

Belleville in the American Revolution

These veterans of the American Revolution are buried
at Belleville Dutch Reformed Churchyard, Belleville, N.J.

NAMES OF SOLDIERS, SERVICES, MILITARY REFERENCES

John Bayley – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker, p 502, Shaw p 33, Dutch Reformed Church, Belleville, N.J., family records in Church Register

Henry Brown – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 521 , Shaw p 33

Isaac Brown – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 521 , Shaw p 33

John Brown – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 521 , Shaw p 33, family records in Church Register

Henry Cadmus – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33 Died 1809, age 58. Family records in Church Register. Grave stone still standing in churchyard, also one to his wife, Letty Keene

Isaac Cadmus – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33, family records in Church Register

John P. Cadmus – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33, family records in Church Register; “Daughters of the American Revolution” Numbers 15617-164701. Buried in churchyard. Verified by his granddaughter, Mrs. Sarah Cox King - living (1927); some of the Cadmus plots were covered by the chapel.

John H. Cadmus - Family traditions verified by his great-granddaughter, Mrs. Harriet Cadmus Wilde.

Peter Cadmus - “Minute Man”, also Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 33; Family records in Church Register. DAR numbers 164701-156117, 180000-208995-77220; Gravestone in churchyard. Removed from plot, over which the chapel stands by Henry L. Cadmus of East Orange, N.J.

Lt. Col. Thomas Cadmus - Lt. Col., Essex Militia, Stryker p 358, family records in Church Register; an original deed is still in possession of the church dated 1795 when land was given to the church by Col. Thomas Cadmus and his wife Pietershe Cadmus

James Campbell – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 33, family records in Church Register

Minard Curen - Private in Capt. Squire's Co., Essex Militia, Stryker, Shaw p 34, Family records in Church Register

Amos Dodd – Captain, Essex Militia, Commissioned May 28, 1777, Shaw p 32, Family records in Church Register

Thomas Doremus – Private, Capt. Scudder's Co. 2nd Essex Militia, Shaw, p 34, family records in Church Register

Anthony Francisco – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 34, family records in Church Register

John Francisco – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 34, family records in Church Register

Jacob Freeland – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 34, family records in Church Register; Died July 5, 1816, age 60; gravestone in Dutch Reformed Church yard

John Garland – Private, Capt. Van Blarcum's Co. 2nd Reg. Also State Troops, family records in Church Register. Stryker, p 602, Shaw p 34

Garrabrant Garrabrants – Private, Capt. Speer's Co. 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Metross Artillery, Continental Army; Stryker p 603, Shaw p 34, family records in Church Register

John Gilliland – Private, Capt. Craig's Co., State Troops, Shaw p 34, family records in Church Register

John Harrison – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p34, family records in Church Register

James Hornblower – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p34, family records in Church Register; gravestone standing in 1847; age 77

Josiah Hornblower

James Jacobus – Private, Capt. Joralemon's Co. 2nd Reg. Essex Militia, State Troops; Stryker p 643; Family records in Church Register

John Jacobus – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p35

Henry Jacobus – Private, in Capt. Speer's Co of State Troops; Stryker p 643; Shaw p 35; Family records in Church Register

Richard Jacobus – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33, family records in Church Register

Henry Joralemon - Captain 2nd Reg. Stryker p 336; Shaw p 32, family records in Church Register

Helmich Joralemon – Private, Essex Militia; also is Capt. Kidney’s Exploit; Stryker p 644; Family records in Church Register

James Joralemon - Lt. Captain 2nd Reg. Essex Militia. Wounded near Springfield, N.J. June ?, 1780. Stryker p 296, Shaw 32; Family records in Church Register; “Bloomfield Old and New”; stone still standing , 1927, Died 1809, age 60 years.

