

SOME ACCOUNT  
OF  
THE BRITISH ARMY UNDER THE COMMAND OF GENERAL HOWE  
AND OF THE  
BATTLE OF BRANDYWINE  
on the memorable 11th of September, 1777, &c., &c.  
AND  
THE ADVENTURES OF THAT DAY, WHICH CAME TO THE KNOWLEDGE  
AND OBSERVATION OF  
JOSEPH TOWNSEND\*

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NARRATIVE.

"During the winter of 1776 and the spring of 1777 the British army had possession of New York, Long Island, etc., and numerous were the conjectures respecting their future destiny, or on what part of the continent the ensuing campaign would be opened. This continued to be the case until the summer approached, when information was generally spread that they were making preparations to leave their winter quarters, which actually took place in the month of July; but their intended movements remained a profound secret until the latter end of the ensuing month, August, when they made their appearance in the Chesapeake Bay. It was then ascertained that their object was to get possession of Philadelphia, and to march thither the most direct and favorable route to obtain that purpose, having been led to believe that the productive country through which they were to pass would render great facility to their contemplated march, and that but little obstruction or opposition would be met with from the inhabitants of that portion of the country. The number of soldiers under arms amounted by computation to seventeen thousand, five thousand of them being German troops, generally termed Hessians, the former being under the command of Gen. Howe, and the latter under Gen. Knyphausen. The fleet conveyed them up above the mouth of the Susquhanna River, and landed them a little east of Turkey Point, from which place they contemplated marching. The news of their landing soon spread throughout the adjacent country, and some were of opinion that a general devastation would be the consequence; others concluded that the country was now conquered, and that peace and tranquillity would be restored by the former government being re-established, as considerable commotion and disturbances had taken place in that section of the country respecting it.

"At that time I resided at my father's (John Townsend), the place of my nativity, adjoining to the ground where West Chester now stands,— a neighborhood where the inhabitants were alive to the prevailing reports and rumors of the day.

"The first account received after their landing was that they were at Iron Hill, a place not much known or spoken of previously as a place of note; the next news was that they were at Allen's tavern, in the settlement of New Garden, a person having arrived who had been in sight of them so near as to discover the buttons on their coat, which I suppose was a regiment of the German troops, who were, during the whole march, kept in front of the army, to cover the English troops from any skirmishing which might take place with the Americans (or rebels, so termed with them), which probably would be the case before they arrived at Philadelphia, their intended winter quarters.

"Things at this time began to wear a serious aspect, and the countenances of many were changed some of them evidently appeared gloomy, others somewhat brightened up from the consideration of pleasing prospects

before them, and the favorable issue soon to be experienced.

"Gen. Washington was early apprised of the British forces landing on the shores of the Chesapeake, and disposed of his troops in different directions, to arrest their progress in their intended march through that section of the country, and to make a stand against them at every position favorable for that purpose. A breastwork was thrown up on an eminence on the east side of Brandywine Creek, nearly opposite to Chad's Ford, near which his principal army was encamped. Scouting-parties were reconnoitring in various directions for several miles up the said creek, to discover if possible the ford over which the invaders intended to force their march.

"Several persons in the neighborhood who had manifested a disposition to support the Americans' cause now thought it advisable to remove their families, stock, and furniture to a distance, that it might be safe from the British plunderers, as destruction would be the consequence if left in their way; others, being of a different opinion, were disposed to remain at home, and risk the danger to which they might be exposed, let the consequence be what it might.

"A majority of the inhabitants were of the Society of Friends, who could not, consistently with their principles, take any active part in the war, and who generally believed it right to remain at their dwellings, and patiently submit to whatever suffering might be their lot, and trust their all to a kind, protecting Providence, who had hitherto protected and prospered their undertaking in an extraordinary manner ever since their first settlement of the country under the proprietor and Governor, William Penn.

"Gen. Washington had his headquarters at Benjamin Ring's, who resided near the east side of Chad's Ford, and Gen. Lafayette was near at hand, in the neighborhood, at Gideon Gilpin's. They were frequently together, which afforded an opportunity to spectators to view them both at the same time.

