Traversing the Ten Crucial Days

Historical Interpretation Tour Packet



TenCrucialDays.org

December 25, 1776 - January 3, 1777

1. Passage of the Delaware *by Thomas Sully* (1819)
2. Victory or Death, *by Don Troiani* (2015)
3. Battle of Trenton, *by H. Charles McBarron, Jr.* (1975)
4. Death of Colonel Rall, by *Don Troiani* (2016)
5. Battle of Assunpink Creek, *by Graham Turner* (2009)
6. Battle of Princeton, *by Don Troiani* (2017)

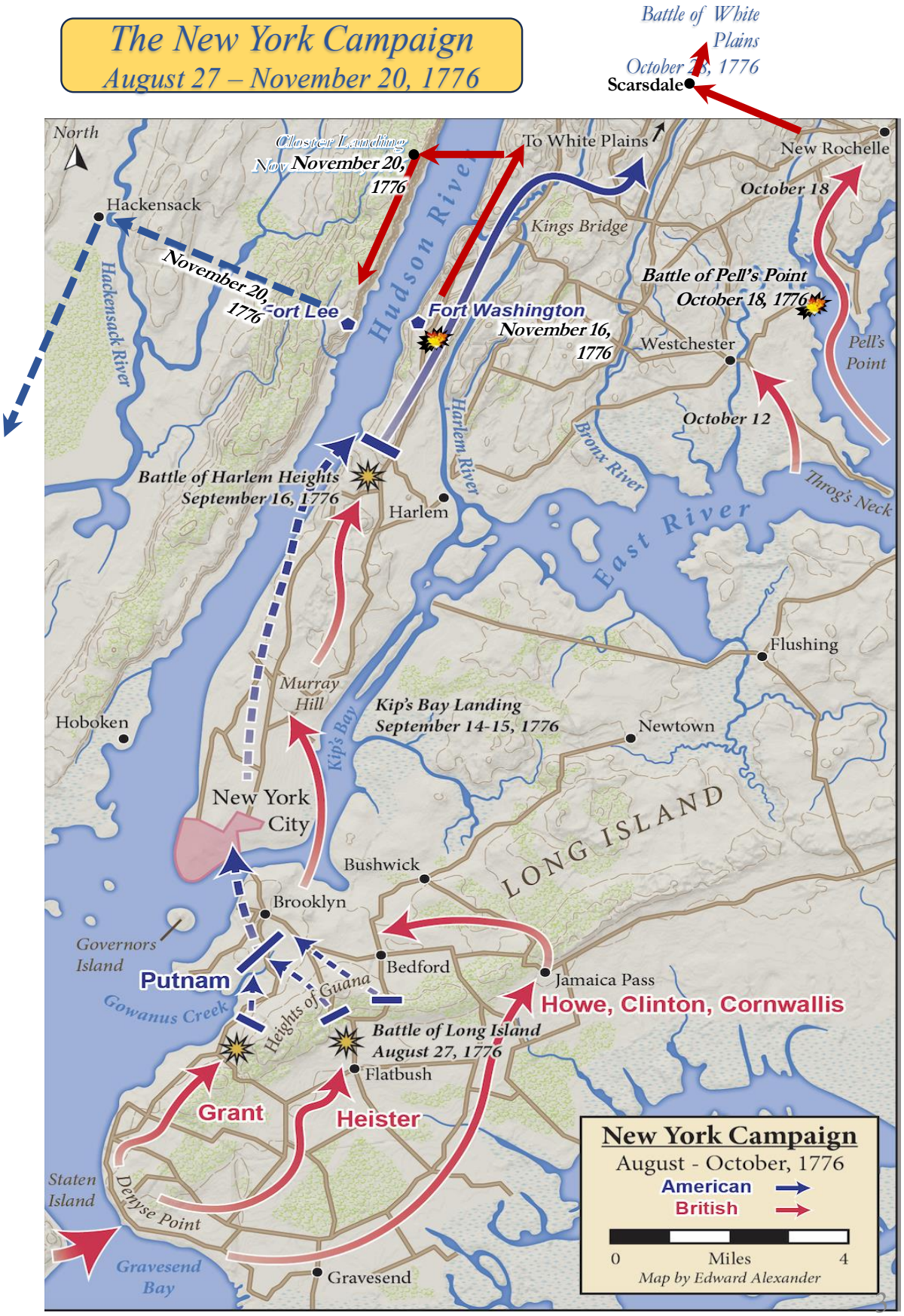
Friends of Washington Crossing Park

Tour Host: **Friends of Washington Crossing Park**
washingtoncrossingpark.org

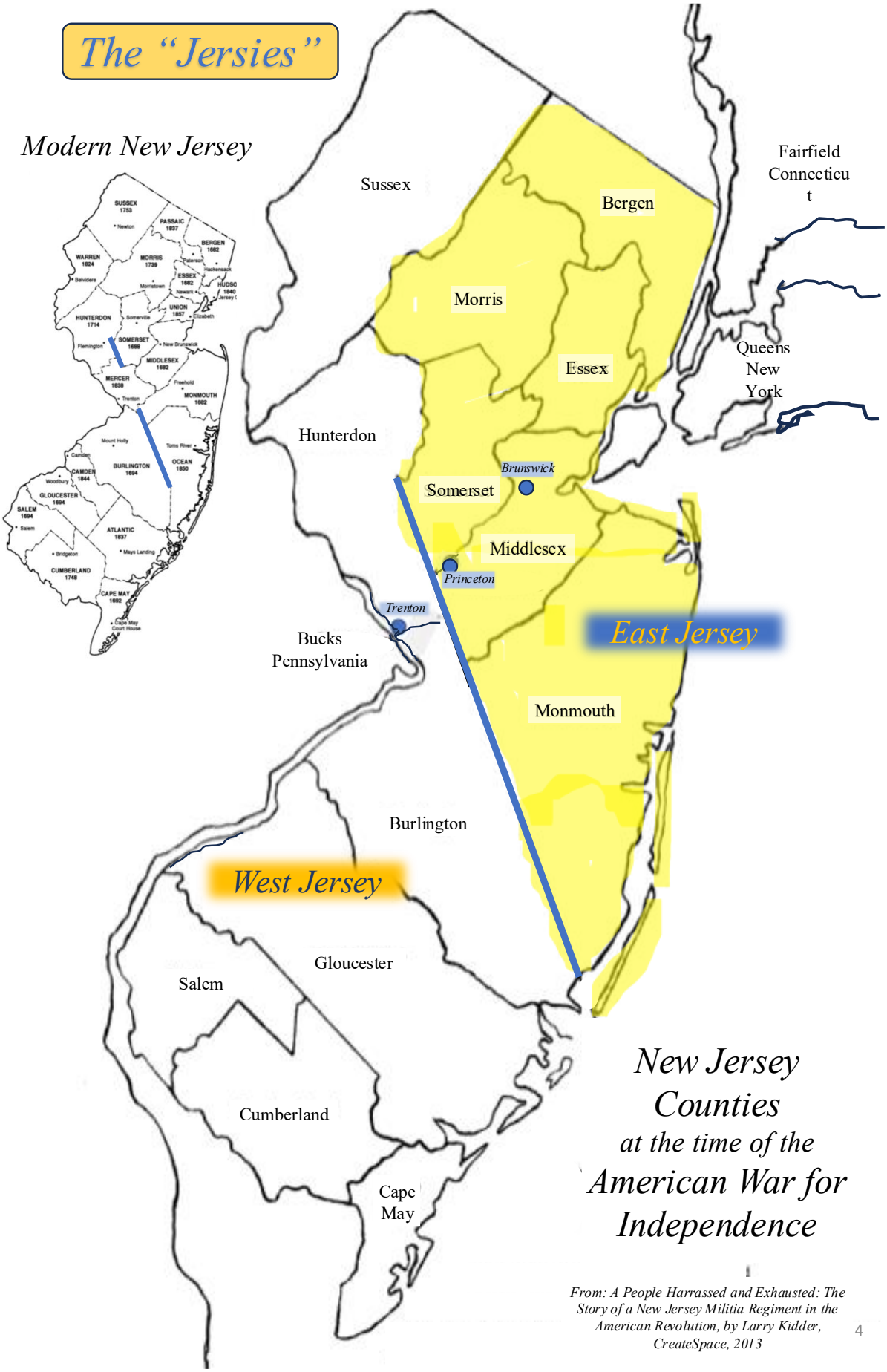
The Islands of New York and the American Troops July 1776



The New York Campaign
August 27 – November 20, 1776



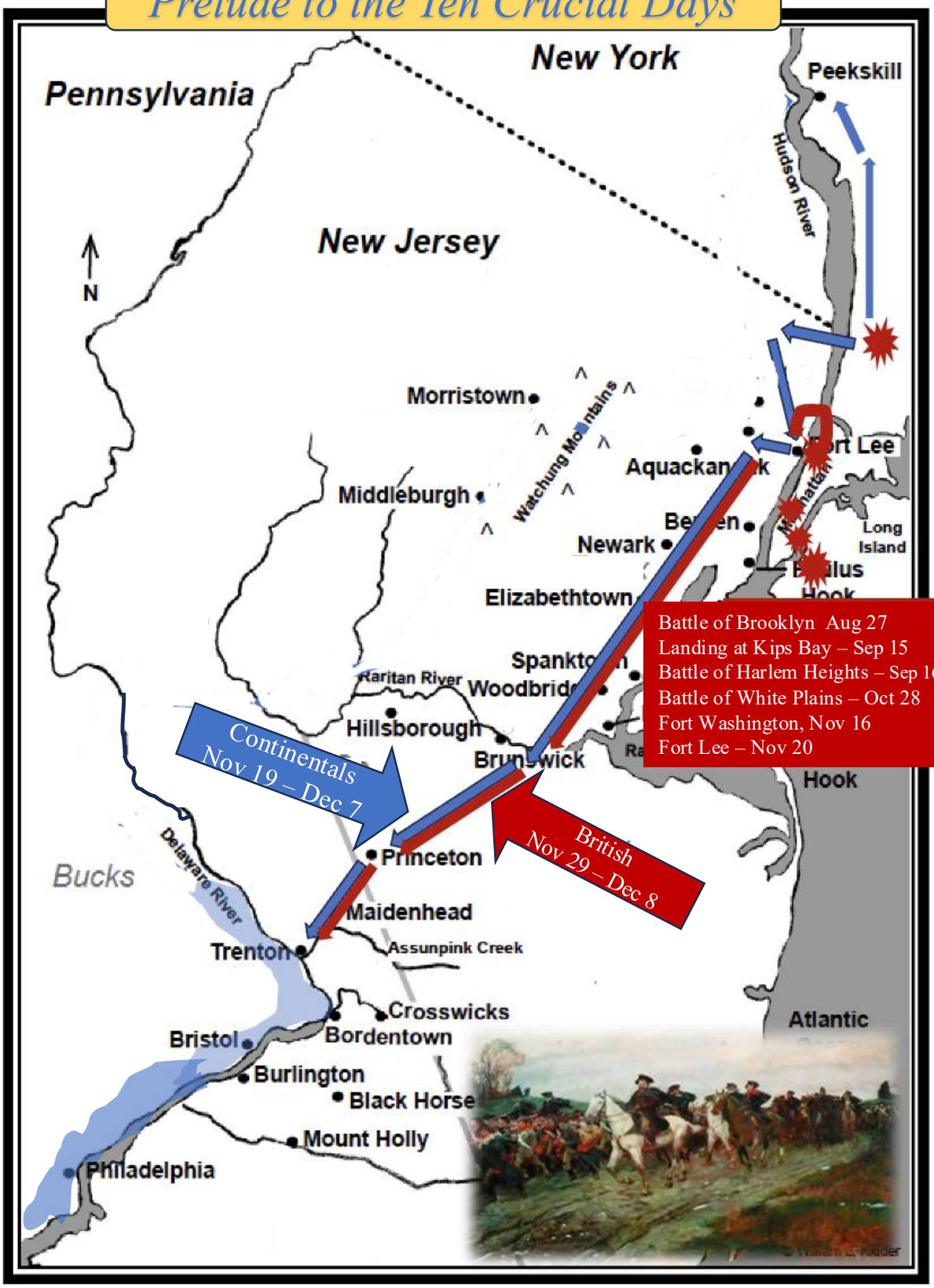
The "Jersies"



New Jersey Counties at the time of the American War for Independence

From: A People Harrassed and Exhausted: The Story of a New Jersey Militia Regiment in the American Revolution, by Larry Kidder, CreateSpace, 2013

