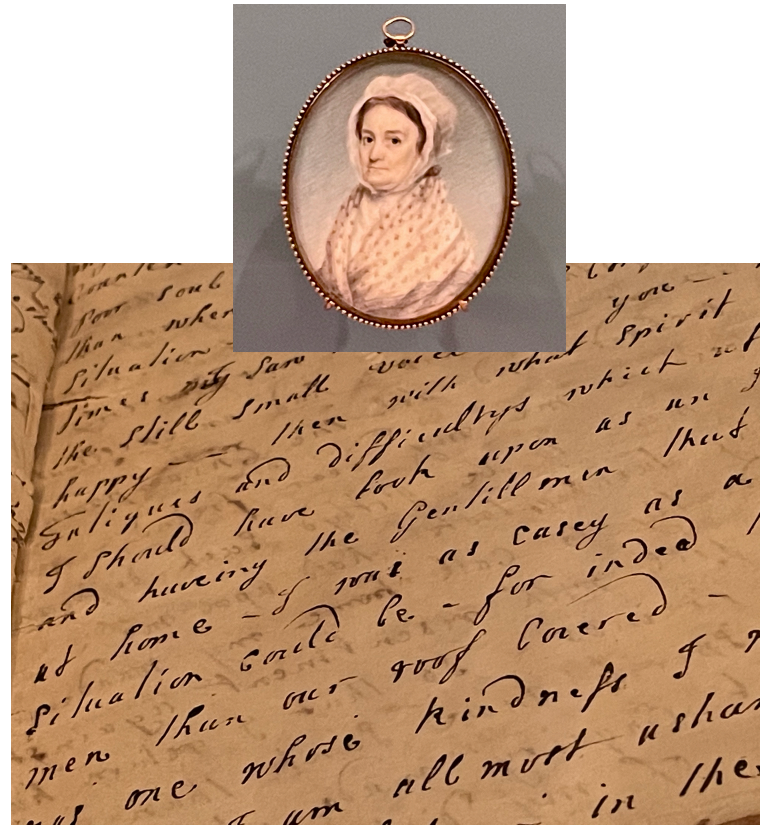
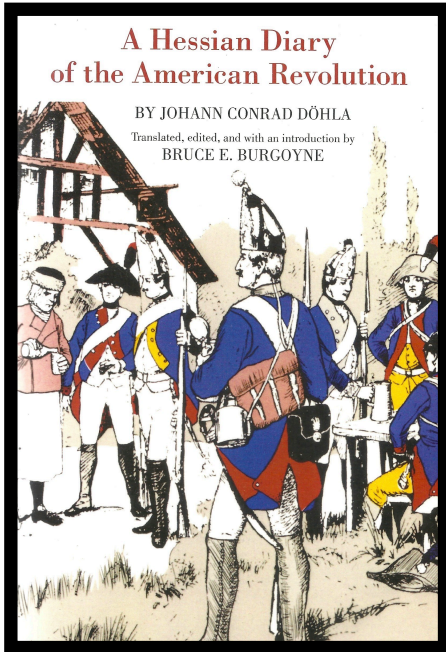


WORKING WITH EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

A LESSON PLAN FOR 7-12TH GRADE



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Eyewitness to the Battle: Working with diaries that record the Battle of Rhode Island

Introduction:

These lesson plans are aimed at helping students to “Think Like Historians.” The plans address Rhode Island State Social Studies Standards for 7th and 8th grade.

HP 1: History is an account of human activities that is interpretive in nature.

HP 1 (7-8) –1 Students act as historians, using a variety of tools (e.g., artifacts and primary and secondary sources) by...

- a. Identifying appropriate sources and using evidence to substantiate specific accounts of human activity.
- b. Drawing inferences from Rhode Island History about the larger context of history.
- c. Asking and answering historical questions, evaluating information, organizing the information in terms of relevance and comprehensiveness.

Essential questions:

- a. How can historical tools help us understand the past?
- b. What is a primary source?
- c. How do we differentiate between things from long ago and today?
- d. How does the information gathered enhance our understanding of the past?

Potential Topics:

Related CCSS: Reading: Informational Text Reading: Range of Reading

Reading: Key Ideas and Details

Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

Primary sources provide valuable firsthand information. They speak to us in a personal voice and through their stories they bring history alive. They represent one person’s view of historic events. These letters, diaries, and photographs create personal stories that students can relate to. By comparing conflicting primary sources, students learn to carefully examine actual documents, as well as the words they contain, evaluate evidence and point of view, and develop critical thinking skills about the past that they can even use to view events of today.

Instructions for Teachers:

Explain the definition of a primary source to your students. Ask them to think of examples of primary sources. Ask why they think primary sources are a valuable way to study history. Teachers may want to use the slide presentation that goes with this lesson.

Describe the purposes and uses of journal/diary writing to the students. Ask whether any of them have written letters, or if there is another, similar, form of communication that they use to exchange information with their friends.

Questions:

1. Who wrote this diary entry?
2. When and where was this diary entry written?
3. What is this diary entry describing?
5. Who was the intended audience?
6. What was the point of view of the diary writer?
7. What does the diary entry tell you about the Rhode Island Campaign?
9. How could you check the accuracy of the information in the diary?

This lesson provides practice in using a primary source (diaries) to pull out information about the Siege of Newport and the Battle of Rhode Island.

Primary sources are materials created at the time we are studying. Photographs, newspaper articles, artifacts, letters, documents are all examples.

Diaries may not seem as important as documents, but they often give us a honest of view by someone who witnessed the event. Diaries usually are written for the writer and not to influence anyone else. They bring us closer to the everyday life of the eyewitness.

Autobiographical accounts written at a later date are also considered primary sources. Letters, diaries, journal entries, public records as well as contemporaneous newspapers articles offer solid examples of this type of primary source.

The students will work with entries from a diary, organize the information they read and use secondary sources such as histories, maps created later and timelines to make sense of what they learn.

Suggested Sequence

- Discussion of what primary and secondary sources are to a historian.
- Focus on role of diaries as primary sources
- Introduction to Siege of Newport and Battle of Rhode Island - using history, maps, and timeline
- Small groups read one account by a diarist of Siege and Battle of Rhode Island.
- Students in small group use a graphic organizer to evaluate the diary.
- Whole class comparisons of diary entries - one student from each group presents.
- Discussion of what we learned about Siege and Battle from the diaries.
- Discussion of what the differences were - biases, exaggerations, etc.

Some questions we need to keep in mind. Who does the the diarist seems to be writing to: a friend, a wiser self, a future self?

1. What other literary forms does a given diary most resemble? Does the diary read like a letter, a novel, a history book?

2. What kinds of events does the diarist write about? Daily events, notable events?
3. Does the diarist always write in the first person "I" or does he sometimes write about "we" or like an observer.
4. What bias might the diarist have? What are the differences between the accounts of the English and German writers versus the American diarists?

Background to understanding the diaries

The Battle of Rhode Island took place in Portsmouth, Rhode Island on August 29, 1778. To understand the importance of the battle, you must set it in context. From December of 1776 to October of 1779 the British occupied Rhode Island (Aquidneck Island) based primarily in Newport. This occupation set the stage for the Battle almost two years later.

In July of 1778 the British still controlled the island, but now the French were allied with the Americans. The five-week Rhode Island Campaign was a joint effort of the allies, the French and Americans, to remove the British and their allies. On July 17, 1778, George Washington received a letter from Congress proposing this operation to free Rhode Island. At the same time, Count d'Estaing, the commander of the French expeditionary force agreed to participate in this operation. On July 24th, Major General John Sullivan received orders to gather a force of 15,000 troops to assist the French in removing the British occupiers from the island. On August 10, 1778 Sullivan started moving his troops from Tiverton to Portsmouth by way of the Howland Ferry. This was planned as a joint effort with Americans working by land and the French working from the sea. American troops began to push toward Newport, an effort that we know as the "Siege of Newport." They were waiting for the French to land and help drive out the British.

A fierce storm damaged the French Navy and they sailed to Boston for repairs, but Sullivan and his troops were already on Rhode Island. When Sullivan received word that the French would not come back, he and his officers made the decision to lift the siege and retreat off the island. The American forces had been weakened as militias left the island. The Battle of Rhode Island was this action that took place as Sullivan tried to extract his troops and the British attempted to block their retreat. Sullivan succeeded in ushering his army safely off the island overnight. The 1st Rhode Island Regiment, (also known as the Black Regiment) was noted for the way they held their position against fierce attacks. Although the British held the island for another year, the battle sent a message to the British that their position on the island was not secure.

Timeline: Rhode Island Campaign - Siege of Newport and Battle of Rhode Island.

July 29th: French general d'Estaing met with American Commanders when he arrived at Point Judith. Plans called for Sullivan's American forces to cross from Tiverton to Aquidneck Island and advance to the British fortifications at Butts Hill. The French would land on Conanicut Island (Jamestown) before arriving in Newport to cut off the British forces.

August 9th: Fearing an attack, British forces abandoned Butts Hill and General Pigot withdrew his forces to Newport as the French were landing on Conanicut. Sullivan discovered that the British had abandoned Butts Hill, so he crossed over to Aquidneck and occupied the high fortifications. He called for the heavy cannon at Fox Point to be moved to Portsmouth. Sullivan was supposed to wait until August 10.

