private property is secure. Each hour brings forth the most distressing complaints of the ravages of our own troops who are becoming infinitely more formidable to the poor farmers and inhabitants than the common enemy.”³⁰

Taken as a whole the officers were no better than the generality of the troops. Lossing writes: “Among many of the subordinate officers, greed usurped the place of patriotism. Officers were selected on condition that they should throw their pay rations into a joint stock for the benefit of the company; surgeons sold recommendations for furloughs to able-bodied men—and a captain was cashiered for stealing blankets from the soldiers. Men went out in squads to plunder from friend or foe, and immorality prevailed throughout the American army.”³¹ General Greene reported that the surgeons had embezzled the public stores committed to their care and that they were now “without the least particle of medicine.”³² One ensign was caught leading twenty of his men “loaded with plunder, such as house furniture, tableware—and even some women’s clothing.”³³ Reed’s comment on the bravery of the officers: “I am sorry to say too many officers from all parts leave the army when danger approaches” and to illustrate the lack of understanding which the officers had of their position he told his wife of seeing a captain shaving one of his men in plain view of hundreds.³⁴ To his cousin Lund, Washington confided that even his Continental troops “never had officers, except in a few instances, worth the bread they eat.”³⁵

While Washington could not condone their pillage, he could understand at least the basic psychological reasons for their desertions and even their cowardice. He explained their actions in this manner: “Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill (which is followed by a want of confidence in themselves when opposed to troops regularly trained, superior in knowledge, and superior in arms) are timid and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides, the sudden change in their manner of living brings on an unconquerable desire to return to their own homes.”³⁶ Gen. Greene uttered the same sentiments: “People coming from home with all the tender feelings of domestic life are not sufficiently fortified with natural courage to stand the shocking scenes of war. To march over dead men, to hear without concern the groans of the wounded—I say few men can stand such scenes unless steeled by habit or fortified by military pride.”³⁷

The young men of Stirling’s brigades, about a 1,000 or less, who were slaughtered at Long Island by 5,000 British and Hessian troops, the best trained and equipped army in the world, were fresh from their homes, farms, and shops with less than two weeks’ service in the army. Those who fled the entrenchments at Kips Bay were also raw rookies. In these entrenchments, which were actually nothing more than “a long ditch with the dirt thrown toward

the water," the men with no overhead protection at all had to withstand at rather close range the terrific cannonade from ten ships of war. As Ward comments: "With their slight defenses battered down and in the face of an advancing foe of overwhelming numbers, it was natural, indeed it was proper, that this thin line of men should leave their indefensible positions.—They might have rallied—but to what end? They could not possibly hold those stone walls. They would have been enveloped and swallowed up with little delay."³⁸ Their officers were equally as green. A Hessian officer contemptuously wrote of them: "The colonels, lieutenant colonels, majors, and other officers are nothing but mechanics, tailors, shoe makers, barbers, etc. Some were soundly beaten (after capture) by our people who by no means let such persons pass as officers."³⁹

Not only was Washington's army "beginners" facing veterans, but it also was one which had an abundance of nothing and nothing in abundance. The army had not been paid for two months, a condition which Washington told the Congress, was creating much dissatisfaction and a great uneasiness. "Not a day passes without complaints and the most urgent demands on this head."⁴⁰ The army was in need of everything—tents, blankets, cooking utensils, medical supplies, and muskets. The states which had bothered to enroll new levies to replace their militia whose terms had expired were sending in their men without equipment or supplies of any kind, often even without muskets. It was now late in September and the nights on Harlem Heights were already becoming cold. Washington wondered how the army would survive the coming winter, if he had an army by then.

If all these trials, anxieties, and frustrations were not enough to plague Washington, "a more fundamental evil was a growing distrust of Washington himself, not of his character as a man but of his ability as a general."⁴¹ At the battle of Long Island, the left flank of the American army at Jamaica Pass had been left entirely unguarded; some 10,000 British and Hessian troops poured through the pass, and although forming a column about two miles long, were able to march for several hours behind a sizable portion of Washington's army without being detected. As described above, the American troops thus cut off from the main entrenchments on Brooklyn Heights never had a chance. "On the whole," writes Ward, "it seems impossible to avoid placing the bulk of the responsibility upon the shoulders of the commander-in-chief George Washington who had made the disposition of the troops."⁴²

Washington has also been criticized for not having a cavalry, "the eyes of the army" in those pre-aviation days, to patrol the areas between the passes and thus might have reported the flanking movement before the troops were hopelessly surrounded. Washington had been offered the services of 400 to 500 Connecticut farmers who had volunteered to form a regiment of light

dragoons. Their sorry-looking farm horses appeared ridiculous to the Southern aristocrat and plantation owner accustomed to the elegant, spirited thoroughbreds of the chase and hunt. He turned them down with the rather flimsy excuse that there was not enough fodder to feed the horses. Charles Francis Adams has minutely investigated the affair and concluded that the real cause of the rejection was that Washington "apparently had no conception of the use to be made of cavalry in wartime."⁴³ Freeman summarizes the causes of the Long Island disaster: "In plain language, the redcoats had outclassed the Continentals. The American commander (Washington) had appeared to be a tyro, a bungler, as well as a beginner in comparison with the British general." (Howe).⁴⁴

At Kips Bay, the faulty deployment of the troops was a large factor in the failure to check the panic after the raw militia in the ditches fled for their lives. Freeman lists the disposition of the troops and comments: "The troops that day might have been everybody's and nobody's responsibility."⁴⁵ Benjamin Trumbull, son of the Connecticut governor and a chaplain in the army wrote of his troop's behavior: "The men were blamed for retreating and even fleeing in these circumstances but I image (sic) the fault was principally in the general officers in not disposing of things so as to give the men a rational prospect of defense and a safe retreat should they engage the enemy."⁴⁶ Van Tyne analyzes Washington's military career and concludes: "Washington had little genius and not much aptitude for war.—(He made) almost fatal errors in both strategy and tactics."⁴⁷

The lack of faith in Washington's ability at that time was "not uncommon among the regimental officers" on Harlem Heights, writes Col. Haslet. The Colonel was in command of a Delaware regiment of regulars, one of the crack outfits in the army, and a capable, courageous man. He wrote most reluctantly: "The Genl. I revere; his character for disinterestedness, Patience, and fortitude will be in everlasting remembrance, but the vast burthen appears to be too much his own. Beardless youth and inexperience regimentated are too much about him.—W'd to Heaven Genl. Lee were here is the language of officers and men!"⁴⁸

Washington was aware of the feeling that his best officers and men were looking to General Charles Lee, the hero of Charleston, to come north to save the army. He knew too of the growing resentment of the New England troops and their representatives in the Congress against him for some indiscreet letters which he had written deploring the Yankee "levelling" tendencies. Washington was still the Southern "gentleman" and aristocrat coming from a section where stratified society was the accepted way of life. He advised that "the true condition (to judge a candidate to be an officer) is to consider whether the candidate has a just pretension to the character of a gentleman, a proper sense of honor, and some reputation to lose."⁴⁹ Also: "Men who have endeavored to support

the character of officers and gentlemen and who have not placed themselves upon a level with the common soldier are fit to be preferred. Others of the latter class will never, in short, conduct matters with propriety." 50

This sentiment sounds indeed strange coming from a man of the highest character and principles who later justly declared: "To share a common lot, and participate (in) the inconveniences which the army—are oblig'd to undergo has been with me a fundamental principle." 51 But Washington was to grow in human understanding and become more appreciative of the views and ways of other people far removed from his own station in life. As Montross observes: "Washington, like his troops, was a beginner and had much yet to learn. It was not in a day that the commander-in-chief developed the tact and impartiality which became two of the pillars of his leadership." 52

In a letter which Washington wrote to the Congress there is a suggestion of his consciousness of being censured by that body: "—because of the effect of my own conduct and present appearance of things—it would be a matter of no great surprise to me if I should stand capitally censured by Congress—added to a consciousness of my own inability to govern an army of discordant parts." 53

As the weary commander-in-chief went painstakingly over the lines on Harlem Heights readying them against a certain attack from an all-conquering, confident professional army, who could blame him for dejectedly thinking: "Such is my situation that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead with my feelings"?

CHAPTER II

The Race to Escape the Noose

After the disaster of Kips Bay, Washington notified Congress: "We are encamped with the main body of the army on the Heights of Harlem, where I should hope the enemy would meet with a defeat in case of an attack." ¹

The American army was now at the tip of Manhattan Island between the Hudson and the Harlem Rivers. Here the uniformly two mile width of the island is tapered to less than a mile by the Spuyten Duyvil, a small inlet of the Hudson, and the Harlem River, a narrow strait which runs from Spuyten Duyvil eastward, southward, and then southeastward to Hill Gate on Long Island Sound. These two streams separate the island from Morrisania and the Bronx, then a part of Westchester County.

The City of New York itself was at the other tip of the island, some thirteen miles south of Spuyten Duyvil. With a population of about 22,000, it occupied slightly less than the lower three miles of the island. North of the suburbs was the district called Bloomingdale beyond which the land rises gradually in a rocky formation that runs southeast to northwest and terminates in the plateau called Harlem Heights. Washington fortified the upper four miles of this rocky formation with a series of three entrenchments about three-quarters of a mile apart, facing south, and extending across its width. On its highest eminence (between present 181st and 186th Streets), Washington built a strong earthworks of irregular form covering several acres. In its center he placed an inner citadel and protected it with twenty heavy guns and several small pieces and mortars. The chief strength of Fort Washington, as it was called, consisted in the densely wooded and almost perpendicular slopes which fell some 200 feet on both of its sides. A little to the north (between 195th and 198th Streets), on the same lofty banks of the Hudson, there was built a little redoubt with two guns which the British later called Fort Tryon. A similar redoubt, Cock Hill, covered the very tip of the Heights overlooking Spuyten Duyvil (the site of the toll-gates of the Henry Hudson Bridge).

Across the creek on the extreme southern tip of Tetart's Hill (now Riverdale) the Americans built a rather substantial square redoubt with bastions. It was called Fort Independence and was to serve as a protection for King's Bridge, which spanned the Harlem where that stream turns from its easterly to its southern course. King's Bridge was the key to Washington's position. As Freeman observes, "Whoever held firmly that crossing and its approaches could open and shut the city gate, whence the roads led upstate and, easterly, into New England." ² It was not only

Washington's escape route but also the only line of supplies coming from New England.

About a mile south of the Harlem Heights plateau was another one extending from Horn's Hook on the East River to Bloomingdale. The British entrenched along this plateau and placed their main army a mile farther back. Between the two plateaus was a rather narrow depression, called the Hollow Way, which widened toward the east into an extensive plain on which was the tiny settlement known as Harlem Village. Because of the dense woods on the heights south of the Hollow Way, the British movements were well screened from the Americans.

The Americans held strong positions on Harlem Heights and Washington was justified in believing they could be held against an attack which was momentarily expected. But the days passed without Howe making a move. Washington was perplexed. Howe certainly was aware that the American army was almost chaotic and that of the 16,000 men "present and fit for duty" a good proportion of them were militia which were no more to be depended upon in a fight than "a broken staff."³ Howe had an army of over 40,000, well-disciplined and equipped, splendidly led, flush with victory, and eager to get going. Why was he stalling? Washington fretted more about this than the conduct of his own army.⁴

If Washington was puzzled over Howe's dilatoriness, the Loyalists back home were annoyed and angry. Joseph Galloway complained: "The British army was commanded by able and experienced officers, the rebels by men destitute of military skill or experience and, for the most part, taken from the mechanic arts or the plough. The first were possessed of the best appointments and of more than they could use and the other of the worst and less than they wanted. The one were attended by the ablest surgeons and physicians, healthy and high spirited—the other were neglected in their health, clothing, and pay; (they) were sickly and constantly murmuring and dissatisfied; and the one were veteran troops carrying victory and conquest wherever they were led; the other were new raised and undisciplined, a panic stricken and defeated enemy whenever attacked. Such is the true comparative difference between the force sent to suppress and that which supported the rebellion.—It met with no difficulty in defeating the enemy in every battle. And yet in them all the British commander suffered his enemy to escape without pursuit. In the middle of victory, the ardor of his troops was suppressed and the chase forbid."⁵

Washington was expecting a frontal attack and this was what Howe would not do. He told why in a speech before Parliament. "The most essential duty I had to observe was not wantonly to commit his Majesty's troops where the object was inadequate. I knew well that any considerable loss sustained by the army could not be speedily nor easily be repaired. I also knew that one great

point toward getting the confidence of an army (and a general without it is upon the most dangerous grounds) is never to expose the troops where the object is inadequate." ⁶ In short, he would not pay the price in men.

He had another plan. "The very strong positions the enemy had taken on this island and fortified with incredible labour determined me to get upon their principal communication with Connecticut with a view of forcing them to quit the strongholds in the neighborhood of King's Bridge and, if possible, to bring them to action" ⁷ in the open.

Charles Stedman, an officer in Howe's army, explains the strategy in more detail: "The American army with strong ground in their front and extensive fortifications in their rear towards King's Bridge, seemed to think themselves perfectly secure and almost invulnerable. The British troops knew the strength of the situation which the enemy possessed and therefore employed themselves in throwing up a chain of redoubts—and rendered it capable of a vigorous defense even after the bulk of the army should be engaged in more remote operations. As soon as the redoubts were completed, it was determined to attempt the enemy's rear by the New England Road (the Boston Post Road) from which they received most of their supplies. This arrangement would force them to hazard a battle or reduce them to the necessity of suffering themselves to be surrounded and confined in York Island." ⁸

On October 9, 1776, three British warships, the Roebuck, the Phoenix, and the Tarter pulled up anchor at Bloomingdale and sailed up the Hudson. In the river the Americans with tremendous labor had built an underground obstruction, called a *chevaux-de-frise*, to prevent passage of vessels of any considerable size. The warships broke through it as if "through a cobweb." The batteries on Fort Washington and Fort Constitution across the river blasted away at them. "To the surprise and mortification" of General Washington, they passed all the obstructions "without the least difficulty and without receiving any apparent damage from the forts though they kept up a heavy fire." ⁹

Excitement ran high. What were they up to? Rumors had it that they were intended to prevent supplies from coming down the Hudson to the Americans; that they were carrying arms and supplies to the Tories up in Westchester County; that they had troops on board and would land them to cut off Washington's retreat through the Highlands near Peekskill. The militia of Westchester and Orange Counties were rushed to the Hudson's eastern shore to combat their debarkation.

Nothing happened. The maneuver was just a feint "to draw the enemy's attention to that side," Howe informed the Home Government, while preparations were being made to attack the

opposite (or eastern) flank. The feint was eminently successful. The all wise General Lee was firmly convinced that Howe would not attack Washington's lines: "Such a measure is too absurd for a man of Howe's genius." He was equally positive that the passage of the ships was to prevent Washington's cross-over to New Jersey while Howe sailed south to attack Philadelphia. He screamed to the Congress, which he considered a "stable of fools": "For heaven's sake, arouse yourselves! For heaven's sake, let ten thousand men be immediately assembled and stationed somewhere about Trenton." ¹⁰

Nature, writes Freeman, "dictated Howe's strategy that was not the less effective because it was elementary and obvious. Howe adopted it in the knowledge that it might save him from having to storm the works on Harlem Heights and at the same time put him where he could cut the shortest line of Washington's land communications between New York and the lower Connecticut towns—as well as to draw Washington in the open and engage him there." ¹¹

The logical place to land was on one of the inlets along the Sound. Howe chose Throg's Neck, about twelve miles from the English base at Kips Bay but a mile closer to the vital King's Bridge. ¹² The plan was to debark at Throg's Neck, march about four miles northwest to King's Bridge, force the evacuation of Harlem Heights, isolate Fort Washington, and, as Freeman points out, perhaps force Washington to fight in the open and not from behind entrenchments.

