Stephen Thompson



Soldier of the Revolution

November, 1759 – February 22, 1835

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Foreword

The following is an attempt to give an accurate account of the life of Stephen Thompson, with specific focus for his six years of service, as a Soldier of the Revolution to the United States of America.

It is a story of our ancestor, who bravely fought for the independence of the United States of America, with nothing more than a musket and personal determination. The hardships and sacrifices he endured for our freedom and liberty, which we still enjoy over two hundred years later, must never be forgotten.

John D. McCallum

Sources

Actual Documents:

The actual documents, primarily the Muster Records and Payroll records, contained were copied via footnotes .com and ancestry .com websites, providing images of the microfilm records held by the National Archives and Records Administration.

Historical Descriptions:

Historical descriptions and paintings are taken from a variety of sources, with attribution.

Narrative Descriptions:

Narrative descriptions of the events involving the 8th Connecticut Regiment are taken from "Private Yankee Doodle", ©1962 by George F. Scheer, who republished the memoirs of Joseph Plumb Martin, written in 1830.

Pvt. Joseph P. Martin served in Col. John Chandlers regiment, at the same time as Stephen Thompson. It is considered extremely likely that the events described by Pvt. Joseph P. Martin were the same events experienced by Pvt. Stephen Thompson.

"Clan McCallum Collection" Reference:

This is only one section of the "Clan McCallum Collection", by John D. McCallum. Reference Numbers, Specifically – "THOSMI905", which is assigned to Stephen Thompson. These reference numbers are used to identify specific individuals within the collection, and specific documents and photo's.

Within the "Clan McCallum Collection", serving as a counter point to the service of Pvt. Stephen Thompson, is Capt. Peter Hare, commander of one companies of Butler's Rangers, a "Loyalist" serving the British Crown. With Pvt. Stephen Thompson stationed at times, in the "Highlands' of New York, and Capt. Peter Hare stationed at Fort Niagara. It seems possible that at some point, they came to direct conflict.

Capt Peter Hare is the great, great, grandfather of Maude Hare, wife of Dermid McLean, who was the son of Dermid McLean Sr., and Margaret (McCallum) McLean.

Stephen Thompson is the great grandfather of Annie Huntsinger, wife of Archibald McCallum.

Both Archibald and Margaret McCallum were the children of William McCallum and Mary (Munro) McCallum.

Synopsis of the Military Service Record for Stephen Thompson

May 27, 1777 – Stephen Thompson enlisted for a period of eight months, in Captain Theophilus Munson's Company, of Col. John Chandler's 8th Connecticut Regiment - Light Infantry (also known as "Regiment of the Foot"), of the Connecticut Line of the Continental Army, holding the rank of Private.

June 1777 – Stationed in the Highlands of New York.

September 1777 – Battle of Brandywine Creek

October 1777 - Battle of Germantown

November 1777 - Siege of Fort Mifflin

December 1777 to May 1778 – Stationed at Valley Forge, with Gen. George Washington.

June 1778 – Battle of Monmouth Court House

August 1778 - Battle of Quaker Hill

November 1778 to May 1779 - Stationed at Camp Redding

May 1779 to November 1779 – Stationed at Camp Highlands

December 1779 to June 1780 – Stationed at Camp New Morristown

July 1780 to February 1781 – Stationed at Camp Nelson's Point.

About February to April 1781 to sometime after June 1781 – sent to Virginia, probably as part of an advance force with General Lafayette..

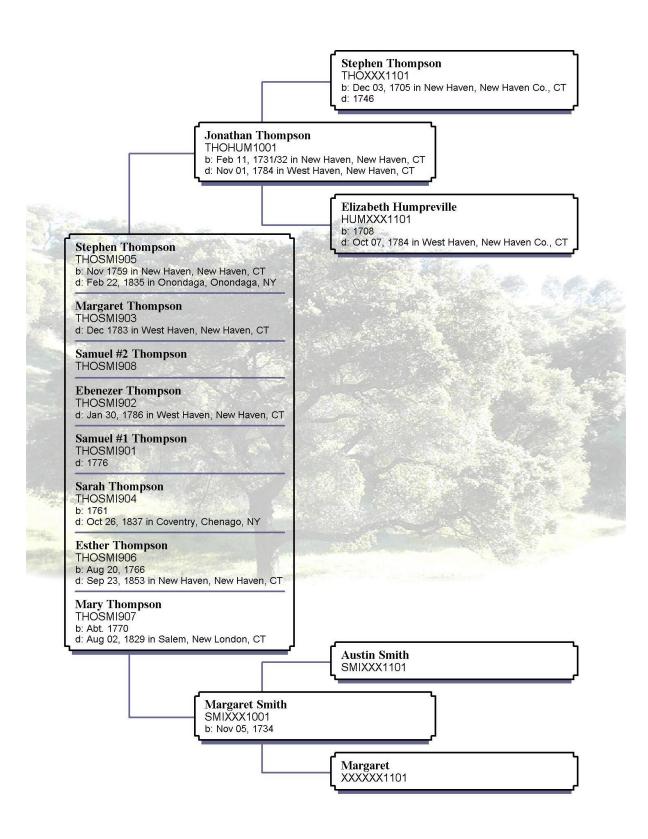
September 1781 to November 1781 – Siege and Battle of Yorktown. Probably participated in the Battle of Redoubt # 10.

Furloughed in June 3 of 1783 (Considered as the date of "Discharge".) Final Payments made on November 3, 1783

Awards:

Badge of Merit - for Six Years of Service. (Signified by the wearing of two chevrons on the soldiers uniform.)

The Clan of Jonathon Thompson and Margaret Smith



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		raye i c
Husband Jonathan	Thompson-THOHUM1001	
Born Feb 11 173	Place	
Died Nov 1 178	Place West Haven, New Haven, CT	
Married-1	Place	
Husband's father	en Thompson-THOXXX1101	MRIN: 100
Husband's mother	eth Humpreville-HUMXXX1101	WANK. 100
Wife		
Born	Smith-SMIXXX1001	
Nov 5 173	Place	
Wife's father	05 Waterbury, New Haven Co., CT	
Austin Wife's mother	Smith-SMIXXX1101	MRIN: 62
Marga	ret-XXXXXX1101	
Children List each child in	order of birth.	
м Samuel #1 Thom	pson-THOSMI901	
Died 17	Place	
м Stephen Thomps	on-THOSMI905	
Born-2 Nov 175	Place	_
Military Service-3,4 May 27 17	Place	Description Private - 8th Reg Connecticut Line
Military Service	Place	Filvate - oth Reg Connecticut Line
Sep 17	Place	
Oct 17	Place	
Nov 17	Place	
from Dec 1777 to Jun 1 Military Service	7/8 Valley Forge W/Gen Washingto	
Jun 17	(8 Battle of Monmouth Court House	Se Control of the Con
Military Service-6 from Jul 1778 to Sep 1 Military Service	778 Camp White Plains, NY	
Aug 17 Military Service-7	8 Battle of Quaker Hill	Description
from Oct 1778 to Nov 1	778 Place Camp Near Quaker Hill	Description Oct 23, 1778 "On Command - Light I
Military Service-8 from Nov 1778 to May 1 Military Service-9		
from Maγ 1779 to Jul 1		
Military Service-10 Aug 17	79 Place Fort Montgomery	
Military Service-11 from Dec 1779 to Jun 1	780 Place Camp Morristown	Description Also "On Command"
Military Service-12 from Jun 1780 to Nov 1	780 Place Camp Nelson's Point	
Military Service from Dec 1780 to Mar 1	781 Place New Windsor Cantonment	
Military Service-13 from Mar 1781 to Sep 1	781 Place "On Command - Virginia"	Description Attached to Gen. Lafeyette
Military Service from Sep 1781 to Nov 1	Place	Description Redoubt #10
Military Discharge-14 Jun 3 178	Place	Description Awarded "Badge of Merit"
Census-15	Place	, made and go on more
Census-16	Diace	
Census-17	Place	
Military Service-18 Apr 7 18	Place	Description Soldiers Pension Application
Census-19	Diace	Solulers Ferision Application
Military Service-20	Place	Description Mallianus Causin Dansin Count Hansin
182 Census-21	20 Onodaga County, New York	Military Sevice Pension Court Hearing
Died 5 1 22 123	Onondaga, Onondaga, NY	
Feb 22 183 Buried-22	Place Onondaga, Onondaga, NY	3 300
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Patier	ce NMN Thompson-PZZXXX901	MRIN: 65
Abt Jul 178	33 Fiate	

MRIN: 368
MRIN: 368
MRIN: 368
MRIN: 368
MRIN: 368
mury, 300
MRIN: 99
MRIN: 101
MRIN: 102
MRIN: 89

Husband Jonathan Thompson-THOHUM1001 Wife Margaret Smith-SMIXXX1001 Sources (Continued) 8. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-133 THOSMI905-135 THOSMI905-137 THOSMI905-139 THOSMI905-141. 9. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-143. 10. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-147. 11. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-156 THOSMI905-158 THOSMI905-166. 12. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-168. 13. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-178 THOSMI905-179 THOSMI905-180. 14. National Archive and Records Administration. 15. 1790 United States Census. THOSMI905-5. 16. 1800 United States Census. THOSMI905-6. 17. 1810 United States Census. THOSMI905-7. 18. National Archive and Records Administration. THOSMI905-140 THOSMI905-141. 19. 1820 Untied States Census, . THOSMI905-140. 20. Pension Statement. THOSMI905-141. 21. 1830 Untied States Census, . THOSMI905-9. 22. Actual Gravestone. THOSMI905-9.