August 11: Most of the American troops were camped about Butts Hill. The diary of Rev. Manasseh Cutler who served as chaplain for American General Titcomb's Brigade, provides a few glimpses of what was going on around Butts Hill. He wrote on August 11th that at 4 o'clock the whole army paraded and passed in review by the general officers. "The right wing of the army was commanded by General Greene and the left by the Marquis de Lafayette."

August 12-13: A hurricane hit that destroyed men, horses, camps and supplies on both the British and American sides. Rhode Island's governor (William Greene) replaced the ruined powder on the American side.

August 16: As the Americans built earthworks and dug trenches toward Newport, American reserves and the sick who were healthy enough to do garrison work remained at Butts Hill which served as Sullivan's headquarters.

August 17: Sullivan calls a council of War. All officers recommend holding positions until they could be reinforced.

August 24: Cutler's entry on Monday, August 24th "As much of the heavy baggage moved off last night as possible. A body of men retreated to strengthen the works at Butts' Hill. At the lines – heavy fire – army preparing to retreat."

August 26: Americans now know that the British fleet is coming and that it would be at least three weeks before French would arrive. They begin to send their heavy cannon back to northern locations like Butts Hill. The Council of War again determines to hold American positions until they could be reinforced. General Sullivan began to prepare for a retreat. He knew that enemy reinforcements were coming and his best course was to retreat. Cutler's story ends on August 26th when he, like many in the militias, escaped to Tiverton and away from battle.

Battle of Rhode Island Timeline: August 29, 1778

Dawn:

*Captain Mackenzie (B) saw empty American works. He travels to Pigot's (B) headquarters to inform him of withdrawal. Pigot decides to hamper the retreat.

6:30 AM:

*General Prescott (B) moved out with the 38th and 54th Regiments to occupy fortifications at Honeyman's Hill in Middletown.

*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.

*On West Road Captain von Malsburg (B) and Captain Noltenius (B) with Hessian Chasseurs advanced toward Laurens (A). Behind them came Major General von Lossberg (B) leading two Anspach battalions.

7 AM:

*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.

*Livingston's men (A) attacked Smith's men (B) from behind stone walls on East Road. Commander Pigot ordered von Huyme's Regiment (B) and Fanning's Regiment (B) to support von Lossberg (B) on West Road.

*Pigot (B) orders Prescott (B) to send 54th Regiment and Brown's Regiment to reinforce Smith (B) on East Road.

8 AM:

*Von Lossberg (B) sent troops toward Lauren's positions on three sides.

*Coore's and Campbell's troops (B) ran into group of Wade's (A) pickets by the intersection of East Road and Union Street.

*British moved down Middle Road and East Road toward Quaker Hill.

8:30 AM:

*Von Lossberg (B) came to aid of Hessian Chasseurs.

*Laurens (A) and his Light Corps was forced to retreat across Lawton's Valley to the works on a small height in front of Turkey Hill.

*Lauren retreats to Turkey Hill. Lauren was told to retire to main army as soon as possible.

Hessian (B) attackers arrived on top of Turkey Hill.

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.

*Quaker Hill was the scene of intense fighting.

*Americans retreated toward Butts Hill and Glover's (A) lines.

9:30 AM:

*From top of Quaker Hill, Smith (B) could see strength of Glover's 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:

*Von Lossberg's (B) troops arrived at Turkey Hill.

*Americans had positions on Durfee's Hill and Butts Hill.

*Samuel Ward (A) and the 1st Rhode Island Regiment (Black Regiment (A)) held an Artillery Redoubt. *His men repulsed von der Malsberg's (B) men.

11:30 AM:

*Von Lossberg (B) ordered von der Malsburg'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.

2 PM:

*Pigot (B) reached Quaker Hill to observe the action.

*Pigot ordered Landgrave (B) and Dittfurth Regiment (B) to march to von Lossberg's (B) troops.

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.

7PM:

*Landgrave (B) and Dittfurth (B) Regiments arrived at von 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.

Diary #1 - Johann Dohla

A Hessian View of the Rhode Island Campaign: The Diary of Johann Dohla

The diary of Johann Conrad Dohla gives us a unique account of the Rhode Island Campaign. Dohla was one of the Hessian (German) troops whose services were sold to George III to fight against the Rebels in the American Revolution. He arrived in America in 1777 as a private in the Ansbach-Bayreuth group of Hessians. In June of 1777 he arrived in Newport, Rhode Island. In this blog I will include part of his diary entries from August 1778 that help us understand what was happening on Aquidneck Island (Rhode Island) during the Rhode Island Campaign.

August 7, 1778

Our Bayreuth Regiment sent a large command to the region beyond Tominy Hill. All Turkish and Indian corn and all other grains on Rhode Island were destroyed. All stone walls and fences around the fields were torn down. All trees were chopped down, and many houses torn down and burned down in order to detect sooner the arrival of the enemy crossing over from New England.

August 9, 1778

.... During the night, after tattoo (a military lights out), our regiment had to fall out in the greatest haste and march forward three English miles because the rebels were crossing over to Rhode Island in many boats. We remained under the open sky throughout the night and the next morning returned to our camp. Also during the night a Hessian ensign and three men, and an English lieutenant and two men, went over to the enemy.

August 11, 1778.

We moved our camp about one hour forward and again set up our tents near Tominy Hill. This Tominy Hill, an exceptionally strong hill fortification on a high cliff, is the place to which our troops would fall back in an emergency.

August 17, 1778

At work on the fortifications. We laid out a line and dug the trench. Everywhere batteries and redoubts, as well as connecting trenches, were completed all along our line, and everything soundly reinforced with wood. The fortifications work continued day and night without let up, and we had many hardships. Within or lines ten principal fortified points were played out namely: 1. Stone Battery, 2. The North Trench, 3. Somerset, 4. The Irish Redoubt, 5. Fort Fanning, 6. Fort Clinton, 7. Fort Percy, 8. the Ice Redoubt, 9. Prince Dauneck, and 10, Conanicut. The enemy, in a little less than an hour, set up a big camp opposite, set his posts and sentries very near us, and fortified himself in the region of Boxland Ferry.

August 19, 1778

At noon today the enemy, after completing his battery on this side of the heights, began to fire cannon at our camp and defenses and to throw in bombs. Therefore we had to

change our front and camped all together behind the fortifications of Tominy Hill as we camped in front of it previously. eHere we were safe from the balls and bombs. The batteries and fortifications of both sides fired heavily, and that continued unceasingly, only ending during the blackness of night.

August 22, 1778

In the morning I went on work detail at the fortifications. During the night the French ships, which had been before the Newport Harbor, disappeared and no one knew where they had gone.

August 28, 1778

This night a 25 man picket from our regiment, commanded by Lt. Ciracy, was attacked by a strong party of Americans, who had crept up through a field of Indian corn. One of our men was killed in this action, and three men were wounded. The enemy, however, had to pull back and take flight. Also tonight, the Americans withdrew the artillery with which they had been firing at us and their heavy baggage to New England, but continuously harassed our outposts in order to cover their withdrawal.

August 29, 1778

When during the early morning, we began to fire our cannon at the enemy, there was no answer in return. Therefore, two thousand men from the army, including our two regiments, were ordered to search out and pursue the retreating enemy, They marched for about three English miles, where they caught up with the enemy, who opposed us as much as possible and, grouped together in order to frustrate our attack, amounted to about ten thousand men. Finally, when the cannon began firing at them, they took flight. They were pursued, and the firing from both sides lasted throughout the day. In our advance we had to climb over many stone walls, five to six feet high, which served as fences around the fields. The enemy often took post behind these and fired through the openings where stones had been removed. Despite this difficulty, we chased them back into their fortifications, of which one, called "Windmill Hill," had many heavy cannon. Since a farther advance was not advisable, we stood still until the cannon arrived; from which time, throughout the day, each side fired against the other. During this heavy fighting our regiment, as we were on the left wing, engaged in combat the entire day. We lost no more than three me....They were killed by a cannonball, and two men were wounded. ...

August 31, 1778

In the morning, as it became apparent that the enemy had completely left the island, the vacated defenses were immediately occupied by the English and Hessians, and we began to set up camp near Windmill Hill.

Diary #2 - Noah Robinson

From Fired a Gun at the Rising of the Sun. Robert Geake. Diary of Noah Robinson of Attleborough.

Noah Robinson had gone out to war with the militia on a number of occasions. This time he served in place of his uncle who was paying him. Robinson was educated and often served as a scribe in his units. In the entries below, I have chosen to share the pieces of writing that speak most about the Rhode Island Campaign. Noah Robinson was among the troops being gathered for General Sullivan in Tiverton to take part in a French and American effort to take Aquidneck Island from British control.

Wednesday, August 5, 1778: Noah reports that he "Heard one of the Enemies ships was blown up.Towards Night heard two more British ships were blown up." This is a reference to the Cerebus, Orpheus, the Juno and the Lark, British ships whose captains were given the order that under no circumstances would they allow their ships to be captured. With the French ships threatening, the British captains rain their ships aground and set them on fire.

Friday 7th: Gen. Varnum's & Gen. Glovers brigade, Col. Jackson & Col. Shearburne's Regt of Continental troops crossed the ferry ..

Saturday 8th: "...about Twelve o'clock marched on through heat and dust to Howland's Ferry and encamped on the ground. Heard some firing towards Newport."

Sunday 9th August: "...About eight o'clock pack up, took boat & crossed Howland Ferry on to R. Island. Formed and marched boldly up to the Fourth on the N. end of ye island then was informed ye enemy had retreated to the end of ye island so we lay on our post until about four o'clock when a shower came up so that we got very wet.."

