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During the American War for Independence in August and September, 1777, the British invaded Delaware as part of an end-run campaign to defeat George Washington and the Americans and capture the capital at Philadelphia. For a few short weeks the hills and streams in and around Newark and Iron Hill and at Cooch's Bridge along the Christina River were the focus of world history as the British marched through the Diamond State between the Chesapeake Bay and Brandywine Creek. This is the story of the British invasion of Delaware, one of the lesser known but critical watershed moments in American history.



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The British Invasion of Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777

Kauffman and Gallagher

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*A Watershed Moment in American History*

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and  
Michael R. Gallagher

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Kauffman, Gerald J.  
The British invasion of Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777  
Gerald J. Kauffman and Michael R. Gallagher

Includes bibliographical references

ISBN-13: 978-1-304-28716-8

1. History-American Revolution
- I. Gallagher, Michael R. . II. Title

*Cover design by Gerald Kauffman*

To American  
courage  
and  
optimism

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The British Invasion of  
Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777



## Prologue

SEVENTEEN SEVENTY SEVEN was a pivotal year in the American Revolution, a turning point that followed the more widely known events of 1776. After the Second Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1776 and Washington crossed the icy Delaware on Christmas night to surprise and rout the Hessians at Trenton, the Americans entered the New Year with flickering hopes of victory. On January 3, 1777 Washington proved the triumph at Trenton was no fluke as American troops left their campfires burning to dupe the British and were victorious again at Princeton. Washington sent skirmishers and foraging parties to drive Lord Cornwallis back through the narrow neck of New Jersey to New Brunswick and New York. The American Army spent the winter of 1777 holed up in the terminal moraine of the Watchung Mountains near Morristown, New Jersey where they could look down on the British on Manhattan Island.

When spring broke in May 1777, the Americans left their quarters at Morristown and the British made plans to capture Philadelphia. Philadelphia was a big prize for the British as the capital of the American cause, the largest city in the United States, and the third-largest port in the British



Empire after London and Liverpool. Washington and his generals spent June and July of 1777 making plans to defend Philadelphia from a suspected British attack by land over New Jersey and a direct sea route up the Delaware River. But the British commanded by brothers General William Howe and Admiral Richard Howe had other ideas that would thrust little Delaware into the conflict and change the course of the war.

During the American War of Independence in August and September of 1777, the British Army invaded Delaware during Lord William Howe's end-run campaign to capture Philadelphia. Over 230 years ago, the British and Americans fought the First State's only battle of the American Revolution at Cooch's Bridge along the Christina River three miles south of Newark, Delaware. After sailing up the Chesapeake and landing at the head of the bay on August 25, 1777, British and Hessian armies marched for two and a half weeks through Elkton, Maryland, east and north through Newark and Hockessin in Delaware, then north to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania enroute to defeating the Americans at the Battle of the Brandywine on September 11, 1777.

British forces under General Howe skirmished with the Americans commanded by General George Washington at Iron Hill, Cooch's Bridge, and Hockessin along the banks of the Christina, White Clay, and Red Clay creeks. Washington's commanders wanted to fight the British here (instead of the Brandywine) and utilize the favorable geography and defensive positions afforded by the hills and valleys along these little-known creeks. Perhaps the Philadelphia Campaign would have turned more to the

American's favor if the decisive battle was fought at Cooch's Bridge along the Christina River instead of the Brandywine in one of the American Revolution's largest battles and one of George Washington's biggest defeats.

Modern geographic information systems (GIS) cartography is used to map and reconstruct the route of the British Army through northeastern Maryland, northern Delaware, and southeastern Pennsylvania during the 1777 Philadelphia Campaign. ArcMap technology was employed to draw GIS base mapping depicting waterways, towns, topography, and roads. This mapping extends from the British landing at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, through Newark and Hockessin in Delaware, and north to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. These modern GIS cartographic maps retrace the heretofore less familiar steps of the British Army through Delaware on the trail to the Battle of the Brandywine (Exhibits 1-8).

Coordinates documenting the British march through the countryside and contact with American forces are plotted on GIS mapping using descriptions of landmarks such as Quaker meetinghouses, Presbyterian churches, historic taverns, and Colonial roads noted in journals and hand-drawn maps. The following data sources provide tangible benchmarks to reconstruct the invasion route through Delaware: (1) diaries of Hessian soldiers Andre, Ewald, Rueffer, Muenchhausen, and Bauermeister, (2) diaries of Englishman John Montresor, and Scotsman John Peebles, (3) hand-drawn period maps by Hessian, British, and French cartographers (Exhibits 9 and 10), (4) papers of Americans Washington, McMichael, McKinley, and Sullivan, and (5) publications by Abbatt (1907), Cooch

(1936), Cooch (1940), Ward (1941), Clift and Moyne (1961), Munroe (1979), Lake (1976, 1997), Burgoyne (1997), Taaffe (2003), McGuire (2006), Sawin (undated), and others.

While modern GIS map technology assists in reconstructing the British advance through Delaware, tracing these movements by plotting and delineating modern landmarks or road names is difficult. Many roads used by the British were unnamed or had different names at that time. Many roads in 1777 were little more than curving cart paths that followed land contours through wilderness, swamps or farmland. Today, segments of modern roads along this route have been straightened and have modern names, particularly in the Hockessin area. Other roads shown on the Hessian, British, and French maps no longer exist. The colonial era cartography was coarse and the imprecise nature of the maps caused complexities in retracing the steps of the armies that crisscrossed Delaware in 1777.

Modern mapping drawn from published accounts of the day recounts a riveting story of the conflict waged among the streams and hills during the British invasion of Delaware, one of the lesser-known watershed moments in American history.

## Chapter One

### The Chesapeake Sees Red

ADMIRAL RICHARD HOWE looked over the bow of his flagship HMS *Eagle* moored at the head of the Chesapeake and gazed at Turkey Point where his troops would go ashore and at last begin their march on Philadelphia. In late August 1777, the British Navy completed a month-long voyage in sweltering ships after they embarked from New York City on July 20 and sailed south along the New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia coasts, around Cape Charles at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, and then north to the far upper reaches of the bay. Admiral Richard Howe and General William Howe sailed the British troops up the Chesapeake as part of their campaign to capture the new nation's capital.

The Howe brothers chose this longer, more circuitous route up the Chesapeake then cross country to Philadelphia, instead of a more direct path up the Delaware River, because the Americans had heavily defended the Delaware at forts and river defenses and *chevaux de frise* (timber obstacles) between Wilmington and the mouth of the Schuylkill.<sup>1</sup> In 2007, an intact *cheval de frise* was recovered

from the Delaware River, remarkably preserved after two centuries underwater.

On board ship, the six-foot tall Lord William Howe celebrated his 48<sup>th</sup> birthday while planning the conquest of Philadelphia. Before coming to America, Viscount Howe was a Member of Parliament who opposed punishing the Colonies for resisting British rule and warned that the entire British Army would have trouble conquering America.

Howe became known as a brilliant strategist who used flanking maneuvers to his advantage over Washington during several early battles in New York and Long Island but in the end lacked the drive to strike for decisive victory. At the Battle of Long Island in August 1776 he cunningly out flanked and bottled up Washington's troops in Brooklyn. But Howe has long been criticized by historians for dawdling and allowing the Americans and their Commander-in-Chief to evacuate safely by night across the East River to Manhattan through a pea soup fog.

During July 1777 in New York, American Colonel Charles Lee, who was captured by the British at a tavern on December 12, 1776 in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, inexplicably suggested that Howe send an invasion force up the Chesapeake to capture Annapolis. Lee's overly friendly advice was suspect given that both men were adversaries.

Howe's strategy to conduct an end-run advance on Philadelphia by a long sea voyage down the Atlantic coast and then up the Chesapeake Bay instead of sailing directly up the Delaware fit his penchant for feinting and flanking. Washington was unsure of Howe's whereabouts and kept his American troops in New Jersey not knowing whether to defend a British attack on Philadelphia overland from New

York or via the Delaware River. Howe's long sea voyage up the Chesapeake was intended to outflank Washington and keep the Americans off balance.

Howe's captains were given orders to sail the British fleet over 500 miles from New York to the head of the Chesapeake Bay, double the distance from New York to Philadelphia up the Delaware River. By land the head of the Chesapeake is 60 miles from Philadelphia. The Howes bet that the tortuous sea voyage in sultry Atlantic summer heat and slog by land through Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania would give them a better chance of capturing Philadelphia than a direct attack up the fortified Delaware River.

On Wednesday July 23, 1777 the British fleet set sail from New York and put out to sea toward a destination that was unknown to the Americans. On July 30 the British fleet passed by the Delaware Bay and HMS *Roebuck* sent news that the Delaware River was defended by fire ships and shore batteries. After receiving reports from British frigates that sailed as far upriver as Reedy Point near Wilmington, the brothers Howe decide that passage up the Delaware would be too dangerous and the fleet sailed south down the coast past Cape Henlopen. After two weeks the British fleet reached Cape Charles at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay on August 14 and anchored two days later.

On Thursday August 21, 1777, after waiting and wondering for weeks concerning the British intentions regarding Philadelphia, George Washington notified Major John Sullivan by dispatch that General Howe's fleet had arrived in Chesapeake Bay and are "high up in the North

East part of it.”<sup>2</sup> By then the British fleet passed by Annapolis.

On August 22, 1777, a Friday, 265 ships in the British fleet anchored in a driving rain in 3 fathoms (18 feet) of water at the head of the Chesapeake Bay north of the Sassafras River about 4 miles south of the Elk River near Turkey Point, Maryland. Part of the massive fleet also anchored at the mouth of the Elk River in 4½ fathoms. The largest of the British ships, the Man-of-War, anchored 14 miles south of Turkey Point in the broad Chesapeake Bay where the water was deeper than the shallow Elk River.<sup>3</sup>

General Washington received confirmation from his spies that the British flotilla was nearing the Elk River so he positioned 1000 Delaware militia along the Christina River at Newport and Christiana Bridge to defend Wilmington.<sup>4</sup>

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States and is the drowned, ancient valley of the Susquehanna River created by rising sea levels from melting glaciers about 6,000 years ago. The British anchored at the head of the Chesapeake near the fall line, the head of navigation that separates the rocky Piedmont hills to the north from the flat, sandy Coastal Plain to the south. As the British looked north from their ships they could see the front range of the Piedmont (in Latin literally foot of the mountains) rising to 300 feet above sea level on the craggy Turkey Point peninsula. These are the foothills of the Appalachians and the steep, rugged terrain makes for slow going by foot. To the south, the British could gaze over the flat sandy Coastal Plain, a landscape much easier to traverse by foot and wagon.

The narrow spine of the Turkey Point peninsula separates the Elk River to the east from the Northeast River to the west at the head of the Chesapeake Bay. The Northeast River is a wider, deeper river than the Elk, easier to navigate, but further west from their ultimate prize. Elk Landing at the northerly tip of the tidal Elk River was a popular link in the colonial transportation chain along the Atlantic coast. Travelers would sail up the Chesapeake and passengers would disembark at Elk Landing for a 12 mile portage overland east to Christiana Bridge where they would sail down the tidal Christina River to Wilmington and then up the Delaware to Philadelphia. The narrow and muddy Elk River, though shallow and difficult to navigate, was Howe's preferred sea lane to Philadelphia.

On Saturday, August 23 with HMS *Roebuck* in the lead followed by HMS *Vigilant* and a fleet of flat-bottomed troop transports, the British sailed north out of the broad Chesapeake Bay into the narrow Elk River. A small squadron formed by a schooner, sloop, and galley with Admiral Howe and General Howe onboard took soundings in the Elk River channel near Turkey Point. Several British ships, one with Hessian Captain Johann Ewald onboard, anchored at the mouth of the Susquehanna River near present-day Havre De Grace. The British sailors took soundings by boat at the mouths of the Susquehanna, Northeast, and Elk Rivers coming within gunshot range of armed Americans on Turkey Point.<sup>5</sup>

Johann Ewald was 33 years old and his fastidious diaries and records of the war are a valuable resource for historians. Ewald was fitted with a glass eye due to injuries suffered after a drunken duel with a friend in 1770. Captain Ewald



was a student of economics and military science and was one of the key leadership figures on the British and Hessian side during the conquest of Delaware.

At 6 am Sunday, August 24, 1777, the British and Hessians received orders from the deck of HMS *Roman Emperor* to prepare for an imminent landing on 50-troop flatboats. Learning of British plans to land, George Washington ordered “that General Greene's and Genl. Stephen's divisions are to march to morrow morning at four o'clock precisely, if it should not rain, towards Wilmington (Delaware), and encamp on the first good ground beyond Naaman's creek.”<sup>6</sup>

At 3 am on Monday August 25 under a southerly wind, HMS *Eagle* with 64 cannons and Admiral Howe and General Howe aboard anchored in the Elk River at Old Field Point upstream from Turkey Point. At 10 am, flatboats began ferrying 17,000 British troops to Elk Neck at the Ferry House on the west bank of the Elk River opposite Cecil Court House about six miles downstream from Head of the Elk (present-day Elkton). The troops landed in this order:

1<sup>st</sup> Debarkation

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Infantry

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Grenadiers, and Hessian and Anspach Yagers

Lt. Gen. Cornwallis under his Command Colonel Donop

2<sup>nd</sup> Debarkation

Hessian Grenadiers, Queen's Rangers

Guards, 4<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiments

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Debarkation

28<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 55<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 42<sup>rd</sup> Regiments

### 4<sup>th</sup> Debarkation

44<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 33<sup>rd</sup>, 37<sup>th</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup>, and 71<sup>st</sup> Regiments

### 5<sup>th</sup> Debarkation

Brigade of Stirn, consisting of Regiments Du Corps  
Donop, Mirbach, and Loos.

The men built rough Indian corn huts as shelter from heavy thunderstorms at 10 o'clock that night. The beachhead on the Turkey Point peninsula was a real wilderness with sassafras and wild grape woods filled with snakes and toads and locusts so loud that the troops could not hear each other. That night several British troop units weathered the heavy storm at Northeast, Maryland.<sup>7</sup>

American spies learned of the British landing and were concerned that valuable supplies would fall into enemy hands. John McKinley, President of Delaware, wrote to Caesar Rodney in Kent County, "The Enemy have landed this morning at Cecil Court House and are proceeding towards the Head of Elk where there are still remains a considerable quantity of Continental Stores...". At 6 pm, General Washington sent an order to Brigadier General Armstrong and the Pennsylvania militia, "I have just received information that the enemy began to land this morning about six miles below the Head of Elk opposite to Cecil Court House..." From Wilmington, Washington wrote to Congress, "There are a quantity of public and private stores (a considerable parcel of salt) at the Head-of-

Elk, which I am afraid will fall into the enemy's hands if they advance quickly".<sup>8</sup>

Hessian Captain Friedrich von Muenchhausen, aide to General Howe, wrote that the British sailed up the Elk River as far as Elk Ferry.<sup>9</sup>

"At three o'clock in the morning the light infantry, the English Grenadiers, and Hessian Jaegers were put into boats. At five in the morning the Admiral and General Howe, together with his aides, went aboard the *Roebuck*, which was stationed close to the mouth of the Elk River. The Admiral's flag was then hoisted on the *Roebuck*, accompanied by the customary signals, and the *Eagle*, which the Admiral left because she drew too much water to proceed farther up, struck the Admiral's flag at the very same moment."