Prelude to the Ten Crucial Days

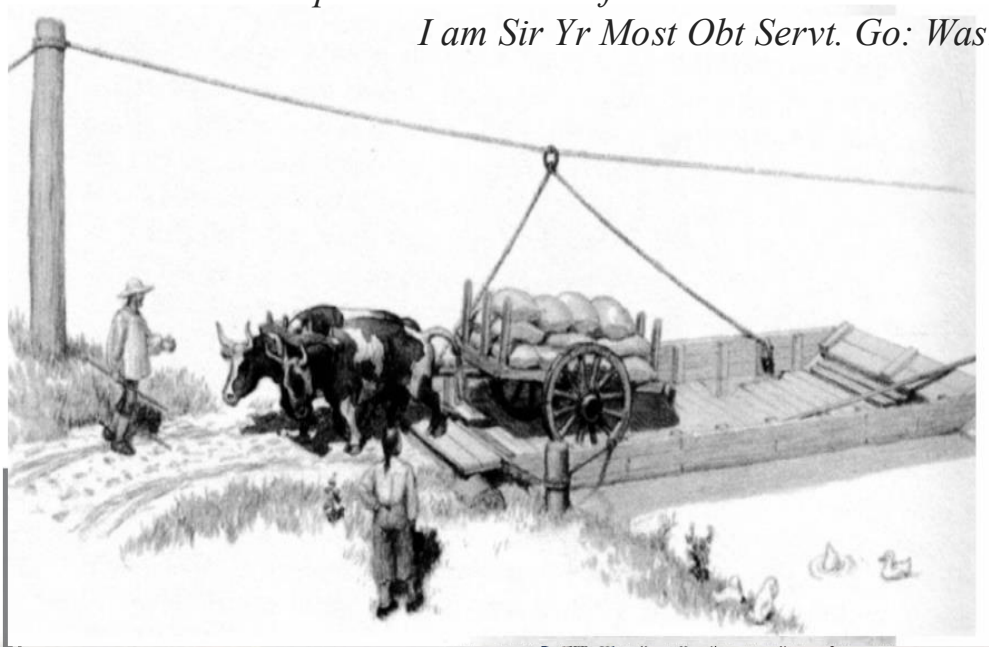


Collecting all the Watercraft on the Delaware

Geo. Washington to Colonel Richard Humpton, *Brunswick Decemr 1. 1776.*

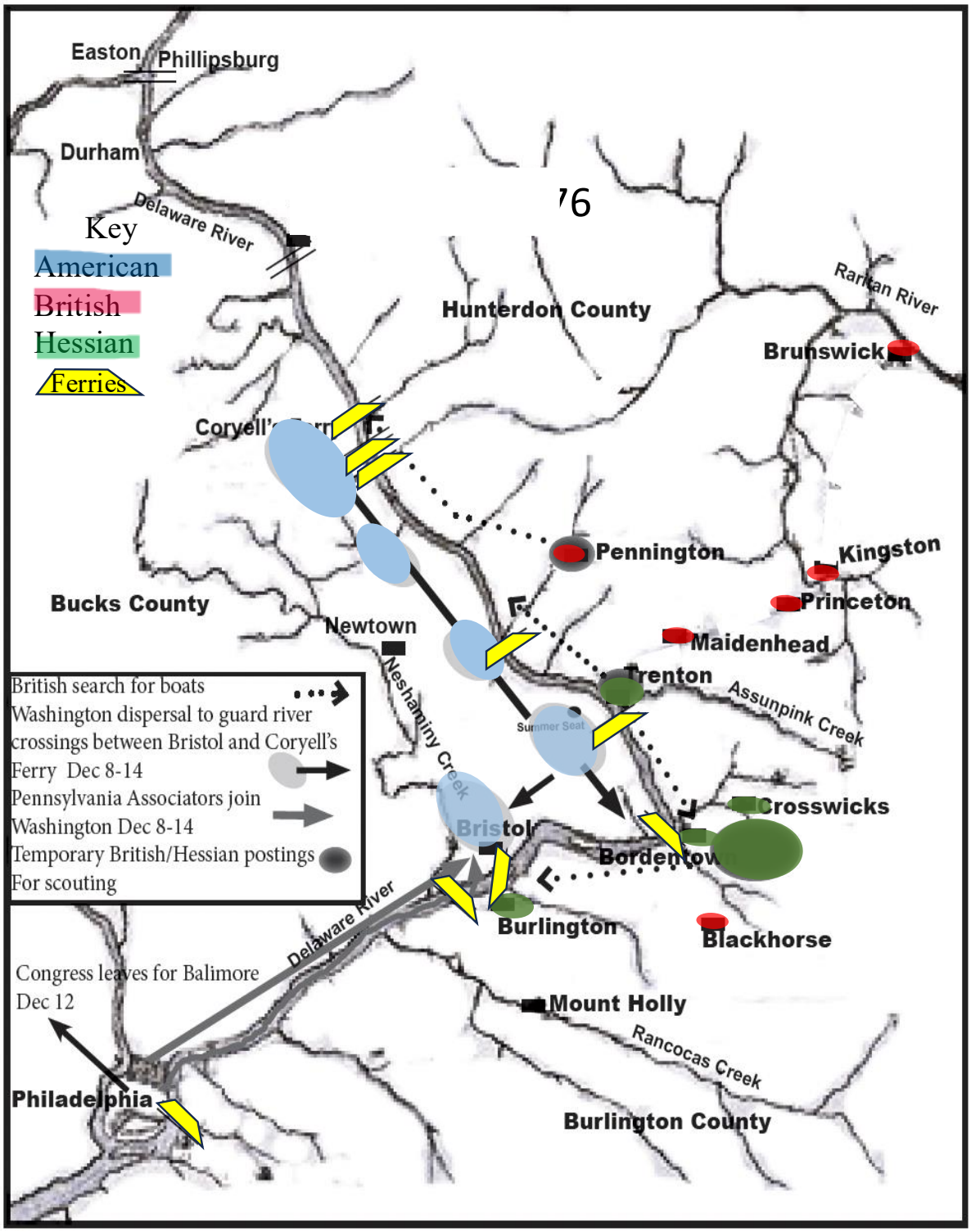
"*Sir, You are to proceed to The Two ferry's near Trentown1 and to see all the boats there put in the best Order with a sufficiency of Oars and poles and at the same time to Collect all the Additional Boats you [can] from both above and below and have them brought to those ferry's and Secured for the purpose of Carrying over the Troops & Baggage in most expeditious Manner: & for this purpose you will get every Assistance in the power of the Quarter Master General & any person in his Department. you will* ***particularly attend Durham Boat****s which are very proper for the purpose.2 The Baggage & Stores of the Army should be got over the River as soon as possible and placed at some Convenient place a little back from it.*

I am Sir Yr Most Obt Servt. Go: Washington



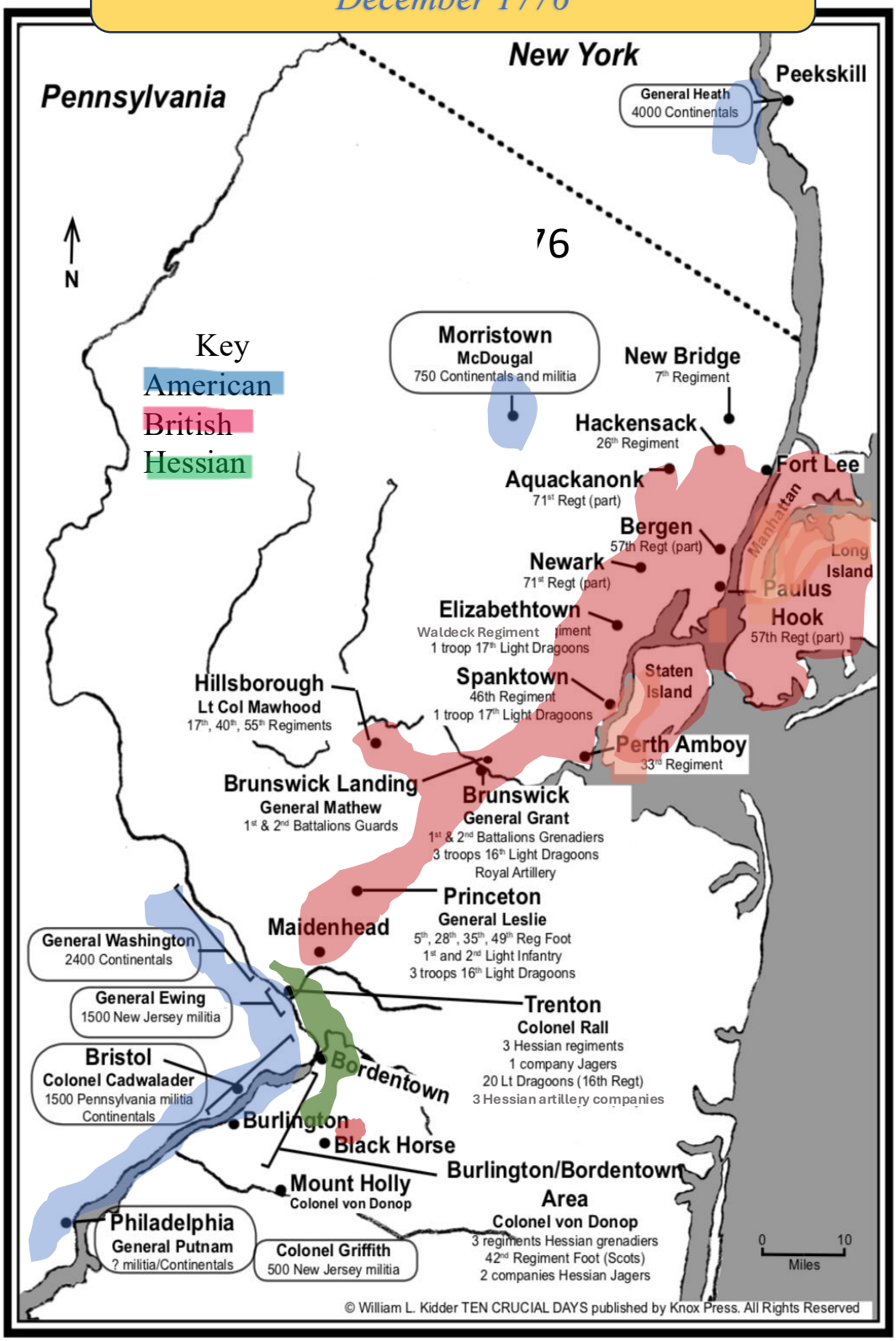


Troop Positions and Ferries
December 1776



Map 5: December 8 - 14
Americans continue to remove boats to PA - British continue searching for boats
British place troops at Trenton, Pennington, and Bordentown area

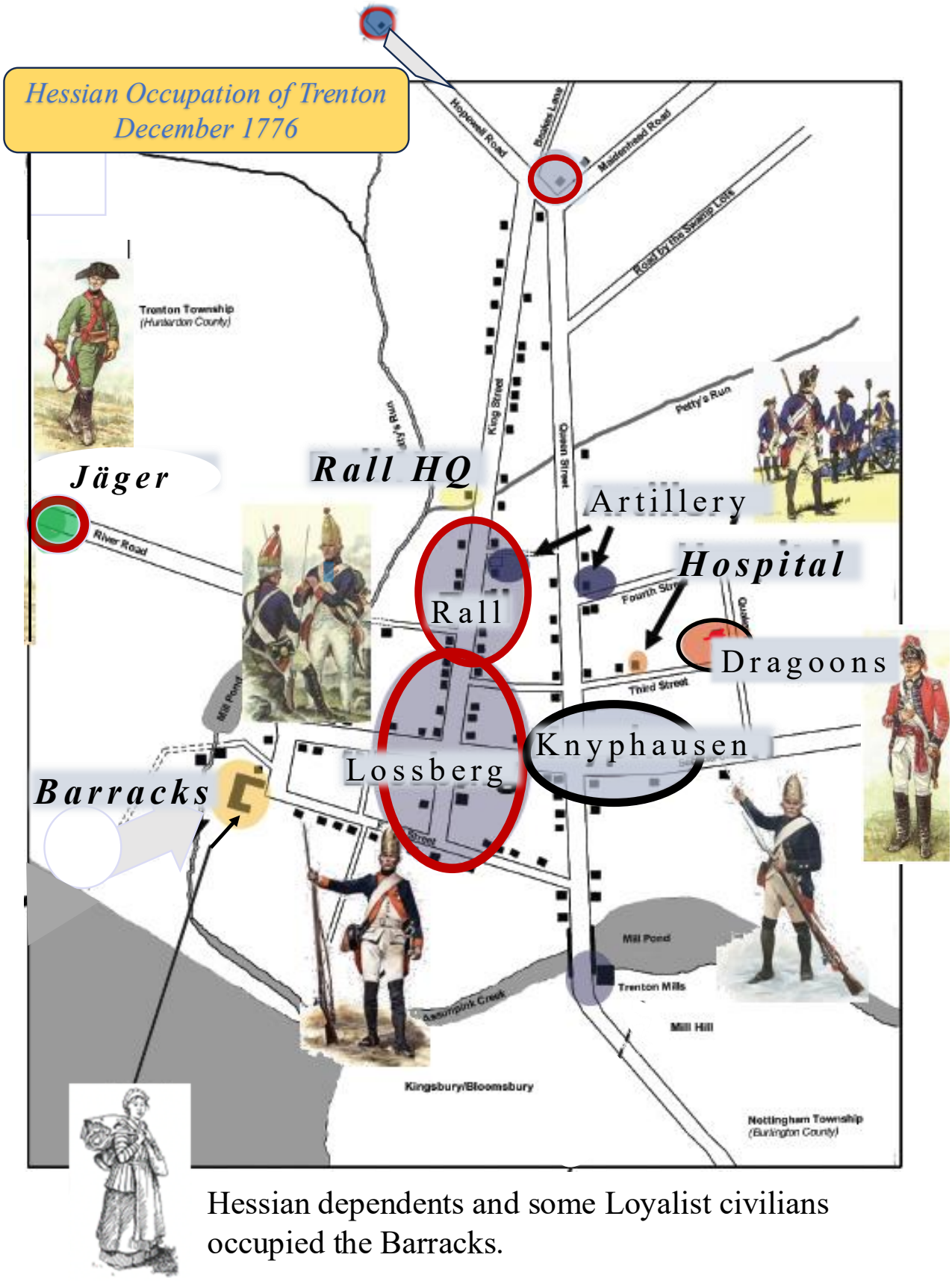
British Occupation of New Jersey
December 1776



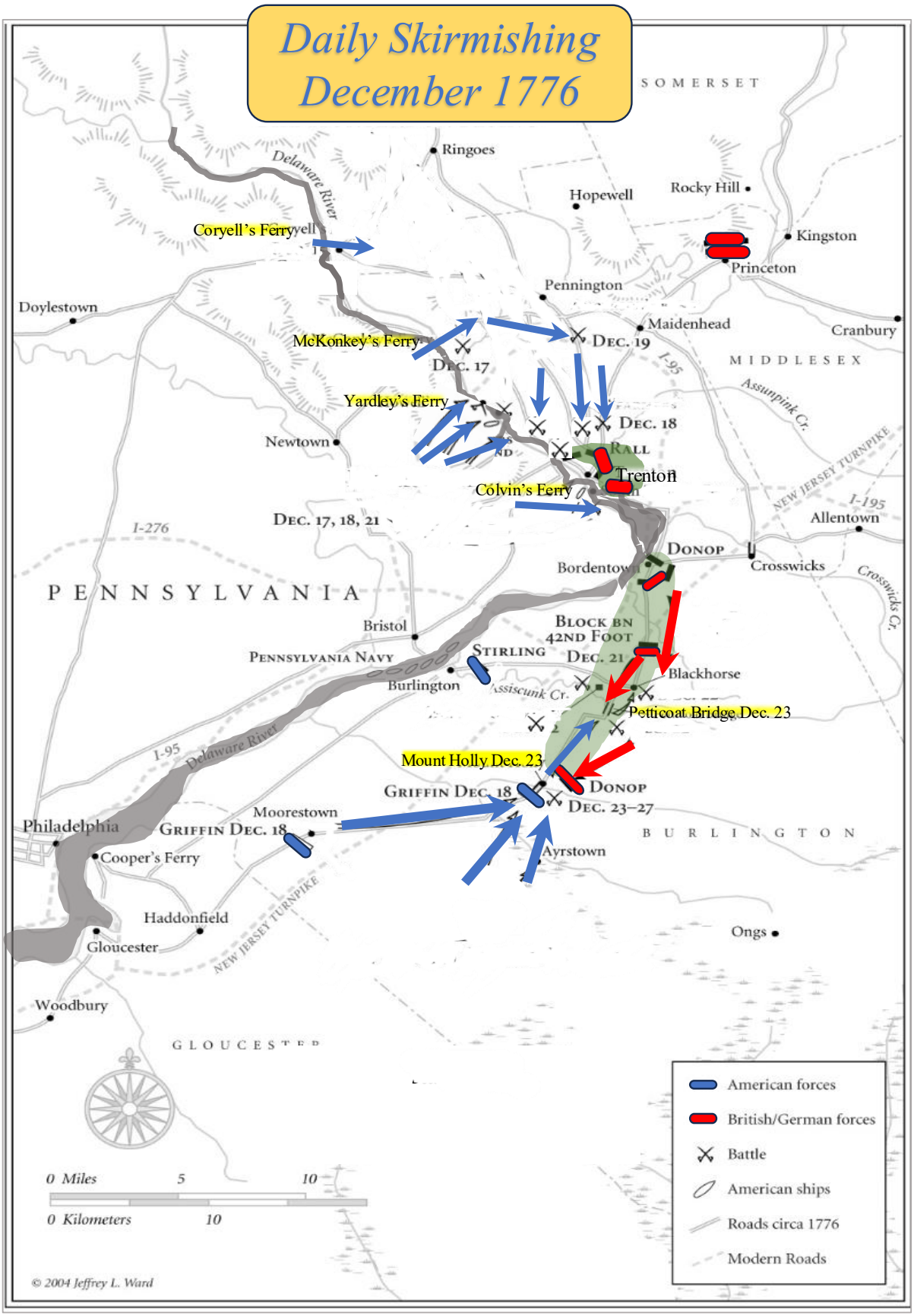
8

Trenton
(1781)





