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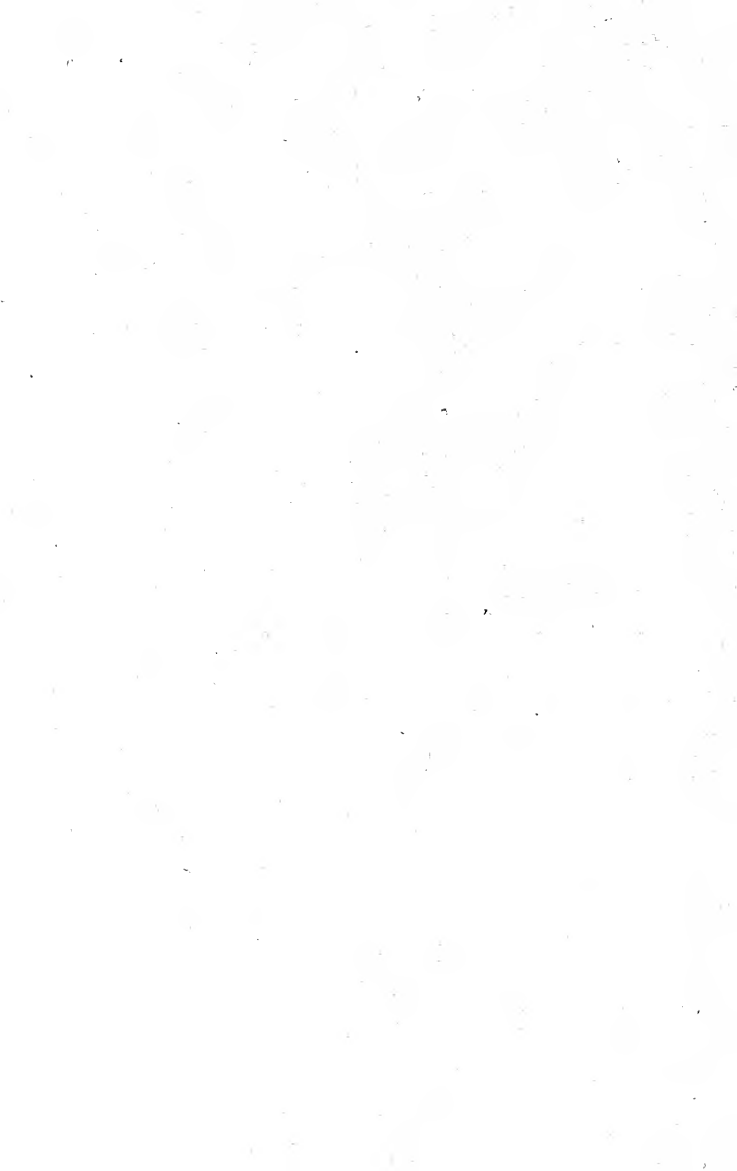
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Andrews, Frank D.  
The tea-burners of  
Cumberland County who



THE  
TEA-BURNERS  
OF  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY  
WHO  
Burned a Cargo of Tea  
AT  
GREENWICH, NEW JERSEY  
DECEMBER 22, 1774

BY  
FRANK D. ANDREWS

VINELAND,  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
1908

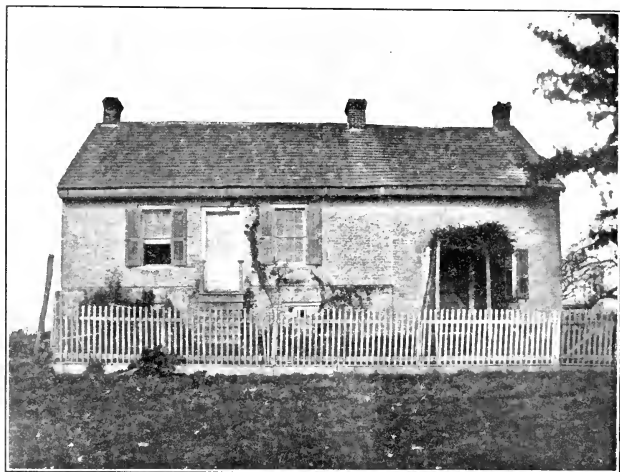












PHOTOGRAPHED BY CORA JUNE SHEPPARD

**THE HOWELL HOMESTEAD**  
**HOME OF RICHARD, AFTERWARD GOVERNOR, AND LEWIS HOWELL**  
**SHILOH, NEW JERSEY**

THE YOUNG MEN FROM BRIDGETOWN AND FAIRFIELD MET HERE BEFORE JOINING THE REST  
OF THE PARTY AT THE FITHIAN HOMESTEAD  
DECEMBER 22, 1774

THE  
TEA=BURNERS  
OF  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY

WHO  
SHOWED THEIR RESISTANCE  
TO  
BRITISH TYRANNY AND UNJUST TAXATION

BY  
BURNING A CARGO OF EAST INDIA TEA

ON THE EVENING OF  
DECEMBER 22, 1774  
AT  
GREENWICH, NEW JERSEY

BY  
FRANK D. ANDREWS  
SECRETARY VINELAND HISTORICAL AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY

VINELAND,  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY, NEW JERSEY  
1908

Allen County Public Library  
900 Webster Street  
PO Box 2270  
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

**Unveiling and dedication of the Monument erected  
in honor of the Tea-Burners of Cumberland  
County, at Greenwich, N. J.,  
September 30, 1908.**

No event in the history of Cumberland County has received such recognition, or been so highly honored as the act of the young patriots who burned a cargo of tea stored at Greenwich, and we preface this edition with some account of the day and celebration.

The centennial of the event was the occasion of a celebration held at Bridgeton, November 25, 26, 1874, attended by thousands of visitors, their patriotism aroused by the approaching centennial of the nation.

With the recent organization of societies of patriotic women of the county, such an important event in its annals could not long remain unhonored.

With one purpose in view, the Daughters of the Revolution, and Mr. W. W. Sheppard, who, impressed with the work of patriotic societies in the East, in preserving and marking historical spots, suggested a monument; an effort was made to secure the necessary funds. After many delays an appropriation of \$5,000 from the State was obtained and a monument commission appointed. The result of their labors is seen in a handsome granite memorial, fourteen feet in height ornamented with Corinthian columns carved on front and back. On the sides in raised letters are the names of the Tea-Burners; on the face, a bronze tablet pictures the scene of the burning of the tea; underneath is the following:

IN HONOR OF THE  
PATRIOTS OF CUMBERLAND CO., N. J.  
WHO, ON THE EVE OF  
DECEMBER 22, 1774,  
BURNED BRITISH TEA  
NEAR THIS SITE.

On Wednesday, the day of the celebration, residents of

the county and strangers from without its borders, laid aside their cares and responsibilities and journeyed to the old historic town on the Cohansey. Former inhabitants returning as to an old home week to look again on familiar scenes and meet the friends of their youth. Some, while awaiting the opening ceremonies, visited the ancient Presbyterian cemetery to pay homage to the Tea-Burners buried there, who one hundred and thirty-four years ago made the day's celebration possible; moving in and out among the graves of the early settlers with reverent tread; reading the quaint inscriptions on the time stained stones; standing on the site of the old brick church, by the tomb of the pastor, who on the eve of the Revolution preached freedom from British oppression. On the right, Whitefield once addressed the assembled colonists; on the left, an old oak still stands as a living witness of the changing scenes of two centuries, near by the stream the Indians loved, murmurs as in the past.

Others sought the village, whose wide street, lined with fine old trees, is the oldest in constant use in the county. They admired as they passed and repassed the well preserved, ancient houses which vied with modern habitations in the display of flags and bunting. Opposite Market Square, and the monument, was the speakers stand, where New Jersey's governor, John Franklin Fort and prominent guests reviewed the fine parade marshalled by an aged descendant of a Tea-Burner.

Lunch was served on the lawn, under stately trees surrounding the Friends Meeting House, about which cluster memories of the past. Adjoining the grounds is the enclosed burial place of the early Quakers, with rude native stones marking the graves of the silent sleepers. Close at hand the Cohansey River moves onward to the Bay while over all blue skies and fleecy clouds add their charm to the peaceful scene.

The afternoons exercises were of an impressive character. Rev. Louis C. Wainwright invoked the divine blessing on the assembled multitude. Hon. Bloomfield H. Minch, the presiding officer, spoke of the completion of a work long delayed, and complimented the ladies through whose efforts it had been accomplished. The Band played the "Star Spangled

Banner," the school children sang, and the flags veiling the monument parted at the touch of Mrs. Robert Ward, Vice President General of the Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, revealing a beautiful and enduring memorial.

Ex-Governor Stokes on being introduced reviewed the colonial history of the county, and the issues which led to the destruction of tea in Boston Harbor, and later on the banks of the Cohansey. In closing he formally presented the monument to the State. Governor Fort with due formality accepted the trust and said, "We want more such memorials all over the state where ever there have been events which justify their erection. They are object lessons more valuable than study and books. The object lesson remains through life."