The first part was executed perfectly. Leaving two or three British and one Hessian brigade under Lieut. Gen. Lord Percy to man the lines opposite Washington's on Harlem Heights, Howe put the plan into operation on October 12th. He describes the movement: "All previous arrangements being made, the army embarked on the 12th of October in flatboats and other craft (batteaux) and pressing through the dangerous navigation of Hell Gate, in a very thick fog, landed at Frog's Neck, near the town of Westchester about nine in the morning, the Carrysfort frigate being posted to cover the descent. The presence of Lord Howe (Gen. Howe's brother, Admiral Viscount Richard Howe), the activity of Commodore Hotham, most of the captains of the fleet and the navy officers in general, were definitely conducive to the King's service in this difficult movement; only one artillery boat was upset, having 3 six pounders on board, which were lost, and three men drowned." ¹³

Kemble enumerates the forces embarked as the 1st, 2nd, and 6th British brigadiers, the 71st Regiment, two Hessian brigades under von Heister and Donop, Rogers' Corps, and one New York company (of Tories). ¹⁴

Throg's Neck, then part of Westchester County, projects about two miles into Long Island Sound. On paper, it appeared in the early maps as a neck or peninsula but it was actually an island separated from the mainland by a narrow creek and a marsh and at high tide was surrounded by water. At the lower end, a bridge led across a creek and connected with a causeway whence the main road to the interior started. At its upper end, the creek was fordable at low tide.

As the fog lifted, the 4,000 troops forming the vanguard debarked, formed into regiments, and marched over the Throg's Neck road toward the causeway. Another detachment headed toward the ford and the road that led to Eastchester from the ford. At the causeway the British met with their first surprise. Gen. Heath had foreseen a landing at this point and had prepared for it. As early as October 3rd, the general "in reconnoitering with Col. Hand, being apprehensive that the British might land on Throg's Neck, took a view of the causeway—and the tide mill and the plank bridge. At the west end of the causeway (the side of the American army)—there was at this time a range of cordwood as advantageously situated to cover a party defending the pass as if constructed for the very purpose." Heath "after taking a full view directed Col. Hand to fix upon his best subaltern officer and 25 picked men and assign them to this post. In case the enemy made a landing on Throg's Neck to instruct the officer immediately to take up the planks of the bridge." ¹⁵

The men had done as ordered. They had removed the planks of the bridge and now from behind the cordwood greeted the vanguard with a volley. The unexpected attack threw the British in confusion and compelled them to retreat to the top of the hill which they had descended. The detachment moving toward the ford also was surprised to find there a well secured detachment of Americans. It too was forced to retreat. ¹⁶

As soon as Heath heard of the landing, he rushed reinforcements to both posts. Some 1,800 men were soon in line opposing the British who also had been re-inforced by nine warships and a large number of men and guns brought up from Hell Gate in 42 vessels. Howe saw that the creek and marshes were not easily to be crossed against the determined opposition. He fortified the top of the elevation nearest to the American position and allowed the next six days to pass without any further offensive movement.

The landing at Throg's Neck and the delay aroused the ire of the British officers and home critics. "Our landing at this place was censured by many and our tedious deliberations even more," was the observation of Capt. Hall. ¹⁷ Stedman believed the landing at Throg's Neck to be an error on the part of the commander-in-chief. "The mistake (finding the Neck to be an island and not a peninsula) should have been remedied immediately by pushing

along some other route to King's Bridge." ¹⁸ Gordon, an American, agrees that "six days were spent here to little purpose while a dozen other places were open where the troops could have landed with no opposition or difficulty." ¹⁹ The embittered Tory, ex-Judge Thomas Jones of the New York Provincial Supreme Court, labeled the landing at Throg's Neck a "gross blunder" and attributes the delay to Howe's desire to become rich through pillage. ²⁰ The charge was as scurrilous as it was ridiculous. There were no houses to loot on Throg's Point and the Village of Westchester was a mile or so behind the American lines.

As a matter of fact, the landing at Throg's Point was not Gen. Howe's error but that of his brother, Lord Howe who commanded the fleet. Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, in immediate charge of the debarkation and second to Gen. Howe in over-all command of the invading force, discloses that it had been "proposed to Sir William Howe that the troops should march to Harlem Point (now Horn's Hook, at East 92nd Street on the East River), met there by boats, passed to City Orchard (present City Island or possibly Orchard Beach nearby), thence to Mills Creek (Meyer's now Davenport Neck at New Rochelle) and then New Rochelle (the village a mile from the harbor.)" ²¹ Lord Howe vetoed the plan on the basis that Davenport's harbor was too small.

Before Parliament, Howe explained the reasons for the delay at Throg's Point: "From the 12th of October—the day the army landed on Frog's Neck—to the 21st of the same month, we were employed in getting up the stores and provisions, in bringing up the dragoons, the 2nd division of the Hessians, the carriages and horses for transporting provisions, artillery, ammunition, and baggage. Four or five days had been unavoidably taken up by the landing at Throg's Point instead of going at once to Pell's Point which would have been an imprudent measure, as it could not have been executed without much unnecessary risk." ²² General Clinton also attests that "the want of provisions prevented our stirring for several days." ²³

But why hadn't Howe smashed through at the causeway and forced his way to King's Bridge? Besides the lack of provisions, he blames the topography of the country. "With regard to the knowledge of the country, so necessary to be obtained previous to the movement from New York—the country is so covered with wood, swamps, and creeks that it is not open in the least degree. (Knowledge of it had to be) collected from the inhabitants entirely ignorant of military description. These circumstances were therefore the cause of some unavoidable delay in our movements." ²⁴ Although Howe did not mention it in his vindication speech, he could have added that the misinformation which he had received about Throg's Neck had come from a leading Tory who lived within three or four miles of the Point. ²⁵ (Isaac Wilkins, former member of

the Provincial Assembly from Westchester). If he didn't know the country, who could be more trusted?

The country did not loan itself to invasion. From Throg's Point to King's Bridge, it was then a wild and rocky region traversed by narrow and widely separated roads lined with stone fences which also divided the farms. The stone fences were excellent ready-made barricades for riflemen and would confine artillery and large bodies of foot soldiers to the narrow roads. It was indeed excellent defensive country. Washington's Adjutant General Reed was positive that the Americans on these grounds could drive the invaders back: "My opinion," he stated, "is that if we cannot fight them here, we cannot do it anywhere."²⁶ On Long Island, Howe had remembered the lesson of Bunker Hill about the cost of a frontal attack up a slope against entrenchments; here he recalled the havoc wrought by riflemen behind stone walls on the British withdrawal along the roads of Lexington and Concord. He again declined to join the issue.

At first Washington believed the landing at Throg's Point to be only a feint to cover the real invasion which would come from Morrisania. He persisted in this suspicion even after the British quitted Throg's Neck and debarked at Pell's Point to the eastward. He supported the troops at Throg's Neck with reinforcements, as already stated, and on the 14th and 16th of October made a careful reconnaissance of the ground near Pell's Point where deserters had told him the British would next strike. Washington ordered Nixon's brigade "to the eastward of William's Bridge to support the troops at Frog's Point and to keep a guard at Rodman's Point (Pell's Point) next to Eastchester Creek."²⁷

Washington's strategy was, as he informed the Congress, "on all occasions to avoid a general action, or put anything to the risk, unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn."²⁸ He meant to stay on the fortified Harlem Heights, where he had a chance to fight off a frontal attack and preserve communications with the other states until he could build up his forces to hazard an open battle with the overwhelming British invaders.

Conditions had now changed for the worse. The British had command of the waters around him and could travel at will up and down the Hudson through the supposedly impassible chevaux-de-frise. The main army of the invaders was on his flank and sizable forces strongly entrenched before him. There were numerous and reliable reports that the "home front" was collapsing and that the Americans would soon be in the anomalous position of being an enemy in their own territory. In Staten Island the people had cordially and enthusiastically greeted the King's forces; in New York City, thousands had flocked to sign petitions praying for restoration of peace and pledging their loyalty anew to the Crown;

in Long Island, the royal government had been restored with the apparent acquiescence of the people. Upstate the Tories were organizing and might soon join the British forces. Already they had a corps of over 600 men under the despised renegade Major Rogers and at least one other company in the field. Freeman writes that "Washington himself had so little faith in the patriotism of the average man that when he had pleaded with Congress for a bounty to encourage long term enlistment, he had argued that the amount (to be paid) to recruits had to be high because the British were reported to have offered a bounty of ten pounds and were said to have recruited already at that figure the greater part of a battalion. In this day of extremity, the services of many men might go to the highest bidder, and not to the better cause!"²⁹

What was to be done? Abandon the Heights and move elsewhere? Washington called a Council of War and put the question to it. Participating in this momentous discussion were five Major Generals, ten Brigadier Generals, and a Colonel. Gen. Lee dominated the meeting. He had just arrived on the preceding day, given a hero's welcome by the troops, greeted cordially by the Commander-in-Chief and placed in charge of the army north of the Heights. He was bloated with notions of self-importance. Contemptuous as usual of the abilities of anyone and everyone else, Washington not excepted, he was loudly critical of the troops' present deployment. Gordon, a New England minister who wrote portions of his history of the Revolution largely from interviews with the actual participants, describes the meeting: "Lee asked what they meant by entertaining a thought of holding their position while the enemy had the command of the water on each side of them and were strong in the front and rear, and when there was a bridge (King's Bridge) which they must pass to escape being wholly enclosed. He soon convinced them that they had been mistaken. All agreed that the bulk of the army should quit the island (Manhattan)." ³⁰ Allen comments that Gen. Lee "found a prevailing inclination among the superior officers (to stay on the Heights and its environs), which he endeavored to counter-act by his utmost efforts arguing, with some degree of vehemence, the necessity of an instant removal to East or Westchester." ³¹ Stedman, the English historian and officer in Howe's army, asserts Lee's advice saved the American army: "Lee remonstrated against so absurd a determination (to hold New York and King's Bridge).—He represented that the British would infallibly encircle Washington's army with a chain of works as would reduce him to the necessity of surrendering through famine without a battle.—This measure (withdrawal), to which the American army undoubtedly owed its safety, was adopted contrary to the original plan of General Washington." ³²

What about Fort Washington? Abandon that too? About this there was disagreement. Lee wanted to but Gen. Greene

didn't. The latter maintained that it should be strongly manned and fortified along with Fort Constitution across the Hudson and more chevaux-de-frise placed as barricades in the river to hinder British shipping.³³ Congress furthermore had repeatedly requested that Fort Washington be held if it could be done.³⁴ The final decision was to hold Fort Washington with some 2,000 troops. Ward calls this decision: "A worse military decision has not often been made."³⁵

The retreat started on October 17th. Gen. Lord Stirling (an American patriot despite the assumed title which he believed, with some degree of justice, to be rightly his) was sent ahead to prepare positions at White Plains. The latter village had been designated as a supply depot. On the 18th, the main bulk of the 13,000 troops got underway. They were to move in long, strung out columns along the narrow roads of the hills to the west of the Bronx River. Progress was agonizingly slow because of the lack of wagons and horses. Gordon writes that when "a part was forwarded, the other was fetched on.—The few teams (of horses) which were on hand were in no wise equal to the service; and their difficulty could be made up only by the bodily labor of the men."³⁶ Hufeland furnishes a few more details: "The wagons had to be moved in relays, the wagons after a day's journey depositing their loads in the care of guards, who threw light protecting works until they were moved (a bit more) forward by the next relay."³⁷

The "light protecting works" mentioned were dug at intervals along the heights on the west side of the Bronx facing east. What ordinarily with horses and wagons would have taken less than a day to cover the twelve miles from Harlem Heights and King's Bridge to White Plains was to consume four full days. If the enemy should attack the defenseless and straggling column before it reached White Plains, disaster was certain for the American army and the flickering light of the Revolution totally extinguished.

The British did just that—on the morning of October 18, 1776 just as the caravan got underway.

CHAPTER III

The Battle that Saved an American Army

It seems incredible that an army of 4,000 men with all their guns, ammunition, wagons, horses, baggage, and equipment could abandon their entrenchments within sight of another army, march some two or three miles, board several scores of ships, sail several miles in a narrow strait—and remain largely undetected. It hardly seems possible but it did happen on Oct. 18, 1776. And before the sun set on that memorable day, stranger and even more unbelievable things were to unfold in the very region where another rebel, Anne Hutchinson, had prophesied over a century before that “God from this wilderness will cause a light to break forth more and more unto the perfect day.”

Perhaps it was destined that the first invasion of the mainland of America to suppress the revolt and extinguish the flickering light of freedom should have been made at the mouth of the river named for Anne Hutchinson. (All previous landings had been made on islands, Boston, Long Island, Kips Bay on Manhattan Island, and Throg’s Neck). The place selected by the British for the starting point of the thrust into the heart-land was a peninsula about three miles in length and much less than that across which projected into Long Island Sound northeast of Throg’s Neck and separated from it by the river which widened here to a little bay about three miles wide. The peninsula was called Pell’s Point or Rodman’s Point, then part of the township of Pelham in Westchester County but now is Pelham Bay Park of the City of New York.

Gen. Sir Henry Clinton was again in charge of the debarkation. He explains why they had to abandon Throg’s Neck and describes the landing at Pell’s Point:

“As we had now (on Throg’s Neck) no other debouchee (outlet or route) but over a narrow neck of meadow, which was masked by a strong work belonging to the enemy (and) occupied in some force, we found ourselves, after all our trouble and loss of time, under a necessity for re-embarking and landing at Wilken’s Point, protected by our artillery from Frog’s Point, or at Rodman’s (Pell’s Point). The latter I preferred as leading to Rochelle, which I constantly considered as the fittest position.—The want of provisions, however, prevented our stirring for several days.