Monday, 10th August: " ..Much firing below ye island. "

"Author Geake notes that day there was an exchange of fire between the French ships and the British batteries. By the next day, August, 11th, the whole army paraded and they had general orders to march by 6 AM to Newport. By August 15th they marched to within two and a half miles of Newport. "

August 16th Noah comments that "since last night our men have been very delinquent in trench making."

(In his annotations author Geake comments the some 800 men were digging trenches for the coming assault. 400 men were digging a four cannon battery just north of Green End Road in Middletown. Another 400 were making a concealed trench from the first battery down the west slope of Honeyman Hill.)

Wednesday, August 19th, Noah could hear cannonading and he heard that some of the men were killed at the lines the night before. On Thursday the 20th of August Robinson

reports that he washed his clothes, there was cannonading and he heard that the French fleet returned to Newport harbor.

By August 24 he heard the French fleet had definitely left the harbor.

(Author Geake's notes add needed background to the brief entries. On the eve of battle, August 28th, Robinson noted that "At 2 o'clock a man was hanged in our camp." Geake tells us that a soldier from Webb's Regiment of Continentals was hanged for desertion because Sullivan wished to set an example.)

On Saturday, August 29th, Noah reports that "Last night (8/28/1778) about 8 o'clock struck tents and returned back to the N. end of Island, about 9 o'clock an action began, the enemy pressing on our light party. It appeared there would be a general action however our Army looking for the rights of their country; fighting like heroes, the enemy dare not press on our main body."

(Author Geake's notes tell us that Robinson was one of about the 120 Bristol County men which were in the rear guard of Titcomb's brigade.)

Robinson writes that action ceased at about 4 PM but cannon shot continued. He writes on Sunday, August 30: "Last night returned to our former station (from the wall) and blanketed down. (Some cannonading on both sides). Dug an intrenchment, drawer some provision and Rum &c. The loss of killed and wounded yesterday I can not certify but it appeared considerable on both sides.

August 31st Robinson reported that "Last night (August 30) mustered up about 5 o'clock, evacuated the lines. The whole Army crossed H(Howland) Ferry. Encamped for the night...

Diary #3. Israel Angell

Israel Angell was a descendant of Thomas Angell, who came to Providence with Roger Williams. He was born in North Providence on August 24, 1740. Angell joined the rebel cause from the beginning. When an army was formed by the General Assembly of Rhode Island in 1775, he was commissioned as a Major. With the formation of the Second Rhode Island Regiment, Israel Angell was elected Lieutenant-Colonel. The regiment went to join the army under Washington. Command of the regiment was given to Angell, on Jan. 13, 1777 when the Colonel in charge died. His regiment was detached from the main army and sent to Rhode Island to fight with General Sullivan in the operations against the enemy on Aquidneck Island.

August 20th, 1778.

A cloudy foggy morning but broak away by nine o'clock and the Canon begun to play. Gov. Bradford Come to my quarters this day and Dind with us. I was ordered on duty to day and Marched of with a detachment of 500 men as a Covering party at five oclock P.M. and Released Colonel Wigglesworth,' the french fleet not being yet heard of Spread great consternation in the Army.

August 21st.

A pleasant Morning but Some foggy there was an Exceeding heavy fire from both Armys to day, with Cannon and Hoitzers we had but one man hurt and he had the Calf of his leg Shot away by a Cannon Shot as he was going to Carry his mesmates Some Vittles I was Released by Col. Jacobs about 8 oclock in the evening.

August 22d, 1778.

A Cloudy thick morning with a North East wind and Cold we had a great Number of Cannon Carried to the different Batteries last Evening in order to open upon the Enemy this morning, but the weather being thick prevented our beginning the fire so soon as we Should had the weather have been clear. on Circumstance I forgot to mention the night before last after I had finished my journal for that Day there was an Express come to headquarters from Count De Estaing the french Admiral who had arived and lay without the light hous and yesterday we saw the Ships two of them had ben Dismasted in the late Storm one was the Admirals ship she was totally dismasted the others had her Mizen mast Carried away, and her main top one Simmons from Providence was badly wounded by the Bursting of a Shell there was but litt firing to day to what there was yesterday.

August 23d, 1778.

A thick morning and Cool, the Enemy flung Shells the Greatist part of the night past, and this morning the Batteries on our Side was opened on the Enemy and a most terrible Cannonade kept up during the day.

I dind with Genl Greene to day, the french fleet Left us to day bound to Boston and I think left us in a most Rascally manner and what will be the Event God only knows we

had one man kill'd and one or two wounded, one Eighteen pounder and one Brass ten inch mortar was split to day but kild no man.

August 24th, 1778.

A Smoking thick morning the Enemy. Continued throwing Shells all the night past. and to day the Cannonade Continued very Sevear I and Col Olney was Curious Enough to measure all the Covered way which was 1512 yards. in the afternoon we got our thirteen inch mortar to play and flung three Shell but did no execution they broak in the air as the fues was two Short.

August 25th.

A clear hott morning and a sevear Cannonade and Bumbarding Still kept up and Continued the whole Day, we got off some of our heavier Baggage to day in order to make a Retreat of the Island in Case necessity required it Major Blodget came to Camp to day from the westward but brought nothing new I sent off my marque and went and took quarters with Col. Livingston and Major Huntingdon at night we mustered all the teams we had and proceeded to the lower works in order to git off all the Cannon and mortar as a Retreat was Determined upon.

August 26.

Clear and Exceeding hott about Eleven o'clock there was a Allarm it being Reported that the Enemy was a Coming out but proved falls and we rested in peace this day.

August 27th August, 1778.

Cloudy and rained a little this morning but Soon broke away and was hott we met with som misfortune last Evening. I had one Ensign and 14 men taken prisoners by the British troops as they was a Setting their sentries the Ensign was John Viol. Genl. Varnum formed an expedition against a picquet which lay near our right wing, which proved unfortunate being drove off with the Loss of one Lt and 3 privates I was the officer of the Day to day. three large Ships arrived in the harbor about two o'clock Suppos'd to be from New York I din'd with Col. Greene thro' day and spent the Greatest part of the afternoon in Visiting the Guard

August 28th, 1778.

A Clear Morning and very Cool. Several Accidents happened during the night past, in the first place we was ordered to strike our tents and march of by Eight o'clock in the Evening to the North End of the Island. and the Order of March given out. but the order was Countermanded and we were ordered to tarry on the Ground till further orders last evening I had one man kill'd by our own people a Sentries on the right of one of the picquets discovering one of the Sentries on the left of the other picquet which formed the line of Sentries and chalinging him he either did not hear or refused to Answer and the other Sentries fired on him Shott him through his knec and he Expired very Soon there was a Considerable of firing between the sentries.

August 29th, 1778.

A Clear morning and Very Cool the () Recd orders last evening to Strike their tents and march to the north end of the island; the advanced piquet was to come off at 12 o'clock the enemy finding that we had left our ground pursued with all possible speed. Come up with our piquet about sunrise and a smart firing begun, the piquet repulsed the British troops 2 or 3 times but was finally obliged to retreat as the Enemy brought a number of field pieces against them the Enemy was soon check'd by our Cannon in coming up to our main body and they formed on Quaker Hill and we took possession of Buttses Hill the left wing of the British army was Composed of the Hessians who Attackt our right wing and a Severe engagement Ensued in which the Hessians was put to flight and beat of the ground with a Considerable loss our loss was not very great but I cannot ascertain the number. I was ordered with my Regt to a Redoubt on a Small hill which the Enemy was a trying for and it was with Difficulty that we got there before the Enemy. I had 3 or 4 men kill'd and wounded to day at night I was ordered with my Reg to lie on the lines I had not Slept then in two nights more than two or three hours the Regt had eat nothing during the whole Day this was our situation to goe on guard, but we marched off Chearfully and took our post.

August 30th.

A Cloudy morning and the wind very high it rained a Considerable in the night the Enemy Remained on their Ground this morning two English frigats Came up yesterday to prevent our retreat but could do but little they Still Remained here. I was Relieved this morning and got Some provisions and being much worn out for the want of sleep went to a hous and took a good knap there was a Cannonade kept up to day and Some small arms from the Sentries at night we Recd orders to Retreat off the Island which we did without the loss of anything, this Retreat was in Consequence of an Express from Genl Washington informing Gen Sullivan that the British Ships of war and transports had sailed from New York Some days before.

August 31st, 1778.

Our retreat off the Island was completed by three o'clock this morning it is Supos'd that the Enemy attempted a Retreat last Evening but after finding that we Had Retreated they Returned to their ground as it was late in the morning before they took possession of the forts we left one accident happened yesterday was forgot to be mentioned in that days journal Lt Arnold of the artillery was killed accidentally as he had fired his Piece Stept off to see where the Shot Struck and Steping before the mussel of another Gun as the officer gave the word fire the ball went through his body blo'd him too peaces his Body hung together by only the Skin of his belly, one Arm was blown Clear off After we had Crost at howlands ferry we Encampt about a mile from Sd. ferry where we tarried this day at Night Rec'd orders to Strike our tents next morning and Embark on board our Boats and Land near Warren as Genl Varnums Brigade was to be stationed Between warren and Bristol. Genl Cornells at Rowlands ferry Genl Glovers at Providence Col. Comdt Green at warwick and Greenwich.

Diary #4. Stephan Popp

Stephan Popp during his participation in the American Revolution as a member of the regiment sent from the principality of Bayreuth in support of the British.

