

**Fort Mercer
Red Bank Battlefield
Tour Book**



British General William Howe



Hessian Colonel Carl Von Donop



British Admiral Richard Howe



General Hugh Mercer



Lt. Colonel Christopher Greene



Commodore John Hazelwood

Continental Weapons



Brown Bess Musket (British/Continental)

Weight - 10.5 pounds

Length – 58.5 inches

Barrel length – 42 inches

Cartridge – 75 caliber lead ball



Continental Weapons



Charleville Musket (French/Continental)

Weight - 10 pounds

Length – 60 inches

Barrel length – 44 inches

Cartridge – 69 caliber lead ball



Hessian Weapons



Potzdam Musket (Hessian)

Weight - 10 pounds

Length – 56 inches

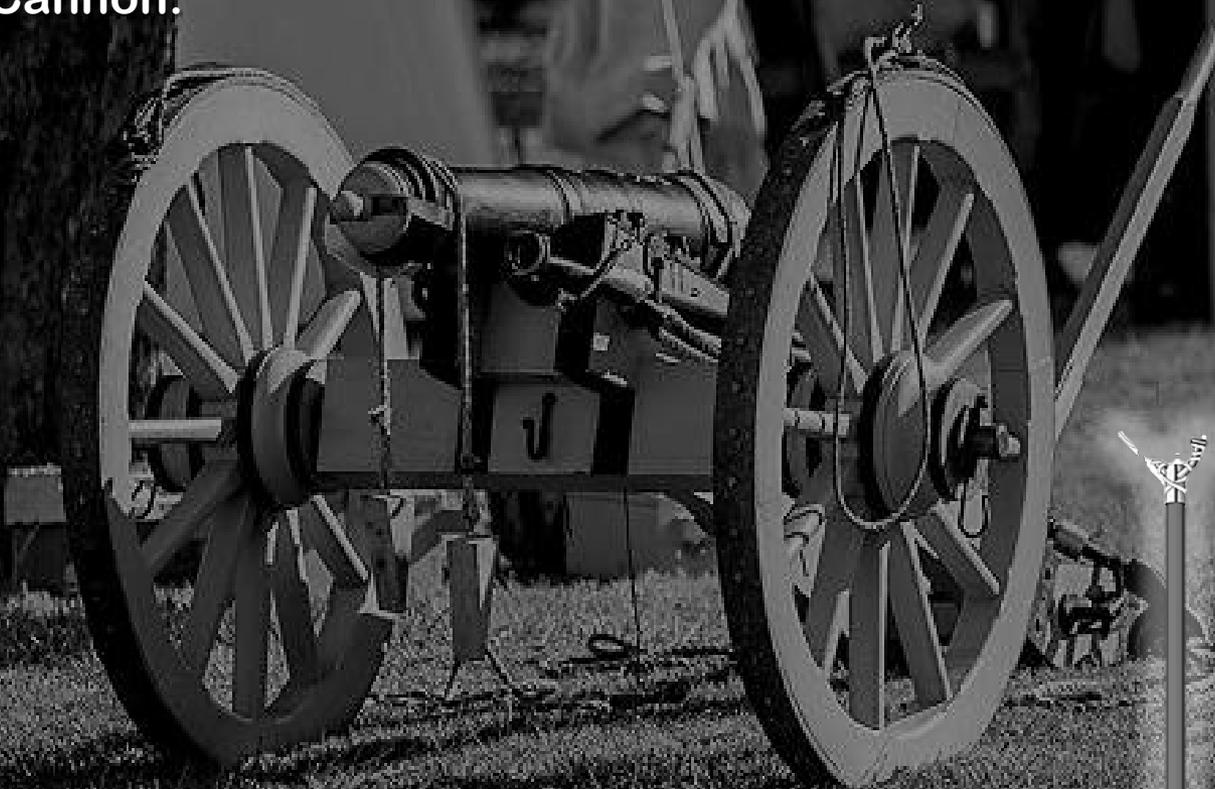
Barrel length – 41 inches

Cartridge – 75 caliber lead ball



Continental Artillery

Fort Mercer is defended with between 11 and 14 artillery pieces mostly 3lb. and 6lb. Cannon.



American Artillery Cannon



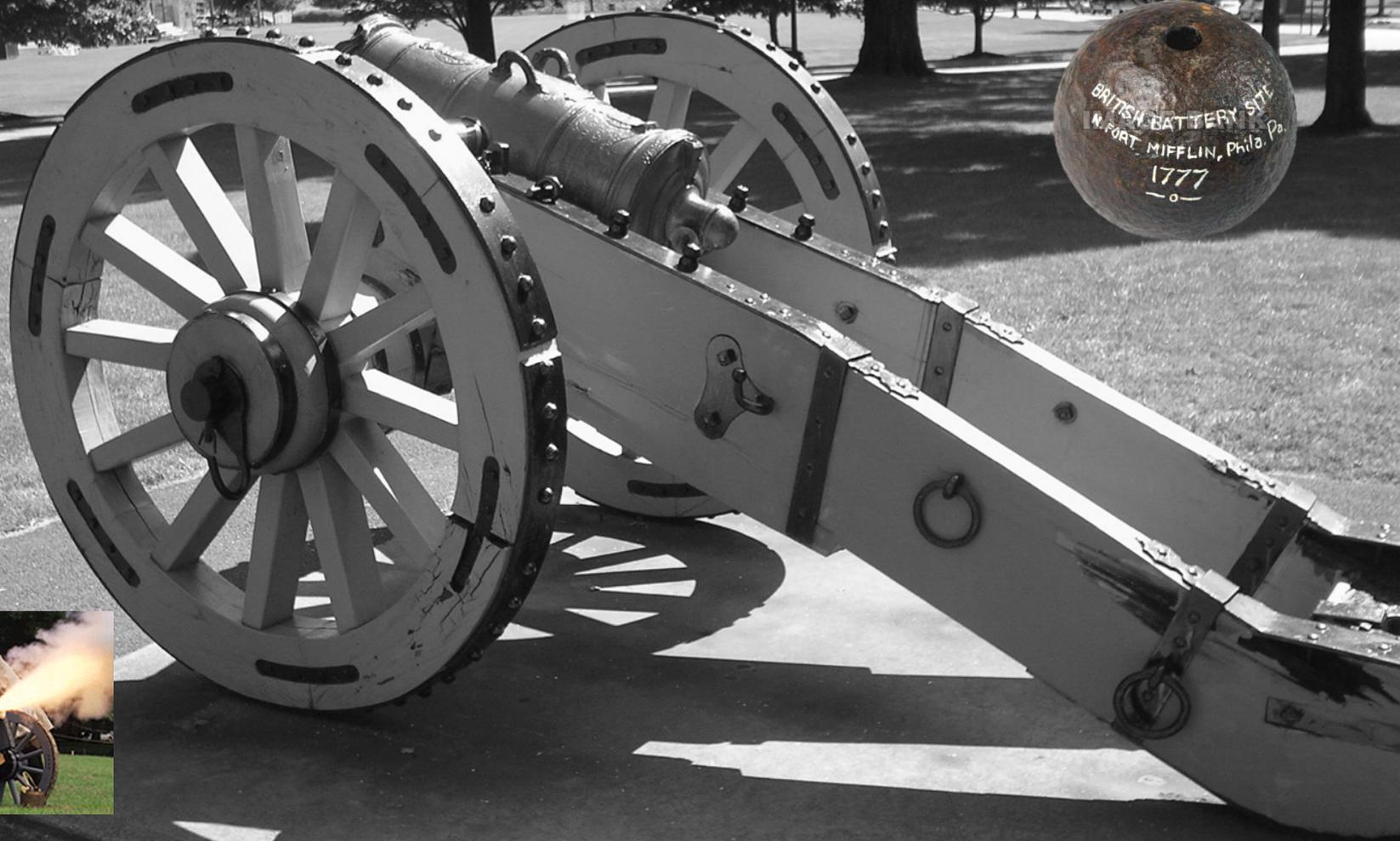
French 6-pounder cannon was cast in 1761 and used by American Artillery.

