

Traversing the Ten Crucial Days Tour Packet



*Washington Crossing the Delaware
by Emanuel Leutze*

December 25-26,
1776



*Washington Crossing the Delaware
by Lloyd Garrison*

December 26, 1776



*Battle of Trenton,
by H. Charles McBarron, Jr.*

January 2, 1777



*Battle of Assunpink Creek
by Graham Turner*

January 3, 1777



*Battle of Princeton
by Don Troiani*

TenCrucialDays.org
December 25, 1776 - January 3, 1777

**New York Campaign
July - November**

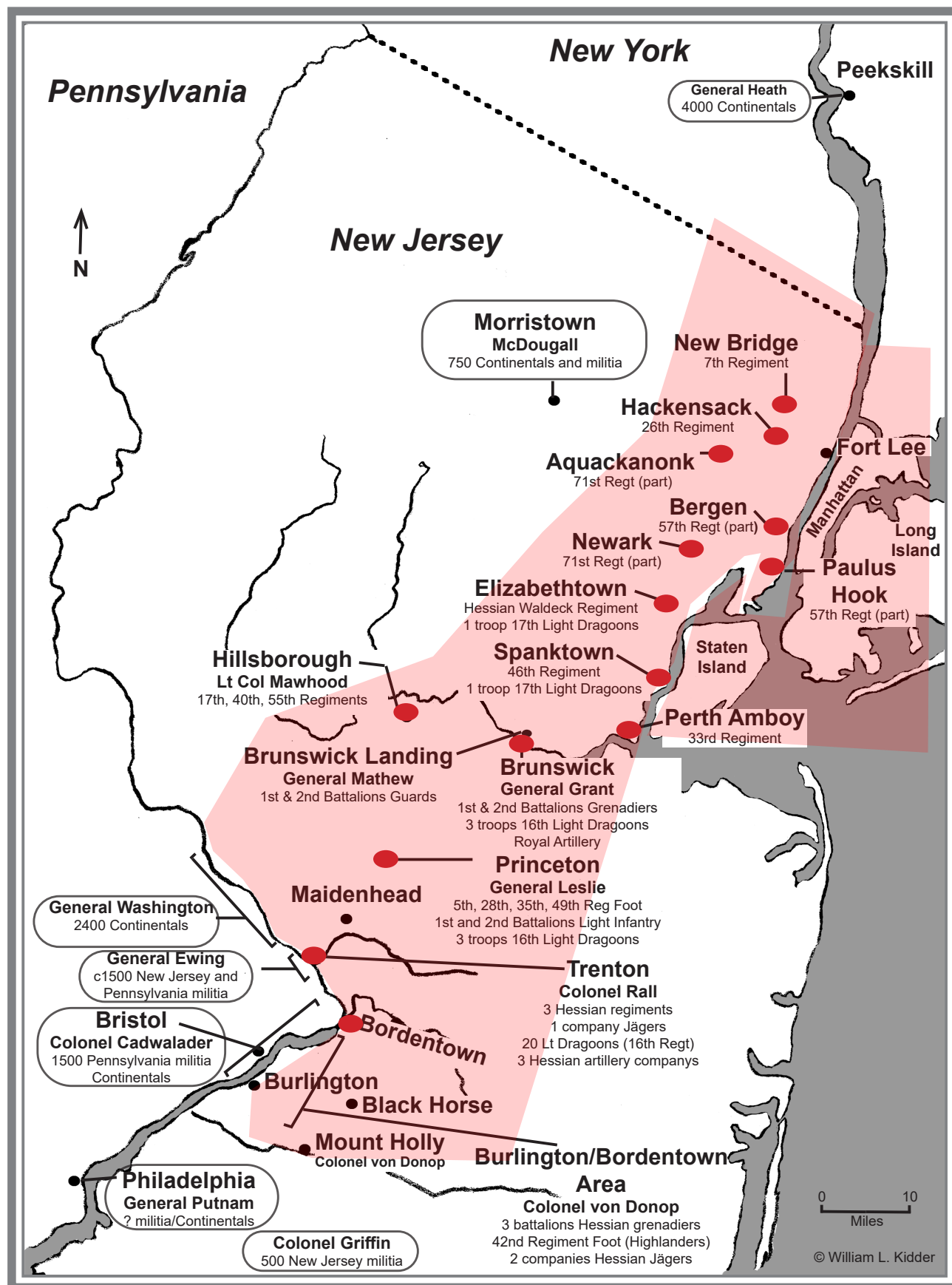
**Retreat across
New Jersey
November 20 -
December 8**

**Troops collect in
Bucks County
December 8 - 25**



Retreat Through "The Jerseys" - by Howard Pyle





British Occupation of New Jersey - December 25, 1776

Hessian occupation of Trenton

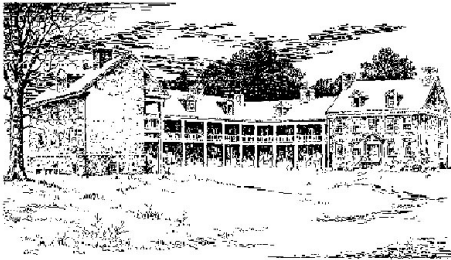
c1500 Hessian troops

Fatigued - many sick

Position of honor



Hessian dependents
Loyalists



THE OLD BARRACKS, BUILT 1758-59, SOUTH WILLOW STREET.



Jägers



Rall HQ

Rall

Artillery

Hospital

Dragoons

Knyphausen

Lossburg



Kingsbury/Bloomsbury



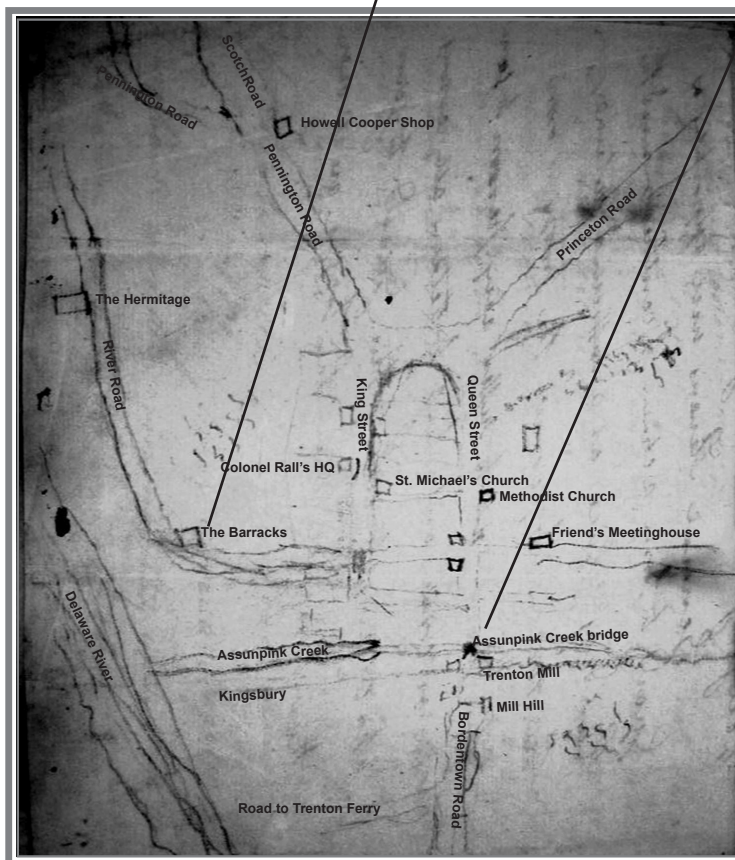
Mill Pond

Trenton Mills

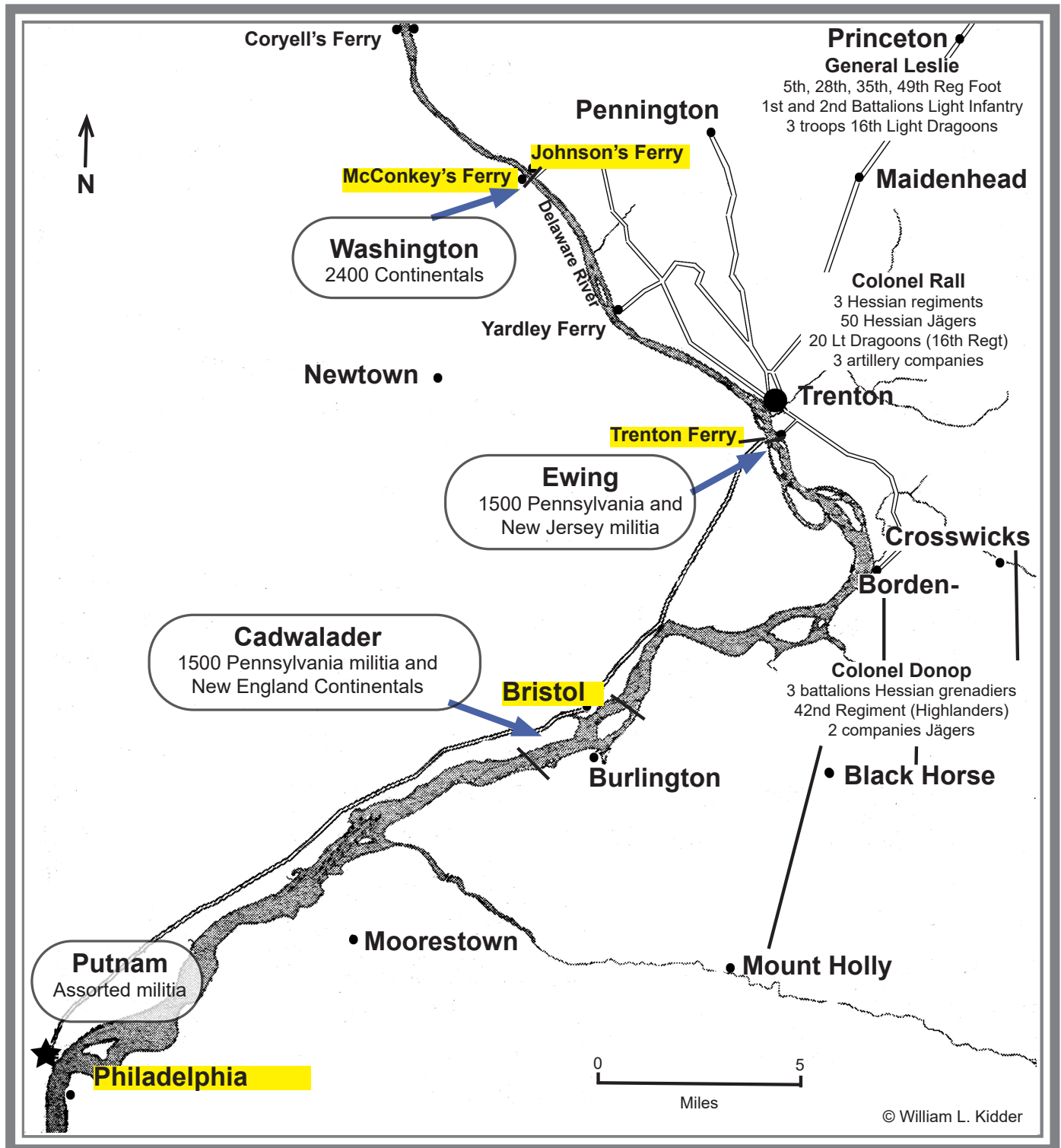
Mill Hill

Delaware River

Nottingham Township
(Burlington County)