Popp, [Stephan] [from old catalog]. Popp's Journal, 1777-1783. Philadelphia, 1902.

August 5.-Many ships sunk in the harbor to keep out the French--3 Frigates were burned.

August 8.-8 French men of war engaged in a heavy cannonade with the British ships and forts. Our fleet was busy signalling and many Rebels crossed at Bristol Ferry.

August 10.- The French fleet left the harbor under heavy fire and sailed away.

August 11.-Encamped on Tammany Hill? and made a strong position. Many of the Anspach Regiment deserted, rather than work hard, but we exchanged shots with the Rebels who were also strengthening their position.

August 14.-Had a violent storm of rain and wind for forty-eight hours, the worst in all my campaigns.

August 17.-The Rebels, 20,000 strong, under Gen' Sullivan were in full view.

August 19.-Moved to the rear of Tammany Hill to escape the heavy fire of the Rebel guns.

August 20.- The French fleet returned.

August 29.-but sailed away again in the night.

August 29.-A sharp engagement with the Rebels, at 7A.M. Adjutant General Lt. Milzenburg gave us orders to march, and we soon came in view of the enemy, protected by stone walls,-we exchanged musketry fire until the cannon were in position and opened on them,-the enemy fell back and we drove them to Windmill Hill, inflicting a heavy loss on them.

August 30,-The enemy left the island, although we had only 6000 men, far less than their force.

Diary #5 Frederick Mackenzie - August 29, 1778

As soon as the day broke this Morning and we could see as far as the Enemy's Encampment it was observed that their tents were struck; I went immediately on top of Dudley's house, and when it grew lighter, I could plainly perceive that the Rebels had struck their whole Camp, and had marched off; hardly a man was to be seen in their Batteries or Trenches. I rode as fast as possible to General Pigot's quarters in Newport and informed him of it, and returned to the Camp with his orders for all the troops to get under arms with the utmost expedition. The General came to Irishes Redoubt by the time the Troops were assembled, and being satisfied that the Rebels had quitted their position, he gave orders for a part of the Army to march out, in three Columns, to pursue them, but to advance with caution, and not bring on an Action with a part of our force. The right Column was composed of the 38th, and 54th Regiments under the Command of Major General Prescott, who was directed to march over Easton's beach, enter the left of the Enemy's encampment, and take possession of all their works on Honeyman's hill, where he was to wait further orders. The Center Column was composed of the Flank Companies of the 38th & 54th, and the 22d, & 43rd Regiments, under the Command of Brigadier General Smith. This Column marched out at Irishes Redoubt, and proceeded on the East road towards Quaker hill. The left Column was composed of the Hessian Chasseurs, and the two Anspach Battalions, under the Command of Major Genl Lossberg; this Column marched out at Irishes Redoubt, & proceeded by the West road towards General Smith's late quarters on that road. The troops began to march about half past 6 o'Clock.

The right Column proceeded to the heights beyond Honeyman's hill without meeting any part of the Enemy. The Centre Column had got as far as the Blacksmith's on the East road, when it was observed that the left Column had fallen in with some of them near Mr Overing's, where there was a good deal of firing. General Pigot having received information of this, and that the Enemy were in force in the neighbourhood of Quaker hill, sent orders to Major General Prescott to detach the 54th Regiment to reinforce Brigadier General Smith, & at the same time ordered Brown's Regiment to march from the lines for the same purpose. Huynes, & Fanning's Regiments were also ordered to march by the West road to reinforce Major General Lossberg. The Regiments of Landgrave, Dittfourth, & Bunau, remained in the lines with General Pigot; for even at this time there were apprehensions that the Rebels had only drawn off towards the East side of the Island with an intention of drawing us out from the lines, and cutting in between us and the town.

The Chasseurs, who headed Major General Lossberg's Column were opposed near Mr Overing's by a few of the Enemy, who were soon forced from their position; and the Major General having been joined by Huynes's & Fanning's Regiment, advanced as far as Turkey hill, near which a considerable body of the Rebels were drawn up, but being attacked with great spirit by the Chasseurs, Huynes's and Fanning's, they were soon driven from thence and obliged to retire as far as the Artillery Redoubt, where they formed in force. Major General Lossberg formed his Column behind Turkey hill, and from it cannonaded the Enemy in front. During this time Brigadier General Smith's Column was advancing on the East road, but did not meet with any part of the Rebels until they came very near Shearman's house on Quaker hill, near which a body of about

700 of them were drawn up behind the walls of the cross road leading to the Windmill; as the Column advanced without having flanking parties out, or taking the usual precautions, they were close to the Rebels before they discovered them, and received from them a heavy fire which did a good deal of execution; the Flank Companies immediately turned out of the road and attacked the Enemy, while the Column (consisting only of the 22d, & 43rd, for the 54th & Brown's had not yet come up) pushed on along the road thro' a heavy fire, as far as Shearman's, when the Rebels gave way, and were drove with precipitation and loss down Quaker hill to the cross road leading to the Artillery Redoubt. At the moment the Rebel Corps near Shearman's gave way, a considerable reinforcement was coming up the hill to them, but they took to their heels along with the rest, and did not stop till they came to the Cross road.

The Rebels had no Cannon with them on Quaker hill but when they formed at the Artillery Redoubt, and in the Cross road they fired some 4prs at the Troops on Turkey hill, and Quaker hill, but without much effect. The 54th and Brown's joined Brigadier General Smith soon after he had driven the Rebels from Quaker hill. It was now perceived that the greatest part if not the whole of the Rebel Army was still on the Island, and as they were strongly posted from the Artillery Redoubt on their right to David Fishe's house on their left, their troops being placed in the cross road between those points, which has a Stone wall on each side, it was not thought adviseable to renew the attack on them. However we cannonaded those in the nearest posts for some time, from Quaker hill and Turkey hill, but without being able to dislodge them. The Main body of the Rebel Army were now posted about Windmill hill, with a line of troops from the Artillery Redoubt to David Fish's on the East road.

As soon as the Troops marched out in pursuit of the Rebels, The Sphynx, and Vigilant, with the Spitfire Galley and the Privateer Brig, got under way with the wind at N.E. and worked up the passage between Rhode- Island and Prudence, in order to annoy the Enemy's right if there should be an opportunity. The Vigilant got up in time to have some shots at the right of the Rebels when drawn up in front of the Artillery Redoubt, but they turning some 18prs against her from thence and from Arnold's point, she dropt lower down, and anchored with the other vessels opposite Slocum's. We were of opinion that had The Vigilant continued in the position she had gained, and persisted in cannonading the Enemy's right with her 24 prs she would have galled them exceedingly, and possibly have enabled us to turn that flank. 'Tis certain there was no necessity for her moving back so soon as she did.

The weight of the action this day fell on the Flank Companies and 22d Regiment in forcing the Rebels from Quaker hill; and on Huyne's and Fannings Regiment in driving them out of the swamp in front of Turkey hill. When Major General Prescott received orders to detach the 54th Regiment to reinforce Brigr General Smith, he returned with the 38th Regiment to the height above Easton's beach, much chagrined at not having been ordered to take the Command of the troops which composed the Center Column.

General Pigot came to Quaker hill about 2 o'Clock, when finding the Rebels were in great force at the North end of the Island, and that there was no appearance of their going off, he thought it prudent to reinforce the Corps now advanced, and therefore sent orders at 4 oClock for Landgrave's and Ditfourth's Regiments to march from Newport

and join Major General Lossberg. They arrived about 7 o'Clock, soon after which the troops were posted for the night on the following order. The Flank Companies, 22d & 54th, occupied the ground from the East side of the Island to the East road, the right of the Flank Companies being at William Shearman's house, and the left of the 54th at the Quaker Meeting. The 43rd, and Brown's were placed in the cross road behind the Meeting, the right of the 43rd to the Meeting, and the left of Brown's to Hadley's house in that road. Fanning's Regiment a little advanced on the left of Browns, with their left to Turkey hill; 1st Anspach behind Turkey hill, their left reaching to the West-road; 2d Anspach, Dittfourth's, Huynes and Landgrave's on the left of the West road, the left of Landgrave's to the rock near Anthony's house: Hessian Chasseurs on their left, facing the Passage between this Island and Prudence. Two 12 prs were posted in the East road near the Quaker-Meeting, and 2, 12 prs on Turkey hill. The Battalian Guns were posted in the most convenient situations near their respective Corps. Picquets consisting of a Captain, 2 Subalterns and 50 men from each Corps, were posted about 300 yards in front, and communicated from Sea to Sea along our whole front. Small parties of the Rebels have been endeavoring all day to creep round our flanks under cover of the stone walls, to get shots at some of the Sentries or men straggling about. Some field pieces were fired at them when most advanced, so that we have not lost any men by them.