“It was the 18th of October before this plan could be carried into execution. At two in the morning of this day, the avant garde under my orders embarked but we could not move until five and the frigate which had been ordered to Tom Pell’s Point to cover us got aground. However, six pieces of cannon, which Sir Howe had judiciously placed for the purpose on Frog’s Point in case of

accidents, gave us full protection by obliging the rebels to keep under shelter until we got abreast of the landing place. Then they began to fire a few shot. But as I was certain that they could not be in any great force, I ordered the debarkation to proceed; and we took possession of the ground at the end of the neck as they quitted it." ¹

The initial landing was unquestionably on the western side of the peninsula, the side nearest to the ford on Throg's Neck where the British had entrenched themselves. ² How many troops were in this "avant garde" has never been definitely ascertained. Glover saw "upwards of two hundred sail all manned and formed in four grand divisions" and estimated their total number as 4,000. ³ Howe reports that "several corps" made the landing and mentions several units including the First Battalion of Light Infantry, the Fourth Regiment, the 16th Light Dragoons (who fought dismounted) and the chasseurs. Von Elking, the German chronicler and the leading authority on the Hessians in America, writes: "Mirbach's Brigade, the Hessian Grenadiers, and the Jagers were brought in the landing at Pell's Neck under the cover of the men of war and engaged the Americans; Stirn's Brigade was (later) brought up and the Americans retreated." ⁴ Abbatt states that Stirn's Brigade alone consisted of four regiments with 633 men each—the Grenadiers (had) 500 men—and with the other German forces named, the Hessians alone comprised 3,000 men. At this rate, the whole force would be more than (Glover's estimate) of 4,000 enemy troops." ⁵ Lowell records that with the arrival on the 22nd of Knyphausen's 2nd Hessian Division of 4,000 Hessians, the "German corps under the command of Gen. von Heister was brought to 13,400." ⁶ With a brigade of Hessians being left with Lord Percy on Manhattan Island, the total number of Hessians on Pell's Point, or en route to it on October 18th, must have approximated some 6,000 or more. The estimates have ranged from 4,000 to 15,000; historians have more or less settled on 4,000 as the total number of Hessians and British who participated in the ensuing battle. As Abbatt observes, "odds enough to enlist our admiration for Glover's brigade of some 750 men." ⁷

There was nothing in the terrain of Pell's Neck to serve as a bottle-neck for Howe's forces as on Throg's Neck. Nor was there any large American force in entrenchments or behind barricades to dispute Howe's thrust into the interior to get at Washington's caravan under way just four miles to the west in the hills back of the narrow but rather deep stream known as the Bronx River. As an American officer moving with the retreating troops wrote in a letter at that time: "Our retreat left all the road from E. Chester to Kingsbridge (the Boston Post Road) open to the enemy except a few guards and a Regiment at or near Ft. Independence." ⁸

The "few guards" mentioned were undoubtedly the brigade of Col. John Glover, then part of Gen. James Clinton's division. The brigade consisted of four skeleton regiments: the 13th Continental, commanded by Col. Joseph Read (226 privates "fit for duty"); the 3rd Continental, Col. William Shepard (204 privates); the 26th Continental, Col. Loammi Baldwin (234 privates); Col. Glover's own 14th Continental (179) privates), now led by Capt. William Courtis. In all, 843 privates "fit for duty" and 17 officers.¹⁰

Who were these men, the handful to hold off a host of at least 4,000? The commander of the brigade was John Glover, 44 years old, short and stocky, who had steadily advanced himself up the economic scale from shoemaker, fish vendor, and inn keeper to the status of a wealthy merchant and the title of "gentleman" in Marblehead, Mass. Two days after Lexington and Concord, he organized a regiment of ten companies largely of sailors and fishermen from Marblehead and its environs. Among them were several free Negroes, which occasioned several donnybrooks between the regiment and Southern troops later in camp. "These fishermen and sailors," writes Billias, "accustomed to taking orders aboard fishing craft instinctively obeyed the commands of an infantry officer.—Glover made 'instant and unquestioning obedience' the rule of his regiment."¹¹ A descendent of Col. William R. Lee, senior captain of the regiment, is rather modest when he writes: "The regiment was one of the most famous in the Revolution and few regiments in the entire Continental army were in more engagements or rendered greater service."¹²

As already stated in preceeding chapters, these services included ferrying Washington's entire army across the East River after the Battle of Long Island and another later ferrying this time across the Delaware before the Battle of Trenton as depicted in Emanuel Leutze's immortal but largely inaccurate painting. The regiment, at least in the early part of the Revolution, wore blue cloth round jackets and trousers trimmed with leather buttons.¹³ Billias adds that the trousers were also "tarred to make them water proof, an old habit among sea-faring men."¹⁴ In history, the regiment is variously cited as Glover's Regiment, the Amphibious, the 21st N.C. Regiment, the 14th Continental, and the Marblehead Mariners.

Col. Glover was commissioned a Brigadier General in 1777; in the summer of 1780, he sat as a member of the court that tried Major John Andre and sentenced him to hang as a spy for his conspiracy with the traitor Benedict Arnold; in 1780 his rugged constitution finally broke under the strain of too much active campaigning and he resigned from the army. Back in Massachusetts, he worked actively in the state convention for the ratification of the constitution launching and organizing the government whose freedom he and his regiment had helped secure.¹⁵

Col. William Shepard was the only officer of the brigade who had previous experience as a soldier. And he had plenty of it! When not yet out of his teens, he joined in numerous bloody forays against the savage Indians in the wilderness fringing the borders of Massachusetts. Later he volunteered for service in the French and Indian War and endured the hardships and agonies of several expeditions against Canada. He was a rugged and grizzled veteran of almost forty when the Revolution broke out in 1775. He offered his services, was commissioned as a Lieutenant-Colonel, and served throughout the entire war. He may have held the record for engaging in most battles of the Revolution but this is conjectural as the records of individuals were not too well kept then and are almost impossible to obtain today. At any rate, he was in 22 different Revolutionary battles, an achievement which Lafayette himself recognized by presenting him with a sword.

After the war and while in his 50's, Shepard was again in active service. This term he was in command of the troops which dispersed Shay's "army" at Springfield and put an end to the abortive "Shay's Rebellion." He was always a hero to the people of his native Westfield, Mass. The folks there elected him to every office in their power, state senator and U. S. Congressman among them. Bugbee writes that all the brutality, savagery, and bloodshed which Shepard witnessed did not affect his "natural kindness and a certain grim humor of the Cromwellian kind; and it may be said of him that he was a soldier after Cromwell's own heart."¹⁶ Without further explanation, Abbott writes that "it is sad to relate that Shepard was one of the many patriots who died poor in consequence of their (sic) patriotism."¹⁷

The C.O. of the 26th Continental, Col. Loammi Baldwin, was a curious mixture of farmer, civil engineer, and soldier. He was born in Woburn, Mass. While earning his living as a cabinet-maker, in his spare time he would walk several miles from there to Harvard to hear lectures, of all things, in math and physics. After several years of this (Harvard bestowed an honorary M.A. on him), he became a civil engineer and rose rapidly in that profession. He joined the Revolutionary army in 1775 and took part in the battles of Long Island, Pelham, and Trenton. He was in constant ill-health and finally was compelled to leave the army in 1777. Baldwin is best remembered in history as a pomologist, the developer of the "Baldwin Apple" (also called the "Woodpecker" and "Steele's Red Winter Apple"), now generally acclaimed as the standard winter apple of eastern America.¹⁸

The truly "forgotten man" of the brigade is Col. Joseph Read. History records nothing of him except that he was born in Uxbridge, Mass., on March 6, 1731.¹⁹ Read's regiment is the only one of the four that is mentioned as carrying a flag. It is described as being light bluff in color and showing two officers in regimental uniform; one is bleeding from a chest wound and

pointing to a group of children under a tree. The inscription reads: "For Posterity I Bleed." ²⁰

These were the "personae dramatis" of the drama soon to be enacted. The four regiments had been across the Hudson at Fort Constitution; when Howe landed at Throg's Point, they were ordered to join the main army at King's Bridge. From there, Baldwin informed his wife, they were moved "a little to the south." On the following day, Wednesday, October 16th, "we decamped, marched a mile, and pitched (our tents) about 2 miles southeast of Eastchester Church (St. Paul's) which was about 1½ miles from the enemy at Frog's Point or Neck." On Thursday, October 17th, the brigade "marched a mile and a half northwest where we pitched in order to throw up some works." Baldwin then retired to a nearby house "being unwell.—The enemy lay still all this time." ²¹

The camp was the hill behind Memorial Field on Sandford Boulevard, Mount Vernon. ²² Hufeland describes the location: "The Boston Post Road at that time ran along the edge of the marsh and made a sharp bend at that point,—which carried it some 600 to 700 feet north of its present location, and from it rose the steep hill which still exists. This (hill) not only commanded the Post Road, which was the only road from New Rochelle, for several thousand feet, but also the bridge over the Hutchinson River, while it was within cannon shot of Secor's Hill and Wolf's Lane, which was the only road from Pell's Point. The salt marsh and Hutchinson River made the highways the only means of approach by an enemy. Behind him Columbus Avenue, then known as the Road from Eastchester to White Plains, provided him with a means of retreat to the main army which was moving a few miles to the west." ²³ At the eastern end of the hill, on what is now Highland Avenue, one at that time could see clear across the Hutchinson Valley to Eastchester Bay and Long Island Sound.

The best eye-witness account of the Battle is a letter which Glover himself wrote to a friend a few days after the Battle. ²⁴ The account follows:

"You no doubt heard the enemy landed all their army on Frog's Point the 11th instant, leaving only twelve hundred men in York, and there remained until the 18th which was Friday. I arose early in the morning and went on the hill with my glass and discovered a number of ships in the Sound under way; in a very short time saw the boats, upwards of two hundred sail, all manned and formed in four grand divisions. I immediately sent Major Lee express to General Lee, who was about three miles distance, and without waiting his orders, turned out the brigade I have the honour to command, and very luckily for us that I did, as it turned out afterwards, the enemy having stole a march one and a half miles on us. I marched down to oppose their landing with about seven

hundred and fifty men and three field pieces, but had not gone more than half the distance before I met their advanced guard, about thirty men; upon which I detached a captain's guard of forty men to meet them, while I could dispose of the main body to advantage. This plan succeeded very well, as you will hereafter see. The enemy had the advantage over us, being posted on an eminence which commanded the ground we had to march over. I would have given a thousand worlds to have Gen. Lee, or some other officer present to direct or at least approve of what I did. However, I did the best I could and disposed of my little party to the best of my judgment: Colonel Read's on the left of the road, Colonel Shepherd's in the rear and to the right of him, Colonel Baldwin's to the rear and on the right of Shepherd's, my own regiment commanded by Capt. Courtes (Colonel Johnnot being sick, and Major Lee being Brigade Major) bringing up the rear with three field pieces of artillery. Thus disposed of I rode forward—to the advance guard, and ordered them to advance, who did, within forty yards, and received their fire without the loss of a man; we returned it and fell four of them, and kept the ground until we exchanged five rounds. Their body being much larger than mine, and having two men killed and several wounded, which weakened my party, the enemy pushed forward not more than thirty yards distant, I ordered a retreat which was masterly well done by the Captain that commanded the party. The enemy gave a shout and advanced; Colonel Read's, laying under cover of a stone wall undiscovered till they came within thirty yards, then rose up and gave them the whole charge; the enemy broke, and retreated for the main body to come up. In this situation we remained for about an hour and a half, when they appeared about four thousand, with seven pieces of artillery; they now advance, keeping up a constant fire of artillery; we kept our post under cover of the stone wall before mentioned till they came within fifty yards of us, rose up and gave them the whole charge of the battalion; they halted and returned the fire with showers of musketry and cannon balls. We exchanged seven rounds at this post, retreated, and formed in the rear of Colonel Shepherd and on his left; they then shouted and pushed on till they came on Shepherd, posted behind a fine double wall; he rose up and fired by grand divisions, by which he kept up a constant fire, and maintained his part until he exchanged seventeen rounds with them, and caused them to retreat several times, once in particular so far that a soldier of Colonel Shepherd's regiment leaped over the wall and took a hat and canteen of a Captain that lay dead on the ground they retreated from.

“However, their body being so much larger than ours, we were, for the preservation of the men, forced to retreat, and formed in the rear of Baldwin's regiment; they then came up to Baldwin's but the ground being much in their favor, we could do but little before we retreated to the bottom of the hill, and had to pass

through a run of water (the bridge I had taken up before) and then marched up a hill the opposite side of the creek where I left my artillery; the ground being rough and much broken I was afraid to risk it over. The enemy halted, and played their artillery at us, and we at them, till night, without any damage on our side, and but very little on theirs. At dark we came off, and marched about three miles, leading to Dobb's Ferry, after fighting all day without victuals or drink, laying as a picket all night, the heavens over us and the earth under us, which was all we had having left our baggage at the old encampment we left in the morning. The next morning we marched over to Mile Square. I had eight men killed and thirteen wounded, among which was Colonel Shepherd, a brave officer."

It will be noted that Col. Glover's first reaction was to alert Gen. Charles Lee, his superior who had succeeded Gen. Heath, of the new threat to the Americans and await orders. For this purpose he immediately dispatched Major Robert R. Lee to contact the general who was only three miles away at Valentine Hill. Instead of just sitting there doing nothing until re-inforcements arrived, Glover decided to do something on his own "without awaiting orders." He naively confides to his friend that he was very lucky "because the enemy had already stolen a march of a mile and a half" towards the bridge, or about one half of the length of the Pell Neck peninsula.

What Glover did not know was that he would have to fight the entire invasion force, the avant garde of 4,000—alone. In a sense, he was to emulate the Greek king Leonidas who held the Persian host at bay in the narrow Thermopylae pass with only 300 men.

What had happened was this: Although no one apparently noticed the tremendous flotilla of boats moving in the sound near the tip of Throg's Neck nor in the strait between Throg's Neck and Pell's Neck, the commanding officers at the two posts on Throg's Neck had spied some movement of the enemy immediately in front of them. Each suspected the enemy was about to mass an attack against his post. The C.O. at the causeway rushed an express to Gen. Heath at Valentine Hill notifying him of an expected large scale British attack on his front. Gen. Heath rushed there with a large number of troops. On his way he was met by another express from the C.O. of the troops at the ford. The report this time was that the British were marching northward toward the post for an attack in force. (Actually they were marching to the eastern shore of Throg's Neck to board the ships there for the passage across to Pell's Neck). Heath turned his forces around and began marching them more toward the southeast, that is, toward the ford. "At this instant," Heath writes, "General Washington came up, and having inquired of General Heath the state of things, ordered him to return immediately (to Valentine

Hill) and have his division formed ready for action and take such a position best calculated to oppose the enemy should they attempt to land another body of troops on Morrisania, which he thought not improbable. General Heath immediately obeyed the order.”²⁵

Washington had guessed wrong again. Instead of ordering troops to Pell's Neck where the invasion was actually taking place at that very moment, he sent his troops to the opposite direction, that is to Valentine Hill to be prepared for an attack on Morrisania which never came and was never planned by Howe. Dawson comments: “Notwithstanding the evident movement of the enemy was Pell's Neck to the eastward, Washington was still under the controlling suspicion that Howe's real intention was to deceive him and instead of landing at Pell's Point—was to effect a landing at Morrisania and to take the Americans on the Heights of the Harlem—(Thus) on Col. Glover and his brigade during that eventful Friday rested the great responsibility of being the only armed force which was in front of the Royal Army opposing the progress of the latter into the interior of Westchester County and being the only force of any kind which on that day fired a shot on the advancing columns.”²⁶

Glover had no time to reflect on the odds against him. He left his own regiment behind on the hill to act as a reserve, guard the equipment, and to man the field pieces if necessary. As he writes, the guns had to be left behind because of a “run of water” and “the ground being rough and much broken.” At the foot of the hill, the Boston Post Road crossed the Hutchinson, the “run of water” Glover mentioned. The plank bridge over the creek connected with a road that here was elevated somewhat like a “causeway,” as another eye-witness described it. Abbatt believes that the “volume of water in 1776 was certainly greater than now and a causeway would have been almost essential to keep the road above water, particularly during high tides.”²⁷

Glover pulled up the planks of the little bridge and marched southward to meet the enemy. As he marched, he noted the many stone fences bordering the road and dividing the fields. He quickly perceived that these fences would force the enemy to march in columns along the narrow roads. They were also ready made barricades. (The reader will recall that similar conditions prevailed on Throg's Neck and were largely influential in Howe's decision not to begin the invasion there). Glover sent ahead an advanced unit of forty men to delay the enemy while he deployed the brigade. He placed the regiments in echelon, Col. Read's in the van behind a stone wall on the left side of the road, Col. Shepard's behind a “fine double wall on the opposite side of the road and in the rear of Col. Read's,” and Col. Baldwin's on the right and in the rear of Col. Shepard's. The British in close columns would have to pass through a veritable funnel of musketry.