Hessian Artillery

The Hessians would assault the fort with 10 artillery pieces mostly 3lb. and 6lb. Cannon and 2 Howitzers.



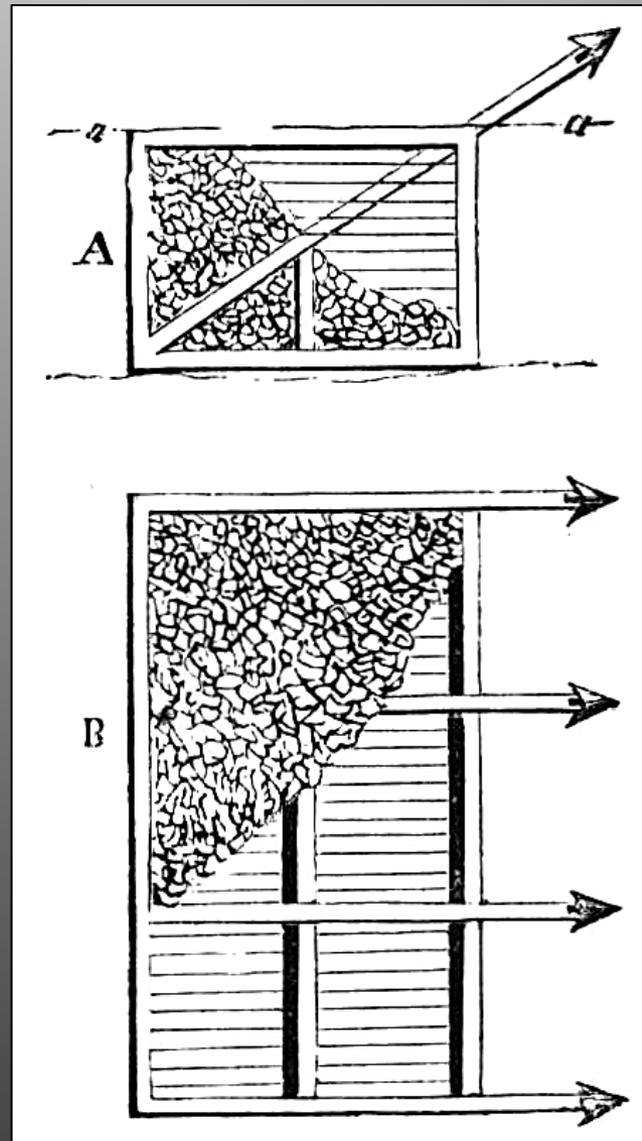
British Howitzer



8-inch British Howitzer captured at the Battle of Saratoga, October 7, 1777.



This cut, copied from an old print, shows the form of the *chevaux de frise*. A is a profile view, and B a plan. The spikes were made of heavy timbers, about thirty feet in length. Partially filled with heavy stone, they presented a formidable obstacle to vessels. It is said that these obstructions were mainly planned by Dr. Franklin, and constructed under the immediate supervision of M. Du Plessis Manduit, a French engineer.