Colonel Henry Knox's Map of the Trenton Battle Scene

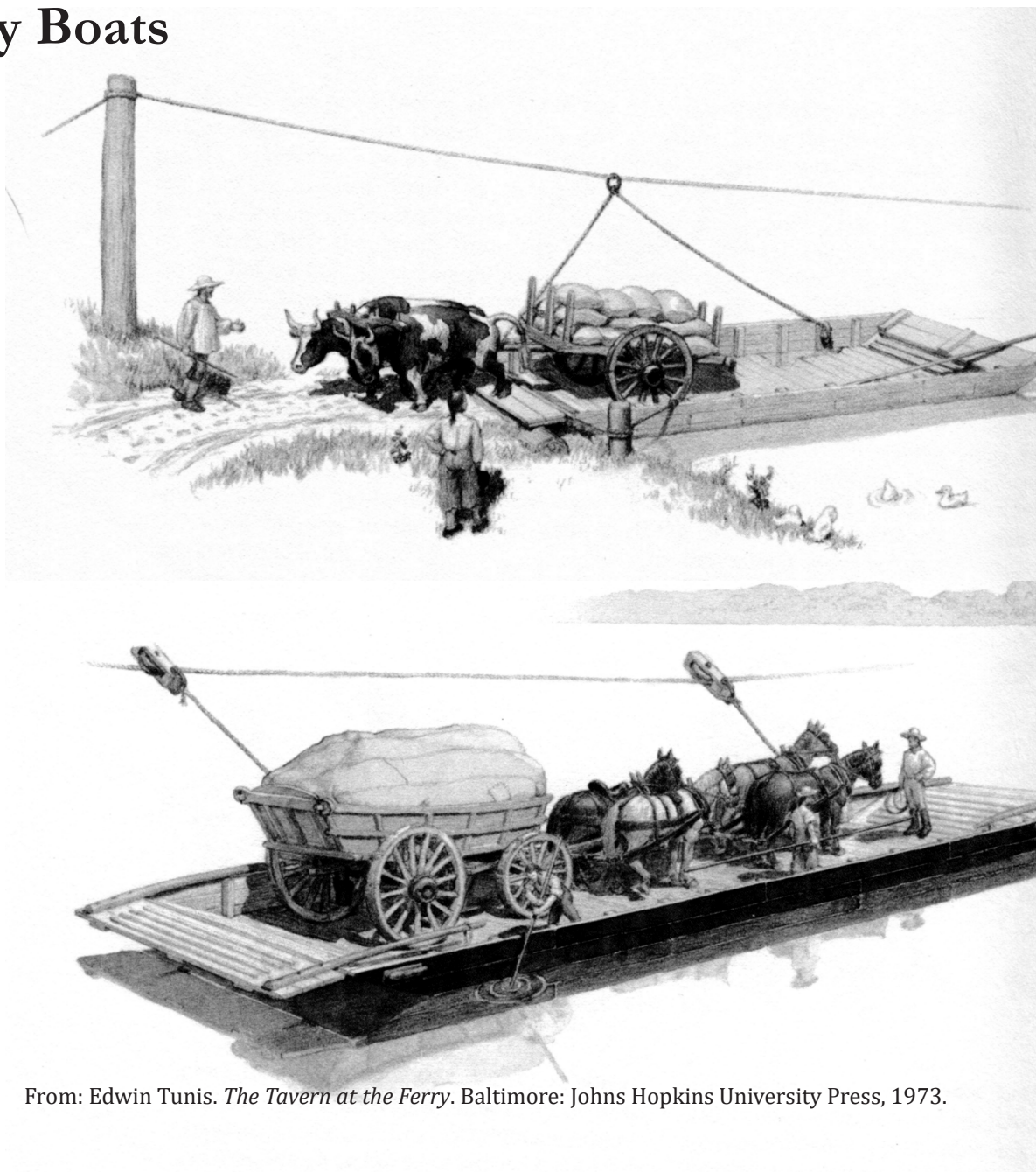


Planned Night Crossings of the Delaware River, December 25-26, 1776

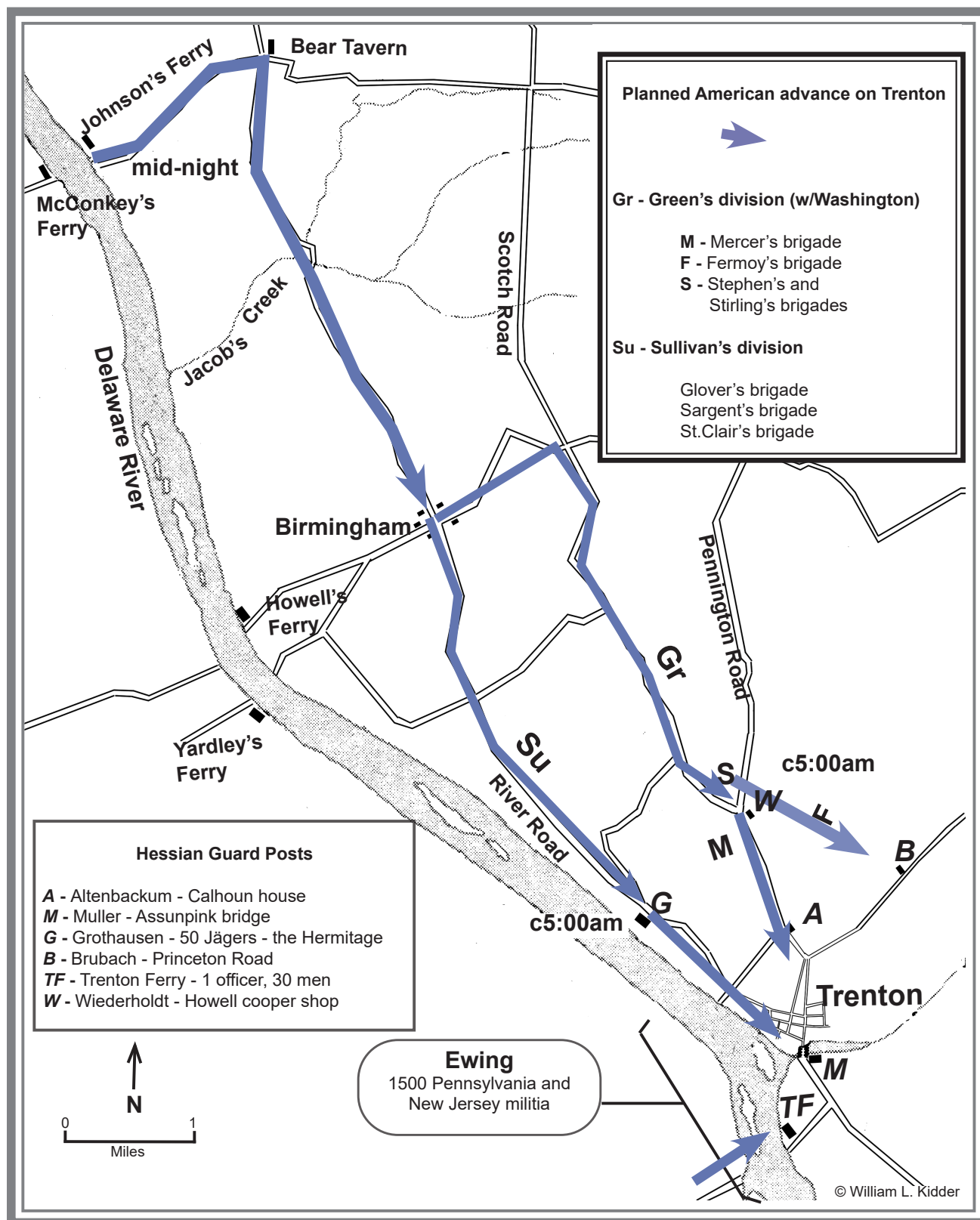
Durham Boats



Ferry Boats



From: Edwin Tunis. *The Tavern at the Ferry*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.



The Planned Night March to Trenton

Excerpts from Orders - December 25, 1776

You are to see that your men have three days' provisions ready cooked before 12 o'clock this forenoon -- the whole fit for duty except **a Serjeant and six men to be left with the baggage**, and to parade precisely at four in the afternoon with their arms, accoutrements & ammunition in the best order, with their provisions and blankets -- you will have them told off in divisions in which order they are to march -- eight men abreast, with the officers fixed to their divisions from which they are on no account to separate -- no man is to quit his division on pain of instant punishment -- each officer is to provide himself with **a piece of white paper stuck in his hat** for a field mark.

You will order your men to assemble and parade them in the valley immediately over the hill on the back of McConkey's Ferry, to remain there for farther orders -- a profound silence is to be observed, both by officers and men, and a strict and ready attention paid to whatever orders may be given -- Each brigade to be furnished with **two good guides**.

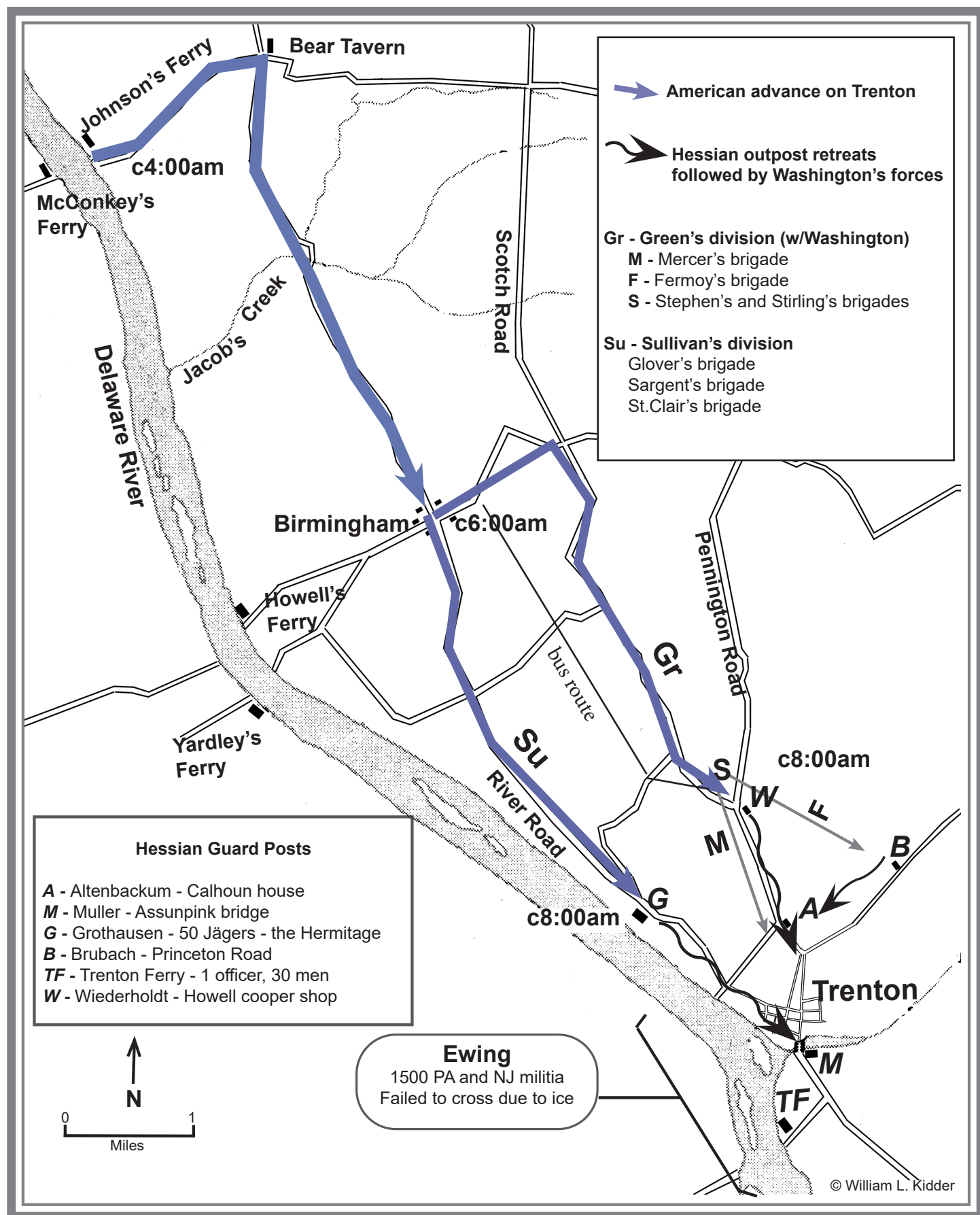
The troops to be **assembled one mile back of McConkey's Ferry**, and as soon as it begins to grow dark **[4:41 pm sunset]** the troops to be marched to McConkey's Ferry, and embark on board the boats in following order under the direction of Colonel Knox.

Captain Washington and Captain Flahaven, with a party of forty men each, to march before the divisions and **post themselves on the road about three miles from Trenton**, and make prisoners of all going in or coming out of town.

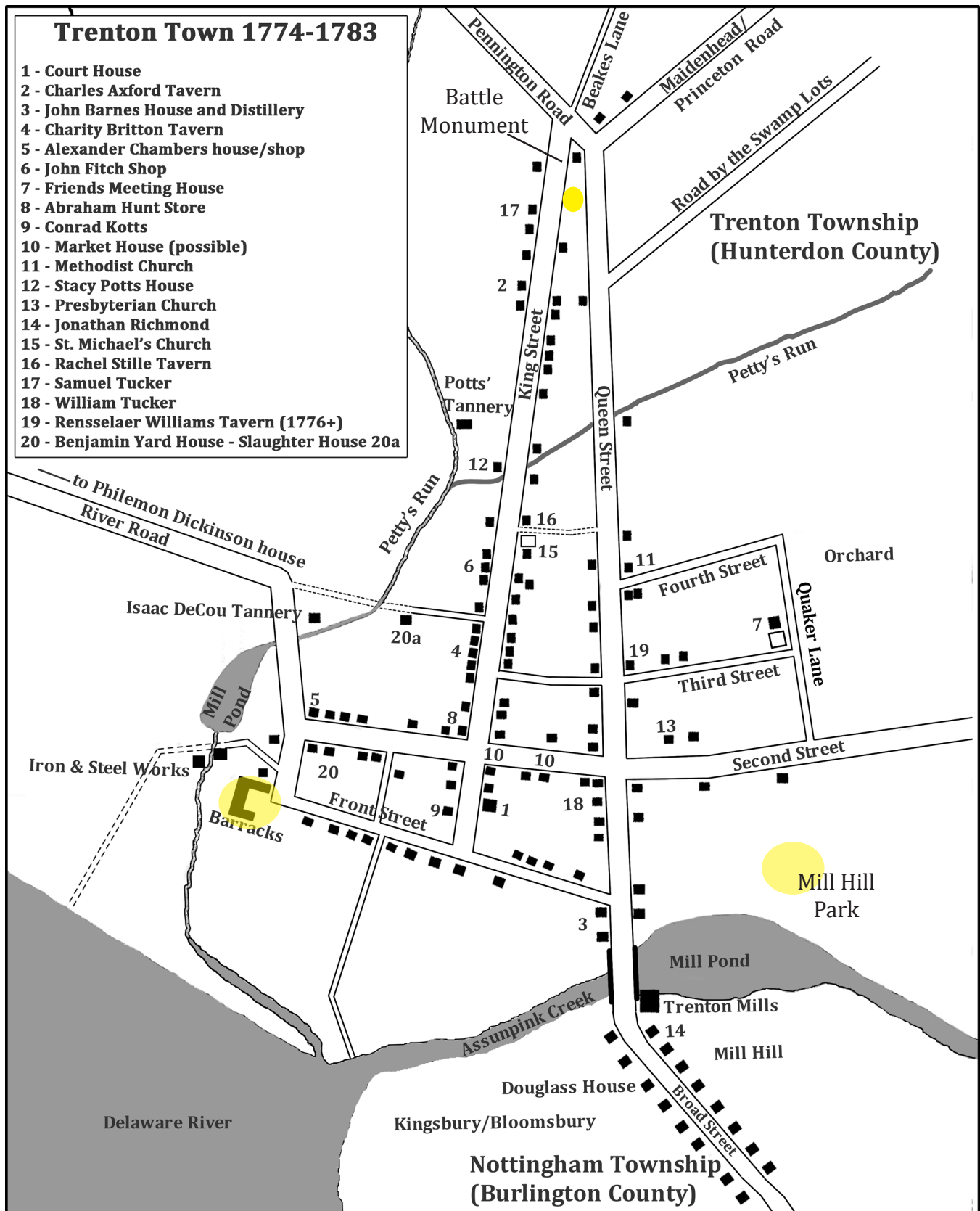
General Stephen's brigade, **to embark first**; with the detachment of artillerymen, without cannon, provided with spikes and hammers to spike up the enemies' cannon in case of necessity, or to bring them off if it can be effected, the party to be provided with drag-ropes for the purpose of dragging off the canon. General Stephen will appoint a guard to form **a chain of sentries** round the landing-place at a sufficient distance from the river to permit the troops to form, this guard not to suffer any person to go in or come out, but to detain all persons who attempt either.

General Mercer's next; Lord Stirling's next; General Fermoy's next. St. Clair's, Glover's, and Sargent's brigades to embark in order. **Four pieces of artillery** to march at the head of each column; **three pieces** at the head of the second brigade of each division; and **two pieces** with each of the reserves.

A profound silence to be enjoined, and no man to quit his ranks on the pain of death. Each brigadier to appoint flanking parties; the reserve brigades to appoint the rear-guards of the columns; the heads of the columns to be appointed to arrive at Trenton at five o'clock.

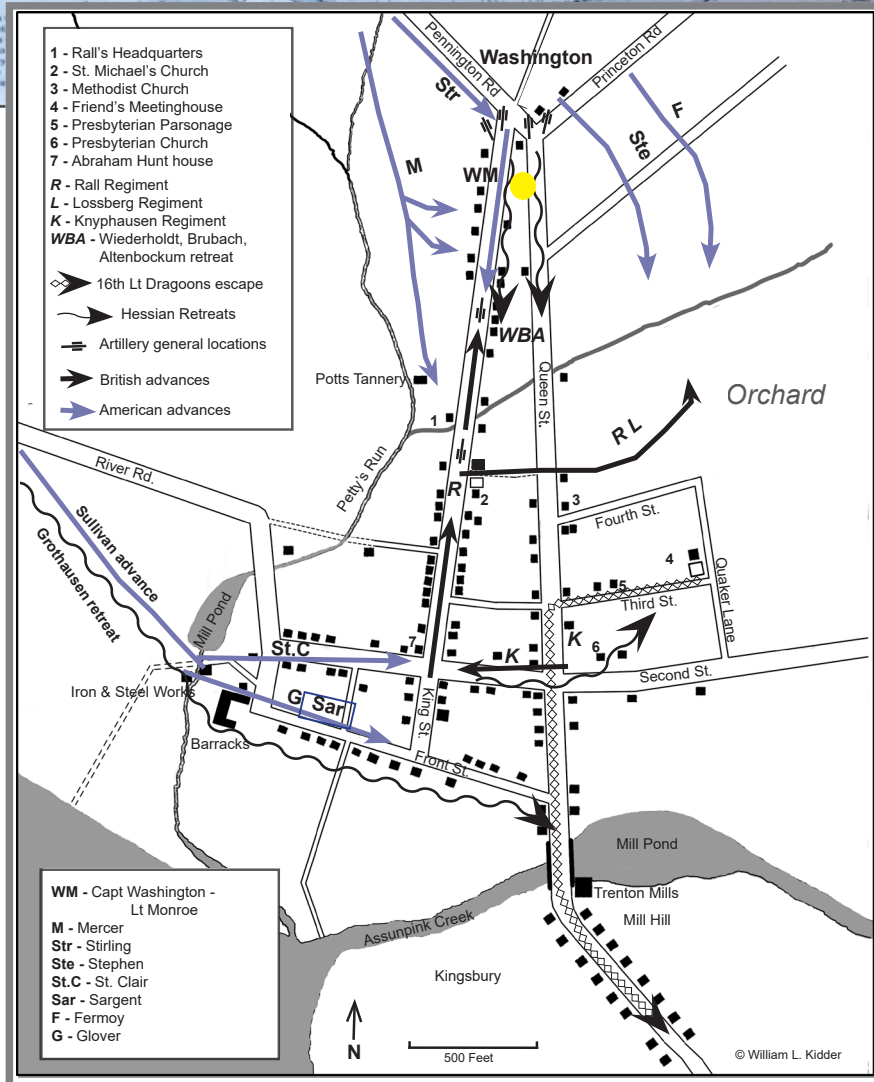
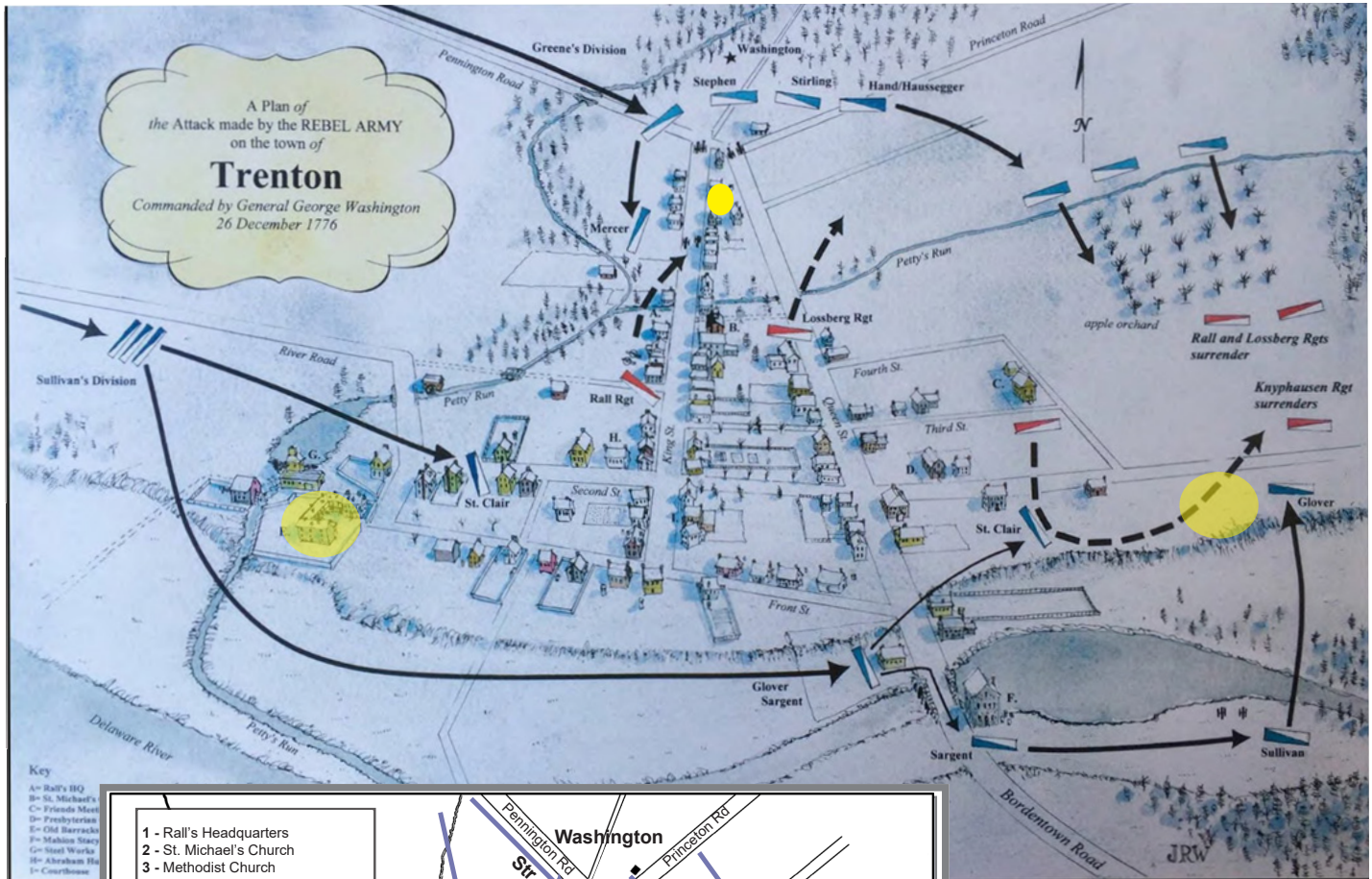