Research Note:

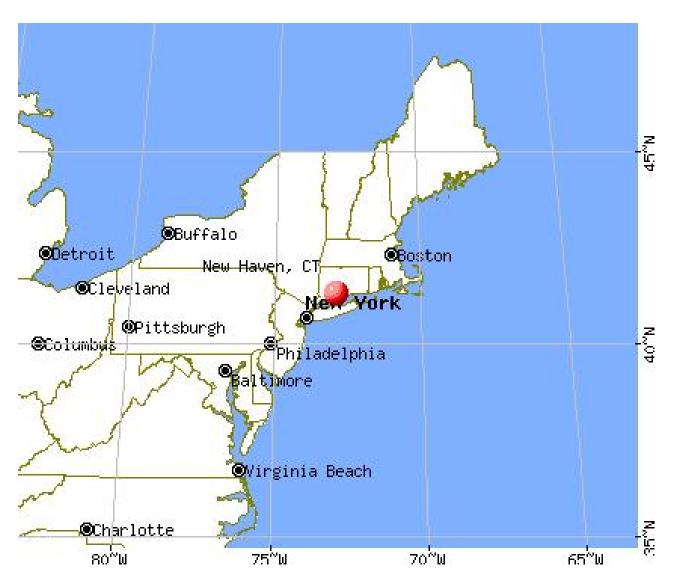
The Thompson – DeHoniwood Ancestry lists ancestry of Stephen Thompson and relies on the work of Scott Robinson, which is believed to be accurate.

Chronology

November 1759

Stephen Thompson is born in New Haven, New Haven, Connecticut. He is the son of Jonathon Thompson and Margaret Smith.

Research Note: The year of birth is confirmed by the inscription of the gravestone of Stephen Thompson, and the month of birth is stated in the 1820 Pension application of Stephen Thompson.



Red Dot indicates New Haven, New Haven, Connecticut.

FAMILIES OF ANCIENT NEW HAVEN, VOL. VII

1766

THOMPSON HAMILY

x Joseph B., b c. 1823, d 3 Oct 1907 æ. 84 WHT3; m Mary E. ----, who d 7 June 1905 æ. 88 WHT3.

FAM. 18. JONATHAN & MARGARET [SMITH] THOMPSON:

1 Samuel, d 1 Nov 1776 (from Northern Army) WHD. 2 EBENEZER, d 30 Jan 1786 WHD; reported in N. Y. in tax list 1778; m 9 June 1785 NHz—Lydia da. John & Lydia (Thomas) Richards, b c. 1764; she m (2) 14 Mar 1790 NHx—Eli Smith.

3 Margaret, d Dec 1783 WHD.

or his brother Ebenezer was prob. father of:

i Ebenezer, b [Mar 1785], d 12 Aug 1870 æ. 85-5
(at Orange) NHV; m Polly da. Asahel Johnson, who d 10 Sep 1869 æ. 83 WHV. They had: (1) Ebenezer, b c. 1808, d 22 June 1852 æ. 44 WHT3; m Sarah Thomas, who d 18 July 1876 æ. 63 WHT3. (2) John, b [Sep 1809],

d 29 Mar 1870 c. 60-6 WHV; m.

7 Mary, b c. 1770, d 2 Aug 1829 c. 59 SalemC; m 4
July 1791 WatV—David Hopkins.

Other members of this branch were prob.—Samuel, m 1 Nov
1801 SalemC—Betsey da. Enos Hull......Stephen, b c. 1791,
d 30 May 1868 c. 77 WatT3; m Amy L. ———, who d 31 Aug 1874 æ. 86 WatT3.

FAM. 19. JAMES & SARAH (PUNDERSON) THOMPSON:
1 DAVID, b 28 May 1747 NHV, d 3 July 1747 NHV.

1 DAVID, 5 28 May 1747 NHV, d 3 July 1747 NHV.

FAM. 19. JAMES & MEHITABEL (BALDWIN) THOMPSON:

2 ELIJAH, b 16 Dec 1751 NHV, bp 10 Dec 1752 NHC1,
d 5 Oct 1825 & 75 NHT1; Census (NH) 4-3-5; m
(1) 20 May 1773 NHC2—Mabel da. Daniel & Parnel (Smith) Alling, bp 14 July 1754 NHC1, d 10
Oct 1799 & 45 NHT1; m (2) Huldah da. Holbrook
& Mehitabel (Alling) Atwater, wid. Hezekiah Thompson.

i Hannah, b Sep 1773 F, d Aug 1818 (Pittsford, N. Y.); m 28 July 1793 NHV—George Hep-

burn.

ii Charles, b c. 1775, d 1 June 1813 (k. on frigate Chesapeake, War of 1812); m Anna da. Amos & Doreas (Sherman) Gilbert, b 21 Aug 1783 F, d 8 Apr 1862 F. Child: Jeannette, m Rev. Nathaniel Kellogg.

Source Information: Database: Families of Ancient New Haven, Vol. VII

FAMILIES OF ANCIENT NEW HAVEN, VOL. VIII

2050

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

ROYCE. (Page 1554.) FAM. 3, 6. Nehemiah m. (2) 2 Oct 1787 Abigail Blackleach of Huntington; she m (2) - Jones. [Contributed by Miss Helen E. Royce, Hartford, Conn.] RUSSELL. (Page 1579.) FAM. 13, 5, vii. Robert in 1810 gave a deed to Woodbridge land, calling himself in the deed of some illegible place in Cortland County, N. Y. I read this place as "Namee," but think Homer was intended. SPERRY. (Page 1682.) FAM. 11, 1, viii. Betty m 6 Oct 1788 WdC-Joab Way (marriage accidentally omitted). Her sister Mary (vi) m James Sperry (FAM. 7, 2, iv).
STEVENS. (Page 1702.) FAM. 3, 7. Shubael m Martha How, according to descendants of the family, who state that Shubael had a younger brother John who settled in Canada and m there. This was a loyalist family. [Contributed by Miss Ethel L. Scofield, New Haven, Conn.] STREET. (Page 1711.) FAM. 4, 2. The wife of Titus was Amaryllis da. Reuben & Mary (Russell) Atwater. Evidently we followed the erroneous statement with regard to her mother found in the Street Genealogy, p. 47, without noting the error. [Corrected by James P. Maynard, Esq., Marquette, Mich.] THOMPSON. (Page 1755.) Mrs. William H. Lewin, of New Britain, points out that Loudon County (see FAM. 7, 3, iii) is in

Va., not Pa.; possibly Luzerne County was meant. The state-

ment was taken from a printed source.
(Page 1766.) Miss Lulu I. M. Thompson of Fond du Lac, Wis., has sent us a record of the family of Jonathan and Margaret [Smith] Thompson, compiled from family sources, which adds considerably to the account which we put together fragmentarily from the public records. The family account knows nothing of the first three children; but as 1 Samuel and 3 Margaret were called children of Jonathan in the West Haven Mortality List, we do not doubt that they belonged in this family; I Samuel died in 1776, and his youngest brother, born presumably after his death, received the same name. The evidence is not positive for placing 2 Ebenezer in this family. The family record confirms Sarah, Esther, and Mary; and adds Amy, who m 20 Apr 1785 Ammi Hoadley; Bettie, who m ——— Pierce; Lydia, who m John Lewis and rem. to Delaware Co., Ohio, 1809; Jonathan, who rem. to Delaware Co., Ohio, 1809; and Samuel, who m Elizabeth Hull and d at Liberty, Delaware Co., Ohio, 30 Apr 1831, his widow dying in Jefferson Co., Wis., in 1869. The Hoadley Genealogy states that Amy, b 12 Sep 1763, d 9 Apr 1834, was da. George Thompson of Bethany; but we are unable to find any George Thompson of Bethany of proper date, and incline to accept the family statement of Miss Thompson that she was da. Jonathan of West Haven and Naugatuck. Miss Thompson gives also the son 6 Stephen, but states that he was