Chevaux de frise

Fascine





H.M.S. Augusta

St Albans-class 3rd Rate Ship of the Line

Commander: Captain Francis Reynolds

Armament: 64 guns

Gundeck: (26) 24 lb. Cannon

Upper gundeck: (26) 18 lb. Cannon

Quarterdeck: (10) 4 lb. Cannon

Forecastle: (2) 9 lb. Cannon



HMS Augusta: Philadelphia 1777. By: Geoff Hunt

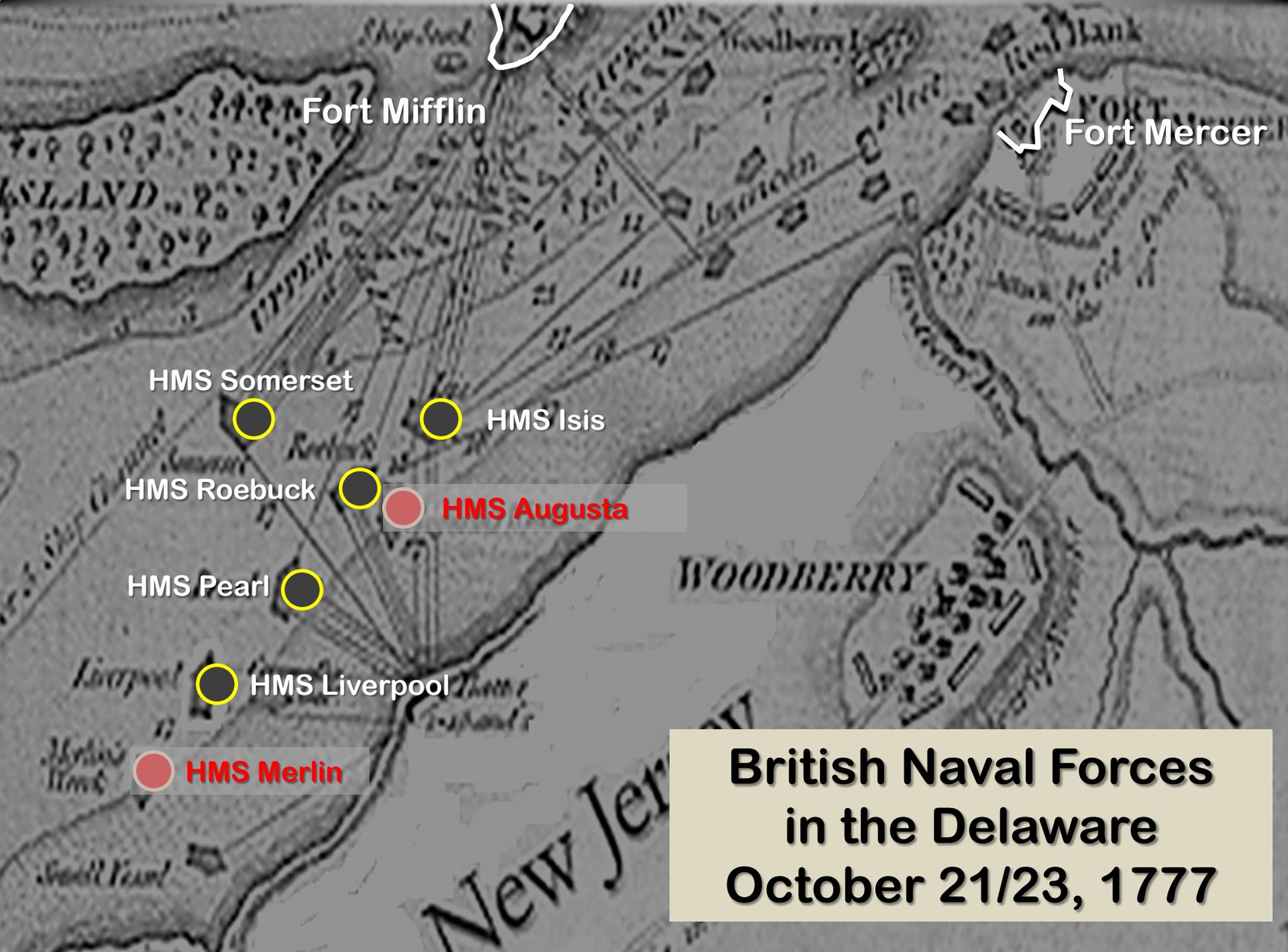
HMS Merlin

British Sloop of War



Commander: Samuel Reeve

Armament: 18 guns



Fort Mifflin

Fort Mercer

HMS Somerset

HMS Isis

HMS Roebuck

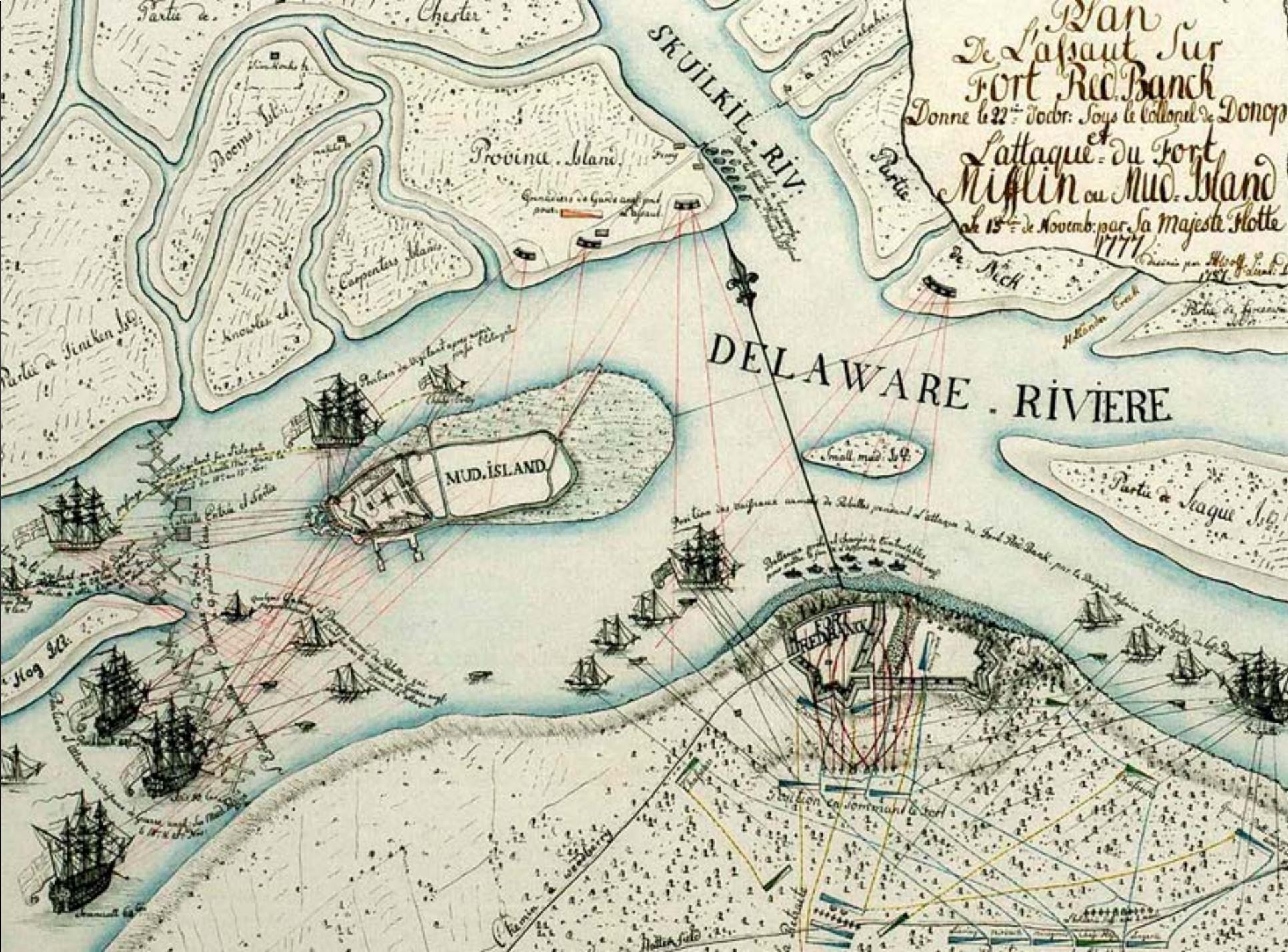
HMS Augusta

HMS Pearl

HMS Liverpool

HMS Merlin

**British Naval Forces
in the Delaware
October 21/23, 1777**



Plan
De L'attaque Sur
Fort Red Bank
Donne le 22^e Decbr. Soit le Colonel de Donop
L'attaque du Fort
Mifflin ou Mud Island
le 15^e de Novemb. par Sa Majeste Flotte
1777

DELAWARE RIVIERE

SKUILKIL RIV.