The Night March to Trenton and First Encounters, c4:00am -c8:00am

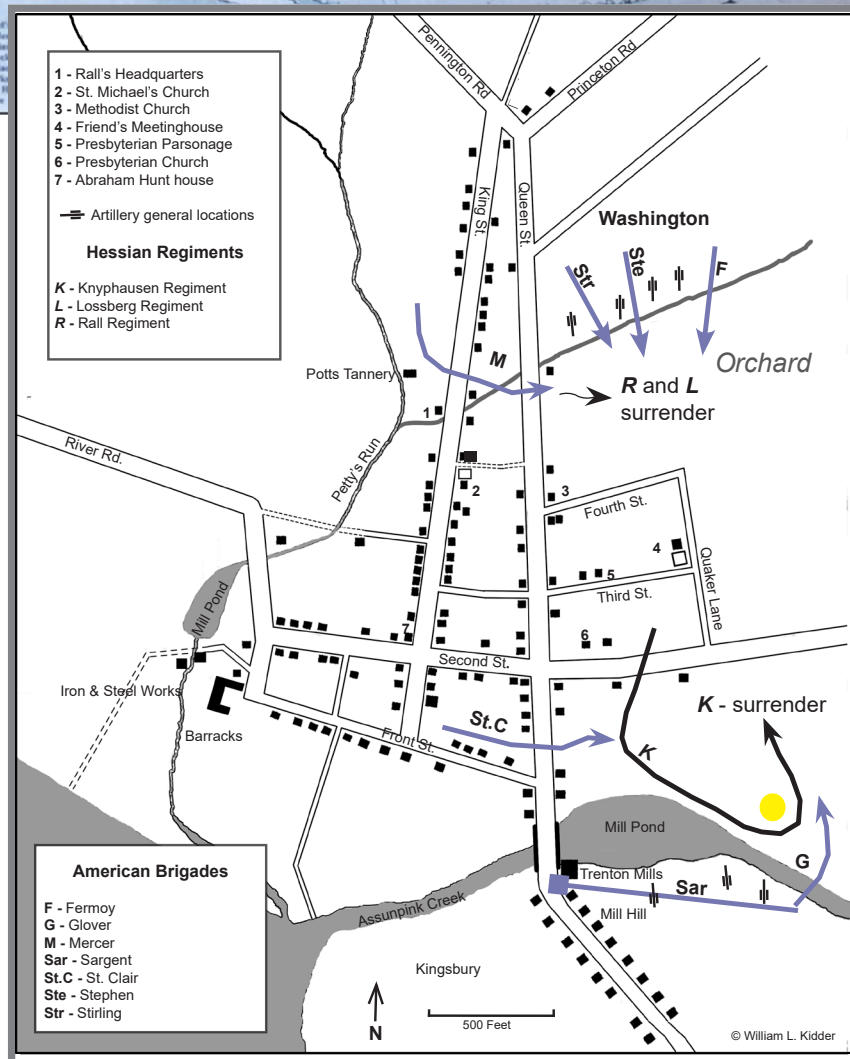
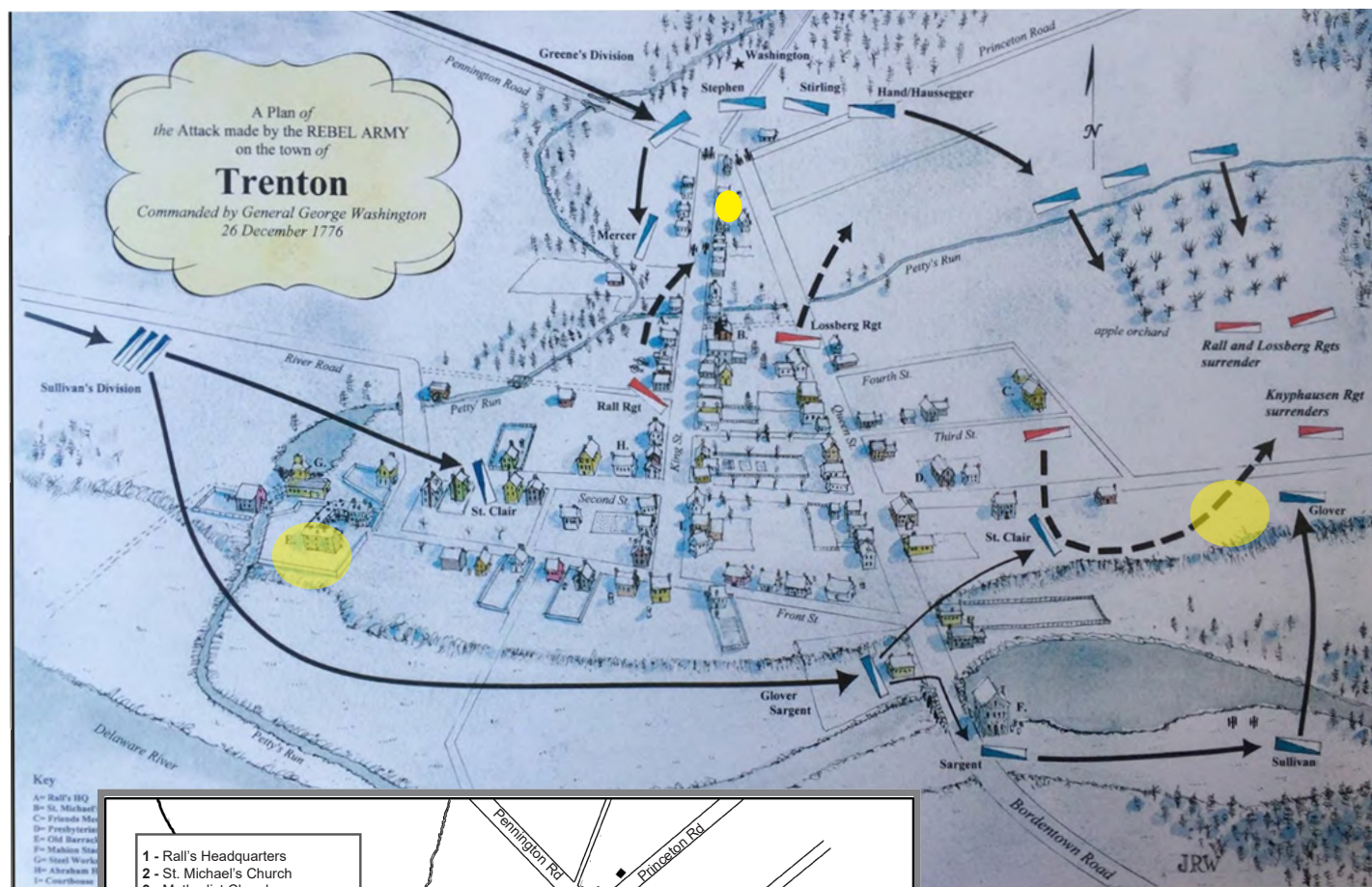


From: William L. Kidder. *Crossroads of the Revolution: Trenton, 1774-1783*. Lawrence Township, NJ: The Knox Press, 2017.

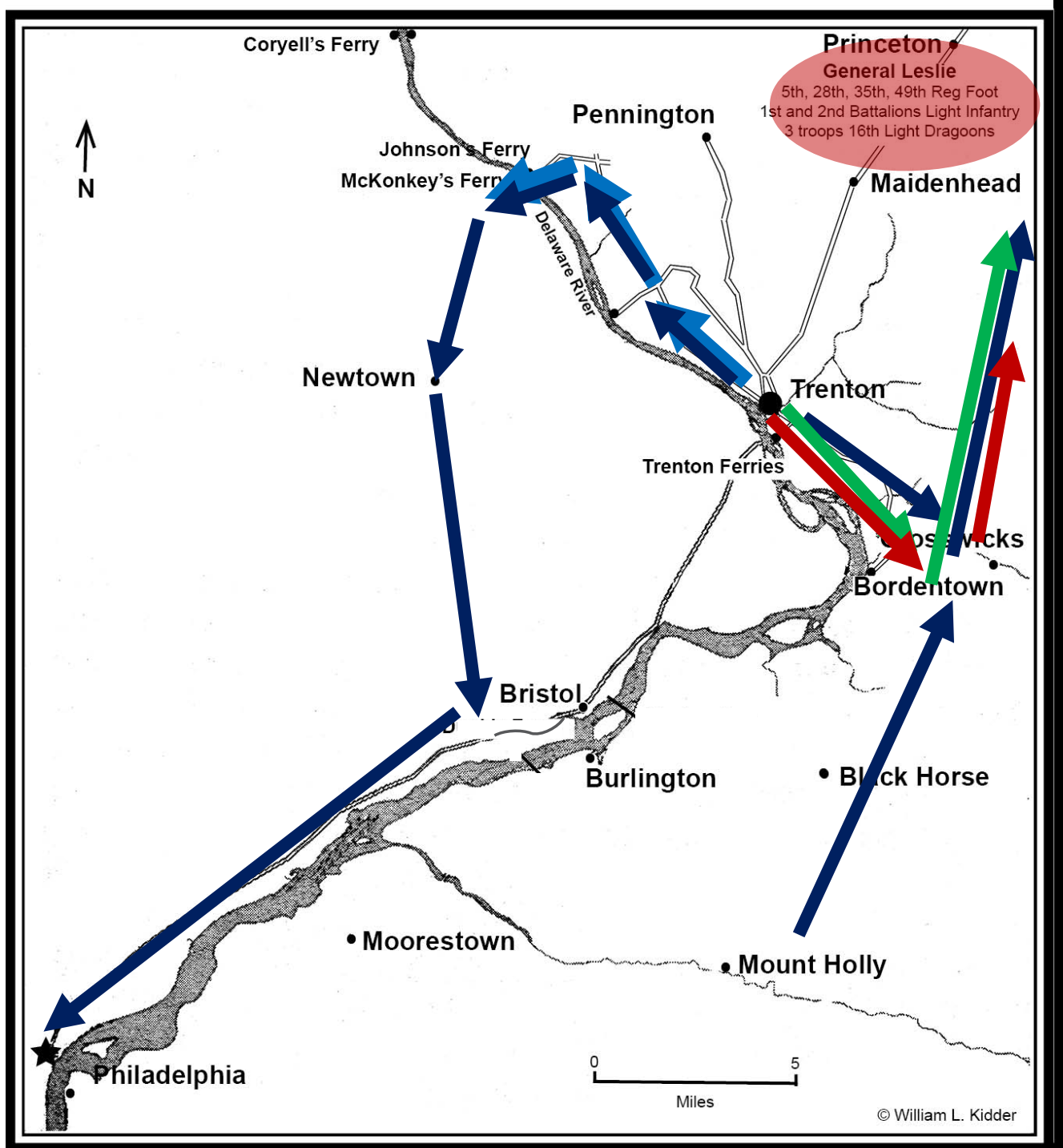
Three tour stops in Trenton placed in the context of the town as it was in 1776



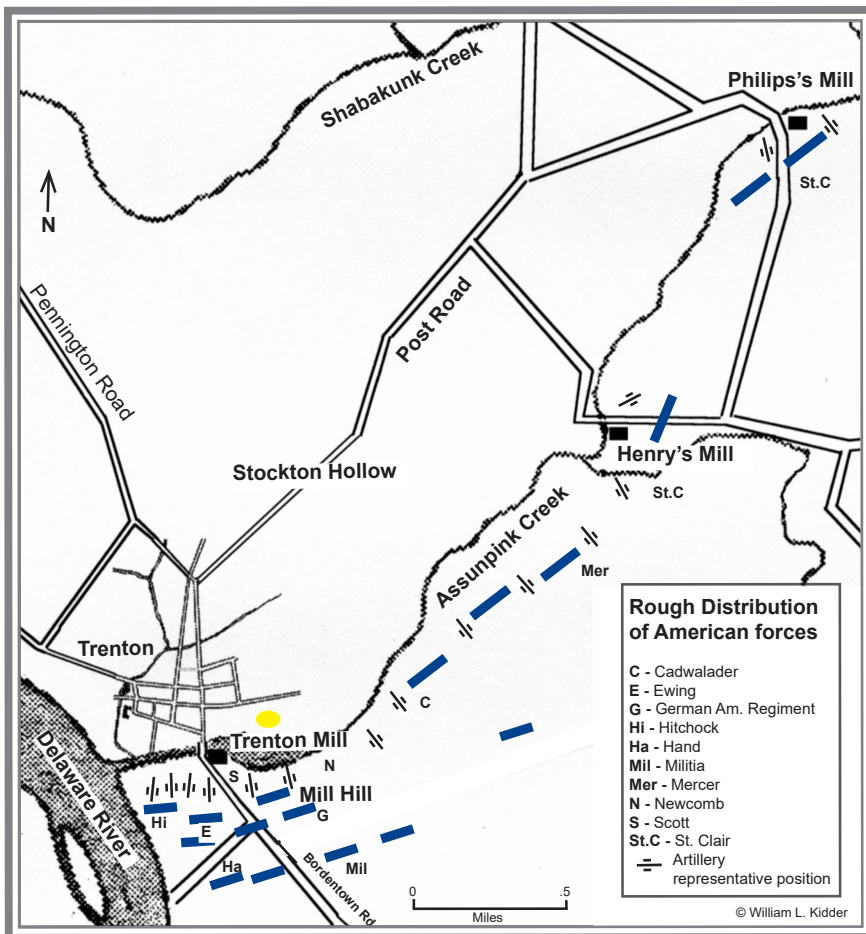
Battle of Trenton
December 26, 1776
c8:05am - c8:20am