Miss Adaline W. Sterling, Regent of the N. J. Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, followed with a most interesting historical address picturing the scene of the tea burning and paying tribute to the Revolutionary heroes of Cumberland County.

Professor Warren W. Sheppard delivered a scholarly oration in which he traced the migration of the ancestors of the English people who settled this country, and the growth and development of the spirit of freedom until it became a living issue with the men who burned the tea.

A poem "What mean these Stones," written for the occasion by Mrs. Charles Watson, was read by Mr. James Hunt. After singing America by the school children, Rev. Joseph Lyon Ewing of Bridgeton pronounced the benediction.

A galax wreath, presented by the New Jersey Society of the Daughters of the Revolution, was placed upon the monument by Mrs. Ward, and with that added tribute to the men honored, visitors, with a last look at the stately object lesson standing in its majestic grandeur for the principle of right and justice, departed for their homes pleased with the celebration, the cordiality and generous hospitality of the Greenwich people, and charmed with the tranquility and quiet beauty of the place.

FRANK D. ANDREWS.

Vineland, New Jersey.

October 3, 1908.





## PART FIRST

### GREENWICH IN 1774

Although the rich farming land along Cohansey River found ready purchasers and the settlers commenced the improvement of their plantations, it was not until after the death of the proprietor, John Fenwick, in 1683, that the town he had planned and named Cohanzick, was laid out on the north side of the river by his executors.

During the ninety years of its growth and development preceeding the Revolutionary era, the first settlers, those who crossed the Atlantic with Fenwick, and those of New England origin, who, in remembrance of their home in Connecticut colony, changed the name of the town to Greenwich, had alike passed on to their reward, leaving numerous descendants to inherit the fruit of their labor. An active, energetic, God-fearing people, these men and women to the manor born. Their inheritance was not only houses and land, but those traits of character which adorn and add lustre to a community, industry, patience and forbearance characterizing the Friends; while energy, thrift and economy marked the descendants of New England ancestry.

Others had been drawn to the settlement by its advantageous location, the enterprise of its people and its fertile soil. They had also helped to develop and build up the place.

Many of the descendants of the early settlers had lived their allotted time, some by reason of strength had reached four score and past and still lingered amid the scenes of their youth. It was the children of these sturdy men and women, who, grown to manhood and womanhood were in active life at this period.

The united labor of three generations of these industrious people had made Greenwich a prosperous community and a pleasant dwelling place. As the rude habitations of the first settlers gave way to more comfortable dwellings, so they in turn were succeeded by homes both substantial and elegant for the time.

The village street from the river landing to the Presbyterian Church, a distance of two miles, was more thickly settled than other parts of the township. On highways leading to neighboring settlements, amid fertile fields, were farm houses of brick, of stone, or wood according to the wealth and enterprise of the owner.

At this time Greenwich was the largest and most prosperous town in Cumberland County. Hither came the farmer to trade, here maid and matrons found the best assortment of goods to select from, the village merchants carrying an ample supply for their simple needs.

At the landing on the river, at the beginning of the "great street," a ferry had been long established, for there was much travel between Greenwich and Fairfield, and visiting of relatives and friends.

Many crossed the river to attend the Cohansey Baptist Church, over which Rev. Robert Kelsey was settled. He was from the north of Ireland, and a most methodical, painstaking man, as his records testify.

Others crossed the ferry to unite with the Friends in silent worship or passed on to the Presbyterian Church, where with the villagers of that faith they listened to Rev. Andrew Hunter, an able divine, who for nearly thirty years had expounded the gospel to their great satisfaction.

Greenwich had long enjoyed water communication with Philadelphia, and vessels bound for New York, Boston, or more distant ports were not unfrequently seen at the landing, taking on board the product of field and forest.

Frequent intercourse with the business and social world of Philadelphia and other centres of population had had its influence upon the citizens of Greenwich, and evidence is not wanting to show that refinement and culture were to be found in many households. Books had readers and admirers, and the more intelligent of the townspeople kept in touch

with the outside world through the interchange of letters and the newspapers of the period. Ambitious men there were in the community who sought to rise above their fellows, aspiring to positions of trust and responsibility in the service of county and state.

For the most part, however, the people were tillers of the soil, who followed with little deviation the habits of their ancestors, opening for cultivation new fields as they cleared the forest, adding more acres to the original purchase and prospering in a moderate way. Some with insufficient help availed themselves of their proximity to the City, securing from the Captains of incoming vessels Redemptionists, who had bound themselves to work out their passage money. This was not always a safe investment as the new arrivals frequently proved untrustworthy and absconded before their time of service expired.

With the beginning of the year 1774 the agitation regarding the rights of the colonists and the unjust and tyrannical course of the British Parliament became a subject of general discussion throughout the country. At Greenwich, many sided with the king and condemned any opposition to his authority.

Others there were, with an ardent love of liberty who freely discussed the political situation, taking sides with the Boston patriots, commending their action in destroying the tea in Boston Harbor, and giving with a liberal hand toward the relief of the sufferers from the "Port Bill" which Parliament had decreed as a punishment.

We may well believe the patriotic citizen of Cumberland County took great interest in the meetings of the Continental Congress and heartily approved of its declaration of colonial rights.

The young men especially were alive to the issues of the day, and the spirit of liberty and desire for freedom from British oppression which was rapidly overspreading the whole country, so influenced the most adventurous among them, they were ready for any action wherein they might assert their independence of kingly rule and show their patriotism.

The year was not to close without an opportunity for

such a demonstration; unexpectedly there came sailing into Cohansey River, December 12-14, the brig Greyhound, Captain J. Allen, with a cargo of tea on board. Probably the Captain had been warned by the pilots in the Bay, of the reception awaiting him should he attempt to land his cargo in Philadelphia whither he was bound.

With the port of destination thus closed against him, he sailed up the river to Greenwich, doubtless expecting to find a loyal subject of King George, willing for British gold to defy public opinion and receive the tea on storage. Such a man was found and the tea was accordingly placed in the cellar of Dan Bowen's house on Market Square.

Although the landing was conducted with much secrecy the Greyhound's mission was soon discovered by the watchful inhabitants and long before the ship had proceeded far on its return voyage, the villagers were in a state of excitement over the extraordinary circumstance.

A temporary committee was appointed to take charge of the tea, and await the action of the general committee, to be chosen at a meeting to be held the following week at Bridgetown.

The opportunity thus unexpectedly opened for the young patriots to follow in some manner the example of the Indian disguised Bostonians was not to pass unnoticed.

Active work on the part of the leaders so perfected their plans that the Thursday evening following the appointment of the general committee was decided upon for the decisive stroke which would effectually rid the county of the obnoxious herb and relieve the committee of its responsibility. On the day appointed a general meeting of the inhabitants of the county met at Bridgetown and unanimously approved of the articles of association agreed upon by the Continental Congress. A committee of thirty-five were appointed to enforce the law throughout the county. They were informed of the landing of the tea at Greenwich and the appointment of a pro tempore committee of five who waited their action in the matter. After deliberation they reported: "that being ignorant of the principles on which the tea was imported, from whence it came, or the importers names, they thought best in his absence to have it privately stored," and proposed

to meet the following morning for that purpose.

Not all the members of that committee had reached their homes that short December day, before the well laid plans for the destruction of the tea were taking shape for speedy execution. Men from Fairfield and from Bridgetown, in little groups, with here and there a lone rider were making all speed toward the appointed rendezvous near Shiloh, the home of Richard and Lewis Howell. Here others joined the little company which soon hastened on to the Fithian homestead, not far from the old mill, where the Greenwich men impatiently awaited them.

Completing their arrangements and perfecting their disguise with no fear of discovery in this unfrequented spot, they again took up the line of march moving rapidly toward Greenwich street.

Were we to visit Greenwich this year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eight we would find houses still standing as old or older than those at which they met that evening. May we not enter one of these ancient dwellings and in imagination picture the scene that took place one hundred and thirty-four years ago?

Turning backward the wheels of time we find ourselves within the walls of one of the most pretentious residences of that period. Uninvited and unseen let us join the family circle about the broad hearthstone and before the blazing logs warm into life faculties benumbed by our long flight through the receding years.

As the approaching gloom of night overspread the land and the work of day is done, candles are lighted and the evening meal served to the household.

The Quaker speech and manner are observed by this family who do not unnecessarily linger over their simple though substantial repast, but again seek the welcome vibrating heat of the fireside, for the day has marked the approach of winter, snow has fallen in Philadelphia, and the chill in the atmosphere has penetrated the house.

Comfortably seated once more the interrupted conversation may perchance turn upon the events of the year: the death of Dr. Ward, the late cold spring, with ice an inch thick in May, the injury to the fruit and scanty crops, the

marriage of Amy Ewing and Robert Patterson, or more recent occurrences; first day meeting, Captain Allen's visit, the Greyhound's cargo, and the probable result of the days meeting at the county-seat.