Provina Island

MUD ISLAND

FORT MIFFLIN

Partie a.

Chester

Dooms Island

Carpenters Island

Knowles Island

Partie de Sinken Is.

Partie

Nick

Melton's Creek

Partie de Saque Is.

Hog Is.

Chemin de la Riviere

Notion Site

Partie de la Riviere
le 15 de Novemb. 1777

Partie de la Riviere
le 15 de Novemb. 1777

Partie de la Riviere
le 15 de Novemb. 1777

Partie de la Riviere
le 15 de Novemb. 1777





Colonel Von Donop & 2000 Hessian troops land at Coopers Ferry on October 21st. Once disembarked they march to Haddonfield and Bivouac for the night.

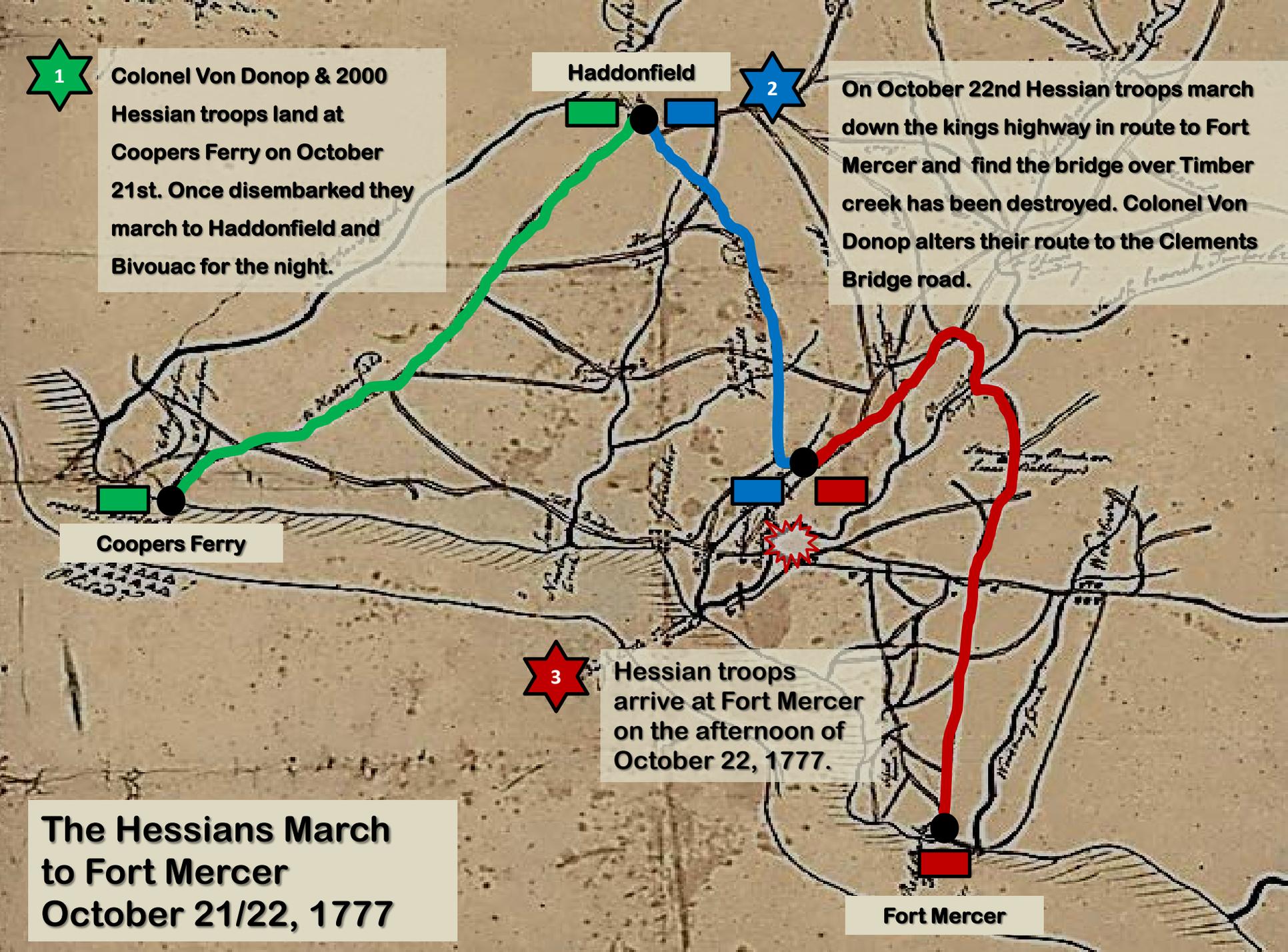


On October 22nd Hessian troops march down the kings highway in route to Fort Mercer and find the bridge over Timber creek has been destroyed. Colonel Von Donop alters their route to the Clements Bridge road.



Hessian troops arrive at Fort Mercer on the afternoon of October 22, 1777.