"The battery ship and five other light frigates, galleys etc., were ordered to proceed up the Elk River. The flatboats with the troops and then the transports followed slowly. Admiral Howe, his brother, and all of us (staff) went aboard the battery ship, which was in the lead. In this manner we proceeded very slowly until we reached Elk Town (Elk Ferry), eight good miles from the mouth of the river where we landed at 10 o'clock in the morning without the slightest interference."

"My General advanced with the jaegers and light infantry for three miles and then made a halt. We found almost all houses deserted, except that some women and children were left behind. Disembarking of troops and of the light artillery continued the whole day."

## Chapter Two

### The March toward Head of Elk

GENERAL HOWE issued strict orders against plundering the countryside. On Tuesday August 26, 1777, the encamped British troops at Old Field Point struggled to regain their land legs as a day-long storm damaged 16,000 rifle cartridges and made the roads too muddy to march. The Americans thought the shallow and turbid Elk River would be unnavigable but the British ship hulls easily cut channels through the mud.<sup>1</sup>

In the afternoon, the Hessian Jaeger Corps patrolled west across the steep and rocky Elk Neck peninsula to the Northeast River and shot oxen, sheep, and turkeys for food. Several Jaegers fell dead from heat prostration. Lord Cornwallis reconnoitered from Turkey Point and moved a few miles north toward the Head of Elk (now Elkton).<sup>2</sup>

General Washington, General Nathaniel Greene, and the Marquis de Lafayette rode from Wilmington to the summit of Iron Hill to survey the British in Head of Elk.<sup>3</sup> This promontory, which looms to the south of Newark, is a geologic anomaly, more characteristic of the hilly, rocky Piedmont Plateau to the north rather than the surrounding flat, sandy Coastal Plain to the south. Iron Hill is the only

summit where Washington could view the waters of the Chesapeake and Delaware from the same pinnacle. Washington is rumored to have slept that night in a farmhouse at the foot of Iron Hill during a severe rain storm. To get a closer look, Washington rode west toward Head of Elk along Old Kings Road (just north of present-day Old Baltimore Pike) and from the summit of Grays Hill just inside Maryland, observed a few tents under the Union Jack as remnants of the British encampment. A Delaware historic marker on Old Baltimore Pike just west of present-day Route 896 commemorates Washington's reconnaissance from Iron Hill.

Captain Muenchausen, who was still in the camp at Elk Neck, corroborated the reports of Washington's close encounter with the British in Elk Town.<sup>4</sup> "General Washington is said to have come down with some men, most of them dragoons, to the Head of Elk, eight miles from here, in order to observe our advances. Disembarkment of troops continued throughout the day, ending in the evening. The heavy artillery, wagons, horses, etc., will be disembarked next. Major Balfour, one of my comrades, was almost captured this afternoon when he was carrying orders to one of our foreposts. In the late afternoon we had a heavy rain. During the evening, orders were issued that we will set out marching at three o'clock in the morning to our right, with the exception of General Knyphausen who will stay here with 13 battalions".

The British were waterlogged. To boost their morale General Howe ordered, "two days rum to be issued to the troops to-morrow morning, from eight to ten o'clock at the Ferry."

On Wednesday August 27, 1777 as the storm raged from morning into afternoon, the British remained at the Turkey Point camp as General Howe postponed orders to march north toward Head of Elk. Using a printing press carried from ship, Howe published a declaration offering amnesty and general pardon to those who had risen against the Crown provided they swore allegiance to the British.<sup>5</sup>

“Sir William Howe regretting the Calamities to which many of His Majesty's faithful Subjects are still exposed by the Continuance of the Rebellion, and no less desirous of protecting the Innocent, than determined to pursue with the Rigors of War all those whom His Majesty's Forces, in the Course of their Progress, may find in Arms against the King, doth hereby assure the peaceable inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania, the Lower Counties on Delaware, and Counties of Maryland, on the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake-Bay, that in Order to remove any groundless Apprehensions which may have been raised of their suffering by Depredations of the Army under His Command, he hath issued the strictest Order to the Troops for the Preservation of Regularity and good Discipline, and has signified that the most exemplary Punishment shall be inflicted upon Those who shall dare to plunder the Property, or molest the Persons of any of His Majesty's well-disposed Subjects.

Security and Protection are likewise extended to all Persons, Inhabitants of the Province and Counties aforesaid, who, not guilty of having assumed legislative or judicial Authority, may have acted illegally in subordinate Stations, and, conscious of their Misconduct, been induced to leave their Dwellings, provided such Persons do

forthwith return, and remain peaceably at their usual Places of Abode.”

Concerned that the British planned to attack Wilmington, Washington ordered battalions to take positions at Christiana Bridge (under Colonel Evans) and along the White Clay Creek (under General Greene) on the outskirts east of Newark near the White Clay Presbyterian Church (built circa 1721). The church still stands today at the northwest corner of the Kirkwood Highway and Polly Drummond Hill Road intersection. Washington reported to the President of Congress that he returned from the Head of Elk to Iron Hill where he camped the previous night during his reconnaissance of the British along the Elk River.<sup>6</sup>

Muenchausen wrote, “Since the heavy rain continues, and the roads are bottomless, and since the horses are still sick and stiff, we had to ride out at two o'clock in the morning to countermand the order of march. At nine o'clock in the morning one of our boats, which had come quite close to the opposite bank, was fired upon with small arms. Our battery ship sent two 32-pound balls over, and the affair was ended.”<sup>7</sup>

At 4 am on Thursday August 28, 1777 the two-day rain finally stopped and the Redcoats marched north from their camp about 8 miles along a road on the easterly shore of the Turkey Point peninsula. Ensign Cochenhausen's map (Exhibit 11) and Major Andre's map (Exhibit 12) indicate the likely route of the march was along Old Field Point Road that hugs the hilly west bank of the Elk River.

At 9 am in clear weather, the British marched into Head of Elk and found a ghost town of 40 pleasant houses

perched at the northeasterly head of the Chesapeake Bay. About 1000 Americans under Colonel Patterson demolished the Big Elk Creek bridge east of town and then retreated east along the Old Kings Road (parallel to current Old Baltimore Pike) about 2½ miles to Grays Hill. The British forded the creek in 3 feet of water and engineers set to rebuild the bridge. When the British reached Grays Hill, the American retreated east to the Sandy Brae summit just northwest of the present-day Otts Chapel Road and Old Baltimore Pike intersection. In their haste to evacuate, the Americans left behind store houses full of “molasses, Indian corn, tobacco, pitch, tar, and flour” and 15 sloops and schooners in the Elk River. Col. Henry Hollingsworth, aide to Washington, collected stores from a warehouse next to his home, at the site of the old Green Lantern Hotel. The British dug a ditch from the warehouse to the Elk River to dock ships and load grain.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the British Army marched through Head of Elk while the remainder stayed at Turkey Point under Hessian General von Knyphausen. Near Head of Elk, Hessian Jaeger Corps boarded and captured 20 ships loaded with indigo, tobacco, sugar, and wine; the property of colonists trying to flee the town. The Hessian Jaeger Corps camped that night where two roads branch out, one from Head of Elk to Christiana along Old Kings Road (now Old Baltimore Pike) and the second to Wilmington (now Elkton-Newark Road).<sup>9</sup>

In Head of Elk, General Howe established headquarters at the Elk Tavern (circa 1750) later known as the Hollingsworth Tavern that still stands at 205 West Main Street just west of Bridge Street. On August 26, only days



before Howe stayed at the same inn, George Washington visited the Elk Tavern while on his foray from Iron Hill.

American Lieutenant McMichael recorded, "On August 28, the American army left its camp on the east side of the Brandywine at 4 am and proceeded through Wilmington, Newport, passed Rising Sun Tavern at Stanton, and encamped to the north of the White Clay Creek and east of White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church."<sup>10</sup> From this description it appears the Americans camped on the high ground between the White Clay Creek and Muddy Run (Middle Run) along Polly Drummond Hill Road near the Judge Morris Estate on Kirkwood Highway.

Captain Muenchausen meticulously documented the British march north from Turkey Point to Elk Town, the accounts of Howe and Washington and their overnight stays at the Elk Tavern only days apart, and the movements of the blue-coated Washington near Elk Town.<sup>11</sup>

"By three o'clock in the morning everyone was under arms, and at four we marched off, with the exception of Knyphausen's corps, which was ordered to change camp after our departure. Since the region here is heavily wooded and cut up with ravines, we marched very slowly and carefully. It was 10 o'clock when the head of our column got beyond the pretty little town of Head of Elk where we halted for an hour to repair the bridge (over Big Elk Creek) so that our artillery could cross. While the bridge was being repaired, the troops marched through the water up to their knees."

"We observed some officers on a wooded hill opposite us, all of them either in blue and white or blue and red, though one was dressed unobtrusively in a plain gray coat.

These gentlemen observed us with their glasses as carefully as we observed them. Those of our officers who know Washington well, maintained that the man in the plain coat was Washington. The hills from which they were viewing us seemed to be alive with troops.”

“My General deployed 3,000 men and marched forward. As soon as they observed our advance, they retreated; we caught only two dragoons. These dragoons and some Negro slaves confirmed that it was Washington with his suite and a strong escort that was looking us over. Most of our troops halted on and around this height.”

“General Washington spent several days in the same house where we are now lodging, and did not leave it until yesterday morning. So he must have known, or at least suspected, that we intended to come here yesterday. From talk said to have been from the lips of Washington and some of his officers, we learn that Washington believes our objective to be Lancaster rather than Philadelphia.”

Friday August 29, 1777 dawned cool and clear. After learning the Americans were posted near the White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church, 400 British troops under General Howe marched 5½ miles east from Head of Elk toward Iron Hill in Delaware. The British divided into two divisions and marched east along the Old Kings Road (a colonial road that ran parallel to and just north of present-day Old Baltimore Pike) coming within sight of 600 Americans troops at Sandy Brae (Elev. 180 ft), a hill near present-day Otts Chapel Road and centered between Grays Hill (Elev. 262 ft) and Iron Hill (Elev. 340 ft).<sup>12</sup>

At 9 am, several foot Jaegers and infantry in the camp at Head of Elk were attacked by the Americans.<sup>13</sup> Thrusting

north from Head of Elk into the Piedmont hills of Maryland, a second British prong led by Cornwallis raided Iron Works, a village along the Big Elk Creek 4 miles north of Iron Hill.

At night, a third prong of troops led by Lt. General von Knyphausen ferried east over the Elk River from the original landing at Turkey Point and camped at Cecil Court House.<sup>14</sup>

Washington informed the President of Congress from Wilmington headquarters that the enemy marched to Grays Hill (just inside Maryland), about 2 miles east of Elk Town and were massed at the border of Delaware.<sup>15</sup>

## Chapter Three

### The British Invade Delaware

SATURDAY August 30, 1777 was another steamy day as many inhabitants at Head of Elk complained about the hottest summer in memory. A few days before, Hessian Jaegers near Elk Town reported firing two cannons at several American officers later thought to be George Washington and the Marquis De Lafayette. Washington was indeed in the area as his letters reported that he was reconnoitering along the roads toward the British near Newark and Iron Hill.<sup>1</sup>

Major General Grey joined von Knyphausen at Cecil Court House after crossing at Elk Ferry. Welsh Fusiliers under Grey and von Knyphausen fired into a body of 200 American calvary at St. Augustine Church that still stands today near current Maryland Route 213 several miles south of present-day Chesapeake City.

Washington suspected that the British planned an easier march on the flat Coastal Plain terrain at sea level along the Old Kings Road (roughly along current Old Baltimore Pike) from Head of Elk to Wilmington by way of Newark, Stanton, Newport, and Christiana instead of the tougher

march up and down the hills to the north in the steep and rocky Piedmont.

General Nathaniel Greene recommended that Washington consider making a stand at Iron Hill and the crossroads at Cooch's Bridge along the Christina River (instead of the Red Clay Creek) as a strategic defense to meet the British. The generals in favor of the Christina River defense noted that the open land that spread south from the Iron Hill fortification would provide a stronger position than the Red Clay Creek. A Delaware historic marker on Old Cooch's Bridge Road (behind Glasgow High School) explains the story of the battle plan and specifically mentions a ford on a small stream that still flows today into the Christina River several hundred yards south of Cooch's Bridge.

Washington overruled the plans for a defense along the Christina River at Iron Hill. The *Philadelphia Evening Post* agreed with Washington's decision in an editorial, "It is laughable... to hear some people talk about Iron Hill. What have we to do with Iron Hill? It commands no pass into the country..."<sup>2</sup>

Washington ordered the Americans to leave the White Clay Creek camp and set up earthworks along the east side of the Red Clay Creek in a triangular formation stretching from Marshallton to Stanton to Newport.

A small band of American troops gathered near Iron Hill to defend against British troops garrisoned in Maryland just across the Mason and Dixon line which was surveyed eight years earlier in 1769. Perhaps reconsidering General Greene's Iron Hill defense plan, Washington wrote to General Maxwell ordering him to place his men at a

defensive position at a pass (ford) along a small stream that flows into the Christina River about 200 yards south of Cooch's Bridge.<sup>3</sup>

On Sunday August 31, General Grey and General von Knyphausen marched east along the neck between Back Creek and Bohemia Creek and foraged for 261 horned cattle, 588 sheep, and 100 horses to replace provisions lost during the hot ocean voyage from New York. There the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regiment attacked a body of the Americans. At 4 am, Lt. Colonel Bird with 150 men crossed into Middle Neck and marched by two mill dams along two branches of Bohemia Creek. Hessian soldiers killed a flock of sheep owned by farmers at Middle Neck along the Bohemia Creek. The green-coated Germans marched back to the north along a now-abandoned road that ran parallel to the Delaware-Maryland line.<sup>4</sup>

Foraging parties were busy as a small British force secured stores at Elk Forge along the Big Elk Creek (now Elk Mills, Maryland) and lost one killed and 4 wounded. Quartermaster General Erskine with 1000 Englishmen seized a flour storehouse at Fishers Mill defended by 300 Americans along the Christina River (at Art Lane near present-day West Chestnut Hill Road just north of the Welsh Tract Baptist Church in Newark). The British captured an American colonel, several officers, and 50 soldiers.<sup>5</sup>

On an intensely hot Monday on the First of September 1777, 200 Queens Rangers attacked the rebels near Elk Town taking six prisoners.<sup>6</sup>

Tuesday September 2, 1777 dawned wet and chilly with no cattle to be seen near a deserted Head of Elk.<sup>7</sup> Heading

to a planned rendezvous with General Howe's troops at Aikens Tavern in Glasgow, von Knyphausen advanced to Buck Carson Tavern as depicted on Major Andre's map (Exhibit 13) just south of present-day Summit Bridge over the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal (the canal was not dug until the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Units of 100 soldiers were deployed to the left and right to round up cattle within a half mile of the British column. Von Knyphausen later stopped at Mill Dam as marked on the British maps (near present-day Lums Pond) and confiscated 60 barrels of flour. General Grey stayed overnight at the Old Cann Mansion, northeast of Lums Pond.<sup>8</sup>

From Wilmington, Washington wrote to General Maxwell that the enemy meant to move on the next day and ordered him to give much trouble to the British. Washington left it up to Maxwell's discretion whether to attack von Knyphausen at Buck Carson Tavern. Maxwell decided to stay dug in at the Cooch's Bridge defenses and missed the opportunity to go on the offensive.<sup>9</sup>

Washington's scouts confirmed that the vanguard of the British Army had moved to Grays Hill just two miles east of Elk Town and only a mile from the Delaware line.<sup>10</sup>

## Chapter Four

### The Battle of Cooch's Bridge

WEDNESDAY September 3, 1777 dawned cool but turned excessively hot by noon. At 5 am the whole British Army under Howe except for 2 brigades under Major General Grant invaded New Castle County, Delaware. The British tramped east along Old Kings Road (now Old Baltimore Pike) from Grays Hill in Maryland past Sandy Brae into Delaware and then south (more or less along the general route of current Otts Chapel Road) to avoid Iron Hill, to the Christiana Road (parallel to and just north of modern-day Route 40) and then east to Aitkens Tavern at Glasgow (Exhibit 14).