From the conversation we may gather, not all the townspeople are in sympathy with the recommendation of the recent Congress. We find there are many faithful subjects of King George in the neighborhood and we also learn who some of the patriots are. But listen! through the silence of the night, do we not hear the subdued murmur of voices and the tread of passing feet? The little group desert the comfortable fireside seeking an explanation of the unusual disturbance.

Let us follow them and join the startled villagers who dimly see a motley crowd apparelled as the Red Men of the forest moving swiftly past.

At Market Square they halt before the building in which the tea is stored, speedily effect an entrance, and soon we may see the boxes passed from hand to hand into the neighboring field where the broken chests and contents form a goodly pile.

But look! was it from that lantern in the hand of an Indian brave, or from the flint and steel of that kneeling Red Man a tiny spark appears, flutters in the breeze, which soon fans it into a blaze lighting the square with burning tea.

The flames reveal the presence of many spectators drawn thither by the unusual occurrence. It also reveals the masqueraders, who, like the brave men of the forest they personate work in silence or with an occasional expression of satisfaction, as box after box is added to the burning pile. Some in a lively vein may join hands and dance and caper before the blaze, their grotesque actions and elongated shadows making a weird and fantastic scene worthy a painter's brush.

As the flames rise high and still higher, lighting up the village and surrounding countryside, conflicting emotions fill the mind of the amazed spectators; some declare it an outrage for which the severest penalties should be visited upon the offenders, some endeavor to penetrate the disguise and discover the active participants with a view of their

apprehension; others secretly rejoice the tea is destroyed, but fear trouble from the lawless act, while others uphold the tea-burners action and regret they could not have taken part.

Who among that curious throng, as they watched the burning tea, brought half way around the world to light up old Cohansey, thought the act of sufficient worth to be remembered for centuries? Little thought they as they saw the drama played, of the far reaching influence of that nights work; little did they imagine the actors would be honored and the event commemorated by generations far removed.

Who were these men who suddenly appeared, defied the law, and as mysteriously disappeared when their purpose was accomplished? Who were they who opened the eyes of the Tories and disaffected to the fact that the spirit of patriotism and the love of liberty was in their midst, that tyranny and injustice must cease and their rights be respected? Whence came these brave men who by one decisive stroke so strengthened the cause of freedom in Cumberland County that the enemies of independence were overawed, if not silenced, and her liberty loving citizens sustained during the long conflict with Great Britain?

Who were they? They were young men of spirit, full of life and enthusiasm, men of character and education, of judgement and understanding, devoted to their country, who believing the British Parliament had no right to impose taxes on the colonies, or regulate its internal affairs, determined to give expression to their opinion in such manner as would convince those in authority that colonial rights in Cumberland County would be maintained.

When the prominence to which many of these young men attained in the service of their country, state and county is considered, the importance of securing such record of their acts and deeds as are now attainable for preservation in an enduring and permanent form.

In one goodly company will be recognized by all who have an interest in the history of the past.

It is a cause for regret that the names of all who took part in the destruction of the tea that December night are not known to this generation and held in remembrance

with their companions. Doubtless among them were those equally brave, equally as patriotic and with as ardent love of liberty, deserving of our tribute, for the successful lives are not alone those whom their fellow countrymen delight to honor, unknown beyond the community in which their lives are spent, are those in restricted surroundings who by their adherence to principle, by strict integrity and unselfishness unconsciously mould and temper the lives of those about them.

May not the influence of some of these unknown heroes who played their part so well in the little drama, have passed into other lives and shown forth anew in the cause of right and justice in conflict with the evils that in every generation oppress mankind.

The secrecy and disguise of those who took part in the destruction of the tea proved unavailing, in part at least, for the owners, John Duffield and Stacy Hepburn, commenced a suit in trespass at the April term of the Supreme Court 1775, against Joel Miller, Abraham Sheppard, Ephraim and Silas Newcomb for damages to the amount of six hundred pounds. Suit was also brought against Alexander Moore, Jr., Henry Seeley and Richard Howell for the same amount.

Joseph Bloomfield, a friend of some of the party, afterwards governor of the state, had recently been licensed to practice law and was located in Bridgeton. To him his companions naturally turned, engaging him to defend them. Duffield and Hepburn were ordered to file security, which they neglected to do.

The denunciation of the Tories and the condemnation of the law abiding citizens who had not awakened to the spirit of the time brought the sympathy of the friends of the defendants to the front and money was raised for their defence.

The services of Jonathan D. Sergeant, an able lawyer of Philadelphia, who later became a member of the Continental Congress, was retained and other legal talent secured. Duffield and Hepburn engaged Joseph Reed of Philadelphia, who afterward attained high rank in the Revolutionary Army, and Charles Pettit, his father-in-law, who like the opposing counsel, became a member of



Continental Congress. Notwithstanding this formidable array of legal talent the plaintiff having at last filed security, found too late that delay had put an end to royal authority in New Jersey.

An effort to have the tea-burners indicted was also unsuccessful. "At the May Court of Oyer and Terminer held May 1775, Chief Justice Frederick Smyth, presided and charged the Grand Jury, dwelling upon the unlawful action of the offenders." Ebenezer Elmer, one of the party in the destruction of the tea, was present and recorded in his journal: "The jury came in without doing anything & Court broke up." Judge Smyth incensed at their disloyalty sent them out again with no result.

Jonathan Elmer, who became one of the most distinguished citizens of Cumberland County, was at that time sheriff and had summoned a jury of Whigs. Daniel Elmer was foreman, both were brothers of Ebenezer and sympathized with the tea-burners.

David Bowen, the successor of Sheriff Elmer was a Tory. He secured a jury of that persuasion who it was expected would agree.

The journal above referred to, records under date of September 27th. "'Twas expected as Sheriff Bowen had got a jury of Tories we should be indicted for burning tea and taking Wheaton, (a notorious Tory), but they could not make out, but made a presentment, Court broke up."

The Tory jury may have sensed the oncoming wave of public sentiment and felt their support weakening, for Cumberland County was partaking of the general excitement which had prevailed throughtout the colonies since the engagement at Concord and Lexington, and its liberty loving inhabitants were uniting in a common cause. A number of the tea-burners had already enlisted in the militia and were practicing the arts of war.

Thus ends part first of the drama, played to a Cumberland County audience long years ago. In its presentation the actors effect great secrecy, assume a characteristic disguise making their first public appearance on Market Square which they illuminate for the occasion with the light of burning tea.

The performance won the applause of many of their audience, others criticised and condemned it. In scene second their friends gather at the Court House, where judge and jury failing to agree, the legal battle is won and liberty is triumphant.

Part second reveals, so far as known, the actors in the drama, giving brief sketches regarding them: their families, ancestry, their acts, their deeds and honors won in the service of their country and state.

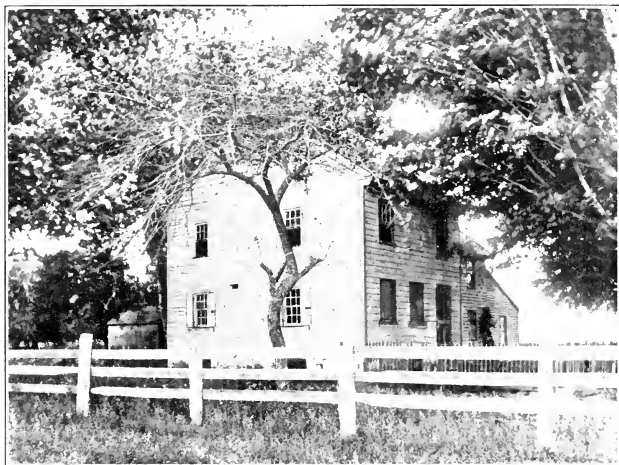
The memory of these men, and those whose names are unrecorded, should be held in grateful remembrance for their fidelity to the principles on which our government was founded. By their act in destroying the tea, they but followed the example of others equally opposed to an invasion of their rights. Great Britain was made acquainted with the temper of the colonists and America's cause was strengthened.\*

December 22nd 1908 marks the one hundred and thirty-fourth anniversary of that memorable night when the light of burning tea illumined Market Square of Greenwich town, a beacon which shone far over land and water, a warning light across the sea.

Since that historic event four generations of men and women have entered this sphere of activity, when, at last, that unseen influence; that sense of justice, that regard for principle, that veneration for ancestors whose sacrifices and devotion to the cause of liberty made freedom possible, touches the human heart vitalizing into action a grateful posterity, an appreciative community, and a liberty loving people who unite in doing honor to that which was honorable, that which was justifiable and that which was commendable in those brave patriots, the Tea-Burners of Cumberland County.

