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Staten Island and Its People

A HISTORY

1609-1929

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1782, prices were set as follows: For good, well-cured English hay, six shillings; good, well-cured salt hay, three shillings; good, clean straw, two shillings three pence, all currency per hundredweight. The above are simply regulations applying specially to Staten Island; there were hundreds of others applying in general to New York and its environs. Every indication, in fact, of strict military rule, exists in the records.

Taking up the military operations of the war we will look first at the militia companies reported on April 1, 1776, as organized under the command of Colonel Christopher Billopp. The officers then were: "For the West Devission—Daniel Winant, captain; Abraham Woglum, first lieutenant; James Randolph, second lieutenant; Joshua Wright, ensign. For the Manor—Peter Housman, captain; Lawrence Hillyer, first lieutenant; William Blake, second lieutenant; John Wright, ensign. North Devission—John Simonson, captain; Abraham Rolph, first lieutenant; Cornelius McLean, second lieutenant; Richard Corsen, ensign. South Devission—William Scobey, captain; Samuel Holmes, Jr., first lieutenant; John Garrison, second lieutenant; Richard Luckerman, ensign."

On the back of the above return is the following: "Abraham Jones, Esq., 1st Coll.; Cornelius Van Wagener 2d do; Cornelius Corsen 1st Major; Jacob Mersereau, 2d Major; Harminus Garrison, Quartermaster; Nicholas Stillwell, Adjutant." These officers were not, however, all involved in the transfer of July 6, 1776, thus narrated by Governor Tryon: "On Saturday last [6th] I received the Militia of the Island at Richmond Town, where near four hundred appeared, who chearfully, on my Recommendation, took the Oath of Allegiance & fidelity to his Majesty. Tomorrow I am to have another muster for the enlistment of Volunteers to form a Provincial Corps for the defence of the Island" (Doc. rel. Col. Hist. VIII, p. 681).

With 9,000 British troops to endorse the Governor's recommendation one can understand the transfer; but the matter of volunteering was different and in the following list of officers many patriots are missing, having joined Washington's troops in New Jersey.

The following is the list of Colonel Christopher Billopp's militia battalion: Lieutenant-colonel, Christopher Billopp; major, Benjamin Seaman; adjutant, John Bedell; surgeon, Lawrence Barrows; chaplain, William Charlton; quartermaster, Jacob Manee. First Company—Captain, David Alston; lieutenant, Richard Coleman; ensign, Jacob Housman. Second Company—Captain, Abraham Jones; lieutenant, Joseph Billopp; ensign, Joseph Simonson. Third Company—Captain, Richard Conner; lieutenant, Willett Billopp; ensign, Samuel Wright. The Staten Island troop—Captain, Isaac Decker; lieutenant, Aris Ryersz; ensign, Derby Doyle; trumpeter, Alfred Poillon. The gunboat, which patrolled the shore and the kills, even up the Fresh Kill to Richmond,

had the following officers: Captain James Stewart, Lieutenant Bornt G. Randall, Mate William Scobey, Quartermaster Stephen Bedell.

The privates in these various companies were not all Staten Islanders. The following appear to be such: Thomas Burbank, John Bedell, Jr., Anson Bedell, Dewitt, William, Hampton and Joel Conner, Tunis Egbert, Abraham Egbert, Garret and George Housman, Abraham, Richard and James Latourette, John Laforge, Stephen Martino, Abraham and William Manee, Edward Perine, Jacob Rickhow, Simon Swaim, Thomas Sprag, Nathaniel Stillwell, Isaac, Abraham, Dewitt and Bornt Simonson, Ephraim and John Totten, Cornelius Van Wagener from the first company.

Freeman and Joseph Bedell, Adrian Burbank, Isaac Blake, John Bodine, Lewis DuBois, Isaac Cubberly, Daniel Corsen, Richard Christopher, Ralph Conner, Richard Crips, Nicholas Depuy, Moses Egbert, Anthony Fountain, Peter Housman, John Housman, John Journeay, John Lisk, Nicholas Latourette, Nathaniel Lockerman, Daniel Lake, David, Charles, and Jaques Laforge, Lambert Merrell, John and Oscar Poillon, Joseph Rolph, William Storer, Jacob Spragg, Joseph, David, Levi and John Simcnson, Gilbert Totten, Lawrence Vroom, Zachariah Van Dyke, Daniel Winants from the second company.

