

Inside THE BRICK ACADEMY

The Historical Society of the Somerset Hills

May 2022

The New Jersey Brigade Encampment

By Roy Crego

In November 1779, during the Revolutionary War, the New Jersey Brigade returned to the state from central New York after participating in General John Sullivan’s campaign against the Iroquois Confederacy. Sergeant Major George Grant of Bernards Twp. served in the 3rd NJ Regiment and kept a diary of their movements. The troops arrived at Scotch Plains on November 5 and spent six weeks in tents “in the most severe and cold weather.” On December 17, Grant writes that the regiment marched to “Erye’s Forge” and began to construct their winter quarters. On December 24, 1779 they moved into the new log huts.¹

Erye’s Forge was a variant spelling for a business owned by Elisha Ayers near the junction of Indian Grave Brook and the Passaic River. The area, now in the Borough of Bernardsville, was part of a small community called Log Town that existed along Hardscrabble Road near the present Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary. The encampment was south of the main army at Jockey Hollow, but offered access to water and local settlements at Basking Ridge and Vealtown (Bernardsville). The latter was reached by the road south that came to be known as Old Army Road.

The New Jersey brigade consisted of four regiments totaling just over 1,000 men. They were the 1st, 2nd and 3rd NJ regiments and Spencer’s Regiment, named after Col. Oliver Spencer, a tannery owner from Elizabethtown (Elizabeth). The other regimental commanders were Col. Mathias Ogden of Elizabethtown (1st NJ), Col. Israel Shreve from Gloucester Co. (2nd NJ) and Col. Elias Dayton of Elizabethtown (3rd NJ). A payroll from the 3rd New Jersey for December 1779 (Exhibit 1) lists Col. Dayton, Sergeant Major George Grant, and other soldiers stationed at the site.²

Names	Rank	Time of Service		Pay		Amount of Pay & Allowances
		the Day	the Day	Dollrs	Dollrs	
Col. Dayton	Col	1	75	300	575	
Sergeant Major Grant	S. Major	do	60	100	160	
Col. Mathias Ogden	Col	do	50	300	350	
Col. Israel Shreve	Col	do	60	300	360	
Col. Elias Dayton	Col	do	20	100	120	
Sergeant Major Grant	S. Major	do	50	100	50	
Private	Private	do	13	100	113	
Private	Private	do	13	100	20	
Private	Private	do	10	10	20	
Private	Private	do	10	10	19	
Private	Private	do	9	10		

9990 Dollars

Exhibit 1

The impact of the encampment on the surrounding area was significant and not always positive. Records from Spencer’s Regiment show soldiers sometimes scavenged for firewood:

April 11, 1780 “Frequent complaints having been made to the Brigadier that many of the soldiers are daily pulling down and destroying the fences near camp—the General requests that every officer will exert himself to detect and bring to punishment all who may be found guilty of such irregularitys [sic] and all centinells [sic] are strictly ordered to prevent any rails being brought into camp.”³

Continued on Page 2

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Continued from Cover Page

The soldiers undoubtedly had great need for firewood. In March 1780, General Washington wrote from his headquarters in Morristown, “The oldest people now living in this Country do not remember so hard a Winter as the one we are now emerging from.”⁴

The brigade left their encampment along Hardscrabble in April 1780 and moved north into Jockey Hollow to occupy the empty huts of the Maryland Line. They left Jockey Hollow in May 1780 and played a major role in repelling British incursions into New Jersey at Connecticut Farms (Union) on June 7 and at Springfield on June 23, 1780.

The NJ brigade encampment was long forgotten, but rediscovered in 1967 through the research of Fred and Isabel Bartenstein of Mendham Township. The site was found on land then owned by the New Jersey Audubon Society.⁵ Archaeologists excavated the remains of the huts, which measured 12 by 14 feet and were laid out in groups of four along the hillside. Many of the huts had been built into the hillside to provide additional shelter and warmth. An old camp road separated the soldiers’ huts from ten officers’ huts. The buildings were of log construction and featured stone fireplaces, several of which were excavated in 1968 (Exhibit 2).^{6,7} Exhibit 3 shows the remains of what may be the same fireplace during a visit in 2022.



Exhibit 2



Exhibit 3

In 1969, the Audubon Society donated the 25.45-acre tract containing the site to the National Park Service, which added it to Morristown National Historical Park. Acquisition by the Park Service also spelled the end of state plans to build the proposed Hardscrabble reservoir in the area.⁸

The New Jersey Brigade site is open to the public from the parking area of the Cross Estate off Jockey Hollow Road in Bernardsville. Hikers may also access the site from the Scherman Hoffman Wildlife Sanctuary.