Battle of Trenton
December 26, 1776
c8:40am - c9:00am



After the Battle of Trenton - December 26 - 29



December 29 - January 1

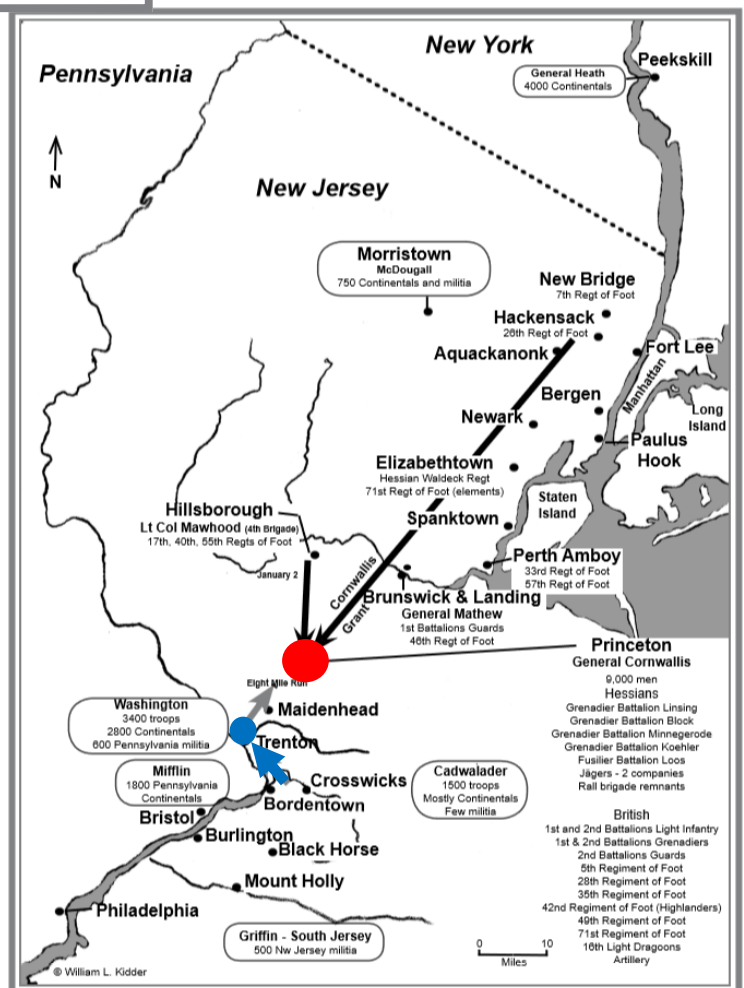
Washington prepares to defend Trenton from the high ground on Mill Hill behind the Assumpink

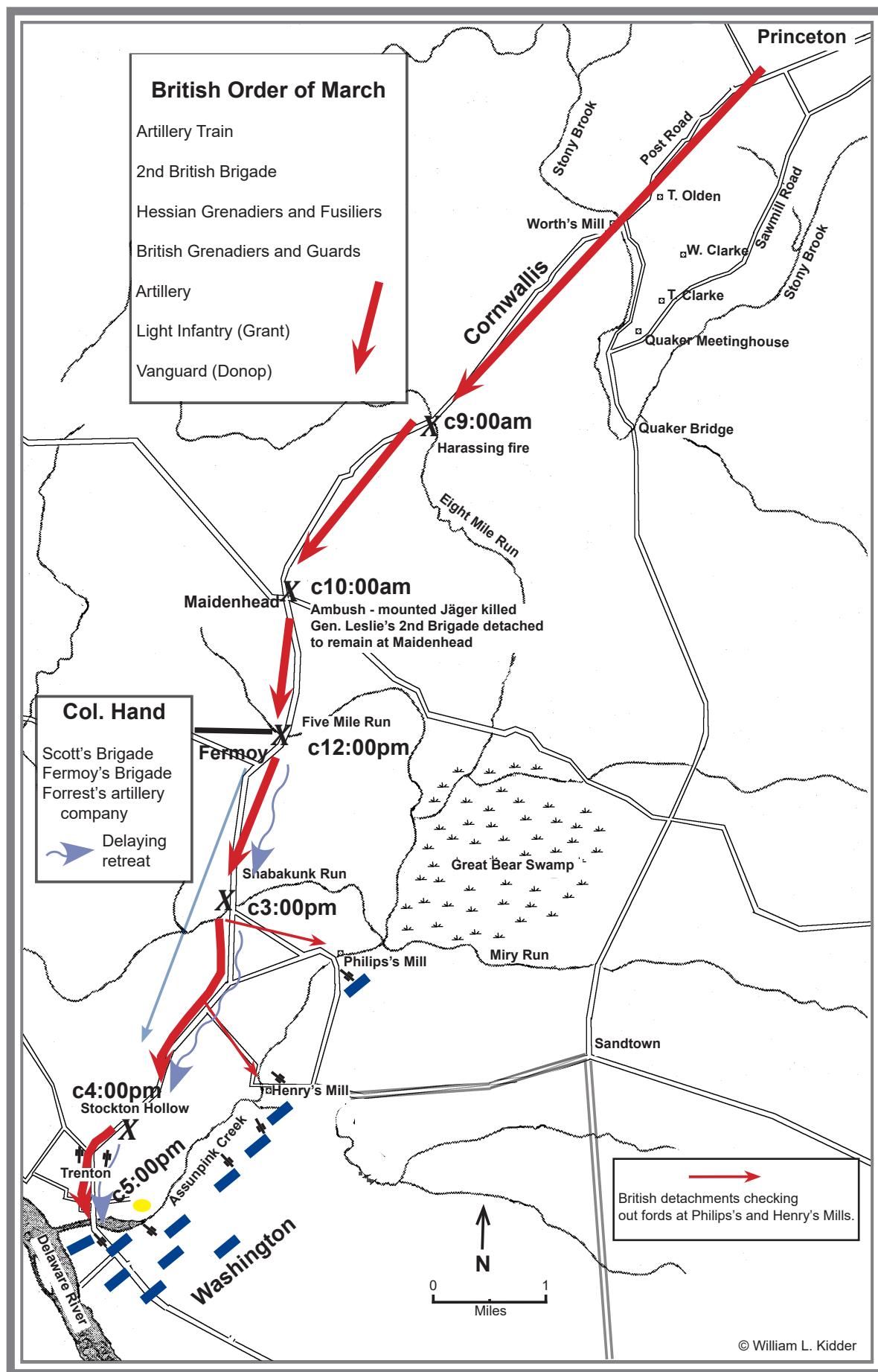
January 1, 1777

British concentrate at Princeton

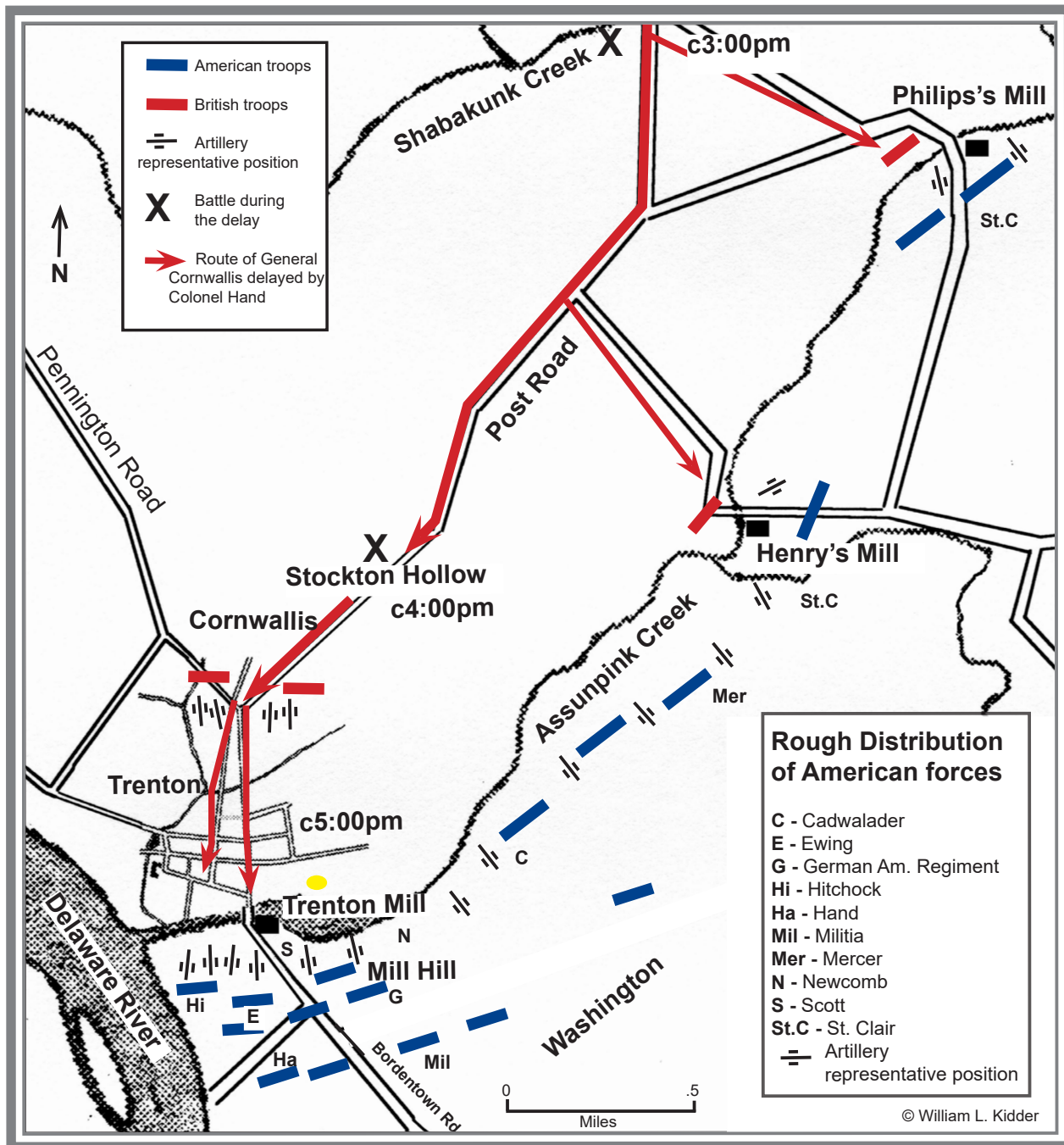
Washington calls in troops from Bordentown and Crosswicks