"On the 10th of September, in the evening, the British forces arrived and encamped at Kennet Square and its vicinity, and early on the morning following were disposed to carry into effect their concerted plan of crossing the Brandywine Creek and routing the American army from their ground of encampment, which was for Gen. Knyphausen to conduct the troops under his command to the high grounds of the creek, on the west side, and commence a brisk cannonading, in order to keep up the appearance of an attempt to cross the stream, while Gen. Howe conducted his troops, artillery, etc., up the stream about seven miles to Jefferis' Ford, that he might surprise Washington's army, which lay southeast of Birmingham Meeting-house.

"The order given to Gen. Knyphausen was complied with. He arranged his artillery on the lands of William Harvey, Jacob Way, and others adjoining, as the most eligible spot for the intended purpose, having the principal part of his troops under arms in full view of the Americans, who occupied the eminences on the east side.

"Gen. Knyphausen commenced his cannonading early after daylight, and continued it the greater part of the forenoon. It then, in a great measure, ceased, and it appeared as if the troops were retiring; so much so, that a company of Americans ventured to cross the creek at the ford and advance some distance on the west side without any interruption from the enemy. Thus were the Americans amused during the forenoon, and until information arrived that Gen. Howe and his troops were crossing the Brandywine at Jefferis' Ford, which unexpected intelligence occasioned a general consternation and commotion throughout the whole of Gen. Washington's army.

"It may be recollected the whole of the movements of the enemy were concealed from Gen. Washington. He could obtain no correct intelligence respecting them, except the firing of the cannon opposite to Chad's Ford. It was near twelve o'clock before the information reached him, and it took some considerable time before he could arrange his forces to risk an engagement with them, which he endeavored to do, by posting such of his troops as were prepared for action on the eminence in front of and south of Birmingham Meeting-house. Some few of them were sent forward to the meeting-house, the burying-ground and site contiguous being favorable for the first attack, which took place accordingly.

"As the object of these memoranda is to recite some particulars of the transactions of that day, I shall now turn to the early part of it and relate some circumstances leading thereto. On the arrival of Gen. Washington's

army from the eastward, in order to impede the progress of the British after their landing on the shores of the Chesapeake, a considerable number of the soldiers were sick, in consequence of their long marches through the excessive heat of that season of the year. On that account the commissaries, and those who had the charge of the disordered persons, were obliged to take possession of the meeting-houses and other public buildings as hospitals to accommodate them. Among the number thus designated Birmingham Meeting-house was to be one, and preparations were being made therein for that purpose. First-day morning arrived. Friends assembled as usual, from an expectation that the meeting might be held in the house even if it should be taken possession of afterwards; but, from the situation of it, their request could not be granted. They therefore got permission to take some of the benches out of the house, and placed them under the trees which stood in front thereof, on which they seated themselves in the quiet, as far as was practicable under existing circumstances, inasmuch as the officers and workmen were moving about, and engaged in making preparation to receive the sick, to be brought there as soon as the premises could be got in readiness. . . . Under these circumstances it became necessary that some other building should be provided to accommodate the meeting in future until the meeting-house should be cleared and put in order for the purpose; and how soon that would be the case was uncertain from the present gloomy appearances. Several houses and rooms were talked of, but it was finally concluded to hold the next meeting in a large wheelwright-shop, which stood on the eminence north of the dwelling house owned by Philip Price (at the date of the writing of this sketch), at a place then in existence, and called Sconneltown. The next meeting day was on the 11th of the month, which proved to be a memorable day.

"Amos House, who had left his dwelling near Chad's Ford, and was succeeded therein by Lord Stirling and his attendants, was in the practice of visiting the premises almost daily to see what discovery he could make, went down on the morning of the eleventh, after the cannonading had commenced, and rode under the cannonballs that were discharged from the artillery on the hills, on each side of the creek, without receiving any injury therefrom.

