

**"Delivery Upon the Delaware"**  
by Steven Campbell

In the winter of 1776 the United States had been a nation for six months. The U.S. Congress had fled Philadelphia to the safety of Baltimore. The fledgling Continental Army, under the command of Brother George Washington, had been defeated, and retreated time and time again across New York and New Jersey. Facing annihilation at the hands of the 20,000 man British and Hessian force, the Americans seized or destroyed all river worthy boats along a 60 mile stretch of the Delaware River and escaped to Pennsylvania.

Eighteenth century "civilized" warfare was normally discontinued in the winter months. The British Commander, Lord William Howe, had been empowered to end the revolt by political as well as military means. He hoped to entice the Americans back into the British Empire.

The 2,400 men under Brother Washington were sick, ill-equipped, ill-fed, and at the end of the year many of their enlistments would expire. "Writing off" the Americans, the British established a base camp at Trenton, NJ, staffed with 1,500 hired mercenaries (Hessians) to "keep an eye" on Washington until the commencement of the spring campaign to "finish them off." After long hours of planning it was decided that the American Army would do something they had not done before - they would attack!

On Wednesday, Christmas night 1776, Brothers Washington, Nathanael Greene, Henry Knox, Hugh Mercer, and John Glover would lead the Americans back across the Delaware River. Encountering pelting snow, sleet, and rain, Glover's Marblehead fishermen ferried our troops, cannon and horses across the ice-choked river in open boats. Wet, cold, ill-clothed and tired, the Americans marched 9 miles to Trenton. Though attacking in daylight rather than the hoped for pre-dawn action, the surprise attack upon some of Europe's best soldiers was complete. The Hessians' initial resistance faltered when their commander, Col. Johann Rall, was mortally wounded. Though 500 Hessians escaped, nearly 1,000 were killed, wounded or captured, as were a large stock of sorely needed arms and supplies. The totally unexpected American victory electrified "The Glorious Cause," saved the U. S. Army, and gave heart to the continued 7 ½ year effort which lead to our independence.

So, as we enjoy the bounty of our labors this holiday season, let us be thankful for the crossing of the Delaware River that cold winter's night those many years ago.

A vex: What British Freemason Commander "chased" the ragged American Army across New Jersey?

- (a) Oliver Cromwell
- (b) Lord Cornwallis
- (c) Lord Kitchner

(Vol. 2, Issue 3 Vex's answer: Washington's half brother, Lawrence, built and resided at Mt. Vernon, which George would inherit.)