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Eyewitness of the American Revolution



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January 3 1777
**Princeton
Battlefield**
Society
www.pbs1777.org

Courtesy of Ella Weller-Zembo,
34th Regiment of Foot



Dec 27 - Martha Reed

A young resident of Trenton



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During the day of December 27 my mother and my siblings set about trying to put our life back together after the previous day's battle. While many people we knew had fled from Trenton when the Hessians came and settled in for the winter, my mother had stayed with us children while my father was off with the army. Hessians had come to our house and taken many things from us, even after mother tried to convince them father was a British officer. When I awakened in the gray dawn after the stormy Christmas night I heard the beating of drums and the sound of firing. The Hessian soldiers occupying our house quickly left and all was uproar and confusion. Mother herded us to the cellar until the battle noises ceased, I heard neighbors calling to us to let us know it was safe to come out, that the Hessians were gone.

Today, with the Hessian occupiers gone, "my mother went all through the house, and found it had been ransacked and pillaged from garret to cellar. Her stores of household linen, mostly of her own spinning and her feather beds were gone – every article of silver had vanished – tables, and chairs were broken, furniture defaced, china and glass utterly ruined, while not a crumb remained of our winter stores." We also learned more about the damages to our town and other families caused by the battle. I learned that our next door neighbor had been killed on his doorstep, a bullet had struck the blacksmith as he was getting into his cellar, and many other townspeople were injured by chance shots. The daughter of a friend was slightly wounded when a musket ball hit her while running home from a neighbor's house. The musket ball only sent the comb in her hair flying. Cannon fire had damaged a number of houses and broken window glass lay everywhere. Dead horses that had pulled Hessian cannon were lying in the street and we learned that a number of badly wounded Hessians had been left in town along with several Hessian doctors. Several of the wounded Hessians died during the day. We knew it was going to take many months to restore our town and our lives, but at least the Hessians had been defeated and most made prisoner. We knew it was a great victory for our army, even if it meant some suffering for us that would take many months to get back to normal. *Text by Larry Kidder.*