John Kidney – Captain, Essex Militia. Hero of Capt. Kidney’s Exploit; “Bloomfield Old and New”; Stryker p 397, Shaw p 32

Abram King – Private, Essex Militia; also Capt. Van Blarcum’s State Troop, Stryker p 654, Shaw p35; Family records in Church Register

Aurey King – Private, Capt. Henry Speer’s Co., 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Shaw p 35; Family records in Church Register

John King – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p 33, family records in Church Register; died 1816, age 72 years

William King – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 655, Shaw p 35, family records in Church Register

Isaac Kingsland – Private, Essex Militia, Capt. Speer’s Co. 2nd Reg.; Stryker p 655, Shaw p 35; Family records in Church Register

John Kingsland - Private in Capt. Henry’s Co. 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Stryker P 655, Shaw p 35; Family records in Church Register

John Luker – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33; Spelled “Luke” in Church Register.

Joseph Miller – Private, 1st Batt. 2nd Essex Militia, Stryker p 251, Family records in Church Register

William Nixon - Private, Essex Militia Capt. Craig’s Co. State Troops; “Nexon” family records in Church Register; Stryker p 704

John Peer – Ensign, Capt. Cornelius Speer’s Co., 2nd Reg. Essex Militia, Commissioned May 25, 1777, Church Register, Shaw p 32.

Jacob Pier – Private, Capt. Lyon’s Co. 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Baptism record states he was son of Johannis. Stryker p 719, Shaw p 36.

Jacob Riker – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 734, Shaw p 36, family records in Church Register

Daniel Rutan – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 742, Shaw p 3, family records in Church Register

Thomas Seigler – Captain, 2nd Reg. Essex Militia, Stryker p 408, Shaw 32; Family records in Church Register

Abraham Speer – Captain, 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Stryker p 411, Shaw p 32; Family records in Church Register

Cornelius Speer – Captain, 2nd Reg. Essex Militia, Stryker p 411 - Shaw p 32; Family records in Church Register, also State Troops

Henry Speer – Captain, 2nd Reg. Essex Militia; Stryker p 411 Shaw p 32; Family records in Church Register

Francis Speer – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 764, Shaw p 35, Family records in Church Register

Lt. Herman Speer – Private, Essex “Light Horse”; Stryker P 764, Shaw P 32; Lieutenant in Artillery and Militia

James Speer – Private, 1st Reg. Essex Militia; Stryker p 289, family records in Church Register

John Speer – Private, 1st Reg. Essex Militia; Lt. Capt. Craig’s Co; Stryker p 289; Family records in Church Register; DAR numbers 117039-3242

John Spier – Private, Essex Militia, Stryker p 528, Shaw p33, family records in Church Register

John Spier Jr. – Lieutenant, Essex Militia; Stryker P 764, Shaw p 36; Family records in Church Register

Christian Stimets - Private in Continental Army, Stryker, p 769; Shaw p 36; Family records in Church Register

Daniel Teurs (Tours) - State Troops, Continental Army, Stryker, p 791, Shaw p 36; Family records in Church Register

Thomas Van Riper – Private, 2nd Essex, Also Capt. Craig’s Co., Shaw p 31, family records in Church Register

Simeon Van Winkle – Private, Capt. Joralemon’s Co., 2nd Reg. Essex Militia, Shaw p 37; Family records in Church Register

Michael Vreeland - Private in Continental Army, Shaw p 37, family records in Church Register

Ezekial Wade - “Captain” on stone in church-yard, family buried there. Died 1817, age 77.

Samuel Ward – Private, “Spencer’s Regiment”, Stryker p 314 Shaw p 37, family records in Church Register

John Winne – Private, “Spencer’s Regiment”, Stryker p 314, family records in Church Register

These veterans of the American Revolution are buried at Belleville Dutch Reformed Churchyard, Belleville, N.J.

A LIST OF MEN OF TRENTON AND VICINITY WHO SERVED IN THE WAR OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

- (1) - New Jersey Official Register - Stryker
- (2) - Newspaper Extracts
- (3) - The Battles of Trenton and Princeton - Stryker
- (4) - Monographs of the Revolution - Stryker
- (5) - History of the Presbyterian Church - Hall
- (6) - History of Burlington & Mercer Counties - Woodward
- (7) - The Mechanics Bank - Dr. Godfrey
- (8) - Burial Records - Mrs. Murray
- (9) - Nelson's Biographical Encyclopedia
- (10) - History of Trenton - Raum
- (11) - Historical Collections - Barber & Howe

Mabel W. Howell

Historian - The General David Forman Chapter, Soldiers and Heroes of the War of the American Revolution, from the Dutch Reformed Church - Belleville, New Jersey, (formerly Second River).

