

STORIES of New Jersey



*Tennent Church, Hospital
during Battle of Monmouth*

nearby, and reached Paramus July 11. On the same day the French fleet arrived at Sandy Hook. Washington's greetings to the French commander, Count D'Estaing, were dispatched from his headquarters at the Hermitage, home of Mrs. Theodosia Prevost, later to be Aaron Burr's wife. The Hermitage is still standing in Ho-Ho-Kus.

His next plan, to attack New York with the cooperation of the French fleet, failed. The American army on July 15 was sent across the Hudson to White Plains, but the warships, because of shallow water, could not sail up the river. Four months of inactivity followed.

The first week in December found the Americans back in New Jersey at Elizabethtown, where on the 4th, Washington attended a celebration in his honor. Next morning he was headed north to Paramus again, having received word that Clinton had moved up the Hudson. By December 12, however, he had returned his men to the Middlebrook Camp in the Watchung hills, for Clinton's maneuver had accomplished nothing and, as Washington put it, involved little more than the destruction of "nine barrels of spoiled herrings." With his army settled for the winter in the Middlebrook valley, the commander made his headquarters in the Wallace home in what is now Somerville. Although the physical condition of his men was better than it had been in the previous winter at Valley Forge, Washington was much concerned about the money situation and the attitude of the states. Paid with worthless currency, the men hinted at mutiny. Desertions increased. The general, in a letter written at Middlebrook, complained that the states were "too much engaged in their local concerns" and had "very inadequate ideas of the present danger."

On December 21 he left for Philadelphia to consult with Congress. Mrs. Washington was there, too, and returned with him to Middlebrook six weeks later.

Two important social events occurred in February: a banquet and ball at General Knox's headquarters in Pluckemin, on the 18th, to mark the anniversary of the alliance with France; and on February 22 the celebration of the commander in chief's 47th birthday at Middlebrook. At these affairs, Washington danced for hours at a time with the wives of his staff officers--particularly Mrs. Greene. Mrs. Washington was either too stout for graceful dancing or disliked strenuous action.

A quiet spring came early to New Jersey in 1779. Late in May, anticipat-

tage, and by daylight the British were well on their way to Sandy Hook, where they embarked for New York City.

The Battle of Monmouth, longest engagement of the entire war, demonstrated that the Continental Army could drive back the British regulars, raised Washington's prestige, and defeated the secret attempts of General Gates and his Congressional supporters to have the commander removed. On July 4 at New Brunswick while the second anniversary of the Declaration of independence was being celebrated, Lee's court martial began.

Suspecting the British of designs on the Hudson River forts, Washington three days later moved his troops northward through Newark, stopped to view the falls of the Passaic River at Paterson and to enjoy a picnic lunch at a spring