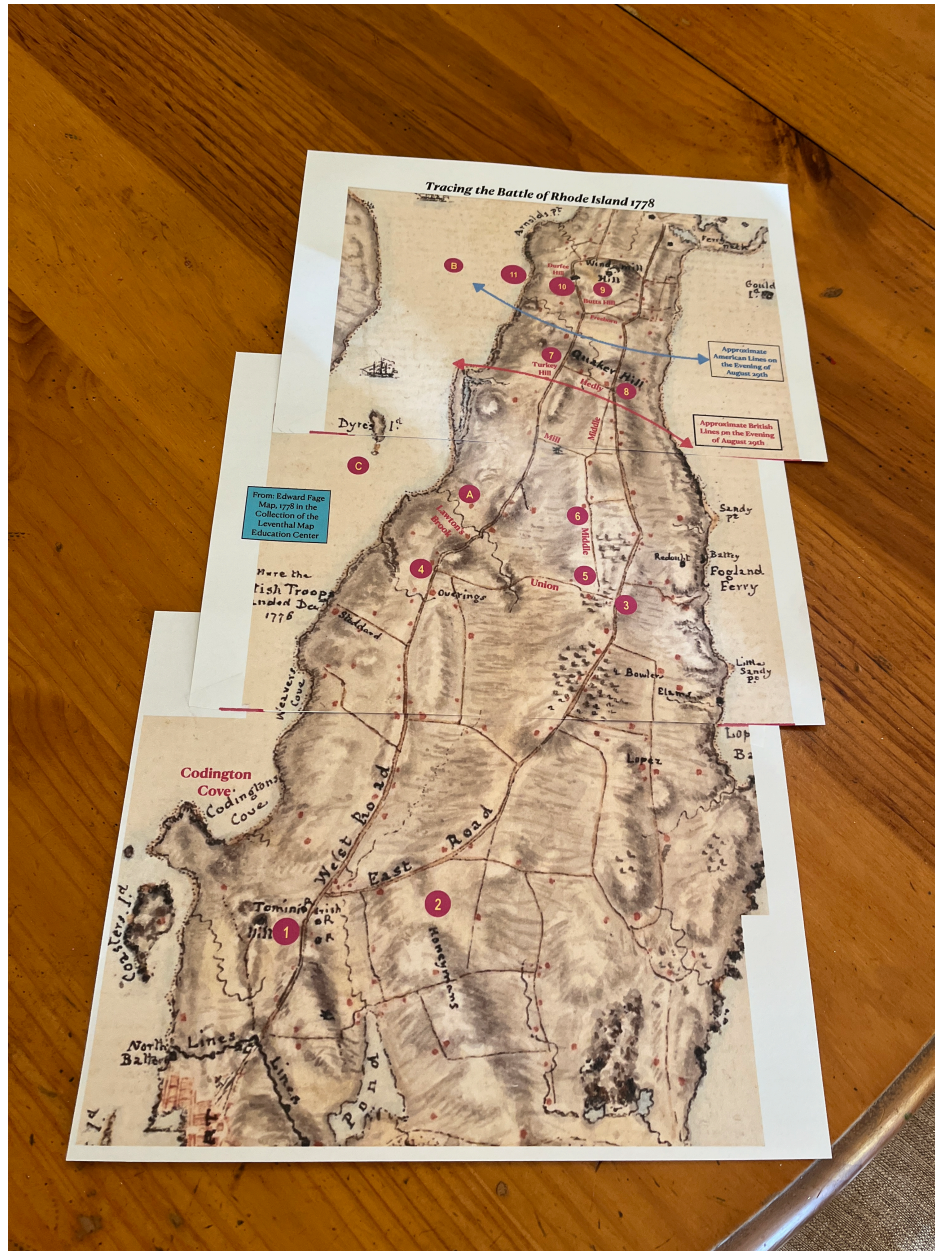


## Tracing the Battle of Rhode Island - Narration



This is a map based activity appropriate for Middle School to Adults. Participants can trace the skirmishes in the Battle of Rhode Island on a 1778 map.

By Gloria H. Schmidt  
For the Battle of Rhode Island Association



Action in the Battle of Rhode Island took place along East and West Roads. Sometimes there were two or more actions going on at approximately the same time. This is a brief simplified timeline to help us trace the events in the battle. It is drawn from Christian McBurney's account of the battle and British Soldier Frederick Mackenzie's Diary. This can be a three person activity with one reading the narrative, one moving American leaders and a third person moving the British and Hessian forces.

