



Eyewitness of the American Revolution

Philadelphia Associators from
"Battle of Princeton" by Graham Turner
from "Trenton and Princeton 1776-77"
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Princeton
Battlefield
Society
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At the Battle of Princeton, I was a private in the Third Battalion of the Philadelphia Associators. We were volunteer militiamen because Pennsylvania did not have a government-organized militia system like most of the other states. We joined companies known as Associations and the men as Associators. After Washington's victory at Trenton, we were motivated to join with him to do more damage to the British regulars.

After a long night march from Trenton the night of January 2, 1777, we arrived south of Princeton near the Stony Brook at a spot on the Quaker Road about 7:30 am. General Washington split his army into three main groups and gave the officers directions on how we would attack the town of Princeton. My company was in a brigade commanded by Colonel Hausegger. Hausegger's brigade was ordered to continue along the Quaker Road, cross the Post Road (known to the British as the King's Highway), and take a back route across farms to the northwest side of Princeton. We would then be in a position to assist Washington when other parts of the army attacked the eastern and southern approaches to the town.

We set off first because we had the longest route to get into position. We did not know that most of the British forces were marching south on the Post Road while we were heading in the opposite direction towards Princeton just out of sight due to the rolling terrain. We reached the outskirts of Princeton about daylight, came through some woods, and a field at the back of town where we saw some defensive earthworks that British soldiers had begun constructing just days before.

From an orchard-covered hill behind the house of a Dr. Bainbridge, I could see the British column ascending Cochran's Hill just across the Stony Brook. I saw this column suddenly reverse its direction and shortly after made out the beginning of a battle on farms south of us. It became apparent that General Washington's plan to attack the town had to be canceled, and the primary action would take place south of town. We did not get involved in the main battle but did help with taking prisoner retreating British soldiers.

- Text by Larry Kidder