Washington sends troops up main road toward Princeton to set up delay ambushes





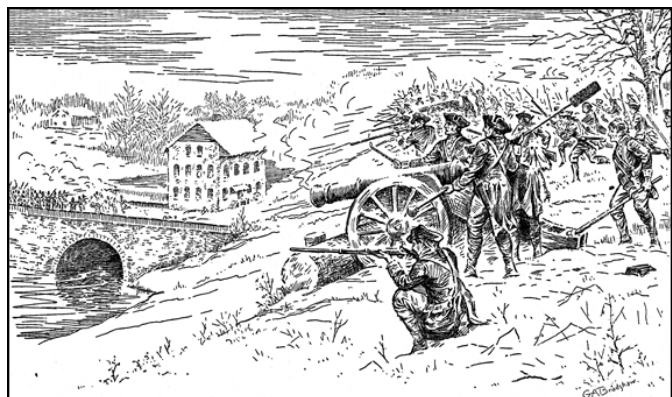
Delaying Actions, January 2, 1777



Battle of the Assunpink Creek - January 2, 1777

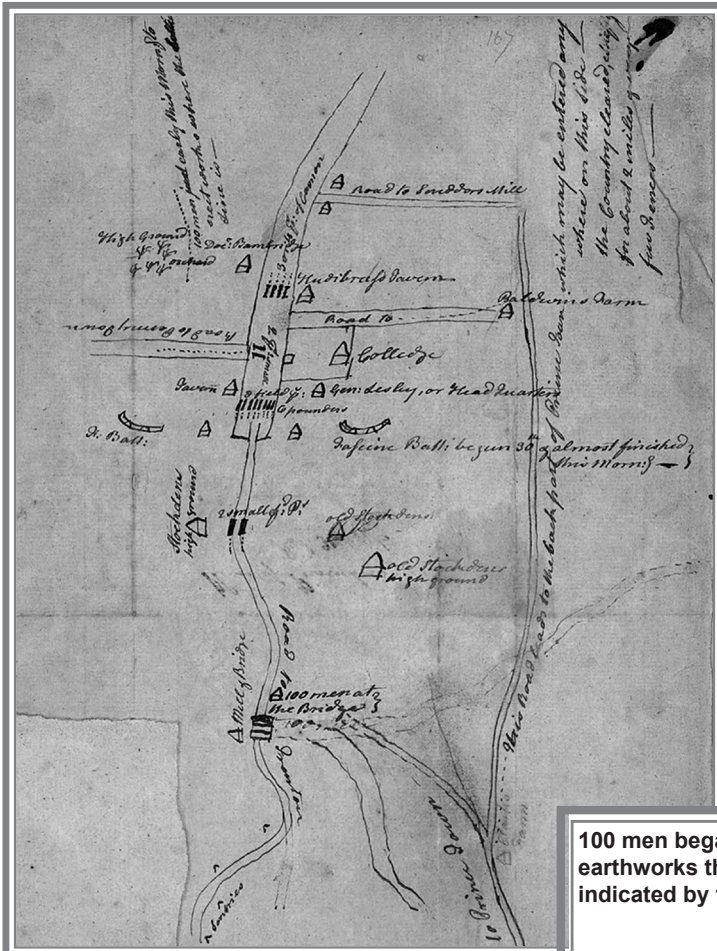


Battle of Assunpink Creek
by Graham Turner

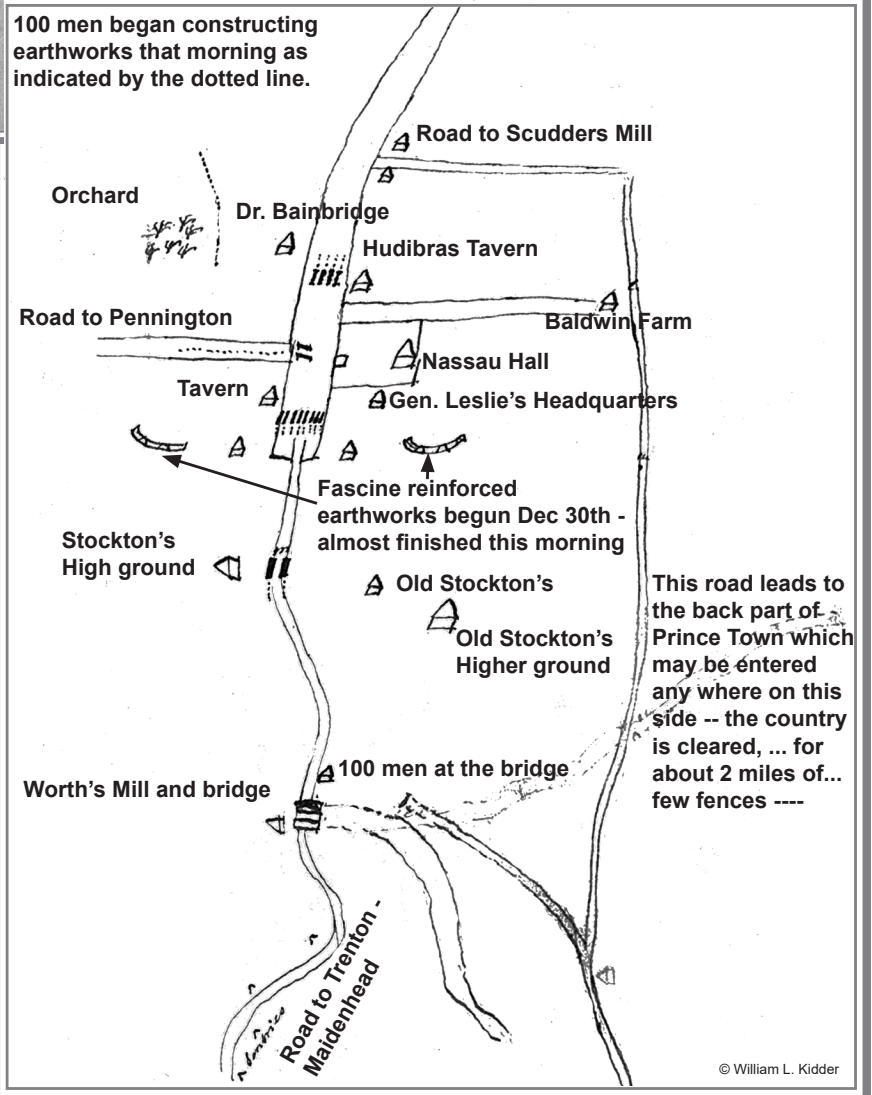


The Spy Map

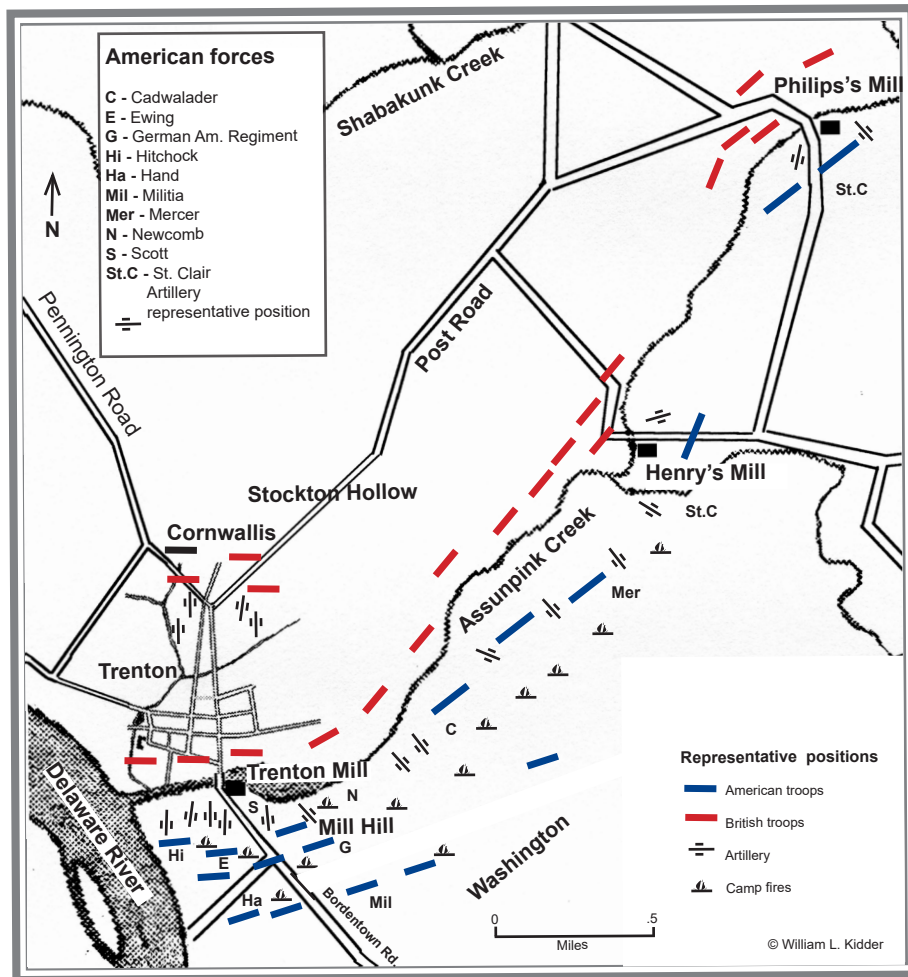
What the Spy Map told Washington about Princeton



100 men began constructing earthworks that morning as indicated by the dotted line.

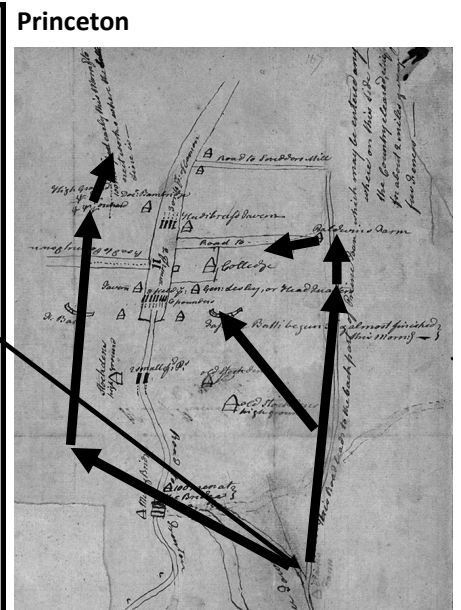
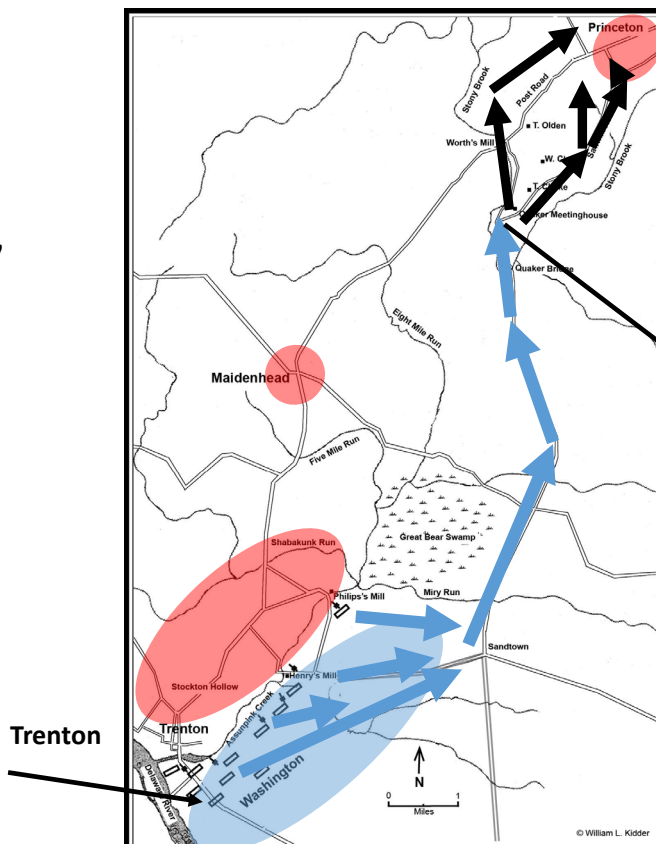
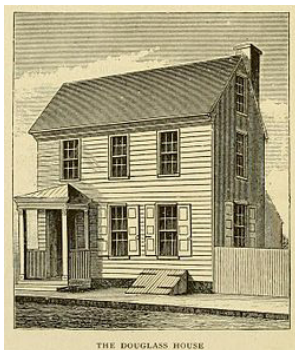


© William L. Kidder

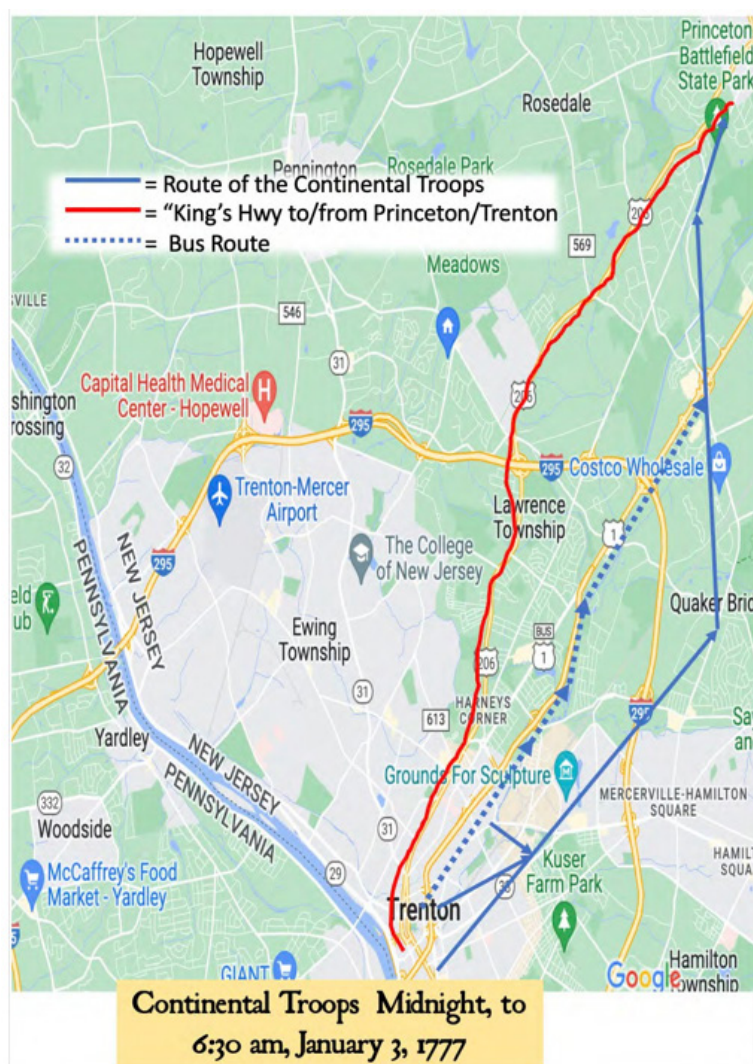


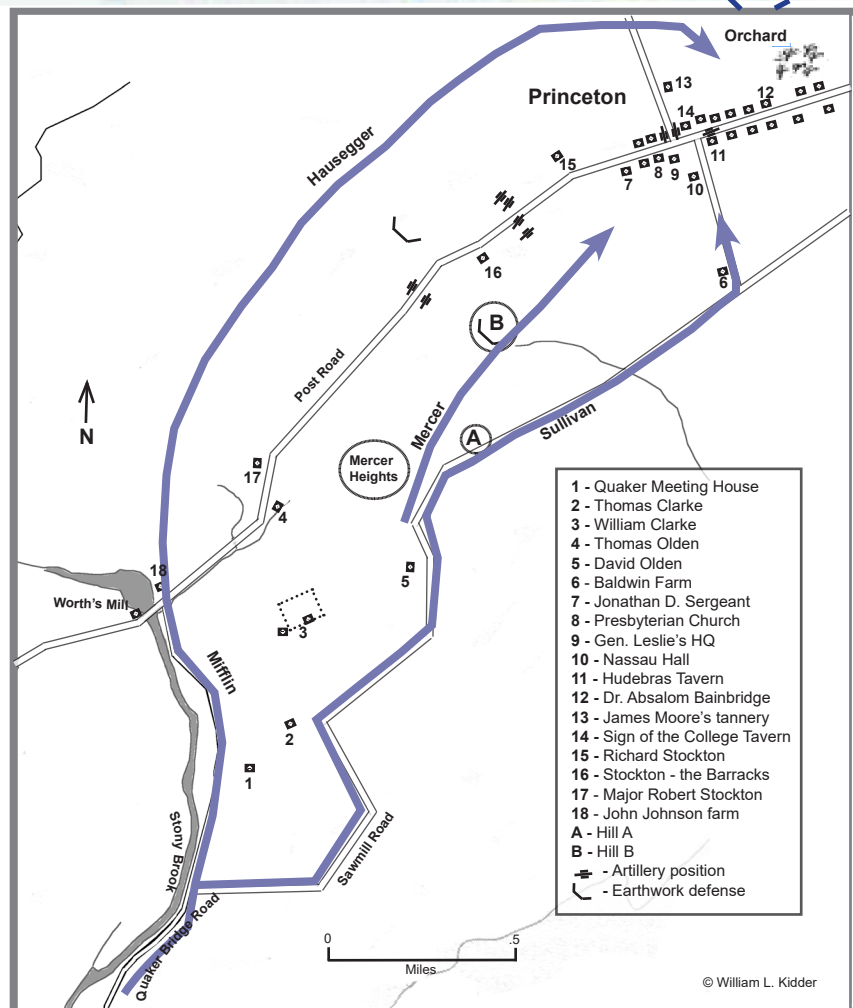
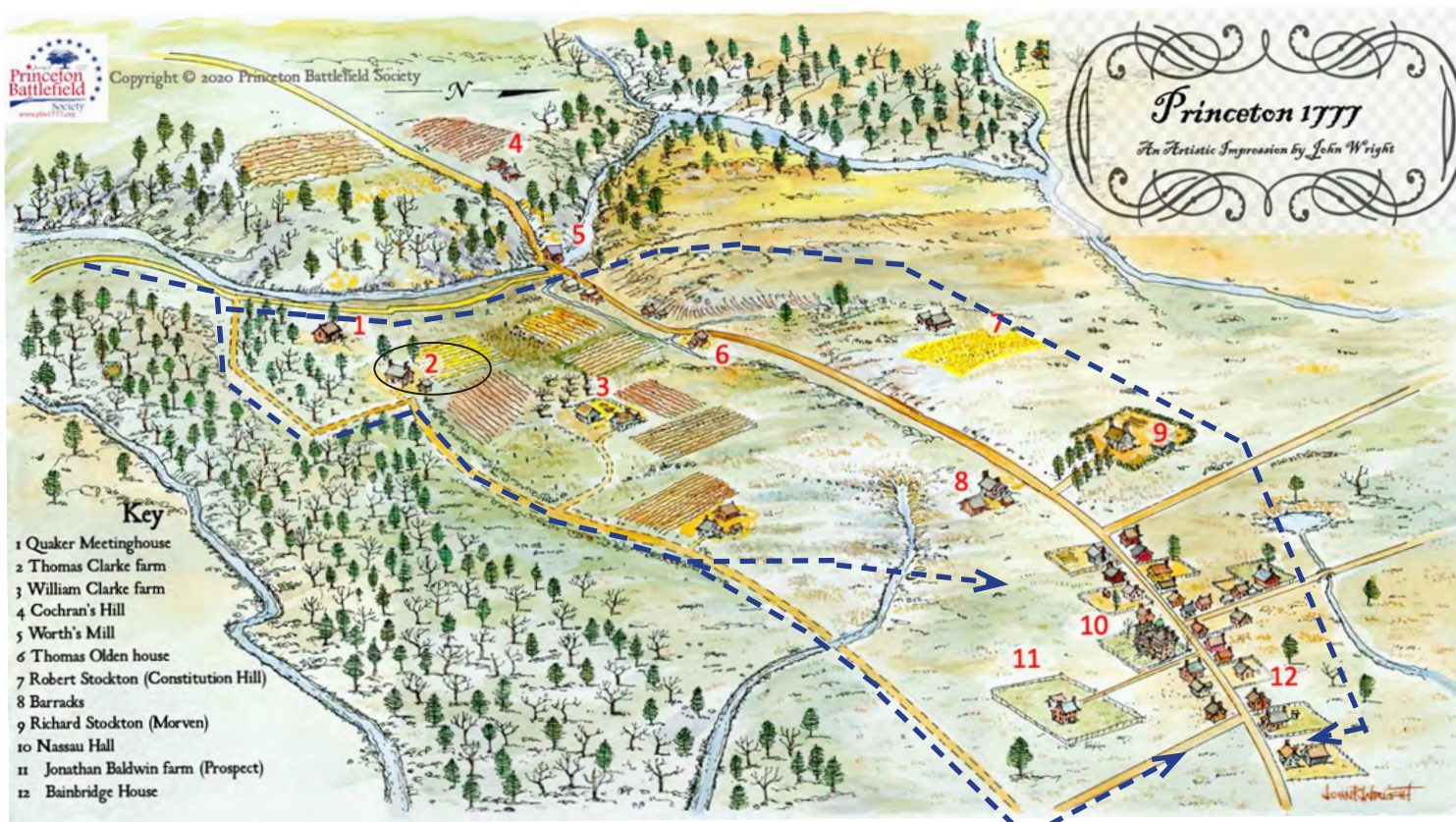
Troop Dispositions night of January 2, 1777