Loammi Baldwin

Portrait of Col. Loammi Baldwin
from Abbott's "The Battle of Pelham"



Wm Shepard Colo

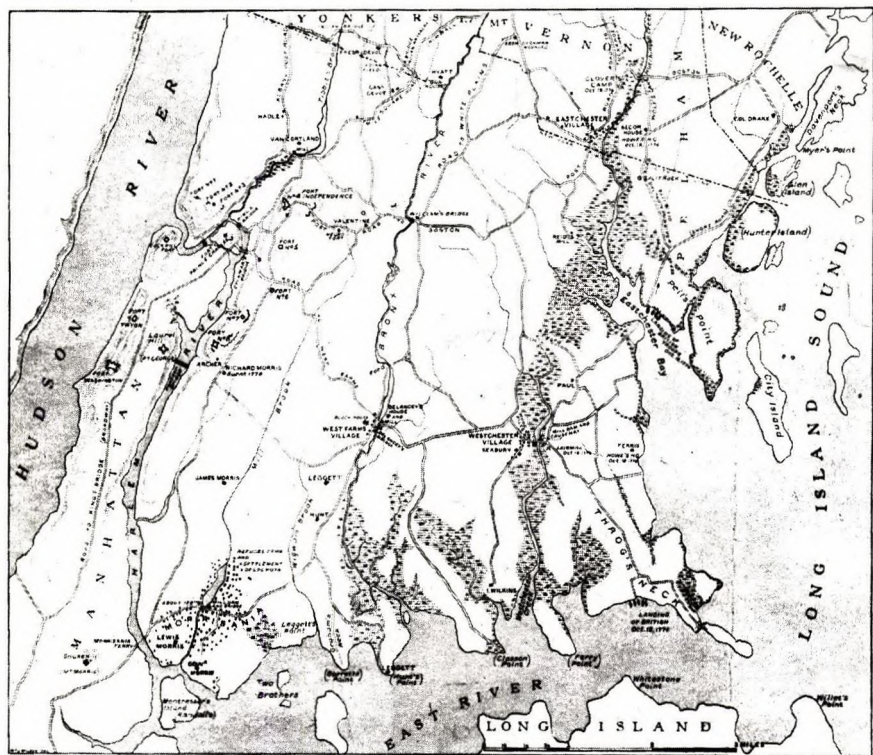
Portrait of Col. Wm. Shepard
from Abbati's "The Battle of Pelham"



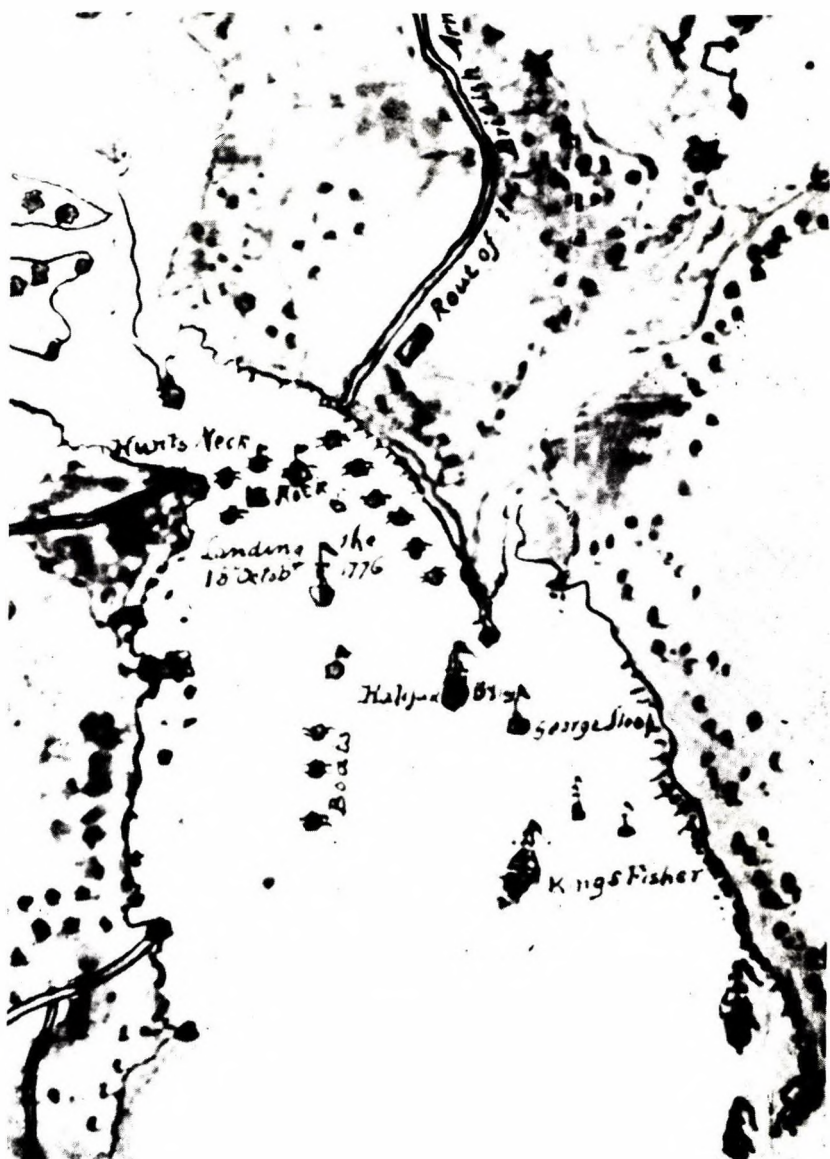
From painting in possession of Mrs. Henry E. Walte.

John Glover

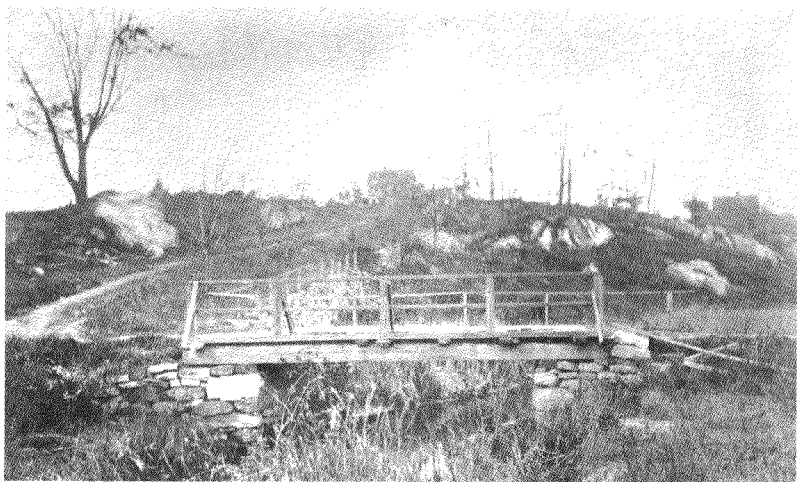
Portrait of Col. Glover
from Abbott's "The Battle of Pelham"



Harlem Heights and Lower Westchester County During the Revolution
from Hufeland's "Westchester County During the Revolution"
 Courtesy Westchester County Historical Society



A Detail of Blaskowitz's 1776 Map Showing Landing of
British on Western Side of Pell's Point
from Hufeland's "Westchester County During the Revolution"
Courtesy, Westchester County Historical Society



The Bridge Over the Hutchinson River

Photo by Abbott about 1900



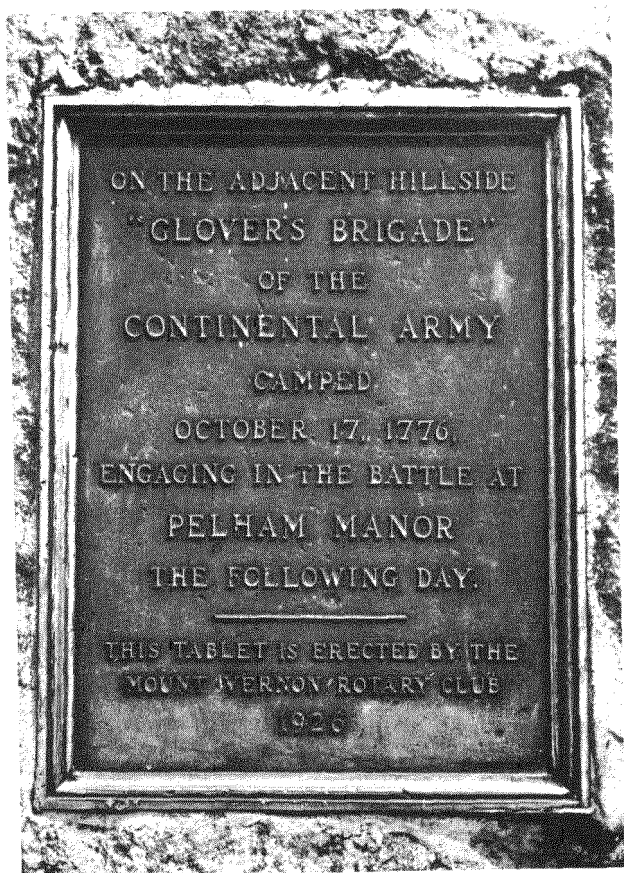
As the Bridge Over the Hutchinson Looks Today

Photo by Sy Rothman



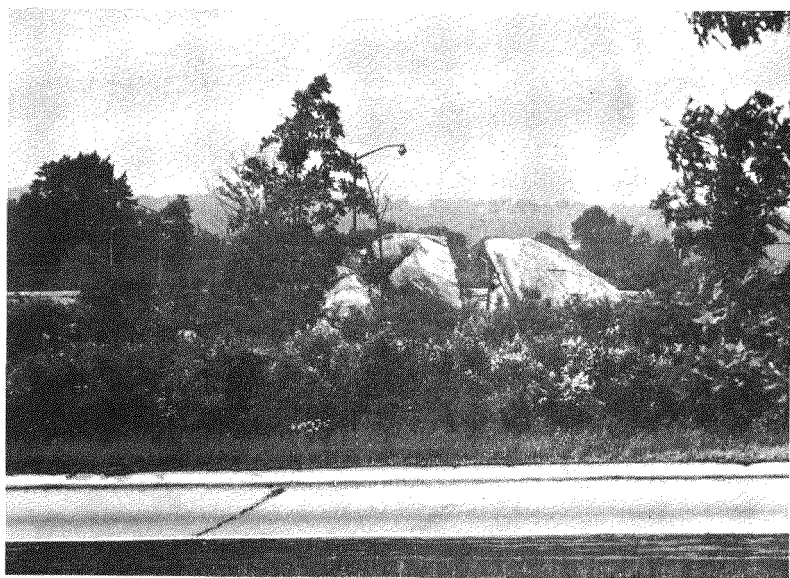
View from Memorial Field Hill
With Eastchester Bay in the Distance

Photo by Sy Rothman



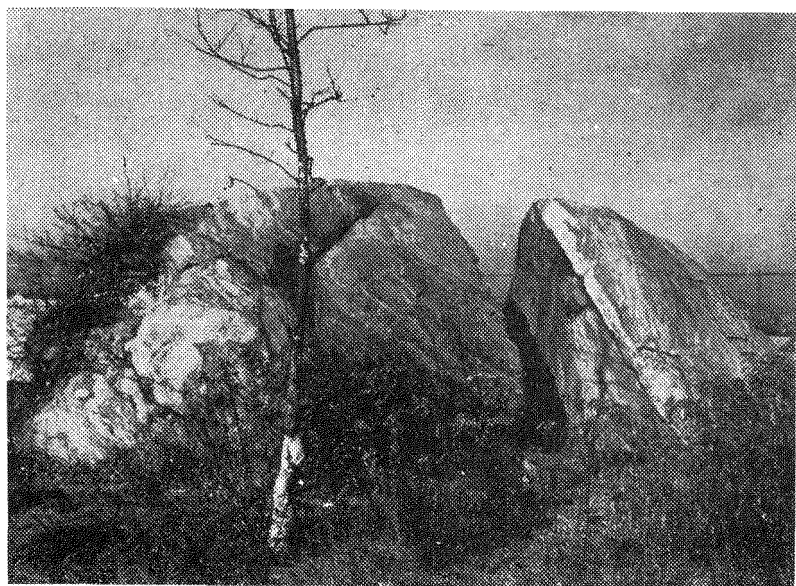
Plaque at Memorial Field

Photo by Sy Rothman



The Split Rock as It Looks Today

Photo by Sy Rothman



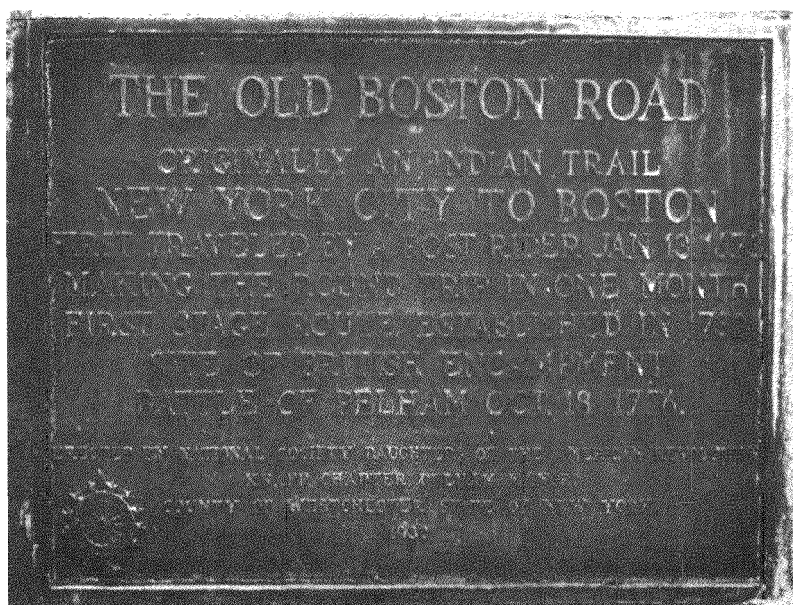
Another View of Split Rock

Courtesy of Daily Argus



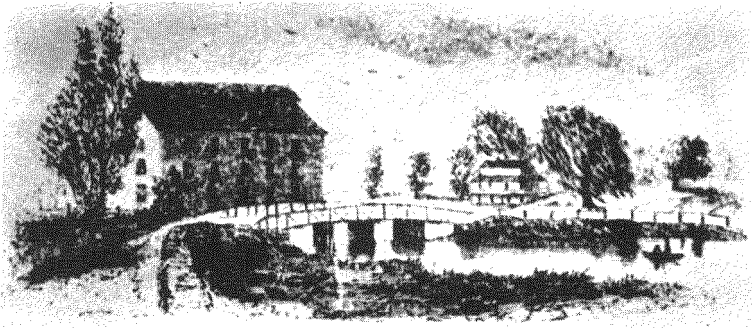
The Retreat Route Down Wolf's Lane Hill

Photo by Abbatt about 1900



Plaque at Pelham High School Field

Photo by Sy Rothman



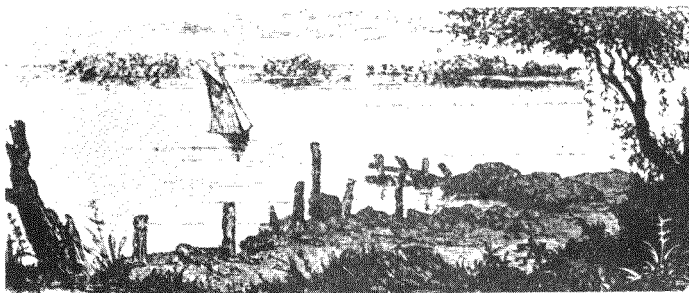
King's Bridge - Key to Washington's Position

Sketched by Lossing about 1850



Battle of White Plains
Chatterton's Hill from the Railroad Station

Sketch by Lossing about 1850



View of East Side of Davenport Neck

Sketch by Lossing about 1850



Howe's Headquarters in New Rochelle

Sketch by Lossing about 1850

Glover devised this plan on the spur of the moment; he could not have done better if he had planned it for months with the aid of maps prepared by our present United States Geological Survey office.