FAMILIES OF ANCIENT NEW HAVEN, VOL. VIII

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

2051

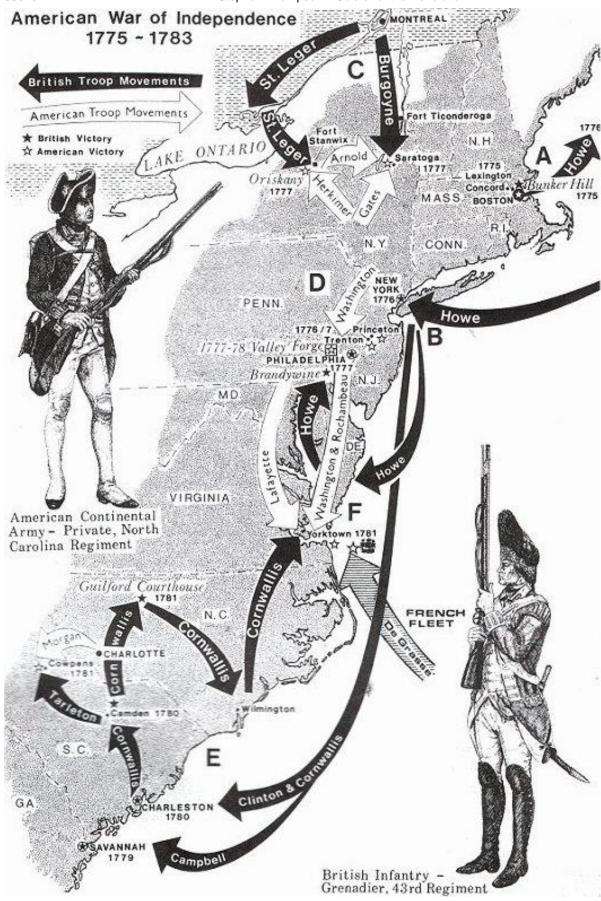
connected with the Onondaga Salt Works in Central N. Y. and that he had a wife Amy L. This we doubt, and believe that Jonathan's son Stephen was the man listed Census (NH) 1-1-2, who in deeds appears as resident at West Haven; for there was a Stephen (1791-1868) with wife Amy L. (1788-1874) buried at Naugatuck, perhaps a grandson of Jonathan and Margaret, who in early life may have lived in Central N. Y. The name of this man's wife corresponds with the family record, but his age makes it impossible to consider him a son of Jonathan. The children of Samuel and Elizabeth (Hull) Thompson were:

- 1 Mary H., b 9 Sep 1802 (at NH), d 1888 or 1889; m 1822 —— Knapp of Delaware Co., Ohio.
- 2 CAROLINE E., b 16 Aug 1804 (at NH), d 1876 (Jefferson Co., Wis.); m 1822 John Blinn, of Delaware Co., Ohio.
- 3 Laura, b 29 Feb 1812 (Delaware Co.), d 1831; m 1830 Jeremiah Gillis.
- 4 Samuel Hopkins, b 4 Sep 1814 (Delaware Co.), d 1 Feb 1880 (Harlan, Kans.); grad. Oberlin 1839; Rev.; m (1) 25 Aug 1842 (Oberlin)—Abigail Hull da. Benoni & Lois Elizabeth (Hull) Dickerman, b 3 Dec 1816, d 23 Feb 1860. [Dickerman Gen. p. 431.]
- 5 Addison, b 6 June 1821 (Berlin, Ohio), d 7 Nov 1907 (Clear Lake, Iowa); m 25 Aug 1842 (Oberlin, Ohio)—Harriet Jane da. Carles Fisher of Grafton, Ohio, who d 14 Sep 1864 (Jefferson Co., Wis.): had 10 children.

TODD. (Page 1831.) FAM. 14, 1. Sarah, b 12 Dec 1736, m 28 Mar 1755 Ephraim Andrews (p. 46).
TURNER. (Page 1877.) FAM. 7, 3. Record of John Turner's family furnished by Miss F. Inez Baldwin, Oswego, N. Y. John, b 9 July 1776 (at NH), d 12 July 1860 (Oppenheim, N. Y.); m Sally da. James & Sally (Scott) Baldwin, b 26 Jan 1786 (Saybrook, Conn.), d Oct 1875. Children:

- SALLY, b 22 Nov 1805 (Oppenheim), d 17 June 1895.
 JOHN, b 17 July 1807 (Oppenheim), d 17 Jan 1892;
 m 20 Sep 1829 Elizabeth Failing, b 3 Sep 1808.
- 3 Baldwin, b 18 May 1809 (Oppenheim); rem. to Mich.
- 4 Hiram, b 2 Aug 1811 (Oppenheim), d 29 Sep 1908; m 1836 Abbie Munson, b 10 Feb 1813 (Litchfield, Conn.), d 25 Apr 1860.

(Page 1881.) To Miss Baldwin we are also indebted for an abstract of the pension record of Enoch Turner (see the end of



From: http://englischlehrer.de/

1775 - 1777 Historical Background:

When the American Revolutionary War began at the Battles of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, the colonial revolutionaries did not have an army. Previously, each colony had relied upon the militia, made up of part time citizen-soldiers, for local defense. As tensions with Great Britain increased in the years leading up to the war, colonists began to reform their militia in preparation for the potential conflict. Training of militiamen increased after the passage of the Intolerable Acts in 1774. Colonists such as Richard Henry Lee proposed creating a national militia force, but the First Continental Congress. rejected the idea.

After Lexington and Concord, thousands of militiamen from New England gathered to oppose the British troops who had been bottled up in Boston. On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress decided to proceed with the establishment of a Continental Army for purposes of common defense, adopting the forces already in place outside Boston as the first units of the army. On June 15, the Congress elected, by unanimous vote, George Washington as commander-in-chief. Washington accepted the position without any compensation, except reimbursement of his expenses.

As the Continental Congress increasingly adopted the responsibilities and posture of a legislature for a sovereign state, the role of the Continental Army was the subject of considerable debate. There was a general aversion to maintaining a standing army among the Americans; but, on the other hand, the requirements of the war against the British required the discipline and organization of a modern military. As a result, the army went through several distinct phases, characterized by official dissolution and reorganization of units.

Soldiers in the Continental Army were citizens who had volunteered to serve in the army (but were paid), and at various times during the war, standard enlistment periods lasted from one to three years. (Early in the war, the enlistment periods were short, as the Continental Congress feared the possibility of the Continental Army evolving into a permanent army. The army never reached over 17,000 men. Turnover was a constant problem, particularly in the winter of 1776-77, and longer enlistments were approved.)

Broadly speaking, Continental forces consisted of several successive armies, or "establishments":

The Continental Army of 1775, comprising the initial New England Army, organized by Washington into three divisions. Also, Major General Philip Schuyler's ten regiments were sent to invade Canada.

The Continental Army of 1776, reorganized after the initial enlistment period of the soldiers in the 1775 army had expired. Washington had submitted recommendations to the Continental Congress almost immediately after he had accepted the position of commander-in-chief, but these took time to consider and implement. Despite attempts to broaden the recruiting base beyond New England, the 1776 army remained skewed toward the Northeast both in terms of its composition and geographical focus.

The Continental Army of 1777-80 was a result of several critical reforms and political decisions that came about when it was apparent that the British were sending massive forces to put an end to the American Revolution. The Continental Congress passed the Eighty-eight battalion resolution, ordering each state to contribute forces in proportion to their population, and Washington was given authority to raise an additional 15 battalions. Also, enlistment terms were extended to three years or "the length of the war" to avoid the year-end crises that depleted forces (including the notable near collapse of the army at the end of 1776 which could have ended the war in a Continental, or American, loss by forfeit).

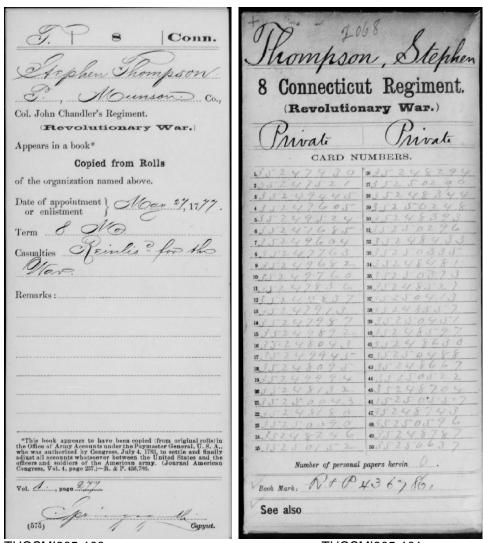
(From: Wikepedia

May 27, 1777

Stephen Thompson, age 17, enlists, (most likely at New Haven, Connecticut) for an eight month period of enrollment, in the 8th Connecticut Regiment, at the rank of Private.

He is assigned to Captain Theophilus Monson's Light Infantry Company, (also known as a "Company of the Foot") of the Connecticut Line ,of the Continental Army. (Question: Was Capt. Monson the actual recruiter?)

Capt Munson's Company was part of the 8th Connecticut Regiment, commanded by Col. John Chandler. The 8th Connecticut Regiment was attached to 2nd Connecticut Brigade and assigned to the Highlands Department.



THOSMI905-100 THOSMI905-101 Record of Enlistment Card and Card index for Stephen Thompson

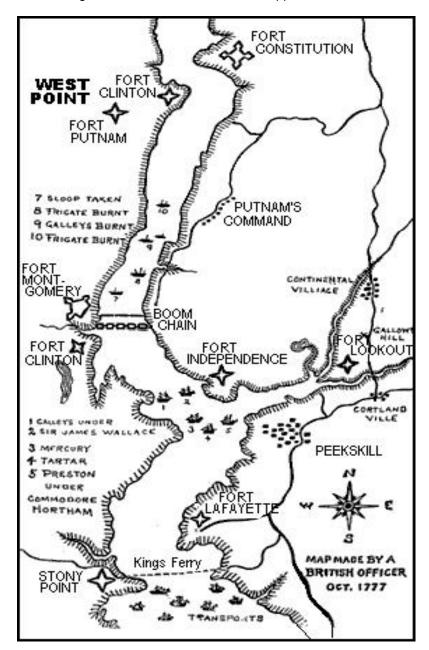
Research Note:

The Muster and Pay Rolls of units of the Continental Army were later transcribed onto individual index cards. These cards contain the key information listed on the rolls, and are much easier to read.