Night of
January 2-3, 1777



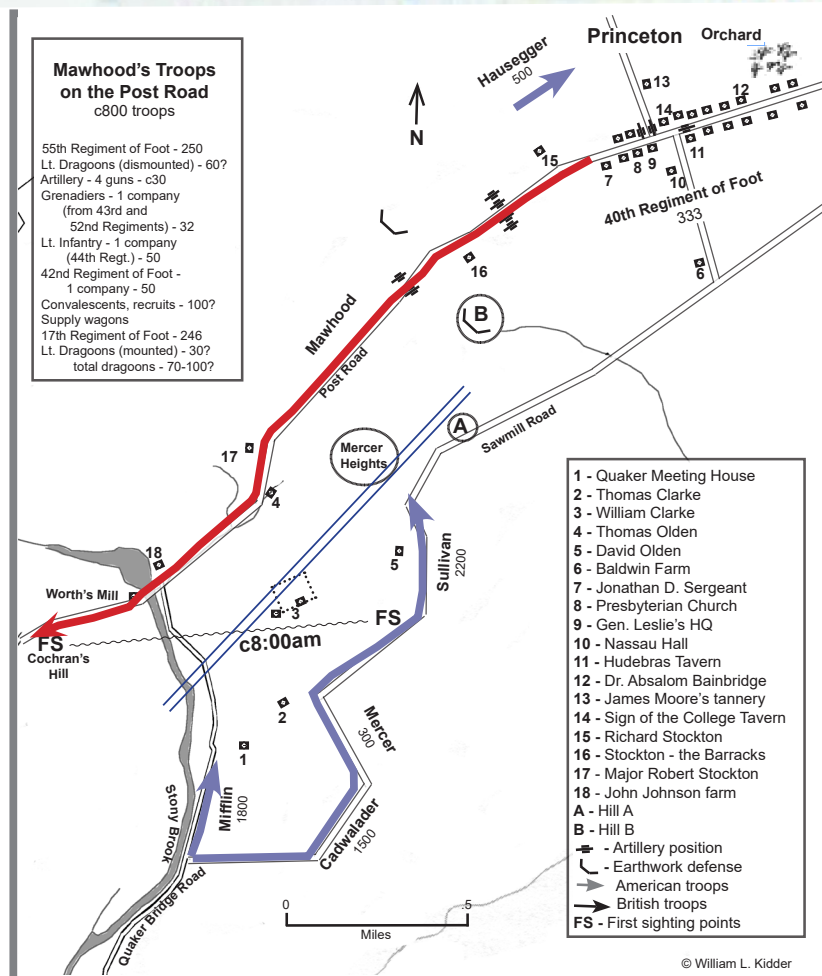
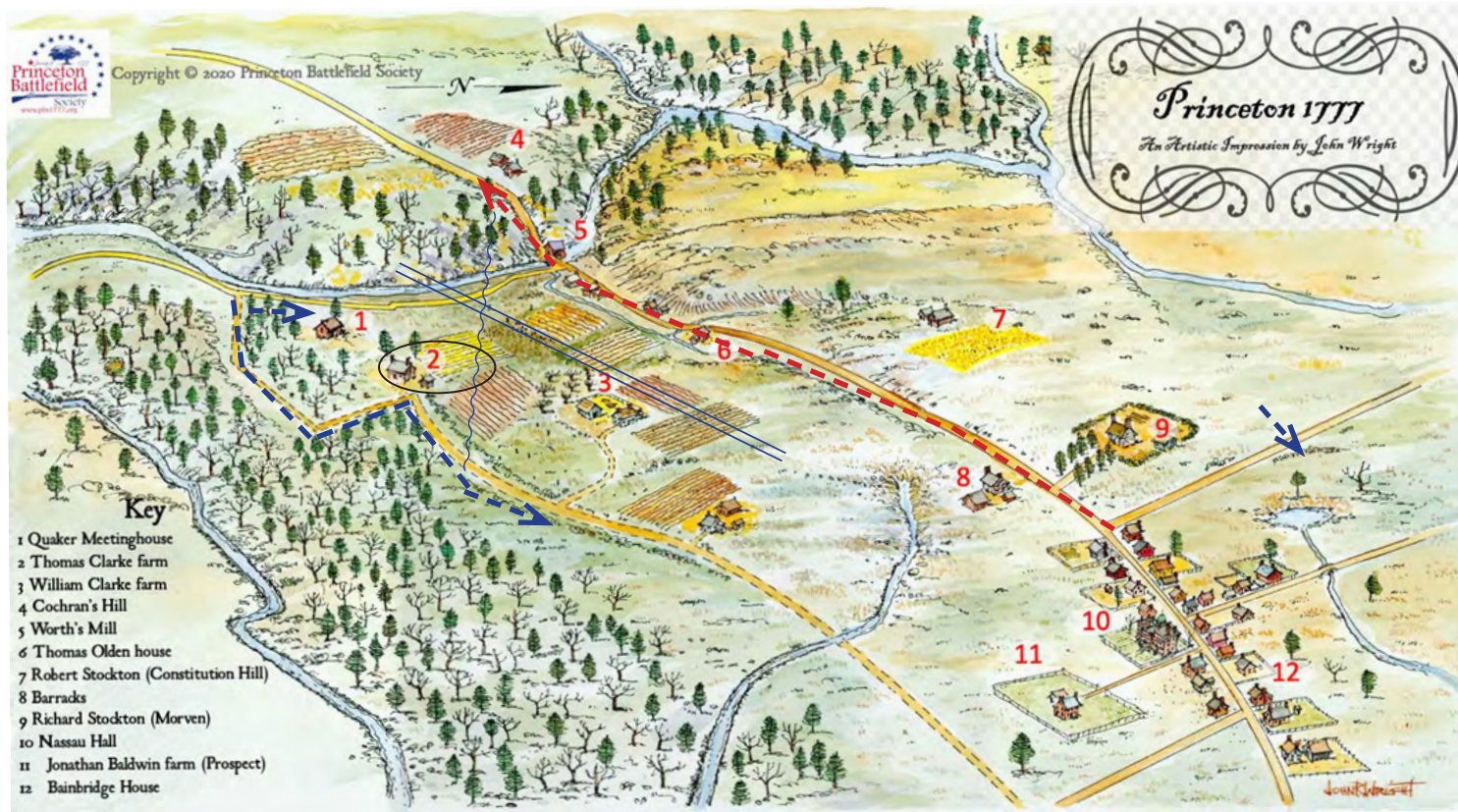
January 2, 1777 12:00pm to 2:00am (approx.)



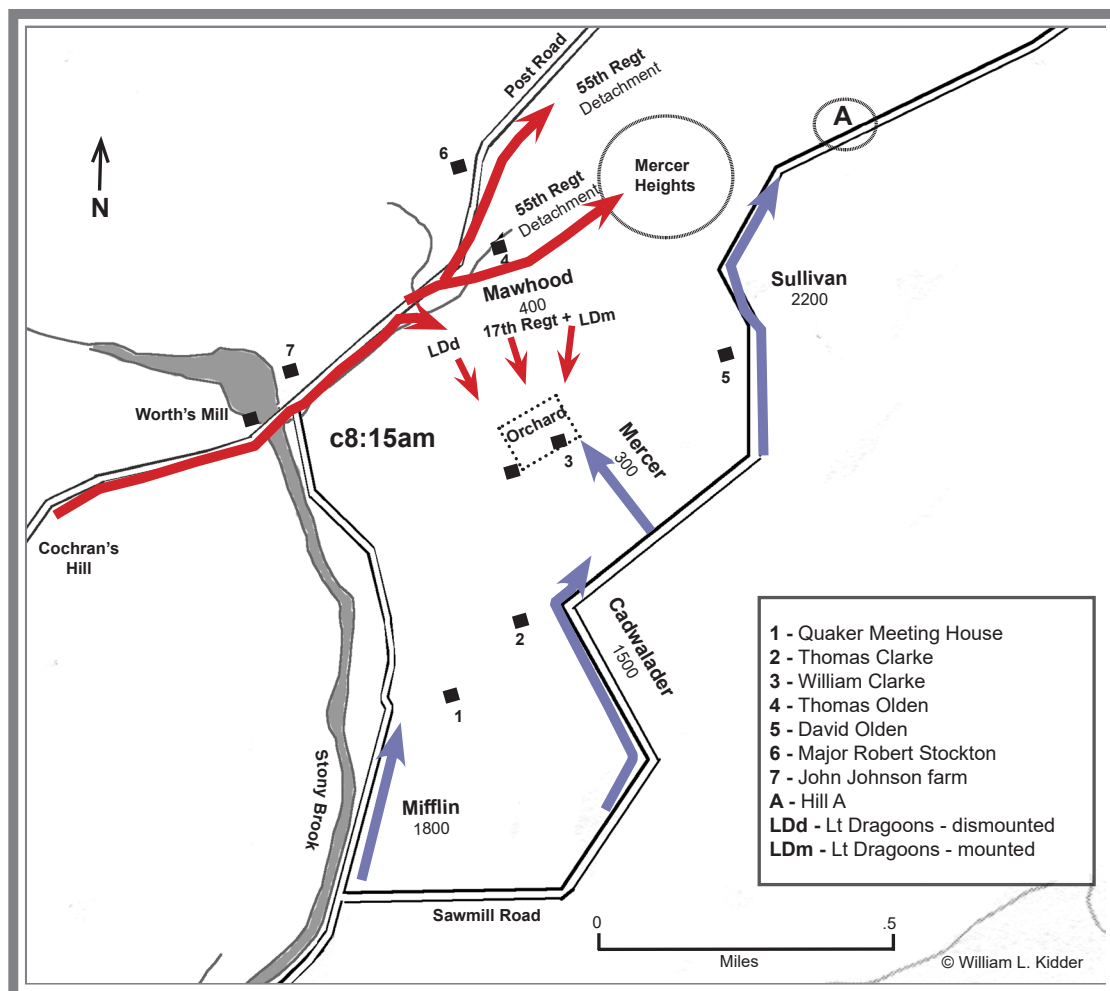
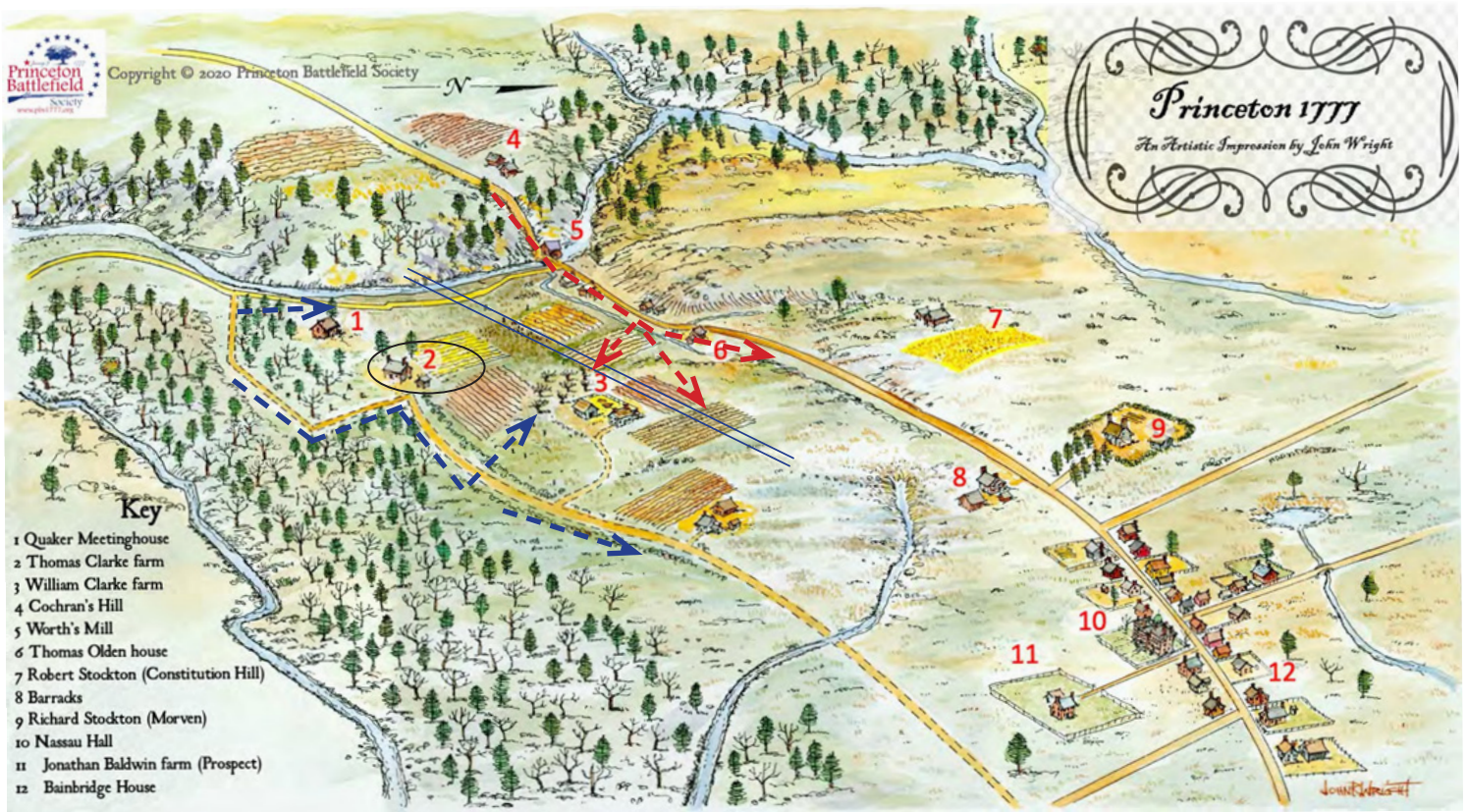