From 1723 to 1815, the Old Kings Road ran between Head of Elk and Christiana Bridge and parallel to and just north of the present-day Old Baltimore Pike (built circa 1813). Aikens Tavern sat along the west side of what is now Route 896 just north of Route 40 at the present-day site of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (Exhibit 15).<sup>1</sup>

After waiting to meet von Knyphausen, who had not yet arrived at Glasgow, the British and Hessians combined their armies and marched north from Aitkens Tavern along a road that roughly followed the path of modern-day Route



896. At 9 am after the British marched only a half mile, the Americans under Captain Maxwell with 1000 militia and 720 regulars attacked and kept up fire for the next two miles on the road to Cooch's Mill (Old Cooch's Bridge Road east of Glasgow High School). About 500 Americans made a stand at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge where the Christina River flows south under present-day Old Baltimore Pike.

The Americans were driven off by bayonet and saber sword and retreated north toward the Welsh Tract Baptist Church along a now-abandoned road (closed in 1859) that ran along the west bank of the Christina River at the foot of Iron Hill. After reaching Cooch's Bridge, the British Light Infantry marched east to cross the Christina River then immediately north along the road to Newark on the east bank of the river with intentions to cut off and surround the retreating Americans. However, a decisive British victory was prevented as the light infantry troops bogged down in an impassable quagmire (Purgatory Swamp) that flows west to the Christina River along the mill race between present-day I-95 and Old Baltimore Road (Exhibit 16). Some historians maintain that Purgatory Swamp was actually a branch of the Muddy Run that flowed to the south of Cooch's Bridge.

Thus the skirmish ended in a draw. The Battle of Cooch's Bridge left 20 Americans dead including 5 captains and 3 British dead and 20 wounded. There is some discrepancy in the British casualty count as Ewald described English losses as "heavy" with half the 2 battalions and the majority of officers killed or wounded.<sup>2</sup>

At the Welsh Tract Baptist Church, just north of Iron Hill and present-day I-95, there is visual evidence of a

musket ball in the stone foundation. After the battle, the Americans withdrew along the road to Ogletown (now Route 4) as far east as the present-day railroad between Newark and Delaware City (near Route 72). From there they moved north to rejoin the American Army along the White Clay Creek and then back to the triangular earthworks on the east side of the Red Clay Creek near Stanton.

Hessian Captain Ewald described the Battle of Cooch's Bridge in his diary entry from September 3, 1777.<sup>3</sup>

"The army marched past Amborn to Aikens Tavern (now Glasgow, Delaware) in the Welsh District of Pennsylvania (now present-day Delaware). At daybreak the army halted here momentarily. The Quartermaster General gave me six dragoons and ordered me to march at once to the left, where I should follow for five to six hundred paces a road which led to Iron Hill and Christiana Bridge. I took the dragoons with me to find the road that I had to take, and I had not gone a hundred paces from the advanced guard when I received fire from a hedge, through which these six men were all either killed or wounded. My horse, which normally was well used to fire, reared so high several times that I expected it would throw me. I cried out, "Foot jagers forward!" and advanced with them to the area from which the fire was coming. My horse followed the men, but I did not observe that the good animal, which had carried me the whole day, was wounded in the belly; it died in the evening. At this moment I ran into another enemy party, with which I became heavily engaged. Lieutenant Colonel von Wurmb, who came up with the entire Corps assisted by

the light infantry, ordered the advanced guard to be supported.”

“By this time it was broad daylight and we saw the mountain (Iron Hill) which was overgrown with woods, rising up like an amphitheater and occupied by enemy troops. The Commander in Chief (Howe) appeared and ordered Lieutenant Colonel von Wurmb to drive the enemy off the mountain. The charge was sounded, and the enemy was attacked so severely and with such spirit by the Jagers that we became masters of the mountain after a seven-hour engagement.”

“During our fight the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of Light Infantry, under Colonel Abercromby tried to take the enemy in the rear, but was prevented from doing so by a marsh (Purgatory Swamp), where the Jagers alone enjoyed the honor of driving the enemy out of his advantageous position. The majority of the Jagers came to close quarters with the enemy, and the hunting sword was used as much as the rifle. Our loss consisted of 11 dead and 45 wounded, while the enemy lost very many men including 2 colonels, according to statements of the prisoners, who numbered 5 officers and some 40 men”.

Captain Muenchausen wrote about the Battle of Cooch’s Bridge in his diary as well.<sup>4</sup>

“At the same time my General sent me to the jaegers to see how they were doing, and to learn where the enemy was stationed and how strong they were. I was to tell Colonel von Wurmb not to advance too fast so as to give the light infantry time to support him. A handsome 18-year old English engineer officer, Haldane by name, who was normally in our suite of aides, and who was a good friend of

mine, rode with me. We saw several rebels behind trees, firing at our advancing jaegers, then retreating about 20 yards behind the next tree, then firing again.”

“It would be unfair not to mention that Colonel von Wurmb was continuously in front of the jaegers, encouraging them in every way, both by actions and by words. I talked to him for a moment; then rode back. The fire was very strong at this time, and to my great sorrow, my accompanying engineer officer received a shot that splintered his right arm, which was amputated in the evening.”

“While I was returning to the rear, I met my General, who in the meantime, because he had heard nothing of the light infantry that he had sent out and because the fire was increasing, had formed two English grenadier battalions, and advanced with them. He had also sent ahead two 2-pounders to support our jaegers.”

“About this time we heard firing from somewhere on our left, but directed forward. This was from one of the dispatched light infantry battalions, which had gone too far to the left and encountered a small party of rebels instead of coming to the aid of our Hessian jaegers. The other dispatched light infantry battalion also was prevented from supporting the jaegers because they ran into a deep morass, which forced them to retrace their steps.”

“Before General Howe arrived at the front with the two grenadier battalions, the jaegers had already finished the whole affair themselves, chasing the rebels through the thick woods, then across the barren hill and the Christiana Creek bridge, which led them across a second creek and a deep ravine. The rebels stopped at this second creek and

made music with half-moons and other (wind) instruments.”

“My General had, in the meantime, sent me back to the front to tell Lieutenant Colonel von Wurmb the reason why he was not supported in the action, and to extend to him his compliments and thanks on the excellent behavior of his men. A short time later, my General followed me to the front, and when he arrived, he dismounted and thanked and praised Lieutenant Colonel von Wurmb and all the other Jaeger officers.”

“Then my General crossed the ravine to the other hilltop from which position he saw in the distance the rebels slowly retreating on the way to Christiana. According to reports, the corps of Armand numbering 700 men, had confronted our jaegers; also a force of about 300 militia had opposed the battalion of light infantry. The latter (militia) fired only one round; then they left the field.”

“The English losses are 3 officers and 9 rank and file wounded, one noncommissioned officer killed. We had 14 Hessians wounded and two killed. We buried 41 of the rebels, among them several officers, including a captain who was still alive when I rode by. He asked me to get him something to drink. Since I could not do it at the time, I hurried back to him, but I found him already dead. We do not know the number of rebel wounded because they carried them away. We have taken only four prisoners. They can run so fast that one can not catch them without taking a chance on being cut off.”

After the battle, the British captured Iron Hill (Exhibit 16). At 2 pm the British camped with headquarters at Aikens Tavern in Glasgow. Lord Cornwallis headquartered

at the Cooch's Mill tavern house. British troops camped along the east side of the Christina Creek extending a mile north of Cooch's Mill.

Von Knyphausen reached Aikens Tavern in the afternoon with 500 horned cattle, 1000 sheep, and 100 horses and camped to the right of the army at Aikens Tavern. The Jaeger Corps received its post in a wood on the highway to Newark, between Cooch's and Fishers Mills, to the left of the army.<sup>5</sup>

At 8 pm, Washington reported from Wilmington to the President of Congress on the Battle of Cooch's Bridge.<sup>6</sup> "This morning the enemy came out with a considerable force and three pieces of artillery against our light advanced corps and after some pretty smart skirmishing obliged them to retreat being far superior in numbers and without cannon. The loss on either side is not yet ascertained, ours, though not exactly known, is not very considerable: theirs, we have reason to believe, was much greater as some of our parties composed of expert marksmen had opportunity of giving them several close, well directed fires, more particularly in one instance, when a body of riflemen formed a kind of ambuscade. They advanced about two miles this side of Iron Hill and then withdrew to that place, leaving a picket at Cooch's Mill about a mile in front. Our parties now lie at White Clay Creek, except the advanced pickets which are at Christiana Bridge. On Monday a large detachment of the enemy landed at Cecil Court House and this morning I had advice of their having advanced on the New Castle Road as far as Carson's Tavern".

A map in Cooch's 1940 book indicates the first shot took place and a British grave was dug along present-day

Route 896 opposite the entrance to the Gore office campus.<sup>7</sup> The road along the right-of-way of Route 896 (in front of Glasgow High School) was built in 1838. The Great Road to Elk (now Welsh Tract Road) ran from the Welsh Tract Baptist Church to Sandy Brae.

## Chapter Five

### **The British March through New-Ark**

**T**HURSDAY September 4, 1777 dawned clear and cold enough for camp fires. The British wounded from the Battle of Cooch's Bridge were sent to a hospital ship in the Elk River. American captains Dallas and Cumming were buried just beyond Cooch's Bridge. The Americans retreated to the White Clay Creek and Christiana Bridge. A column of Hessians and British infantry were sent east along the Old Kings Highway and chased the Americans toward the rebel camp at Red Clay Creek.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Cornwallis took residence in the Cooch Mill tavern house. Mr. Ned Cooch told a rapt audience at an October 13, 2004 University of Delaware Water Policy Forum in Newark that the British drank the Cooch family's liquor during the occupation. In memory of the British lord's impropriety as a guest in his family's ancestral home, a painting of Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown still hangs today over the mantle at the historic Cooch House.<sup>2</sup>

Hessian Jaeger Corps camped along the road to Newark between Cooch's Mill and Fishers Mill. Hessian General von Donlap camped at the Fishers Mill house. The British army camped in the rear of Welsh Tract Baptist Church.



General Howe returned to camp at Aikens Tavern (site of the present-day Methodist Church). General von Knyphausen camped southwest of the Pencader Village near Aitkens Tavern.<sup>3</sup>

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of September, the Jager Corps received the following expression of thanks from the Commander of Chief in an order from the army.<sup>4</sup> “The courageous manner in which Lieutenant Colonel Wurmb, all the other officers, and the entire personnel of the Jager Corps, defeated yesterday the picked troops of the enemy on the mountain near Cooch’s Mill, deserves the highest praise and the fullest acknowledgement of the Commander in Chief, and has attracted the greatest admiration of the entire army. W. Howe”

John Peebles, a Scotsman in the British Army, wrote about Iron Hill and its environs.<sup>5</sup> “Encamp’d on a high ground called Iron Hill from which there is a very extensive prospect of the country all round, you see the Delaware below New Castle about 7 miles distant, about east, a long view of the Eastern Shore & Lower Counties, flat & woody, the ground about Head of Elk and Chesapeake, and on the Wilmington road, you see the Village of Newark and the ground about Christeen.”

Friday September 5, 1777 again dawned clear and cold. British spies reported that General Sullivan had camped along the Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford with 2000 Americans and in Philadelphia 23,000 people remained in the City with another 12,000 in the suburbs and northern liberties.<sup>6</sup>

The British and Hessians remained in camps between Aikens Tavern, Cooch’s Mill, and Fishers Mill. According

to the Howe and Clinton 1777 map (Exhibit 17) and Major Andre's 1777 map of Aikentown, British and Hessian troops camped along a two-mile line stretching from Aikens Tavern in Glasgow to Iron Hill. Aiken's Tavern was 1200 feet north of the present intersection of Route 896 and Route 40 in Glasgow.

A Delaware historic marker established in 1932 along Route 896 in Glasgow read: "Aiken's Tavern, Site of old Aiken's Tavern. Quarters of General William Howe, September 3 to 8, 1777. Tavern then owned by Mathew Aiken, who laid out this village, naming it Aikentown. Renamed for Glasgow in Scotland."

Washington sent a letter alerting General Maxwell to the possibility of capturing Hessian General von Donlap who was under a light guard at the Fishers Mill camp, but Maxwell decided not to attack.<sup>7</sup>

In General Orders, George Washington, in a style reminiscent of Shakespeare's St. Crispin's Day speech about Henry V and the 1415 Battle of Agincourt, sought to inspire his troops and appeal to their growing feelings of patriotism as they lay in their trenches waiting to take on the British along the banks of the White Clay and Red Clay creeks. The General drew on all of the emotions of liberty and independence that brewed among the troops as he hoped that this would be the most decisive battle of the war.

"From every information of the enemy's designs, and from their movements, it is manifest their aim is, if possible, to possess themselves of Philadelphia. This is their capital object... They are now making their last effort; to come up the Delaware it seems, was their first intention; but, from the measures taken to annoy them in the river, they judged

the enterprise, that way, too hazardous. At length they have landed on the eastern shore of Maryland, and advanced some little way into the country: But the General trusts, they will be again disappointed in their views. Should they push their design against Philadelphia, on this route, their all is at stake; they will put the contest on the event of a single battle: If they are overthrown, they are utterly undone, the war is at an end. Now then is the time for our most strenuous exertions. One bold stroke will free the land from rapine, devastations and burnings, and female innocence from brutal lust and violence. In every other quarter the American Arms have, of late, been rapidly successful and still greater numbers have been made prisoners. The militia at the northward, have fought with a resolution, that would have done honor to old soldiers; they bravely fought and conquered, and glory attends them. Who can forbear to emulate their noble spirit? Who is there without ambition, to share with them, the applauses of their countrymen, and of all posterity, as the defenders of Liberty, and the procurers of peace and happiness to millions in the present and future generations? Two years we have maintained the war and struggled with difficulties innumerable. But the prospect has since brightened, and our affairs put on a better face. Now is the time to reap the fruits of all our toils and dangers! If we behave like men, this third Campaign will be our last. Ours is the main army; to us our Country looks for protection. The eyes of all America, and of Europe are turned upon us, as on those by whom the event of the war is to be determined. And the General assures his countrymen and fellow soldiers, that he believes the critical, the important moment is at hand,

which demands their most spirited exertions in the field. There glory waits to crown the brave, and peace, freedom and happiness will be the rewards of victory. Animated by motives like these, soldiers fighting in the cause of innocence, humanity and justice, will never give way, but, with undaunted resolution, press on to conquest. And this, the General assures himself, is the part the American Forces now in arms will act; and thus acting, he will insure them success.”