The actual Muster and Pay Rolls are used, unless they have not been found, or are difficult to read, and the index card is used as a substitute.

June 1777

The 8th Regiment of the Connecticut Line supports the defense of Hudson Highlands,



From: www.dmna.state.ny.us

June 15, 1777

The 8th Connecticut Regiment is relieved from the 2nd Connecticut Brigade, and attached to the McDougall's Brigade.

Private Yankee Doodle Except:

"But "the ease of a winter at home" caused Joseph Martin to "alter his mind" about the army, and on April 12, 1777, he (Joseph P. Martin) enlisted for the duration under the Continental Establishment in Colonel John Chandler's Eighth Connecticut, serving through the summer in the Hudson Highlands. That fall, Howe, despite Washington's efforts to stop him at Brandy-wine Creek on September 11, 1777, took the rebel capital, Philadelphia. Washington then called in reinforcements, including four regiments from the Highlands, to strike Howe's army at Germantown. At first, all went well; then the battle turned and the Americans were routed."

From: Private Yankee Doodle

July 7,1777

Muster Roll as of July 7, 1777 Stephen Thompson listed as #66

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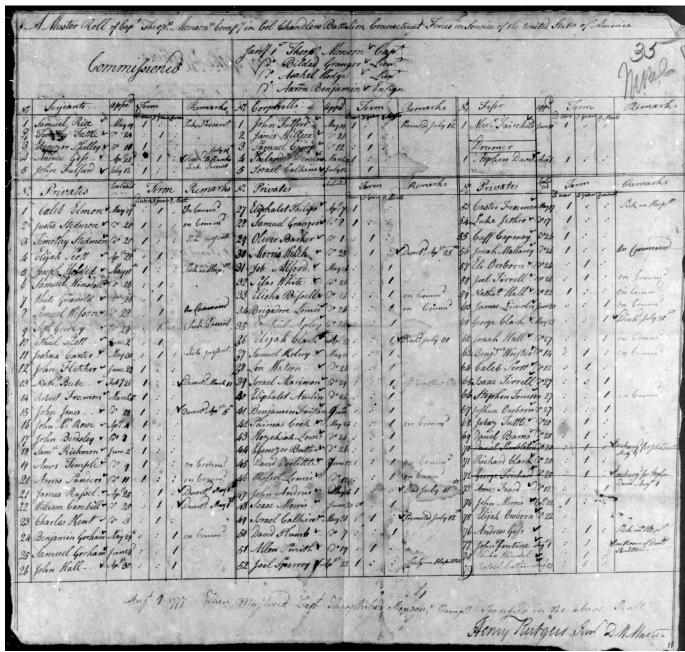
THOSMI905-102

August 1, 1777

Muster Roll as of August 1, 1777

Stephen Thompson listed #66,

Also noted: Enlistment as May 27, and having an eight month enlistment. He is also listed as "on command",



THOSMI905-103

Research Note:

"On Command" means a specific assignment, usually a detachment, to a specific location.

There are numerous occasions during his military service, which Private Stephen Thompson was "On Command".

August 11, 1777

Pay Roll for July 1777

Stephen Thompson, right column, ninth name from bottom

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Asahel Hodge	Lieut		10.	100		Brigadore Lomis	100	30	00		2:0.0
Aaron Benjamin	n Ens:	De.	100	120/0		Tychiel Agely	100	00	20	00	2.0.0
Samuel Price		100	100	48%	2. 8.0	Elijah Clark	1	00	100		2.0.0
Timothy Juttle Ebenezer Relley	10.	0.	100	00		Samuel Heliey	-	100	100	100	2.0.0
John Fulford	Do	10.	100	D.		Levi Watson		100	100	00	2.0:0
James Willow .	Corps.	100	10.	44/0	2.40	Sorael Marimon	4	100	13.	30	2.0.0
Vaac Camp -	100	2.	15.	10.		Eliphalet Austr		10:	3.	100	2: 0:0
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Israel balking	1	30	00	0.	2.4.0	Thrown book			100	20	2. 0.0
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September 2, 1777

Pay Roll for August 1777

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THOSMI905-105

September 9, 1777

Muster Roll for August 1777

Stephen Thompson is listed as #57
Also noted: Enlisted on May 27, and for "the duration of the war".

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The Eight Regiment of the Connecticut Line participates in the Battle of Brandywine Creek.

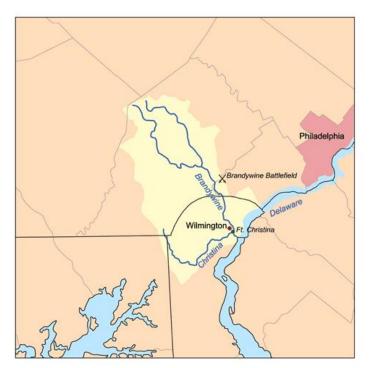
Historic Background:

In late July 1777, after a distressing 34-day journey from Sandy Hook on the coast of New Jersey, an armada of more than 260 ships carrying some 17,000 British troops under the command of the British General Howe landed at the head of Maryland's Elk River, on the northern end of the Chesapeake Bay near present-day Elkton, approximately 40–50 miles (60-80 km) southwest of Philadelphia. Unloading the ships proved to be a logistical problem because the narrow river neck was shallow and muddy.

General George Washington had situated the American forces, about 10,600 strong, between Head of Elk and Philadelphia. His forces were able to reconnoiter the British landing from Iron Hill, about nine miles (14 km) to the northeast. Because of the delay debarking from the ships, Howe did not set up a typical camp but quickly moved forward with the troops. As a result, Washington was not able to accurately gauge the strength of the opposing forces.

Washington chose the high ground near Chadds Ford to defend against the British, since Chadds Ford allowed a safe passage across the Brandywine River on the road from Baltimore to Philadelphia. Accordingly, on September 9, 1777, Washington positioned detachments to guard other fords above and below Chadds Ford, hoping to force the battle there. Washington employed General John Armstrong commanding about 1,000 Pennsylvania militia to cover Pyle's Ford, a few hundred yards south of Chadds Ford, which was covered by Generals Anthony Wayne's and Nathanael Greene's divisions. General John Sullivan's division extended northward along the Brandywine's east banks, covering the high ground north of Chadds Ford along with General Adam Stephen's division and General Lord Stirling's divisions. Further upstream was a brigade under Colonel Moses Hazen covering Buffington's Ford and Wistar's Ford. Washington was confident that the area was secure.

The British grouped forces at nearby Kennett Square. Howe had no intention of mounting a full scale attack against the prepared American defenses. He instead employed a flanking maneuver similar to those used in the Battle of Long Island. A portion of the army, about 5,000 men under the command of Wilhelm von Knyphausen, were to advance to meet Washington's troops at Chadds Ford, while the remainder, under the command of Lord Charles Cornwallis, were to march north to Jefferis' Ford, several miles to the north, which Washington had overlooked, and then march south to flank the American forces.



Battle map of Brandywine Creek showing the location of the Brandywine Battlefield

The Battle of Brandywine Creek:



Brandywine Creek Battleground – present day

September 11, 1777, began with a heavy fog, which provided cover for the British troops. Washington received contradictory reports about the British troop movements and continued to believe that the main force was moving to attack at Chadds Ford. The British appeared on the Americans' right flank at around 2 p.m. With Hazen's brigades outflanked, Sullivan, Stephen, and Stirling tried to reposition their troops to meet the unexpected British threat to their right flank. But Howe was slow to attack the American troops, which bought time for the Americans to position some of their men on high ground at Birmingham Meeting House, about a mile (2 km) north of Chadds Ford. By 4 p.m., the British attacked with Stephen's and Stirling's divisions bearing the brunt of the attack, and both lost ground fast. Sullivan attacked a group of Hessian troops trying to outflank Stirling's men near Meeting House Hill and bought some time for most of Stirling's men to withdraw. But Sullivan's men were cut down by return British fire, forcing them to retreat.

At this point, Washington and Greene arrived with reinforcements to try to hold off the British, who now occupied Meeting House Hill. The remains of Sullivan's, Stephen's, and Stirling's divisions held off the pursuing British for nearly an hour but were eventually forced to retreat. The Americans were also forced to leave behind most of their cannon on Meeting House Hill because most of the artillery horses were killed.

Knyphausen, on the east bank of the Brandywine, launched an attack against the weakened American center across Chadds Ford, breaking through Maxwell's and Wayne's divisions and forcing them to retreat and leave behind most of their cannon. Armstrong's militia, never engaged in the combat, also decided to retreat from their positions. Further north, Greene sent Colonel Weedon's troops to cover the road just outside the town of Dilworth to hold off the British long enough for the rest of the Continental Army to retreat. Darkness brought the British pursuit to a standstill, which then left Weedon's force to retreat. The defeated Americans were forced to retreat to Chester where most of them arrived at midnight, with some stragglers arriving until morning.