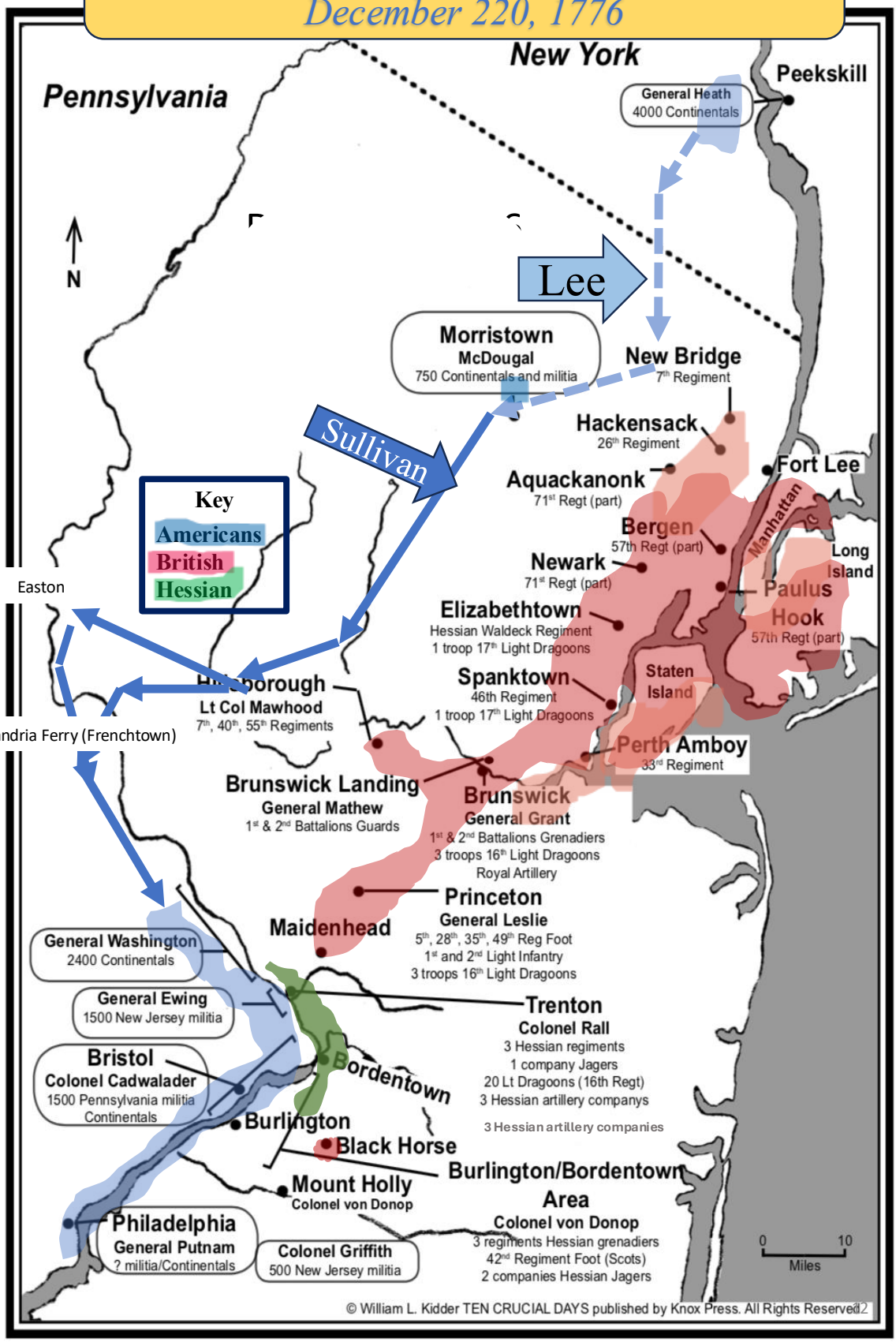
Hessian dependents and some Loyalist civilians occupied the Barracks.


Daily Skirmishing
December 1776
SOMERSET
Ringoes
Delaware River
Hopewell
Rocky Hill
Coryell's Ferry
Kingston
Princeton
Pennington
Doylestown
Maidenhead
Cranbury
McKonkey's Ferry
Dec. 17
Dec. 19
MIDDLESEX
I-95
Assunpink Cr.
Yardley's Ferry
Dec. 18
Newtown
Rall
Trenton
Colvin's Ferry
NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE
I-195
Allentown
I-276
Dec. 17, 18, 21
Donop
Bordentown
Crosswicks
Crosswicks Cr.
PENNSYLVANIA
Bristol
Block Bn
42nd Foot
Pennsylvania Navy
Stirling
Dec. 21
Blackhorse
Burlington
Assiscunk Cr.
Petticoat Bridge Dec. 23
I-95
Delaware River
Mount Holly Dec. 23
Griffin Dec. 18
Donop
Dec. 23–27
Moorestown
Philadelphia
Griffin Dec. 18
BURLINGTON
Cooper's Ferry
Ayrstown
Haddonfield
Ongs
Gloucester
NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE
Woodbury
GLOUCESTER
American forces
British/German forces
Battle
American ships
Roads circa 1776
Modern Roads
0 Miles 5 10
0 Kilometers 10
© 2004 Jeffrey L. Ward

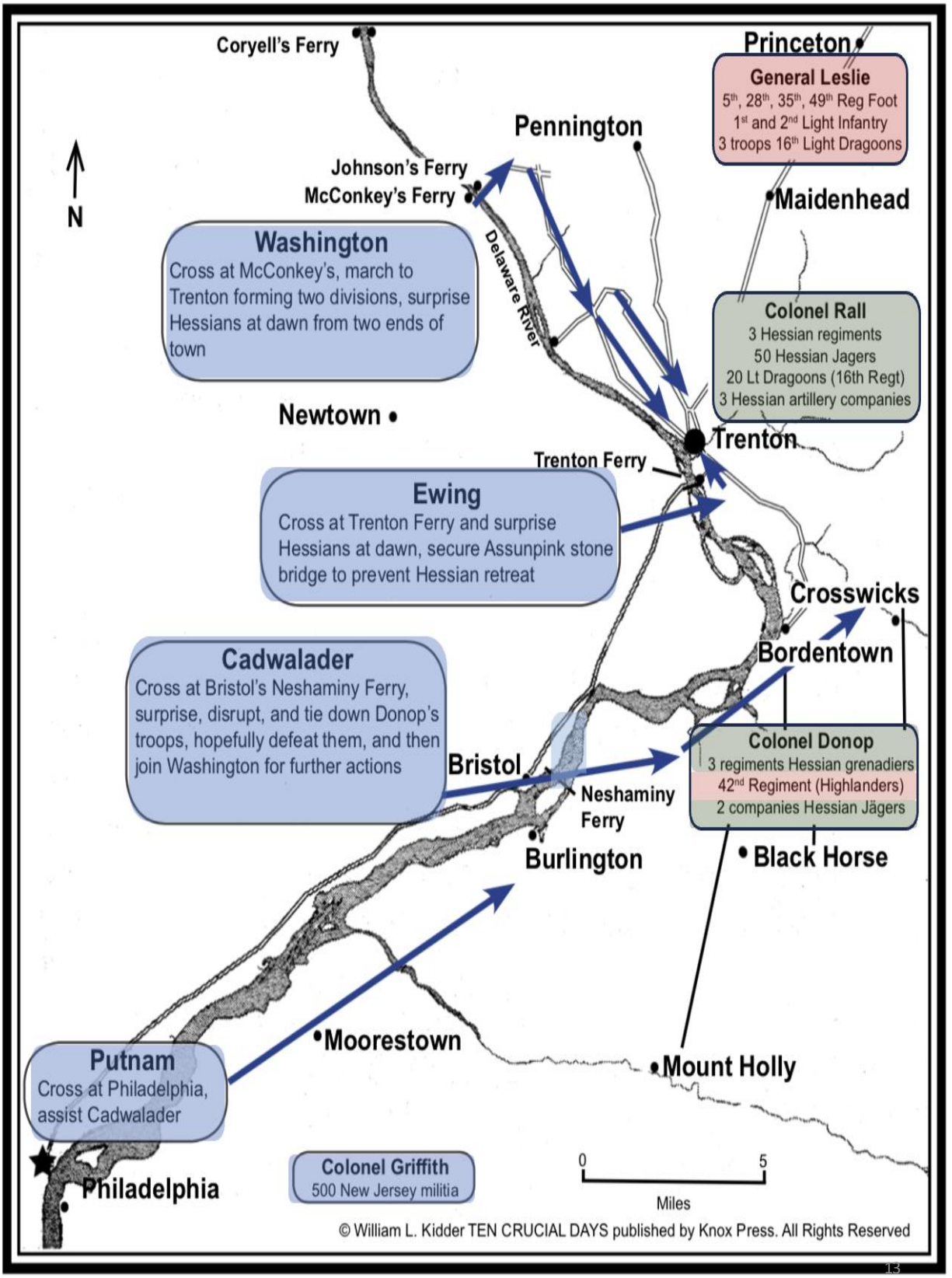
11

Route of Lee & Sullivan's March

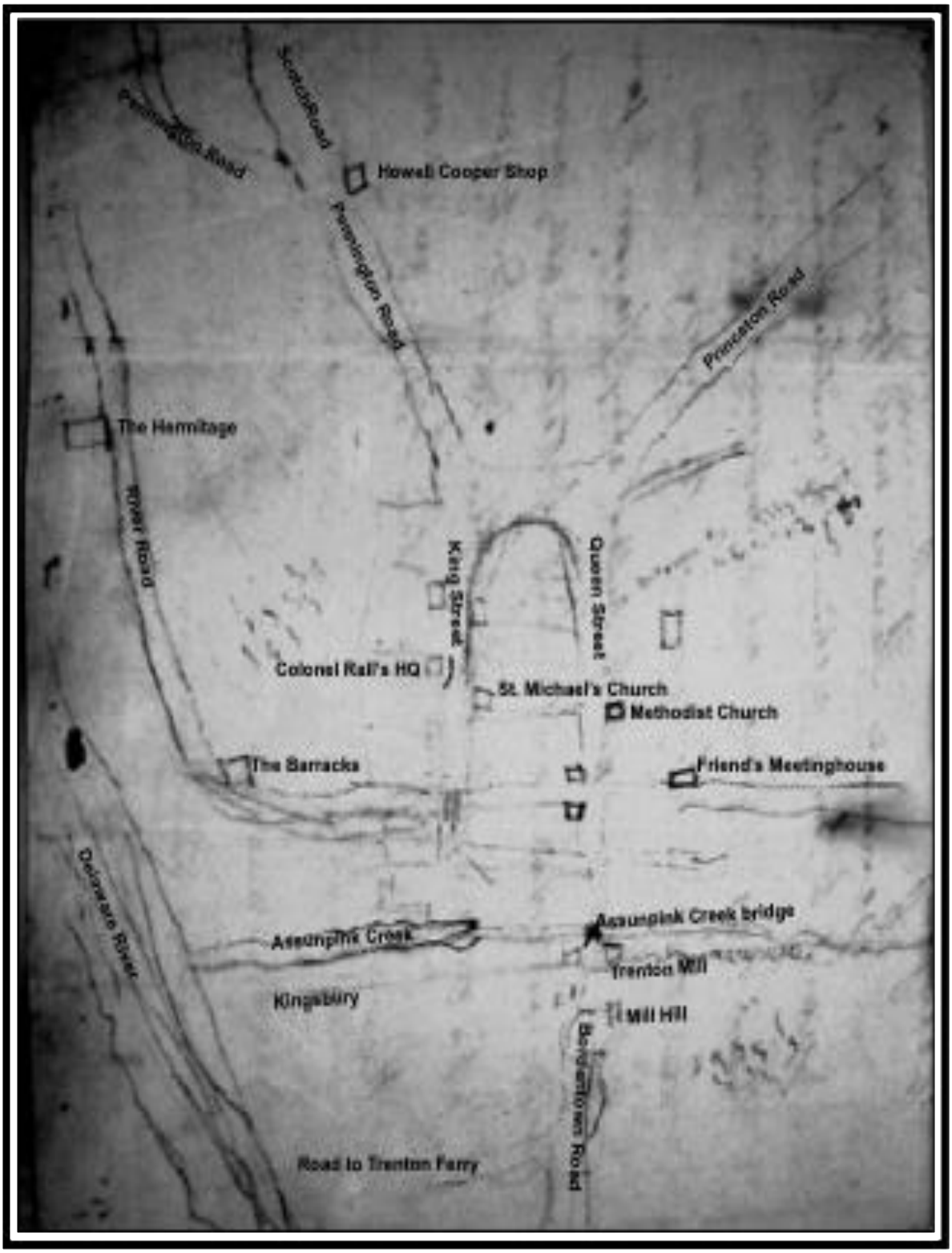
December 220, 1776



Plan of Attack on Trenton



General Henry Knox's Map Of the Trenton Battle Plan



14

Excerpts from the General 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 McKonkey's Ferry,*** and as soon as it begins to grow dark [4:41 pm sunset] the troops to be marched to McKonkey'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 dragropes for the purpose of dragging off the canon. General Stephen will appoint a guard ***to form a chain of sentries*** round the landingplace 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 rearguards of the columns; the heads of the columns to be appointed to arrive at Trenton at five o'clock.