On Saturday September 6, Major Andre reported that all camp equipment except for tents were sent back to the ships anchored at Head of Elk and communication with the fleet ended. The army was now on its own in Delaware without sea support from the British fleet.<sup>8</sup>

Hessian Jaeger Corps marched into Newark and skirmished with the rebels, capturing two American prisoners. British Major General Grant arrived at Cooch’s Bridge from Head of Elk. General Sullivan had now advanced to the heights north of Newark (near the present day Newark Reservoir) with 2000 Continentals after marching that day from Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.<sup>9</sup>

Washington ordered the officers to meet at 5 pm, “at the brick house by White Clay creek, and fix upon proper picquets for the security of the camp”. To plan the defense of Wilmington, General Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, General Greene, General Maxwell, and Captain Robert Kirkwood held a council of war at the Hale Byrnes House, a 1750 structure on the National Register of Historic Places that still stands today along the Old Kings Road from Christiana (now Old Route 7) at the head of tide along the White Clay Creek at Stanton. To block an

advance on Wilmington, Daniel Byrnes reported that General Washington placed cannon for a half mile in a triangular formation near Marshalltown, Newport, and Stanton along a ridge on the northerly side of White Clay Creek at Stanton to guard the Old Kings Road from Christiana to Stanton to Newport (now Route 4).<sup>10</sup>

In 1793 Daniel Byrnes wrote a letter to George Washington requesting compensation for 20 wagons of wheat and flour and 8 large cheese that the Continentals took in early September 1777 from his mill at the Hale-Byrnes house.

Washington left the Hale Byrnes House and went back to Wilmington where he issued an order to the Army warning of an impending battle as the British advanced toward Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup>

On Sunday September 7, 1777, the British Army remained camped between Aikentown and Iron Hill in sultry weather. Deserters including American Light Dragoons who sold their horses appeared at the British camp and reported that Washington was dug in at Newport and was prepared to make a stand.<sup>12</sup>

Washington wrote from Wilmington headquarters to General Heath that General Howe had moved seven miles from the Elk River to Iron Hill and was separated 8 to 10 miles apart from the American army at Newport.<sup>13</sup>

In the afternoon, the British prepared to break camp and set north toward Newark under Lord Cornwallis, General Grant, and General Knyphausen in three divisions.<sup>14</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> Division under Lord Cornwallis

Dismounted Jager Corps, 1 officer with 12 mounted Jagers

2 battalions of light infantry  
2 English and the 3 Hessian battalions of grenadiers  
English guards brigade  
Mounted Jagers

2<sup>nd</sup> Division under General Grant  
2 troops of the 16<sup>th</sup> regiment of dragoons  
1<sup>st</sup> brigade English artillery  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> brigades English infantry  
2<sup>nd</sup> brigade of artillery  
3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> brigades of English infantry  
War chest, ammunication, provisions, and hospital wagons  
3<sup>rd</sup> battalion of 71<sup>st</sup> Scottish regiment covered right flank

3<sup>rd</sup> Division under General von Knyphausen  
3<sup>rd</sup> brigade English artillery  
Stirn brigade of the 4 Hessian regiments  
2 troops of the 4 Hessian regiments  
40<sup>th</sup> regiment of Foot  
South Lancashire Regiment  
Queen's Lancashire Regiment  
1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> battalions of Scottish regiment  
Queen's Rangers and Ferguson's Corps

On Monday September 8, 1777, five days after the Battle of Cooch's Bridge, the British broke camp and departed Glasgow by the "light of a remarkable borealis," the Northern Lights. As Cooch wrote in his 1940 book, "at quarter past seven they passed through Newark. Their route was north on Academy Street, east on Main Street at

the Newark Academy, north on Chapel Street, crossing the White Clay Creek into Mill Creek Hundred.”<sup>15</sup>

At 7:15 am the British marched through Newark in cool weather. After the British marched through Newark, mischievous soldiers started the mill stones and left the machinery grinding for 12 hours in Simonton’s flour and gristmill along the south bank of the White Clay Creek. The mill was just downstream from present-day Paper Mill Road, site of the old NVF Fiber plant and now the site of Timothy’s restaurant. In 1777 there was no bridge over the White Clay Creek and Tyson’s Ford provided a shallow crossing of the creek until a bridge was built in 1817.<sup>16</sup>

As the British moved toward Newark, the Americans took down their tents and the entire American army was now thirsting for battle dug in the triangular earthworks along the east side of the Red Clay Creek to defend Wilmington.

The British marched twelve miles north from Aikins Tavern, to Cooch’s Mill, round Iron Hill, through Newark, to the road from Newport to Lancaster (now portions of Limestone Road or Route 7 and an old road that would later become the Newport-Gap Pike), then to New Garden. At 9:15 am, three American alarm guns went off at Newport. The British camped at 1 pm at Nibblas’s House in New Garden and shot cannon at the rebels that night.<sup>17</sup>

Hessian Ensign Carl Friedrich Rueffer wrote in his diary, “at 2 o’clock we passed Newark, a very pleasantly built city of about sixty houses, but completely uninhabited.”<sup>18</sup>

Peebles recorded, “The Army under arms by 3 o’clock in the morning and we march about 5 from Couch’s Mill

about 7 pass thro Newark Villages quite deserted, from that to the cross roads, and proceeded on the Lancaster road.”<sup>19</sup>

The British march through Newark was memorable and historic to the residents of the college town that was later known as the “Athens of Delaware”. As the British camped on the north slopes of Iron Hill, the inhabitants of Newark remembered looking south seeing shadows 30 feet high backlit by the invaders as they tended their campfires. Elliott Hall on 26 East Main Street, now a University of Delaware building, is the only remaining structure in Newark that stood in 1777. When the British marched past the Academy Building on Main Street in Newark, cobblers in the shoe factory there fired upon them and the British returned fire with no casualties reported. The Newark Fair Market, authorized by charter issued by King George II in 1758, met on Tuesdays and Fridays next to the Academy yard. The original Academy Building lasted until 1839 taking any evidence of gun fire damage with the demolition. The old Platt House, which stood until the 1870s, had rifle shot buried in its walls. The green serpentine stone mansion that stands there today was built in its place along the north side of Main Street at the Academy Street intersection. Families near Iron Hill were said to have buried their coins and valuables in the woods to hide them from the British and the caches were never found. The Newark Academy Trustees (predecessor of the University of Delaware) sent their funds to Wilmington but acting Delaware President Thomas McKean wrote to General Washington that the funds and public money of New Castle County were seized by the British from a colonial ship anchored in Wilmington harbor.<sup>20</sup>



Captain Ewald described the British treacherous advance north from Newark on September 8, 1777.<sup>21</sup> “The army marched past Newark and toward morning on the 8<sup>th</sup> crossed the White Clay Creek, which was surrounded on both sides by steep, rocky heights that formed a most frightful defile half an hour in length. I still cannot understand why Sullivan abandoned this position, where a hundred could have held up the army a whole day and killed many men. My hair stood on end as we crammed into the defile, and I imagined nothing more certain than an unexpected attack at the moment when we would have barely stuck our nose out of the defile. For the precipitous rocks on both sides of the creek and along the defile were so steep no one could scale them. But I surmised that Sullivan has reasoned that General Howe would never choose this route, because he had stationed himself behind the Christiana Bridge. He had interspersed the marshy bank with thirty cannon, making a good defile there, which position was now bypassed during this march.”

Judging from the description by Ewald, it appears that after the British troops forded the White Clay Creek, they marched on a now-abandoned road just west of present-day Newark Reservoir through the steep, rocky heights of the defile known now as the Jenney’s Run valley.

While marching up the hills north of Newark, Howe divided his army into two prongs, one led by Cornwallis and second led by von Knyphausen. Cornwallis’ troops marched generally up along the path of present-day Paper Mill Road to the crossroads at Limestone Road (road between Stanton and Lancaster) and then northeast more or less along Valley Road to the Hockessin Meetinghouse.

Cornwallis slogged cross country to Hockessin on a parallel course two miles to the east of von Knyphausen. Von Knyphausen had a baggage train and artillery and looped to the west along the road through New Garden to Kennett Square. Von Knyphausen likely marched from Milford Crossroads to Corner Ketch Road then along current Doe Run Road to Newark Road, along Southwood Road to Limestone Road (Route 7) and hence along a road that would be today's Newport-Gap Pike (Route 41) through to the New Garden Meetinghouse in Pennsylvania.

On their uphill march toward New Garden and Hockessin, the Hessians plundered and burned down a mill on a farm along the Pike Creek near present-day Paper Mill Road. In 1936, the Derickson sisters told a story to Mr. Francis Cooch in his book about the Hessians who plundered Mill Creek Hundred. The marauders smashed all the furnishings and pottery in the family's ancient Pike Creek farmhouse except for a single blue and white piece of china that they cherished 150 years after the invasion as the Hessian plate.<sup>22</sup>

The British erected earthworks along Pike Creek in the vicinity of the present intersection of Paper Mill Road and North Star Road near present-day Independence School. In 1958, Mrs. Elizabeth Peach Atwell recounted that her ancestor's farm along Paper Mill Road had been sacked by the British and Hessians leaving only a single porcelain plate (probably the Hessian plate) untouched. The Mermaid Tavern (circa 1725), was used to store military goods. The tavern is recorded on the National Register of Historic Places that still stands today just north of the intersection of Limestone Road (built circa 1710) and Stoney Batter Road.

Revolutionary War cannon balls were recovered near the Mermaid Tavern.<sup>23</sup>

The 1777 French map (Exhibit 18) depicts Allen Tavern as probably at the intersection of the Wilmington-Lancaster Road (now Route 41) and Hercules Road past Red Clay Presbyterian Church.

A detachment of the combined British and Hessian forces pitched camp on a hilly, forested site that today is a part of the Sanford School property near the intersection of the modern Route 41 (road from Newport) and Route 48 (road from Wilmington) near Hockessin.<sup>24</sup>

That night, Howe camped at the Nicols House near the Hockessin Meetinghouse on the Wilmington-Lancaster Road (now Old Wilmington Road). With Howe was Royal Artillery Captain Francis Downman who recorded in his diary that after a dusty march of 16 hours from Newark, they camped at 11 o'clock that night within 3 miles of an encamped Washington with 20,000 Americans.<sup>25</sup>

British General Grant reported on the march north from Newark and the end run to outflank Washington's right.<sup>26</sup> "Not just chusing to take the Bull by the horns we disappointed Washington and turned his right the 8<sup>th</sup> by a forced march from Pencader by Newark to New Garden. A handsome move of 14 miles which he did not think us equal to, knowing that the state of our carriages and in fact was so disconcerted upon finding that we might by a subsequent move get possession of the heights of Wilmington, that he quit his camp in the night and fled with precipitation over the Brandywine."

Louis Augustus the Baron de Uechritz wrote about the British march after leaving Newark.<sup>27</sup> "These hills are

situated this side of New Garden Meetinghouse at the intersection of the Newark Lancaster road with the Chester road. The enemy had not expected this move and was compelled to quit their posts in the neighborhood of Wilmington. Leaving behind one brigade of Maryland militia, they crossed Brandywine Creek at Chadd's Ford. The main army occupied the hills on the far side of the creek, while a detachment under Brigadier General Greene, composed of a thousand volunteers from the regular battalions, among them perhaps some fifty light dragoons, remained this side of the creek taking post as far as Welch's Tavern (located at the intersection of present-day Route 1 and Route 52, Kennett Pike), four miles from Chadd's Ford."

Muenchausen also wrote about the day-long march by the British from Aikens Tavern through Newark to Hockessin.<sup>28</sup>

"At 4 o'clock in the morning the van of the 1st division under Lord Cornwallis, accompanied by General Howe, started to march. Then the 2nd division under General Grant followed; after this came the 3rd division under General von Knyphausen, which had with it all our baggage, a lot of cattle, provisions, and other wagons. All marched in one column, and to our great surprise, instead of taking the road by way of Christians Bridge to Wilmington as expected, we went to our left by way of White Clay Creek and Newark. We halted near Nicolson's (near the Hockessin Meetinghouse), the only house on the main road from Newport and Wilmington to Lancaster. Von Knyphausen's rear guard did not arrive until two o'clock in the morning. Everyone is pleased with the good march and

the fact that it was kept a secret, thus cutting off Washington from Lancaster.”

“When our vanguard arrived here, it seemed that the rebels were also on the move. We were only five miles away from them and only five miles from Newport. There was much activity in front of us. We saw two regiments coming from Newport on two different roads, with their flags flying, and in very good order, as if they were heading for the road to Lancaster.”

“I was ordered by the General to ride quickly so as to lead the Hessian jaegers diagonally through the woods to cut off these troops, if possible. At the same time General Howe, with the light infantry, marched directly toward them for the same purpose. But the rebels, who had become aware of all this, retreated quickly. Notwithstanding this, the jaegers got close enough to send a few amusette balls at them.”

“We impatiently look forward to the end of these maneuvers. It is hoped that, unless Washington withdraws by forced marches the coming night, we can either force him to do battle on an advantageous terrain or to make a precipitous retreat. Either would mean the ruin of his army.”

John Peebles wrote, “The Army under arms by 3 o’clock in the morning & we march about 5 from Couch’s Mill about 7 pass thro Newark Villages quite deserted, from that to the cross roads, & proceeded on the Lancaster road beyond Nicholls’s, which was Hd.Qrs. as we came to our ground saw a Column of dust rising out of the wood over the road in our front, which being reconoitred some of the Enemy were seen Horse & foot. The 44 & 42d Comys.

were sent down on which ye Enemy retired, a few skulking rascals came down in the Eveng. & fir'd at our sentrys which was smartly return'd & we were quiet there then for the Night.”<sup>29</sup>

## Chapter Six

### To New Garden and Hockessin Meeting

AMERICAN detachments crossed the Red Clay Creek On Tuesday September 9, 1777 and marched to a hill near McKennan's Meetinghouse (Red Clay Creek Presbyterian Church) near present-day Delcastle Recreation Area. The right wing of Howe's Army reached Christiana Bridge but saw that Washington was entrenched at the confluence of the Red Clay and White Clay creeks near the Hale Byrnes House so the British veered northwesterly towards Hockessin with one platoon of the British appearing at Milltown. The British under Howe temporarily took positions on the hill near Milltown about 3 miles west of Newport to create a disturbance and try to bluff the Americans. The British detachment then withdrew from Milltown and marched northwest to join the rest of their forces at Hockessin and New Garden.<sup>1</sup>

At 2 pm, von Knyphausen left New Garden Meetinghouse with the 8<sup>th</sup> Division and reached Kennett Square that night. At sunrise, two divisions under Cornwallis and Grant marched 4 miles from Mill Creek Hundred along the Wilmington-Lancaster Road to Hockessin Meetinghouse and camped. At 5:30 pm,

Cornwallis received word that the Americans had evacuated Newport and Wilmington and were marching to Chadds Ford along the Brandywine.<sup>2</sup>

Ewald and Andre recorded that the British army set out at sunset toward Kennett Square in two columns separated 2 miles apart with Cornwallis on the right and von Knyphausen on the left. Von Knyphausen with the baggage train and artillery traveled via the New Garden Meetinghouse to Kennett Square. Cornwallis marched along the Red Clay Creek valley through swampy woods and treacherous roads after leaving the Hockessin Meetinghouse.<sup>3</sup>

Major John Andre's map (Exhibit 19) confirmed the site of the British camp at the Nichols House across Meetinghouse Road from Hockessin Meetinghouse). British forces left Hockessin in two columns with one marching straight north toward Kennett Square and the other force to the west and through New Garden. A Hessian map (Exhibit 19) and a second map by Andre (Exhibit 20) depicts the westerly looping movement by the British from Hockessin Meetinghouse through New Garden to Kennett Square. The 1820 Heald map (Exhibit 21) shows the road system in New Castle County only 40 years after the American Revolution. Price and Price Engineering (undated) mapped Howe's advance from Newark, Delaware to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania but did not include the camps at the New Garden and Hockessin meetinghouses (Exhibit 22).