REFERENCES

- Jersey-men in the Revolutionary War - William Stryker
History of Essex and Hudson Counties - William H. Shaw
Proceedings of the New Jersey Historical Society - Vol. I 3rd Series
New Jersey Archives Marriage Records from 1665-1800, 1st Series, Vol.22
Bloomfield Old and New - Joseph F. Folsom
Church-Yard Records - taken in 1847-1901 & in 1926-27
Manuscript Copies of 1847-1901 Church-Yard records in possession of New Jersey Historical Society, Room 16, West Park St. Newark, N.J.
Family Traditions
Daughters of the American Revolution National Numbers.
- Compiled by Grace Louise Ward (Mrs. Henry C.)

ALPHABETICAL

**American Revolution
Soldiers Buried In Belleville**

John Bayley
Henry Brown
Isaac Brown
John Brown

Henry Cadmus
Isaac Cadmus
John P. Cadmus
John H. Cadmus
Peter Cadmus
Lt. Col. Thomas Cadmus
James Campbell
Minard Curen

Capt. Amos Dodd
Thomas Doremus

Anthony Francisco
John Francisco
Jacob Freeland

John Garland
Garrabrant Garrabrants
John Gilliland

John Harrison
James Hornblower
Josiah Hornblower

James Jacobus
John Jacobus
Henry Jacobus
Richard Jacobus
Capt. Henry Joralemon
Helmich Joralemon

Lt. Capt. James Joralemon

Capt. John Kidney

Abram King

Aurey King

William King

John King

Isaac Kingsland

John Kingsland

John Luker

Joseph Miller

William Nixon

Ensign John Peer

Jacob Pier

Jacob Riker

Daniel Rutan

Capt. Robert Rutgers

Capt. Gerard Rutgers

Capt. Thomas Seigler

Capt. Abraham Speer

Capt. Cornelius Speer

Capt. Henry Speer

Francis Speer

Lt. Herman Speer

James Speer

John Speer

John Spier

Lt. John Spier Jr.

Christian Stimets

Daniel Teurs

Col. Van Courtland

Thomas Van Riper
Simeon Van Winkle
Michael Vreeland

Capt. Ezekial Wade
Samuel Ward
John Winne



Belleville (Second River) in the American Revolution

The Retreat Across the Jerseys

It was the second year of the Revolution, and the Declaration of Independence was but a few months old. Washington's reverses in New York were disheartening. The battle of Long Island was lost on Aug. 27, 1776. Fort Mifflin fell Oct. 26 and Fort Mifflin fell Nov. 16 and Washington crossed to Fort Mifflin.

Cornwallis followed over the Hudson, and the Continental army was ordered to abandon Fort Mifflin and to retreat to the Delaware, "over the Essex Hills." Thus began the memorable "Retreat across the Jerseys" when the patriot army under General Washington and the pursuing British under General Lord Cornwallis marched through the region which we now call Nutley. Washington had hastened from Fort Mifflin to Hackensack. To reach Newark the Passaic River must be crossed. The only available bridge was at Acquackanonck (Passaic) and the village was rumored to be a "Tory hot-bed." A detachment was sent ahead to hold the bridge and to send on stores and ammunition to Morristown by way of Great Notch. Orders were given to destroy the bridge as soon as the army had crossed. The patriots approached with the British often so near that "the sound of their bugles was heard." Over the rude wooden bridge they tramped and that evening or the next day a force from the neighborhood destroyed the bridge with axes and saws and burned the approaches.

Washington spent one anxious night at Acquackanonck, Nov. 21, 1776. The next day, the 22nd, with 3,500 men he started for Newark along the River Road (along the Passaic River through Second River, now known as Belleville).