THSSH is sponsoring a trail hike on Saturday, June 11. Details on page 3...

¹ George S. Conover, comp., *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan Against the Six Nations of Indians in 1779*, Auburn, N.Y. : Knapp, Peck & Thompson, 1887, p. 114.

² "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," database with images, FamilySearch.org, citing NARA microfilm publication M246.

³ "Orderly Book, Colonel Spencer's Additional Regiment, April 9, 1780 to June 6, 1780." Morristown NHP Library Photocopy collection.

⁴ George Washington to Marquis de Lafayette, March 18, 1780, Varick Transcripts, Library of Congress.

⁵ "Dig Reveals 1779-80 Hut", *Bernardsville News*, Apr. 11, 1968, pp. 1 and 5.

⁶ John F. Luzader, *The New Jersey Encampment, a Special Study*, Exhibit V, preliminary report by Robert Ditchburn, National Park Service, 1968.

⁷ National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form, NJ Brigade Encampment Site, May 1979, pp. 6-7.

⁸ "Bernardsville Tract In National Park", *Bernardsville News*, May 1, 1969, p. 1.



**Walk in the historic footsteps
of New Jersey's
Revolutionary Soldiers!**



*New Date
Coming Soon!*

Join society members for a 1.4 mile hike (round trip) to the site of the New Jersey Brigade encampment. There, interpretative signs explain the remains of the soldiers' huts and the conditions the American army faced during the hard winter of 1779-80.

Trail head parking is available at Morristown National Historical Park located on Jockey Hollow Road (off Hardscrabble) in Bernardsville.

Note: The trail is forested and steep in several places. Please wear hiking or other high-top shoes. The hike is expected to take 60 minutes.

Email roycrego@gmail.com
to reserve a spot or ask questions.

Charter Day

Saturday • May 21

Bernards Township will once again be hosting Charter Day! This year's event commemorates the 262nd anniversary of the granting of a Charter by King George II of England, establishing Bernardston Township. The charter was in appreciation of the services of Sir Francis Bernard, who was Royal Governor of New Jersey from 1758 to 1760.

The Historical Society will have a prominent presence on S. Finley Avenue by the Blue Café from Noon to 6PM and will welcome visitors to the Brick Academy on W. Oak Street from Noon to 4PM.

Dan Lincoln, THSSH Vice-President, and Ridge High School students will man our street table, where copies of the 1760 Bernardston Charter, mascot contest, and life-sized painted cut-outs of King George II and Sir Francis Bernard (for a photo op!) will be available.



The Brick Academy will feature "*What Put Somerset Hills on the Map*" - a visual narrative of the five neighboring towns, as well as George B. Post's Grotesques exclusive display, out-of-print local history books, and the circa 1890 schoolroom with potbelly stove and antique desks.

Both Charter Day locations will highlight the Historical Society's mission, upcoming events, membership benefits, and volunteer opportunities.

Noteworthy News...

- It's Membership Renewal time! Look out for our letter in the mail, or conveniently renew online at <https://somersehillshistoricalsociety.org/membership-form/>
- Have you noticed the Brick Academy gardens are beautifully spruced up for the new season? If you have a "green thumb" and would like to assist the Trustees in maintaining our grounds please call 908.221.1770.
- Our first Historical Society email newsletter will be sent out later this year, thanks to a generous volunteer who will be spearheading the organization's digital marketing.
- THSSH is eager to restart our Education Programs in September after a three-year (COVID) hiatus. A volunteer is needed, preferably with a teaching background, to lead the Committee. If interested in this rewarding position, contact Sue Zibelli at susanzebelle@yahoo.com or 908.872.6196.

Dunster Squibb Cottage

The Friends of Historic Bernardsville (FHB) have submitted a grant application to the Somerset County Cultural and Heritage 2022 Historic Preservation Program for funds to refurbish the Dunster Squibb Cottage located on the Dunster Squibb Property at 189 Mine Brook Road. The proposed request involves both interior and exterior work on the cottage which will provide dry and safe interior space.

The money, if awarded, would be used to repair and renovate the cottage with new roofing, flooring, plumbing, electrical systems, ADA toilets, emergency lighting, exit systems, etc. to make it useable for local volunteer organization meetings and file storage. Bernardsville FHB and the Historic Preservation Advisory Committee would have their monthly meetings there.