"Possessed with curiosity, and fond of new things, my brother, William Townsend, myself, and some others rode alongside of the Brandywine for some distance to discover the approach of the British army, in case they should attempt to cross at any of the fords on the creek between Jefferis' and Chad's. We fell in with many like ourselves, but no intelligence could be obtained. We then returned to the aforesaid wheelwright-shop, to assemble with Friends in holding our week-day meeting, it being near the hour appointed. While we were sitting therein some disturbance was discovered near the house and about the door, which occasioned some individuals to go out to know the cause, and the uneasiness not subsiding, suspicions arose that something serious was taking place, and the meeting accordingly closed. On our coming out of the house and making some inquiry of what had happened, found it to be an alarm among some of the neighboring women that the English were coming, and that they murdered all before them, young and old. Some of us endeavored to quiet their fears by telling them it was not likely to be the case, and that they had better compose themselves instead of making further disturbance; and while we were reasoning with them our eyes were caught on a sudden by the appearance of the army coming out of the woods into the fields belonging to Emmor Jefferis, on the west side of the creek, above the fording-place. In a few minutes the fields were literally covered over with them, and they were hastening towards us. Their arms and bayonets, being raised, shone as bright as silver, the sky being clear and the day exceedingly warm. Recollecting that there was no one at our dwelling except some of our sisters, we concluded it advisable to return home as expeditiously as possible, as we had no doubt that they were marching direct for Philadelphia, and would pass by the house and over the farm. Our parents had a few days before been called to their daughter Lamborn's, at Kennet, on account of the illness of her children, one of whom had died during their stay there. They were considerably plundered by the rabble which accompanied the army during their encampment at Kennet Square, to which they were contiguous.

"After our arrival at home, and our horses inclosed in the stable, we were in momentary expectation of the army's approach, but in this we were disappointed; and having waited some time, we ventured down the road

towards them, and when in sight of Jefferis' Ford we discovered that they had turned their course towards Birmingham, and were passing by where the meeting on that day had been held. Being disposed to have a better and nearer view of them, we sat out for the purpose; and passing by the dwelling of Abel Boake, we soon after met Sarah, his wife, who had been as curious as ourselves, and had been among the soldiers as they marched along. The space occupied by the main body and flanking parties was near half a mile wide. Sarah encouraged our going among them, at the same time admired their appearance, and said what fine-looking fellows they were, and (to use her own phrase) 'they were something like an army,' which we could see for ourselves, if we would go among them, and that there would not be any objection to our entrance. Thus encouraged, we walked on until we approached the flanking party, when a soldier under arms called out, 'Where are you going?' We replied that we wished to see the army, if there was no objection. He observed that there was their captain, we must speak to him; which being done, leave was readily obtained, and in a few minutes we found ourselves in the midst of military characters, rank and file; little to be discovered but staff-officers and a continued march of soldiers, with occasionally a troop of horse passing. Great numbers of baggage-wagons began to make their appearance, well guarded by proper officers and soldiers. We passed through them until we reached one of the most eligible houses in the town (Sconneltown), and soon after divers of the principal officers came in, who manifested an uncommon sociable disposition. They were full of inquiries respecting the rebels, where they were to be met with, and where Mr. Washington was to be found. This inquiry respecting the rebels was a general thing among the common soldiers, and others, as they moved along. The officers aforementioned were replied to by my brother, William Townsend, who modestly and spiritedly told them, if they would have patience a short time, he expected they would meet with Gen. Washington and his forces, who were not far distant. Had we known it, the front of his army was then in view, on the heights at Birmingham Meeting-house, though three miles distant from us. They inquired what sort of man Mr. Washington was. My brother, who had a knowledge of him by being with him at his quarters at Chad's Ford, replied that he was a stately, well-proportioned, fine-looking man, of great abilities. active, firm, and resolute, of a social disposition, and was considered to be a good man. This he observed to check their eagerness for a sight of the general, and to draw forth some further observations from them respecting him; to which one of them answered, that 'He might be a good man, but he was most damnably misled to take up arms against his sovereign.' During the interview, while I was conversing with one of the officers, I inquired of him at what place they had encamped the night before; of which he replied, that he knew not where the main body of the army was, but that their regiment lay on the south side of the hill beyond Kennet Square. He then observed to me, with much animation, 'You have got a hell of a fine country here, which we have found to be the case ever since we landed at the Head of Elk.'