Washington Crossing the Delaware by Emanuel Leutze 1851



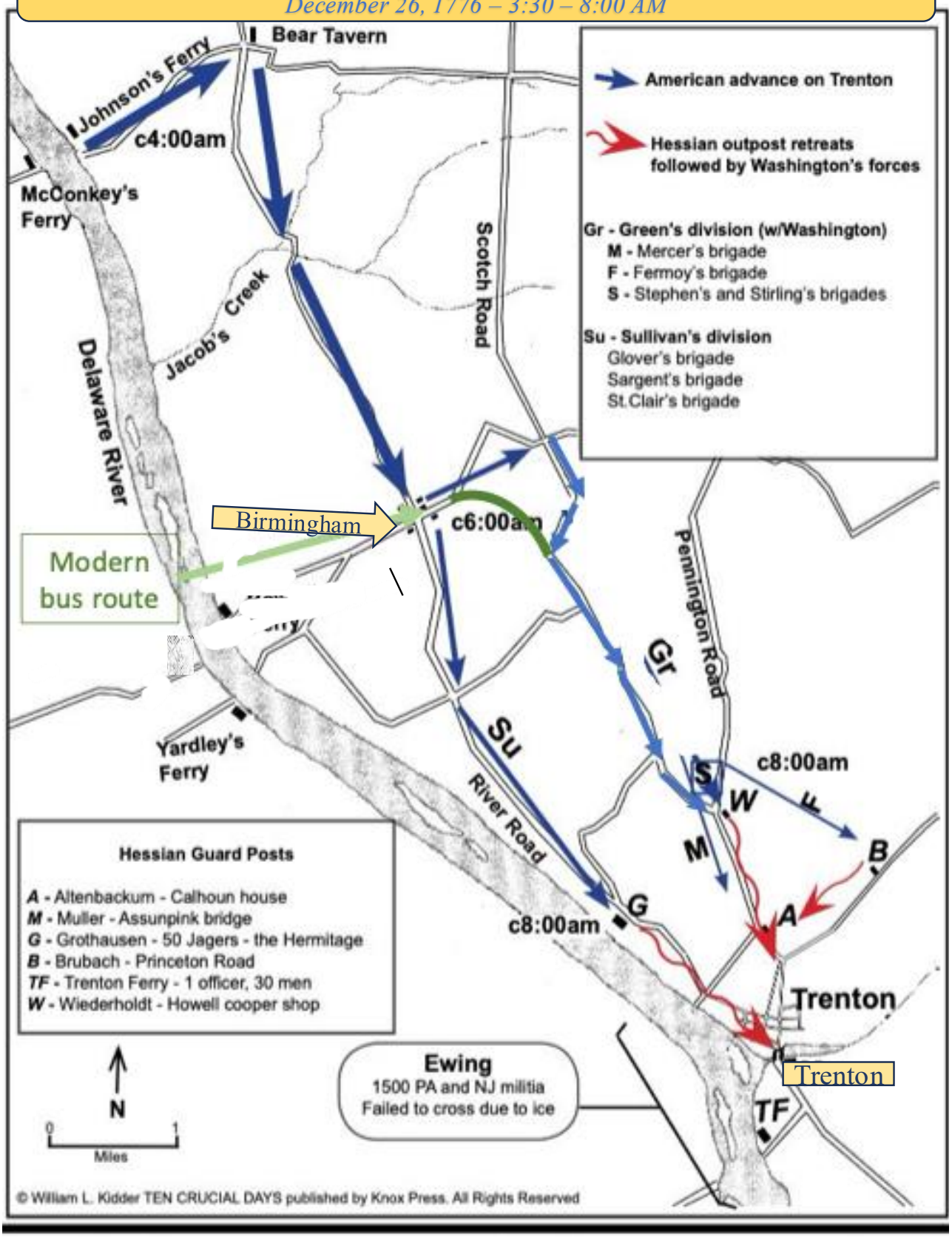
Crossing the Delaware by Lloyd Garrison All Rights Reserved 2009 lloydgarrison.com



Christmas Surprise, Washington Before Trenton by Dale Gallon All Rights Reserved2025 Available for sale at Gallon.com