**The Hessians March to Fort Mercer
October 21/22, 1777**



Captain Johann von Ewald

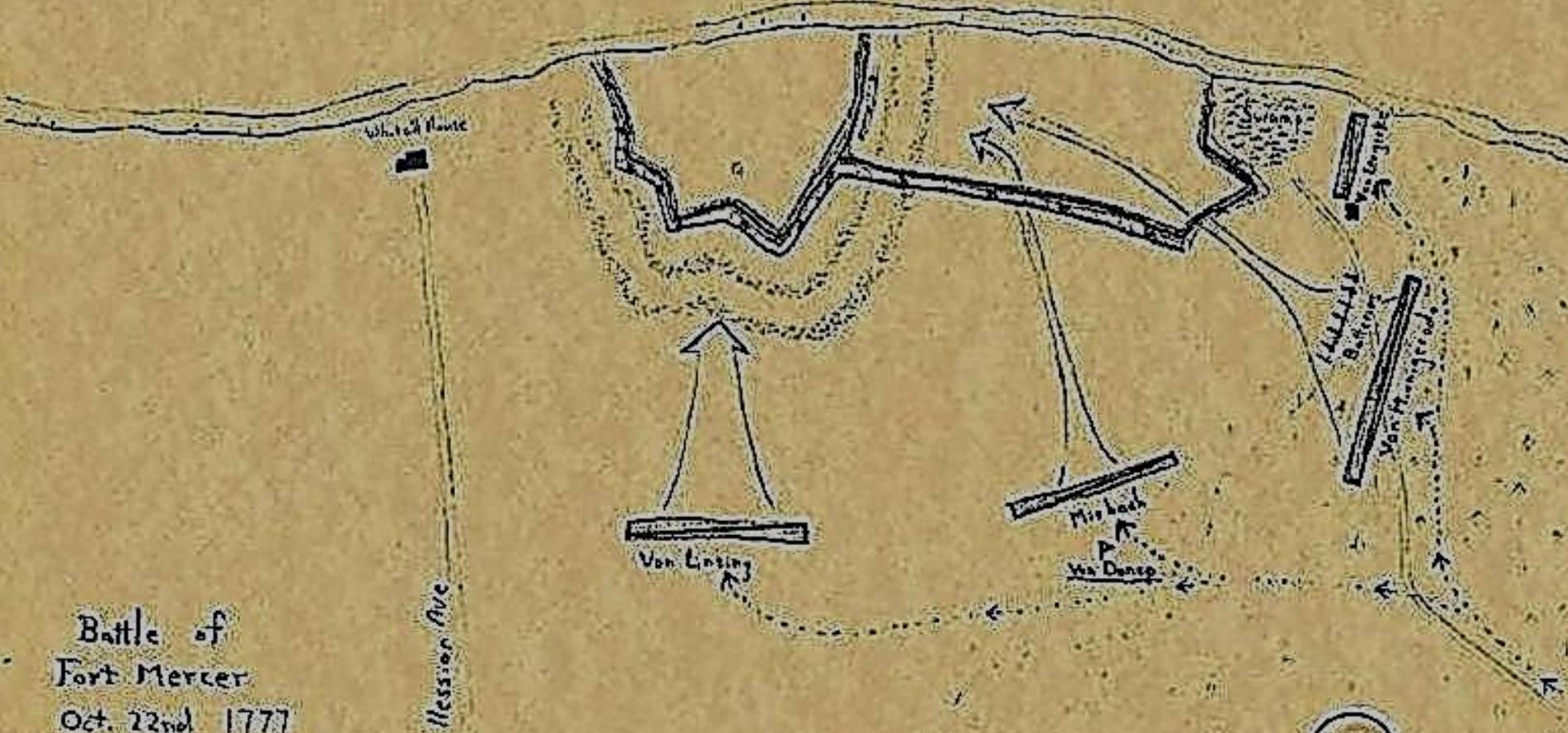


Johann von Ewald (20 March 1744 – 25 June 1813) was a German military officer from Hesse-Kassel . After first serving in the Seven Years' War, he was the commander of the jäger corps of the Hessian Leib Infantry Regiment attached to British forces in the American Revolutionary War.

During the Philadelphia campaign, Ewald and his jäger corp was involved in the Battle of Red Bank and covered the hessian retreat after Colonel Carl von Donop's disastrous attempt to take the fort by direct assault was repulsed,