Indicates where we are at today's Princeton Battlefield State Park

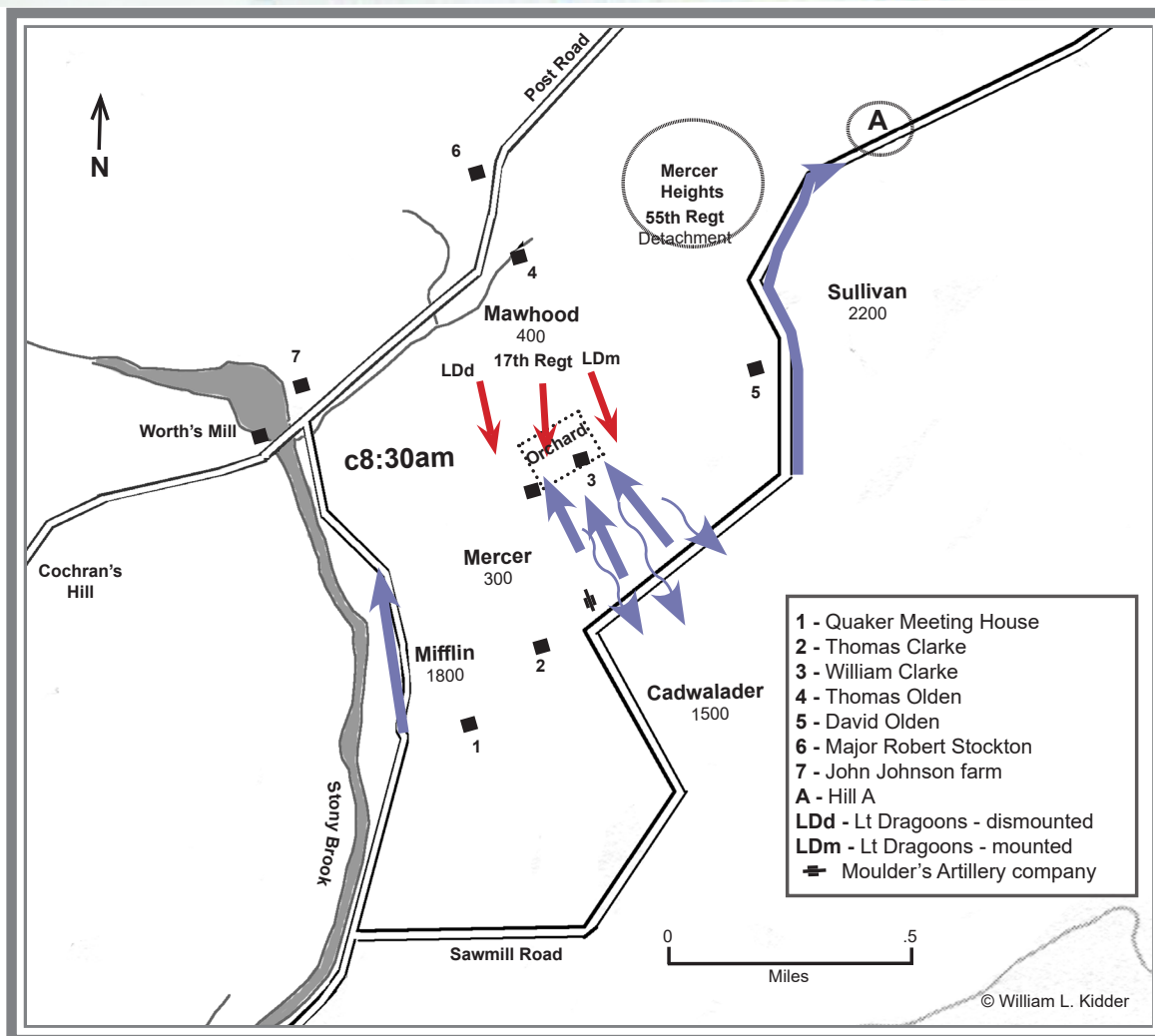
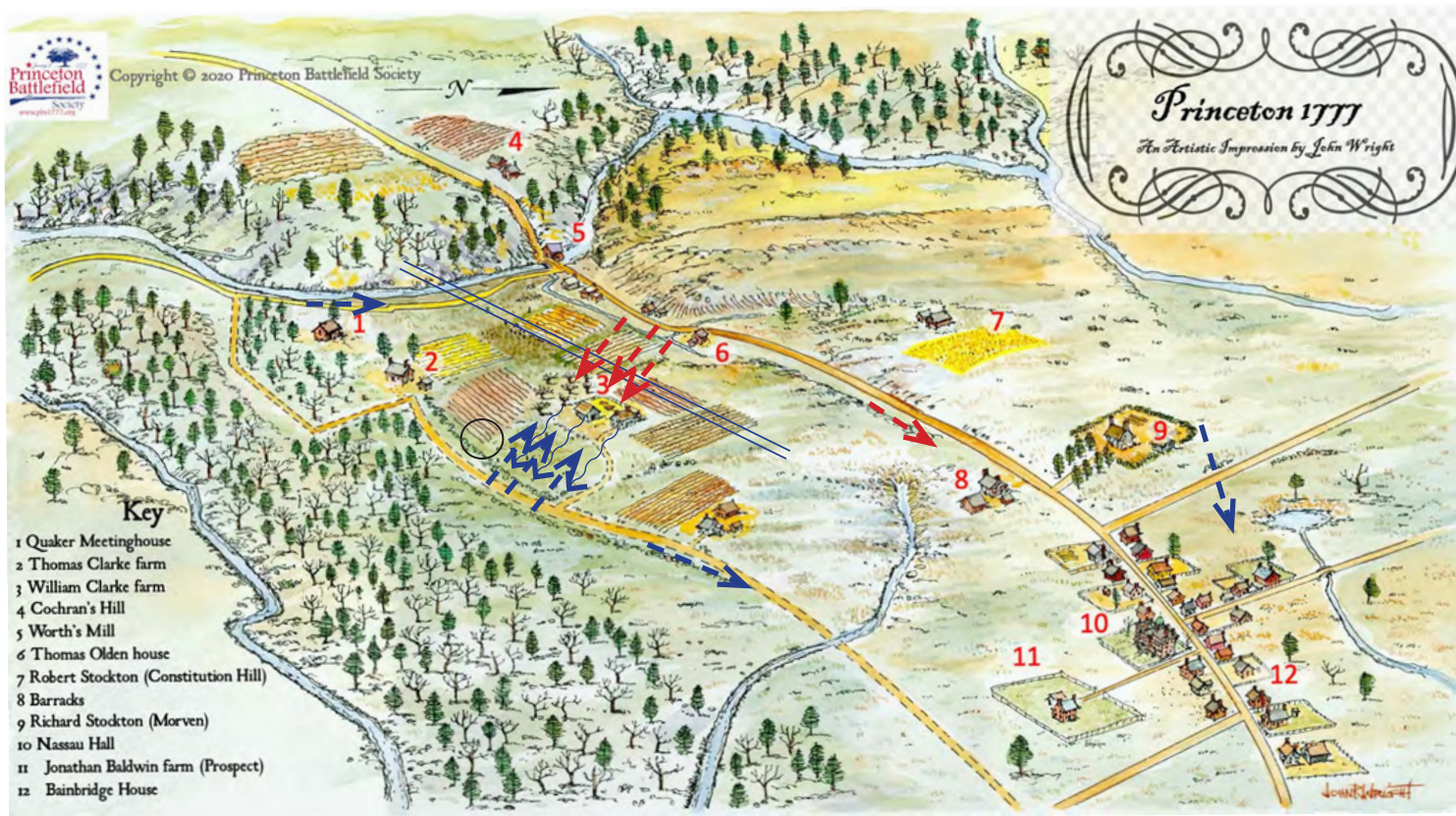
Washington's Plan for attacking Princeton, January 3



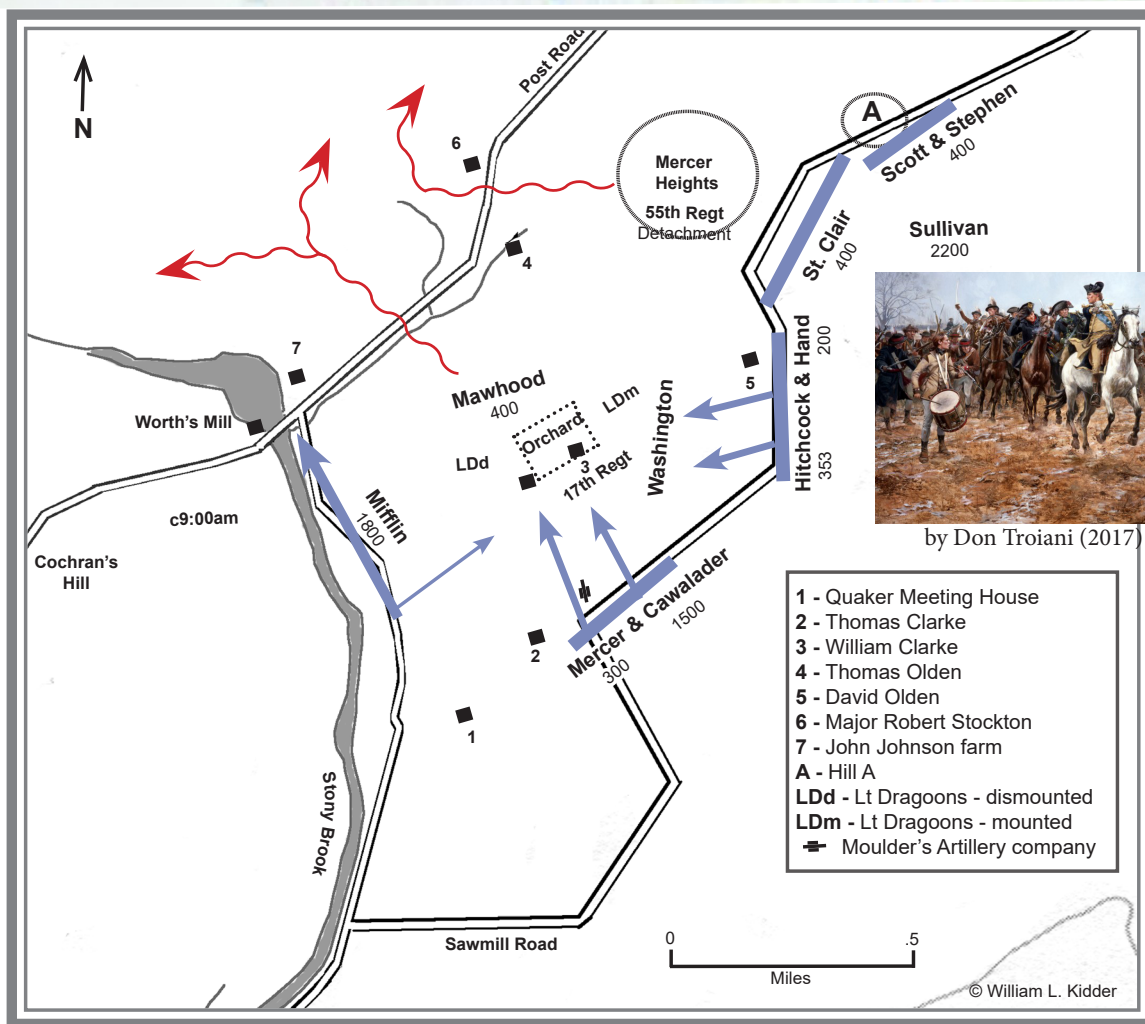
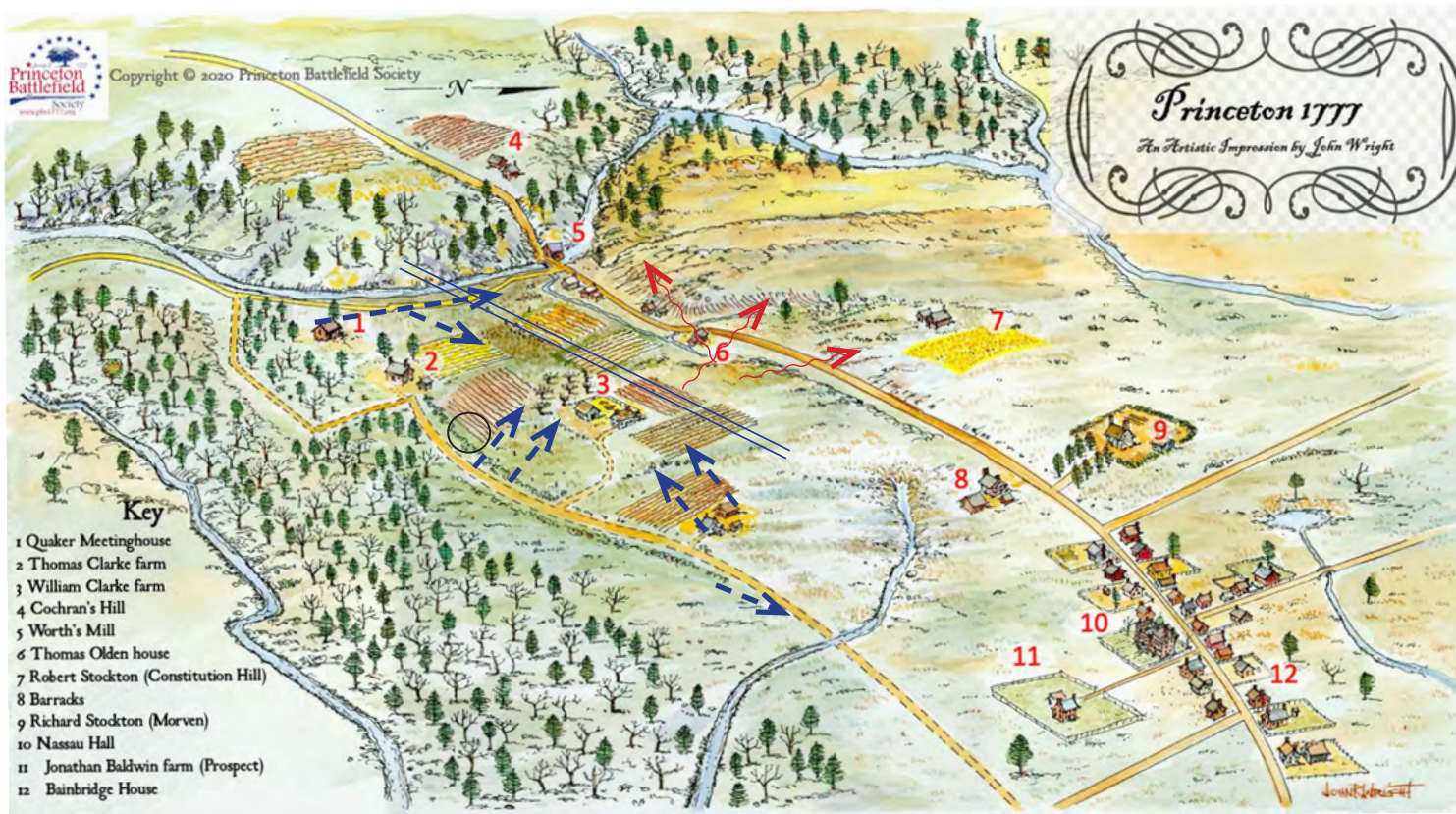
Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777 - Initial Sightings c8:00am



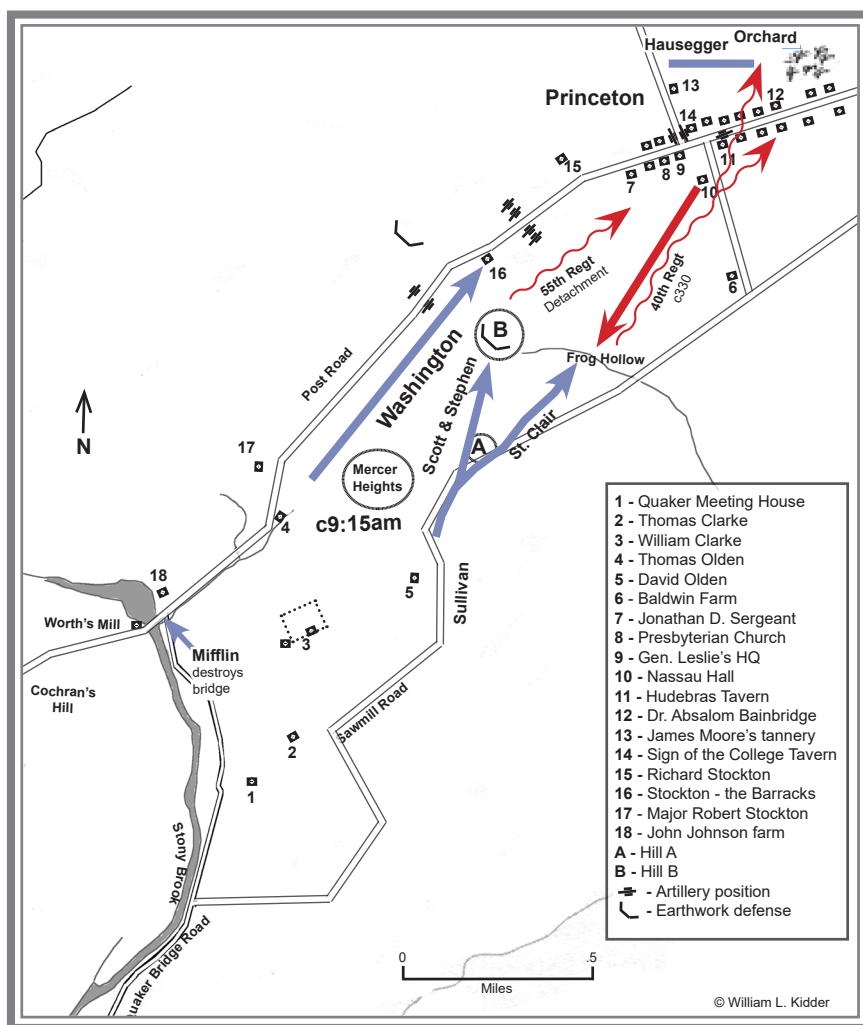
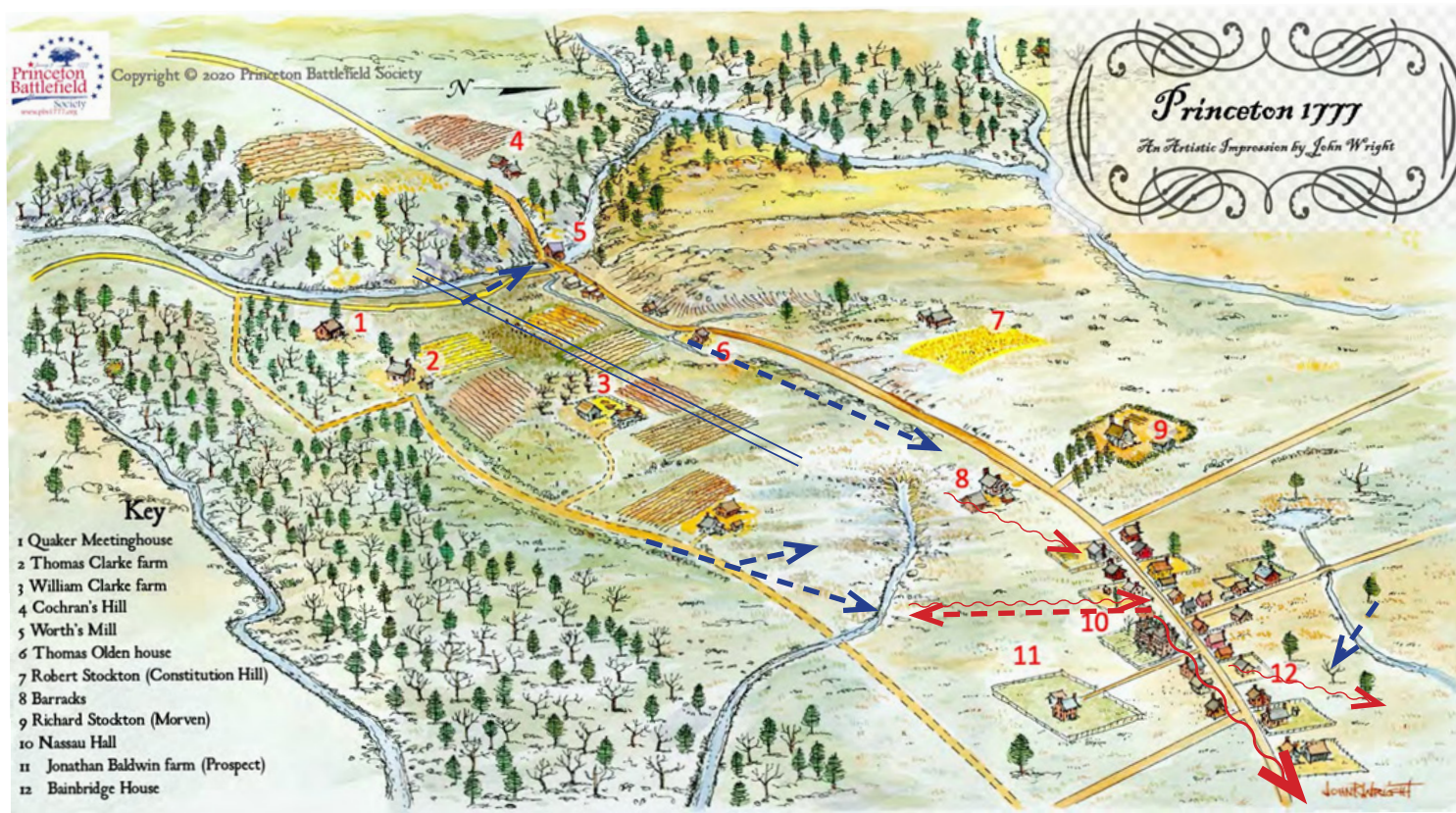
Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777 - c8:15am - 8:20am



