

## STORIES of New Jersey

captivity, Charles Lee whined for the company of his dogs and, according to Rupert Hughes, wrote to Washington suggesting that Congress make peace with the enemy. Benedict Arnold, with a splendid record for bravery in action, had been denied promotion by the politically-minded Congress, and it was the commander's task to sooth his pride so that he would not resign. Others who were part of Washington's so-called "family"--young, ambitious men like Alexander Hamilton--found the commander too sensitive to criticism and too dull. Foreign sympathizers and adventurers who had begun to arrive expected to become generals at once, outranking native officers. Washington's diplomatic talents were exercised to exhaustion.

The additional burden of supervising the care of prisoners was finally taken from Washington's shoulders by Elias Boudinot of Elizabethtown who for a year and a half devoted his entire time and much of his personal fortune to the work. Other Jerseymen like Boudinot--Governor Livingston, Francis Hopkinson, Dr. John Witherspoon, president of the College of New Jersey, and John Honeyman, the clever, daring spy of Griggstown whose information made possible the Trenton victory--made up for their neighbors' lack of patriotism during the war years.

Leading Puritan citizens, and even the Congress, spoke out against the gambling and swearing among the soldiers at Morristown until Washington, quite a card player himself, forbade these indulgences. In order to curb desertion, theft and other crimes, the general requested permission to inflict 500 lashes on culprits. Congress, however, would allow only 100. Another severe punishment forced a man to straddle a narrow tree branch with his feet off the ground for hours at a time. The British, during the last world war, were still using this torture to punish their men.

Strong measures were also needed to check epidemics of smallpox and dysentery, an infection still common among armies living under unsanitary conditions. Washington, in his youth, had suffered both diseases, and the marks of the pox were still on his face. Mrs. Washington had been inoculated against smallpox the year before. In February, over the protest of the citizenry, he ordered the encampment at Morristown and all the civil population of that part of the State to be inoculated by army physicians.

With disease and desertion the army shrank during February and March. Washington himself became ill with a dangerous fever early in March and assigned General Greene to succeed him. By March 15 he was well enough to travel to Pluckemin to meet Mrs. Washington, who had come to be with him till the opening of the spring campaign. Though his wife made it more comfortable for him at Morristown, Washington was plagued by the weakness of his army. In April there were still no recruits, and the opening of the British offensive was drawing dangerously close. "How I am to oppose them, God knows!" he exclaimed. At last in May the recruits, mostly from Morris County, began to come in, and on May 28, with 8,000 men, he moved 20 miles southward from Morristown to Middlebrook valley, between the first and second Watchung mountains, just north of Bound Brook and the valley of the Raritan River. From this natural rampart, virtually immune from attack and only eight miles from British headquarters at New Brunswick, Washington could immediately throw his force across the enemy's path should they once more attempt to march on Philadelphia.

The winter had not been entirely quiet. On January 20, while combing the neighborhood of Millstone for food and horses, a British detachment was put to



*Elias Boudinot*