The Dunster Squibb House was originally constructed, with Federal-style influences, sometime between 1827 and 1839 when the property was owned by Daniel Heath.

The current property contains the remainder of a 120-acre farm assembled by Oliver Dunster after he purchased the land in 1839. Dunster was a prominent farmer who served on the Bernards Township Committee and the Bernards Township Commission of Appeals.

Later the property became part of the large estate established by Charles F. Squibb. Significant renovations in the Colonial Revival/Craftsman style were performed by Squibb circa 1900, turning the house into a guest cottage. The site contains the house, an early 20th-century barn/stable, a circa-1900 coachman's cottage, and circa-1900 landscape features including a smokehouse structure and stone wall.

Charles F. Squibb was the son of pharmaceutical manufacturer Edward R. Squibb. Charles and his older brother Edward H. Squibb became partners with their father in 1892 in the renamed firm E.R. Squibb and Sons. Charles was an active member of the Somerset Hills social elite and was engaged in local civic affairs. Squibb descendants continued to own the house until 2008, when it was sold to the Borough of Bernardsville.



America Celebrates Flag Day - June 14

Flag Day commemorates the adoption of the United States flag on June 14, 1777, by resolution of the Second Continental Congress. Colonial troops had previously fought under many different flags with various symbols such as rattlesnakes, pine trees, and eagles, as well as slogans including "Don't Tread on Me," "Liberty or Death," and "Conquer or Die."

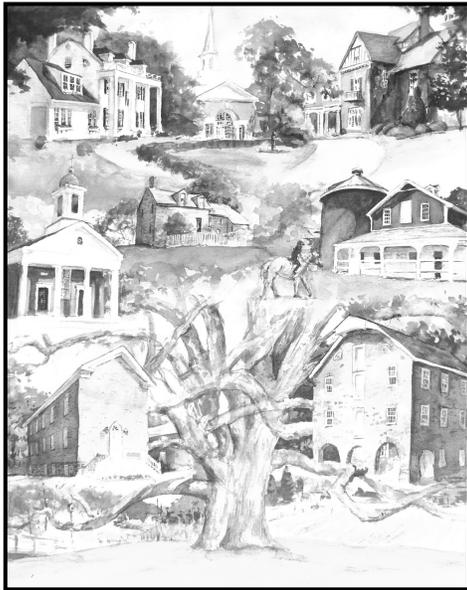
The Flag Resolution stated: "Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."



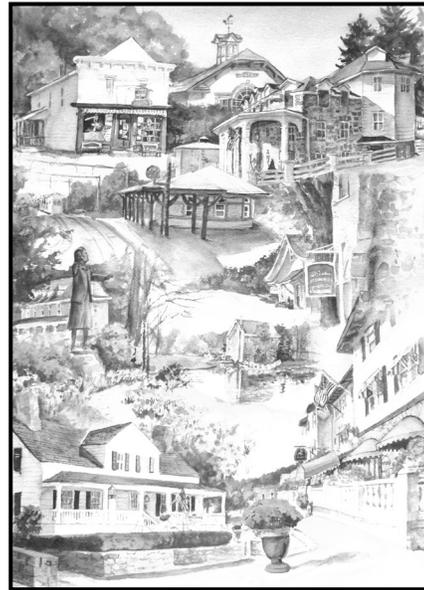
The origins of the Stars and Stripes have become part of American folklore. Although the Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross is popularly attributed with designing this early version of the flag, historians generally concur that there is no official documentation.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that established June 14 as Flag Day. On August 3, 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress. Although Flag Day is not an official federal holiday, its observance is traditionally proclaimed each year by the president of the United States.

The displayed postcard, in the Historical Society's archives collection, was mailed to Mrs. Sarah B. Boyle of Liberty Corner in the early 1900s.



Basking Ridge by Mark de Mos, Watercolor, 21” x 15”



Bernardsville by Mark de Mos, Watercolor, 21” x 15”

Giclee’ Prints Available



5 Morristown Rd, Bernardsville, NJ 07924 www.studio7fineartgallery.com (908) 963-0365



**THSSH
has a new mascot!**

*Hmm...
What shall we name the
furry faux fox?*

Suggestions are welcomed at
www.somersetillshistoricalsociety.org/contact/
or by calling 908.221.1770
Please submit by June 18

Win a copy of the photograph history book...
***Around and About Basking Ridge,
Liberty Corner, and Lyons***



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Inside the Brick Academy

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