Near the northern limits of our area, his forces divided, one column to continue by the River Road, the other to go "over the hills" to Bloomfield. There one brigade remained for several days while another went on to Orange and thence to Newark. Washington spent six days in Newark and on Nov. 28th, proceeded to "Brunswic" (New Brunswick). His headquarters in Newark are uncertain.

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Pursuit of the British

Cornwallis pursued in two divisions. One came from Hackensack to Rutherford, and crossed the Passaic at the ford where Delawanna now is, camping there for several days. The rest of the British army followed Washington through Lodi and Wallington to the bridge to find it destroyed and 3,000 men on guard. They turned and crossed above Passaic Falls. Cornwallis spent a week between Passaic and Newark, a week filled with carousals and revels and forages extending widely inland. He took the River Road to Newark. "Their advance guards were entering the town by the time our rear got out," wrote Washington from "Brunswic."

Flight of the British in 1778

There was another flight of soldiery through this region in 1778, after the battle of Monmouth, when the British were running before the Americans to reach the Hudson. Skirmishes took place at Belleville and at the restored Acquackanonck Bridge, the red coats escaping across it in the darkness. (A marker at Mill Street in Belleville Park commemorates the skirmish in that area between Sept. 12 and 14, 1777.)

The Raiders and Refugees

While the British were in possession of New York and Staten Island, no part of Jersey suffered more from raids than the banks of the Passaic. Farms were stripped of crops, cattle and sheep were driven off, and the defenceless inhabitants on their scattered farms were wantonly murdered in defending their property. So great were the terror and sufferings of the people of this region that a guard of the State Militia was raised for the "Defense of the Frontiers." There was a guard house at Belleville and Captain Speer's company was stationed there. John Vreeland (grandfather of Mr. Warren Vreeland of Nutley) was a River Guard who rode up and down the river bank on the lookout for raiders, or "refugees" as they were also called, British, Hessian or Tory. He carried two huge brass-mounted pistols, one of which is now in Mr. Vreeland's possession, marked, "J. V. 1776." Though he often shot to frighten "raiders," only once did the young soldier actually kill an invader across the river.

Captain Abraham Speer

The most striking figure that we can summon from dim colonial times in this farm and woodland region is the young Dutchman Abram Speer. He was the eldest of five sons of John Speer of Second River, who owned a large estate in the center of that village and who was a descendant of John Hendrick Speer, an original grantee near Hackensack and also one of the Acquackanonck patentees. Abram (or Abraham) came over Third River seeking a wife. He found her in the daughter of one Wouterse or Wouters who had a blacksmith shop at Povershon. He was commissioned Captain in the Second Essex Regiment on May 28, 1777, and stationed at Belleville with this company to "guard the river." It was his father who from the church steeple shot the "refugee" across the Passaic.

SOURCE: HISTORY OF NUTLEY, Elizabeth Stow Brown, 1907

Skirmish of Second River

In September of 1777 there was an engagement which is most frequently referred to as the “Battle of Second River”. It is for this engagement that a memorial plaque has been erected in the park. The British intended to expand their invasion with a larger force in central Jersey. But first, they had to pass through Second River and beneath the old church tower.

Eyes in the tower saw the advance and sounded the alarm. Under the direction of Captains Hornblower, Joralemon, Rutgers and Rutan, a defense was prepared. Skirmishes went on for two days. It began with an artillery barrage of our town followed by musket and cannon battles in the streets.

Sending for reinforcements, the American troops valiantly held their ground and managed to damage British General. Sir Henry Clinton’s hilltop headquarters with a direct hit from a cannonball, which happened to be on what is now Franklin Ave. September 14th turned into an all-day pitched battle.

With patriot reinforcements pouring in from neighboring communities, front lines eventually took shape near to Mill Street and Union Avenue. The British forces, overwhelming in numbers, eventually broke through. But once again, the local militia had succeeded in delaying the advance and weakening the invading army.

A skirmish was recorded on Jan. 27, 1777, between British foraging party and large body of rebels, according to Battles and Skirmishes in New Jersey. That source says that on June 1, 1779, the militia captured a Tory named Lawrence as he enlists men for the British Army.