*\*Local tradition has preserved the names of Eno Ewing and Isaac Preston as among the tea-burners.*





PHOTOGRAHED BY CORA JUNE SHEPPARD

**THE FITHIAN HOMESTEAD  
HOME OF PHILIP V. FITHIAN  
GREENWICH, NEW JERSEY**

THE GREENWICH MEN AWAITED THE ARRIVAL OF THE PARTY FROM THE HOWELL HOMESTEAD  
AT THIS PLACE BEFORE PROCEEDING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE EVENING  
DECEMBER 22, 1774

*“The name, the life, the influence of every man makes a part of the history of the times.”*

## PART SECOND

# THE TEA-BURNERS

## EBENEZER ELMER

Rev. Daniel Elmer, the ancestor of the Elmer family of Cumberland County was born in Connecticut in 1690. He graduated from Yale College in 1713; engaged in teaching and preaching until 1727 when he removed with his family to Fairfield where he was pastor of the Presbyterian Church until his death January 11th, 1755. His eldest son, Daniel, married Abigail Lawrence in 1738. He was a surveyor, and also served as clerk of the county. He died in 1761. Ebenezer, his son, was born August 23, 1752. Early deprived of his father's care, his education with the exception of one quarter when he went through with arithmetic, was acquired at an evening school. On reaching manhood he studied the practical branches of navigation. He was not however to follow a sea faring life, his brother, Dr. Jonathan Elmer, taking him into his office as a student. While engaged in the study of medicine the agitation regarding the landing of the tea at Greenwich occurred, with others of his acquaintance he took part in its destruction.

Early in 1776, after two years of study, he entered the army as ensign in Captain Bloomfield's company, Third Battalion. He was promoted April 9th to the office of second lieutenant. His medical attainments secured him a position as surgeon's mate under Dr. Lewis Howell, in the Second Regiment, November 28, 1776. On Dr. Howell's death,

June 28, 1778, he succeeded him as regimental surgeon, and continued in the service until the army was disbanded in 1783.

Returning to Bridgeton, he established himself in his profession, in which he was very successful. In 1784 he married Hannah, daughter of Col. Ephriam Seeley. Two children were born to them, Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus, who attained eminence as a jurist, and Sarah Smith, who married Rev. William Neill, later president of Dickinson College. About 1789 he entered the political arena and was elected to the Assembly, serving until 1795. In 1800 he was sent to Congress as a representative from New Jersey, continuing for six years. He was appointed adjutant general of the New Jersey Militia in 1804 and brigadier general of the Cumberland brigade in 1806. The following year he was again in the Assembly, and in 1809 was made collector of the port of Bridgeton. He held several minor offices in the gift of the people by whom he was highly honored and respected.

Joining the Presbyterian Church in 1825, he established the first Sabbath School in the county, and was one of the founders and for many years president of the Bible Society; he was also president of the New Jersey Branch of the Society of the Cincinnati, and the last surviving officer of the Revolution in the state.

It has been said of him, "He was one who always seemed to think more of his duty as a public officer than of his private interest." On the stone that marks his last resting place in the grave yard of the old Presbyterian Church at Bridgeton, appears the following inscription:

In  
Memory of  
GENERAL EBENEZER ELMER  
A soldier of the Revolution  
who died October 18th 1843  
Aged 91 years

**TIMOTHY ELMER**

Timothy, son of Daniel Elmer Jr., and brother of Ebenezer Elmer was born in Fairfield in 1748.

In 1772 he married Mary Dayton and settled on the farm inherited from his father, who died when he was a lad of thirteen. He is said to have been an earnest Whig whose patriotic zeal led him to join the little band of tea-burners of which his brother Ebenezer was a conspicuous member. His love of country was so great he entered the service in its defence becoming captain of the First Battalion, Cumberland Militia, under Col. Newcomb, October 5, 1776. He was subsequently promoted to the rank of major. Returning from the army he was elected to the Assembly in the fall of 1779. He was not to live to see the close of the struggle for independence or to enjoy the fruit of his labor, his death occurring May 16, 1780.

He was the father of three children: Timothy, born 1773; Oliver, 1775; and Jane, 1777. Timothy was sheriff of the county in 1805-'07, and surrogate in 1815. He married Ruth, daughter of Jeremiah Bennett in 1807. Of their ten children, the youngest but one was the late Joseph H. Elmer whose death in Bridgeton took place in 1906.

**JAMES EWING**

The Ewing family trace their ancestry to Finley Ewing, an Irish patriot, to whom King William presented a sword for bravery at the battle of Boyne Water, July 1, 1690. Thomas, the first of the name to settle in West Jersey, came from Londonderry to Long Island in 1718. He soon removed to Greenwich where in 1720 he married Mary Maskell, a descendant of New England ancestors.

Maskell Ewing, their first child, born in 1721, married in 1743 Mary Paget, whose many domestic virtues made her a model wife and mother. Of their ten children, two, James and Thomas, took a prominent part in the destruction of the tea at Greenwich.

While a young man James served as clerk in the store of Mr. Boyd, who came from the north of Ireland in 1772, having established himself in business in Bridgeton, he sent for his wife and children to join him. On their arrival, late in 1773, they found the husband and father had recently died. The widow, with the assistance of James Ewing, continued the business. In the midst of his cares and responsibilities he found time to win the heart and hand of the eldest daughter, whom he married October 15, 1778. He was elected to the Assembly the same year. The following year he removed to Trenton where he held office as commissioner of loans for New Jersey.

He gave much time in devising a simplified system of spelling, which he explained in a pamphlet published in Trenton in 1798. He died October 23, 1823.

His son Charles was born July 8, 1780; graduated with honor at Princeton, became a lawyer, and from 1824 until his death, August 5, 1832, was Chief Justice of the state, and one of the ablest jurists of his time.

## THOMAS EWING

Thomas, son of Maskell and Mary (Paget), Ewing, and brother of James, was born in Greenwich, September 13, 1748.

His early education was supplemented with a course of Latin at the somewhat celebrated classical school kept by Rev. Enoch Green at Deerfield. He then took up the study of medicine under the instruction of Dr. Samuel Ward, a native of Connecticut, who located in Greenwich near the Presbyterian Church in 1760, and was a most successful practitioner. Thomas Ewing married September 30, 1770, Sarah, only daughter of Samuel and Abigail Fithian, by whom, it is said, he acquired a considerable estate.

He established himself in his profession at Cold Spring, Cape May. His instructor Dr. Ward dying in 1774, he returned to his native town, where he continued the practice of medicine. He is described as "slimly built, five feet ten



inches in height, with dark complexion, black eyes and hair, making with the addition of an Indian costume and some slight changes, a disguise which his friends undoubtedly found difficult to penetrate at the tea burning on Market Square.

His professional ability secured him an appointment from the Provincial Congress as surgeon in the Battalion, under Colonel Silas Newcomb, in which were two companies from Cumberland County.

He narrowly escaped capture at the battle of Long Island. After the retreat and during the occupation of New York by the British he was with Heard's Brigade, stationed at Fort Washington. The excitement of the campaign, the heat and unsanitary condition of the camp produced its effect upon the raw recruits, and much sickness and mortality prevailed. Among those who took the camp fever was his former instructor, Rev. Enoch Green who was fortunately able to reach his home and family before death claimed him.

Not so fortunate was his friend Philip V. Fithian, chaplain of Colonel Newcomb's Regiment, who fell a victim of the same disease. Dr. Ewing was also seized with the disorder and was brought home. Upon his recovery he was commissioned first major, Second Battalion, under Colonel David Potter; November 26, 1777.

During the war, Dr. Ewing was on the letter of marque brig "Hibernia," Captain Collins, and again in 1779, on the privateer "General Wayne," enduring many hardships and having several narrow escapes from death. In 1781 he was elected to the Assembly. Dr. Ewing never fully recovered from the effects of his sickness contracted in the army, which had undermined his constitution. His practice was extensive and was attended with so much exposure and fatigue, that he had little opportunity for physical recuperation. He died of consumption October 7, 1782. Of his two children: Samuel Fithian, died young; William Belford, born in 1776, attained prominence as a physician.

Dr. Ewing's remains lie in the old grave yard of the

Presbyterian Church at Greenwich. A marble tablet bears the following record:

THOMAS EWING ESQ.  
 Surgeon,  
 and  
 Practitioner in Physic.  
 After having served his country,  
 With fidelity and Reputation,  
 In a variety of important offices,  
 Civil and Military,  
 Died, highly beloved  
 And much lamented,  
 October 7th 1782.  
 In the 35th year of his age.

### JOEL FITHIAN

The Fithian family of Cumberland County descended from William, who according to tradition was a native of Wales. He was a soldier under Cromwell and present at the execution of Charles I. After the restoration of Charles II, he was proscribed as a regicide and obliged to flee the country.

He came first to Boston, thence to Lynn, from there to New Haven, finally settling in East Hampton, Long Island. He died about 1678.

His son Samuel, married Priscilla Burnett, March 6, 1679; removing to Fairfield about 1698, he soon afterwards settled in Greenwich, where he died in 1702. Of their children; Josiah, born May 6, 1685, married Sarah, daughter of Philip Dennis, November 7, 1706, and had Samuel, born October 12, 1715. He married Phebe, daughter of Ephraim Seeley, September 3, 1741.