Result:

Although Howe had defeated the American army, the unexpected resistance he had met prevented him from destroying it completely. The American morale had not been destroyed; despite losing the battle, the Americans had good spirits hoping to fight the British again another day. But neither commander in the battle had proven themselves. Washington had committed a serious error in leaving his right flank wide open and nearly brought on destruction if it had not been for Sullivan, Sterling, and Stephen's divisions that fought for time. Howe had waited too long to attack the American right flank, showing again his lack of killer instincts because he was still afraid of sustaining heavy casualties since the costly victory at the Battle of Bunker Hill two years earlier, and thus allowed most of the American army to escape.

British and American forces maneuvered around each other for the next several days with only minor encounters such as the Paoli Massacre on the night of September 20-21.

The Continental Congress abandoned Philadelphia, first to Lancaster, Pennsylvania for one day and then to York, Pennsylvania. Military supplies were moved out of the city to Reading, Pennsylvania. On September 26, 1777, British forces marched into Philadelphia unopposed.

From: Wikipedia

October 1777

The Eighth Connecticut Regiment, under command of Gen. McDougall, participates in the Battle of Germantown

Prelude to the Battle of Germantown:

The campaign in Philadelphia had begun quite badly for the American forces. Washington and the Continental Army had suffered successive defeats at the Battle of Brandywine and the Battle of Paoli that left Philadelphia defenseless. After the seizure of the revolutionary capital by Charles Cornwallis on September 26, 1777, William Howe left 3,000 men to defend it and moved 9,000 men to Germantown, 5 miles (8.0 km) north, determined to locate and destroy the American forces. Howe established his headquarters at Stenton, the former country home of James Logan.

With Howe's forces thus divided, Washington saw an opportunity to confront the British. He decided to attack the British garrison in Germantown as the last effort of the year before the onset of winter. His plan was to attack the British at night with four columns from different directions, with the goal of creating a double envelopment. Washington hoped to surprise the British and Hessian armies in much the same way he had surprised the Hessians at the Battle of Trenton.

Setting and movement to battle - British and Hessian Positions:

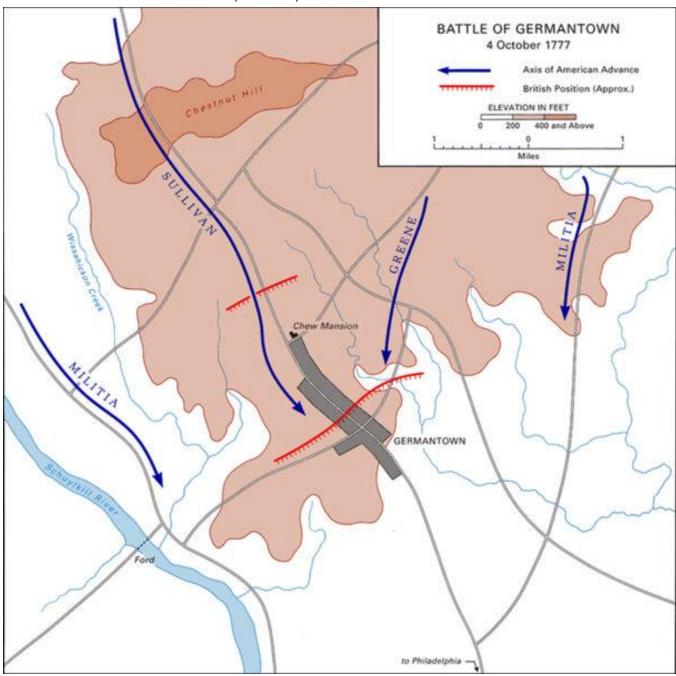
Germantown was a hamlet of stone houses spreading from what is now known as Mount Airy on the north to what is now Market Square in the south. Extending southwest from Market Square was Schoolhouse Lane, running a 1.5 miles (2.4 km) to the point where Wissahickon Creek emptied from a steep gorge into the Schuylkill River. Gen. William Howe had established a base camp along the high ground of Schoolhouse and Church lanes. The western wing of the camp, under the command of the Hessian general Wilhelm von Knyphausen, had a picket of two jaeger battalions at its left flank on the high ground above the mouth of the Wissahickon. A Hessian brigade and two British brigades camped along Market Square, and east of there were two British brigades under the command of Gen. James Grant, as well as two squadrons of dragoons, and the 1st Light Infantry battalion. The Queen's Rangers, a New York loyalist unit, covered the right flank.

Setting and Movement to battle - The Americans March Out:

After dusk on October 3, 1777, the American army began the 16 miles (26 km) southward march to Germantown in complete darkness. As the attack was to occur before dawn, the soldiers were instructed to put a piece of white paper on their hat to identify friend from foe. They were not detected by the jaeger pickets, and the British and Hessian forces remained unaware that American troops were advancing on them. For the Americans, it seemed their attempt to repeat their success at the Battle of Trenton was going to succeed.

The darkness made communications between the columns very difficult, and progress was slower as expected. At dawn, most of the American forces were well short of their intended attack positions, and they had lost the element of surprise.

One American column, however, consisting of militia, had managed to reach the British camp. These troops halted near the mouth of Wissahickon Creek, firing a few rounds from their cannon at Knyphausen's camp before withdrawing. The three remaining columns continued their advance. The one under the command of General John Sullivan, moved down Germantown Road, the column of New Jersey militia under the command of General William Smallwood, moved down Skippack Road to Whitemarsh Church Road and from there to Old York Road to attack the British right flank, and the one under the command of General Nathanael Greene, which consisted of Greene's and General Adam Stephen's divisions and *General Alexander McDougall's brigade, moved down Limekiln Road.*



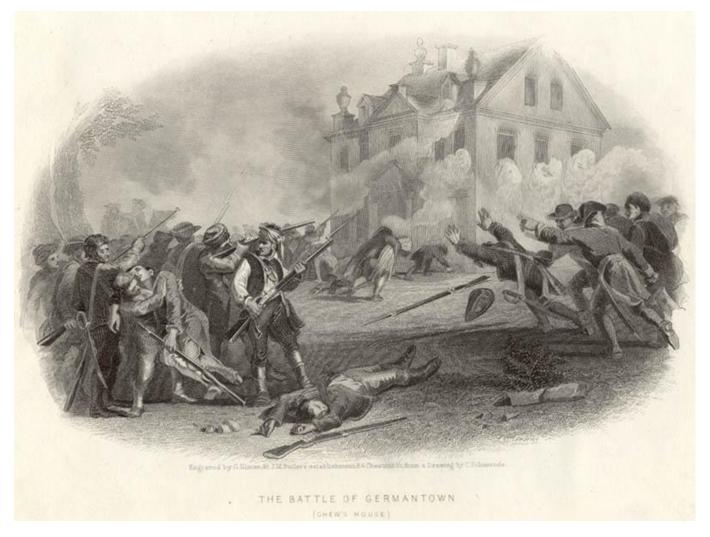
Battle Map of the Battle of Germantown, October 4, 1777.

British, Hessian and Loyalist forces Continental Army and Militia forces - (8th Conn. Reg. with Gen. Greene)

A thick fog clouded the battlefield throughout the day.

The vanguard of Sullivan's column, on Germantown Road, launched the battle when they opened fire on the British pickets of light infantry at Mount Airy just as the sun was rising at around 5:00 am. The British pickets resisted American advance and fired their guns in alarm. Howe rode forward, thinking that they were being attacked by foraging or skirmishing parties. It took a substantial part of Sullivan's division to finally overwhelm the British pickets and drive them back into Germantown.

Now cut off from the main British and Hessian force, British Col. Musgrave caused his six companies of troops from the 40th Regiment, around 120 men, to fortify the stone house of Chief Justice Chew, called Cliveden. The Americans launched furious assaults against Cliveden, but the greatly outnumbered defenders beat back them back, inflicting heavy casualties. Gen. Washington called a council of war to decide how to deal with the distraction. Some of the officers favored bypassing Cliveden and leaving a regiment behind to deal with it. However, Brig. Gen. Henry Knox recommended to Washington that it was unwise to allow a garrison in the rear of a forward advance to remain under enemy control. Washington concurred.



Gen. William Maxwell's brigade, which had been held in the reserve of the American forces, was brought forward to storm Cliveden, while Knox, who was Washington's artillery commander, positioned four three pounders out of musket range and fired point blank shots against the mansion. However, the thick walls of Cliveden withstood the bombardments. Infantry assaults launched against the mansion were cut down, causing heavy casualties. The few Americans who managed to get inside were shot or bayoneted. It was becoming clear that Cliveden was not going to be taken easily.

Meanwhile, Gen. Nathanael Greene's column on Limekiln Road caught up with the American forces at Germantown. Its vanguard engaged the British pickets at Luken's Mill and drove them off after a savage skirmish.

Adding to the heavy fog that already obscured the Americans' view of the enemy was the smoke from cannons and muskets, and Greene's column was thrown into disarray and confusion.