A large boulder also rests at the fork in the road between Union and Franklin Avenues on Mill Street as a landmark to mark the spot where the final shots of the Battle of the Second River were fired. A bronze plaque was placed on the rock in 1932

Sources: Norman Price, Village of Second River author; Michael Perrone, Dave Hinrichs, The Belleville Times. David C. Munn, Battles and Skirmishes of the American Revolution in New Jersey.

Dutch Reformed Church

Belleville, the old Village of Second River, was a hot-bed of patriot activity, not to mention the processing center for the Schuylers copper mine, then the largest copper supply in the country. In addition, Main Street was a major thoroughfare for troop movements going south to Monmouth, Princeton or Trenton, which must pass below the old Dutch church tower. We were high on the British “watch list”. Much attention was focused on our activities.

In our defense, the Second Essex Regiment, mainly men of the village, was charged with the task of defending the road, the river, the village and the tunnel to the mine. No easy chore was that. British troops were stationed across the river in Arlington watching the mine entrance. Homes along the river were within musket-shot range of British patrols along the Passaic. Going to the barn to milk a cow or fetching water from the well were life-threatening activities for local citizens. But watchmen and snipers stood guard in the old church tower and the guardhouse at the church had “minute-men” at-the-ready.

The old church tower served the patriot’s cause on numerous occasions. Several clashes of troupes occurred within sight of the tower, including the Battle of Second River. History tends to blur these various military actions into a single “Battle of Second River”, but it appears that there were several.

After the battle at Fort Lee, General Washington was in full retreat, trying to save what was left of his army. British General Howe was in hot pursuit, intent upon Washington’s capture and ending the Revolutionary War right here. But the militia men of Second River, together with the Second Essex Regiment and rear-guard detachments from Washington’s army were not going to let the war end in defeat here on our turf.

Source: Norman Price, Village of Second River author.

Sixty-five American Revolution veterans are interred in Belleville. It could be that no other town in the United States can make such a claim. The Rutgers buried here are related to Col. Henry Rutgers, whom Rutgers University is named after. George Washington’s army passed through Second River on its retreat from New York on November 22, 1776.

Soldiers of the New Jersey Second Essex regiments were posted here during the Revolution to watch for an English invasion from New York. Skirmishes occurred in 1779 and another in 1780. The American detachment that guarded Belleville or Second River was part of Jersey Militia raised for the “defense of the frontiers”. Its commander was Abraham Speer, a native of Second River who was commissioned Captain in the Second Essex Regiment on May 28, 1777. Speer’s guardhouse was near the ferry across the Passaic. Here was the spot most in need of defense against a possible surprise attack on Second River. Washington’s army retreating from Fort Lee crossed the Passaic River at Passaic and then proceeded down the west coast of the Passaic, knowing that the Americans at Second River would protect him.

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He spent the night of Nov. 22, 1775, in Second River (Belleville) and then proceeded to Newark and points south.

The British, under the leadership of General Cornwallis, was forced to stay on the east side of the Passaic and never did catch Washington. A watch was maintained in the belfry of the Dutch Reformed Church.

At the first sign of the enemy's approach, an old mortar would be fired to rally the residents against attack. Watchfulness had to be doubled in winter due to the river freezing and they could walk across.

Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt commanded a New Jersey regiment in the Revolution. Minard Coeyman served under him.

Sources: Norman Price, Village of Second River author; Michael Perrone, Belleville Historical Society.

Philip Van Courtlandt

A hero of the Battle of Saratoga, Van Courtlandt served in Poor's Brigade as Colonel of the 2nd and Lieutenant Colonel of the 4th New York Regiments. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1783. The son of Pierre Van Courtlandt of Courtlandt Manor in New York, and the husband of Catherine Ogden, whom he wed in 1762. The long-lived officer's name was inadvertently omitted from the church plaque honoring the Revolutionary War veterans interred in Belleville's Dutch Reformed Church Yard because he did not serve in a local regiment .

Birth: Unknown - d. November 5, 1831; American General, Revolutionary War.

Burial: Belleville Dutch Reformed Churchyard, Belleville, N.J. Plot: Van Courtlandt Crypt.