Delaware River

North



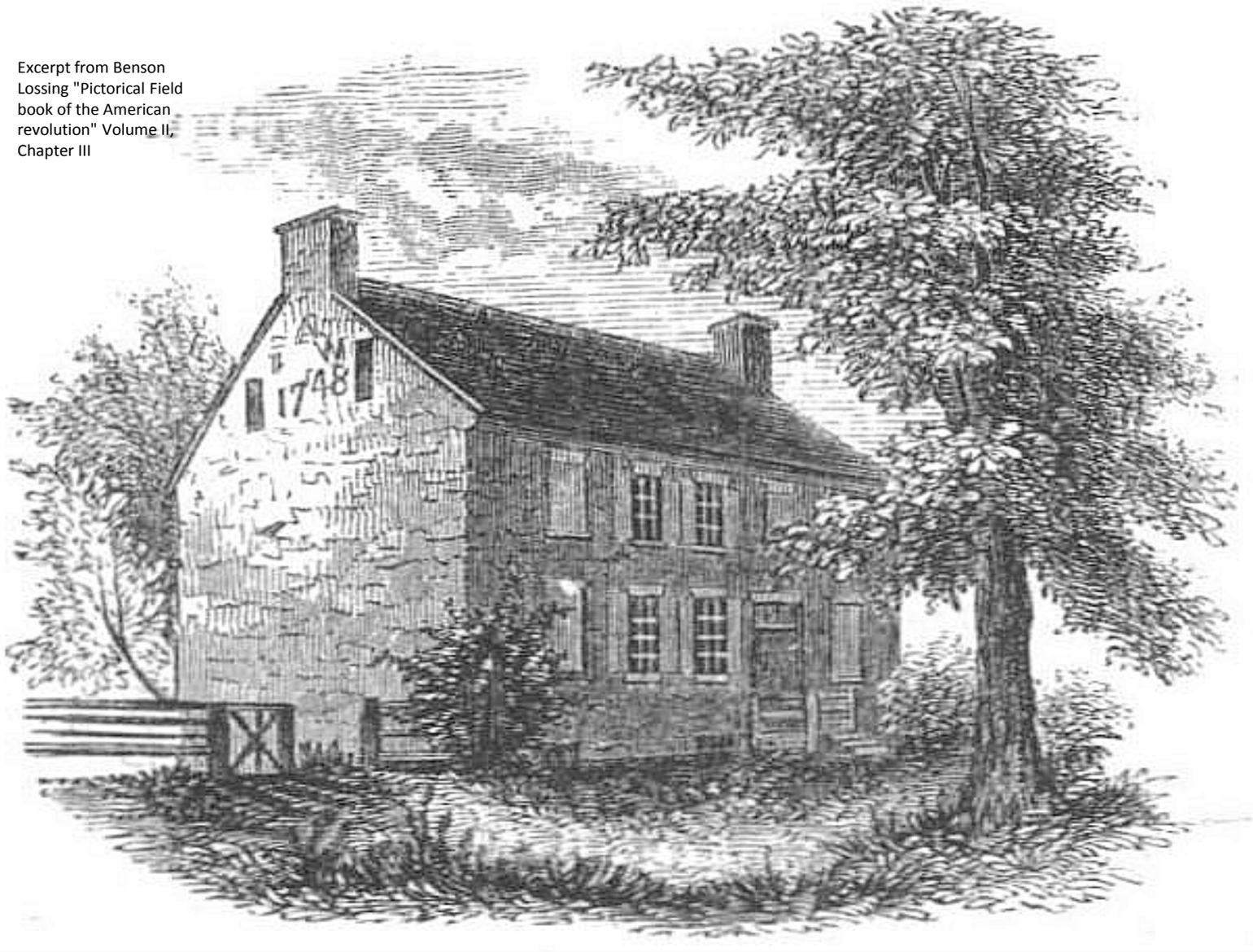
Battle of Fort Mercer
Oct. 22nd 1777

From a sketch by Hessian
Capt. J. Ewald

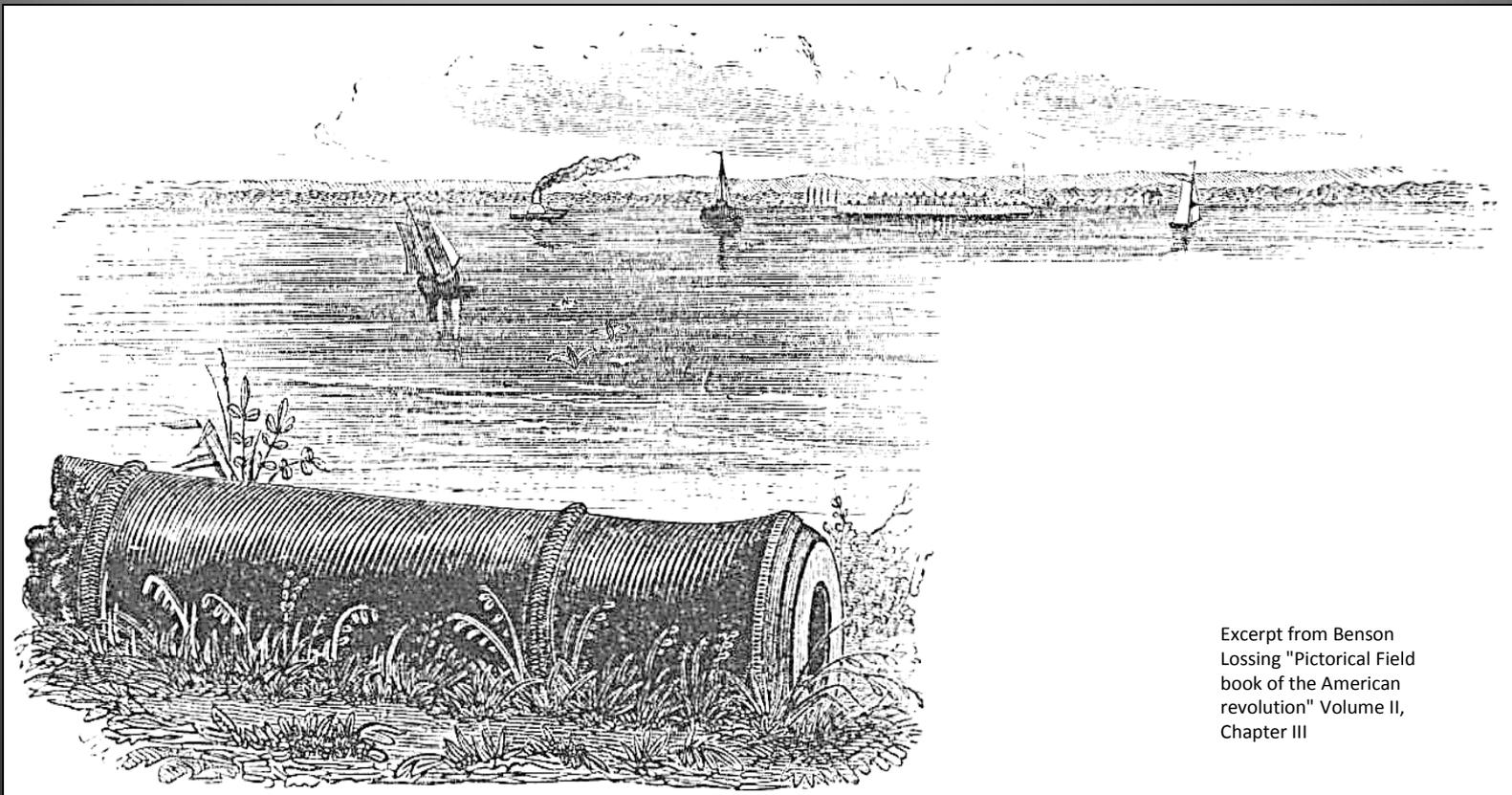
Engaged	Lost
Americans about 600	HK & 29W
Hessian: About 1000	400 K.W.C.

Map from Hessian Captain Johann Von Ewald diary

Excerpt from Benson
Lossing "Pictorial Field
book of the American
revolution" Volume II,
Chapter III



Whithall House 1848



Excerpt from Benson
Lossing "Pictorial Field
book of the American
revolution" Volume II,
Chapter III

