

*Margaret Corbin*

HISTORY OF NEW YORK

#15

DURING

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR,

AND OF

THE LEADING EVENTS IN THE OTHER COLONIES  
AT THAT PERIOD,

BY

THOMAS JONES,

JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE PROVINCE.

X

EDITED BY

EDWARD FLOYD DE LANCEY.

WITH NOTES, CONTEMPORARY DOCUMENTS, MAPS, AND PORTRAITS.

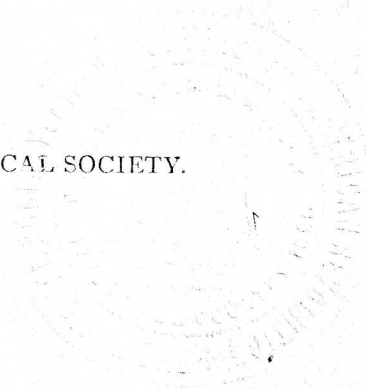
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right to do. When Washington first arrived at Fort Lee on the 13th, and found the post still occupied, he did not direct its evacuation, as he might have done, but yielding to the doubt and hesitation he felt between his own opinion, and the views of the Council, Congress, and of the generals there present, let the garrison remain.

Magaw seems to have made the best disposition of his forces he could, considering the ground and the four attacks that he had to meet. Neither of these three officers should be censured at the expense of the others. Each did what he thought best under the circumstances in which he was placed. And neither dreamed that he had treason to contend against. The loss of Mount Washington was due to the first American traitor, William Demont.

Many were the instances, on both sides, in this engagement, of humor and gaiety in the midst of danger, as well as intrepidity and valor. There was one of the latter, however, which has rarely been equalled, or surpassed.

In one of the Pennsylvania regiments was a soldier named Corbin, who was accompanied by his wife. His post was in the battery attacked by the Hessians where the battle raged hottest and longest; for it was between two and three hours before the Germans succeeded in carrying it. In the midst of the battle Corbin, struck by a ball, fell dead at his wife's feet, as she was aiding him in his duties. Instantly stepping into his place she worked the gun with redoubled skill and vigor, fighting bravely, till she sank to the earth, pierced by three grape shot in the shoulder. Though terribly wounded, she finally recovered though disabled for life.

This heroic matron, Margaret Corbin, was the first woman who fought for American liberty in the war of the revolution. A soldier's half pay, and the value of a soldiers' suit of clothes annually, voted her by the Continental Congress, while John Jay presided, was all the reward she ever received for such heroic love, courage, pain, and bravery.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-two years

<sup>1</sup> Journals of Congress, 1779, p. ~~22~~<sup>805</sup> and 1780, p. ~~231~~<sup>669</sup>. Minutes of Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, under date June 29, 1779, July 3, 1779, and July 24, 1780.

see her  
on hand.

afterwards the famous "Maid of Saragossa" merely repeated the courageous deed of the Matron of Mount Washington.

Fort Lee was taken by Lord Cornwallis on the 20th of November, not, as the text states, on the morning after the capture of Mount Washington. Sir William Howe's despatch of Nov. 30th, to Lord George Germaine, by mistake; says it was taken on the 18th, which has led many writers to commit the same error. Lord Howe's despatch, however, gives the 20th, the true date, as does the letter of General Washington to Congress. The boats to take Cornwallis's corps over the river went up in the night of the 18th to Spuyten Duyvel inlet.<sup>1</sup>

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NOTE XLII.

THE ADVICE OF CONGRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF PHILADELPHIA, TO APPLY TO SIR WILLIAM HOWE FOR PROTECTION, IN DECEMBER, 1776.

*Volume I., p. 127.*

The advice of the Continental Congress to the citizens of Philadelphia, when they fled to Baltimore on the approach of the British army, "that as they could no longer give them protection, they must look to the power which could," is almost the same as that given in Galloway's testimony before a Committee of the House of Commons, in June, 1779. It is to be wished the author had mentioned whence he took the quotation.

Galloway's evidence is as follows:

"Q. Did the members of the Congress, and others who had taken an active part in the rebellion, take any steps in consequence of their expecting the British troops in Philadelphia?"

"A. I was informed by every one I conversed with on the subject, that the Congress and the Rebel States, in which I in-

<sup>1</sup> See Force, Fifth Series, Vol. III., pp. 925, 816, and 765.  
So in the original.