One of Greene's brigades, under the command of Gen. Stephen, veered off course and began following Meetinghouse Road instead of rendezvousing at Market Square with the rest of Greene's forces. The wayward brigade collided with the rest of American Gen. Wayne's brigade and mistook them for the redcoats. The two American brigades opened heavy fire on each other, became badly disorganized, and fled. The withdrawal of Wayne's brigade left Conway's left flank unsupported.

In the north, an American column led by McDougall came under attack by the Tory Loyalist troops of the Queen's Rangers and the Guards of the British reserve. After a savage battle between the two, McDougall's brigade was forced to retreat, suffering heavy losses.

Still convinced, however, that they could win, the Colonial 9th Virginian troops of Greene's column launched a savage attack on the British and Hessian line as planned, managing to break through and capturing a number of prisoners. However, they were soon surrounded by two British brigades who launched a devastating countercharge, led by Gen. Cornwallis. Cut off completely, the 9th Virginian Regiment was forced to surrender. Greene, upon learning of the main army's defeat and withdrawal, realized that he stood alone against the whole British and Hessian force, so he withdrew as well.

The large, main attacks on the British and Hessian camp had been repulsed with heavy casualties. Washington ordered Armstrong and Smallwood's men to withdraw. Maxwell's brigade, still having failed to capture the Chew House, was forced to fall back. Part of the British army rushed forward and routed retreating Americans, pursuing them for some nine miles before giving up the chase in the face of resistance from Greene's infantry, Wayne's artillery guns and a detachment of dragoons, as well as the nightfall.

Aftermath:

Of the 11,000 men Washington led into battle, 152 (30 officers and 122 men) were killed and were 521 wounded (117 officers and 404 men). Over 400 were captured, including Colonel Mathews and the entire 9th Virginia regiment. Gen. Francis Nash had his left leg taken off by a cannon ball, and died on October 8 at the home of Adam Gotwals. His body was interred with military honors on October 9 at the Mennonite Meetinghouse in Towamencin. Maj. John White, who was shot at Cliveden, died on October 10. Lt. Col. William Smith, who was wounded carrying the flag of truce to Cliveden, also died from his wounds. In all, 57 Americans were killed attacking the Chew House.

Gen. Stephen was later court-martialed and cashiered from military service when it was discovered he was intoxicated during the battle. Command of his division was given to the Marquis de Lafayette. British casualties were 70 killed (4 officers and 66 men) and 450 wounded (30 officers and 420 men). British officers killed in action included Gen. James Agnew and Lt. Col. John Bird. Lt. Col. Walcott of the 5th Regiment of Foot was mortally wounded.

October 16, 1777

The 8th Connecticut Regiment is relieved from McDougall's Brigade, and assigned to the Rhode Island Brigade, an element of the Main Continental Army.

October 19, 1777

Muster Roll for September 1777 . Stephen Thompson is listed as #54

Also noted: Enlistment on May 27, and for 3 year enlistment (looks like a possible scratch out) A Muster that of Cafe Theophilus Monson! Comp" Colo Charoles! Wallation Connect! Yours in the Service of the United States of Smired Mildal Ganger to Lieut on Command charles House to Lieut Remarks to Corpots Remarks A Drumer & Fifer Inlitto am Camp Torall Eathin July 12 1. Orivates No Privates No Orivates Talet Elmore May 19 Justice Sedman 2 20 Tim Bedmon & 20 fam Meloni 20 Jeth Grioly 10 20 10 Ethiel Scott gune 20. 11 Toffina Carter May 30 12 John Hitchen June 20 1 13 Robert Freeman March 1 1 14 John M' hower spel 4 1 63 Ropel Eatten John Berdeley 8 8 sichalefent 16 Vam ! Bichmon June 2 Sich abjent 25 Saphalet Vilian 8 7 Monrous Compet Specified in the above holl Olive Backer & if 1777 Then Mustered Gage Theophiles

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Pay Roll for September 1777

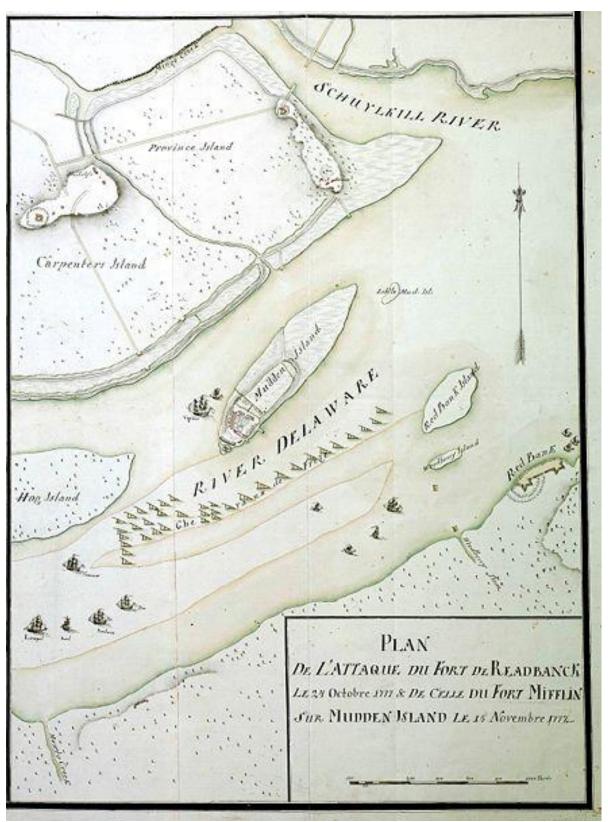
Stephen Thompson listed in right column, at the page crease.

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November 1777

Siege of Fort Mifflin



Hessian map showing campaign against Fort Mifflin and Fort Mercer (Redbank) in 1777.

After the defeat of Washington at the Battle of Brandywine, the British took control of Philadelphia in September of 1777. The British forces then laid siege to Fort Mifflin and Fort Mercer in early October, 1777. The British engineer John Montresor, who both designed and initially oversaw construction of the fort, was assigned to besiege the fort in 1777. The siege, which lasted until the middle of November, destroyed much of Fort Mifflin. During the siege, 400 soldiers held off over 2,000 British troops and 250 ships until November 10, when the British intensified their assault, launching an incessant barrage of cannonballs into the fort. On November 15, 1777, the American troops were forced out. Their stand, which denied the British Navy free use of the Delaware River, allowed the successful repositioning of the Continental Army for the Battle of White Marsh and subsequent withdrawal to Valley Forge.

From: Wikipedia



Fort Mifflin - Photo from Olde Fort Mifflin Historical Society website

Private Yankee Doodle:

In order to hold and utilize Philadelphia, Howe first had to clear the Delaware River of the rebels. After knocking out one of their forts at Billingsport and futilely assaulting another at Red Bank, he turned his attention late that fall upon Fort Mifflin on Mud Island, in the river opposite Red Bank. To succor Fort Mifflin, Washington ordered two Connecticut regiments to the island. "Here," recalled Martin, "without winter clothing, not a scrap of either shoes or stockings to my legs or feet, I endured hardships sufficient to kill half a dozen horses." Too, he was subjected to one of the most terrible bombardments of the war:

The island, as it is called, is nothing more than a mud flat in the Delaware, lying upon the west side of the channel. It is diked around the fort, with sluices so constructed that the fort can be laid under water at pleasure, (at least, it was so when I was there, and I presume it has not grown much higher since.) On the eastern side, next the main river, was a zigzag wall built of hewn stone, built, as I was informed, before the Revolution at the king's cost. At the southeastern part of the fortification (for fort it could not with propriety be called) was a battery of several long eighteen-pounders. At the southwestern angle was another battery with four or five twelve- and eighteen-pounders and one thirty-two-pounder. At the northwestern corner was another small battery with three twelve-pounders. There were also three blockhouses in different parts of the enclosure, but no cannon mounted upon them, nor were they of any use whatever to us while I was there. On the western side, between the batteries, was a high embankment, within which was a tier of palisadoes. In front of the stone wall, for about half its length, was another embankment, with palisadoes on the inside of it, and a narrow ditch between them and the stone wall. On the western side of the fortification was a row of barracks, extending from the northern part of the works to about half the length of the fort. On the northern end was another block of barracks which reached nearly across the fort from east to west. In front of these was a large square two-story house, for the accommodation of the officers of the garrison. Neither this house nor the barracks were of much use at this time, for it was as much as a man's life was worth to enter them, the enemy often directing their shot at them in particular. In front of the barracks and other necessary places were parades and walks; the rest of the ground was soft mud. I have seen the enemy's shells fall upon it and sink so low that their report could not be heard when they burst, and I could only feel a tremulous motion of the earth at the time. At other times, when they burst near the surface of the ground, they would throw the mud fifty feet in the air.

The British had erected five batteries with six heavy guns in each and a bomb battery with three long mortars in it on the opposite side of the water, which separated the island from the main on the west, and which was but a short distance across. They had also a battery of six guns a little higher up the river, at a place called the Hospital Point.

. . .

Our batteries were nothing more than old spars and timber laid up in parallel lines and filled between with mud and dirt. The British batteries in the course of the day would nearly level our works, and we were, like the beaver, obliged to repair our dams in the night. During the whole night, at intervals of a guarter or half an hour, the enemy would let off all their pieces, and although we had sentinels to watch them and at every flash of their guns to cry, "a shot," upon hearing which everyone endeavored to take care of himself, yet they would ever and anon, in spite of all our precautions, cut up some of us.