"The house we were in was elevated, so that on the first floor, where we stood, we had a pretty full view of the army as they passed along; and while we were conversing together, my brother called to me to step to the door to see Gen. Lord Cornwallis, who was passing by. He was on horseback, appeared very tall and sat very erect. His rich scarlet clothing, loaded with gold lace, epaulets, etc., occasioned him to make a brilliant and martial appearance. The advanced portion of the army made a halt at this place, and refreshed their horses by hastily clearing off some of the corn patches that were within their reach. It might be observed that most or all of the officers who conversed with us were of first rank, and were rather stout, portly men, well dressed and of genteel appearance, and did not look as if they had ever been exposed to any hardship; their skins were as white and delicate as is customary for females brought up in large cities or towns.

"As we spent no idle time in viewing the strangers who surrounded us, I discovered on a sudden that there was a general stir or movement among them. Inquiry was made what could be the object of it, and it was answered by one of them that they were resuming their march, and that the halt which had been made was only to refresh their horses, to enable them to perform the several duties required of them.

"Having by this time become familiar with them, and no danger or difficulty to apprehend from them, my

curiosity or ambition was increased, and I wished a further and more full view than I before had, and to have it to say that I had seen the whole of them, as far as was practicable. I invited James Johnson, an acquaintance, who was standing by, to accompany me, and we proceeded through the crowd on the public road until we reached the advanced guards, who were of the German troops. Many of them wore their beards on their upper lips, which was a novelty in that part of the country. This took place between the dwelling of Richard Strode and Osborne's Hill. Being now in the front, we walked on inconsiderately until we arrived at a pair of bars, opposite the ancient dwelling of Amos Davis, through which we went into the field southwest of the road, and walked up to the upper fence, being the division line between the two tracts of land of Amos Davis and the heirs of his uncle, Daniel Davis. On turning our faces back we had a grand view of the British army, as they advanced over and down the side of Osborne's Hill and the lands of James Carter; scarcely a vacant space left. While we were amusing ourselves with the wonderful curiosity before us, to our great astonishment and surprise the firing of the musketry took place. The advance-guard aforementioned, having arrived at the Street Road, were fired upon by a company of the Americans who were stationed in the orchard north of Samuel Jones' brick dwelling-house. The attack was immediately returned by the Hessians, who, stepping up the bank of the road, alongside of the orchard, used the fence as a breastwork, through which they fired upon the company that commenced the attack. From the distance at which we were from them,— though in full view until the smoke of the firing covered them from our sight,— I was under no apprehension of danger, especially when there was such a tremendous force coming on and ready to engage in the action; nevertheless, I concluded it best to retire, finding that my inconsiderate curiosity had prompted me to exceed the bounds of prudence. I proposed it to my companion, but he refused to return, being disposed to see what further would take place and how it would end.

"I then made the best of my way through the crowd until I arrived at the aforementioned bars on the road, which opened into the field of Amos Davis, where I was met by several companies of soldiers, who were ordered into the field to form and prepare for the approaching engagement. The opening of the bars not being of sufficient width to admit them to pass with that expedition which the emergency of the case required, a German officer, on horseback, ordered the fence to be taken down, and, as I was near to the spot, had to be subject to his requiring, as he flourished a drawn sword over my head, with others who stood by. On a removal of the second rail I was forcibly struck with the impropriety of being active in assisting to take the lives of my fellow-beings, and therefore desisted from proceeding any further in obedience to his commands. The hurry was great, and so many rushing forward under arms, I found no difficulty in retiring unobserved, and was soon out of reach of those called immediately into action. I lost no time on my return, and when I arrived on the top of the hill I discovered on the eminence in Samuel Osborne's field a number of my acquaintances, who were standing near to a considerable number of persons on horseback, and viewing them, with the different movements of the army. I joined in with them. It was now a time of some seriousness and alarm among them. The battle had commenced in earnest; little was to be heard but the firing of the musketry and the roaring of cannon from both parties. It appeared that those on horseback were some of the principal officers of the British army, with their aides, who had collected together to consult about carrying on the engagement to the best advantage. Among them was Gen. Howe. He was mounted on a large English horse, much reduced in flesh, I suppose, from being so long confined on board of the fleet between New York and the head of the Chesapeake Bay, which was about six weeks, occasioned by contrary winds. The general was a large, portly man, of course features. He appeared to have lost his teeth, as his mouth had somewhat fallen in. As I stood alongside, I had a full opportunity of viewing him as he sat on his horse, and had to observe his large legs and boots, with flourishing spurs thereon. While the officers were in consultation and we viewing them, together with the smoke issuing from the cannon and musketry, we remarked a tremendous roaring of cannon, and volumes of smoke arising therefrom, at Chad's Ford. Gen. Knyphausen having discovered that the engagement was on with the front of Howe's army at the meeting-house, he immediately forced the troops under his command across the Brandywine, and the whole of Gen. Washington's army at that station were routed from their breastworks, and from the different positions they