Samuel Fithian was a man of prominence in the county, holding several important offices, also serving as a member of the Provincial Congress. He died November 2, 1777.

His eldest son, Joel, born September 29, 1748, had the advantages of a good education, his preceptor, Mr. Mc Gilliard having prepared for the ministry, inculcated into his pupils

mind a love for the English classics and the literature of the period.

Through his father's activity in political life he became familiar with the duties and responsibilities that attend a public career. He was well informed regarding current events and undoubtedly was familiar with the reception given the tea at the different ports, and was ready to carry into execution the plan for the destruction of that landed at Greenwich. His patriotism led to his election as sheriff in 1776, an office of much responsibility and attended with no little danger in the exciting times of the early part of the Revolutionary war. He served also in 1777 and 1778, when feeling his presence needed in the field he commanded a company in Colonel Enos Seeley's battalion and rendered service at the battle of Princeton and elsewhere.

His fellow citizens desiring him to represent them in the Legislature, he did so in 1779, and again in 1791, 1793, and in 1798 was a member of the Council.

Joel Fithian was twice married, first to Rachel, daughter of Jonathan and Ann Holmes. His second marriage was with Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Charles Beatty, and widow of his cousin Rev. Philip V. Fithian, February 2, 1780.

Of their five children, the youngest, Dr. Enoch B. Fithian lived to be a centenarian.

In the Presbyterian Church yard at Greenwich, Joel Fithian and Elizabeth his wife, lie buried. A marble stone bears the following:

Sacred  
To the Memory of  
JOEL FITHIAN  
Who Departed This Life November 9 1821  
In The 71 Year Of His Life  
He Was A Soldier In The Revolution  
And Served His Country In Many Important Offices  
And The Church In Greenwich As A Ruling Elder  
With Zeal And Fidelity  
Reader Imitate His Virtues That Your End  
May Like His Be Peaceful.

His children have placed at his grave this testimonial of his worth and their affection.

**PHILIP VICKERS FITHIAN**

Philip, the son of Joseph and Hannah (Vickers) Fithian was born in Greenwich, December 29, 1747. In his youth he showed a disposition to acquire an education, having a fondness for books and learning, which led to his being placed at the classical school of Rev. Enoch Green at Deerfield, where he prepared for college. He entered Nassau Hall at Princeton in 1770, graduating in 1772, and returned to Deerfield to study for the ministry with his former instructor, Mr. Green.

While thus engaged he received an offer through Rev. Dr. Witherspoon, president of the College of New Jersey, to become a tutor in the family of Hon. Robert Carter of Nomini Hall, Virginia, which he accepted, and for upward of a year was engaged in teaching.

On his return he was licensed to preach December 6, 1774, and entered upon his work as missionary supplying vacancies in New Jersey, and preaching in Western Virginia and Pennsylvania.

He was in Greenwich when the destruction of the tea took place and thus records the circumstance in his journal under date of Friday, December 23, 1774. "Last night the Tea, was, by a number of persons in disguise, taken out of the house & consumed with fire. Violent and different are the words about this manœuvre among the inhabitants. Some rave, some curse and condemn, some try to reason; many are glad the Tea is destroyed, but almost all disapprove the manner of destruction."

While he does not mention his participation in the event of the previous evening, it is generally understood he was present. Indeed, we may never know to what extent he was responsible for the method of destruction. We do know, that on his return from Virginia a few weeks previous, he had spent a day at Annapolis, Maryland, where the people a few days before had obliged the owner of the brig "Peggy Stewart" to set fire to the vessel in which were seventeen chests of tea. The patriotic zeal and temper of the people there may have led him to suggest the tea stored at Greenwich be disposed of by the same agent.

Of the young men engaged in the affair, many were his friends and associates, those living in the vicinity of Greenwich met at his house, which was in a retired spot, where they were joined by others of the party from the rendezvous at the Howell brothers, and it is probable, with his intimate friend, Andrew Hunter, Jr., he accompanied them to Market Square where if the young ministers did not take an active part, they heartily approved of the proceedings.

While Philip was yet a student at Mr. Green's he met and became attached to Mrs. Green's sister, Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. Charles Beatty of Neshaminy, Penn., an amiable and attractive young lady some four years his junior. They were married at the house of her brother, Dr. John Beatty, near Princeton, October 25, 1775.

On the third of July, 1776 the Continental Congress resolved to reinforce the army at New York, and requested New Jersey to furnish of their militia, three hundred men.

The Provincial Congress ordered the force to be divided into five battalions, consisting of eight companies of seventy-eight men each, and the service was limited to December 1, 1776. Cumberland County's quota was two companies.

Many of Philip's friends had already entered the service and others proposed joining the new companies. Here was his opportunity to serve his country and his fellow men. He secured the appointment of chaplain June 20th, bade adieu to his beloved wife and joined the army at New York. Colonel Newcomb was in command of the battalion. Dr. Thomas Ewing was surgeon, Robert Patterson, surgeon's mate and other friends were in the camp. With his battalion he was in the retreat from Long Island and retired to Fort Washington when the British took possession of the City. As the fall approached, the sickness and mortality of the army increased. In Colonel Newcomb's battalion of 337 men but 261 were fit for duty the 21st of September. A few days later chaplain Fithian, weakened by exposure and fatigue was seized with the camp fever, although he had the care and attention of his comrades; Dr. Ewing and Rev. Andrew Hunter, who were in the same brigade, he was unable to rally and died October 8, 1776.

He was buried the following day, another friend, Rev. William Hollingshead of Fairfield, in the service as chaplain, conducted the last rites. Thus closed the brief career of one of Cumberland County's most talented sons.

### LEWIS HOWELL

The American ancestor of the branch of the Howell family to which the brothers, Lewis and Richard belonged, came from Wales in 1729.

Lewis, the son of Ebenezer and Sarah (Bond) Howell, was born in Newark, Delaware, October 25, 1754. With his twin brother, Richard, he enjoyed the educational advantages of his native town until the family having removed to Shiloh in Cumberland County about the year 1769, it is believed he became a pupil of Rev. Enoch Green at Deerfield.

Having decided to become a physician, he entered upon the study of medicine in the office of Dr. Jonathan Elmer at Bridgetown. The Doctor's brother, Ebenezer, was a fellow student, and one of the party associated with the Howell's in burning the tea at Greenwich. On the completion of his studies, Lewis Howell was appointed surgeon of the Second Battalion, November 28, 1776.

At the battle of Brandywine he was taken prisoner but escaped. The Second Battalion was included in the 13,000 men under General Washington, who pursued the army of Sir Henry Clinton across New Jersey after the evacuation of Philadelphia in June 1778. The weather was exceedingly debilitating—heavy rains having fallen—followed by intense heat. Dr. Howell was taken sick with the cholera morbus and was unable to proceed, stopping it is said, at the Black Horse Tavern between Bordentown and Trenton. Word was conveyed to his brother, Major Howell, who had gone forward with his command, "that if he did not come that day he would not see him alive." He sought and obtained leave by supplying his place. The officer appointed "remarked that Howell was willing to get leave of absence,

for he knew there would be hot work that day." Hearing the remark, and believing it a reflection on his courage, Major Howell threw himself into the ranks as a private and fought with gallantry throughout the battle." General Washington hearing of the circumstance, sent for him and on the account being confirmed, he rebuked him gently and said: "Howell, I admire your bravery, but it was your duty to go to your brother."

On that day, the 28th of June, the hottest of the season, the battle of Monmouth was fought. Lying in an obscure tavern, Dr. Lewis Howell, in his twenty-fourth year died. His life was as much a sacrifice to the cause of American liberty as those who fell on the field of battle.

## RICHARD HOWELL

Richard, twin brother of Lewis Howell, was born at Newark, Delaware, October 25, 1754. The early education of the boys was obtained there, and after the removal of their parents to New Jersey, continued at the classical school of Rev. Enoch Green at Deerfield.

Having chosen law as his profession, Richard Howell returned to Delaware and pursued his studies at New Castle. His school-mate Philip V. Fithian on his way to Mr. Green's records meeting him July 19, 1773. Mr. Howell informed him he was soon going to Philadelphia on some business, and thence to Cape May for his health.

This statement shows at that early day Cape May was considered a health resort.

It was at the home of the Howell brothers, a brick house still standing near the village of Shiloh, that the Fairfield and Bridgetown men, intent upon the destruction of the tea stored at Greenwich, met.

It is probable Ebenezer Elmer was one of the leaders among them; but we may rest assured from what is known of the character of Richard Howell, that when the signal was given and they crossed the threshold of the lower entrance of his home out into the fast fading light of the

winter's day, he held no second place in that company. His activity led to his recognition and he was with others sued for damages.