I cannot avoid mentioning here, that soon after General Pigot came to Quaker hill, some of our Field Officers advised him to retire as soon as it was dark within our lines at Newport, representing to him the badness of our position, the superior force of the Rebels, and the great probability there was that as soon as they had recovered themselves a little and observed our position, they would attack us and drive us back in confusion. Nothing certainly was ever more ill judged than all this; Our position is the best in the whole Island, the Island being narrower here than in any other part of it, and the troops being drawn up on heights which extend across the Island; Turkey hill and Quaker hill Command all the ground in our front by which the Rebels could approach to attack us, which attack it is highly improbable they will make, after having raised the siege and retired to the extreme part of the Island. Their Generals would judge very ill to attack us, well posted, with 20 pieces of Cannon in our front, and our Troops in high spirits with success of the day; with a body of mixed Troops, who tho' superior perhaps in number, are destitute of that confidence and ardour so requisite to ensure the success of an attack under such circumstances as those apprehended. Convinced in my own mind that retiring in the night to Newport would be attended with most disgraceful consequences, and imply that we had got the worst in this days affair; and being firmly of opinion that the Rebels had not the smallest Idea of attacking us, but on the contrary were only studious to get off the Island without further loss; I presumed to object strongly to quitting our present position; when after some conversation it was determined by the General to remain, in consequence of which determination the two Hessian Regiments were ordered up. In justice to General Pigot I must say, that he had no doubts about remaining in the position taken, until those Field Officers talked of the danger attending it.

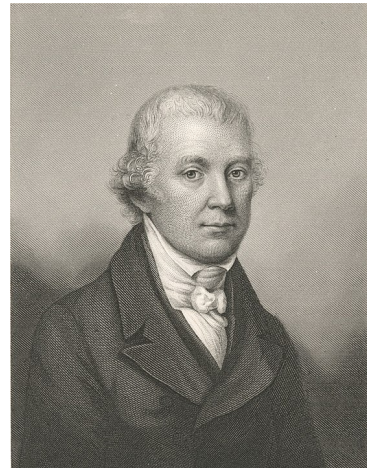
Diary 6 Samuel Ward

We are fortunate to have eyewitness accounts of the Battle of Rhode Island. One of those accounts is by Lieut.-Colonel Samuel Ward, the son of Rhode Island Governor Samuel Ward. He was born in Westerly on November 17, 1756. He graduated from Brown University in 1771. He was the grandfather of Julia Ward Howe. Ward received his commission as Captain on May 8th, 1775. Ward was promoted to major of the 1st Rhode Island Regiment on January 12, 1777 and became a lieutenant colonel on 5 May 1779 (with date of rank retroactive to May 26, 1778). When the First Regiment arrived on Aquidneck Island, there were changes in leadership. Major Samuel Ward was given command of the First Rhode Island Regiment. The regiment was assigned to guard the abandoned British redoubt that was part of the American line. This location was to the southwest of Butt's Hill. Ward and the Black Regiment are credited with driving back three waves of Hessian troops.

Ward's published diary is more of an account of his military career with just a few quotations with his actual words. Fortunately the description of the Battle of Rhode Island is among the quotations.

The August 30, 1778 diary entry provides an eyewitness account:

"The army retreated the evening of the 28th. Early yesterday morning, the enemy moved out after us, expecting that we were leaving the island, and took possession of the Heights in our front. They sent out parties in their front, and we made detachments to drive them back again. After a skirmish of three or four hours, with various success, in which each party gave way three or four times, and were reinforced, we drove them quite back to the ground they first took in the morning, and have continued there ever since. Two ships and a couple of small vessels beat up opposite our lines, and fired several shots, but being pretty briskly fired upon from our heavy pieces, they fell down, and now lay opposite the enemy's lines. Our loss was not very great, it has not been ascertained yet; and I can hardly make a tolerable conjecture. Several officers fell, and several are badly wounded. I am so happy to have only one captain slightly wounded in the hand. I believe that a couple of the blacks were killed and four or five wounded, but none badly. Previous to this, I should have told you our picquets and light corps engaged their advance, and found them with bravery."



Diary 7 Mary Almy's Journal

Mary's journal is written to her husband and relates what was happening in British occupied Newport during August of 1778. Basically it tells about the fears of the coming of the French Navy and ends with the outcome of the Battle of Rhode Island. She writes to him September 2, 1778 – "I am to give you an Account of what Past during the Seige—but first Let me tell you it will be done with Spirit — for my dislike to the Nation that you call your friends.." Mary believed the Patriot cause would end with the "discredit of the Americans."

The focus will be her entries on the Battle of Rhode Island.

Mary Almy's Diary – I have converted this somewhat with modern spelling and punctuation.

August 22, 1778

Sent a light horse man to call the 38th back. (38th Regiment of Foot with 334 men in Newport). By this time all was horror and confusion. The Hessians overtook a Party in the West Road (West Main Road, Portsmouth) near Mr. Redwood's farm. They pursued with violence. The other retreated with prudence leaving the roads strewn with dead bodies. The East Road (East Main Road, Portsmouth) was a scene of blood and slaughter from Cousin Almy's down the foot of Quaker Hill. All the crossroads filled with them and they kept up a smart fire up until 2 o'clock. Then they began to bury the dead and bring in the wounded. Oh how many wretched families were made that day! It would have softened the most callous heart to see cartloads of wretched men brought in. Their wives screaming at the foot of the cart in consort with their groans. Fine youths with their arms taken off in a moment. In short it is too far beyond my description. The horrors of that day will never be quite out of the remembrance. I quitted company and hid myself to mourn in silence for the wickedness of my Country. Never was a heart more differently agitated than mine. Some of my good friends in the front of battle here and heaven only knew how many of the other Side. Instead of inquiring news or asking after a soul, a stupidity took hold of me at last. I shut myself from my family to implore heaven to protect you and keep you from imprisonment and death. Every dejected look and every melancholy countenance trembled for fear they would say – "your husband lies among the slain" or that he is wounded and a prisoner. Think you what a life I live owing to your violence of temper – which I knew would lead you to all things dangerous.

Sunday morning August 23, 1778

The Provincials encamp on the Wind Mill Hill. Little or no firing from either party. More regiments ordered out. Something great is intended if you should not slip away too soon. Constant riding from Quaker Hill every hour expecting a general battle. My whole heart is sick with melancholy story. Every hospital is crowded with wounded men. No church (services.) No appearance of anything but horror and distress. The Country people will plunder. In the midst of all the confusion some were going to eternity while

others were robbing. Innocent farmers houses – death and destruction was before their eyes from every quarter until the officers heard what was doing. They directly ordered guards to every house – whose kind protection was the saving of them. And to do justice to the British, their humanity and leniency was beyond all conception to the wounded prisoners. There was a hospital on purpose for them. Nurses were chosen from amongst the inhabitants that they might have every indulgence that their unhappy situation needed – doctors whose goodness, understanding and compassion might never be forgotten. Whenever justice is done at the end of war, I hope this instance will be in your records. Night is coming on – everything I suppose will be left for daylight.

Monday August 24th, 1778

By daylight, the trampling of horses, the different sounds of voices, brought to her thoughts a poor creature who had scarcely had sleep enough to compose her distracted brain but had brought her self willing to hear the worst. Seven o'clock – a light horseman with news. They are retreated – quite gone over Howland ferry. At eight o'clock a messenger. They began to decamp early in the evening and before day. Their artillery, baggage, wounded men and part of the Army were over. At 10 o'clock Thomas Hill came in. He told me he saw you on Friday – that you desired him to let me know by daylight on Monday morning you should be at home at breakfast with a number of gentlemen. Oh, Mr. Almy. What shocking disappointment to you. Can you keep up your spirits? Heaven I hope will support you. So positive, so assured of success. And



remember in all your difficulty and trials of life that when the all wise disposer of human events thinks we have been tried, then our patience is waiting. We will be amply repaid by a joyful meeting.

And a joyful meeting they must have had. After the Occupation and War Mary's Tory leanings didn't seem to be held against her. She continued with her boardinghouse and hosted Thomas Jefferson in 1784 and George Washington in 1790.

Hattendorf, John B. Mary Gould Almy's Journal 1778. Published for the Rhode Island Society Sons of the Revolution, 2018.

Diary 8 Manasseh Cutler

From 1771 until his death, he was pastor of the Congregational church in what was the parish of Ipswich, Massachusetts until 1793, now Hamilton. For a few months in 1776, he was chaplain to the 11th Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Colonel Ebenezer Francis, raised for the defense of Boston. In 1778, he became chaplain to General Jonathan Titcomb's brigade and took part in General John Sullivan's expedition to Rhode Island. Soon after his return from this expedition he trained in medicine to supplement the scanty income of a minister. In 1782, he established a private boarding school, directing it for nearly a quarter of a century. In 1784 a geological party, headed by Manasseh Cutler, named the highest peak in the northeast Mount Washington.

Aug. 9, Sunday.

This morning the army was ordered to parade near Howland's Ferry, in order to embark and re-embark in the boats, that they might the better understand such a maneuver; but a reconnoitering party having discovered that the enemy had left the upper end of the Island, and retreated into Newport, the troops embarked and proceeded over, formed on the opposite beach, and marched up and took possession of their works, which were not at all damaged. They evacuated them Saturday evening, upon finding our troops intended to land six miles below, and cut off their retreat. They drove off all the horses and all the cattle from the inhabitants, except one cow to a family, destroyed all their wheels and carriages of every kind, took quantities of provisions, and filled up most of their wells.

Aug. 10, Monday. This morning I crossed on to Rhode Island, and joined General Titcomb's Brigade. Dined with him and a number of gentlemen on the ground abroad, not having any quarters. Slept this night in" the officer's room at the barracks in the fort taken up by Colonel Wade.

Last evening a fleet was seen off the harbor, of about eighteen or twenty sail, which came up near the Lighthouse and anchored. Several ships of the line, but unknown who, or from whence. About 10 o'clock the French fleet, that lay above the town of Newport, came to sail, and went out in pursuit of them. As they passed the town and forts, the ships began and kept up an incessant fire, until they were all passed. The roar of cannon at times was such as to make but one continued sound, without any distinction of guns. The fleet in the offing, which proved to be a fleet from New York, immediately put to sea, and by dark the French fleet in pursuit of them was out of sight of land.