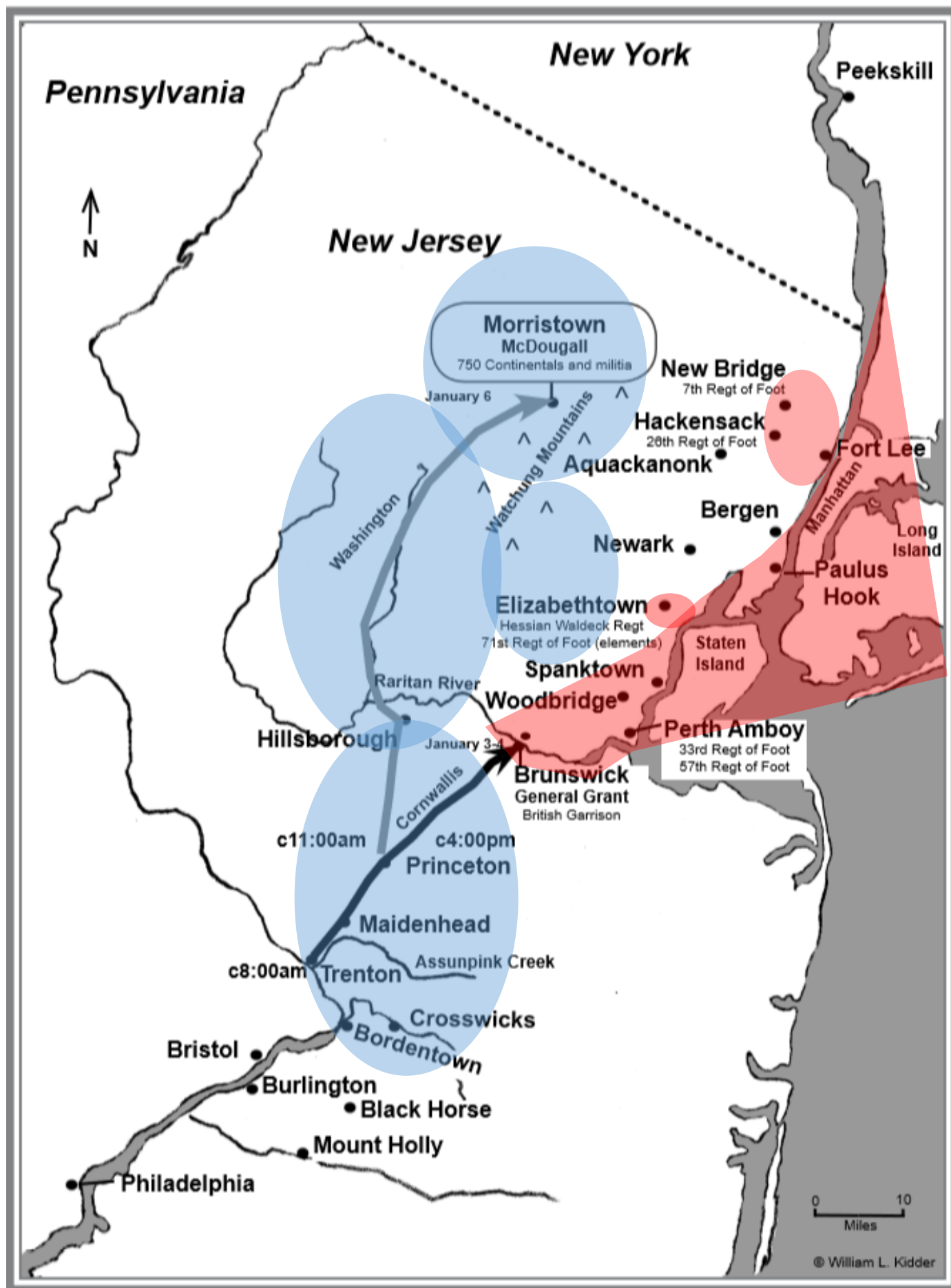
Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777 - c8:30am - 8:40am



Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777 - c8:40 - c9:00am



Battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777 - c9:00am - c9:15am



Aftermath of the Ten Crucial Days



THE "TEN CRUCIAL DAYS": A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Prelude—December 14-25, 1776: The bulk of the Continental Army under George Washington is encamped on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River, where it is regrouping from a disastrous New York campaign against the British and Hessian forces and a long retreat across New Jersey. In New Jersey, Continental soldiers and militiamen engage Hessian troops in the area of Mount Holly while other militia units continually harass the Hessian brigade occupying Trenton. Thomas Paine's *The American Crisis* inspires the weary Continentals to fight on. Approximate temperature at beginning the crossing 29°

Day 1—December 25, 1776: A Continental Army force of 2,400 soldiers (organized into seven brigades) crosses the Delaware River to New Jersey and marches almost 10 miles to Trenton in a raging blizzard to assault the 1,500 Hessian troops occupying the town. Temperatures at dawn 33°; 35° by the afternoon.

Day 2—December 26, 1776: First Battle of Trenton - The Continental Army defeats the Hessians at Trenton to win its first significant victory of the war, then returns to Pennsylvania with its prisoners and captured arms, ammunition, horses, and wagons. Temperature remains around 32° all day.

Days 3 and 4—December 27-28, 1776: Washington and his generals decide to cross the Delaware back to New Jersey and join up with Pennsylvania and New England militia who have already crossed over from Pennsylvania and discovered that Hessian forces in the area near Trenton (in Bordentown and Burlington) have withdrawn. It snows up to six inches in the morning 28°, drops into the 20's that night

Days 5 and 6—December 29-30, 1776: The Continental Army crosses the river (for the fourth time that month) and returns to Trenton, where Washington's troops combine with militia to form a consolidated force of 6,000 soldiers that entrenches itself below the Assunpink Creek. Washington persuades a bare majority of his soldiers whose enlistments are to expire on the 31st to remain with the army for another six weeks, based on a promise to pay each of these soldiers \$10 in hard coin. Remains below freezing both days.

Days 7 and 8—December 31, 1776-January 1, 1777: Several Continental Army regiments advance from Trenton towards enemy-occupied Princeton and take up positions along the Princeton Road in Maidenhead (today Lawrence Township). There they skirmish with British and Hessian troops on New Year's Day. Remains in the 30's all day on the 31st, On the 1st temperatures moderate at 50° by late afternoon.

Day 9—January 2, 1777: Second Battle of Trenton (or the Battle of Assunpink Creek) - Continental units fight a delaying action against 8,000 British and Hessian troops under Gen. Charles Cornwallis in Maidenhead and slow Cornwallis's march from Princeton to Trenton long enough to prevent a full-scale, coordinated assault in daylight against Washington's army, arrayed behind the Assunpink Creek below Trenton. The Continentals and militia beat back a series of probes by British and Hessian forces along the creek. The temperatures dropped all day into the 30's and further into the 20's that night.

Day 10—January 3, 1777: Battle of Princeton - Overnight, the Continental Army marches around Cornwallis's left flank, from behind the Assunpink Creek to Princeton (12 miles in five hours) and defeats a small British force stationed there for the capstone American victory of the "Ten Crucial Days." Temperatures remained in the 20's all day.

Postscript—January 3-6, 1777: The Continental Army makes its way from Princeton to Morristown, NJ, where it establishes its winter quarters and thereby ends the military campaign associated with the "Ten Crucial Days."



George Washington at the Battle of Princeton Charles Wilson Peale 1781

“When the illustrious part that your Excellency has borne in this long and arduous contest becomes a matter of history, fame will gather your brightest laurels rather from the banks of the Delaware than from those of the Chesapeake.”

—Cornwallis to Washington, after dining with him following the Siege of Yorktown, 1781

Relive the “Ten Crucial Days” of the American Revolution

Visit these historic sites:

Washington Crossing Historic Park

This Pennsylvania state park and National Historic Landmark is where General George Washington's army began its epic crossing of the Delaware River the night of December 25-26, 1776, which may have saved our nation's quest for independence when the American Revolution appeared all but lost. This was the beginning of the Ten Crucial Days. The park offers a visitor center and more than 500 acres of American history, natural beauty, and family fun.

Washington Crossing State Park

This New Jersey state park lies opposite its Pennsylvania sister and is part of the same National Historic Landmark. It is the site where Washington's army landed after crossing the Delaware River to attack the Hessian brigade occupying Trenton. In addition to its historical significance, the 3,500-acre park is well known for its trails and wildlife habitat.

Old Barracks Museum

This museum in Trenton has a unique history dating back to 1758, when it was built to house British soldiers during the French and Indian War. It is a remnant of Trenton that helps visitors understand both the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776 and the Second Battle of Trenton on January 2, 1777. From military quarters to widow's home, from brothel to museum, the building offers visitors a fascinating look at the history of the area.

Princeton Battlefield

This New Jersey state park is where the Battle of Princeton was fought on January 3, 1777 - the capstone event of the “Ten Crucial Days” campaign that altered the course of the war. It is the site of what is considered to be the fiercest fight of its size during the long conflict. The 1772 Clarke House witnessed the battle and served as sanctuary for the wounded General Hugh Mercer, who died there nine days later; it contains period furniture and Revolutionary War exhibits.

Learn more about these historic sites at:

www.tencrucialdays.org



Books related to the Ten Crucial Days campaigns and New Jersey in the Revolution

Full length Narratives to the Trenton and Princeton Campaigns and the Events of the Ten Crucial Days

1. TEN CRUCIAL DAYS: Washington's Vision for Victory Unfolds by Larry Kidder (Knox, 2019) The most authoritative modern narrative on the Ten Crucial Days.
2. ROAD TO ASSUNPINK CREEK: Liberty's Desperate Hour and the Ten Crucial Days of the American Revolution by David Price (Knox 2019). Says Patrick K. O'Donnell, "Assembling the best scholarship ... Price has rightfully elevated the crucial importance of one of the least remembered battles..."
3. VICTORY OR DEATH: The Battles of Trenton and Princeton by Mark Maloy (Savas Beatie, 2018) Good overview and great for a self-guided tour.
4. WASHINGTON'S CROSSING by David Hackett Fischer (Oxford, 2004) Despite having included some of Stryker's challenged references this is the bestselling book on the subject.
5. THE DAY IS OURS! An Inside View of the Battles of Trenton and Princeton, November 1776-January 1777 by William M. Dwyer (Viking, 1983) ^ Relies heavily on Stryker; written in a thrilling, journalistic style.
6. THE WINTER SOLDIERS: The Battles for Trenton and Princeton by Richard M. Ketchum. (Doubleday, 1973)^ Relies heavily on Stryker. Good military history for the modern reader.
7. THE BATTLES OF TRENTON AND PRINCETON by William S. Stryker (Houghton Mifflin, 1898)^ The earliest history from which many following works have been based. While detailed, there are unsourced references which are either questionable, or have since been proven inaccurate.

Overviews, Abridgments, and Essays on the Ten Crucial Days and the Revolution in New Jersey

1. THE BATTLE OF TRENTON/THE BATTLE OF PRINCETON: Two Studies by Samuel Stelle Smith (Philip Freneau Pr. 1967) ^
2. NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION edited by Barbara J. Mitnick (Rutgers, 2005)
3. TRENTON AND PRINCETON 1776-77: Washington Crosses the Delaware by David Bonk (Osprey 2010)^
4. A PEOPLE HARASSED AND EXHAUSTED: The Story of a New Jersey Militia Regiment in the American Revolution by Larry Kidder (Kidder, 2013)
5. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN NEW JERSEY: Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front edited by James J. Gigantino II (Rutgers, 2015)
6. RESCUING THE REVOLUTION: Unsung Heroes of the Ten Crucial Days of the American Revolution by David Price (Knox Press 2016) Short biographical vignettes on twelve lesser known participants of the Trenton and Princeton campaigns. Good storytelling.
7. FATAL SUNDAY: George Washington, the Monmouth Campaign, and the Politics of Battle by Mark Edward Lender and Garry Wheeler Stone Ph.D (Univ OK 2016) Award winning narrative on the largest battle fought in the northern theater of the revolution.
8. CROSSROADS OF THE REVOLUTION: Trenton, 1774-1783 by William L. (Larry) Kidder (Knox Press, 2017) Meticulously researched history of Trenton; rich background on how this important colonial town survived the revolution.

Recommended General Histories of the Revolution and the Actions in New Jersey

1. THE LONG RETREAT: The Calamitous Defense of New Jersey, 1776 by Arthur S. Lefkowitz (Rutgers, 1998)
2. 1776 by David McCullough (Simon & Schuster, 2006)
3. THE GLORIOUS CAUSE: The American Revolution, 1763-1789 by Robert Middlekauff (Oxford 2007)
4. ALMOST A MIRACLE: The American Victory in the War of Independence by John Ferling (Oxford 2007)
5. THE MEN WHO LOST AMERICA: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire by Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy (Yale 2013)
6. BAND OF GIANTS: The Amateur Soldiers Who Won America's Independence by Jack Kelly (Macmillan 2014)
7. AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS: A Continental History, 1750-1804 by Alan Taylor (WW Norton 2016)
8. WASHINGTON'S IMMORTALS: The Untold Story of an Elite Regiment Who Changed the Course of the Revolution by Patrick K. O'Donnell (Grove 2017)
9. THEATERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION James Kirby Martin and David L. Preston, Editors (Westholme 2017)

These and other fine books and educational materials are available at your local library, or wherever books are sold including the gift shops at The Old Barracks Museum 609-396-1776 and Washington's Crossing Historic Park 215-493-4076. (Titles listed with a ^ are out of print and are available at libraries or perhaps online)