We hope you will follow along with the map that was created by Edward Fage. If you are tracing the action of a particular soldier or general, move their marker to the appropriate numbers.

The British and Hessian leaders are noted with a (B) and the American leaders are noted with an (A).

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#### American Leaders

Laurens  
Wigglesworth  
Livingston  
Ward with 1st RI  
Wade  
General Greene  
General Sullivan

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#### British and Hessian leaders

Prescott  
Smith  
Hessians (Lossburg) 1  
Hessians (Lossburg) 2  
Hessians ( Mallsburg)  
Pigot  
Campbell

British ships: Spitfire, Vigilant, Sphinx

### Starting Points: August 28, 1774

The British forces starting point is [1]. Their camp is around Tonomy Hill. **Place all the British and Hessian markers at [1]. Markers for the ships Spitfire, Vigilant, Sphinx should be at Coddington Cove.**

The American forces beginning point is [2]. They had gotten as far as Honeyman Hill in Middletown. **Place all American markers at {2}**

Overnight the American forces retreat towards East Road and West Road in Portsmouth. **The French navy is not coming back to help free Newport, so the American goal is to retreat safely off the island.**

August 29, 1778

Overnight.

1. **Move Livingston and Wade to the corner of East Road and Union St. [3].**
2. **Move Laurens to the corner of West Road and Union St. [4]**
3. **Move Wigglesworth to top of Quaker Hill [8]**
4. **Move Ward with 1st RI at Durfee Hill [10]**
5. **Move Greene and Sullivan to Butts Hill Fort [9]**

**The goal of these American forces is to stop the British advance long enough so that the Americans can retreat.**

Pre-Dawn: Captain Mackenzie (B) saw an empty American camp. He traveled to Pigot's (B) headquarters to inform him of withdrawal. Pigot decides to hamper the retreat. **The British goal is to prevent the Americans from successfully retreating.**

6:30 AM:

- General Prescott (B) moved out with the 38th and 54th Regiments to occupy fortifications at Honeyman's Hill in Middletown. **Move Prescott to [2].**
- The British held back these troops in case the Americans were making a run around the British defenses.
- Brigadier General Smith (B) marched toward Quaker Hill by East Road with 22nd and 33rd Regiments with the flank companies of the 38th and 54th. **Move Smith and Campbell down East Main toward location [3].** Smith had about 1800 troops.
- On West Road Hessian leader Von Malburg advanced toward Laurens (A). Behind them came Hessian Captain von Lossberg (B) leading battalions.
- **Move the Hessian markers (Lossburg 1&2 and Malsburg) down East Road to (4)**
- **Move Vigilant, Sphinx, Spitfire to position (B) in the Bay.**

7 AM:

- Hessian Von Malsburg (B) spotted Laurens (A) and Talbot (A) with their Light Corps behind stone walls to the south of Redwood House. Americans were driven back up West Road. **Move Lauren's marker halfway up towards Turkey Hill West Road.**
- At East Main and Union {3} Livingston's men (A) attacked Smith's men (B) from behind stone walls on East Road. **Smith's and Livingston's markers should be at [3]**
- Pigot orders Prescott to sent 54th Regiment and Brown's Regiment to reinforce Smith (B) on East Road. **Move Prescott marker up East Road toward [3]**

8 AM:

- Hessian Von Lossberg (B) sent troops toward Lauren's positions on three sides. Lossberg has 1800 men against 300 Americans under Lauren. **Laurens and Hessians markers should be halfway between [4] and [7] around Lawton Brook marked [A].** Laurens and the Americans had to retreat, but a group of American fighters was able to delay the Hessians by wounding one of their leaders so the Americans could get away.
- Campbell's troops (B) ran into group of Wade's (A) pickets by the intersection of East Road and Union Street. This was an ambush that cost the British many casualties. **Move Wade (A) and Campbell (B) to Union and Middle Road [5]**
- British moved up Middle Road and East Road toward Quaker Hill. **Move Wade up Middle Road with Campbell following them.**

8:30 AM:

- Laurens (A) and his Light Corps was forced to retreat across Lawton's Valley to the defensive works on a small height in front of Turkey Hill. Laurens was under orders to return to American lines. Lauren retreats to Turkey Hill. Laurens was told to retire to main army as soon as possible. **Move Laurens to Turkey Hill [7] and on to Butts Hill [9].**

- Hessian (B) attackers arrived on top of Turkey Hill. **Move Lossburg 1&2 Hessians to Turkey Hill. [7]**