Henry Butler, John Baker, James Burger, John Beatty, Matthew and Freeman Decker, Harmon Garrison, John Hilliard, Samuel Holmes, Ephraim Kettletas, Asher and Jonathan Manee, Theodore Poillon, Bar-ent Simonson, Lewis Simonson, Rufus and Ephraim P. Totten, Charles and Freeman Van Name, Abraham Woglum from the third company.

The Troop privates were nearly all Staten Islanders: John Androvette, Abner Burbank, Benjamin Barton, Daniel Corsen, Edmund Christopher, Benjamin Crips, Matthew Decker, Samuel De Hart, Isaac Johnson, Nicholas Larzalere, Abraham Lake, Edward Perine, Isaac Prall, Jr., Bernard Sprong, John Stillwell, John Simonson, Samuel Van Pelt.

The gunboat crew included Joel Simonson, Obadiah Bedell, Paul Latourette, Asher Jacobson, Alonzo Latourette, Peter Laforge. It is said to have been a small sailing vessel with two small cannons mounted on deck. Various receipts, quoted in previous histories, show that wages and cost of maintenance were paid by the county officials.

Hostilities began July 25, 1776, on Staten Island. "Colonel Heard's militia at this time occupied the Amboy barracks. The Tory element in that place and on Staten Island was so large that during the summer of 1776 about a thousand men were encamped at Blazing Star and Amboy to prevent open alliance with the Royalist cause" (Dally's Woodbridge and Vicinity, p. 242). Several shallops were observed coming down the

Rev. Carmelo DiSano, in consideration of his patriotic sentiments and welfare work among his fellow countrymen, and especially for his enthusiastic Red Cross activities, has been honored by the title of Chevalier of the Crown of Italy, with letters of appreciation from the King and Queen.

Moravian Churches—It is said that Captain Nicholas Garrison, commanding a ship in which Bishop Spangenberg of the United Brethren, commonly called Moravians, was a passenger, became thereby the means of introducing the denomination on Staten Island. Rev. David Bruce was their first preacher here and Jacob Vanderbilt and wife among the first converts. Between 1742 and 1743, other Moravian clergymen began to come here, and services were held in a school house at or near Egbertville or New Dorp. On December 7, 1763, the old Moravian Church, combined with a parsonage, which is still standing but moved from the original site, was consecrated. Its cornerstone had been laid July 7, 1763, following an application to the church authorities in Bethlehem, Pa., made by Richard Conner, Stephen Martino, Jr., Tunis Egbert, Jacob Vanderbilt, Aaron Cortelyou, Matthias Enyard, John Beatty, Cornelius Cortelyou, Cornelius Vanderbilt, Cornelius Van Deventer, Stephen Martino, Mary Stillwell, Cornelius Martino, and Peter Perine.

From this beginning have sprung the various Moravian churches and the Moravian cemetery which have long been among the interesting features of Staten Island. The parent church was replaced by the present edifice, consecrated May 15, 1845. It had been damaged by fire, but not destroyed, during the Revolution, and had been served by the following pastors:

Rev. Hector Gambold, April 17, 1763-84.

Rev. James Birkby.

Rev. E. Thorp.

Rev. Frederick Moehring, 1787-93.

Rev. James Birkby, 1793-97.

Rev. Frederick Moehring, 1797-1803.

Rev. Nathaniel Brown, 1803-13.

Rev. John C. Bechler, 1813-17.

Rev. George A. Hartman, 1817-37.

Rev. Ambrose Rondthaler, 1837-39.

Rev. H. G. Clauder, 1839-52.

Since the new church was erected the following:

Rev. Bernhard de Schweinitz, 1852-54.

Rev. Amadeus A. Reinke, 1854-60.

Rev. Edwin T. Senseman, 1860-62.

Rev. Eugene Leibert, 1862-67.