The engineer in the fort was a French officer by the name of [Francois Louis de] Fleury. ... He was a very austere man and kept us constantly employed day and night; there was no chance of escaping from his vigilance. Between the stone wall and the palisadoes was a kind of yard or pen, at the southern end of which was a narrow entrance not more than eight or ten feet wide, with a ditch about four feet wide in the middle, extending the whole length of the pen. Here, on the eastern side of the wall, was the only place in the fort that anyone could be in any degree of safety. Into this place we used to gather the splinters broken off the palisadoes by the enemy's shot and make a little fire, just enough to keep from suffering. We would watch an opportunity to escape from the vigilance of Colonel Fleury, and run into this place for a minute or two's respite from fatigue and cold. When the engineer found that the workmen began to grow scarce, he would come to the entrance and call us out. He had always his cane in his hand, and woe betided him he could get a stroke at. At his approach I always jumped over the ditch and ran down on the other side, so that he could not reach me, but he often noticed me and as often threatened me, but threatening was all, he could never get a stroke at me, and I cared but little for his threats. It was utterly impossible to lie down to get any rest or sleep on account of the mud, if the enemy's shot would have suffered us to do so. Sometimes some of the men, when overcome with fatigue and want of sleep, would slip away into the barracks to catch a nap of sleep, but it seldom happened that they all came out again alive. I was in this place a fortnight and can say in sincerity that I never lay down to sleep a minute in all that time. The British knew the situation of the place as well as we did. And as their point-blank shot would not reach us behind the wall, they would throw elevated grapeshot from their mortar, and when the sentries had cried, "a shot," and the soldiers, seeing no shot arrive, had become careless, the grapeshot would come down like a shower of hail

I will here just mention one thing, which will show the apathy of our people at this time. We had, as I mentioned before, a thirty-two-pound cannon in the fort, but had not a single shot for it. The British also had one in their battery upon the Hospital Point, which, as I said before, raked the fort, or rather it was so fixed as to rake the parade in front of the barracks, the only place we could pass up and down the fort. The artillery officers offered a gill [a half pint] of rum for each shot fired from that piece, which the soldiers would procure. I have seen from twenty to fifty men standing on the parade waiting with impatience the coming of the shot, which would often be seized before its motion had fully ceased and conveyed off to our gun to be sent back again to its former owners. When the lucky fellow who had caught it had swallowed his rum. he would return to wait for another, exulting that he had been more lucky or more dexterous than his fellows. ...

We continued here, suffering cold, hunger and other miseries, till the fourteenth day of November. On that day, at the dawn, we discovered six ships of the line, all sixty-fours, a frigate of thirty-six guns, and a galley in a line just below the chevaux-de-frise; a twenty-four-gun ship (being an old ship cut down.) her guns said to be all brass twenty-fourpounders, and a sloop of six guns in company with her, both within pistol shot of the fort, on the western side. We immediately opened our batteries upon them, but they appeared to take very little notice of us. We heated some shot, but by mistake twenty-four-pound shot were heated instead of eighteen, which was the caliber of the guns in that part of the fort. The enemy soon began their firing upon us and there was music indeed. The soldiers were all ordered to take their posts at the palisadoes, which they were ordered to defend to the last extremity, as it was expected the British would land under the fire of their cannon and attempt to storm the fort. The cannonade was severe, as well it might be, six sixty-four-gun ships, a thirty-six-gun frigate, a twentyfour-gun ship, a galley and a sloop of six guns, together with six batteries of six guns each and a bomb battery of three mortars. all playing at once upon our poor little fort, if fort it might be called. ...

The enemy's shot cut us up. I saw five artillerists belonging to one gun cut down by a single shot, and I saw men who were stooping to be protected by the works, but not stooping low enough, split like fish to be broiled. About the middle of the day some of our galleys and floating batteries, with a frigate, fell down and engaged the British with their long guns, which in some measure took off the enemy's fire from the fort. The cannonade continued without interruption on the side of the British throughout the day. Nearly every gun in the fort was silenced by midday. Our men were cut up like cornstalks. I do not know the exact number of the killed and wounded but can say it was not small, considering the numbers in the fort, which were only the able part of the Fourth and Eighth Connecticut regiments, with a company or two of artillery, perhaps less than five hundred in all.

The cannonade continued, directed mostly at the fort, till the dusk of the evening. As soon as it was dark we began to make preparations for evacuating the fort and endeavoring to escape to the Jersey shore. When the firing had in some measure subsided and I could look about me, I found the fort exhibited a picture of desolation. The whole area of the fort was as completely ploughed as a field. The buildings of every kind [were] hanging in broken fragments, and the guns all dismounted, and how many of the garrison sent to the world of spirits, I knew not. If ever destruction was complete, it was here. The surviving part of the garrison were now drawn off and such of the stores as could conveniently be taken away were carried to the Jersey shore.

I happened to be left with a party of seventy or eighty men to destroy and burn all that was left in the place. I was in the northwest battery just after dark when the enemy were hauling their shipping on that side higher up to a more commanding position. They were so nigh that I could hear distinctly what they said on board the sloop. One expression of theirs I well remember. "We will give it to the d—d rebels in the morning." The thought that then occupied my mind I as well remember, "The d—d rebels will show you a trick which the devil never will; they will go off and leave you." ...

Before we could embark the buildings in the fort were completely in flames, and they threw such a light upon the water that we were as plainly seen by the British as though it had been broad day. Almost their whole fire was directed at us. Sometimes our boat seemed to be almost thrown out of the water, and at length a shot took the sternpost out of the rear boat. We had then to stop and take the men from the crippled boat into the other two, and now the shot and water flew merrily, but by the assistance of a kind Providence we escaped without any further injury ...

Howe was now secure in the rebel capital. Washington watched him for a while from a position about twelve miles north northwest of the city and then chose a wintering place for his army close enough, he hoped, to limit British foraging and supply. Joseph Martin never forgot the hard days that followed, but neither did his sense of humor desert him.

From: Private Yankee Doodle

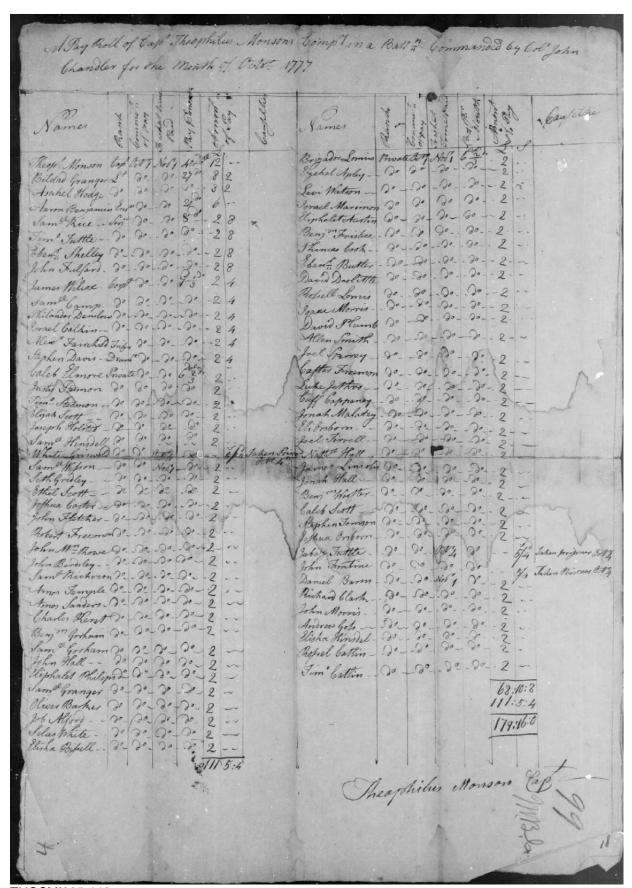
December 4, 1777

Muster Roll for October and November 1777. Stephen Thompson listed as # 54 Also noted: Enlisted on May 27, and enlistment for the "duration of the War".