He then hurried on to join his advance unit. The enemy had already marched "one and a half miles from the Point," which was about half the length of the peninsula, and were on an "eminence" when the first clash occurred.²⁸ The Americans advanced to within "fifty yards" of the enemy and received their "full fire without loss of a man." They returned the fire, doing better by felling four. The exchanges lasted for a few minutes and then the British, probably re-inforced, rushed forward. The American unit fell back to Col. Read's concealed position behind the stone fences. (Near the boulder known as Split Rock). Sensing a rout, the re-inforced Chasseurs, Light Infantry, and Grenadiers pressed forward in columns. When they were within thirty yards of the stone wall, Read's men rose in unison and fired into the packed ranks in the narrow roadway. At this close range, their volley was murderous. The invaders fell back to the Point. There for the next hour and a half they massed 4,000 men in line and came on anew preceeded by a heavy cannonade from seven pieces of artillery. Read's men were nowhere to be seen. A spirit of bravado now filled the ranks of the enemy as they marched down the road. The rebels had fled! So the enemy thought. But when within 150 feet of the stone wall, up popped Read's men and met them with a wall of flame. The suddenness and strength of the attack brought the Hessians and British force to an abrupt halt. Seven volleys in rhythm poured into their ranks. They retaliated with "showers of musketry and cannon balls." Then the Americans retreated. The invaders thought it a rout, cheered, and resumed their pursuit with a steady marching tempo.

Read's 13th Regiment had withdrawn as planned behind Shepard's regiment and to its left. As the British-Hessians advanced to finish off the retreating Americans, they ran smack into Shepard's men ensconced behind that "fine double wall." (On the top of Prospect Hill, Hufeland tells us). Shepard's men then revealed themselves with a volley. The invaders stopped, regrouped, and, no longer cheering but solemn and determined, began a series of charges to storm the wall. Each one was repulsed and the enemy sent reeling, one time so far back that one of Shepard's men was able to leap over the wall, collect some souvenirs, and return in safety. The battle here must have ranged for an hour, perhaps two or three. It took time to load and fire those 18th century muskets.

Shepard's men could not keep up the pace indefinitely against the overwhelming host. Glover finally gave the order for them to withdraw behind the third line of barricades, that held by Col. Baldwin. Up to now the terrain had been favorable to the Ameri-

cans. They were on the easterly and uphill side of the road while the British were on the westerly part where the land sloped sharply. Once the top of the hill was reached, the British-Hessian host had the advantage as Baldwin's regiment was beneath them on the downward slope of the hill. "The ground being much in their favor," Glover writes, "we could do little before we retreated to the bottom of the hill."

There was another cogent reason for the retreat which Glover does not mention. Other eye-witness accounts of the battle, both American and British (which will be given in the following chapter) tell of a large body of enemy troops marching briskly and rapidly approaching the bridge over the Hutchinson from the right or New Rochelle side. This was the force which Gen. Clinton that morning on debarking had detailed as a flanking guard to protect the landing. If this force reached the bridge before Glover did, the brigade's retreat would be cut off and it would be caught between two forces.

Glover sensed the danger as well as the futility of fighting any longer against an overwhelming host shooting and charging downhill. About noon he ordered the retreat down Secor Hill over Wolf's Lane to the bridge on the Boston Post Road. His men waded through the mud and water of the Hutchinson and on the other side climbed the hill to Glover's regiment which had been left there that morning with the field pieces. The guns were put immediately into play on the pursuing enemy. "The enemy halted," Glover chronicles, "and played their artillery at us, and we at them, till night, without any damage on our side, and very little on theirs." At night the Americans marched about three miles on the Columbus Avenue Road leading to Dobb's Ferry. The enemy did not follow.

Billias comments that "no more eloquent testimony was paid to the ferocity with which Glover's men fought than the estimate made by Howe that he had faced 14,000 Americans."²⁹ As already indicated, Glover's entire brigade numbered only 750 men. From the above account, Glover's own regiment had been left behind as a reserve and had not participated in the battle; Baldwin's regiment fired only one volley when the order to retreat came from Col. Glover. Actually, therefore, only two regiments, Read's and Shepard's, sustained the entire British-Hessian assault, or only 430 men.

Billias also observes that if Glover's estimate of 4,000 as the enemy's force is correct, then 4,750 men were engaged in the battle. This figure, he points out, is larger than the numbers engaged in the much better known battles as Trenton, Bennington, Stony Point, King's Mountain, or the Cowpens.³⁰

Col. Glover records that he had "eight men killed and thirteen wounded, among which was Col. Shepard, a brave officer." The

official returns list only six.³¹ A retreating army does not bury its dead; the British chronicles contain no reference to burial of their own or the American dead. It is presumed, according to custom, that the British buried their dead and the Americans near where they fell. If so, then somewhere in the soil of Pelham Manor, or possibly Mount Vernon, there meet in the eternal bivouac of the hero dead Private Samuel Cole, Private Daniel Deland, Private Ezekiel Fuller of the 13th Continental and Sgt. Charles Adams, Sgt. James Scott, and Private Thaddeus Kemp of the 3rd Continental.

CHAPTER IV

Other Accounts of the Battle of Pelham Manor - - Authentic, Modified, or Falsified

The preceding account of the Battle of Pelham Manor was written largely from the modest and straightforward letter which Col. Glover wrote to a friend. The impression which one gains of Glover from it was that here was a man who had a job to do, was not certain that he could do it but did the best he could and was relieved and gratified that what he did was at least satisfactory. (He does not mention that the Commander-in-Chief himself praised him in General Orders for the whole army to know).

There were other eye-witness and contemporary accounts of the Battle which add further details. These, like the Glover letter, are also interesting for the insight which they afford of human nature in general and several individuals in particular, what men under intense stress will note and later recall, and the considerations which enter into the choice which people make of what is to be included, glossed over, and omitted in written records to give the calculated effect desired. To neophytes in history and to those with more than a passing interest in the creation of historical "images," the various accounts given may well serve as an exercise in the ways by which errors and distortions in contemporary documents become perpetuated in later day histories.

Besides Glover's, the most informative account and the one most full of human interest is a letter which Col. Loammi Baldwin wrote to his wife Mary from camp at Mile Square. It was in the form of a diary and composed in installments on the 20th to the 23rd of October probably under conditions for writing that were far from ideal. Age has faded some portions of the manuscript almost to illegibility and creases of the original folding have obliterated other parts.

The letter starts with his explanation that on the night of October 17, 1776, he had to leave his regiment on the hill near the bridge over the Hutchinson while he sought overnight rest and relief from his complaint (flux) at a nearby house.¹ On Friday, the 18th of October, he returned to the camp and found that his regiment had marched off with Read's and Shepard's to engage the British marching northward from their landing at Pell's Point. His narrative continues:

"I immediately joined the Rgts. and found them posted on each side of a road behind a cross fence finely situated to annoy the enemy as they approached. Col. Shepard and Col. Reed's Rgt.

advanced on my left wing and received the enemy fire first which was pretty heavy but being well secured behind fences received but little damage and granted(?) the enemy very much, brought them to a stand and finally to retreat till they were re-inforced and came up a second time which brought on a second fire. At this time news was brought to Col. Glover who commanded the brigade that the enemy were surrounding us, which I mistrusted and went out with about 30 men to post as sentries to give us information. Ensign Wood was with me being anxious to know the situation of the enemy; (he) advanced toward them and found that they were approaching fast toward a bridge over which we hoped to get back.

"Reed and Shepard were then retreating. Ensign Wood on his return to the Rgt. was wounded in the left arm—Our troops were as calm and steady as though they were expecting a shot at pigeons or ducks and not in the least daunted or confused; and when the General (Glover) gave orders to retreat it was with the greatest reluctance imaginable though with as much good order and regularity as ever they marched off a public parade. (We) retreated over the bridge in order to rake them should they attempt to pass over the bridge but however they did not come that night but played their field pieces pretty brisk till night but never hurt a man that I knew of.

"At dark we retreated about two miles—moved our encampment about the same distance though not directly the same way. The difficulties that attended this removal were inconceivable having the whole baggage of the brigade to transport upwards of two miles without any wagon or even men except 3 out of a company.

"The enemy lay about a mile from the encampment and no troops between us which left us exposed—All this time my Rgt. lay as a picket in the road near Mile Square and continued so till the next morning.

"There were only 3 Rgts. in all, 700 men, viz. Col. Shepard, Read, and mine that opposed the enemy at Pell's Point.—Col. Glover's Rgt. did not go over—In the fight we lost six men and about 20 more wounded in the whole 3 regiments—The enemy must have lost at least 200 dead in the field, I judge from what I saw myself and good information from which it cannot be any other way.

"This battle was fought near the Boston Post Road about 20 miles from the city of New York on the southeast side of the road toward their shipping—The Generals were royally pleased with our conduct and have since presented us their thanks." ²

It will be noted that Baldwin saw the enemy approaching the bridge and was apprehensive about it; Glover does not mention this circumstance at all. They both agree rather well on the casualties

suffered by the Americans; Glover does not tell of the enemy's losses and Baldwin does. From personal observation and "good information," Baldwin is rather certain that the enemy lost "at least 200 in the field."

Although Gen. Lee was nominally the commander of all the American troops north of Harlem Heights, the officer actually in charge at this time was Gen. William Heath. In his *Memoirs* he describes the battle:

"The British crossed to the other side of Frog's Neck, embarked on board their boats, crossed over the cove, landed on Pell's Neck, and moved briskly upwards. Three or four of the American regiments advanced toward them and took a good position behind a stone fence. When the British had advanced sufficiently near, they gave them a close fire, which checked them and even obliged them to fall back, but being immediately supported, they returned to the charge. The action was sharp for awhile but the Americans were soon obliged to give way to superior force. Shepard's, Read's, Baldwin's, and Glover's regiments had the principal share in this action. The Americans had between 30 and 40 men killed and wounded; among the latter, Col. Shepard in the throat, not mortally, though the ball came well nigh effecting instant death. The loss of the British was not known but must have been considerable. They advanced almost to New Rochelle and halted." ³

This account was written several years after the Revolution. Heath gives absolutely no credit to Col. Glover for deploying the troops nor for the strategy employed. He was certainly aware of the generous praise given in General Orders by Washington and even by Gen. Lee, who is depicted in history as a person contemptuous of the ability and achievement of others. Yet Heath totally ignores not only Glover's role but fails also to say anything concerning the importance of the Battle. This flagrant omission irked even the editor of Heath's *Memoirs*, Rufus Rockwell Wilson, who was moved to comment: "Heath does scant justice to the Battle of Pell's Point which was one of the most important of the minor engagements of the Revolution." ⁴ Was Heath in his *Memoirs* playing up the importance of the battles in which he played a role and down-grading those in which he had no share? Incidentally the only mention which he makes of Glover is to include his brigade among those which had a "principal share in this action," which is totally wrong as Glover's regiment was left behind as a reserve.

Ezra Stiles, a chaplain in a Connecticut company, who later became president of Yale College, has two letters in his *Literary Diary* describing the battle. ⁵ While Abbott, Hufeland, and Dawson state that he was a participant in the Battle, seemingly on the basis of these letters or at least one of them, the present writer is inclined to be doubtful. The four regiments comprising Glover's brigade were all from Massachusetts; there is no record of the

participation of any Connecticut troops. There is no reason to doubt, however, that both letters were written by actual combatants.

The first letter was written from "Camp at Mile Square, E. Chester, 23 Oct." It follows:

"Friday morning (18th) we were alarmed (alerted and assembled in battle formation) and the enemy landed at Rodman's Pt.—a place about four miles from our encampment—with their whole force. The brigade under Gen. Glover consisting of about 700 men, one regiment being absent for guard—We marched down towds. (sic) the place where the enemy were advancing with a body of 16,000 with a very large artillery. The first attack was made by their advanced guard, which was effectually routed and forced to return to the main body, who when they came up were fired upon by two regiments advantageously posted by Col. Glover and Major Lee (who behaved gallantly) which brought many of them to the ground. Thus we continued fighting them and retreating the whole afternoon until they came to a stand, where they now remain stretching along down towards Connecticut, I imagine for forage.

"Our men behaved like soldiers, conformed to the orders of their officers and retreated in grand order—Our loss is abot (sic) nine or ten killed and about 30 wounded. The enemy, a deserter says, lost two hundred killed on the spot and a great number wounded. People may think what they please of the regular and spirited behavior of the British troops, but I that day was an eye-witness to the contrary. I saw a great irregularity almost as in a militia. They would come out of the body and fire single guns. As to their courage, the whole body of 16,000 were forced to retreat by the fire of a single regiment and many of them old troops. The fourth regiment was the one that ran. And had we been re-inforced with half their number might have totally defeated them." 6

This letter correctly describes the feeling of the brigade after the battle. Glover's men were confident that they would have handed the British-Hessian host a total defeat if their numbers had not been so overwhelming and re-inforcements had come. The estimate of 16,000 enemy troops is, of course, a gross exaggeration; as stated, Glover faced the advance units of some 4,000 which had landed on October 18th. The letter quotes a deserter as stating that the enemy lost "200 killed and a great number wounded." These figures collaborate Baldwin's estimate of the enemy killed. The writer mentions Major Lee as having helped Glover to deploy the men and behaving gallantly. Glover's account states that Major Lee was sent express to Gen. Lee with news of the new threat to the American rear. It does not seem possible that he could have returned from Valentine Hill, some three to four miles away, in time to assist Glover in the deployment of the troops. He may have participated in the fighting.

The second letter included in Stiles' *Diary* is the one generally attributed to his authorship. It is a very brief and accurate account of the terrain and the battle. The letter was written on October 29th from North Castle:

"We have secured and encamped in every hill and dale between this and New York. Last Friday (18th) our whole brigade that lay at East Chester under command of Col. Glover was ordered to oppose the progress of a large body of the enemy then landing at Rodman's Point. Three regiments were ordered to pass a causey (causeway)—the only passage, and march to oppose them; and our regiment with three pieces of artillery was posted on an eminence overlooking the causeway to secure a retreat for the others and prevent the enemy's advancing. Col. Glover so posted the three other regiments in the wood that they annoyed the enemy greatly. But discovering that they had determined to flank us he ordered a retreat. We had six or seven killed and about 18 wounded; the enemy's loss was about 140 or 150." 7

On the day after the battle of Pelham Manor the following letter was written from Fort Constitution (renamed Fort Lee in honor of the General). Whether the writer was an actual eyewitness or combatant is exceedingly doubtful; he appears to be relaying news which he heard in camp.

"Yesterday's affair was honourable to us. Three regiments, Glover's, Read's, and Shepard's, of Massachusetts, under Col. Glover who commanded the brigade, were advancing undercover to receive the enemy marching out towards the country. Col. Shepard was well covered by a wall, and at 30 or 40 yards, gave their grenadiers and infantry an unexpected heavy fire and then a second and third which broke the enemy so much they ran as fast as they could in confusion. They returned with field pieces and out-flanked our party which occasioned our people to retreat to a short distance where they rallied well and kept their ground vs. their cannonade and numbers. Our men behaved with remarkable spirit and coolness and I think are in a good way to do great things. We lost a few, 30 or 40 killed or wounded. Two deserters from the enemy say they lost one thousand but I have the best opinions to believe they lost one hundred and fifty or upwards, as our men fired with great coolness at a good distance." 8

The most interesting part of this letter is that two deserters, presumably interrogated separately according to the usual practice, place the enemy's losses at "one thousand." He couldn't believe the slaughter to be of that catastrophic proportion and apparently sought the opinions of those better informed. From these "best opinions" he himself would estimate the enemy's losses to be "one hundred and fifty or upwards." He balances this loss with the Americans, "we lost a few, 30 or 40 killed or wounded." He apparently did not know that the successive retreats of Glover's

regiments, until the final one, were according to design and not "occasioned by outflanking our party." Glover's brilliant strategy seems to have gone unnoticed.