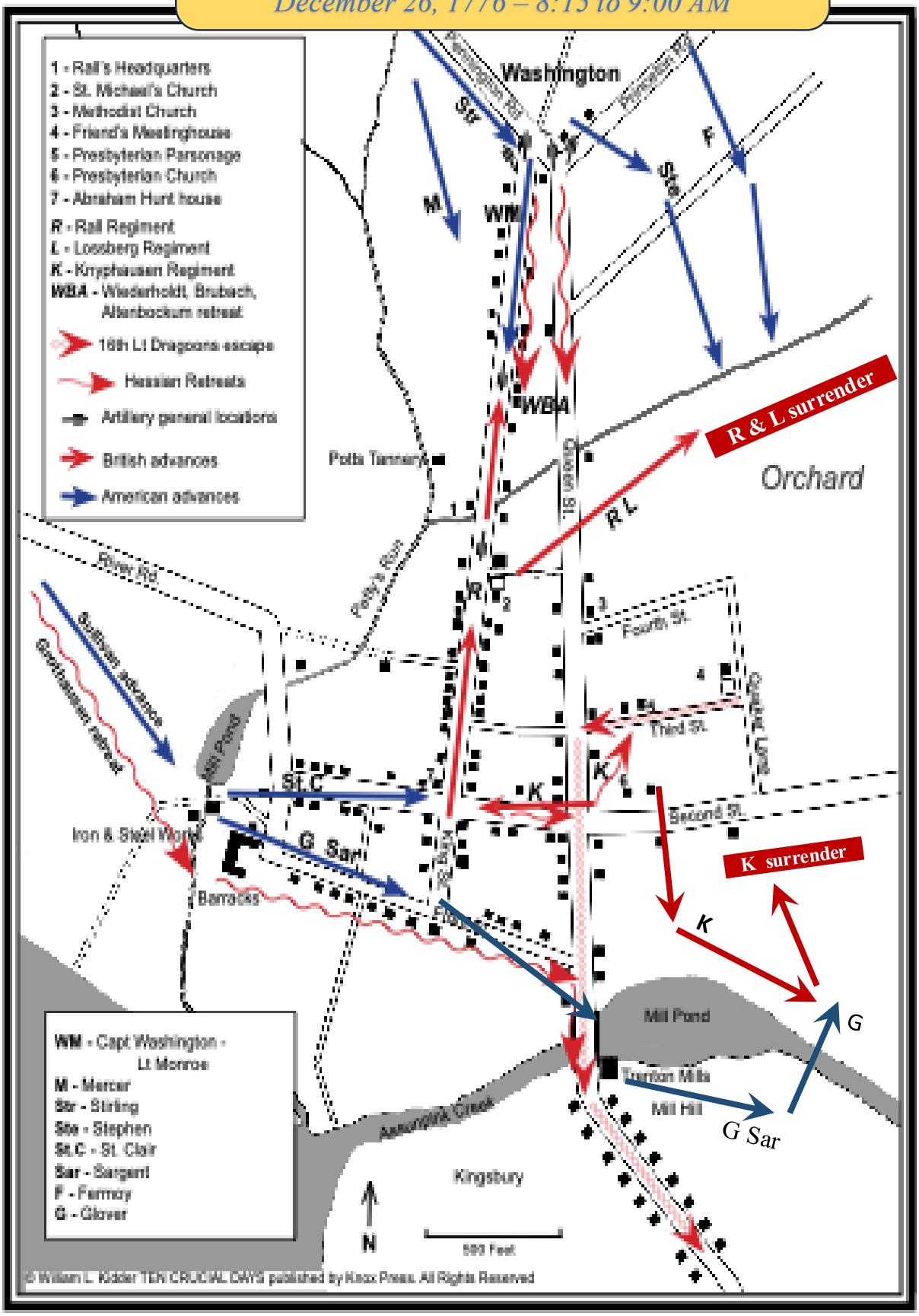
Route of the Night March to Trenton

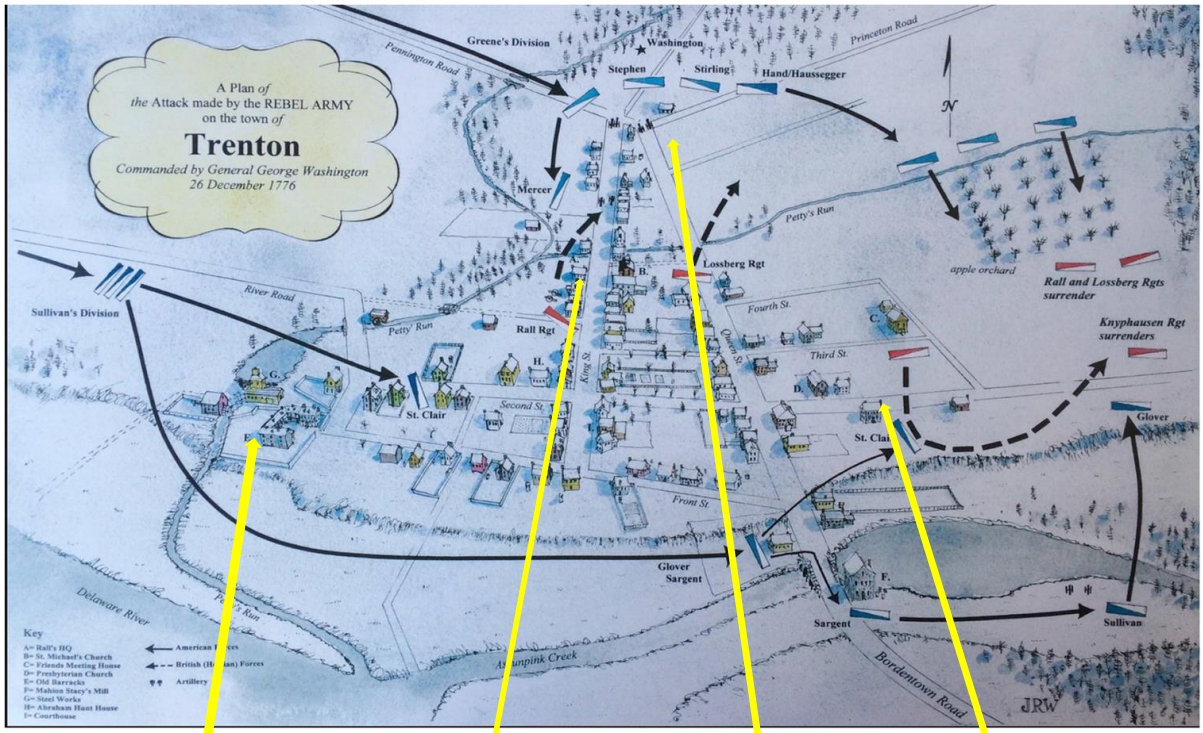
December 26, 1776 – 3:30 – 8:00 AM



Battle of Trenton

December 26, 1776 – 8:15 to 9:00 AM







Old Barracks Museum



St. Michael's Episcopal



Battle Monument

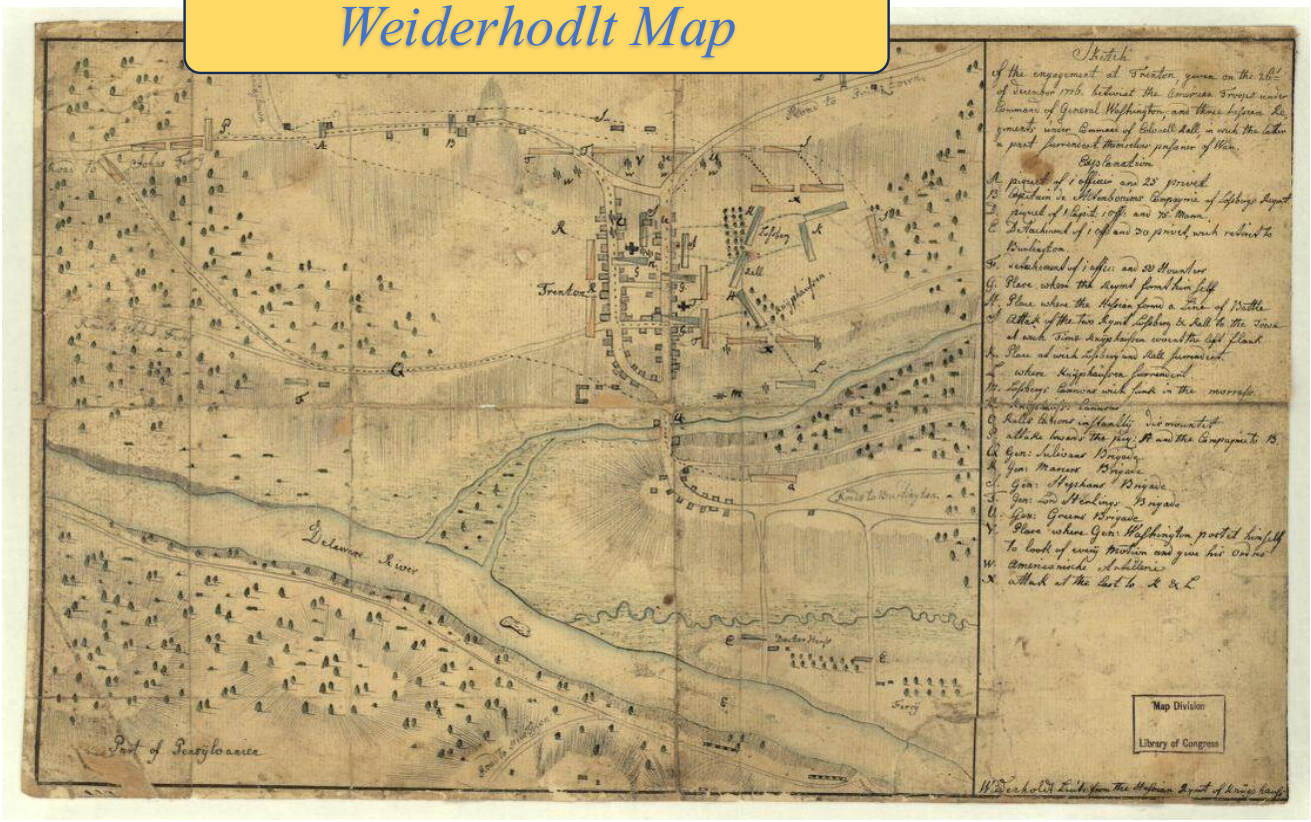


First Presbyterian

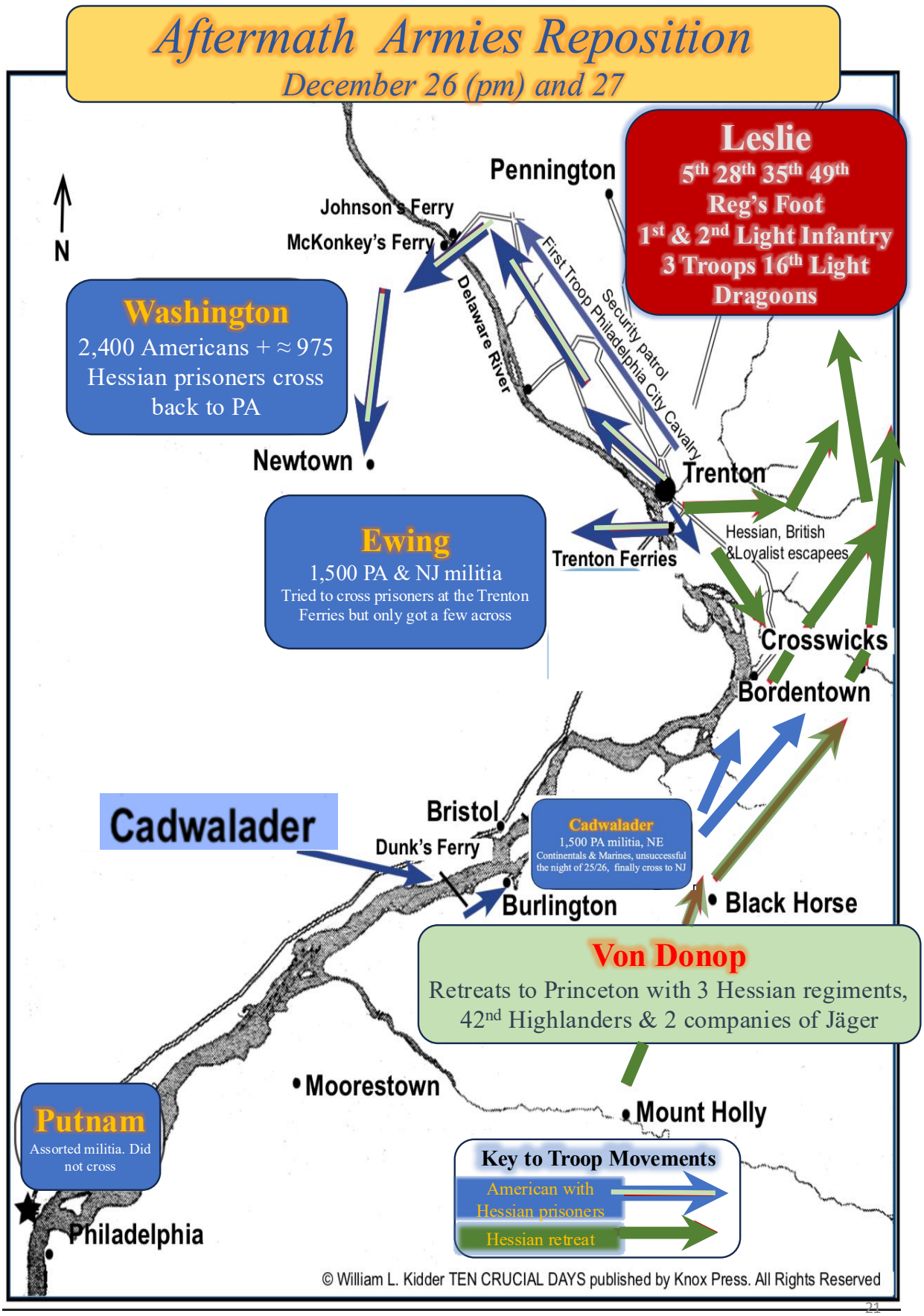


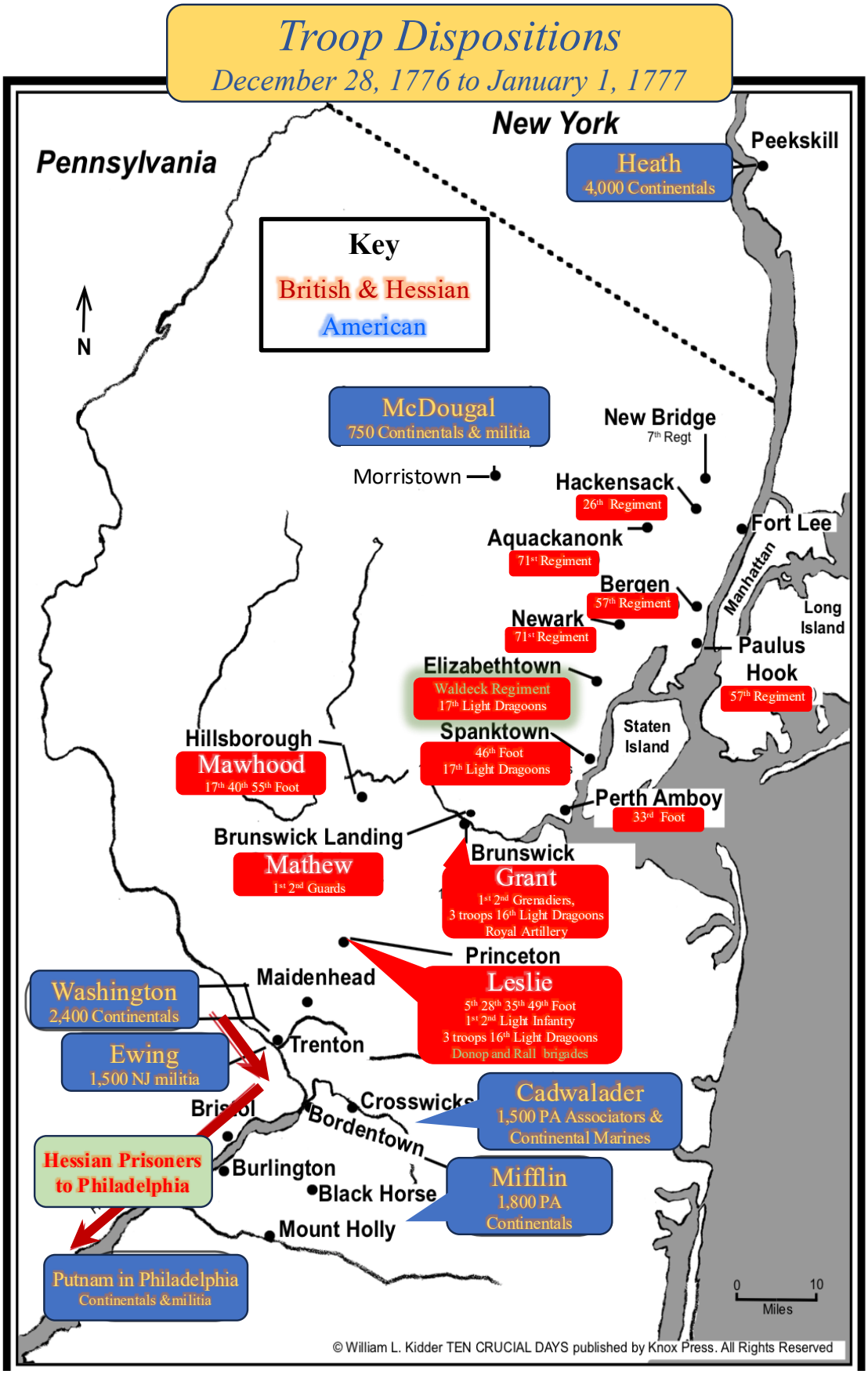
Surrender at Trenton by Don Troiani All Rights Reserved 2026 dontroiani.com

Weiderhodlt Map



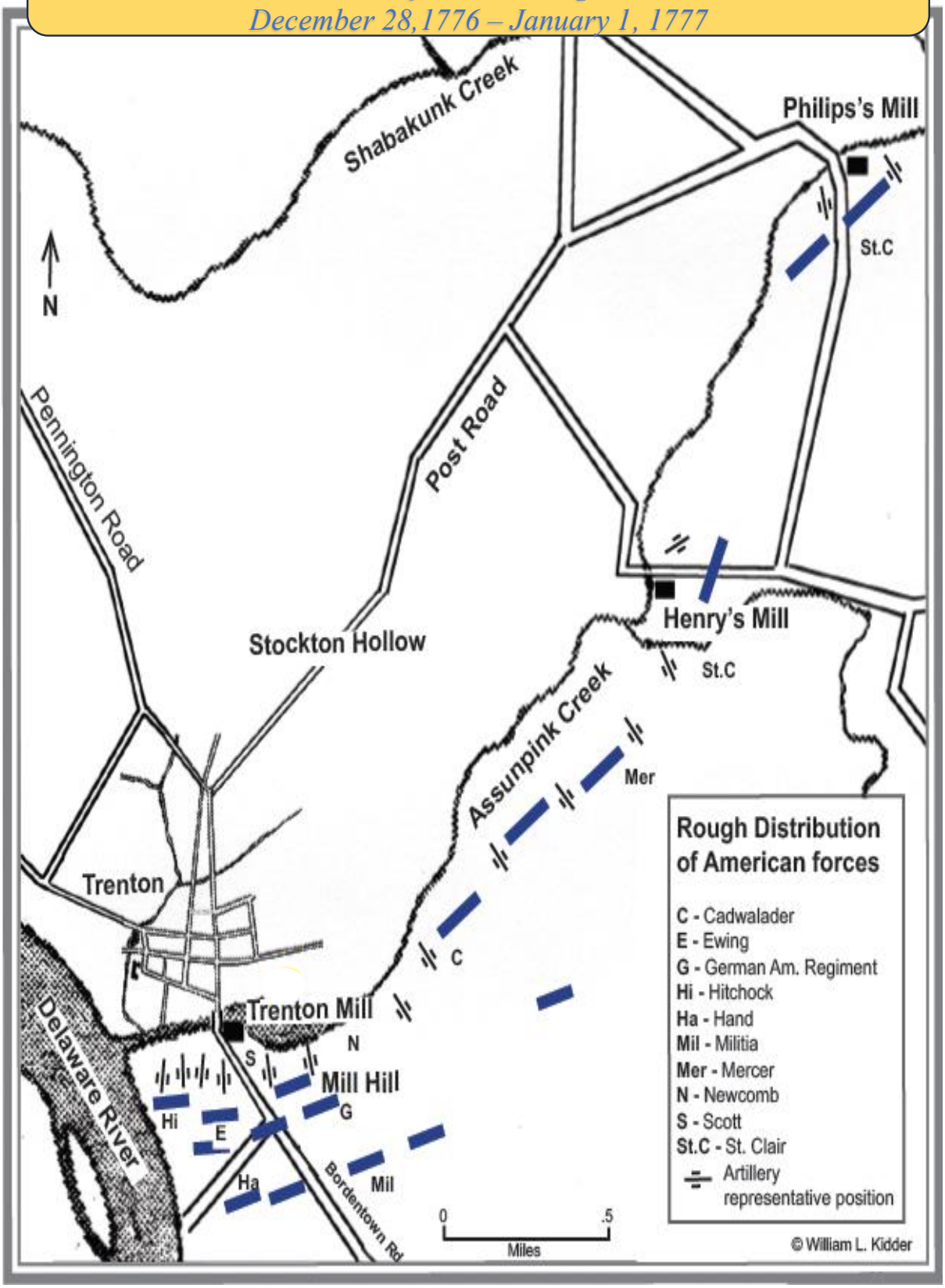
A. Trenton.
B. Picket of 1 officer and 24 men (Wiederhold's outpost).
C. Captain von Altenbockum's company of the von Lossberg Regiment, quartered in this neighborhood; it was attacked by the enemy while on picket duty.
D. Picket of 1 captain, 1 noncommissioned officer, and 75 men.
E. 1 officer and 50 Jägers (light infantry) who immediately retreated over the bridge (Grothausen).
F. Detachment of 1 officer and 30 men who retired to join von Donop's corps.
G. Place of the original formation of the regiments.
H. Place where the regiments stood after leaving the town, and where Colonel Rall intended to attack the town with his own regiment and the von Lossberg Regiment, but failed to do so.
I. Place of the repulse and capture of the regiments; in the meantime the von Knyphausen Regiment was supposed to have covered the flank.
K. Where the von Knyphausen Regiment (which sought to hold the bridge) had the misfortune that the von Lossberg cannons with them stuck in the marsh; while extracting them they lost the chance to seize the bridge, which was now too strongly held, and they were forced to surrender.
L. von Lossberg cannons.
M. von Knyphausen cannons, which did not reach their regiment during the action.
N. Rall's cannons, which were silenced at the beginning of the fight.
O. Attack of the rebels from the woods.
P. Advance and surrounding of the town by the same force.
Q. Two battalions of the same force that pressed on toward the von Knyphausen Regiment.
R. Last manoeuvre and attack of the same force.
S. Rebel cannons.
T. Place where General Washington stood and gave his orders.
U. Place where Gen. Washington posted himself to look at every motion and give his orders.
W. American artillery.
X. Attack at the last to A & L (or similar final assault notations).


Aftermath Armies Reposition
December 26 (pm) and 27
N
Leslie
5th 28th 35th 49th Reg's Foot
1st & 2nd Light Infantry
3 Troops 16th Light Dragoons
Pennington
Johnson's Ferry
McKonkey's Ferry
Delaware River
First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry
Security patrol
Washington
2,400 Americans + ≈ 975 Hessian prisoners cross back to PA
Newtown
Trenton
Ewing
1,500 PA & NJ militia
Tried to cross prisoners at the Trenton Ferries but only got a few across
Trenton Ferries
Hessian, British &Loyalist escapees
Crosswicks
Bordentown
Cadwalader
Bristol
Dunk's Ferry
Cadwalader
1,500 PA militia, NE Continentals & Marines, unsuccessful the night of 25/26, finally cross to NJ
Burlington
Black Horse
Von Donop
Retreats to Princeton with 3 Hessian regiments, 42nd Highlanders & 2 companies of Jäger
Moorestown
Mount Holly
Putnam
Assorted militia. Did not cross
Philadelphia
Key to Troop Movements
American with Hessian prisoners
Hessian retreat
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Troop Dispositions
December 28, 1776 to January 1, 1777
New York
Pennsylvania
Peekskill
Heath
4,000 Continentals
Key
British & Hessian
American
N
McDougal
750 Continentals & militia
New Bridge
7th Regt
Morristown
Hackensack
26th Regiment
Fort Lee
Aquackanonk
71st Regiment
Manhattan
Bergen
57th Regiment
Long Island
Newark
71st Regiment
Paulus Hook
57th Regiment
Elizabethtown
Waldeck Regiment
17th Light Dragoons
Staten Island
Spanktown
46th Foot
17th Light Dragoons
Hillsborough
Mawhood
17th 40th 55th Foot
Perth Amboy
33rd Foot
Brunswick Landing
Mathew
1st 2nd Guards
Brunswick
Grant
1st 2nd Grenadiers,
3 troops 16th Light Dragoons
Royal Artillery
Princeton
Leslie
5th 28th 35th 49th Foot
1st 2nd Light Infantry
3 troops 16th Light Dragoons
Donop and Rall brigades
Washington
2,400 Continentals
Maidenhead
Ewing
1,500 NJ militia
Trenton
Crosswicks
Cadwalader
1,500 PA Associators &
Continental Marines
Bordentown
Hessian Prisoners
to Philadelphia
Burlington
Black Horse
Mifflin
1,800 PA
Continentals
Mount Holly
Putnam in Philadelphia
Continentals &militia
0
10
Miles
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Washington Prepares Defenses on the South Bank of the Assunpink Creek