Aug. 11, Tuesday. The General procured a chamber for quarters at one Browning's, a Quaker. Invited me to live with him. This morning, the wind at N. E. blew pretty hard; cloudy and rainy. At 4 o'clock the whole array paraded, and

was reviewed by the general officers. The order of battle and encampment : Front line, Varnum's and Cornell's Brigades on the right. Glover's and Colonel Gommader Greene's on the left. The second line, commanded by Major-General Hancock, Level's Brigade on the right, Titcomb's on the left. The light corps, consisting of Jackson's Corps, Boston Independents and Light Infantry, and 50 men from each brigade in the front line, commanded by Colonel Commanding Livingston. The reserve, consisting of Holden's and Brown's regiments, commanded by Colonel Commander West. A flanking division on each wing of the army, and a flanking party to each wing of each line, consisting of volunteers and militia. A body of horse, commanded by General Whipple. The right wing of the whole army commanded by Major-General Greene ; the left, by the Marquis de la Fayette.

Aug. 12, Wednesday. This morning, orders for the whole army to be paraded at 6 o'clock, for advancing toward the enemy's lines. The storm increasing violently, prevented. A great number of the militia, having no tents, were obliged to continue out in the storm without any shelter. Colonel Thorndike resigned, and Colonel Wadsworth appointed. Captains Brown and Cabot took lodgings at our quarters.

Aug. 13, Thursday. The storm exceeding severe ; wind very high. Mr. Nat. Tracy lodged with us. Dr. Clark and Parsons, Colonels Wadsworth and Thorndike, with us. A sergeant and nine men deserted, belonging to the Twenty-second Regiment, British. Say the French ships dismounted the guns, and almost demolished two forts, and killed several men, on Monday.

Aug. 14, Friday. This morning the wind changed to the southward. At 4 o'clock in the morning troops turned out, examined their arms, and renewed their cartridges. Captains Cabot, Brown, and myself rode down near the enemy's lines. Saw Colonel Hichborn and his brother, Samuel. Orders for the army to march at 6 o'clock to-morrow morning. Several deserters.

Aug. 15, Saturday. At 6 o'clock a signal gun from the right fired as a signal for the whole army to parade. Half after six two cannons were fired for signals for forming into columns. Three cannons the signal for marching. The front line advanced in four columns, and the second line in ___ column commanded by their respective Brigadiers. Flanking divisions and flanking parties marched in their respective stations. The Light-corps advanced. The Light-horse advanced on the right for reconnoitering. Pioneers marched advanced of each division to remove Avails, etc. The artillery and ammunition wagons between the first and second line ; the bao-craffe(?) between the second line and the reserve. The reserve moved in one column. I had a fine prospect of the whole army as it moved off from Butt's Hill, where we first encamped. They made a very grand appearance. The army marched about three miles and halted. A council of war was held by the general officers, who advanced, and marked out the ground for encamping. No appearance of an attack from the enemy. The army extended

quite across the Island from water to water. At 2 o'clock advanced and came upon the ground, about a mile and a half from the enemy's lines, directly in their front. They fired a few cannon. As soon as our brigade halted on the ground, I returned to our old quarters and tarried the night. Was much pleased with the kindness and benevolence of Mr, Thomas Browning at whose house we quartered.

Aug. 11), Lord's Day. Returned to camp. General Titcomb took quarters at Mr. Peleg Laughton's, a friendly Quaker, Where we had very good accommodations. Almost the brigade on duty. No opportunity to attend public worship. At night began to throw up a redoubt upon a high eminence near the enemy's lines. Went in the afternoon with a number of officers to view a garden near our quarters belonging to one Mr. Bowler — the finest by far I ever saw. It is laid out much in the form of my own contains four acres, has a grand aisle in the middle, and is adorned in the front with beautiful carvings. Near the middle is an oval, surrounded with espaliers of fruit trees, in the center of which is a pedestal, on which is an armillary sphere, with an equatorial dial. On one side of the front is a hot-house, containing orange trees, With some ripe, some green, some blooms, and various other fruit trees of the exotic kind, curious flowers etc. At the lower end of the aisle is a large summer-house, a long square containing three rooms — the middle paved with marble and hung -with landscapes and other pictures. On the right is a very large private library adorned with very curious carvings. The collection of French and English authors, maps, etc., is valuable. The room is furnished with a table, chairs, etc. There are espaliers of fruit trees at each end of the garden, some curious flowering shrubs, and a pretty collection of fruit trees. The room on the left in the summer-house, beautifully prepared and designed for music, contains a spinnet. But the whole garden discovered the desolations of war and the want of a gardener to dress it. The Marquis de la Fayette took quarters at this house. A number of cannon fired from the enemy's lines this afternoon, but no damage done.

Aug. 17, Monday. Morning foggy. After it cleared away rode down to the lines with Colonel Thorndike. Had a fine view of the enemy's lines from the top of a house, about a quarter of a mile distant, and little advanced of our picket. The enemy had fired for some time in the morning, but had ceased for some hours. While we were on the house they begun their fire again from the redoubts. Several shot passed us on each side and fell beyond us. Made a shocking whistling. Soon after we left the house a shot came through it. Found our situation not very safe or agreeable. Stood by the Marquis when a cannon ball just passed us. Was pleased with his firmness, but found I had nothing to boast of my own, and as I had no business in danger concluded to stay no longer lest I should happen to pay too dear for my curiosity.

Aug. 18, Tuesday. Morning foggy. As soon as it cleared off the enemy began to fire on the works thrown up last night, which were considerable, but our men

were so covered that they continued the works for the whole day — no damage done except one man wounded. One man had his cartouch-box carried away. Nine arms belonging to our brigade paraded on the ground near the intrenchment carried away by two balls. Captain Dodge * escaped narrowly. Had the honor to dine with General Hancock *by particular invitation. Dined in great state. A large number of officers. The General very complaisant. Invited me to dine, breakfast, or to sup with him whenever it suited me, without any ceremony. , After dinner a number of good songs.

Aug. 19, Wednesday. Foggy morning. Our first battery opened. A steady fire from both sides. Three hundred cannon fired by 10 o'clock. The enemy evacuated one redoubt before 12 o'clock. At the great rock on our left had a fine view secure from danger. Rode in the afternoon in pursuit of a fishing; boat. A man in one of the trenches had his thigh cut off" by a cannon ball and expired in an hour and a half.

Aug. 20, Thursday. Foggy morning. A steady fire through the day. Attended prayers this evening with the brigade for the first time, our situation not admitting of it before.

Aug. 21, Friday. The French fleet returned and came to anchor off the lighthouse, greatly damaged by the storm. The Languedoc, on board of which Count D'Estaing hoisted his flag, was dismasted and lost her rudder. One seventy-four missing. Took the Senegal and one bomb ketch. General and all of us invited to take luncheon with General Hancock. Found it rather an elegant dinner than a luncheon. We all rode down to the rock. Saw the fleet. We had two or three more batteries opened. Warm firing. Continually throwing shells from both parties. Saw several burst in the air. Attended prayers morning and evening.

Aug. 22, Saturday. Wind out. The three frigates in the river joined the fleet. Warm firing. Prayers morning and evening.

Aug. 23, Lord's Bay. Expected to preach, and just prepared to go up to the brigade when the General received a letter from General Sullivan, informing him that the French fleet was so disastered they could by no means afford us any assistance, but were gone to Boston to refit. As the plan had ever been to take off" eight or ten thousand men from the to the command of his regiment. He represented Hamilton several years in the Massachusetts General Court.

left of the army and land them on Brenton's Neck, in the enemy's rear, under cover of the French ships, for it was well known their lines were impregnable, this could not be executed with any degree of safety or prospect of success, without any cover, all the generals were called upon to give their opinion whether an immediate retreat was not absolutely necessary. This unexpected desertion of the fleet, which was the mainspring of the expedition, cast a

universal gloom on the army, and threw us all into consternation. Our most sanguine hopes were cropped in the bud, and we expected immediate orders to prepare to move off the ground. This prevented the brigade's meeting for religious services. A very heavy firing from the batteries all day. Rode down the lines. Had a fine prospect of the enemy's lines. Saw all our shot strike which were well directed. One man killed by a cannon ball at one of our guns ; another died of the wound he received yesterday by the bursting of a shell. A great number of shells thrown in the night. Our people split one eighteen pounder and one nine and a half inch mortar.

Aug. 24, Mon. As much of the heavy baggage moved off last night as possible. A body of men retreated to strengthen the works at Butts' Hill. At the lines, heavy firing ; army preparing to retreat.

Aug. 25, Very heavy firing ; shells at night. Orders to be ready to retreat at a moment's notice.

Aug. 26, Wed. Expected to retreat at six this morning. Brigade paraded. Sent all our baggage off the Island. Extremely hot, but remained on the ground. Concluded to set out myself for Connecticut. Came off the Island at 4 o'clock p. M.; crossed at Bristol Ferry ; rode to Providence, and lodged about a mile out of town.

Aug. 27, Thursday Rode to my father's. Found all well. Heard firing all day.

Aug. 29, Sat. Visited several of my friends. Mr. Foster not at home. Applied to, to supply the pulpit to-morrow. This day our army retreated to Butt's Hill. The enemy pursued. A pretty warm action, but the enemy repulsed. Our loss : 30 killed, 150 wounded, 20 taken prisoners.