Washington wrote to Congress that the British advanced toward Newport seemingly ready to attack. The Americans waited but the British halted about 2 miles away at Milltown



faking an attack while the greater part of the British Army marched to the American's right through Newark toward Kennett Square. The Americans left Newport at 2 am and marched northeast under a waxing moon to the high ground east of Chadds Ford along the Brandywine to wait for the British. The Americans marched east north east to the Crooked Billet Tavern on the road from Wilmington to Lancaster (Kennett Pike) and then along Center Road, Kennett Pike and Pyles Ford Road and crossed the Brandywine to Chadds Ford.<sup>4</sup>

A long gone historic plaque marked the location at Southwood Road and Limestone Road (Route 7) near the arc of Delaware where Hessian and British troops under von Knyphausen invaded Chester County, Pennsylvania. The plaque read: "Here General Howe's Army entered Chester County September 8, 1777 on it's march from Head of Elk to Brandywine Battle Field."

In Hockessin, the British hurried to establish a field hospital in Strathworth, a mansion near Valley Road that commanded a view of the Hockessin valley. This was the traditional home of the Dixon and Jackson families. In the early 1950s, Mrs. Richard Beard owner of the Jackson House, recalled that she once ordered the removal of boxwood hedges near the steps. When the hedges were removed; belt buckles, bayonets, and rifle parts of unknown buried Revolutionary War soldiers fell from the roots. These artifacts were later reportedly donated to the Metropolitan Museum of History in New York City. The memoirs of three early Hockessin families collected in the 1950s told that General Howe, while at the Hockessin Friends Meetinghouse, reportedly compared the

prosperous, rolling farmland of Hockessin to that of the Yorkshire region of his native England. Howe also expressed a concern at the "burning" and "the smoke seen on the horizon", which may have been his dissatisfaction with von Knyphausen's and the Hessian's plundering at New Garden. No local residents were reported killed and no structures were destroyed in Hockessin during the British occupation of the village. Supplies for the encamped British soldiers were provided by the some Quaker villagers who were pacifists and pledged neutrality during the war.<sup>5</sup>

Revolutionary War soldiers buried in the cemetery at Red Clay Presbyterian Church include James Brindley, James Crossan, James Huston, David McCallmont, George McCullough, Capt. William Robeson, Rev. William McKennan, Charles Williams, James Walker, Samuel Montgomery, Samuel Huston, Sam Lindsey, Beata Miller, and Abram Groff. Soldiers buried at the Hockessin Meetinghouse graveyard include S. Ground and Dr. James Stewart.<sup>6</sup>

At 1 pm on September 9, the British marched in two columns. Howe led the first column with General Cornwallis and marched two miles to the right of the second column, led by General von Knyphausen. The destination of the two columns was Welch's Tavern, which still stands today east of Kennett Square just north of the intersection Route 1 and Route 52 (Kennett Pike). Major Baurmeister wrote: "The column on the left under Lieutenant General von Knyphausen, in the middle of which was the entire provision train and all the artillery and cattle, marched along the New Garden road through continuous narrow defiles. The vanguard reached Kennett

Square several hours after nightfall. General Howe, who with the vanguard of the first column had arrived at the Quaker church in Marlborough Township, did not go further and ordered the army to halt in column formation. He posted the grenadiers between the two columns and the 3rd English Infantry.”<sup>7</sup>

Muenchausen wrote about the British whereabouts on September 9 as they approached Kennett Square.<sup>8</sup>

“Unfortunately Washington marched away last night; it is uncertain what his destination is. The General has two conflicting reports. According to the first one, which is generally believed, Washington marched from Newport back to Wilmington, crossed the Brandywine, then recrossed at Chads Ford, and proceeded on the road to Lancaster. According to the second report he went up to Chads Ford along this side of the Brandywine, his main force being stationed in the hills on the other side of the Brandywine.”

“At one o'clock in the afternoon with new intelligence, von Knyphausen was ordered to march with his division, including baggage, cattle, provisions etc., on the road to Kennett Square. It was almost six o'clock before his rear guard left the camp grounds at New Garden Meetinghouse.”

“At six o'clock General Howe marched with the division of Lord Cornwallis and General Grant on another road to Kennett Square, to the right of the von Knyphausen route. The road that we (Howe) took was so bad, and it was getting so dark, that the General halted five miles from Kennett Square.”

“General Howe sent me and one of my comrades, Captain Knight, together with 12 dragoons, back with orders for Knyphausen's division to stop at New Garden Meeting, which we would have to pass. The General assumed that he would be able to catch up with General Knyphausen before he reached New Garden Meeting because his march would be slowed down by the large amount of baggage, cattle etc. We also were instructed to inform General Knyphausen that he should march early the next morning toward Kennett Square with the greatest precaution, because Washington's foreposts were already at Welch's Tavern, two miles from Kennett Square.”

“The good, honorable General Howe, who is never concerned about himself but always about others, warned us to be careful not to be taken by one of the rebel dragoon parties, and to make sure that at least one of us got through to Knyphausen with the orders. Although we rode for 10 miles in territory we did not control, and twice came upon rebel dragoons who fired at us, we luckily got through. General Knyphausen's vanguard was already at Kennett Square, and it was absolutely impossible for him to return to New Garden Meeting because of the loaded wagons and the ravined roads.”

“We two aides rode back as quickly as possible to report this to our General. General Knyphausen permitted no fires, and was as quiet as possible, so that Washington who was nearby, would not discover his presence. On our way back we met two English brigades with heavy artillery and the baggage that General Howe's corps had taken along. They were on their way to General Knyphausen at New Garden.”

“While we were away, the General had sent forward with a few dragoons, a Scottish Captain Campbell, who was a deputy aide, more properly a courier, to get reliable information about Washington's position. Campbell, who had been told that Knyphausen was at New Garden Meeting, unfortunately ran into a patrol of the Knyphausen corps on the other side of Kennett Square. Since neither party supposed the other to be there, they fired at each other, and our poor Campbell was shot through the belly and will probably die”.

In the 18th Century, roads in New Castle County were poorly maintained. Heavy clay soil in New Castle County and Chester County made roads often impassible when wet and often damaged the wagons and coaches. This problem was later addressed by the construction of private turnpikes before the War of 1812.

Peebles wrote, “Hd.Qrs at Nicholls's the army order'd to move at 1 oclock but was 4 or 5 before they got in motion & march'd about 3 miles by County road to the Eastwd. where the van took an ofr. of the Rebels, his party ran off. Encamp'd on a hill in the Dark, General Kniphausens division march'd by the Lancaster road to Kenets Square with all the Baggage & Provision train; Capt. [Duncan] Cambell of the emigts being sent from Hd.Qrs. towards Kenetts Square fell in with some of Fergusons rifflemen whom he took for Rebels in the night & advancing upon them was wounded.”<sup>9</sup>

## Chapter Seven

### To Kennett Square and the Brandywine

CORNWALLIS and Grant and two prongs of the British forces arrived at Kennett Square, Pennsylvania at 6 am on Wednesday September 10, 1777 and joined von Kynphausen after a six-mile march through “a succession of large hills with narrow vales.”<sup>1</sup> Most likely, the left prong marched due north on Meetinghouse Road in the direction of Marshalldale (Marshall's Mill) on the Red Clay Creek, just within Pennsylvania. This force then continued northward into Kennett Square. The right prong likely marched northeast from the Hockessin Meetinghouse along now dead-ended Old Public Road to present-day Benge Road and then northwest along Route 82 along the Red Clay Creek valley past Marshall's Mill (circa 1765) into Kennett Square. Chester County war reparation reports indicate Marshall's Mill was never plundered by the British. At Marshalldale, the two components met and continued northward as a combined British force, but minus the Hessians.

When the British army reached Kennett Square, the Hessians stopped at the Unicorn Tavern at the northwest corner of State and Union Streets where von Kynphausen

made his headquarters. The Hessians camped at Hessian Hill near the Kennett Meetinghouse two blocks north of downtown Kennett Square. The British camped on a hill at what is now Kennett High School. Cornwallis headquartered at the Shippen Mansion on East State Street, the location of a modern-day Newberry's Department Store.<sup>2</sup>

Captain Ewald reported that his column arrived at 10 am in Kennett Square. General von Knyphausen remained at Kennett Square while Lord Cornwallis marched an hour to the right and camped at East Marlborough.<sup>3</sup>

Muenchausen wrote, "We got back to General Howe [at Hokkeson Meeting] at about two o'clock in the morning and at five o'clock we started out for Kennett Square where we joined General Knyphausen at eight o'clock. Knyphausen's rear guard had not arrived until just then because of the many wagons and cattle. It was ordered that all should march at once in two columns, one under Howe and the other under Knyphausen, but this was impossible."<sup>4</sup>

Peebles wrote, "Head Qrs. at Casket in the mornng. & at Kenetts Square in the Eveng. Lord Cornwallis division of the army moved about 6 this mornng. back a piece of the road we came yesterday & then turn'd to the right & march'd to Kennetts Square where we found Kniphausens Division; we Encamp'd about 1/2 a mile to the Nod. of the Village. The whole 3 divisions collected here again - this change of our Route owing to the enemy's having retired from the heights of Newport & gone beyond the Brandywine."<sup>5</sup>

At 2 o'clock in the morning on Thursday September 11, 1777, the column under General von Knyphausen set off directly toward Welch's Tavern and Chadds Ford along the Nottingham Road (present-day U.S. Route 1). The left column under Lord Cornwallis including General Howe with 7000 men marched north and then east to the forks of the Brandywine six miles upstream from Chadds Ford to outflank the Americans at the Battle of the Brandywine.<sup>6</sup>

Peebles wrote, "Kennetts Square in ye mornng. the army put in motion by break of day - Genl. Kniphausens division (Reinforced with two Brigades British, 1st. & 2d.) moved on the lower or right hand road to Brandywine to Shades's ford (Chadds Ford) with the spare Artillery & all the Baggage & Provision - The other division of the army march'd by the upper roads & crossed both branches of the Brandywine."<sup>7</sup>



## Chapter Eight

### Concluding Remarks

After leaving Kennett Square, the British defeated the Americans at the Battle of the Brandywine in one of the largest battles of the Revolutionary War. The series of fords here (Chadds Ford and Pyle's Ford) proved hydraulically suitable for the battle as the only shallow places above the steep and narrow Brandywine canyon upstream from Wilmington where troops could cross the creek on their way to Philadelphia. Later that fall, the British moved on to capture the American capital at Philadelphia just after the Continental Congress evacuated to Lancaster and then to York. Washington and the Americans spent the frozen winter of 1777-1778 in Valley Forge.

Modern GIS map technology more precisely records the movements of British troops during the 1777 invasion of Delaware. By turning north into the Yorkshire-like hills of the Piedmont from Newark through Hockessin and New Garden into Kennett Square instead of marching straight along the flat Coastal Plain toward Wilmington, the British under Howe evaded Washington's desire to fight a major battle along the Christina River and White Clay and Red Clay creeks. Had Howe not turned north into the hills above Newark, the major battle of the Chesapeake to

Philadelphia campaign might well have been fought more to Washington's favor along the banks of these little known but strategically important creeks, not by the Brandywine.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament was disappointed at Howe's failure to force Washington's surrender at the Battle of the Brandywine on September 11, 1777 as the war could have ended there at Chadds Ford.<sup>2</sup> While the British plan to sail up the Chesapeake and march through Maryland, Delaware and southeastern Pennsylvania to capture Philadelphia was ultimately successful, the arduous march after the long sea voyage drew the British fleet away from the Hudson leaving little assistance in the north and ultimately led to the surrender of the Redcoats at the Battle of Saratoga on October 17, 1777. The failure to collar Washington during the invasion of Delaware and at Brandywine were important events that led to the victory at Saratoga, drew the French to an alliance with the Americans, and ultimately resulted in Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown in 1781.

During a few brief weeks in August and September of 1777, the focus of world history was on the British invasion of Delaware. These historic events of the American Revolution as mapped and documented herein are nationally significant in the larger context of the Philadelphia Campaign. Perhaps the British invasion of Delaware and Battle of Cooch's Bridge ought to be considered by Congress and the National Park Service for permanent commemoration as part of Delaware's first national park, national historic site, or national historic trail.

Commemoration of the invasion of Delaware by a national monument would require an executive order by the President under powers of the Antiquities Act of 1906.

**American Antiquities Act of 1906**  
**16 USC 431-433**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That any person who shall appropriate, excavate, injure, or destroy any historic or prehistoric ruin or monument, or any object of antiquity, situated on lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States, without the permission of the Secretary of the Department of the Government having jurisdiction over the lands on which said antiquities are situated, shall, upon conviction, be fined in a sum of not more than five hundred dollars or be imprisoned for a period of not more than ninety days, or shall suffer both fine and imprisonment, in the discretion of the court.

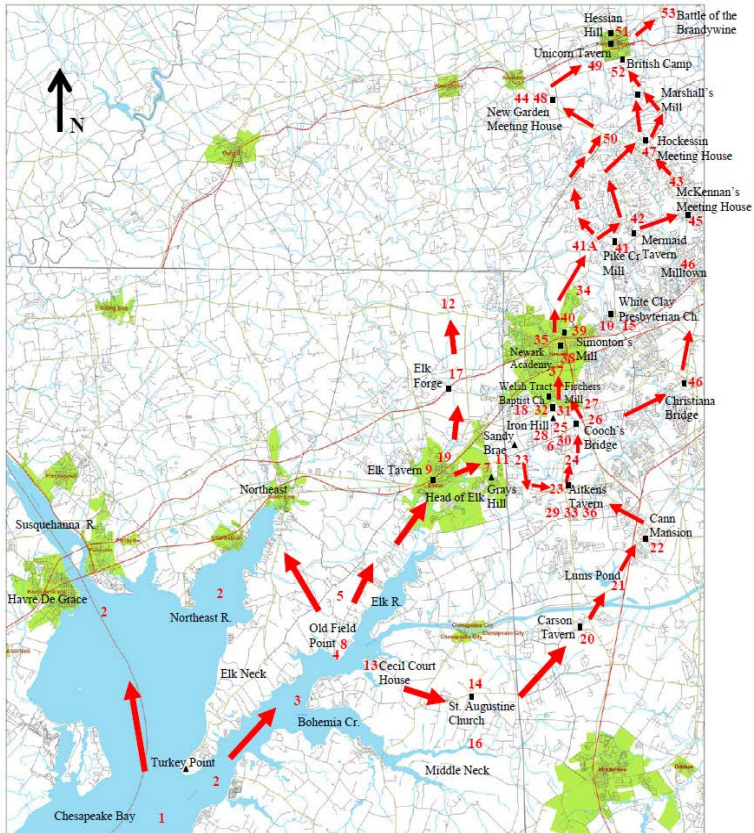
*Sec. 2.* That the President of the United States is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments, and may reserve as a part thereof parcels of land, the limits of which in all cases shall be confined to the smallest area compatible with proper care and management of the objects to be protected: Provided, That when such objects are situated upon a tract covered by a bona fide unperfected claim or held in private ownership, the tract, or so much thereof as may be necessary for the proper care and management of the object, may be relinquished to the Government, and the Secretary of the Interior is hereby

authorized to accept the relinquishment of such tracts in behalf of the Government of the United States.