The approaching conflict offering a wider field for his adventurous spirit, he laid aside the study of law to enter the army. In October 1775 he applied for a captain's commission and set about enlisting a company. He received his commission bearing date November 29th and marched with his company from Greenwich the 13th of December. He was in the expedition to Canada, saw service at Brandywine, Germantown, was at Valley Forge, followed the British after the evacuation of Philadelphia, and fought bravely at Monmouth, while his brother Lewis, surgeon of the battalion in which he was major, lay dying at a small tavern some miles away, refusing to take leave to visit him and absent himself from the conflict. He resigned April 7, 1779 to engage in some secret service for General Washington.

He commenced the practice of law in Salem and Cumberland Counties, having obtained license April 1779. After a few years he removed to Trenton where he was in 1778 elected clerk of the Supreme Court.

In 1793 he was chosen governor of the state, an office he held until 1801, when the Federalist party to which he belonged was defeated. When General Washington passed through Trenton on his journey to New York to be inaugurated president, Governor Howell was most active in making the reception one of lasting remembrance and wrote the verses of welcome.

Richard Howell married November 1779, Keziah, daughter of Joseph Burr of Burlington County, by whom he had nine children. His son, Richard Lewis, was an officer in the War of 1812. His grandson, John Cumming Howell, entered the navy, served during the civil war, attaining the rank of rear admiral 1877, and was acting secretary of the Navy at various times. Governor Howell's son William was a lieutenant in the War of 1812. He emigrated to Mississippi where he married and was the father of several sons distinguished in the naval service of the Confederacy. His daughter, Varina, married Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, whom she survived. Governor Howell



died at Trenton, April 28, 1802. His widow removed to Pittsburgh, Penn., where she died August 9, 1835.

### JAMES BOOTH HUNT

During the religious persecution which prevailed in Scotland many of the inhabitants removed to the north of Ireland where they became known as Scotch-Irish. Many thousands of these people emigrated to this country during the first half of the eighteenth century. Among them was Robert the ancestor of the Hunt family of Cumberland County, who settled at Shiloh where he married Rebecca, daughter of Isaac and Hannah (Barrett) Ayars.

Their son, Bartholomew, married a Mrs. Wood, and was the father of several children. James Booth, the first born, with his next younger brother John, had for neighbors Lewis and Richard Howell, young men of energy and spirit, at whose home the young patriots met that memorable December day, joining with others in the execution of a rash and hazardous undertaking—the destruction of the tea at Greenwich.

James B. Hunt enlisted in the service of his country and was at Trenton, the scene of General Washington's triumph, which revived the hopes of the American people. He married Sarah daughter of Maskell Ewing and settled in Greenwich near the Presbyterian Church of which he was an active member. He was a man of local prominence and judge of the County Court. Three of his sons grew to manhood: Thomas Ewing, Reuben and William F., whose descendants are widely scattered over the United States.

The remains of James B. Hunt and his wife repose in the old cemetery near their home. Mr. Hunt's tombstone bears the following inscription:

In  
 memory of  
 JAMES B. HUNT ESQ  
 who departed this life  
 August 5 1824  
 in the 71st year of his age  
 He served his country in her  
 struggle for Independence and  
 afterwards filled various Civil  
 offices with fidelity to the public

### JOHN HUNT

The family home of the Hunts was on an elevation known as Hunt's Hill, south west of Shiloh, adjoining the residence of Ebenezer Howell. After the death of his wife, Rebecca Ayars, Robert Hunt removed to North Carolina, where there was a settlement of Scotch-Irish, his sympathies being more in accord with the Presbyterian faith than that of the Seventh Day Baptist of Shiloh.

Bartholomew, his son, and father of John and James B. was a successful farmer. John, the second son, in company with his brother James, was one of the party who so signally protested against British tyranny by destroying the tea at Greenwich, December 22, 1774.

John Hunt obtained license to marry Ann Brewster, May 28, 1779. Of their children, two sons, Richard and John removed from New Jersey, locating in Springfield, Ohio.

### ANDREW HUNTER, JR.

David Hunter, the father of Andrew, was an officer in the British Army who on his retirement settled in Virginia. Here Andrew was born in 1752. An Uncle for whom he was named had removed to New Jersey, entered the ministry and at that time located in Cumberland County as pastor of the

Greenwich Presbyterian Church. His wife, Amie Stockton, was a cousin of Richard Stockton, who later signed the Declaration of Independence. Having no children, Rev. Andrew Hunter wrote his brother David if he would send his namesake to him he would educate him. The father complied, and the boy became an inmate of the household, his uncle instructing him and preparing him for college, which he entered in the fall of 1770, graduating from Nassau Hall, Princeton, in 1772. He was licensed to preach the following year, and went as a missionary to the frontier of Pennsylvania and Virginia.

The Greenwich parsonage, then located about three miles east of the church, had long been his home and was dear to him—dearer still was one of its inmates—Nancy Ann Riddle, a beautiful girl, half sister of Mrs. Hunter, and much younger, whom she had adopted as a daughter.

Brought up in the same household they had become much attached to each other, her presence in the home being the loadstone which drew him thither whenever opportunity offered. He was there in December, happy in the enjoyment of her society, when the agitation regarding the tea occurred. On that evening when the village was illuminated with burning tea, he was undoubtedly present at the scene of the conflagration and it is supposed took an active part.

After the death of his uncle, July 28, 1775, he was occasionally called to the pulpit of the Greenwich church.

October 2d of the same year he and his charming Nancy were married. After a few short months of wedded bliss he received an appointment as chaplain of Colonel Van Cortland's battalion, June 28, 1776. This battalion formed part of Heard's brigade which in the defence of New York, was, on the approach of the British, obliged to retire to the upper part of the Island. Here he was called upon to take final leave of his youthful companion and college associate, Chaplain Fithian, who, weakened by sickness and disease passed from the activity and turmoil of camp life into that unknown realm which so closely enfolds and conceals from mortal sight the spirit of the departed.

As his term of service with the militia expired, Chaplain

Hunter entered the Continental army, General Maxwell's brigade, remaining in the service until the close of the war.

He received the public thanks of General Washington for valuable aid rendered at the battle of Monmouth. By his marriage with Nancy Riddle he had two children: Andrew, a prominent lawyer and attorney general of the state, and a daughter who married a Mr. Gordon of Trenton. After the close of the war he returned to Bridgeton where he taught a classical school in 1784—'85.

His wife having died, he married a daughter of Richard Stockton, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Mr. Hunter occasionally preached, and on December 29, 1799, he occupied the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church at Trenton, reading President Adams' proclamation regarding General Washington's death and stated the recommendation of the pastor, Rev. Mr. Armstrong, regarding the ladies wearing mourning for three months.

He was engaged in teaching in the vicinity of Trenton for a number of years, and from 1804 to 1808 was professor of mathematics and astronomy at Princeton College.

He was appointed chaplain in the U. S. Navy, March 5, 1811, and for many years was stationed at Washington, D. C. He died there February 24, 1823. His children by his second marriage were: Richard S., a naval officer, who died in 1825; David, a graduate of West Point, who was a major general in the Civil War, dying in 1886; Moses and Lewis B., who graduated from Princeton, the latter an eminent surgeon in the U. S. Navy.

A daughter, Mary, married Lieutenant S. W. Stockton, who died in 1836. On July 8, 1852 she became the second wife of the eminent Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton College.

## JOEL MILLER

Joel Miller was one of the members of the Greenwich tea-burners whose identity was discovered and against whom suit was brought for damages. As at that time he was in his twenty-fourth year it is assumed he was a man of some

property, the owners of the tea, however, never received any consideration for their loss.

Many of Joel's companions and friends having enlisted, he entered the army as sergeant in the company of which Joel Fithian was captain. His company formed part of Colonel Enos Seeley's battalion and rendered good service at Princeton. It is believed Joel Miller was with the pursuing army who followed Sir Henry Clinton and his command across the "Jerseys," and was present at the battle of Monmouth, taking part also in other engagements.

A few years later Joel Miller, in a matrimonial engagement, surrendered his heart into the keeping of Polly Newel, whom he took out license to marry April 10, 1787.

By reason of strength he lived four score years, and as an old soldier of the Revolution was laid at rest, among comrades who had preceeded him, in the Presbyterian cemetery at Greenwich. A plain marble stone marks the spot and bears the following:

In  
memory of  
JOEL MILLER  
who died December 8, 1827  
Aged 80 years

## ALEXANDER MOORE, JR.

Alexander Moore, Sr., was of Irish descent, born about 1704. He was an early settler of Cohansey Bridge, (Bridgeton), where he engaged in trade and became wealthy. He married Sarah, daughter of Abraham Reeves of Greenwich. Of their five children, the eldest, Sarah, became the wife of John White of Philadelphia; another daughter married Dr. Isaac Harris of Pittsgrove, who in 1776 was surgeon in Colonel Newcomb's brigade, and two children died in infancy. The parents were buried in the church yard at Greenwich where substantial tablets recount their virtues. Mrs. White and the two children also repose there.