Dawson mentions another letter written from Mount Washington (Fort Washington) on Oct. 23, 1776, by another eyewitness or combatant. (The American wounded at the battle were taken to Fort Washington for convalescence). Dawson quotes the letter as confirming the statement that the losses were largely sustained by the German troops and that deserters placed the entire enemy loss at "more than eight hundred killed and wounded." *

An account of this period of the Revolution, used often by historians of the Revolution and usually without citation of the source of their information, is a letter written by a "gentleman in the army," that is an officer, on November 1st, 1776, while Washington's army was in the heights beyond White Plains after the battle near that village. The letter is a rather lengthy one in which the writer reviews the evacuation of New York, the grand strategy of the generals, and the battle of Pell's Neck. By the frequent, "I understand" in the letter, one gathers that he was not privy to the councils of the generals nor a combatant in the battle of Pelham Manor but was an inquisitive person who wanted very much to know what was going on. In short, a Revolutionary era version of a war correspondent who had access to sources of information and hastened to put down whatever he learned for the enlightenment of the news-hungry folks back home.

The portion of the letter relating to the battle of Pelham Manor follows:

"The enemy having collected their troops from all quarters at Frogs Point and on board their ships, which were ranged along shore off against the Point and opposite to E. Chester. On the 18th they began a cannonade from their ships early in the day and landed some men on a point or neck of land near E. Chester meeting house. (St. Paul's Church) and their main body advanced from Pell's Neck out toward the great Post Road from Connecticut to New York. Gen. Lee, who had been watching their movements, had posted a regiment or two of men with one of the Rifle Batalions (sic) in a very advantageous manner to annoy them and bring them into an ambush, which partly succeeded. A large advanced guard came forward with three parties on the right and left of them and got around our pple (people) wherever small parties should appear to oppose them. A small party of our troops were sent forward to fire on the large advanced body of the enemy and to direct and lead them on to a Wall, behind which the regiments mentioned were principally secreted. The enemy came very near the wall and recd. (received) a general fire from our troops, which broke their advanced party intirely (sic), so that they ran back to the main body, formed and came on again in

larger numbers, keeping up a heavy fire with field pieces on the wall and men. They advanced now very near and recd. a second fire which intirely routed them again, and they retreated in a narrow lane by a wall, in a confused and huddled manner, near which were posted a large body of riflemen and some companies of musquet men (musketmen), who at this favorite moment poured in upon them a most heavy fire once or twice, before they could get out of the way; and they were seen to fall in great numbers. The whole body of the enemy then advanced in solid columns and large flanking parties advanced different ways to surround our men. They however kept the wall, till the enemy advanced a third time, and after giving them several fires they retreated by order from their officers. Gen. Lee greatly commended the conduct of the men.

"The enemy were tho't (thought) at the lowest computation to have lost 500 men, some think not less than a thousand. We had but few killed, and as far as I can learn not more than 50 or 60 wounded. The enemy advanced to a high point or neck of land, not far from E. Chester meeting house, from whence they were able to command the Rode (road, the Boston Post) with their field pieces but they kept very much in a body." ¹⁰

This fanciful account of the battle has the Americans placed behind two walls; the officer deploying the troops fully expected the group behind the rear wall to repulse an army outnumbering it by something like 40 to one and drive it back "in a confused and huddled" mass to a forward wall, the one near the "narrow lane." The writer wisely does not attempt to explain how the British in their charge missed the first group entirely and encountered them only when thrown back. As the Americans were actually stationed behind three walls in echelon, the British would have had to advance backward and retreat forward. The account would be ludicrous if it had not given birth to the legend that Gen. Lee was there in person to deploy and lead the troops. As previously stated, Gen. Lee had absolutely nothing to do with the battle. It was Gen. Heath who had sent Glover's brigade to Eastchester. The reader will also recall Glover stating in his letter that he had sent Major Lee express to Gen. Lee and added fervently: "I would have given a thousand worlds to have had Gen. Lee or some other officer present to direct or at least approve" of his positioning of the regiments.

The unfortunate part of all this is that the earliest American historians of the Revolution—Gordon, Allen, and Morse among others, accepted the statement that Gen. Lee was the guiding genius of the battle of Pelham and credit him with all the glory to the neglect of Col. Glover. ¹¹ The Rev. Mr. Gordon, for example, wrote: "The enemy was annoyed by a regiment or two of Americans and one of the rifle battalions which Gen. Lee had posted behind a wall and secreted for that purpose. The advance party

was repulsed twice and the Americans did not leave the wall until the enemy advanced a third time in solid columns when they gave them several fires and then retreated by General Lee's orders. The British are thought to have lost a considerable number; the Americans had a few killed and about 60 wounded." ¹² How closely Gordon has followed the letter of "a gentleman in the army," even to phraseology, is rather apparent. The early British historians have in the main largely copied their American contemporaries and compounded the errors. Thus are historical errors created and perpetuated; thus are genuine heroes forgotten and shams glorified.

Personal motives affected the way the British recorded the battle even more than they entered into the writings of the Americans. The landing at Pell's Neck and the battle itself were under the direct supervision of General Sir Henry Clinton. An exaggeration of the enemy's forces would not only serve to enhance his status as a strategist but also explain in part why the army delayed several days at New Rochelle waiting for still more thousands of troops instead of immediately thrusting into the country. Clinton writes in his *Narrative and Correspondence*:

"The moment the avant garde was ashore, I passed the defile and detached Lord Cornwallis with the Grenadiers, light infantry, and First Chasseurs to our right (that is toward New Rochelle) with directions to cover that flank and preserve the communications open between us. (This resulted in the flanking movement which was spied "fast approaching the bridge" and occasioned the final withdrawal of Glover's brigade). As we advanced, we found the enemy strongly posted behind stone walls, from whence they might have greatly obstructed our march had it not been for the corps which I had detached to the right, the number of the enemy being said to have been at least 14,000. The commander-in-chief (Howe) joined us here and the rebels being forced to quit the high ground, the gross of our army lay this night on their great communication with New England." ¹³

Gen. Howe was in a difficult position politically. He belonged to the minority party in Parliament which opposed stern measures to reduce the American colonies. He believed the colonies could be restored to fealty by conciliatory action with concessions. Acknowledgment of heavy losses would arouse the opposition, which was certain to attribute the losses to Howe's lack of vigor and his reluctance to punish the colonists for their intransigence. It was wise, therefore, to exaggerate the enemy's losses and minimize his own. He totally ignores any mention of the losses of the Hessians, who comprised three-fourths of the troops engaged in the battle. It would have been impolitic to let it be known that an amateur army brigade of farmers, sailors, and fishermen had inflicted heavy losses on the Hessians, the best trained and the best professional soldiers in the world. Every Hessian killed or wounded, moreover, cost the Crown and tax-payers an additional

sum of money. Revelation of the Hessian casualties might stir up the opposition of those whose pocketbook is the center of their conscience. ¹⁴

Gen. Howe's official report on the battle:

"On the march a skirmish occurred with a small part of the enemy posted to defend a narrow causeway, who were pursued for a mile, when a considerable body appearing in front behind stone walls and in woods, some companies of light infantry and a party of Chasseurs were detached to dislodge them, which they did effectually. Lieut. Col. Musgrave, commanding the first battalion of light infantry and Capt. Evelyn, of the Fourth Regiment were both wounded; the latter is since dead and much to be regretted as a gallant officer but Lieut. Col. Musgrave is in a fair way of recovery; 3 soldiers were killed and 20 wounded. The enemy's loss upon this occasion was a Lieut. Col. killed, a major wounded, and about 90 men killed and wounded." ¹⁵

There are four eye-witness reports from other British officers. Their arrogance is apparent in their writings. It must be remembered that the British officers in those days were almost entirely from the aristocracy and the wealthy classes of a highly stratified society. The following report is that of Gen. Lord Harris, then Senior Captain of the Grenadier Company:

"The boats soon brought over (to Pell's Neck) a great part of our army. Then we marched into the country, drove the enemy from some posts and lay on our arms near New Rochelle. The Grenadiers did not suffer being exposed to the batteries which were ill-served. From this we marched to White Plains, where the Americans behaved in the most dastardly manner for at first they made a show of resistance (but) no sooner was our second brigade ordered to advance than they gave way with such precipitation that they escaped to the heights before our men could reach them." ¹⁶

Another account is that of Col. Stephen Kemble, Deputy Adjutant General of the British Army, 60th Foot. Col. Kemble after the Revolution married into a wealthy American Tory family: "On Friday, Oct. 13, 1776 we passed over to Pelham's Manor, took post opposite to Eastchester with our right toward New Rochelle; in our route which was about three miles our light infantry engaged a party of rebels in a wood, who fled before us; we had about 20 killed and wounded with 3 officers, Major Musgrove, Capt. Evelyn (4th Rgt.), dangerously, and Lieut. Rutherford (22nd Rgt.), the first not badly." ¹⁷

Capt. Hall dismisses the affair briefly: "A skirmish ensued at this place, brought on in dislodging a party of the enemy who defended a narrow pass or causeway. The rebels were routed; a gallant young man, Capt. Evelyn, of the 4th, fell in this attack

with about 30 light infantry killed and wounded, among the latter was Lieut. Col. Musgrave, who particularly distinguished himself." ¹⁸

Charles Stedman, who served as an officer, rank unknown, under Sir Henry Clinton, after the war in 1794 wrote a two volume history of the Revolution with the title, *History of the Origin, Progress and Termination of the American War*. He follows the usual English tenor: "Soon after the landing a short skirmish happened in an attempt to dislodge the enemy from a narrow pass at which they had taken post with a strong corps. Notwithstanding their advantageous position, the American army retired with considerable loss; 32 were killed or wounded on the side of the British." ¹⁹

The most astonishing account of the battle is that of the German historian and chief apologist of the Hessian mercenaries, Max von Eelking. He spent years studying the German documents and gives the American losses as "one lieutenant colonel killed, a major wounded, and 90 dead and wounded." ²⁰ (Lifted bodily from Howe's report). He says absolutely nothing about the Hessian loss. The silence is most significant!

CHAPTER V

The Aftermath

On the 19th of October, the day after the battle of Pelham Manor, Gen. Washington dispatched Gen. Rufus Putnam to make a personal reconnaissance of the terrain and military situation in Westchester County. It will be recalled that on the 17th of October Washington had sent Lord Stirling ahead to prepare entrenchments at White Plains, the supply depot for the American army. On the day of the battle, the evacuation of 13,000 troops from Harlem Heights and the King's Bridge area had just started. Washington's army had no maps of Westchester County and none of his officers had any personal knowledge of the terrain. The army seemed to be retreating into a strange foreign land.

Gen. Putnam travelled on the Boston Post Road from King's Bridge, through the Village of Eastchester, "where I saw a small body of the British near the Church (St. Paul's)—and the houses were deserted," up Columbus Avenue (the old White Plains Road) to Tuckahoe and Scarsdale, and then returned to King's Bridge by way of Philipse's Manor (Yonkers) and the Albany Post Road.

What Putnam reported shocked and angered Washington. The British with the main bulk of their army were in the neighborhood of New Rochelle, only eleven miles from White Plains, with good roads and an open country before them. At White Plains the Americans had assembled considerable ammunition, supplies, and provisions,—but these were "guarded" by only 300 of the rawest militia! If the British had not been delayed a whole day by Glover's men, they would have marched to White Plains and taken the supplies, cut off Washington's retreat, and forced a fight in the open.

Gen. Putnam describes Washington as being greatly surprised that the American army was so greatly imperiled and "complained, very feeling, of the Gentlemen of New York from whom he had never been able to obtain a plan of the country" and on whose judgment he had ordered the supplies to be assembled at White Plains. As Freeman explains, "If the British got to the Croton River and the high ground at White Plains before the Americans did, then Washington's army could be starved or forced to flee, broken and powerless across the Hudson in small bodies or into Connecticut as refugees."¹

Washington immediately sent Putnam to Lord Stirling, who had gone only four or five miles with the vanguard of the evacuation, with orders that he get moving at once and fast. The bon-vivant Stirling pushed his brigade during the night and arrived at White Plains on the next morning and thus, Putnam writes in the spirit of one who had been holding his breath until the deed was done,

"the American army was saved by an interposeing (sic) providence from a probabal (sic) total destruction." ²

On the 21st of October, Washington in General Orders expressed his thanks to Glover and his brigade. "The hurried situation of the general for the past two days having prevented him from paying that attention to Col. Glover and the officers who were with him on the battle of Friday last, that their merit and good behavior deserves, he flatters himself that his thanks, though delayed, will nevertheless be acceptable to them, as they are offered with sincerity and cordiality. At the same time he hopes that every other part of the army will do their duty with equal duty (sic) and zeal whenever called upon, and that neither danger, difficulties, or hardships will discourage soldiers engaged in the cause of liberty and contending for all that freeman hold dear and valuable." ³

General Lee had already thanked the troops. On the 19th, in his orders he told his division: "General Lee returns his warmest thanks to Col. Glover and the brigade under his command, not only for their gallant behavior yesterday but (also) for their prudent, cool, and soldierlike conduct in all respects. He assures these brave men that he shall omit no opportunity of shewing (sic) his gratitude. All the wounded to be immediately sent to Valentine Hill—where the surgeons should repair to dress them; they are afterwards (to be) forwarded to Fort Washington." ⁴

Judging from a letter written by a soldier in Glover's brigade, Gen. Lee appeared at Glover's camp at Mile Square, Eastchester, on the day after the battle and also personally thanked Glover and his men: "The next day, Gen. Lee (under whose command we are) came and returned his thanks to Col. Glover and the officers and soldiers under his command for their noble, spirited, and soldierlike conduct during the battle and nothing in his power should be wanting to serve these brave officers and men—Gen. Lee says we shall none of us leave the army but stay and be promoted, but how that will be is not certain." ⁵

Putnam blames Howe's "stupidity" for the preservation of the American army. For several days the invaders had not moved from Pell's Neck. Their Hessian allies were deployed on the Post Road from the bridge at the Hutchinson eastward through Pelham's present Colonial Road to New Rochelle. They made no attempt to hinder Washington's long caravan strung out along 15 miles of the roads between Harlem Heights and White Plains. Between the caravan and the British host were only several entrenched posts or camps on the hills rising from the Bronx River valley. But Howe did not make a single offensive action against them. "It is a little unaccountable," Heath writes, "that they did not attempt to stretch across to the Hudson which might have been done with great ease." ⁶ Washington's army reached White Plains on the 22nd of October. Even as late as the 24th of October, Howe could have

cut across the county and caught Lee's forces which were bringing up the rear. It would have been a grand prize,—8,000 troops and a train of 150 wagons bearing baggage, artillery, and military stores.

Why was Howe hesitating? The only possible reason was Clinton's belief that in the battle of Pelham Manor he had been opposed by an army of at least 14,000. It seemed prudent to await the arrival of the 2nd Division of Hessians then on the high seas approaching New York. The Hessian wounded in the battle had been brought to the Eastchester meeting house. (St. Paul's Church). The brick building, begun in 1765, was yet incomplete. It is said that the Hessians cut down some huge trees on the Village Green in front of the church and used these for benches on the uncovered earth floor of the church. The older wooden building, built in 1692 and still standing a few feet north of the present structure, was knocked down and used as firewood. Those who died were buried in a sandpit in the extreme rear of the cemetery. (It is now marked with a gravestone and often sought by visitors to the historic church). How many died is unknown; one writer places the number as an even one hundred, which may or may not be an exaggeration. That American women from the neighborhood nursed the Hessians seems to be fanciful romanticism. Putnam observed the houses to be all deserted and well they might be as the invaders were pillaging the houses of Tories and patriots indiscriminately.

The loose system of the British patrols invited daring raids by the American detachments scattered along the hills back of the Bronx River to protect the long train of Washington's retreating army farther west. On Sunday, October 20th, only two days after the battle of Pelham Manor, Gen. Lee asked Col. Glover to venture an attempt to recover some badly needed provisions left behind in a store at Eastchester. In his characteristically modest and straightforward manner, Glover describes the exploit: "Lee sent for me and informed me that there were 200 barrels of pork and flour at Eastchester if the enemy hadn't taken it; (he) would be glad I would think some way to bring it off. I set out and pressed (commandeered) 15 wagons and at night turned out the whole brigade and went so nigh the enemy that we heard their music and talk very plain, and brought off the whole."⁷ It was quite a feat, a band of 700 men stealthily inching their way at night with 15 wagons right in the midst of the enemy, packing 200 barrels of pork and flour in the wagons and drawing them off by hand without being detected.