had taken to impede the march of the British. From these circumstances, Gen. Washington considered it prudent to effect a retreat, which took place accordingly. While we remained on Osborne's Hill we had the opportunity of making many observations,— the engagement of both armies, the fields in front of us containing great heaps of blankets and baggage, thrown together to relieve the men for action; the regular march of the British army, consisting of horse and foot, artillery, baggage and provision wagons, arms and ammunition, together with a host of plunderers and rabble that accompanied the army; almost the whole face of the country around appeared to be covered and alive with these objects. The time occupied in their passage was about four hours.

"We remained on the hill for some time, and when the engagement seemed to be nearly over, or at least that part of it which was in view, and the day being far on the decline, we were about retiring; but, as admiration and curiosity had been the order of the day, I proposed to some of my companions that we should go over to the field of battle and take a view of the dead and wounded, inasmuch as we might never have such another opportunity. Some of them consented, and others with reluctance yielded. We hastened thither, and awful was the scene,— to behold such a number of fellow-beings lying near each other, severely injured, and some of them mortally; a few dead, but a small proportion, considering the quantity of powder and balls that had been used. It was now time for the surgeons to exert themselves, and divers of them were busily employed. Some of the doors of the meeting-house were torn off, and the wounded carried thereon into the house, which was now occupied as a British hospital, instead of for the American sick, for whom it had been preparing some days previous.

"The wounded officers were first attended to; several of distinction had fallen, and as everything appeared to be in a state of confusion, and we being spectators and assistance required, some of our number,— of whom I was one,— at the request of the surgeons, became active in removing them therein. I desired to know who they were; but it was not a time for inquiring, and I do not recollect to have heard the name of one of them mentioned at that time. After assisting to carry two of them into the house, I was disposed to see an operation performed by one of the surgeons, who was preparing to amputate a limb, by having a brass clamp or screw fixed thereon, a little above the knee-joint. He had a knife in his hand, the blade of which was of circular form, and was about to commence the incision, when he recollected that it might be necessary for the wounded man to take something to support him during the operation. He told some of his attendants to give him a little wine or brandy to keep up his spirits, to which he replied, 'No, doctor, it is not necessary; my spirits are up enough without it.' He then observed that he had heard some of them say there was some water in the house, and if there was, he would like a little to wet his mouth. As I was listening to the conversation, and waiting for the water to arrive, one of my companions caught me by the arm and mentioned that it was necessary to go out immediately, as they were fixing the picketguards, and if we did not get away in a few moments we should have to remain within the lines of encampment during the night. I instantly complied, and we saved our distance, and were at liberty to return home.

"The dusk of the evening was then on, and we set out accordingly, being twelve or fifteen in number, two of whom had started earlier and were some distance before us. I suppose we were all under the erroneous impression that from what had passed during the day there was no probability of an American under arms to be found in the neighborhood. In this, however, we were mistaken, for the two persons aforesaid, who had started early, were talking rather freely on the defeat of the American army that afternoon, and were overheard by a scouting-party who had been following the rear of the British during their movements. They were posted in a field on an eminence, and were watching the movements of the British in the evening after the battle was over. Note.— Tradition says this scouting-party was a company of local militia, commanded by Capt. William Gibbons. They hailed the two gentlemen who had been and were then taking such liberties, and as no answer was returned they repeated their call, which, being disregarded, one of the scouts, without further hesitation or ceremony, fired upon them. The ball penetrated the thigh of one of them named Simon Kerns, and he fell. They then rode off, and were seen traveling up the public road that led to our dwelling. The report of the musket was

heard by some of our number who were behind, and that not without serious apprehensions, not knowing what it could mean. When we arrived at the place where the circumstance had happened, we were informed of the particulars, and that a kind neighbor, Richard Strode, had assisted in carrying the wounded man into a small house, where he lay groaning and lamenting in grievous manner. Note.— Simon Kerns not having the assistance of a surgeon that night, the wound swelled considerably. Thomas Darlington attended him, but did not think it best to extract the ball. Simon finally recovered, but carried the ball as long as he lived, without serious injury to his person or occupation. He died about the year 1830.