OLD CANNON AT RED BANK

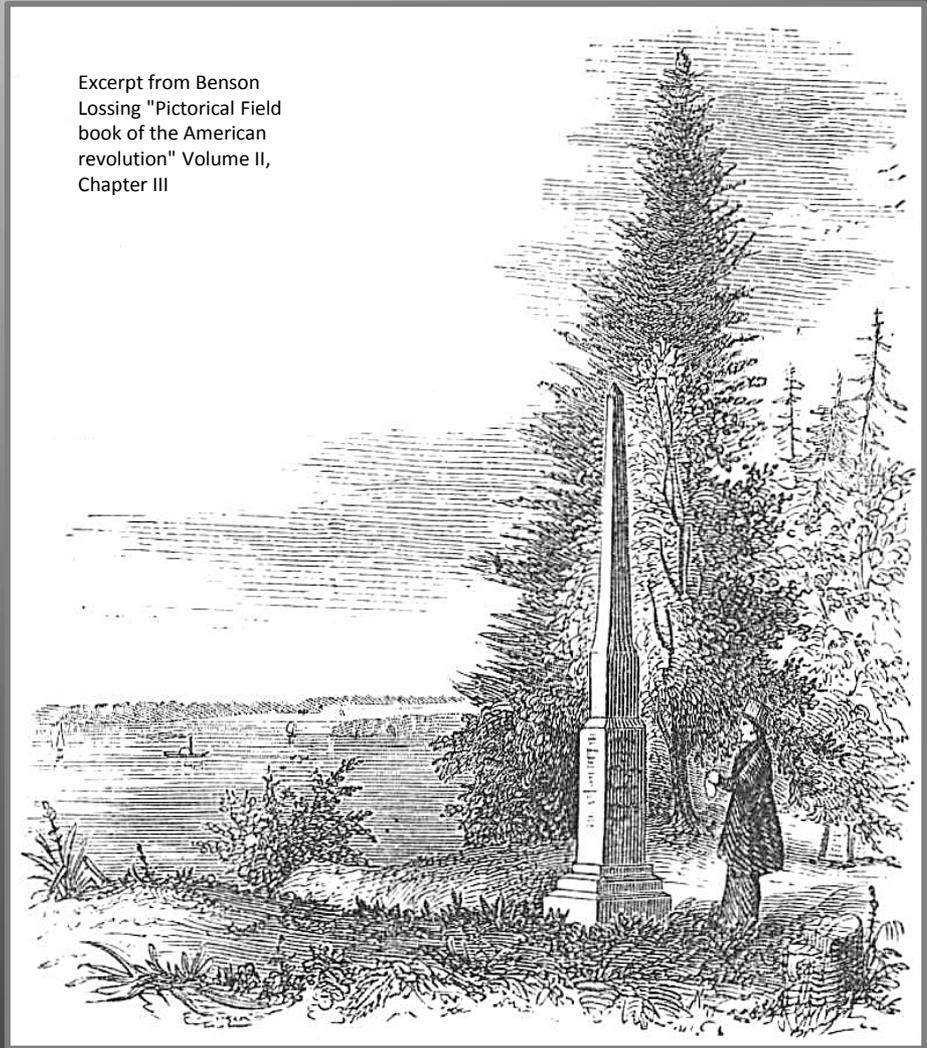
On the green, between the Whitall house and the river, lies a portion of an iron cannon which was burst during the engagement. That event killed several of the Americans. The picture represents its present appearance, with its breech blown away.

After the explosion of the magazine on the HMS Augusta on October 23, 1777, American forces salvaged a few of the cannon and brought them to Red Bank. On November 11, 1777 an 18-pounder (from the upper deck of the Augusta) burst while being fired, killing a bombardier, blinding another and injuring 10 other men.



In commemoration of the battle at Red Bank and the valor of Colonel Greene, a monument of blue veined marble, about fifteen feet high, was erected in 1829, just within the northern line of the outworks of Fort Mercer, and within a few feet of the margin of the Delaware. This tribute to the memory of valor and patriotism was made by some New Jersey and Pennsylvania volunteers. While it is a testimony of one of the most noble traits in human character, it bears an exhibition of the existence of another of the most detestable. In the inscription were the words **NEW JERSEY AND PENNSYLVANIA**, in a single prominent line. Some Jersey scoundrel almost obliterated the word **PENNSYLVANIA**; and afterward some Pennsylvania Vandal, in the fierceness of his retaliatory zeal for the credit of his state, disgraced it, so far as insignificance could do it, by **obliterating the words NEW JERSEY**. The whole line is destroyed; and that marble shaft perpetuates a remembrance of unknown barbarians as well as of honored patriots.

Excerpt from Benson
Lossing "Pictorial Field
book of the American
revolution" Volume II,
Chapter III

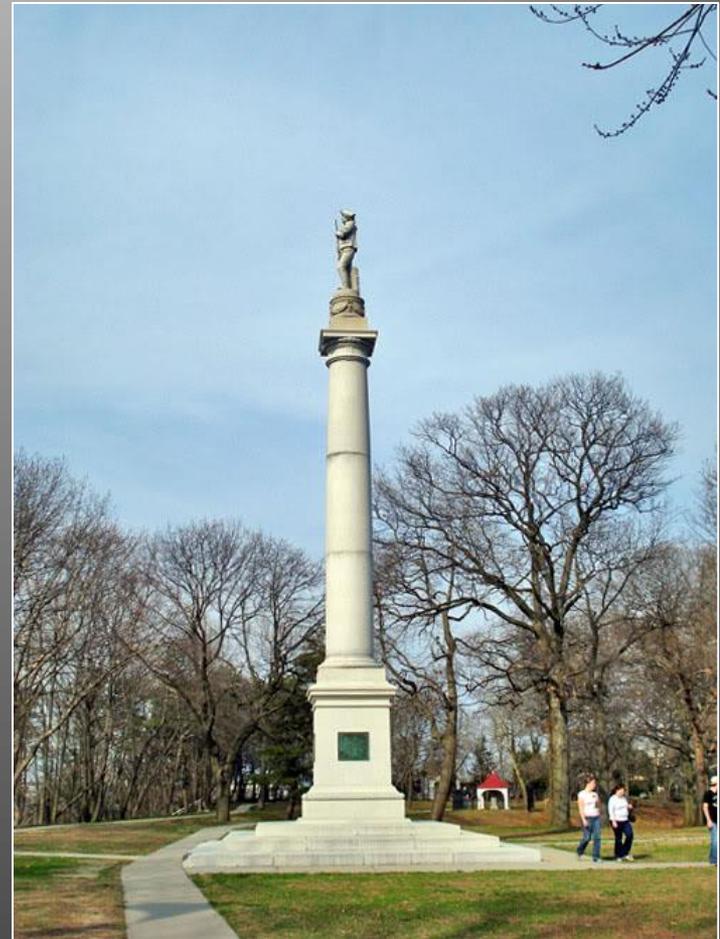


Old Monument at Red Bank 1829



The new monument was erected by the State of New Jersey and dedicated with appropriate ceremonies, June 21, 1906, the Governors of Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and New Jersey taking part in the presentation of the monument.

“This land has been conveyed in trust by Congress to the Board of Freeholders as a public park, to be forever owned and used by the people of our country and to instill, if possible, a greater love of country among our citizens”.



New Monument at Red Bank 1906

Excerpt from Benson
Lossing "Pictorial Field
book of the American
revolution" Volume II,
Chapter III



A little below, and in the path leading to the house of Mr. Whitall, is the grave of Count Donop, marked by a small, rough sandstone, about fourteen inches in height. Vandal fingers have plucked relic-pieces from it, and so nearly was the rude inscription effaced that I could only decipher a portion of the words, DONOP WAS LOST, as seen in the sketch.