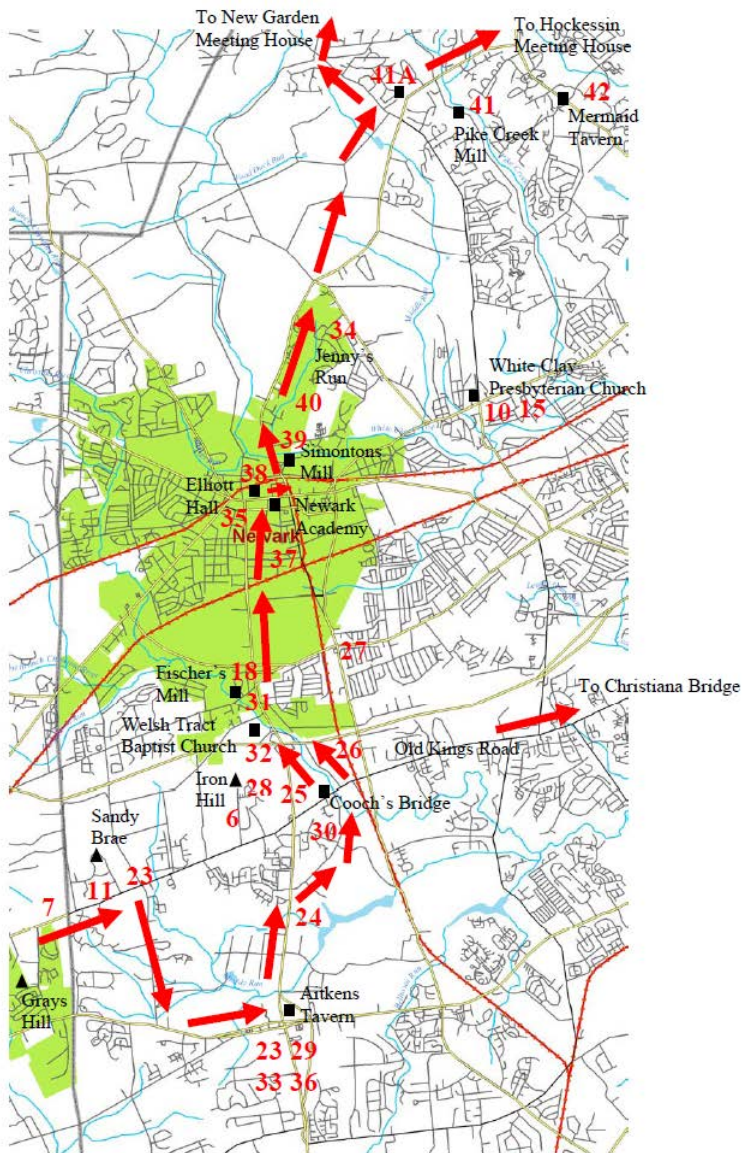
*Sec. 3.* That permits for the examination of ruins, the excavation of archaeological sites, and the gathering of objects of antiquity upon the lands under their respective jurisdictions may be granted by the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and War to institutions which they may deem properly qualified to conduct such examination, excavation, or gathering, subject to such rules and regulation as they may prescribe: Provided, That the examinations, excavations, and gatherings are undertaken for the benefit of reputable museums, universities, colleges, or other recognized scientific or educational institutions, with a view to increasing the knowledge of such objects, and that the gatherings shall be made for permanent preservation in public museums.

*Sec. 4.* That the Secretaries of the Departments aforesaid shall make and publish from time to time uniform rules and regulations for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act.

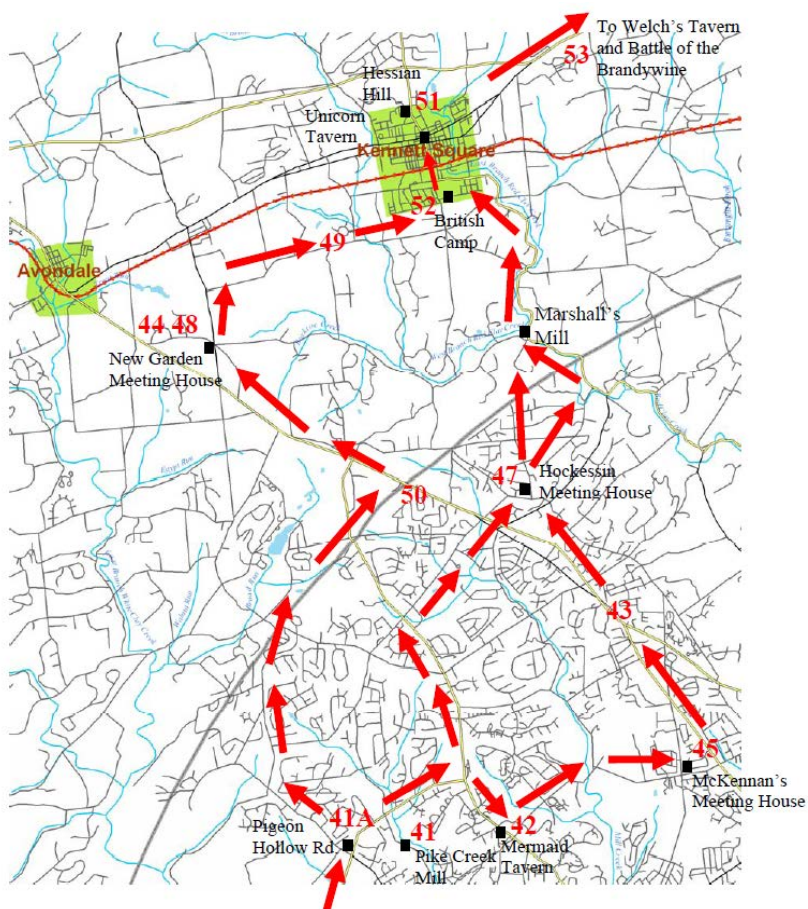
*Approved, June 8, 1906*



**Exhibit 1.** British Invasion of Delaware, August - September 1777  
 GIS map of the British invasion of Delaware,  
 Aug-Sep 1777 (G. J. Kauffman 2010)



**Exhibit 2.** GIS map of British route through Newark, Del., Aug-Sep 1777 (G. J. Kauffman 2010)



**Exhibit 3.** GIS map of British route near Hockessin, Del., Aug-Sep 1777 (G. J. Kauffman 2010)



## **British Invasion of Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777**

1. Aug 22 - British fleet with 265 ships anchors south of Turkey Point, Maryland at head of the Chesapeake Bay.
2. Aug 23 - Adm. Howe and Gen. Howe take soundings at mouths of Susquehanna, Northeast, and Elk Rivers.
3. Aug 24 - British troops receive orders to prepare for landing at Elk Neck on 50-troop flatboats.
4. Aug 25 - British with 17,000 men land at Old Field Point on west bank of Elk River opposite Cecil Ct. House.
5. Aug 26 - Lord Cornwallis scouts toward Head of Elk. Capt. Ewald's Hessians patrol across Elk Neck peninsula.
6. Aug 26 - General Washington and Marquis de Lafayette survey British in Head of Elk from summit of Iron Hill.
7. Aug 26 - Washington on Grays Hill looks west. Views a few tents in Head of Elk at remnants of British camp.
8. Aug 27 - British remain at Turkey Point camp as a storm rages into the afternoon. Howe publishes declaration offering pardon to those who had risen against the Crown.
9. Aug 28 - British march to Head of Elk arriving 9 am in clear weather. General Howe headquarters at Elk Tavern where Washington stayed just days prior. Hessians capture 20 ships in Elk River laden with tobacco, sugar, wine.



10. Aug 28 – Americans leave Brandywine Creek and march through Wilmington, Newport, Rising Sun Tavern Stanton, and camps east of White Clay Creek Presbyterian Church.

11. Aug 29 - Howe with 400 British troops divides into two divisions and marches 5 miles east along Old Kings Rd. Sees 600 American troops at Sandy Brae at Maryland/Delaware line.

12. Aug 29 - Cornwallis leads raid on Iron Works, a village along Big Elk Creek 4 miles north of Iron Hill.

13. Aug 29 - General Von Knyphausen ferries east across Elk River from Turkey Point and camps at Cecil Ct. House.

14. Aug 30 – General Grey ferries to Cecil Ct. House. Fusiliers engage 200 American calvary at St. Augustine Ch.

15. Aug 30 - Americans leave White Clay Creek and set up earthworks along east bank of Red Clay Creek in triangular formation from Marshallton to Stanton to Newport.

16. Aug 31 - Grey and Von Knyphausen march along neck between Back and Bohemia creeks and forage for 261 cattle, 588 sheep, and 100 horses. Hessian soldiers kill flock of sheep at Middle Neck between forks of Bohemia Creek.

17. Aug 31 - British force secures stores at Elk Forge along Big Elk Cr. (Elk Mills) and lose one killed and 4 wounded.

18. Aug 31 – Quartermaster Erskine with 1000 British seizes flour storehouse at Fishers Mill along Christina River defended by 300 Americans.

19. Sep 1 - On intensely hot Monday, 200 Queens Rangers attack rebels near Head of Elk taking 6 prisoners.

20. Sep 2 - Von Knyphausen advances to Buck Carson Tavern just south of present-day Summit Bridge, Delaware.

21. Sep 2 - Von Knyphausen stops at Lums Pond and confiscates 60 barrels of flour.

22. Sep 2 - British General Grey stays overnight at Old Cann Mansion, northeast of Lums Pond.

23. Sep 3 - At 5 am, British invade Delaware from Grays Hill in Maryland to just west of Iron Hill via Old Kings Road, then south/west to Aitkens Tavern. British and Hessians leave Aikens Tavern, head north toward Newark.

24. Sep 3 - At 9 am after the British marched a half mile, the Americans under Captain Maxwell with 1000 militia and 720 regulars attack and keep up fire for next 2 miles on road to Cooch's Mill (Old Cooch's Bridge Road east of Glasgow High School). About 500 Americans made a stand at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge where the Christina River crosses under Old Kings Road (now Old Baltimore Pike).

25. Sep 3 - Americans retreat north on road along west bank of Christina River to the Welsh Tract Baptist Church.

26. Sep 3 - British march east and then north to unsuccessfully cut off American retreat. British bog down in impassable Purgatory Swamp near the Christina River.

27. Sep 3 - Americans withdraw along road to Ogletown (now Route 4) as far east as present-day railroad between Newark and Delaware City (near Route 72). Americans move back to White Clay Creek at the Presbyterian church.

28. Sep 3 - Hessian troops drive Americans off Iron Hill.

29. Sep 3 - Von Knyphausen reaches Aikens Tavern at Glasgow in pm with 500 cattle, 1000 sheep, and 100 horses.

30. Sep 3 to 8 - Lord Cornwallis headquarters in the Cooch Mill tavern house and the British drink the Cooch family liquor stores.

31. Sep 4 – Hessians camp between Cooch's Mill and Fishers Mill and von Dunlap camps at Fishers Mill house.

32. Sep 4 - British Army camps in rear of Welsh Tract Baptist Church after Battle of Cooch's Bridge.

33. Sep 5 - General Howe camps at Aikens Tavern.

34. Sep 6 - General Sullivan advances to the heights north of Newark with 2000 Americans.

35. Sep 6 - Hessian Jaeger Corps move into Newark and skirmishes capturing two American prisoners.

36. Sep 7 - British Army prepares to break camp and sets out toward Newark in three divisions under Lord Cornwallis, General Grant, and General Von Knyphausen.

37. Sep 8 - The British depart Glasgow by the “light of a remarkable borealis” and at quarter past seven they pass through Newark. Their route was north on Academy Street, east on Main Street and north on Chapel Street, crossing the White Clay Creek into Mill Creek Hundred”.

38. Sep 8 - American cobblers shoot at British from the Newark Academy Building at intersection of Main Street and Academy Street in Newark, Delaware.

39. Sep 8 - Mischievous British soldiers start the machinery in Simonton’s flour mill along the south bank of the White Clay Creek near Tysons Ford (present-day Paper Mill Road).

40. Sep 8 - Hessian Captain Johann Ewald records the British advance from Newark: “The army marched past Newark and toward morning on the 8<sup>th</sup> crossed the White Clay Creek, which was surrounded on both sides by steep, rocky heights that formed a most frightful defile (probably the Jenny’s Run valley) half an hour in length...”

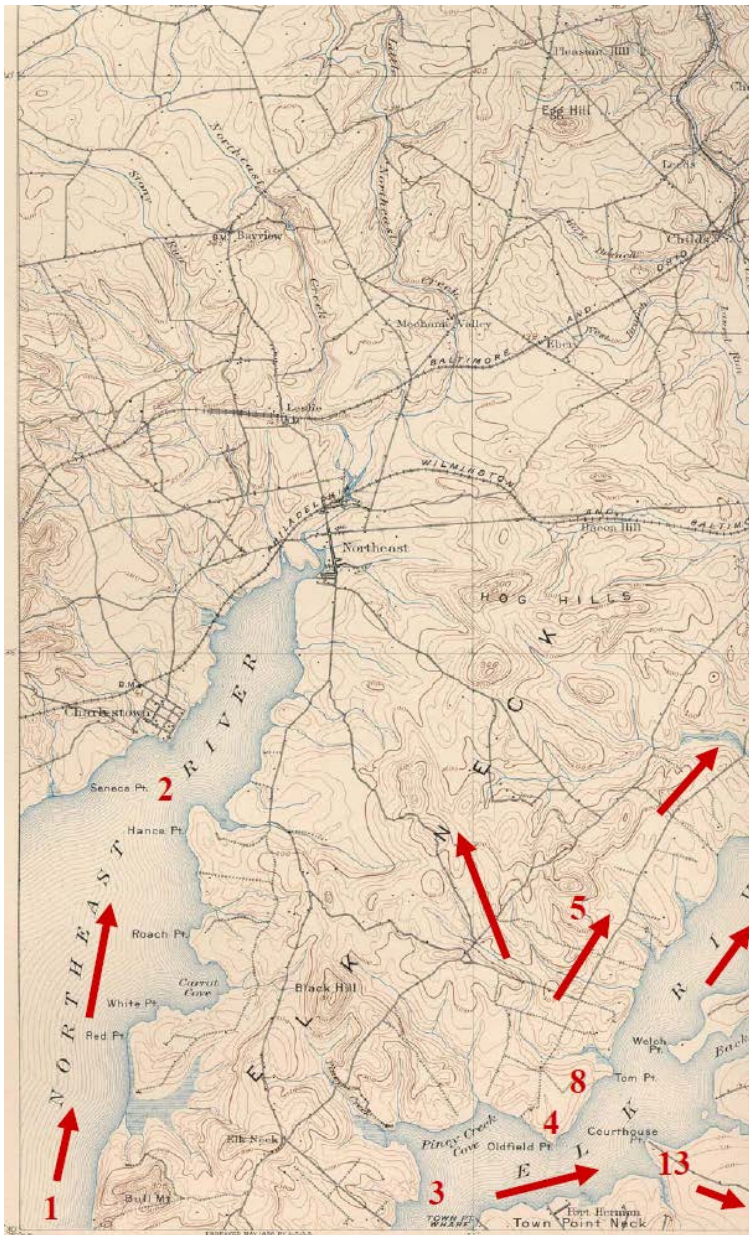
41. Sep 8 - Hessians burn down mill at farm along Pike Creek near present-day Paper Mill Road.