Alexander Jr., was one of the now famous tea-burners,

and was sued by the owners for damages, the wealth of his father no doubt leading them to hope for financial redress, a hope that proved delusive.

Alexander Moore owned a large tract of land near the present county house. Here in a substantial mansion called "Moore's Hall" he and his wife, a Miss Tate, endeavored to maintain the position and style assumed by wealthy and aristocratic families of the period. Early in the nineteenth century he disposed of his estate and removed to Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

### EPHRIAM NEWCOMB

Ephriam Newcomb was of New England ancestry, his father and grandfather having removed from Massachusetts to New Jersey in 1732.

Silas Newcomb, his father, married Bathsheba Dayton and settled at Fairfield. They were members of the Presbyterian Church, having been baptized in 1759, when he is recorded as captain. He saw active service in the French and Indian and Revolutionary wars.

Ephriam was his fourth son. It is said he studied medicine with Ebenezer Elmer. He was one of the young men present at Greenwich when the tea was destroyed and was included with those who were sued for damages. It does not appear that he entered the service; the family, however, was well represented by his father, General Silas, his brothers, Dayton and Webster, and his cousins, Reuben and Ethan.

### SILAS NEWCOMB

Toward the close of the seventeenth century a number of the inhabitants of Fairfield in Connecticut removed to West Jersey and settled on the south side of Cohansey River. Here they established a church about 1690, and on

May 12, 1697 were, by an act of the Assembly, duly authorized to name the township Fairfield. The advantages of the settlement having become known to Captain Joseph Newcomb of Edgartown, on the Island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, he removed with his wife and three sons in 1732.

Captain Newcomb was then about fifty years of age, he had held important offices in his home town, and served as a member of the Legislature. The family were hardly settled in their new home when he died just before January 17, 1733, at which time his widow, Joyce (Butler), was appointed administrator of his estate.

Silas, their sixth and youngest child, was born about 1723; he married Bathsheba Dayton, and their children were: Dayton, Webster, Silas and Ephriam. He was a lieutenant in the French and Indian War defending the frontier in 1758 against the attack of the savages.

The following year he was promoted captain and with his company was included in that famous regiment of 1,000 men who were completely clothed in a handsome uniform and provided with all necessities through the efforts of Governor Barnard, which reflected credit upon the colony and elicited the praise of General Amherst when he reviewed them at Albany.

Whatever influence the pomp and splendor of the British camp, with its well equipped and finely disciplined troops, may have had upon the rank and file of the provincial army, the old soldiers were better qualified by their experience, and were generally ready to engage in the approaching struggle for their country's freedom.

Captain Newcomb, although one of the committee to carry into execution the articles of association entered into by the Continental Congress, yet persisted in violating one of its articles, by using tea in his family. He was soon convinced of his error by the determination of his associates to "break off all dealings with him," and acknowledged in a letter, May 11, 1775, his decision to abide by the association, and asked "pardon for his great offence."

The news of the battle of Lexington, which occurred on the 19th of April, 1775, arrived in Philadelphia the 24th about

five o'clock in the afternoon. The next day Cumberland County was awakened by the report. Captain Newcomb's martial spirit was aroused, and with clearer views on the tea question, he was ready to serve his oppressed country. He was commissioned colonel of the First Battalion, Cumberland County militia, which formed part of Heard's brigade in the defence of New York, he was also in the Continental army. March 15, 1777 he was appointed brigadier general of the militia, resigning December 4th of the same year, but was afterwards engaged in guarding the banks of the Delaware, preventing the landing of refugees to plunder the inhabitants.

Although the names of Silas and Ephriam Newcomb appear among the tea-burners, and General Newcomb is accepted as the Silas referred to, the writer is inclined to the belief, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it was Silas the son of the old soldier who was present with his brother Ephriam.

### CLARENCE PARVIN

Clarence, the son of Silas Parvin was born at Bridgetown, probably in the tavern built by his father, a two-story hip-roofed house of some pretensions, west of and facing the river a short distance south of Commerce street.

Silas Parvin was a store keeper as well as an innkeeper; he secured a license as early as 1737 to keep a tavern, renewing it from time to time until 1773 when he retired.

In the year 1771 Silas Parvin appeared before the governor and council at Burlington, having charges against "Jonathan Holmes, Howell Powell, Jonathan Ayars, Ephriam Seely and Samuel Fithian, Esqrs., justices of the peace." At the hearing December 4th, as Mr. Parvin could not "prove misbehavior on the part of the justices," he acknowledged he was unable to support his charges, "asked their pardon for the trouble he had put them to and his behavior toward them." From this incident and the opinion of the committee we may infer Mr. Parvin, at that period of his life, was not in



sympathy with the majesty of the law.

Clarence, his eldest son, was evidently a young man of some spirit who did not hesitate to defy the law in the cause of freedom—and under cover of the darkness with his associates made a bonfire of the tea stored at Greenwich. He married Amy Mayhew of Pittsgrove in 1775. His father who was a man of considerable property died in 1779.

### DAVID PIERSON

Henry Pierson, the ancestor of David and Stephen Pierson, who were among the tea-burners at Greenwich was one of the first and leading citizens of Southampton, Long Island. He was a brother or near kinsman of Rev. Abraham Pierson, who came to New England in 1639, gathered a church at Lynn, Massachusetts, and with them removed to and became the first settlers of Southampton in 1640. Seven years later he removed with part of his congregation to Branford, Connecticut, and in 1667, again removed with most of his flock to New Jersey, founding and settling Newark.

Henry Pierson remained in Southampton until his death in 1680 or 1681. His son, Joseph, married Amy Barnes, November 17, 1675. Of their five children, the first, named Henry, was born in 1678 and married into the Ludlow family. From that marriage eight children were born; the third, Azel, born 1708, settled in West Jersey, probably at Fairfield where so many of the Long Island emigrants located.

Of his descendants, David Pierson, the tea-burner, entered the service of his country as first lieutenant October 5, 1776, in Captain Timothy Elmer's company. He also served under Captain David Elwell in Colonel Enos Seely's battalion, January 31, 1777, and was promoted to the rank of captain July 1, 1780. Dr. Azel Pierson, born July 12, 1767, became a prominent physician of Cumberland County.

**STEPHEN PIERSON**

The name of Pierson holds an honorable place in the records of the colony of New Jersey. One of the most prominent in its early annals is that of Rev. Abraham Pierson, who was the founder and first settler of Newark. His son, bearing the same name, was the first president of Yale College. A kinsman, Azel Pierson, settled in the southern part of the colony and left among his descendants, two, who immortalized their names by their connection with a number of young men who with patriotic zeal burned a cargo of East India tea at Greenwich. Stephen Pierson's home was probably not far distant from his friends, the Elmers, and Newcombs at Fairfield, and although we may know little regarding his career, General Elmer in his old age did not forget he was one of his companions on that memorable day in December 1774.

**HENRY SEELEY**

The Seeley's of West Jersey are descendants of Robert Seeley who was made a freeman in Massachusetts Colony, May 18, 1631. From Watertown, where he was a surveyor, he removed with a "goodly company" to Wethersfield, in Connecticut Colony, where they hoped to "better maintain their minister and find larger accommodations for their cattle."

Hardly had they become established when a band of Pequot Indians surprised them, killing six men and three women, taking captive two girls, killing twenty cows and doing other damage.

The general court declared war against the Pequots May 1, 1637. Captain John Mason and Lieutenant Robert Seeley were placed in command of upward of ninety men, who, with the help of friendly Indians, destroyed nearly the entire tribe of Pequots, and secured peace which lasted nearly forty years. Lieutenant Seeley removed to New Haven in 1639. After residing there a few years, he revisited England, re-

turning in 1654. He is supposed to have died in New York, his widow administering upon his estate October 9, 1668.

His son, Nathaniel, married in New Haven, 1646, Mary Turney. They removed to Fairfield, Connecticut Colony, where he was made a freeman in 1647. His wife having died he married Elizabeth, widow of Nehemiah Olmsted.

Nathaniel Seeley was commissioned lieutenant in King Philip's War, and was killed December 19, 1675 at the head of his command in an engagement with the Indians. Of his ten children, Joseph, who married Sarah\_\_\_\_\_, and had Ephriam and Samuel, was undoubtedly the Joseph Seeley "late of New England," who with others, possibly his brother Benjamin among them, purchased May 3, 1697, 400 acres of land on Cohansey River at Fairfield, in New Jersey.

Joseph's son Ephriam, purchased land and built a mill on what is now known as East Lake, Bridgeton. His will is dated March 9, 1722-3. He left a wife Mary, and children: Ephriam, Elizabeth, Sarah and Phebe. His personal estate amounted to £258.13. To the congregation inhabitants in and about Fairfield "he left forty shillings per year, for the procuring and supporting a Protestant Dissenting minister" for ten years.

