

dry on one occasion. The other incident of the Revolutionary War most frequently recorded in Scotch Plains history occurred in 1777. The British, in a sortie from New Brunswick and Perth Amboy to reconnoiter the American defenses, approached the Ash Swamp section of town. There the appetizing aroma of freshly baked bread wafting from the home of the patriotic Aunt Betty Frazee attracted the attention of Generals Cornwallis and Howe. Courteously requesting a loaf, they were rebuffed when the fearful but staunch Aunt Betty handing over the loaf declared, "I give this to you, Sirs, in fear, not in love." Withdrawing his hand, Cornwallis replied, "Then neither I, nor a soldier of mine, shall eat it, Madam." And none did.

After the Revolutionary War, Scotch Plains continued its agricultural development and its slow growth as a village. In 1838 when the Elizabethtown and Somerville Railroad reached Westfield and the owners attempted to purchase rights of way in Scotch Plains, these rights were refused by the townspeople who "would have no part of the smoking monstrosity." Thus the railroad passed east of the community, spurring growth in the adjacent towns but permitting Scotch Plains another century of pastoral life. When the Civil War began in 1861, the village of unpaved roads, no sidewalks, and no street lighting, included only a church, three private schools, an academy (a public school established in 1851), an inn, two stores, five mills, seventy houses, and several farms.

The New Jersey attitude toward the South preceding the Civil War prompted one historian to characterize the state as the "northernmost of the Border States." Indeed, there was a large sentiment in favor of peace on Southern terms or of compromise. Yet with the firing on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, almost every Jersey community exploded in fervent support of Lincoln. When the President called for 3,120 New Jersey men, 10,000 men and boys reported. By May 6, Scotch Plains men were numbered among the four New Jersey regiments marching through the streets of Washington eager for an encounter with the Rebels.



"Cannonball House"