- 41A. Sep 8 - British follow now-abandoned Pigeon Hollow Rd. near Corner Ketch Rd. and Paper Mill Rd. intersection.
42. Sep 8 - Mermaid Tavern (built 1725) still stands at Limestone Rd. and Stoney Batter Rd. intersection. Revolutionary War cannon balls recovered nearby.
43. Sep 8 - British and Hessians with General Grant pitch camp near road from Lancaster and road from Newport. Sep 8 - British camp 1 pm at Nibblas's House (4 miles from Hockessin) and shoot cannon at rebels that night.
45. Sep 8 - American detachments march to hill near McKennan's Meetinghouse (Red Clay Presbyterian Church).
46. Sep 8 - Right wing of Howe's Army reaches Christiana Bridge and veers northwesterly towards Milltown.
47. Sep 8 - Cornwallis camps at Hockessin Meetinghouse.
48. Sep 8 - Knyphausen camps at New Garden Meeting.
49. Sep 9 - Von Knyphausen marches with 8<sup>th</sup> Division from New Garden and reaches Kennett Square at 11 am.
50. Sep 9 - British march from Hockessin Meetinghouse toward Kennett Square in two columns separated 2 miles apart with Cornwallis on the right and Grant on the left.

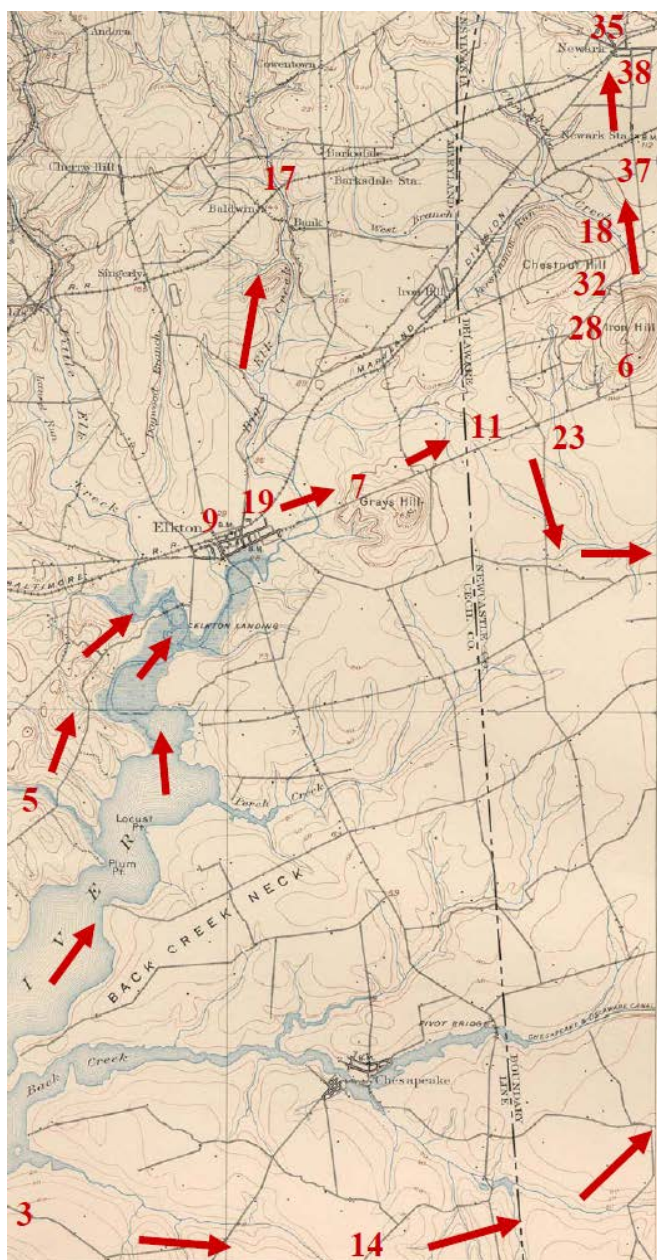
51. Sep 10 - British army reaches Kennett Square. Hessians stop at Unicorn Tavern at northwest corner State and Union Streets and camp at Hessian Hill two blocks north.

52. Sep 10 - British camp on hill at site of present-day Kennett High School. Cornwallis headquarters at Shippen Mansion on East State Street, now Newberrys Dept. Store.

53. Sep 11 - Led by General von Knyphausen, a prong of the British and Hessian Army marches east from Kennett Square toward Welch's Tavern (still standing at intersection of present-day Route 1 and Route 52) and defeat the Americans in largest battle of the Revolutionary War at the Battle of the Brandywine near Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania.

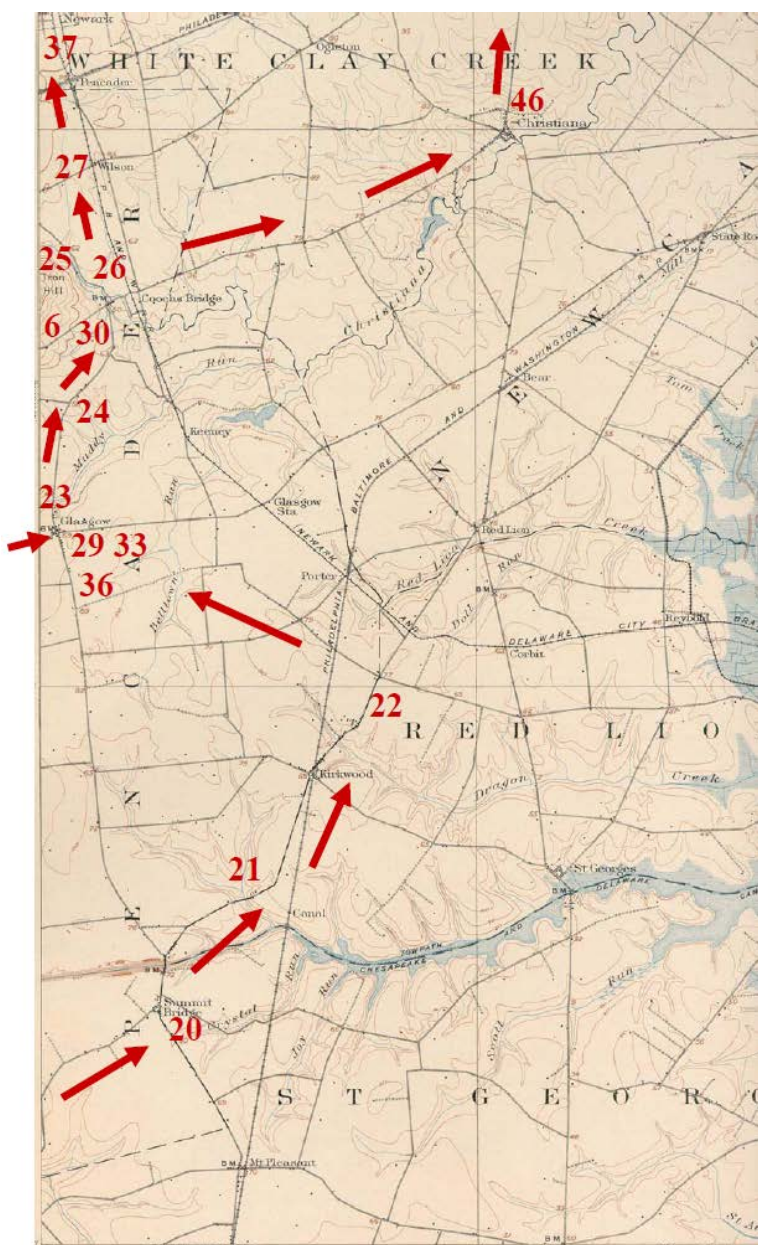


**Exhibit 4.** British Invasion of Delaware in vicinity of Elk River, Maryland, Aug-Sep 1777 (USGS 1905)

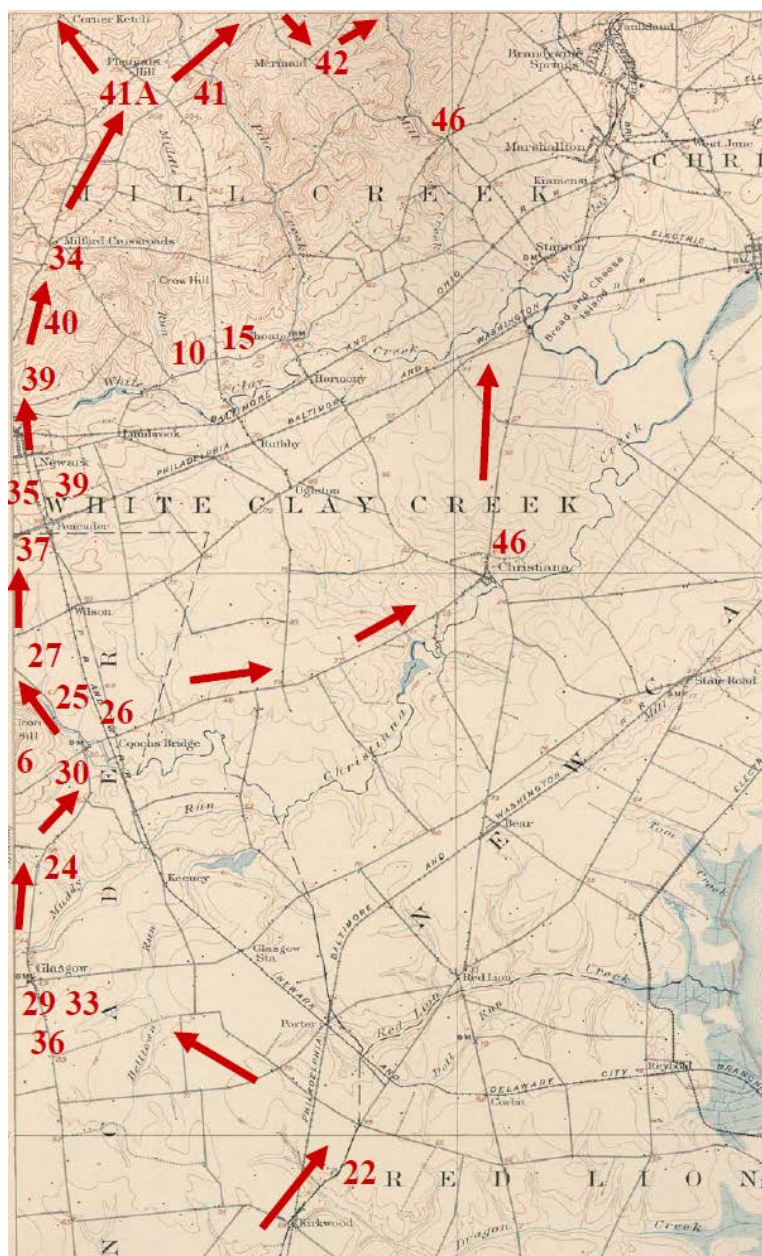


**Exhibit 5.** British Invasion of Delaware vicinity of Grays Hill, Maryland, Aug-Sep 1777 (USGS 1905)



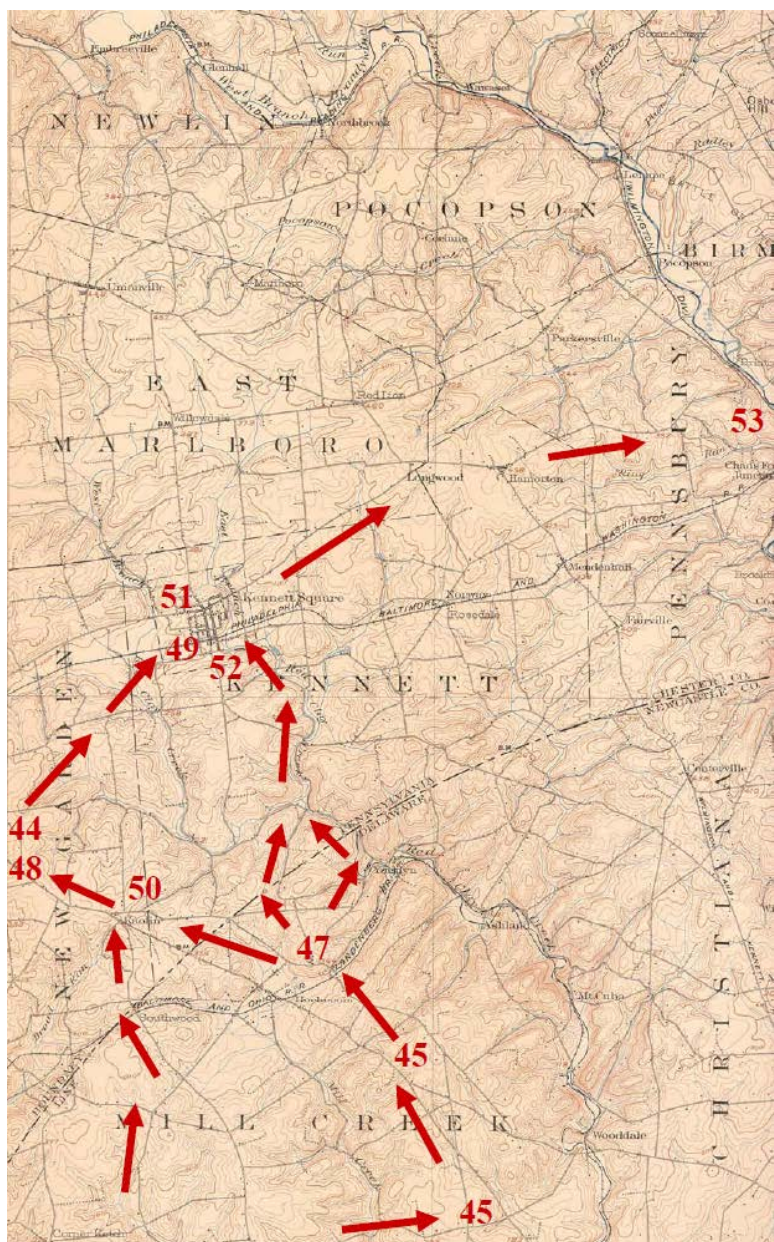


**Exhibit 6.** British Invasion of Delaware near Glasgow, Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777 (USGS 1905)

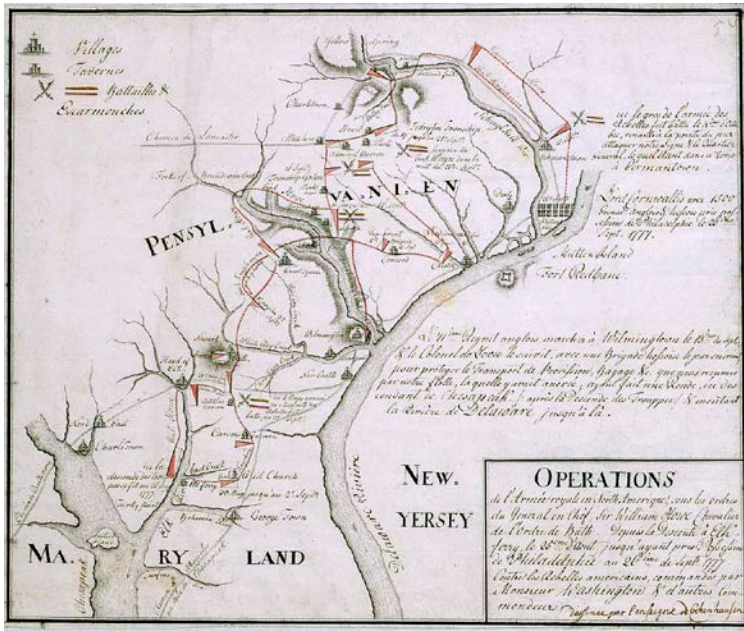


**Exhibit 7.** British Invasion of Delaware near Newark, Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777 (USGS 1905)