On the following Wednesday he went out on a searching patrol with men "principally from my own regiment, who met a party of Hessians and attacked them, killing 12 and took 3 prisoners; one of the slain was an officer of rank, the horse was taken and brought off; we had one man mortally wounded."⁸ The horse was taken triumphantly into camp as a trophy and perhaps to

collect the reward Washington had offered to anyone capturing enemy horses in combat. The Continental troops had not been used to being attacked by cavalry and in the few engagements in which they had faced any enemy on horseback, they had acted as if intimidated by the horses. To overcome this feeling, Washington had offered the bounty. ⁹

On October 22, the 2nd grand division of Hessians under Lieut. Gen. Baron von Knyphausen arrived at Meyer's Point (now Davenport's Neck) in New Rochelle. The beautiful cove presented a grand sight with 120 sail bearing 4,000 Hessians, 670 Waldeckers, a company of jagers, and 3,400 British recruits. These swelled the invasion force to over 37,000. Howe now completed his preparations for the thrust into the mainland. Leaving the 2nd Division under Knyphausen at Meyer's, he made a cautious movement forward on October 25th. He reported to the Home Office: "We took a position with the Bronx in front, the line being a distance of 4 miles from White Plains, upon which the rebels quitted their detached camps between King's Bridge and White Plains, assembling their whole force at the latter place behind entrenchments thrown up by the advanced corps." ¹⁰

The British-Hessian host was now scattered through the town of Eastchester and New Rochelle with an advance guard in the lower part of Scarsdale. The main part of the army was along the present North Avenue in New Rochelle. Howe's headquarters from the 19th to the 21st was at the Secor House in Pelham, then on North Avenue probably at the Pugsley House, from the 22nd to the 24th, and on the 25th at the Ward House on old White Plains Road opposite Concordia School in Bronxville at the Eastchester line. The Ward House was then strategically located at the fork of two important roads: one descending the steep hill (along side of the present Catholic Church) going westward to the important Ward bridge crossing of the Bronx in Tuckahoe, the other was the main road going northward to White Plains.

On the 28th occurred the two clashes between detachments of both armies which have been coupled and extensively chronicled as the Battle of White Plains. When Washington's army retired to a stronger position on the heights of North Castle after the battle, Howe kept him guessing for a few days and then moved southward for an attack on Fort Washington which had been left isolated. It fell on November 15th after a couple of hours of fierce fighting with some 3,000 American troops being made prisoners along with the loss of a staggering amount of precious materiel. It was a catastrophic blow to the American cause and chilled the ardor of the remaining troops in North Castle. Ward writes that "the blame for the disaster must rest upon the shoulders of Gen. Greene and Col. Magaw and their inexplicable infatuation in attempting to hold the fort, and upon those of Gen. Washington for his vacillation and indecision when by prompt and decisive

action he might have prevented his inferior officers from persisting in their suicidal folly." ¹¹ Washington knew it was partly his fault. Three years later he wrote candidly to his Adjutant General Joseph Reed that the wishes of Congress and other conflicting considerations "caused that warfare in my mind and hesitation which ended in the loss of the garrison." ¹² A few days later the dispirited Washington crossed the Hudson into New Jersey with the main bulk of his army.

Westchester County was now completely in the hands of the British invaders except for the small part of the American army that had been left under Gen. Lee at New Castle. At the time of the Revolution, Westchester County extended from the Harlem River northward to the present Putnam County line and from the Hudson River to the Byram River-Connecticut line. It was divided into several townships. What is now the Bronx was then the Town of Westchester and included the latter townships of West Farms and Morrisania. It was the largest of the towns in Westchester County, had a population of 600 to 700 persons, and, although not the earliest part of the County to be settled, for over a hundred years already had been organized as a chartered borough with a rather pretentious government run by a mayor and six aldermen. The Village of Westchester was the only one in the township and served as the county seat until 1759. Trials were held in the courthouse here and at the meeting house or church at Eastchester (St. Paul's).

To the east of the township of Westchester was that of Eastchester which extended to Scarsdale and included the area between the Bronx and Hutchinson Rivers. ¹³ The Village of Eastchester itself was very small, consisting of a school, a mill, two taverns, a store, and a blacksmith clustered around St. Paul's Church. The old church with the Village Green before it was the center of all the public activities of the Township of Eastchester and frequently of all Westchester County. Here the farmers met for religious services, elections, militia training, and occasional court sessions; on the Green too were the stocks and the pillory for the punishment of lawbreakers. The entire township boasted of four taverns, four mills, four schools, and 37 dwellings not counting the cottages of farm laborers. The population was about 500. As often mentioned, the old Boston Post Road passed through the Village of Eastchester as it wound its way from King's Bridge, through the Township of Westchester, made the loop northward up present South Columbus Avenue to the bridge over the Hutchinson River (Sandford Boulevard) into Colonial Avenue, Pelham, to New Rochelle and eastward to Boston. ¹⁴

The rest of Westchester County was similarly farm land interspersed here and there with very small settlements which called themselves villages. The Township of White Plains had some 75 dwellings scattered throughout its territory; the twelve houses near

the Court House on present Broadway was the Village. The township of New Rochelle had about 200 inhabitants with the Village being centered about Trinity Church, a mile or so from the harbor.

Along the Hudson were the two great manors of the Philipses and Van Courtlands'. The owners were called the Lords of the Manor but did not possess here the manorial rights of those in England. Their political power, however, was tremendous since they owned all the land and their tenants were disenfranchised as were all the other tenants, laborers, and farmers in Westchester County who did not possess a freehold of forty pounds unencumbered by debt. Yonkers was known as Philipse's and consisted of the manor house, a grist mill, and a few laborers' cottages located at the mouth of Saw Mill River. The proprietor at the time was Frederick Philipse and he owned all of the area which now comprises Yonkers, Greenburgh, Mount Pleasant, and Ossining. Tuckahoe was then part of Yonkers and contained 19 houses, all of them very small; Mile Square to its south had 13 small houses and two taverns.

Westchester County, abandoned to the enemy, was in for a dreadful time. It was plundered unmercifully by the British and the Hessians. They started on the very day of their landing at Pell's Point. Baldwin wrote in his letter-diary on Saturday, October 19, the day after the battle: "The enemy lay partly still this day only plundering the Point indiscriminantly showing no more favour to a Tory than a Whig—The country people are in a great confusion altho they are chiefly enemies or nutors (neutrals). We have been until very lately exceedingly careful of the property of the country people till we found it was only saving it for our enemies now in the field." ¹⁵

Three days later he wrote: "The enemy take up about six miles of the Boston Post Road about New Rochelle and are encamped on the southeast side of the road near the sea—We hear that they have destroyed some houses near Merrynack (Mamaroneck). The fingers of both officers and men seem to be foul of them (anxious to get at them) but have no orders for it at present." ¹⁶ Col. Kemble of the British army wrote rather ruefully on November 2nd: "The country all this while was unmercifully pillaged by our troops, Hessians in particular, no wonder if the country people refuse to join us." ¹⁷

Howe was bitterly angry at the pillage. He still had lingering hopes of conciliating the colonies. As he later declared in a speech to Parliament on his conduct of the war: "Although some persons condemn me for having endeavored to conciliate his Majesty's rebellious subjects by taking every means to prevent the destruction of the country instead of irritating them by a contrary mode of proceeding. Yet—am I satisfied—in that particular for the benefit

of the King's service." ¹⁸ In his pursuit of Washington across New Jersey, Howe found the natives rather indifferent toward the American cause but disinclined to take sides. The behavior of his troops, however, soon angered them and made active revolutionists out of the great majority of them.

Howe saw what the troops were doing at the Point and railed against it. On the very day after the battle he angrily declared in General Orders: "The Commander-in-Chief is greatly disappointed that the repeated orders he has been from time to time under the necessity of issuing for the suppression of plundering and marauding have not been attended to by the troops as he had a right to expect. He now declares in Public Orders for the information of every individual soldier and follower of the army that he is determined hereafter to shew no mercy to any person proved guilty of the above crimes." ¹⁹

This was fine but Howe never carried out the intention. There is no record of his punishing any one for these offenses even though those plundered were in the main Tories. (The arch-Tory ex-Judge Jones later wrote a thick book assailing Howe for his failure to protect the Tories in Westchester County). Montross contrasts his conduct in this respect with that of Washington: "The rebels (Americans) found themselves in the strange position of holding enemy territory in their own country. Tories outnumbered patriots by far in Westchester County, so that the troops had to be on their guard against reprisals. The officer of one detachment reacted by burning the courthouse at White Plains. It speaks well for Washington's discipline that he turned the officer over to civil justice for punishment. No such restraints curbed enemy soldiers who plundered the Westchester loyalists welcoming them as deliverers. Household goods had a special fascination for the Hessians, who did not neglect even pots and pans when loading their wagons with stolen loot. Such activities go a long way toward explaining Howe's slow progress to White Plains." ²⁰

The Hessians were intensely disliked, if not hated, by both sides. Gen. Gates was told that "the Hessians and British troops disagree and are kept entirely separate. The latter do not like the former's being allowed to plunder while they are prohibited from doing it. Those rascals plunder all indiscriminately; if they see anything they like, they say 'rebel, good for Hesse-man's' and seize it for their own use. They have no idea of the distinction of Whig and Tory." ²¹

To Americans the Hessians were foreigners intruding in a family fight. Their fierce mustaches, blue coats, thick pigtails, and clumsy boots made them appear as "ugly devils" to Americans. They were notorious as fierce, brutal fighters, the best trained and disciplined soldiers in the world. The English historian Lecky says that the hiring of the German mercenaries "to subdue the essentially

English population made reconciliation hopeless and the Declaration of Independence inevitable. It was idle for the Americans to have any further scruples about calling in foreigners (the French) to assist them when England herself set the example." ²² Jefferson in the Declaration made this one of the grievances of the Americans against the King.

Who were these Hessians? Where did they come from and what were they like? And why did England bring them to America? To answer the last question first: After the British evacuated Boston, it was apparent that it would require far more troops to subdue the Americans than the 7,000 which were brought over for that purpose. England itself, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland were combed for recruits. These were not readily forthcoming because of the general prosperity prevailing at that time and the lack of enthusiasm for the war among the lower classes. England had to look elsewhere. After Russia refused, the British turned to Germany.

Germany at that time was divided and sub-divided into numerous small independent regions ruled by petty princes called Landgraves. The princes were a desolate lot whose power over their subjects was almost absolute. Their main source of income were human beings whom they sold "like so many beasts for slaughter." When England offered to pay a fancy price for hiring soldiers, the Landgraves sent their bully boys out to scour their territories for available men. Their subjects had no choice, the army was compulsory; they either joined or faced the firing squad. In a sense, it is true, as one of their apologists writes, the Hessians "did not fight for pay but because they had to."

During the Revolution, the British hired 30,000 soldiers from five Hessian princes. The total cost was a staggering sum of over four and a half million pounds in a day when the pound had an enormous purchasing power. The contract with the Prince of Brunswick was typical: In addition to 7 pounds and 4 shillings "per head" for each man furnished, the Prince was to receive an annual payment of 11,517 pounds. For each man killed, he was to receive an additional "head money" of 7 pounds and 4 shillings; three men wounded were to be counted as one killed. The additional money for those killed and wounded went into the pocket of the Prince; the wounded men and the dead men's family received none of it. ²³

The British soldiers themselves were far from being "gentle folks." Montross writes of them that they came "from the lower orders of the population—when dwellers in English slums and rural hovels were—brutalized by poverty and cheap gin and oppressed by laws of ferocious severity—" ²⁴ Yet the treatment of the Hessian soldiers by their officers shocked the British soldiers. The Hessian officers, almost all from the nobility with the usual

"von," carried canes and "struck the men freely by way of injunction rather than chastisement.—The British felt that striking a man as if he were a dog—robbed him of the last tatters of human dignity." ²⁵

One would believe that the Hessian soldier, living under such despotic, tyrannical, and almost inhuman conditions where respect for the dignity and worth of the individual had no place at all, would sympathize with the aspirations of other men who wished to be free. Washington was of this opinion and tried to entice the Hessian soldiers to desert by offering them bounties of money and land. He prepared broadsides written in German to be distributed among them. ²⁶ The response was very poor. Completely "brain-washed" by their mode of living, particularly the ingraining of absolute, immediate, and unquestioning submission to authority, the Hessians considered any rebellion against authority to be a capital crime. They were amazed at the absence of a caste system here and the comfortable houses, gardens, orchards, and fields of the inhabitants. People enjoying these benefits were ingrates for rebelling against a benevolent government which bestowed these blessings. They deserved to be punished and the Hessians joined most willingly and even zestfully into the task.

Lowell, an American who next to the German historian von Elking has done the most research in the history and background of the German mercenaries, tries to make a case for the Hessians: "Many of the involuntary volunteers were not such bad fellows after all," he writes, asserting that "they had their share of the virtues, honesty, courage, and kindliness." ²⁷ (His book cites no instances of these virtues with the possible exception of courage; as a matter of fact, his book is evidence to the contrary). Another American historian, the celebrated John Fiske, on whose books the present writer cut his historical eye-teeth, waxes most sentimental over their plight: "It was indeed with a heavy heart that the honest men took up arms to go beyond the sea and fight for a cause in which they felt no sort of interest and great was the mourning at their departure." ²⁸

It is hard to reconcile this maudlin sentiment with the actual deeds of the Hessians. Granted that they had no choice but to fight. But did that include their bayoneting of helpless men with uplifted hands in token of surrender, their brutal treatment of prisoners even to the denial of the barest necessities of life, their constant pillage and marauding of every defenceless home of enemy and friend alike? The Nazis and Japanese probably also had in their ranks some men who possessed "their share of the virtues, honesty, courage, and kindliness." It would be difficult to convince the people of the lands they ravished that these so endowed were true representatives of the vast generality of the soldiers.

Westchester County knew what it is to be occupied by enemy troops which make no distinction even between friend and foe. As Montross writes, "The Americans of 1776 were not stretching it when they complained of ravages that might have been committed by a horde of barbarians." ²⁹

Works Cited

CHAPTER I

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2. *Ibid.*, 6, p. 138.
3. *Ibid.*, 6, p. 59.
4. Washington Irving, *Life of George Washington* (1866), Vol. 2 p. 304.
5. Quoted by Edward J. Lowell, *The Hessians* (1884), p. 67.
6. Christopher Ward, *The War of the Revolution*, (1952), p. 223.
7. Irving, *loc. cit.*
8. Lowell, p. 68.
9. Letter from a Marylander, Peter Force, *American Archives*, 5th Series (1885), Vol. 2, p. 108.
10. *Writings of George Washington*. Ed. by Jared Sparks (1847), p. 73.
11. George Athan Billias, *General John Glover and his Marblehead Mariners*. New York: Holt & Co. (1960), pp. 101-102.
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13. *Journal of Lieut. Col. Stephen Kemble*, New York Historical Society Collections, Vol. 16 (1883), p. 86.
14. William Heath, *Memoirs of Major General Heath* (1798), p. 60.
15. *Loc. cit.*
16. Letter of Gen. Nathanael Greene to Gov. Cooke of Rhode Island, quoted in Thomas Jones, *History of New York During the Revolution* (1879), p. 604.
17. Irving, Vol. 2, p. 334.
18. Quoted by Billias, p. 108.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
20. Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington*, Vol. 4 (1951), p. 196.
21. Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 4, p. 428.
22. William B. Reed, *Life and Correspondence of Joseph Reed*, Vol. 1, p. 237.
23. *Writings of George Washington* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 83.
24. *Writing of George Washington* (Sparks), p. 73.
25. Lynn Montross, *Rag, Tag, and Bobtail* (1952), pp. 139-140.
26. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 31.
27. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 111.

28. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, p. 5.
29. Reed, Vol. 1, p. 240.
30. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 91.
31. B. J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (1860), p. 615.
32. Quoted by Gen. Henry B. Carrington, *Washington the Soldier*, (1899), p. 10.
33. Ward, p. 458.
34. Reed, Vol. 1, pp. 243-244.
35. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 188.
36. Quoted by Irving, Vol. 2, p. 323.
37. *Loc. cit.*
38. Ward, p. 245.
39. Lowell, p. 66
40. Quoted by Henry B. Dawson, *Westchester County During the Revolution*, (1885), p. 223.
41. Ward, pp. 238-239.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
43. Charles Francis Adams, *Studies Military and Diplomatic* (1911), p. 60.
44. Freeman, p. 178.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 196.
46. Quoted by Freeman, p. 196.
47. Claude H. Van Tyne, *The Loyalists in the American Revolution* (1922), pp. 250-251.
48. Quoted by Ward, p. 239.
49. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 167.
50. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 186-187.
51. Quoted by Montross, frontispiece.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
53. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 116.

CHAPTER II

1. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 39.
2. Freeman, Vol. 4, p. 186.
3. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 96.
4. Irving, p. 346.
5. Joseph Galloway, *Letters to a Nobleman on the Conduct of the War*. London (1779), p. 33 & p. 47.
6. *The Narrative of Lieut. Gen. Sir William Howe in a Committee of the House of Commons on April 17, 1779*. (London, 1790), p. 5.

7. Howe to Lord German, Nov. 30, 1776; in Force, 5th Series, Vol. 3, p. 921.
8. Charles Stedman, *History of the Origin, Progress, and Termination of the American War*. Dublin (1794), Vol. 2, p. 161.
9. Washington to Congress, quoted by Dawson, p. 226.
10. Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 1008.
11. Freeman, Vol. 4, pp. 214-215 and note.
12. The Point and Neck is spelled Thock's, Throg's, and Frog's in the documents. It was originally owned by a man named Throckmorton, hence the curious abbreviations. The Throg's Neck Bridge is near the site.
13. Howe to Lord Germain; Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 3, p. 921.
14. Kemble, p. 93. Lieut. Gen. Philip von Heister was the first commander of the Hessians in America; he was succeeded by Lieut. General Baron Wilhelm von Kynphausen; Col. Carl von Donop was in command of the Hessians grenadiers and chasseurs; Major (later Colonel) Robert Rogers, the American renegade, was commander of the Queen's Rangers, a corps of 600 American Tories. No one was more despised by the American troops than Rogers.
15. Heath, p. 77.
16. Hufeland writes that the command of the men at the woodpile was given to Major William S. Smith, who was wounded at Harlem Heights and had asked for the assignment. Major Smith later married the daughter of President John Adams and lived with her at the Vincent Halsey House on Provost Avenue, on the Mount Vernon Line. In 1797 Pres. Adams, to escape a yellow fever epidemic raging in Philadelphia, then capitol of the United States, came to Eastchester to live with the Smiths, thus making Eastchester the site of the White House for several months. For further details see Hufeland, p. 11, and the writer's *The Place of Mount Vernon's Village Green and St. Paul's Church in American History*, p. 19.
17. Hall, p. 203.
18. Stedman, Vol. 2, p. 211.
19. William Gordon, *The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the United States of America*. (1801), Vol. 1, p. 110.
20. Jones, p. 21.
21. Jones, p. 621. The above was written by Gen. Clinton in the margin of Stedman's manuscript account of the landing. Clinton states substantially the same thing in his memoirs: Sir Henry Clinton, *The War of the Rebellion; Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of His Campaigns*. Ed. by William B. Willcox, p. 48. Ten days later, the harbor (Meyer's or Davenport's Neck in New Rochelle), was found to be ample and safe. It served as the debarkation point of Kynphausen's 2nd Hessian Division.

and the main supply depot for the invasion force.

22. Howe, *Narrative*, p. 6.
23. Clinton, p. 45.
24. Howe, *loc. cit.*
25. Hufeland, p. 112.
26. Reed, Vol. 1, p. 244.
27. Heath, p. 80.
28. *Writings*, (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 28.
29. Freeman, Vol. 4, p. 218. In his history, *Westchester County During the Revolution*, Dawson gives a detailed, bitter, and almost sneering account of the "patriotism" of the general populace and its lack of enthusiasm or concern for the "principles" for which the war was being fought. If we are to credit him fully, almost all the leaders of the Revolution were activated solely by the selfish motive of securing wealth and power for themselves. He asserts they were almost tyrannical in their efforts to coerce the peaceful and rather indifferent majority of the Westchester farmers to support the Revolution.
30. Gordon, p. 117.
31. Paul Allen, *A History of the American Revolution* (1822), p. 509.
32. Stedman, p. 212.
33. Allen, p. 511; Irving, pp. 359-360; Freeman, p. 219 for details of this Council of War.
34. *Writings* (Sparks), Vol. 4, p. 155 note.
35. Ward, p. 357.
36. Gordon, pp. 339-340.
37. Hufeland, p. 116. Why there should have been an appalling shortage of horses and wagons in a predominantly agricultural community such as Westchester County has never been satisfactorily explained. Dawson, p. 239, attributes the lack to inefficiency of the Quarter Master's Department and to the "thefts of horses by the officers of the army, not for their present purpose, but for their use in the future, after their retirement from the service." (Page 239).

CHAPTER 3

1. Sir Henry Clinton's *Narrative*, p. 45. There is no other account of any American force on the Neck which could have fired a "few shot." If Gen. Clinton's account is accurate, the Americans were probably a squad of vedettes from the local militia.
2. The first writer who devoted more than a few scant paragraphs to the Battle of Pelham Manor was Henry B. Dawson. In his history, *Westchester County During the Revolution* (1886), he places the landing on the *other* side (eastern) side of the

Point. William Abbatt, *The Battle of Pelham* (1901), follows Dawson in the location. Otto Hufeland, a professional engineer and a most meticulous historian, was the first to point out the error in his *Westchester County During the Revolution*, pp. 117-124. He asserts that Dawson and Abbatt by their location would have placed the British forces with all their guns, ammunition, wagons, and baggage right in the middle of a tidal marsh. He also makes a point of the fact that stone fences, which played a vital role in the ensuing battle, are not to be found in tidal marshes. He attributes their error to their following a map made by Sauthier in 1777 which shows the landing of the British at the outer end of Pell's Neck. Although both Dawson and Abbatt recognize many other glaring errors in Sauthier's map, one admittedly drawn to give a general impression and not exact details, both curiously accept Sauthier as the authority for the location of the landing. What is still more curious is that Abbatt, on the basis of an unreliable and inaccurate map, seeks to correct Glover's estimate of distances. In short, he attempts to have an eye-witness account fit the map of a person who never visited the area but drew it from a distance of some 3,000 miles. What is unfortunate is that Abbatt's error has been perpetuated by the misplacement of a monument on a spot at least a mile and a half away from the scene of the actual fighting. A far more detailed and accurate map is that by Charles Blaskowitz made in 1776 by an English engineer with the British army.

3. For Glover's letter, see below.
4. Howe to Lord Germain, Nov. 30, 1776; Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 3, p. 921.
5. Max von Eelking, *The German Allied Troops in the North American War for Independence*. Translated from the German by Rosengarten (1863), p. 43.
6. Abbatt, p. 5 note.
7. Lowell, p. 75.
8. Abbatt, *loc. cit.*
9. *Extract from a Gentleman in the Army*, Nov. 1, 1776 in Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 472. Also in Ezra Stiles, *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale*. Edited by Franklin Dexter (1901), pp. 86-87.
10. General Returns of the Army, Oct. 5, 1776; given in full for two other dates also by Dawson, p. 241. Courtis' name is variously spelled in the documents cited.
11. Billias, p. 59.
12. Thomas A. Lee, *Col. William R. Lee of the Revolution* (1917), p. 11.
13. *Loc. cit.*
14. Billias, p. 70.

15. *Encyclopedia Americana; Dictionary of American Biography*. The standard biography on Glover is, of course, George Athan Billias, *General Glover and His Marblehead Mariners*. (Holt & Co.), 1960.
16. J. M. Bugbee, *Memoirs of the Mass. Society of the Cincinnati*; other biographical information from *Encyclopedia Americana* and *Dictionary of American Biography*.
17. Abbatt, p. 12.
18. Abbatt, p. 13. *Encyclopedia Americana; Dictionary of American Biography*.
19. Not to be confused with Washington's Adjutant General Joseph Reed. In colonial Massachusetts the Read or Reed name was apparently as common as the Smith and Jones of today.
20. Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 244; also described by Abbatt, p. 12 note.
21. *Letter Written to Wife Mary Baldwin from Camp at Mile Square Abt. 5 miles North of Kingsbridge on Oct. 20-23, 1776*. Manuscript in Baldwin papers collection, Harvard University Library. The author is indebted to the Library authorities for furnishing photostat copies. Baldwin's illness, which frequently caused his absences at night from his regiment, was a "flux sometimes attended with blood with a very bad sickness at my stomach and a weakness in my limbs which made one unfit for the extraordinary fatigues of the war." He put off taking a leave granted by Washington because "of the recent movement of the enemy to Frog's Pt."
22. Historians are in agreement that the hill is Memorial Field. Abbatt seems alone in placing it elsewhere. He locates the camp on Kimball Avenue, Yonkers, on the hill directly opposite to the N.Y. Central Station. Presumably, he places it there on Baldwin's statements, as given in the text, that on Wednesday they marched "about 2 miles s/e of Eastchester about 1½ miles from the enemy at Frog's Point" and on the day following "marched a mile and a half n/west." The "n/west" may possibly have led Abbatt astray. While Kimball Avenue is north-west of their position, it is several times "a mile and a half n/west" of it. Memorial Field fits the distances.
23. Hufeland, pp. 116-117.
24. *Letter from Mile Square, Oct. 24, 1776*. It was printed in the *Freeman Journal and New Hampshire Gazette* on Nov. 26, 1776. Force copied it in *American Archives*, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, pp. 1188-1189; Hufeland also reproduces it, pp. 119-122, Dawson quotes it rather extensively without giving the text. The versions are all substantially the same; these are, however, some minor variations.
25. Heath, p. 72. Heath in his *Memoirs* refers to himself in the third person.

26. Dawson, p. 245.
27. Abbatt, p. 8 note.
28. Hufeland, p. 123, points out that the only "eminence" between Prospect Hill proper and Pell's Point is about 800 yards north of the Harlem River Branch Road" and agrees fully with Glover's estimate of distances. Thus "the boulder on the road between Bartow and City Island, which has been named Glover's Rock and carries a tablet commemorating the battle is about one and a half miles from the nearest point where there was any fighting and about a mile east of the Shore Road over which the British marched on their first attack on the Americans, a mile farther on." The Split Rock itself is now to the left of the ramp to the Connecticut Thruway as one leaves the Hutchinson Parkway going north.
29. Billias, p. 120.
30. *Loc. cit.*
31. *A Return of the Killed, Missing, etc.*, as given in Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 718.

CHAPTER IV

1. See note 21 of previous chapter.
2. The transcript is the current writer's.
3. Heath, p. 72.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
5. *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, President of Yale*. Ed. by Franklin D. Dexter (1901).
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 90-91. Also in Frank Moore, *Diary of the American Revolution from Original Papers and Original Newspapers* (1865), pp. 321-322.
7. *Loc. cit.* The "our whole brigade" reference and that of "our Rgt. with 3 pieces of artillery was posted on an Eminence" lend the strongest possible support to the writer's belief that the account was written by a member of Col. Glover's own regiment and not by Ezra Stiles.
8. *Extract of a Letter from Fort Lee, dated Oct. 19, 1776*; in Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 1130.
9. Dawson, p. 246. Dawson's reference places the source of this letter as the *Pennsylvania Journal* of Oct. 30, 1776. The present writer has not been able to secure the above copy of this weekly newspaper.
10. *Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in the Army, Dated Camp Near Mills, About Three Miles North of White Plains, Nov. 1, 1776*; in Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 471; also in Stiles, pp. 86-87.

11. Gordon, p. 39; Allen, pp. 511-512; A. Morse, *Annals of the American Revolution* (1824), p. 262; Dawson, p. 246, gives a list of many others.
12. *Loc. cit.*
13. Clinton, p. 55.
14. Hence the reason for not reporting to the Home Government any details of the Hessian operations in the war or any casualty lists. These reports were sent directly to the despotic Princes who had "loaned" out the troops for a price. These records were thrown in repositories, seldom read, and forgotten. The following chapter gives more details on the Hessians.
15. Howe to Lord Germain, Nov. 30, 1776; in Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 3, p. 921.
16. R. S. Lushington, *The Life and Services of General Lord Harris* (1860), p. 81. Lushington was private secretary to Lord Harris.
17. Kemble, p. 94.
18. Hall, p. 205.
19. Stedman, p. 212.
20. Von Eelking, p. 44.

CHAPTER V

1. Freeman, Vol. 4, p. 222.
2. *The Memoirs of Rufus Putnam* (1903), pp. 61-63.
3. *General Orders*, Oct. 21, 1776; Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, p. 1240.
5. *Letter from Camp at Mile Square, Eastchester*, Oct. 23, 1776; in Moore, pp. 326-327; also in Stiles, pp. 90-91.
6. Heath, p. 87.
7. Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 2, pp. 1188-1189.
8. *Loc. cit.*
9. There was another raid at this time which did not involve Col. Glover but did occur within the present limits of the city of Mount Vernon. On October 23rd, from the entrenched camp at Mile Square, a small group of Americans crossed the Bronx River and went "directly to the rear of the Hessian Camp" near Morrell's Tavern which stood on North Columbus Avenue immediately north of the Cross County Parkway overpass. (An historical tablet now marks the location). "They went into a house where they washed for the Officers, and were bringing off three tubs of shirts, when the man of the house informed the camp." They were driven off but on their way back to their camp met another party from their camp. They combined forces, attacked the house, killed ten Hessians including the Major who commanded them, and came back

with two prisoners and the tubs of shirts. *Letter from Camp at Mile Square*, 23 October, 1776 quoted by Dawson, p. 254. Hufeland, p. 132, says the house was an "out building" but the reference to the "man of the house" leads one to believe it was actually a dwelling.

10. Howe to Lord Germain, Nov. 30, 1776; Force, Fifth Series, Vol. 3, p. 922.
11. Ward, p. 274.
12. *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), Vol. 6, p. 150.
13. Mount Vernon, of course, was part of the township of Eastchester from its founding in 1851 to its incorporation as a city in 1892. A good portion of the five farms purchased for its founding was farm land once owned by Stephen Ward, the Revolutionary patriot whose home on White Plains Road was used by Gen. Howe as his headquarters as told in the text. St. Paul's Church still uses its incorporated title as St. Paul's Church, Eastchester, which is rather confusing as the present community of Eastchester is now several miles to the north. The old Village of Eastchester lies now mainly in Mount Vernon; the part south of Kingsbridge Road is in the Bronx portion of New York City.
14. The loop north to Sandford Boulevard was eliminated when the Boston Post Road was straightened out.
15. Baldwin manuscript letter to his wife.
16. *Loc. cit.*
17. Kemble, p. 94.
18. *Narrative of Gen. Sir William Howe*, p. 9.
19. Quoted in full by Kemble, p. 94.
20. Montross, p. 153.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
22. William E. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. 3, p. 244.
23. Lowell, p. 20 and p. 300.
24. Montross, p. 142.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
26. *Writings* (Spark), Vol. 1, p. 66.
27. Lowell, p. 45.
28. John Fisk, *The American Revolution*, p. 162.



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