

STORIES of New Jersey

degenerated into marauders and land pirates. By day they hid in the pine barrens and among the sand dunes of Ocean and Monmouth Counties, coming out at night to plunder and destroy.

Captain Huddy had been assigned the task of defending patriot families from these assassins, and so fearless and skillful was he in this dangerous business that the Tories and land pirates determined to kill him. On the night of September 1, 1780, about seventy of these Pine Robbers, under the command of a notorious mulatto known as Colonel Tye, had attacked Huddy's house at Colt's Neck. His only companions in the house were his wife and a maidservant named Lucretia Emmons. The attack came as a complete surprise; for Tye and his gang, on their way to the Huddy house, had made prisoners of the neighbors, so that he had no warning of the robbers' approach.

But there was no surrender in the make-up of Captain Huddy, nor in Lucretia. There were a few muskets in the house. These Lucretia loaded as rapidly as possible, handing them to Huddy, who, firing now from one window and then from another, gave the attackers the impression that the house was well defended. At first they were driven off, but they soon returned to set fire to the place. With the flames spreading and the lives of the women in danger, Huddy called out that he would surrender if his home were spared. The fire was extinguished, the house was plundered, and, with Huddy as prisoner, Colonel Tye and his mob rounded up sheep and cattle from the neighborhood and headed for their hiding place.

Meanwhile news of the attack on Huddy spread and a band of militia gathered to pursue the raiders. They reached Black Point just as Tye and his force were putting off in their boats. Five of the raiders were killed and one of the bullets struck the prisoner. But, as he fell into the water, Huddy shouted out his name to the rescuers and was saved.

In the spring of 1782 the war was approaching its victorious close. The Pine Robbers were losing no opportunity to loot and they still wanted their old enemy Huddy. They saw their chance at the Toms River salt works. An expedition consisting of eighty men in whale boats, plentifully supplied with ammunition, set forth under command of loyalist officers from Bucks County, Pa. On March 20th they were joined by about thirty of the land pirates. The invaders again used the old tactics of surrounding each house and taking prisoners, so as to cut off warnings and surprise the little garrison. When the blockhouse was surrounded Huddy was called upon to surrender.

"Come and take it!" was his answer.

Huddy's men, many of them armed only with pikes, stood off the attack until their ammunition was exhausted. Then the invaders swarmed over the palisade walls and the defending garrison, including Huddy and sixteen men (four wounded), were taken prisoners. Five escaped.

The prisoners were brought to New York and placed in the famous Sugar House prison. Huddy became the personal prize of Captain Richard Lippincott, a loyalist who, before the war, had been one of his friends and neighbors.