9 AM:

- Wigglesworth's Regiment (A), Livingston's Advanced Guard (A) and Wade's pickets (A) waited for British at intersection of East Road, Middle Road and Hedley Street.
- **Move Wade and Livingston to [8] with Wigglesworth at [8].**
- **Move Campell, Smith and Prescott to the area around [8] Top of Quaker Hill.**
- Quaker Hill was the scene of intense fighting over British cannons, In the confusion Wigglesworth mistook Hessians (Lossburg) for Americans. **Move Lossburg 1 from West Main Road to Quaker Hill [8]**
- The Americans held their position for an hour and then Americans retreated toward Butts Hill.
- **Move Wade, Livingston, Wigglesworth to Butts Hill [9]**

9:30 AM:

- From top of Quaker Hill, Smith (B) could see strength of the American position.
- Smith was under orders not to begin a general engagement, so he decided against a frontal assault. Smith withdrew forces to top of Quaker Hill.

10 AM:

- Americans had positions on Durfee's Hill [10] and Butts Hill [9].
- Samuel Ward (A) and the 1st Rhode Island Regiment (Black Regiment (A)) held an Artillery Redoubt. His men repulsed Malsberg's (B) Hessians.
- **Move Malsberg to Durfee Hill [10]**

11:30 AM:

- Lossberg (B) ordered Malsberg's men (B) to try to attack Ward's (A) First Rhode Island Regiment position again.
- British ships Sphynx, Spitfire, and Vigilant shelled the American positions from the West shore, but they did little damage.
- The Americans held their position.

1PM:

- British ships planned to attack American positions.
- General Greene's (A) men dragged cannon down to beach and forced the British ships to retreat. **Move Greene to shore [11].**

2 PM:

- Pigot (B) reached Quaker Hill to observe the action. **Move Pigot from headquarters near Tominy Hill to Quaker Hill [8]**
- Pigot ordered other Hessian troops to move to Turkey Hill [7] with Lossberg's (B) troops.
- **Move Lossburg 1 back to Turkey Hill [7].**

4PM:

- General Glover (A) saw movement in British lines and ordered Tyler's Connecticut militia (A) and Titcomb's (A) Brigade of Massachusetts militia to positions behind stone walls (maybe Freeborn Street), but the British did not engage in battle.

7PM:

- More Hessian Regiments arrived at Lossberg's lines.



7PM (August 29) to 3AM (August 30) :

- There was sporadic artillery fire and light skirmishing. Musket and cannon shots were heard for seven hours.
- The Battle of Rhode Island was basically over.
- The Americans and British forces retired to their lines.

Over the next days the Americans were able to achieve their goal of a successful retreat. The British hampered the retreat, but did not stop it.

Pigot's official casualty report was 260 - 38 killed, 210 wounded and 12 missing. Sullivan's casualty report was 211 - 30 killed, 137 wounded and 44 missing.

Resources:

The timeline was culled from McBurney's Rhode Island Campaign.  
Added information from Frederick Mackenzie's Diary - Vol. 2  
Map base by Edward Fage, 1778. (In Leventhal Map Collection)

Directions for markers

Cardstock may work best. Print and cut out markers. Turn over an end of the marker and tape a penny to the bottom to weigh the marker down.

Sort the markers with blue edged together and red edged together.

Print out the three map segments. There are red lines to help you tape the segments together. You might need to trim the edges to make a smooth transition from one map piece to the other.

Begin tracing the skirmishes along with the narrative. Wait to move markers until the narration asks for a move.

Directions for map base.

Cardstock may work best. Print the three map pages. There are red lines on the edges of the pages to help you line them up. The bottom map (towards Newport) does not need to be trimmed. On the middle section trim the lower white border off - leave no white. Line up middle section on top of the bottom section. Adjust the sections so that the roads line up. On the top section trim the lower white border using red lines as a guide. Put it on top of the middle section and match the roads. Tape the sections together.

