Eyewitness of the American Revolution

Courtesy of the Marblehead Museum



Dec 25 – Colonel John Glover 14th Continental Regiment (Marbleheaders)

My regiment had crossed the Delaware River to Bucks County on December 8 after being pursued across the state of New Jersey by British troops following the battles we lost in and around the city of New York. In Thomas Paine's words it was now the time that tried men's souls and it looked like the whole Revolution could be lost. However, Washington planned to once again cross the Delaware, and deliver a blow to the British that would put us back on the path to success in winning our independence. His plan called for crossing our 2,400 or so veteran Continental soldiers back to New Jersey at McConkey's Ferry to march the nine miles to Trenton for a surprise dawn attack on the about 1,500 Hessians quartered there for the winter. My men would help get Washington's soldiers across the Delaware River using the large Durham boats he had collected there for that purpose. To cross the artillery, horses, and wagons he would also use the flat ferry boats that required the skills of ferry operators.

General Washington admired my regiment because we had helped him retreat from Long Island after the disastrous battle there the previous August. My men skillfully handled the boats that got the army successfully back across the East River to Manhattan Island. Men from the Marblehead region of Massachusetts made up my regiment and most of them had lots of experience with water craft of all sorts. My regiment was also very diverse and contained a number of Black and Indian men. While I valued all of my men, one man from Pennsylvania praised the fine qualities of my regiment but had to comment that, there were a number of Negroes, "which, to persons unaccustomed to such associations, had a disagreeable, degrading effect."

We began taking across boatloads of Continental soldiers about 5:00pm under the direction of Colonel Henry Knox whose voice was heard above the crash of floating ice which filled the river as my men used all their strength to get the army across. The work of my men and the ferry crews became almost impossible when a storm began brewing in the afternoon and developed into a violent northeaster at night. By mid-night, Washington's goal to complete the crossing, not everyone had crossed. *Text by Larry Kidder*.

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