"It would be difficult to express our feelings on this occasion. We were all panic-struck, not knowing but what it might be our fate, or perhaps worse, in a few minutes. We felt our imprudence or inconsiderate conduct with great force, and the curiosity of the day was now greatly damped. To move forward was terrifying; to remain where we were would be no small punishment under existing circumstances. Some of us had left our families, consisting only of a few females and children, and we knew not what dreadful events might have taken place in our absence. Imagination was worked up to a great height, and our fears were as great as we could well bear, such was the dilemma that we were in. I considered that it overbalanced all that we had seen, and was now without remedy. A consultation was held, and we found ourselves surrounded with difficulties. To pursue the public road home was dangerous, from the expectation that the aforementioned scouting-party, or others of the military, were lying in wait for us, and that we might be fired upon, or otherwise taken up and carried before the prevailing power to answer for our conduct. If we attempted to return through the fields we were apprehensive we might be met by some of the military, and more guilt would appear than if we went boldly along the road. We were two miles from home, and the moon having risen, the night was clear and bright and remarkably still, so every movement could be discovered at a distance. After various projects being suggested, we finally resolved to take the nearest way home, which was through divers fields and woods, from a hope that there would be less danger and risk of being detected. We came to the conclusion before we set out that no conversation should take place on the way, or observations made that would be unfavorable, in case we should be overheard. We accordingly commenced our route, and reached our dwellings at a late hour of the night without molestation or alarm, except in one instance, when climbing over a fence on the way we surprised a flock of sheep which lay alongside taking their repose. They started and ran off as if their greatest enemy was in close pursuit of them. Our fears were up in an instant, not knowing but that those whom we so much dreaded were not at hand.

"We found all safe and undisturbed when we arrived at home, but met with a severe reproof from one of our sisters for having taken such liberties, and given way to an idle curiosity, which might involve ourselves and the family in great difficulty and distress, saying that for her part she had no wish nor desire to see one person in the whole British army. I was satisfied with the correctness of her observation, but it was too late to be remedied. I could say for myself that I do not recollect ever to have felt a more thankful heart to the great author of my existence than I did after I retired to bed, though I knew not what might be the consequence of that day's expedition when it came to be known that we had shown such an attachment to, and familiarity with, the enemies of our country, whom the American forces were contending against, and over whom, under the assistance of a protecting Providence, they finally prevailed, which event was the introduction and establishment of a great and powerful nation.

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APPENDIX

"Having in the foregoing given some account of the engagements and adventures of one day,— the memorable 11th of September, 1777,— I shall now proceed to give some further account of what took place shortly thereafter. The British army remained on the ground of encampment at Birmingham until the third day

of the week following, being the sixteenth of the month, having in the course of that time removed all their wounded that survived to the borough of Wilmington (at that time in their possession), amounting to one hundred and twelve wagon-loads. They on that day commenced their further march for the city, having formed two divisions, one of which, commanded by Gen. Knyphausen, proceeded by way of Chester, and the other, being the grand one, under the command of Gen. Howe, proceeded direct to the Swedes' Ford, on Schuylkill, which, after marching through a severe day's rain, encamped the following night on the south side of the Valley Hill, and around the Boot Tavern, at which house the general had his headquarters.

"The ground which they had lately occupied at Birmingham, being now cleared and left in a desolate condition, exhibited a scene of destruction and waste. Some few of the inhabitants who remained thereon, and some others who were returning to the places of abode, found it necessary to call in the assistance of their neighbors to rebury many of the dead, who lay exposed to the open air and ravages of beasts and wild fowls, having, in consequence of the late heavy rains, been washed bare, and some few of them had never been interred. I was one among a number who attended and performed that duty.