Aug. 30, Lord's Day. Preached for Mr. Foster. Mr. Willard supplied my people at home. This evening our whole army came off the Island, without leaving any thing behind.

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John Trumbull in Reminiscences (Memoir 1 - written later)

Sullivan sent an aide, John Trumbull, to order Wigglesworth to retreat.

“Reminiscences of his own Times” by John Trumbull that describes events on August 29th, 1778.

“Soon after daybreak the next morning, the rear-guard, commanded by that excellent officer, Colonel Wigglesworth, was attacked on Quaker, otherwise called Windmill Hill {actually it was Butts Hill that was called Windmill Hill} and General Sullivan, wishing to avoid a serious action on that ground, sent me with orders to commanding officer to withdraw the guard.

Nothing can be more trying to the nerves, than to advance deliberately and alone into danger. At first I saw a round shot or two drop near me, and pass bounding on. I met poor Colonel Tousard, who had just lost one arm, blown off by the discharge of a field piece, for the possession of which there was an ardent struggle. He was led off by a small party. Soon after, I saw Captain Walker, of H. Jackson’s regiment, who had received a musket ball through his body, mounted behind a person on horseback. He bid me a melancholy farewell, and died before night. Next, grape shot began to sprinkle around me, and soon after musket balls fell in my path like hailstones. This was not to be borne. I spurred on my horse to the summit of the hill, and found myself in the midst of the melee. ‘Don’t say a word, Trumbull;’ cried the gallant commander, ‘I know your errand, but don’t speak; we will beat them in a moment.’

‘Col. Wigglesworth, do you see those troops crossing obliquely from the west road towards your rear?’

‘Yes, they are Americans, coming to our support.’

‘No sir, those are Germans; mark, their dress is blue and yellow, not buff; they are moving to fell late your rear, and intercept your retreat. Retreat instantly — don’t lose a moment, or you will be cut off.’

The gallant man obeyed, reluctantly, and withdrew the guard in fine style, slowly, but safely.” The heavy action lasted for almost a hour. Some American writers called it an orderly retreat, but British writers recorded that the Americans retreated at a run. As the British came within range of the six 18 pounders fired from Butts Hill, the British regrouped. From Quaker Hill British General Smith could see the strength of Sullivan’s lines. By 9:30 AM Smith decided against an assault and he withdrew back to the top of Quaker Hill. Almost half the casualties of the battle came from the skirmishes on East Main Road.

“Reminiscences of his own Times” by John Trumbull is quoted in Stone’s Our French Allies.

Joseph Durfee - Memoir 2 (written later in his life)

This is an account by an eyewitness, but Joseph Durfee is penning his reminiscences many years after the events. At the time of the Battle of Rhode Island, Durfee was a major in Col. Whitney's Regiment. The last blog related Durfee's account of the "Battle of Fall River" and this blog entry is a continuation of the account beginning with the Americans crossing to Aquidneck Island.

Preparation for invasion of Aquidneck

" During a considerable part of the month of August following (the Battle of Fall River - see the previous blog), we were busily engaged in procuring arms, ammunition, and provisions for the soldiers, and in building flat-bottomed boats and scows for the troops to cross over the river on to Rhode Island, with a view to dislodge the British army, who then had possession of the island. A barn, now standing near the Stone Bridge, was occupied for a commissary store, of which I had the charge until things were in readiness and the troops prepared to cross over to the island, when I left the store in charge of my friend and relative, Walter Chaloner.

The Expedition Begins

In the fore part of August 1798, the American troops embarked in the boats and scows prepared for them and landed on Rhode Island, where I joined them, having been appointed a Major in Colonel Whitney's Regiment. Our troops were then marched to a spot but a short distance to the North of what is called Butts' Hill; where they encamped for the night with nothing but the canopy of heaven for a covering and the ground for our beds. But we were animated with the hope of liberty--with a belief that we were engaged in a righteous cause—and that He, who sways the sceptre of the universe would prosper our undertaking.

Waiting on the French

At this time we were anxiously looking for the French fleet from which we hoped for assistance against the enemy, whose numerous bodies of troops were before us. Soon the French fleet bore in sight, when the British set fire to the shipping in the harbor and blew up most of the vessels within their reach. Not long after the French fleet came up, the British fleet appeared in the offing. Immediately the French fleet tacked about, went about and attacked the British squadron, when broadsides were exchanged and a bloody battle ensued.

The Storm

A tremendous storm came on long remembered as the August storm, in which the two fleets were separated, and many who had escaped the cannon's mouth found a watery grave. The French fleet, or so much of it as survived the storm, went into Boston to repair and the remnant of the British fleet went into New York.

Siege of Newport

Soon after this storm, our troops marched in three divisions towards Newport. One on the East road, so called one on the West road, and the Brigade, commanded by General Titcomb moved in the centre, until we came in sight of Newport--when orders were given to halt, erect a marque and pitch our tents. General orders were issued for a detachment from the army of three thousand men - our number being too small to risk a general engagement with the great body of

British troops then quartered on the South end of the Island. Early on the next morning a detachment of troops, of which I was one, was ordered to proceed forthwith and take possession of what was called Hunneman's Hill. The morning was foggy and enabled us to advance some distance unobserved by the enemy — but the fog clearing away before we reached the hill, we were discovered by the British and Tory troops, who commenced such a heavy cannonade upon us, that it was deemed expedient by the commanding officers, to prevent the destruction of many of our brave troops, that we should fall back and advance under the cover of night. Accordingly when night came, we marched to the hill undiscovered by the enemy. We immediately commenced throwing up a breast work and building a fort. When daylight appeared, we had two cannon mounted--one twenty-four pounder and one eighteen--and with our breast work we had completed a covered way to pass and repass without being seen by the enemy. The British had a small fort or redoubt directly under the muzzles of our cannon, with which we saluted them and poured in the shot so thick upon them that they were compelled to beat up a retreat. But they returned again at night to repair their fort, when they commenced throwing bomb shells into our fort, which however did but little damage. I saw several of them flying over our heads and one bursting in the air, a fragment fell upon the shoulder of a soldier and killed him.

Retreat

At this time, we were anxiously waiting the return of the French fleet from Boston, where they had gone to repair. But learning that they could not then return, and knowing the situation of the British troops, that they were enlarging and strengthening their forts and redoubts, and that they had reinforcements arriving daily from New York, it was deemed expedient by our commanding officers, Lafayette, Green and Sullivan, all experienced and brave Generals, that we should retreat to the North end of the Island. Accordingly, on the 29th day of August, early in the morning we struck our marque and tents and commenced a retreat. The British troops followed, and soon came up with our rear-guard and commenced firing upon them. The shots were briskly returned and continued at intervals, until our troops were joined by a part of our army a short distance to the South of Quaker Hill, so called, when a general engagement ensued, in which many lives were lost on both sides. At night, we retreated from the Island to Tiverton. On the following day we left Tiverton, crossed over Slade's ferry and marched through Pawtucket and Providence to Pawtucket where we remained until our service expired.”

Durfee, Joseph, b. 1750. *Reminiscences of Col. Joseph Durfee : relating to the early history of Fall River and of Revolutionary scenes. 1834?*]. Retrieved from the Digital Public Library of America, <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009723583>. (Accessed March 13, 2023.)

Diary Notesheet _____-your names: _____

Diary Number : _____

1. Who wrote this diary _____

2. When and where was this diary entry written? _____

3. What is this diary entry describing? What kinds of events does the diarist write about?
Daily events, notable events? _____

4. Who was the intended audience? Circle one: (personal record), (for someone else to read) , (an official record)

5. What was the point of view of the diary writer? Circle one: 1st person (I,we), 2nd person (you), 3rd person (they, them)