**Exhibit 8.** British Invasion of Delaware near Hockessin, Delaware, Aug-Sep 1777 (USGS 1905)



**Exhibit 9.** Hessian map depicting Philadelphia Campaign,  
drawn September 26, 1777 (Library of Congress)



**Exhibit 10.** Major John Andre's map of Philadelphia campaign in 1777 (Library of Congress)



**Exhibit 11.** 18th century Hessian map Philadelphia Campaign by Ensign Cochenhausen (Library of Congress)





**Exhibit 12.** Excerpt Major John Andre's map in vicinity of Elk River, Maryland, 1777 (Library of Congress)



**Exhibit 13.** Excerpt Major John Andre's map in vicinity of Newark, Delaware, 1777 (Library of Congress)



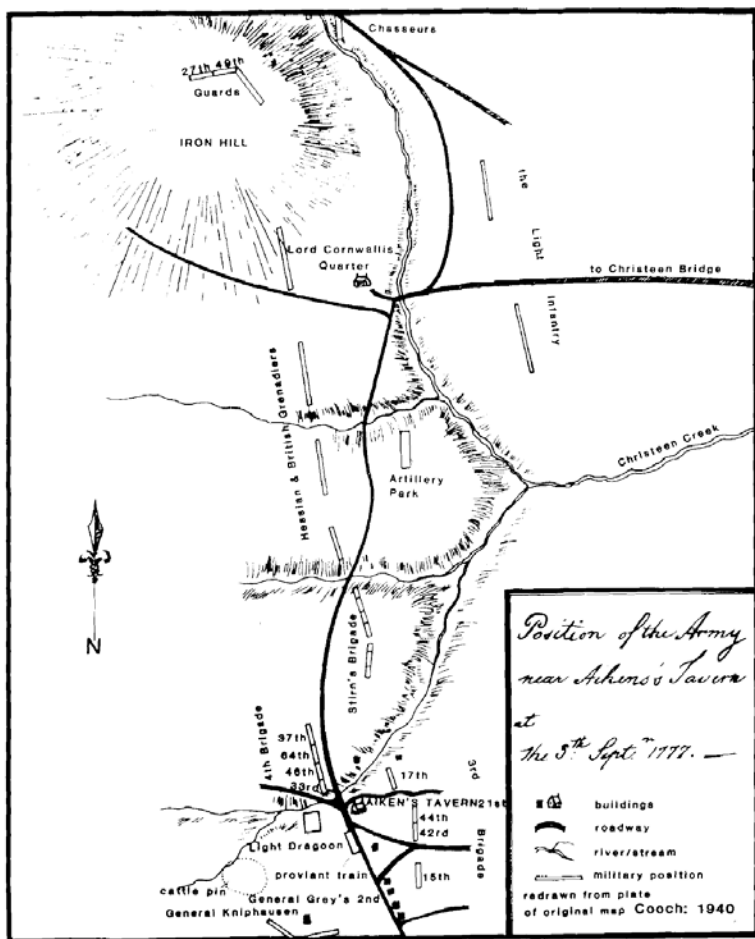
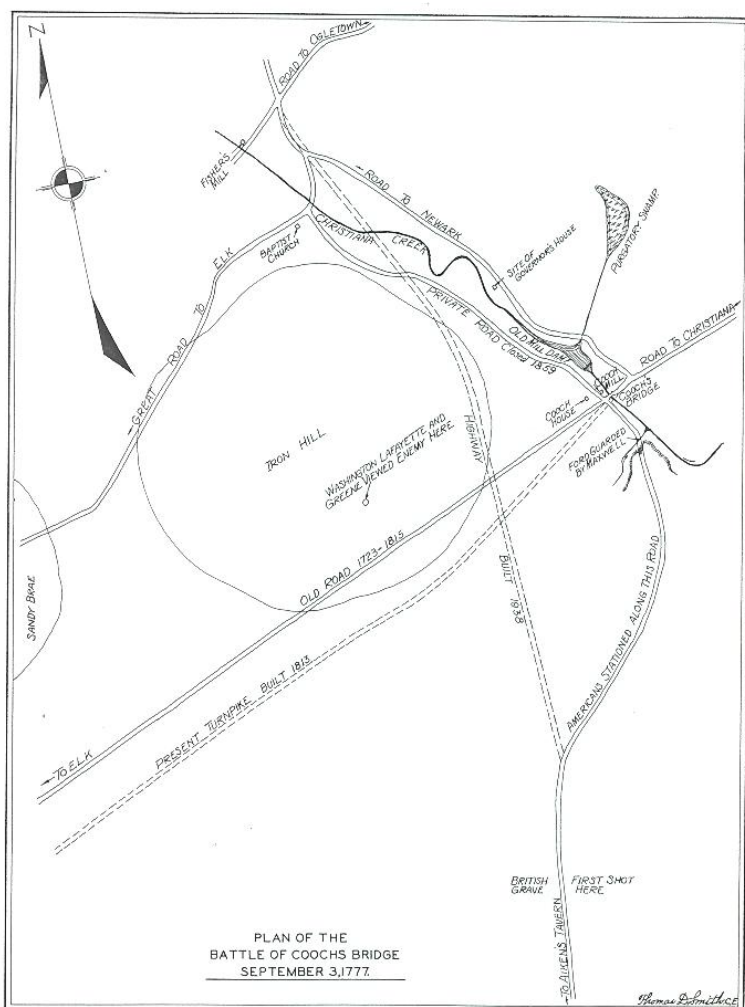
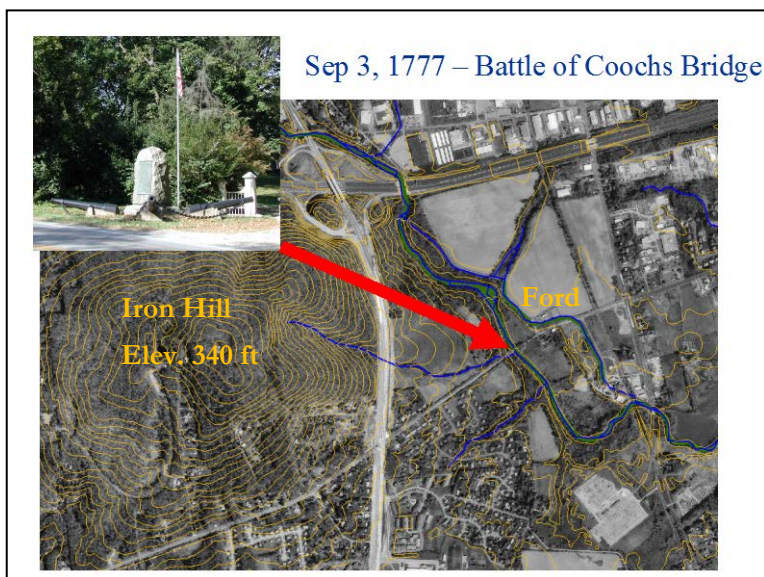


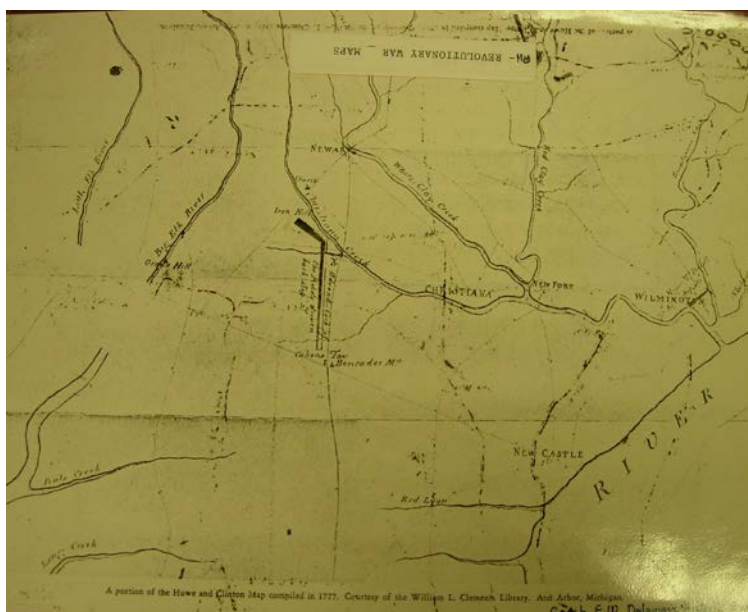
Exhibit 14. Major Andre's map depicting British Army near Aiken's Tavern at 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1777 (Cooch 1940)



**Exhibit 15.** Plan of Battle of Cooch's Bridge Sep 3, 1777  
(Thomas Smith as published in Cooch, 1940)



**Exhibit 16.** Aerial photograph (2002) depicting Iron Hill at Battle of Cooch's Bridge (G. J. Kauffman 2004)



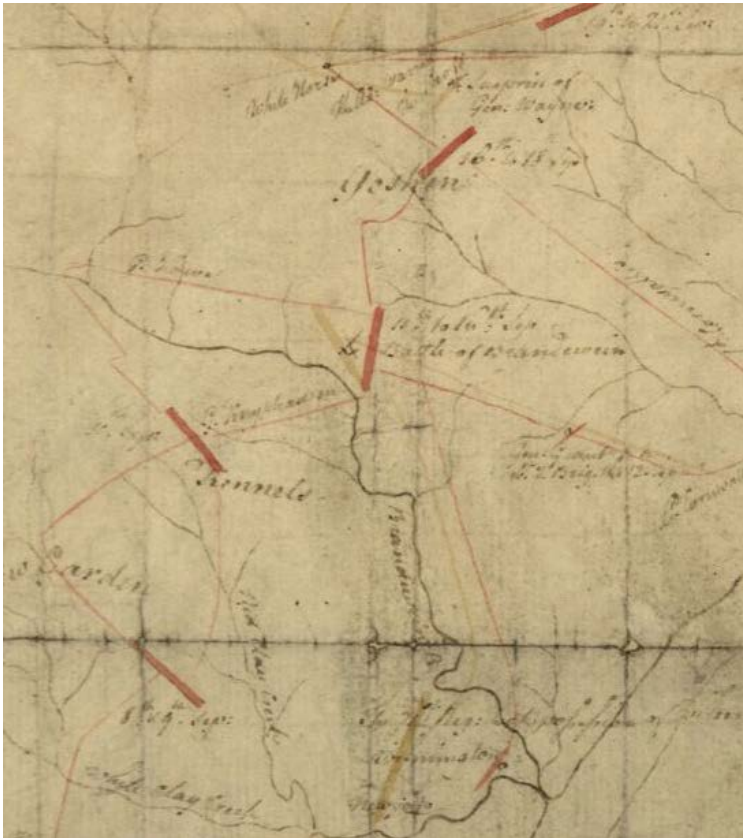
**Exhibit 17.** Howe and Clinton map compiled in 1777  
(Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan)



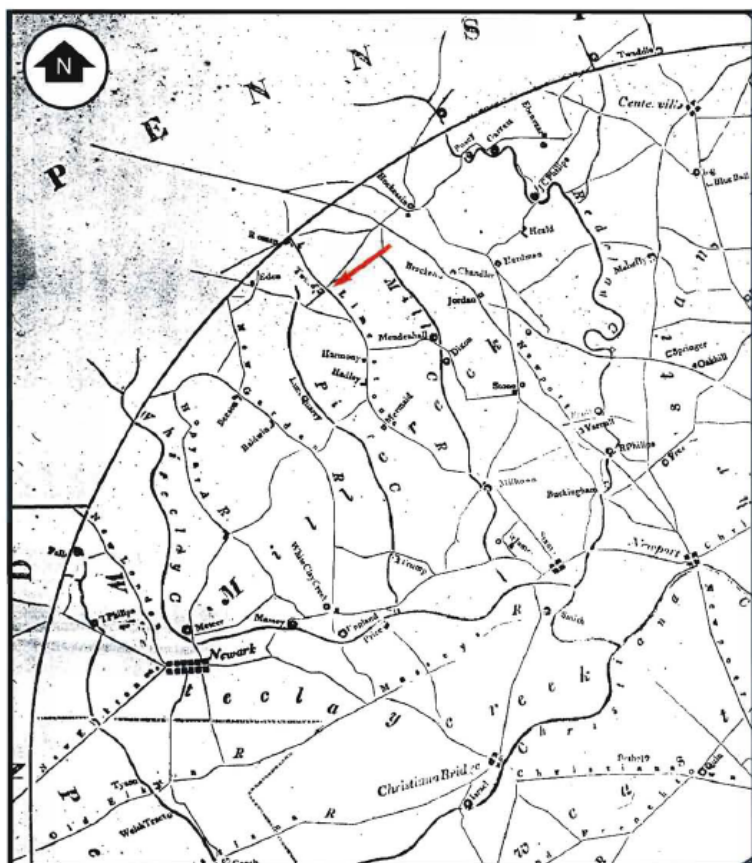
**Exhibit 18.** French map of the Battle of Cooch's Bridge, 1777 (Library of Congress)



**Exhibit 19.** Excerpt Major John Andre's map near Newark and Hockessin, Delaware, Sep 1777 (Library of Congress)

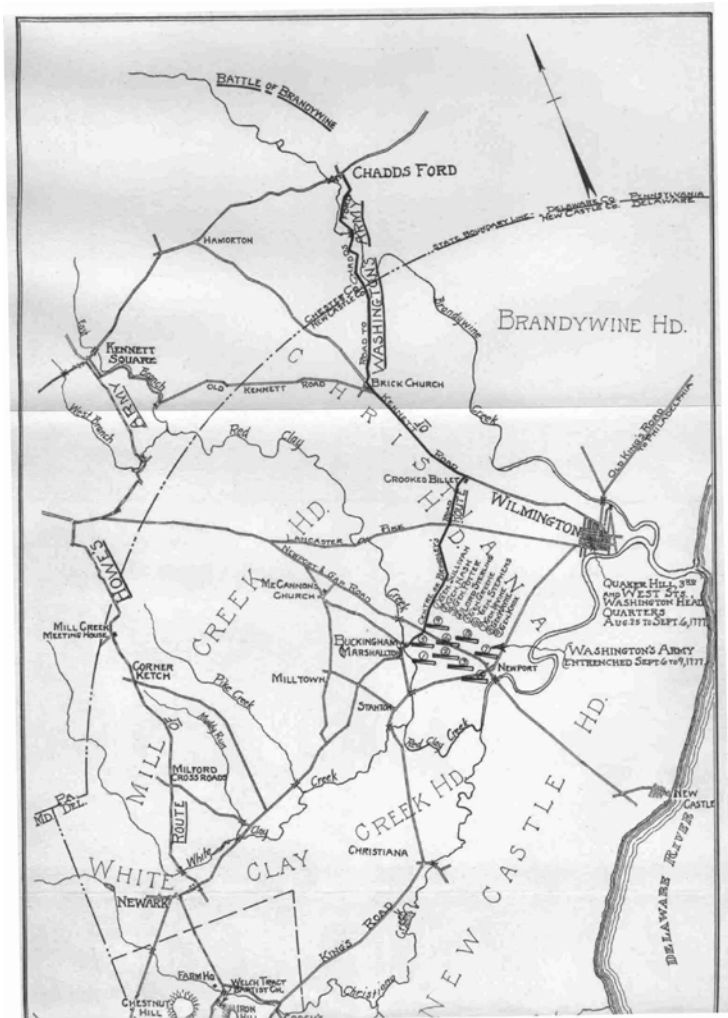


**Exhibit 20.** Map by Major John Andre, progress of army from Elk to Philadelphia (Library of Congress)



**Exhibit 21.** Heald map of roads in New Castle County, Delaware, 1820





**Exhibit 22.** Map of Howe's advance from Newark, Del. to Kennett Square, Pa. (Price and Price Engineering undated)

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