"It would be difficult to describe the many cases of horror and destruction of human beings that came under our notice in this undertaking, but we accomplished it, though in many instances of a most disagreeable and unpleasant nature. During the performance of it we had a full opportunity of beholding the destruction and wanton waste committed on the property of the peaceable inhabitants of the neighborhood, and on the ground of the encampment. Those who were obliged to remain thereon had their stock of cattle destroyed for the use of the army, their horses taken away, and their household furniture, bedding, etc., wantonly wasted and burned. It was not uncommon to see heaps of feathers lying about the farms, the ticks having been stripped off and made use of, and the remains of small pieces of valuable furniture lying about their fireplaces, in the fields, unconsumed, when there was no want of timber and fence-rails, which might have been used for their cooking, etc.; but being in an enemy's country, inhabited by rebels, there was no restraint on the soldiery or rabble which accompanied them.

"Having made mention that the meeting-house at Birmingham had been taken out of our possession by the Americans in order to accommodate their sick soldiers, it so turned out that before it could be occupied for that purpose Gen. Howe had the control of it for the use of his wounded officers; and when vacated, and the army removed, friends were at liberty to cleanse and purify it, which was so far done that we held our meeting therein on first-day (Sunday) succeeding their departure; but considerable repairs were necessary afterwards to put it in the condition it was previous to our being deprived of it. During their occupancy of it several of their principal officers died, and were interred in the burying-ground adjoining, one of them said to be a near connection of the Duke of Northumberland, a young man of the name of Perey."

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\*NOTICE OF THE LIFE OF JOSPEH TOWNSEND

This sketch was prepared by Henry C. Townsend, Esq., a grand nephew of the Joseph Townsend. in 1846, for the Historical Soceity of Pennsylvania

Joseph Townsend was the sevten child of John and Joanna Townsend, and a grandson of Joseph Townsend, who was born in Berkshire, England, in 1686, and emigrated to this country in 1714, where he purchased and occupied a large tract of land lying in East Bradford Township, in Chester county, Pennsylvania, near which the village of West Chester is now built. Joseph, the subject of this sketch, was born on the 26th day of February, 1756, upon the original trct purchased by his grandfther. He was, by birth, a member of the religious Society of Friends, as his ancetors had been for some generations before him. He remained upon the paternal farm until 1782, and witnessed in the meantime the battle of Brandywine, which occured o nthe 11th Septemeber, 1777. The devastation committed by the passage of the British army under the command of Gen. Howe, through Chester county, induced him to emigrate, and i nthe year 1782 he removed to the Little Falls of

Gunpowder, in Harford county, Maryland, where he taught school one year. In the fall of 1783 he removed to Baltimore, and the town being then small and growing, he soon took an active part in its advancement - was a member of the Board of Health in 1794, 1797, and 1800, during the three several visitations of the yellow fever, and was active in the purchase of the Potter's Field, and the Maryland Hospital, both of which were demanded by the fatal disease. In 1794 he was one of the founders of the "Baltimore Equitable Society for Insuring Houses from Loss by Fire," - an establishment based upon the mutual principle, and over which he presided for the long period of forty-seven years, until his death, having seen his adopted town expand into the importance of a large city, third in rank in the United States. Various other offices of trust and responsibility, he also held - both under the city and State governments, in corporate bodies, and in the administration of private estates, too numerous to mention in this short outline of his life.

He was three times married.

June 6th, to Hannah Painter, of Chester county, by whom he had two children; both of whom died.

May 31st, 1787, to Mary Matthews, of Baltimore, by whom he had eight children, only one of whom survives at this date, (a son.)

June 3d, 1803, to Esther Hallet, of Long Island, who survives him. They had a family of thirteen children, of whom five (a son and four daughters) are living at this time. Making in all a family of twenty-three, of whom but six survive, and all but nine lived to years of maturity.

His brother and seven sisters, all married, and (with one exception) had families. They remained in Chester county or removed to Philadelphia, and live to an advanced age, from 60 to 90 years, except two sisters, who died in middle age.

Preserving the regular temperate habits of his early life, he lived to the age of 85 years and seven months. His death was sudden and without apparent pain. He died in his own house in the city of Baltimore, on the 5th day of the 9th month, 1841, having been arrested while at dinner, by his first death-stroke, from which he so far recovered as to rise from the table and lie down, when a second stroke, in a few moments, summoned him away from the living.

His remains were interred in Greenmount Cemetery, on First day, 10th mo. 3d, 1841.