6. What does the diary entry tell you about the Rhode Island Campaign?

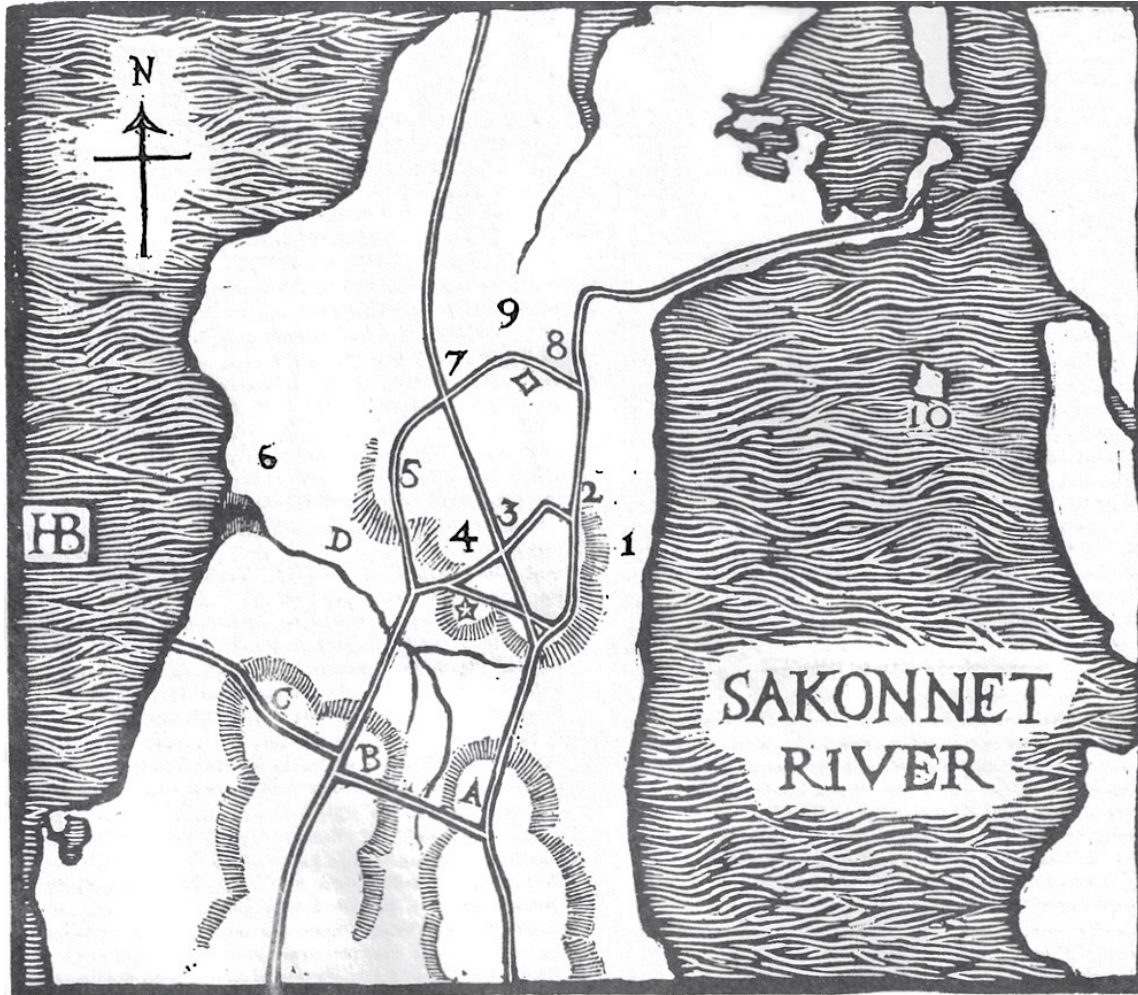
7. Evaluate the information in the diary

A. Look at the maps (do they help you understand what the diarist is writing about?)

B. Do the timelines agrees with the diary information? _____

C. Comparing diary accounts help us to confirm the information.

D. Checking secondary sources can put the diaries in perspective.



POSITIONS OF BRITISH DIVISIONS

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A. Smith with English | C. Anthony's Hill |
| B. Lossberg with Germans | D. Malsburg's farthest advance |

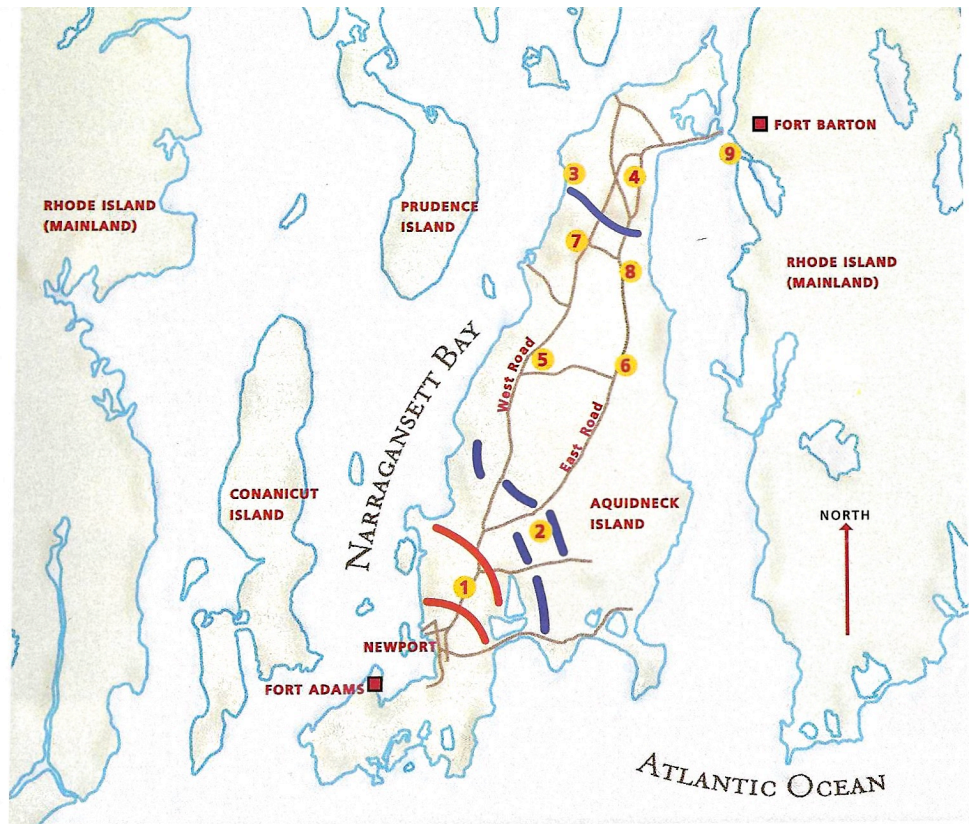
POSITIONS OF AMERICAN CORPS

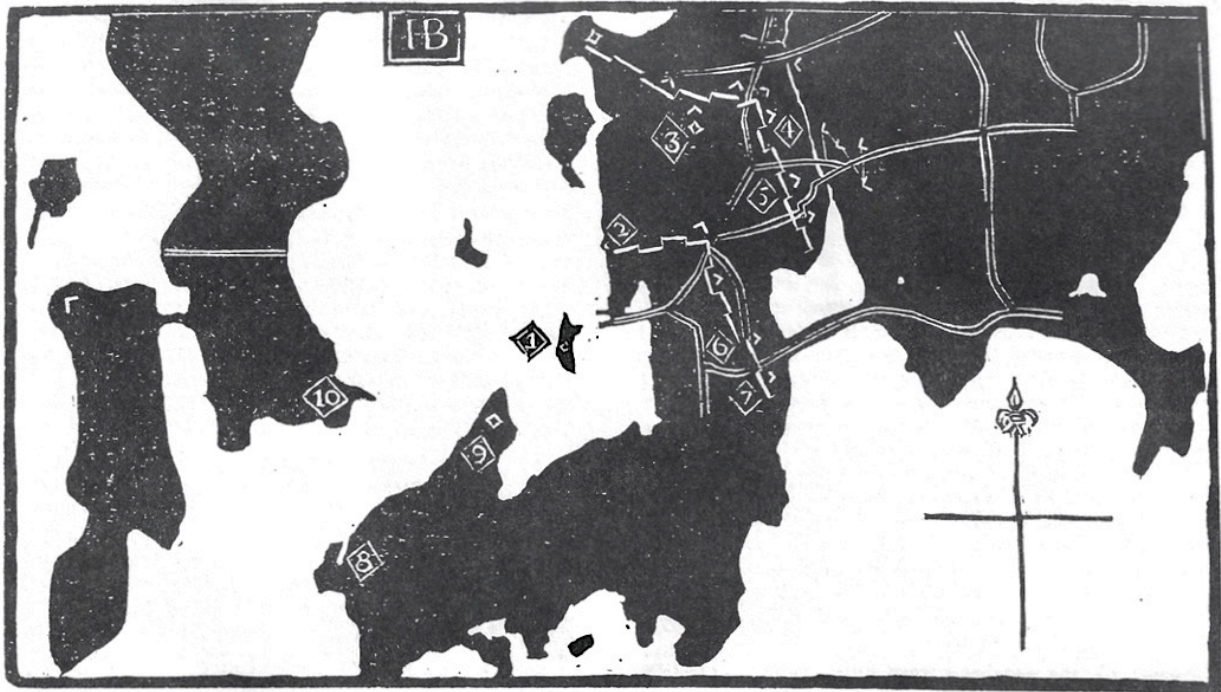
- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Tyler | 6. Livingstone |
| 2. Glover | 7. Lovell |
| 3. Christopher Greene | 8. Titcomb |
| 4. Cornell | 9. Wade |
| 5. Varnum | 10. Owls' Nest |

The star indicates the position of the Key redoubt.

THE BATTLE OF RHODE ISLAND

- 1 British defensive lines, August 14-28
- 2 American lines, August 14-28
- 3 American defensive line, August 29
- 4 American headquarters
- 5 Americans ambush Hessian advance, morning, August 29
- 6 Americans ambush British advance, morning, August 29
- 7 Hessian Hole, furthest Hessian advance, afternoon, August 29
- 8 Furthest British advance, afternoon, August 29
- 9 American retreat by boat, August 30





SIEGE OF NEWPORT. AUGUST 17TH TO 29TH, 1778

BRITISH FORTS (FROM DOEHLA'S DIARY)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Stone Battery (Ft. George) | 6. Fort Clinton (Gibbs Avenue) |
| 2. North Battery (Ft. Greene Park) | 7. Fort Percy (Luce House) |
| 3. Somerset (Tammany Hill) | 8. Ise Redoubt (Castle Hill) |
| 4. Irish's Redoubt (Bailey Farm) | 9. Prinz Dauneck (Ft. Adams) |
| 5. Fort Fanning (Green End) | 10. Coninicut (Dumplings) |

The American lines are shown opposite Fort Fanning and across Green End. Mr. Easton's house may be seen east of the pond and north of the beach road.

The nearest approach of the Americans was the raid, August 28, upon the redan east of Buffum's Hill.