Henry Seeley was a descendant of the first settlers of Fairfield. He was probably living in or near Bridgetown at the time of the landing of the tea at Greenwich. As a friend and companion of the young men, he joined with them in its destruction. Of his subsequent history little seems to be known. It is said he died unmarried. A Henry Seeley, a relative, married Hannah Dare and kept an inn at Deerfield.

## JOSIAH SEELEY

Ephriam, the father of Josiah Seeley, the tea-burner, was a son of Ephriam, whose father, Joseph, settled in Fairfield about 1697. He was born in 1709 and married Hannah, daughter of Josiah Fithian in 1736.

He was a man of prominence in the county, holding the

office of justice, judge and colonel of militia. His death occurred while a resident of Bridgetown, June 22, 1774.

Josiah, his son, was born in 1755. He early displayed his patriotism by uniting with his Bridgetown companions in destroying the tea at Greenwich, and later showed his love for his country by enlisting in the Continental army, February 7, 1776, as first lieutenant in Captain Bloomfield's company. He soon resigned, and was appointed quartermaster of the first battalion, Cumberland militia, July 10, 1777. He married Rebecca Gibbon, settling near Deerfield, where in the management of his mill property on the Cohansey, inherited from his father, he resided for a number of years, returning later to Bridgeton where after many years of usefulness he died. His wife died April 5, 1822, aged 64 years. Their daughter, Mary Gibbon, married Dr. Francis G. Brewster, a lineal descendant of Elder William Brewster who came in the "Mayflower" in 1620. Another daughter, Harriet, became the wife of Dr. William Belford Ewing. Twin sons, Ephriam and Leonard died in 1794 and are buried at Deerfield. Richard and Mason G. grew to manhood, married and left descendants.

Husband and wife lie buried in the old cemetery at Bridgeton. On Mr. Seeley's tombstone is the following:

IN  
MEMORY OF  
JOSIAH SEELEY  
who departed this life  
October 1 1832  
Aged 77 years.

### ABRAHAM SHEPPARD

The Sheppards were among the early settlers of Cohansey precinct, now Cumberland County. On September 20, 1687, David Sheppard, who was then sojourning in Burlington, purchased of the agent of William Worth, one half of 500 acres of land he had bought of John Fenwick, August 11, 1676, located at Back Neck. David's brothers,

James and Thomas purchased in the same locality.

John, probably another brother, was also an extensive land owner. He died in 1710, James in 1690, David in 1695 and Thomas in 1721. Evidently they were all men of property and standing in the community.

Among their numerous descendants was the father of Abraham Sheppard, who it is thought settled at Greenwich. Little seems to be known regarding the son, but from his connection with the tea-burners we have good reason to believe he was patriotic and brave. He was, with others, sued by the owners of the tea, with what result has already been stated. It is believed his remains lie unmarked in the Presbyterian burial ground at Greenwich.

## HENRY STACKS

In the year 1729 there was in the employ of Benjamin Acton, a surveyor and tanner of Salem, one Henry Stacks, shorter of stature than most men, and of a yellowish brown complexion, with a scar upon his face, who for some reason became dissatisfied with his environment, and in company with an Indian man, also in Mr. Acton's service, deserted their master and the town.

Where they went is not known to this generation. It is quite possible however, Henry Stacks found his way to Cohansey precinct and settled there, where in the course of time, having married, a son was born, to whom he gave his own name. If the inference is correct, it was his son, Henry, who joining with the tea-burners on that memorable Thursday evening won for himself an unenviable reputation by tying his trousers about his ankles and filling them with tea, hoping while the moon was obscured to escape detection in the darkness. Not only was his act discovered and ridiculed by his companions who dubbed him "Tea-Stacks," but the story has been handed down from generation to generation. Like many another person, he forgot the glorious cause in which they were engaged, the principle to be maintained at all hazard, for the present opportunity.

His saving propensity served him well, for in his later years he became a large landholder in Lower Hopewell, and in a wordly way was prosperous. His place in Dutch Neck is now owned by Robert M. Rocab of Bridgeton.

### SILAS WHITEKAR

With John Fenwick in the "Griffin" came Richard Whitacar, the founder of the family in New Jersey. Tradition has it he visited this country in 1665—'66 returning to England to come again in 1675.

He was a zealous adherent of the founder of Salem, and a magistrate from 1676 to 1702. He was a Friend, and married Elizabeth Adkins a member of that body. Before the close of the century he removed to the south side of Cohansey River in the vicinity of New England Town where he built a substantial brick dwelling.

In company with Henry Buck, Jr., a native of Connecticut, he engaged in trade, carrying on an extensive business in supplying the settlers with groceries, dry goods, clothing and liquors, receiving in exchange produce which was sent to New York and Boston in a large sloop owned by the firm.

Richard Whitacar died soon after 1709, leaving a son of the same name, also Thomas and Nathaniel. Of this family so prominent in the early history of Fairfield, the name of Silas Whitekar appears as an illustrious example of the young men of the time, who, feeling the injustice of Great Britain in forcing the tea upon the unwilling colonists, asserted their independence by committing it to the flames.

In the cemetery surrounding the "Old Stone Church" at Fairton may be seen the marble slab marking the last resting place of his wife.

The inscription, quaint and unusual to modern eyes is as follows:

In memory of  
MARY the once  
beloved spouse of  
SILAS WHITEKAR  
whose exit was on  
the 18th of Nov. 1794  
  
Life how short  
Eternity how long

This brief epitaph evidently but partly reveals the depth of tenderness and love Silas Whitekar had for his wife. Of his burial place we know not, no stone appearing in the old cemetery, but we venture to say it was his desire to be laid at rest beside his beloved Mary.

Another descendant of Richard and relative of Silas, Rev. Epher Whitaker, distinguished as a clergyman and author, was born at Fairfield, March 27, 1820.

Before the close of the present year of nineteen hundred and eight, visitors to the historic town of Greenwich will find a monument of enduring granite erected in honor of the young patriots who burned a cargo of tea stored there in 1774.

This memorial will remain an object of pride to the people of the town, county and state, who in thus commemorating the event will not only draw attention to its history, and the character of the men honored, but also serve to increase the interest of the present generation in historic events.

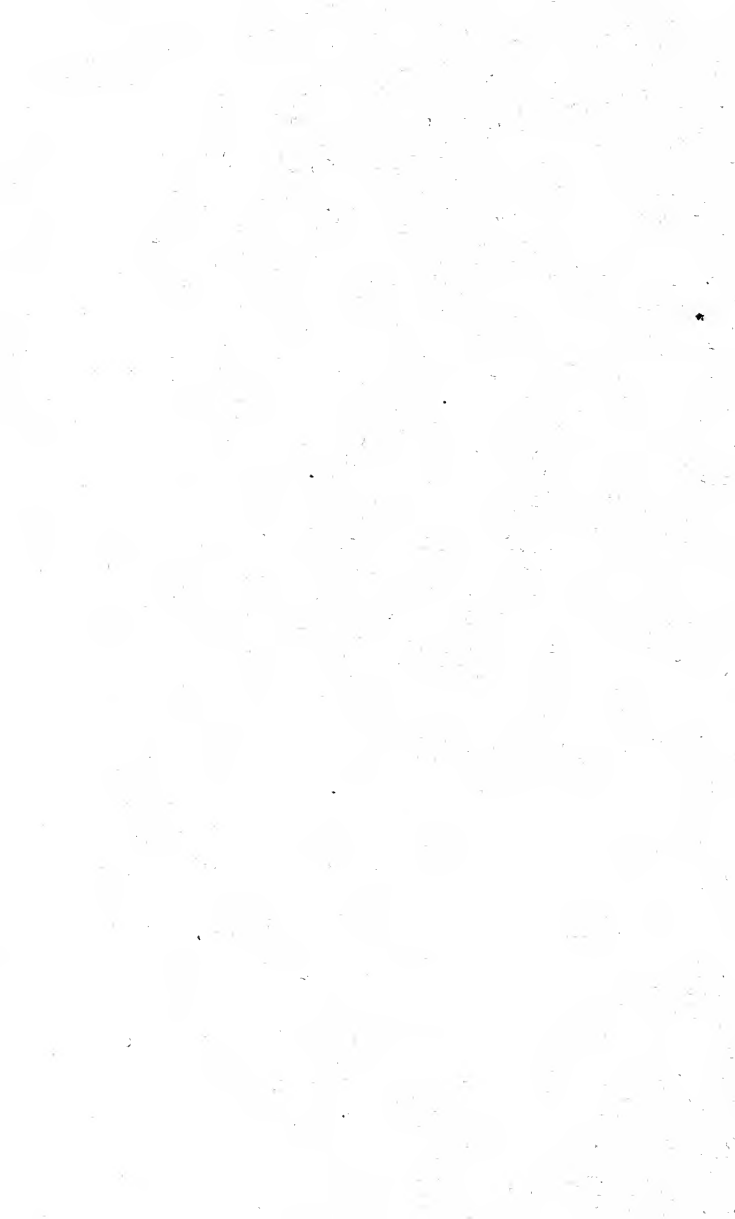
















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