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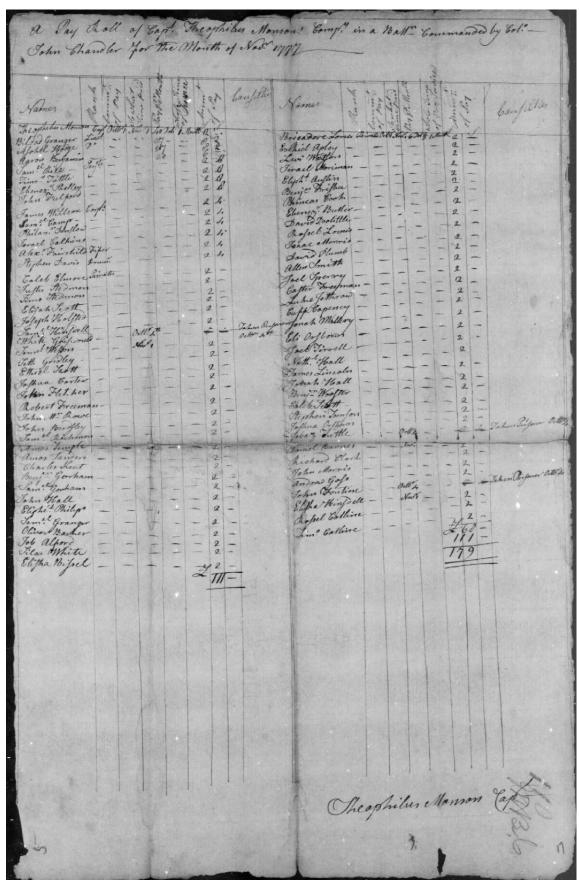
THOSMI905-109

Pay Roll for October 1777. Stephen Thompson listed in right column, below paper fold



THOSMI905-110

Pay Roll for November 1777. Stephen Thompson listed in right column, near paper fold



THOSMI905-111

December 1777

Private Yankee Doodle Except:

We crossed the Schuylkill in a cold, rainy and snowy night [December 12] upon a bridge of wagons set end to end and joined together by boards and planks. And after a few days more maneuvering we at last settled down at a place called "the Gulf" (Three miles beyond the Schuylkill on Gulf Creek, present-day West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania - so named on account of a remarkable chasm in the hills); and here we encamped some time, and here we had liked to have encamped forever—for starvation here rioted in its glory. But lest the reader should be disgusted at hearing so much said about "starvation," I will give him something that, perhaps, may in some measure alleviate his ill humor.

While we lay here there was a Continental Thanksgiving ordered by Congress; and as the army had all the cause in the world to be particularly thankful, if not for being well off, at least that it was no worse, we were ordered to participate in it. We had nothing to eat for two or three days previous, except what the trees of the fields and forests afforded us. But we must now have what Congress said, a sumptuous Thanksgiving to close the year of high living we had now nearly seen brought to a close. Well, to add something extraordinary to our present stock of provisions, our country, ever mindful of its suffering army, opened her sympathizing heart so wide, upon this occasion, as to give us something to make the world stare. And what do you think it was, reader? Guess. You cannot guess, be you as much of a Yankee as you will. I will tell you; it gave each and every man half a gill of rice and a tablespoonful of vinegar!!

From: Private Yankee Doodle

Thanksgiving Proclamation 1777 by the Continental Congress

IN CONGRESS

November 1, 1777

FORASMUCH as it is the indispensable Duty of all Men to adore the superintending Providence of Almighty God; to acknowledge with Gratitude their Obligation to him for Benefits received, and to implore such farther Blessings as they stand in Need of: And it having pleased him in his abundant Mercy, not only to continue to us the innumerable Bounties of his common Providence; but also to smile upon us in the Prosecution of a just and necessary War, for the Defense and Establishment of our unalienable Rights and Liberties; particularly in that he hath been pleased, in so great a Measure, to prosper the Means used for the Support of our Troops, and to crown our Arms with most signal success:

It is therefore recommended to the legislative or executive Powers of these UNITED STATES to set apart THURSDAY, the eighteenth Day of December next, for SOLEMN THANKSGIVING and PRAISE: That at one Time and with one Voice, the good People may express the grateful Feelings of their Hearts, and consecrate themselves to the Service of their Divine Benefactor; and that, together with their sincere Acknowledgments and Offerings, they may join the penitent Confession of their manifold Sins, whereby they had forfeited every Favor; and their humble and earnest Supplication that it may please GOD through the Merits of JESUS CHRIST, mercifully to forgive and blot them out of Remembrance; That it may please him graciously to afford his Blessing on the Governments of these States respectively, and prosper the public Council of the whole: To inspire our Commanders, both by Land and Sea, and all under them, with that Wisdom and Fortitude which may render them fit Instruments, under the Providence of Almighty GOD, to secure for these United States, the greatest of all human Blessings, INDEPENDENCE and PEACE: That it may please him, to prosper the Trade and Manufactures of the People, and the Labor of the Husbandman, that our Land may yield its Increase: To take Schools and Seminaries of Education, so necessary for cultivating the Principles of true Liberty, Virtue and Piety, under his nurturing Hand; and to prosper the Means of Religion, for the promotion and enlargement of that Kingdom, which consisteth "in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost."

And it is further recommended, That servile Labor, and such Recreation, as, though at other Times innocent, may be unbecoming the Purpose of this Appointment, be omitted on so solemn an Occasion.

Private Yankee Doodle Except:

After we had made sure of this extraordinary superabundant donation, we were ordered out to attend a meeting and hear a sermon delivered upon the happy occasion. We accordingly went, for we could not help it. ...

I remember the text, like an attentive lad at church. I can still remember that it was this, "And the soldiers said unto him, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, nor accuse anyone falsely." The preacher ought to have added the remainder of the sentence to have made it complete, "And be content with your wages." But that would not do, it would be too apropos. However, he heard it as soon as the service was over, it was shouted from a hundred tongues. Well, we had got through the services. ...

I had nothing else to do but to go home and make out my supper as usual, upon a leg of nothing and no turnips.

The army was now not only starved but naked. The greatest part were not only shirtless and barefoot, but destitute of all other clothing, especially blankets. I procured a small piece of raw cowhide and made myself a pair of moccasins, which kept my feet (while they lasted) from the frozen ground, although, as I well remember, the hard edges so galled my ankles, while on a march, that it was with much difficulty and pain that I could wear them afterwards; but the only alternative I had was to endure this inconvenience or to go barefoot, as hundreds of my companions had to, till they might be tracked by their blood upon the rough frozen ground. But hunger, nakedness, and sore shins were not the only difficulties we had at that time to encounter; we had hard duty to perform and little or no strength to perform it with.

The army continued at and near the Gulf for some days, after which we marched for the Valley Forge in order to take up our winter quarters. We were now in a truly forlorn condition, no clothing, no provisions and as disheartened as need be. We arrived, however, at our destination a few days before Christmas. Our prospect was indeed dreary. In our miserable condition, to go into the wild woods and build us habitations to stay (not to live) in, in such a weak, starved and naked condition, was appalling in the highest degree, especially to New Englanders, unaccustomed to such kind of hardships at home. However, there was no remedy, no alternative but this or dispersion. But dispersion, I believe, was not thought of, at least, I did not think of it. We had engaged in the defense of our injured country and were willing, nay, we were determined to persevere as long as such hardships were not altogether intolerable. ...

We arrived at the Valley Forge in the evening [December 18]. It was dark; there was no water to be found and I was perishing with thirst. I searched for water till I was weary and came to my tent without finding any. Fatigue and thirst, joined with hunger, almost made me desperate. I felt at that instant as if I would have taken victuals or drink from the best friend I had on earth by force. I am not writing fiction, all are sober realities. Just after I arrived at my tent, two soldiers, whom I did not know, passed by. They had some water in their canteens which they told me they had found a good distance off, but could not direct me to the place as it was very dark. I tried to beg a draught of water from them but they were as rigid as Arabs. At length I persuaded them to sell me a drink for three pence, Pennsylvania currency, which was every cent of property I could then call my own, so great was the necessity I was then reduced to.

From Private Yankee Doodle



"Valley Forge" The Winter of 1777-1778

Valley Forge, 25 miles west of Philadelphia, was the campground of 11,000 troops of George Washington's Continental Army from Dec. 19, 1777, to June 19, 1778. Because of the suffering endured there by the hungry, poorly clothed, and badly housed troops, 2,500 of whom died during the harsh winter, Valley Forge came to symbolize the heroism of the American revolutionaries.

The soldiers represented every state in the new union. Some were still boys -- as young as 12 -- others in their 50s and 60s. They were described as fair, pale, freckled, brown, swarthy and black. While the majority were white, the army included both Negroes and American Indians. Each man had few possessions and these he carried with him. His musket -- by far the most popular weapon -- a cartouche or cartridge box. If he had neither, the infantryman carried a powder horn, hunting bag and bullet pouch. His knapsack or haversack held his extra clothing (if he was fortunate enough to have any), a blanket, a plate and spoon, perhaps a knife, fork and tumbler. Canteens were often shared with others and six to eight men shared cooking utensils.

The first order of business was shelter. An active field officer was appointed for each brigade to superintend the business of hutting. Twelve men were to occupy each hut. The officers' hut, located to the rear, would house fewer men. Each brigade would also build a hospital, 15x25 feet. Many of the Brigadier Generals used local farmhouses as their quarters. Some, including Henry Knox, later moved into huts to be closer to their men. The huts provided greater comfort than the tents used by the men when on campaign. But after months of housing unwashed men and food waste, these cramped quarters fostered discomfort and disease. Albigence Waldo complained, "my Skin & eyes are almost spoil'd with continual smoke." Putrid fever, the itch, diarrhea, dysentery and rheumatism were some of the other afflictions suffered by the Continental troops.



Little is known about the women but there were women at Valley Forge. Junior officers' wives probably remained in the homes of their husbands and socialized among themselves. The enlisted men's wives lived and labored among the troops, some working as housekeepers for the officers; others as cooks. The most common positions were nurse and laundress. A washerwoman might work for wages or charge by the piece.