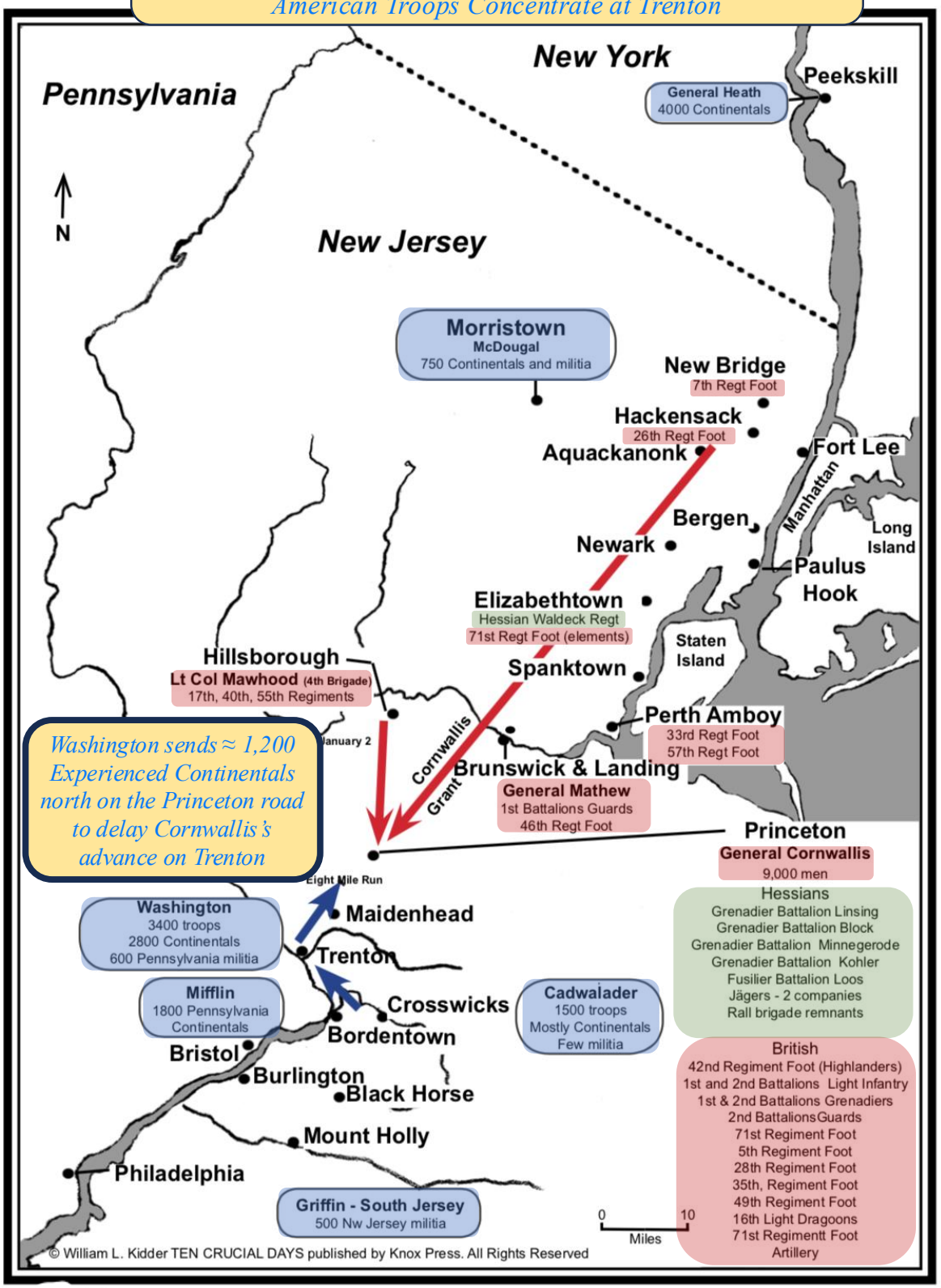
December 28,1776 – January 1, 1777



December 28, 1776 to January 1, 1777

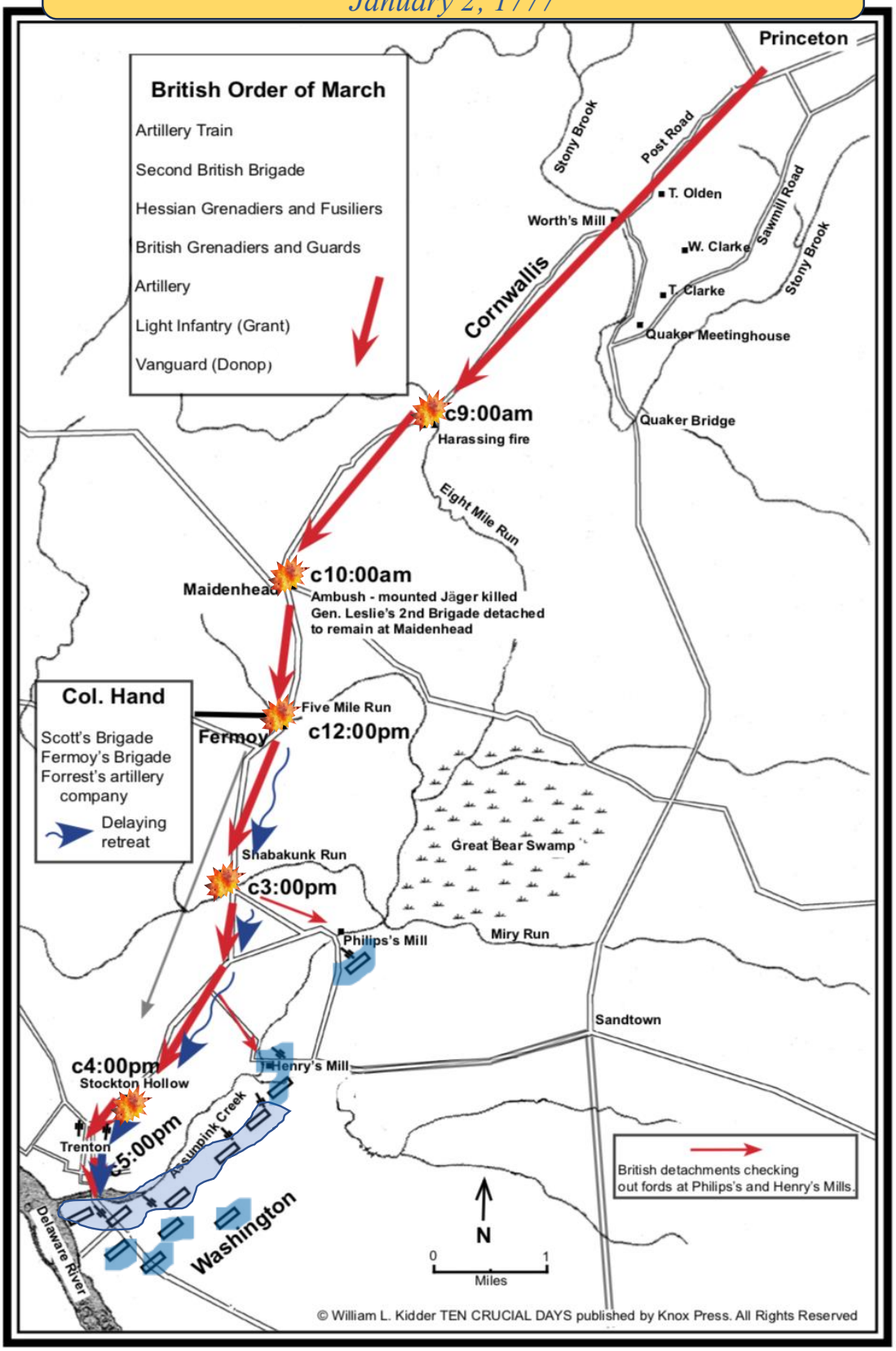
Crown Troops Concentrate at Princeton

American Troops Concentrate at Trenton

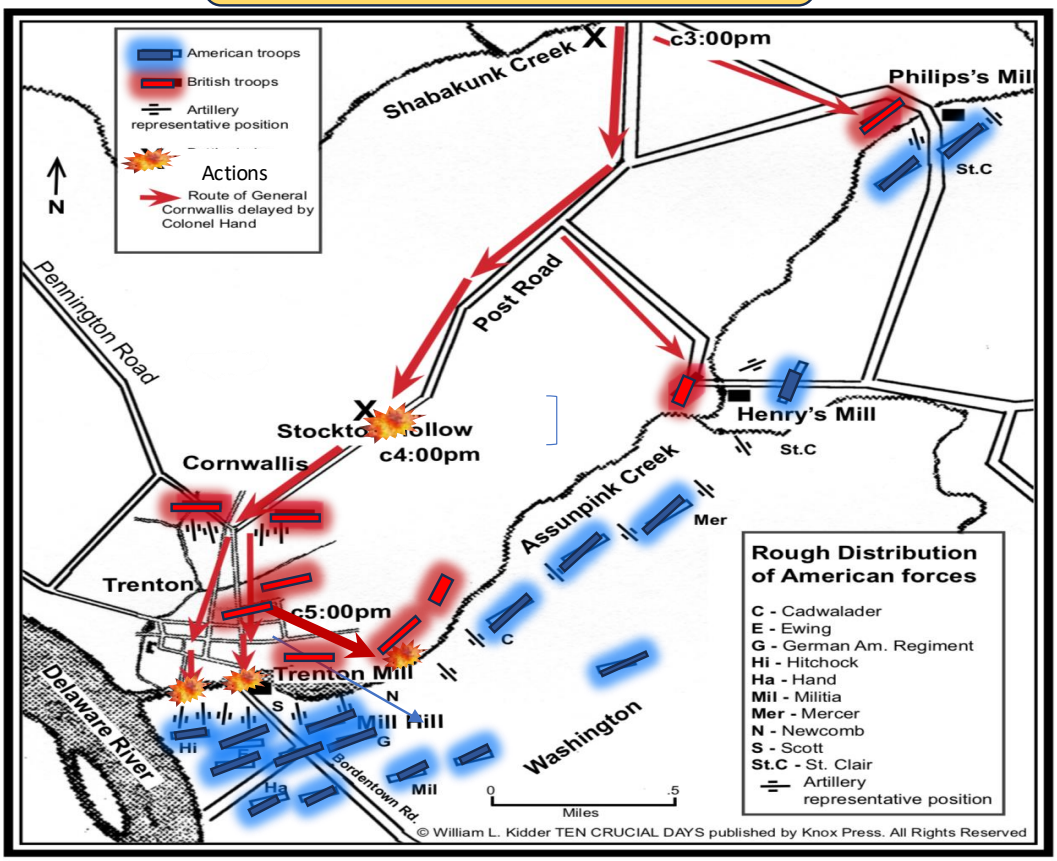


Delaying Action from Princeton to Trenton

January 2, 1777



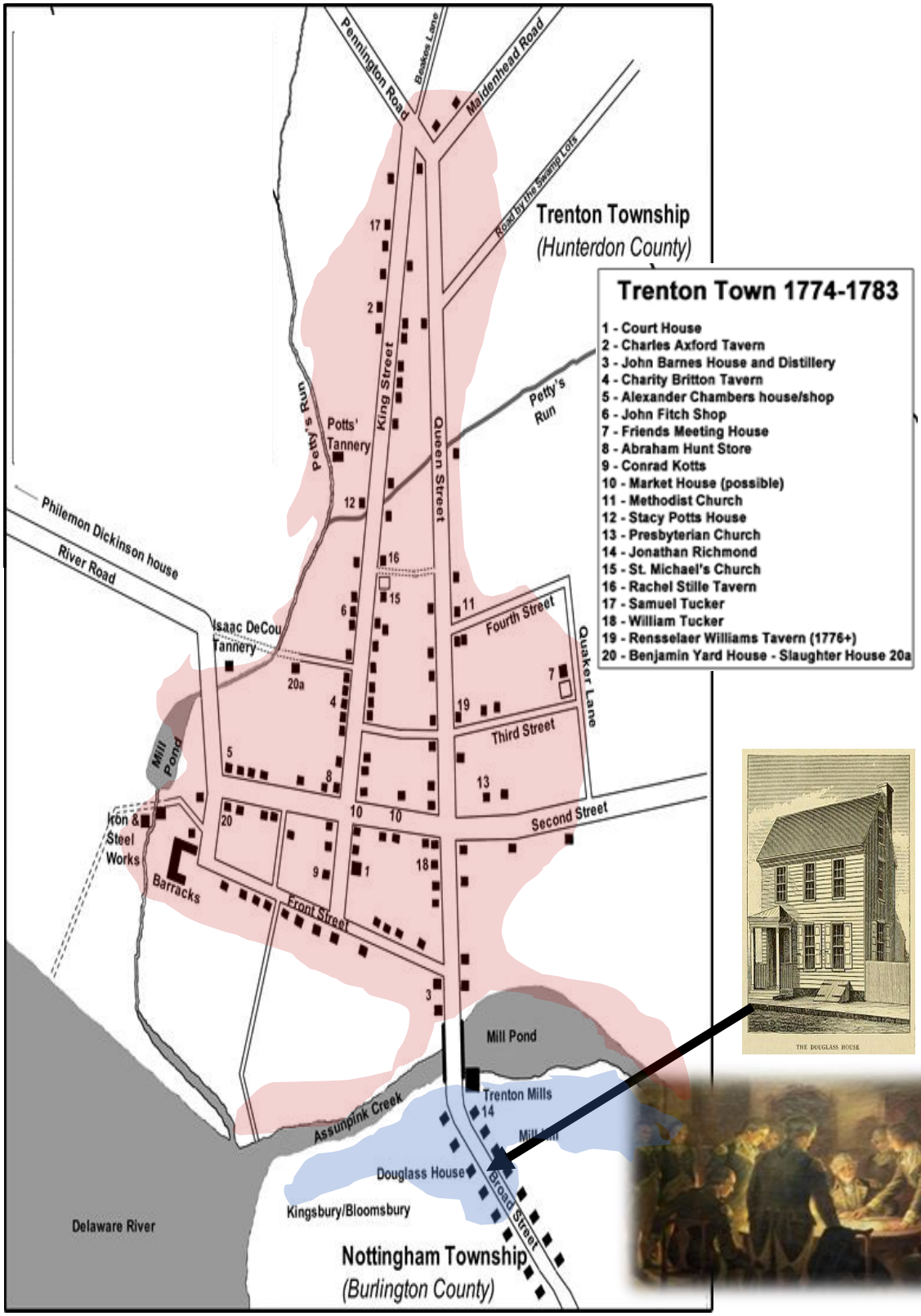
Battle of Assunpink Creek
January 2, 1777





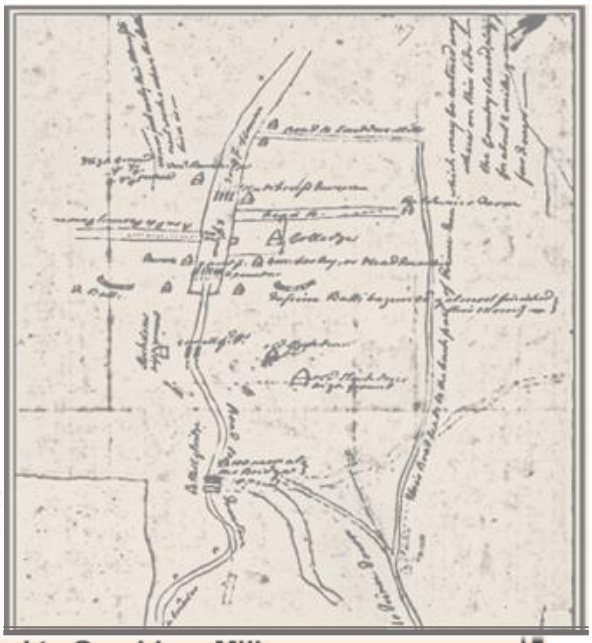
Assunpink by Graham Tuner All Rights Reserved 2010 Osprey Publishing

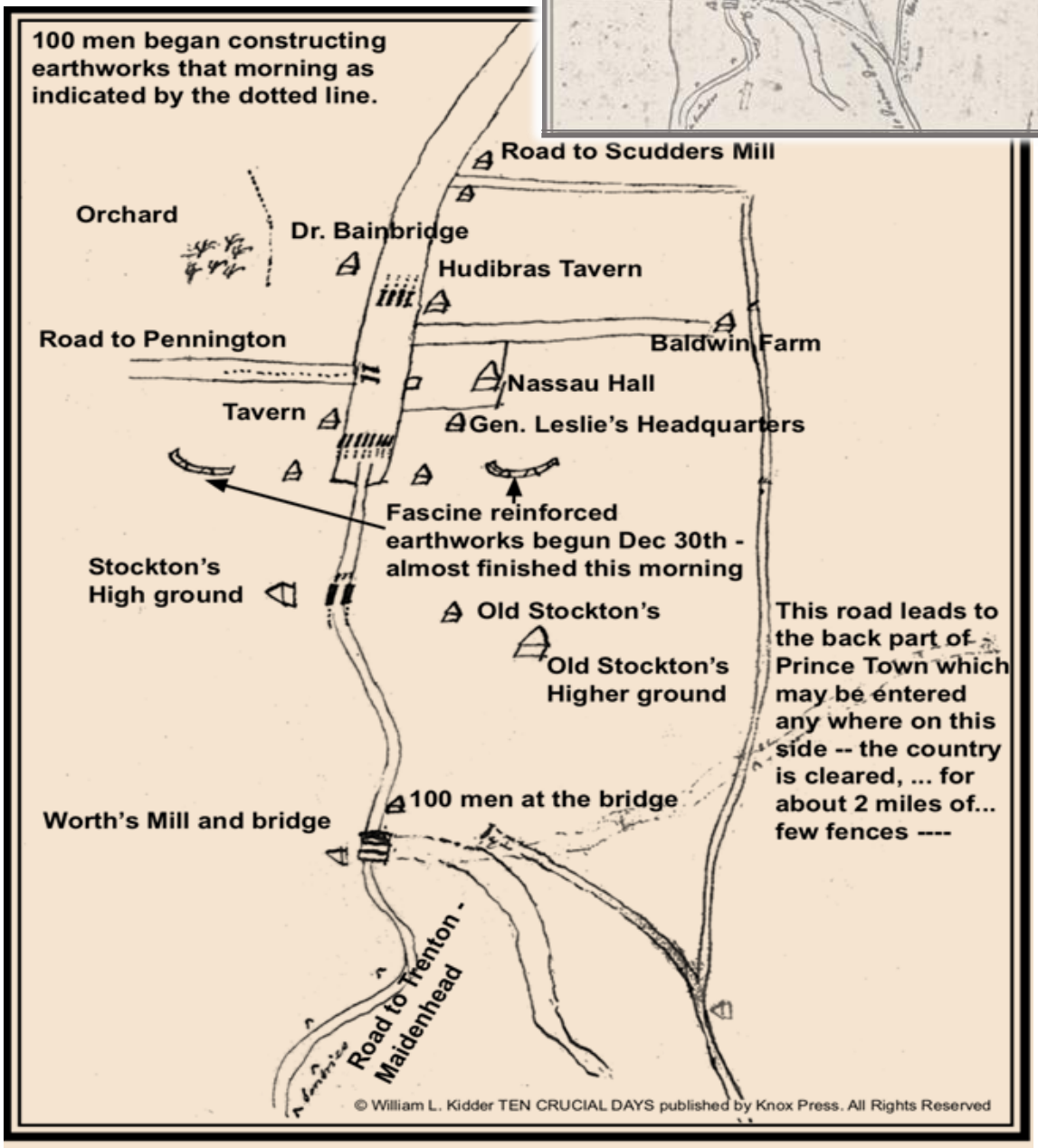
January 2nd – Decision at the Douglass House