Source: Find A Grave; Bio by: Nikita Barlow.

Van Cortlandt

Stephen Van Cortlandt spied a British patrol coming across the Passaic River on the ice. He rounded up the half a dozen militiamen that were in the village at that time. They hid among the thick cedars near the river bank and made such a din that the invaders thought there was a whole army after them and retreated to the other side of the river. It is said that the Van Cortlandts could not draw water from their well without being shot at by the British on the other side of the river.

Van Riper

Cornelius Van Riper was a blacksmith whose shop was the place where slugs of iron were prepared in the absence of ball, having exhausted his supply of iron suited to this kind of shooting, he surrendered to the gunners first his hammer and then his sledge to be used in place of ball. The British discovering the kind of shot used, were heard to call out loudly to their comrades, "Get out of the way for God's sake, before they send us the anvil."

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Speer

Captain Abraham Speer commanded the Second Essex Regiment that was stationed here at Second River. John Speer, the captain's brother, was a look-out in the Reformed Church belfry when he spied a British officer across the river. He shot him and kept his watch and the brass buttons from his coat. On an occasion Captain Speer was informed just before daybreak five horses had been driven off by a party of refugee Tories. Speer, with two Vreelands and several other men, followed the tracks to the Hackensack. While considering whether they should continue into enemy territory, they spotted a rider farther upstream. One of the Vreelands fired and dropped the man, whereupon several other men, who had been hiding on the opposite bank, broke shelter and fled. The riderless horses neighed loudly and were answered from a thicket where the Second River men found the other horses.

Cadmus

Second River had its own female heroine in the wife of **Peter Cadmus**. A party of redcoats approached her homestead. She saw them coming so hid her two children in a large oven built in the side of the fireplace – admonishing them to keep very quiet. When she refused to give the British any food and wouldn't tell them where the men were, the angry officer plunged his sword in her side. When the Cadmus brothers came home they found her bleeding heavily. The children heard their voices and came out of hiding. Mrs. Cadmus eventually recovered.

James Kidney

Captain James Kidney, Captain Henry Joralemon, Halmark Joralemon and Jacob Garland on a dark and winter night caught the British relaxing at a school house dance in Bergen Heights. They selected the highest ranking officer and a loyalist refugee and bundled them off to a waiting sleigh and brought them back to Second River (Belleville). For several generations the Joralemons proudly exhibited the silver-belted sword of the captured officer. Richard Kidney's home near Smallwood Avenue for years had holes in his front door made by British bullets.

Rutgers

Anthony Rutgers was an artillery captain. He had six children and his eldest son Anthony constructed the first bridge over the Passaic River. Gerard and Robert Rutgers were both colonels. Col. Henry Rutgers, after whom Rutgers University was named, was a colonel and fought in the battle of Long Island. Harmon Rutgers was killed in the battle of Long Island on Aug. 27, 1776.

Hornblower

Josiah Hornblower at the time of the Revolution had acquired considerable property, was the father of a large family and had become a justice of the peace. He was an ardent patriot, and though too old to carry arms himself, he served the Revolutionary cause with advice, financial aid and as a member of the Provincial Assembly. He brought the first steam engine over to America in 1753 to pump the water out of Scuyler Mine. The British regarded Hornblower as a very dangerous man, and several times he barely escaped arrest. It was small wonder that he watched prudently from his porch as a rather large party of men were being ferried across the Passaic River by Robert Kip, his son-in-law. At first the score of strangers seemed inoffensive enough of Kip. They were dressed as farm

laborers, and had a plausible reason for crossing. But in the middle of the stream they pulled pistols from under their greatcoats, primed them and got ready for action. Kip kept his peace until the ferry was near enough to the shore so that Hornblower, still seated on the porch, would hear his call. Then he dropped his oars overboard, rose to his feet, and shouted, "Father, the British!" History holds no record of what the British did to Kip. Hornblower had flown and his daughter, Kip's wife, had been able to hide the family silver. The enemy searched and set fire to the house, but rain and neighbors extinguished the blaze before much damage was done.

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