<p>Add breaks, page numbers, links, and more.</p> <p><b>LAURENS</b></p>	<p><b>WIGGLESWORTH</b></p>	<p><b>LIVINGSTON</b></p>
<p><b>WARD AND 1ST RI</b></p>	<p><b>WADE</b></p>	<p><b>GENERAL GREENE</b></p>
<p><b>GENERAL SULLIVAN</b></p>	<p><b>PRESCOTT</b></p>	<p><b>SMITH</b></p>
<p><b>HESSIANS LOSSBURG 1</b></p>	<p><b>HESSIANS LOSSBURG 2</b></p>	<p><b>HESSIANS MALSBURG</b></p>
<p><b>PIGOT</b></p>	<p><b>CAMPBELL</b></p>	<p><b>SPHYNX Ship</b></p>
<p><b>SPITFIRE Ship</b></p>	<p><b>VIGILANT Ship</b></p>	

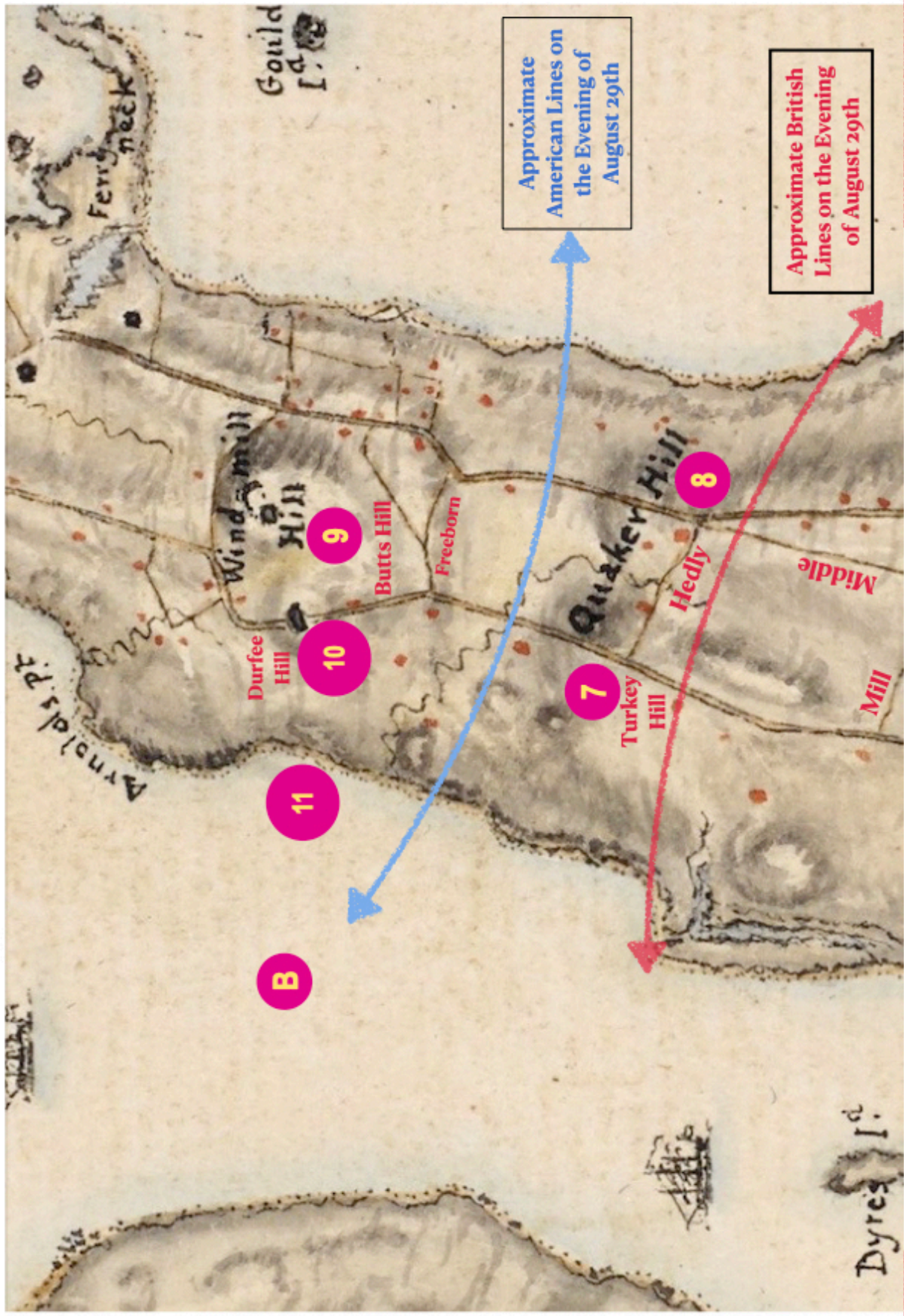


Fold over one end of the marker and tape a penny to the bottom to weigh the marker down.

British and Hessian markers are outlined in red.

American markers are outlined in blue.

# Tracing the Battle of Rhode Island 1778







From: Edward Fage  
Map, 1778 in the  
Collection of the  
Leventhal Map  
Education Center