What Cadwalader's Map Revealed

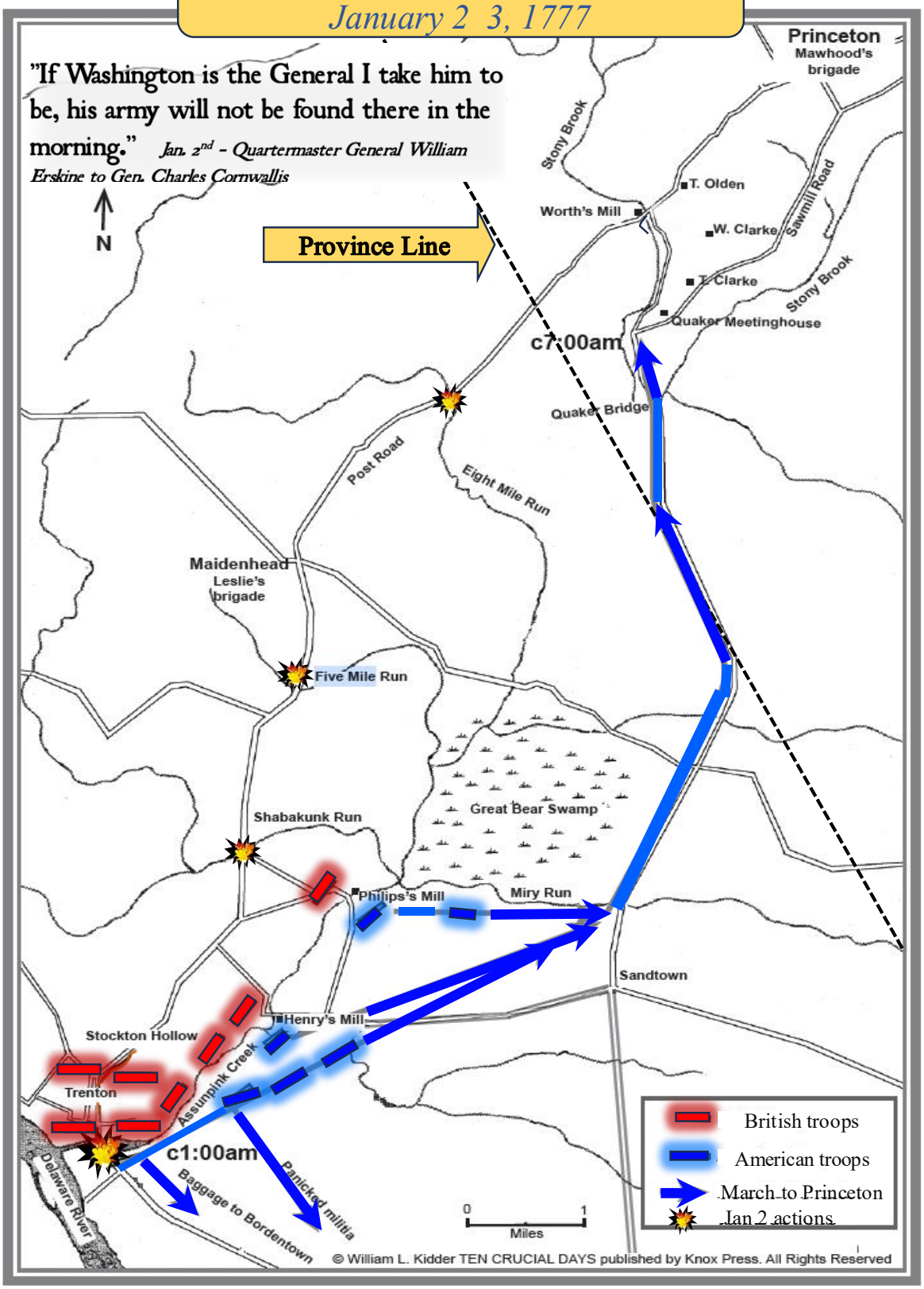
January 2, 1777





Night March to Princeton

January 2 3, 1777



Obelisks Marking the Route of the Night March

Placed by the Sons of the Revolution 1914



First Obelisk - Hamilton Avenue at South Broad Street.
In front of the Sun Center National Bank.



Second Obelisk - Hamilton Avenue at Chestnut Avenue.
In front of Bank of America.



Third Obelisk - 1800 Hamilton Avenue.
Inside Greenwood Cemetery.



Fourth Obelisk - 1070 Klockner Road.
In Front of the Health Careers Center.



Fifth Obelisk - 77 Christine Avenue / Hamilton, NJ
In front of the VFW.



Sixth Obelisk - Quakerbridge Road near Clearview Ave / Hamilton, NJ
In Median



Seventh Obelisk - 133 Youngs Road / Mercerville, NJ
In Front of Hamilton Fitness Center



Eighth Obelisk - Quakerbridge Road & Hughes Drive / Hamilton, NJ
At the corner



Ninth Obelisk - Quakerbridge Rd & Nassau Park Blvd / Lawrence, NJ
In Median on Quakerbridge - Partly hidden in the trees.



Tenth Obelisk - Quaker Road / Princeton NJ
D & R Canal State Park Trail, right by the parking lot.

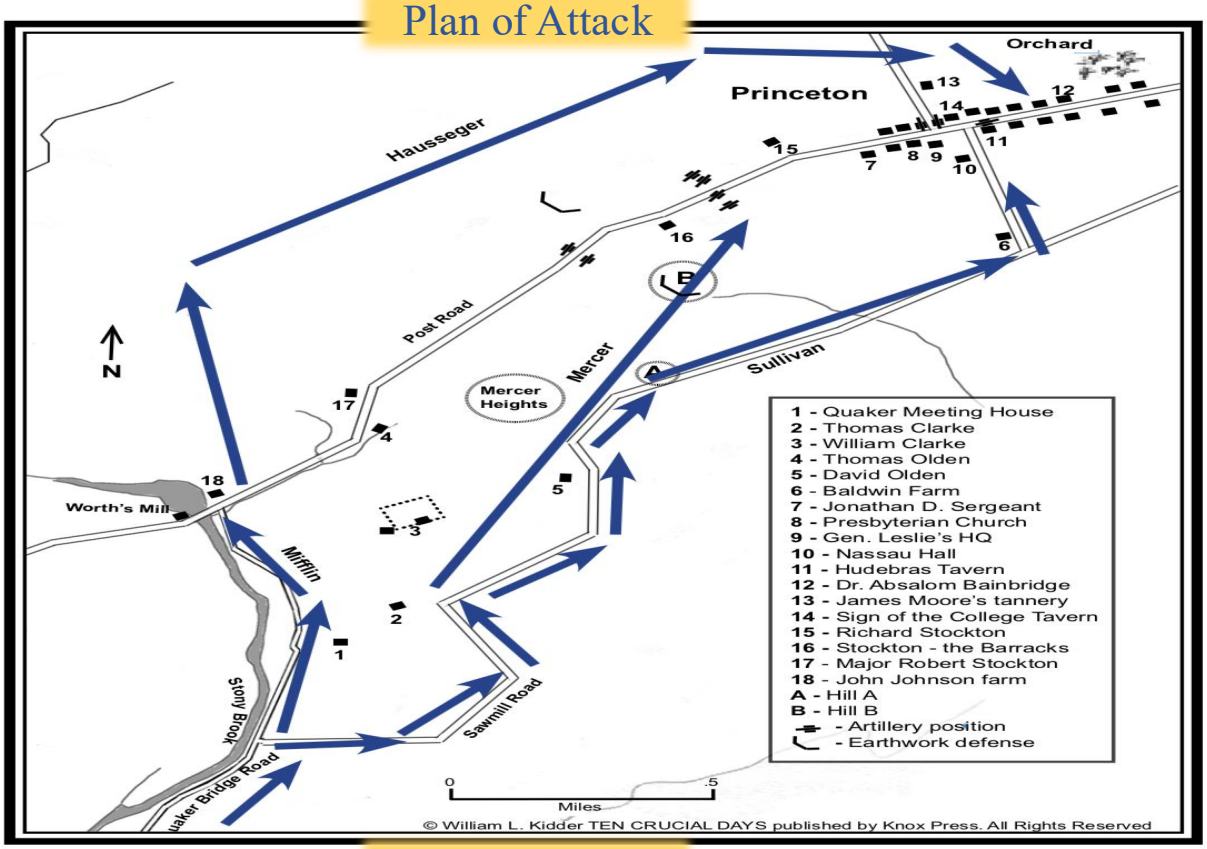


Eleventh Obelisk - In a field next to Quaker Road / Princeton, NJ



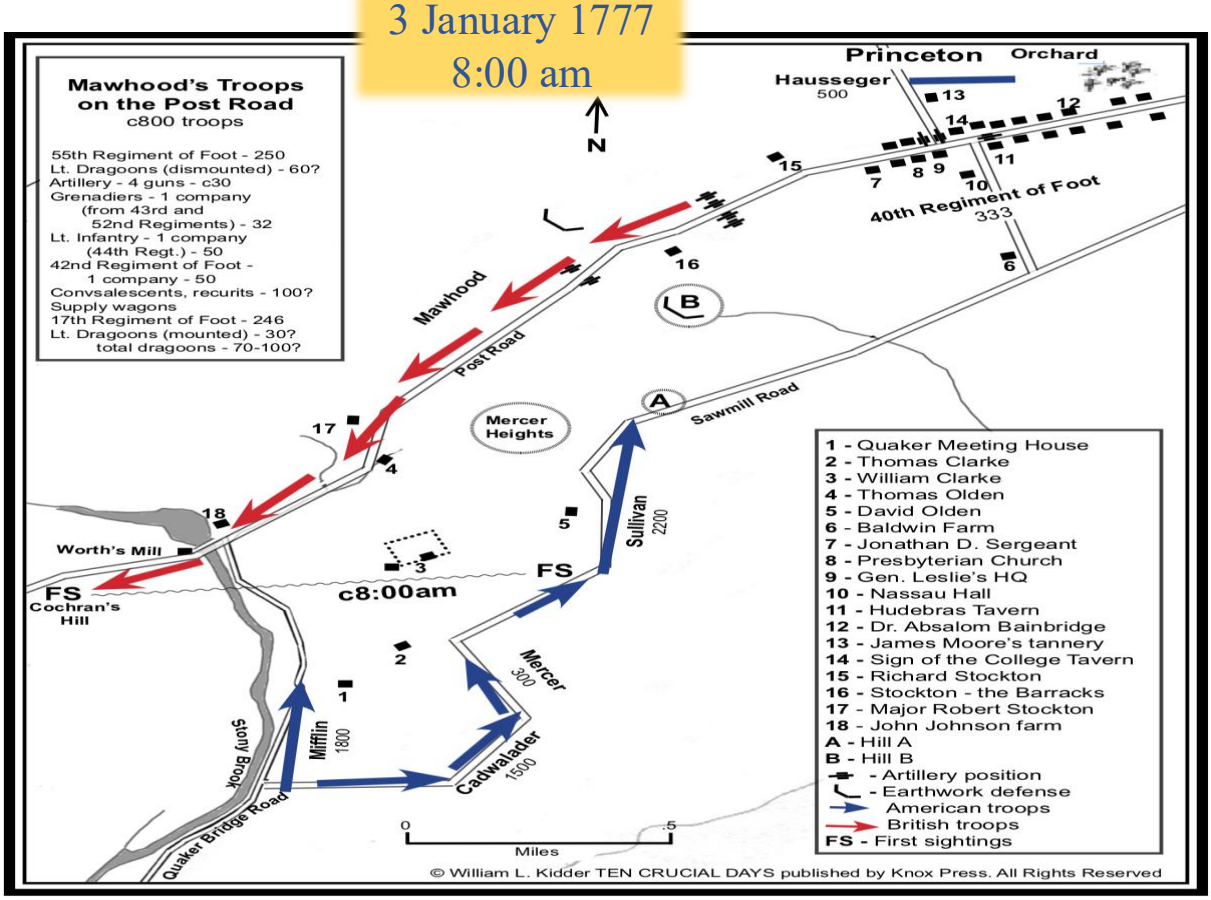
Twelfth Obelisk - Behind Clark House in Princeton Battlefield
- In the woods behind the house, on the walking path.