Red Bank Battlefield Tour

Historical Background 1770 to 1776

March 5, 1770

The Boston Massacre

The Boston Massacre a result of the tensions caused by British military presence in Boston and the Townshend Acts of 1767. The Acts imposed more taxes on common products imported into the colonies, such as paper, glass and of course tea.

December 16, 1773

The Boston Tea Party

The Boston Tea Party a political protest by the Sons of Liberty in Boston. The demonstrators, some disguised as American Indians, destroyed an entire shipment of tea, which had been sent by the East India Company, in defiance of the Tea Act of May 10, 1773.

May 14, 1774

The Intolerable Acts

The Intolerable Acts was the Colonial name for a series of punitive laws passed by the British Parliament, in 1774 relating to Massachusetts after the Boston Tea party. The acts took away Massachusetts self-government, closed Boston harbor and triggered more outrage and resistance in the Thirteen Colonies.

September 5, 1774

The First Continental Congress

The first Continental Congress meets in Carpenter's Hall in Philadelphia, from September 5, to October 26, 1774. It was called in response to the passage of the Coercive Acts (also known as Intolerable Acts on the Colonial Americans) by the British Parliament. The Congress met briefly to consider options, including an economic boycott of British trade; rights and grievances; and to petition King George III for redress of those grievances.

April 19, 1775

Battles of Lexington and Concord

The Battles of Lexington and Concord were the first military engagements of the American Revolutionary War. They were fought on April 19, 1775. The battles marked the outbreak of open armed conflict between the Kingdom of Great Britain and the thirteen American colonies.

May 10, 1775

The Second Continental Congress

By the time the Second Continental Congress meets, the American Revolutionary War has already begun with the Battles of Lexington and Concord. The Congress now has no other option but to take charge of the war effort. On June 14, 1775, Congress creates the Continental Army out of the militia units around Boston and appoints George Washington of Virginia as commanding general of the Continental Army. On July 6, 1775 Congress approves a Declaration of Causes outlining the rationale and necessity for taking up arms in the Thirteen Colonies. On July 8, Congress extends the Olive Branch Petition to the British Crown as a final attempt at reconciliation.

June 17, 1775

The Battle of Bunker Hill

On June 13, 1775, the leaders of the colonial forces besieging Boston learned that the British were planning to send troops out from the city to occupy hills surrounding the city. In response, 1,200 colonial troops under the command of William Prescott occupied Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill. In the ensuing battle the British had taken the ground but at a great loss; they had suffered 1,054 casualties (226 dead and 828 wounded), with a disproportionate number of these officers. The casualty count was the highest suffered by the British in any single encounter during the entire war. The colonial losses were about 450, of whom 140 were killed.

August 23, 1775

British Government declares the Colonies are in Open Rebellion

The Proclamation of Rebellion, officially titled A Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Seditious, was the response of George III of Great Britain to the news of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Issued August 23, 1775, it declares the American colonies in a state of "open and avowed rebellion."

October 13, 1775

The Continental Navy

On this date the passage of a resolution in Congress creates the Continental Navy. In November Congress creates the Continental Marines.

July 4, 1776

Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 1776 the Congress adopts the Declaration of Independence declaring the United States independence from the British Crown.

September 15, 1776

British forces occupy New York

On August 27, 1776 British forces defeat the George Washington's army in the Battle of Long Island. Washington's army escapes at night. British forces occupy New York.

December 26, 1776

Washington captures Trenton

Washington crosses the Delaware and captures Trenton from the Hessians commanded by Colonel Johann Rall. Those Hessians that are not killed are taken prisoner. Colonel Rall is killed in the battle. Colonel Von Donop in overall command of the Hessian forces was in Mount Holly an 8 hour march away. It is said that Von Donop was alerted by messenger prior to the battle but never read the dispatch. The defeat is a major embarrassment to Von Donop.

January 3, 1777

Battle of Princeton

While leading a vanguard of 350 soldiers, General Hugh Mercer's brigade encounters two British regiments and a mounted unit. Mercer's horse was shot from under him. Getting to his feet, he is quickly surrounded by British troops who mistaken him for George Washington and order him to surrender. Outnumbered, he draws his saber and fights back. He is beaten to the ground, bayoneted repeatedly and left for dead. When he is discovered still alive, Mercer is carried to the field hospital in the Thomas Clarke House. In spite of medical efforts by Benjamin Rush, Mercer is mortally wounded and dies nine days later on January 12, 1777. Because of Mercer's courage and sacrifice, Washington is able to proceed into Princeton and defeat the British forces there.

In the spring of 1777 General Washington orders that the Fort at Red Bank be named in Honor of General Hugh Mercer.

Historical Background Battle of Fort Mercer / Red Bank 1777

In the summer of 1777, Sir William Howe, the British commander sailed from New York with a large land force of 17,000 (British and Hessian), and with naval armament under his brother Admiral Richard Howe. General Howe believed that if he captured the rebel capital of Philadelphia this colonial conflict would soon end. Landing at the head of Chesapeake Bay on August 25, the British and Hessian forces commenced their march toward Philadelphia.

September 11, 1777

Battle of Brandywine

Generals Howe and Cornwallis with 17,000 troops defeat Washington with 11,000 troops at the battle of Brandywine. Washington is forced to withdrawal to Germantown outside of Philadelphia.

September 20, 1777

Battle of Paoli (Paoli Massacre)

On September 20 British forces launch a surprise attack and defeat General Anthony Wayne's continental division at Paoli Tavern. Known as the Paoli massacre due to the fact that the British attack was by bayonet because they had removed the flints from their muskets so as not to alert the Americans.

September 26, 1777

British occupy Philadelphia

Now that the British forces occupy the rebel Capital of Philadelphia it becomes an urgent matter to open the Delaware River. General Howe will be unable to hold the city if he cannot re-supply his army.

October 4, 1777

Battle of Germantown

After General Howe seized Philadelphia he split his army, keeping the bulk of it (over 10,000) near Germantown while occupying Philadelphia with over 4,000 troops. Washington seeing an opportunity to defeat this British force attacks on October 4. Due to heavy fog, heavy loses and inability to coordinate the attack Washington orders a withdrawal. British forces fail to counterattack and Washington moves his army to Whitemarsh.

October 12, 1777

Howe issues orders to take the two American forts defending the river. A combined land and naval assault is organized. British shore batteries established on the Pennsylvania side of the river will attack Fort Mifflin, 2000 Hessian soldiers under the command of Colonel Carl Von Donop will land on the New Jersey side of the river and will attack Fort Mercer, and the British navy will move up river and support Von Donop's attack and bombard Fort Mercer and Fort Mifflin.