



Princeton Battlefield Society
www.pbs1777.org

In January 1777, I was about 35 years old and in charge of a company of Philadelphia Associators with General Washington's army assigned to Colonel Cadwalader's brigade. We were at Trenton on January 2 and, after the battle that day, marched all night very rapidly around the British army and headed towards Princeton. Our brigade followed General Mercer's brigade as we started up a back road to surprise the British troops in Princeton. When Mercer's brigade turned left and crossed a farm, they ran into a British force. They exchanged fire and then were subjected to a bayonet charge in which General Mercer was mortally wounded and Colonel Haslet killed. Their men began to retreat. We marched quickly to support them and ran into some of the retreating men. The fighting went back and forth for a short time as the British put up a staunch defense against our more numerous troops and artillery. The advantage turned to our side when General Washington brought in New England troops on our right flank who formed up and withstood the enemy fire with its bullets whistling their thousand notes around our heads. With these troops joining us, we drove the British from the field in disarray.

After the British left the battlefield, we advanced toward the town and halted about a quarter-mile outside until the artillery could be brought up and our troops collected in better order. Then our artillery fire caused the final surrender of the British in town and many were captured. While we rested on our arms waiting to go into town to refresh ourselves, we heard cannon fire in our rear that we learned was at the Stony Brook bridge and that British troops were coming on. We began to march through town and then continued on. We could hear the enemy behind us as we walked on a road which had become very sloppy as the temperature rose. Our troops were so fatigued that many men just stopped, declaring they could go no further. When we finally got them moving, we reached Somerset Court House, I got my men into a loft at a tavern where there was a fine heap of straw, where some Hessians had lain. While my men usually avoided sleeping where other men had, for fear of vermin, they were glad to lie down and were asleep within minutes. I could not get even one man to go with me to look for food. - *Text by Larry Kidder*