Plan of Attack

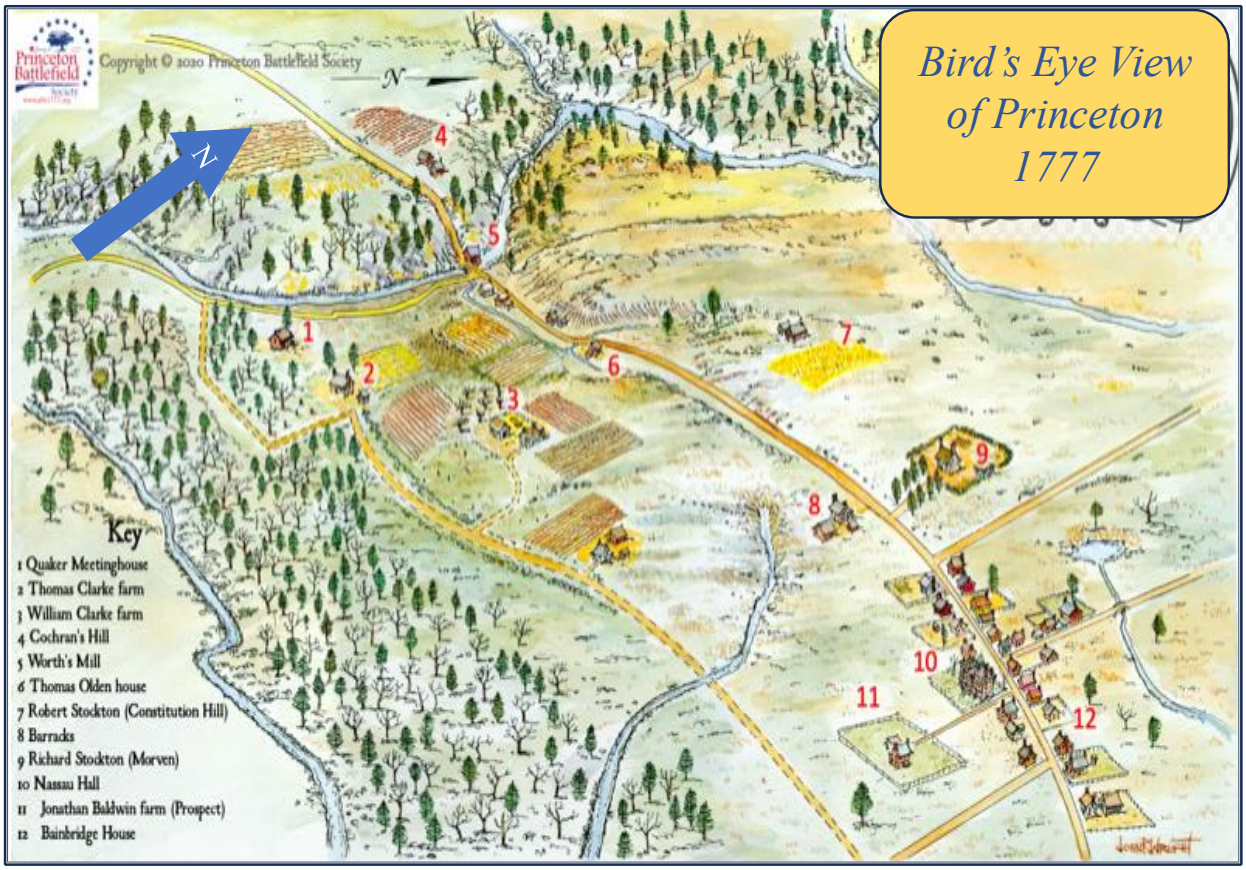


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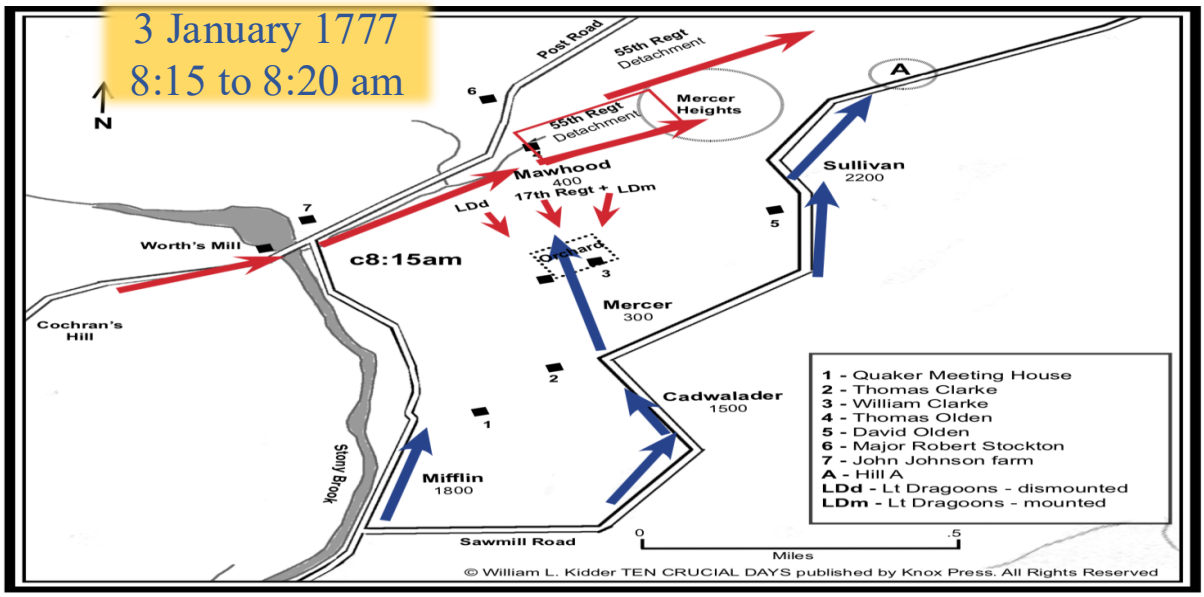
3 January 1777
8:00 am

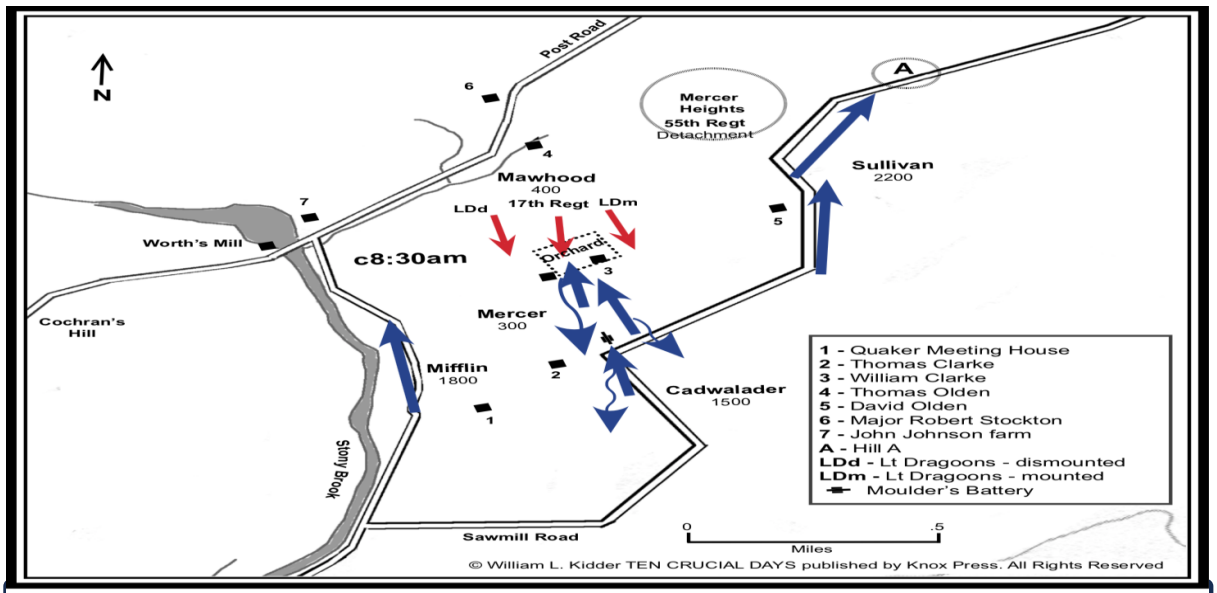


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Princeton Battlefield Society
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N
Bird's Eye View of Princeton 1777
Key
1 Quaker Meetinghouse
2 Thomas Clarke farm
3 William Clarke farm
4 Cochran's Hill
5 Worth's Mill
6 Thomas Olden house
7 Robert Stockton (Constitution Hill)
8 Barracks
9 Richard Stockton (Morven)
10 Nassau Hall
11 Jonathan Baldwin farm (Prospect)
12 Bainbridge House


N


3 January 1777
8:15 to 8:20 am
N
Post Road
55th Regt Detachment
55th Regt Detachment
Mercer Heights
Mawhood 400
17th Regt + LDm
LDd
Sullivan 2200
A
Worth's Mill
c8:15am
Orchard
Mercer 300
Cochran's Hill
Cadwalader 1500
Mifflin 1800
Stony Brook
Sawmill Road
0
.5
Miles
1 - Quaker Meeting House
2 - Thomas Clarke
3 - William Clarke
4 - Thomas Olden
5 - David Olden
6 - Major Robert Stockton
7 - John Johnson farm
A - Hill A
LDd - Lt Dragoons - dismounted
LDm - Lt Dragoons - mounted
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N
Post Road
Mercer Heights
55th Regt Detachment
Mawhood 400
17th Regt LDm
LDd
Sullivan 2200
A
Worth's Mill
c8:30am
Orchard
Mercer 300
Cochran's Hill
Cadwalader 1500
Mifflin 1800
Stony Brook
Sawmill Road
0
.5
Miles
1 - Quaker Meeting House
2 - Thomas Clarke
3 - William Clarke
4 - Thomas Olden
5 - David Olden
6 - Major Robert Stockton
7 - John Johnson farm
A - Hill A
LDd - Lt Dragoons - dismounted
LDm - Lt Dragoons - mounted
Moulder's Battery
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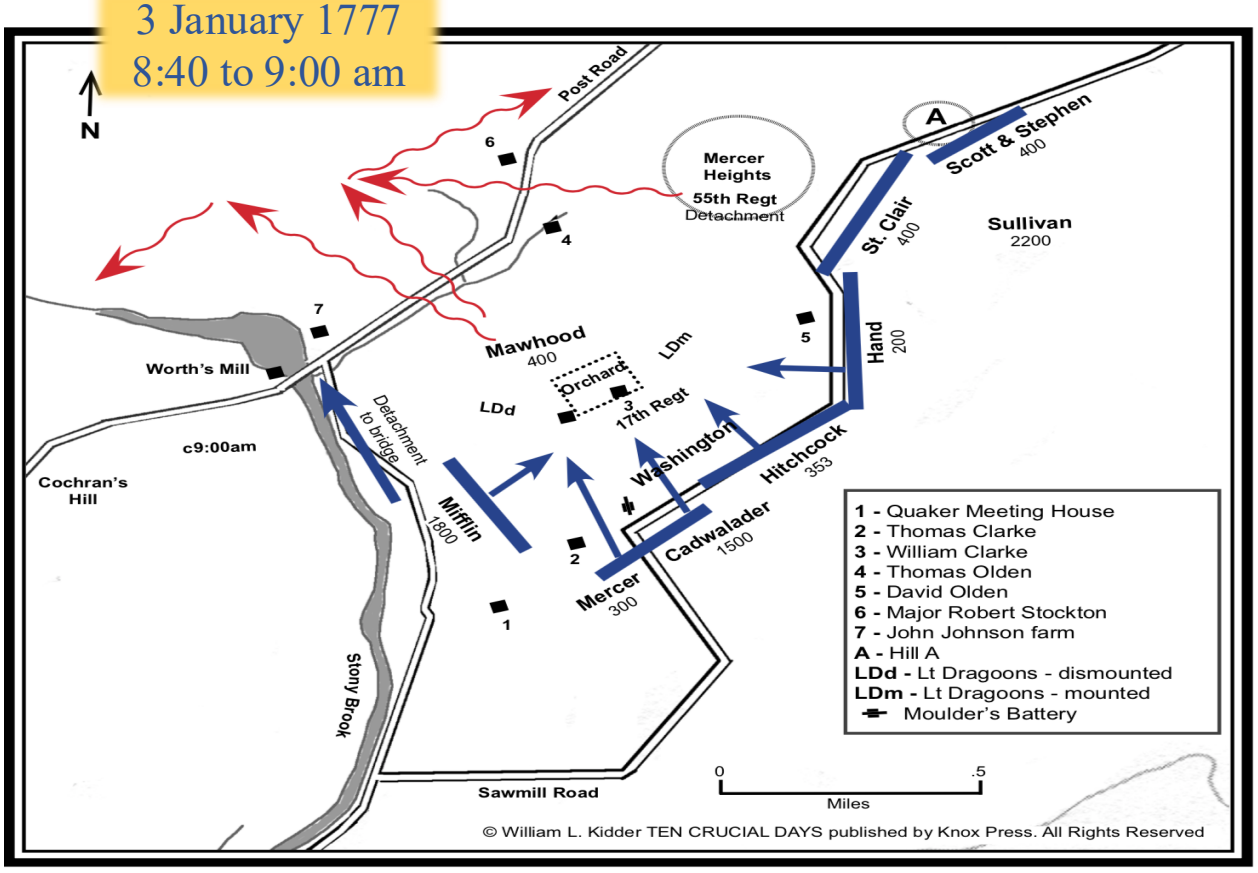


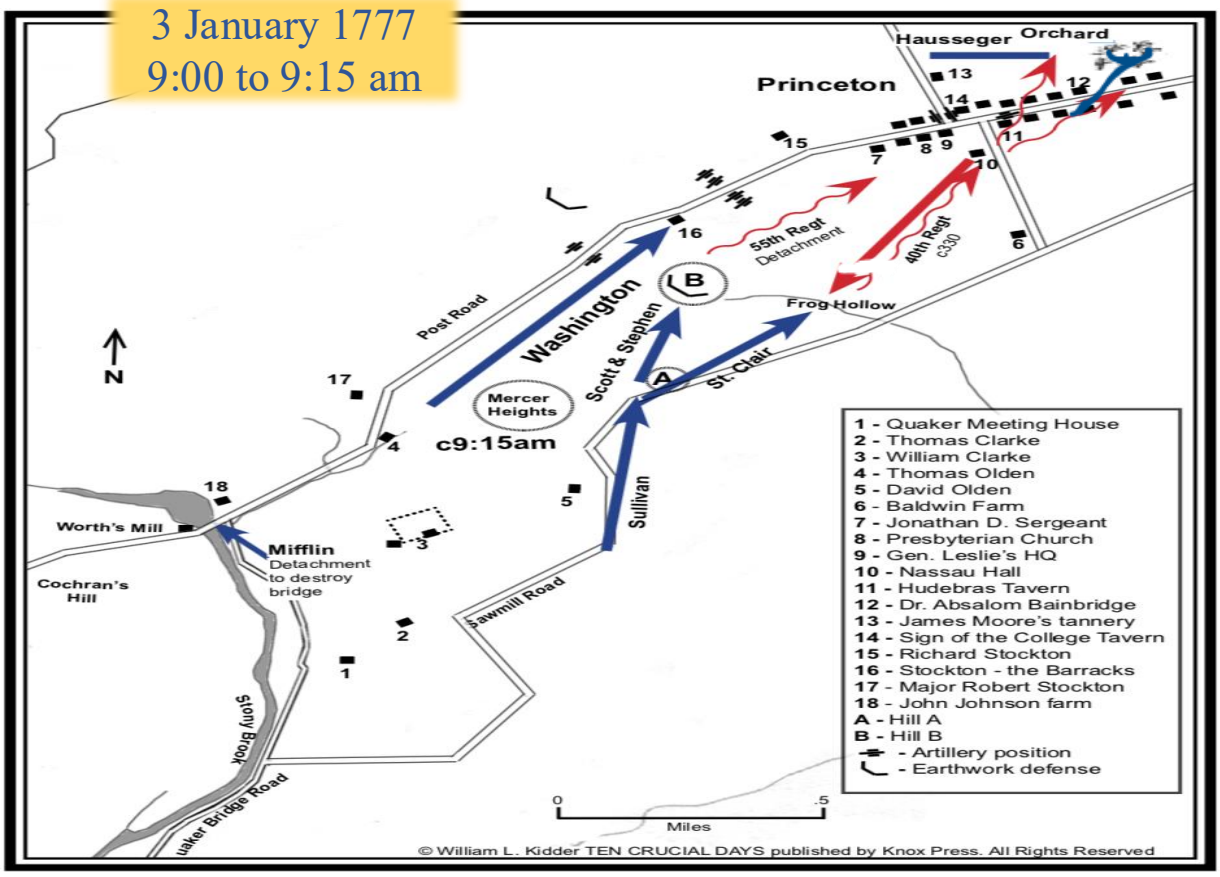


James Peale, American, 1749 - 1831. The Battle of Princeton, ca. 1782. Oil on canvas. Princeton University, gift of Dean Mathey, Class of 1912, in 1951



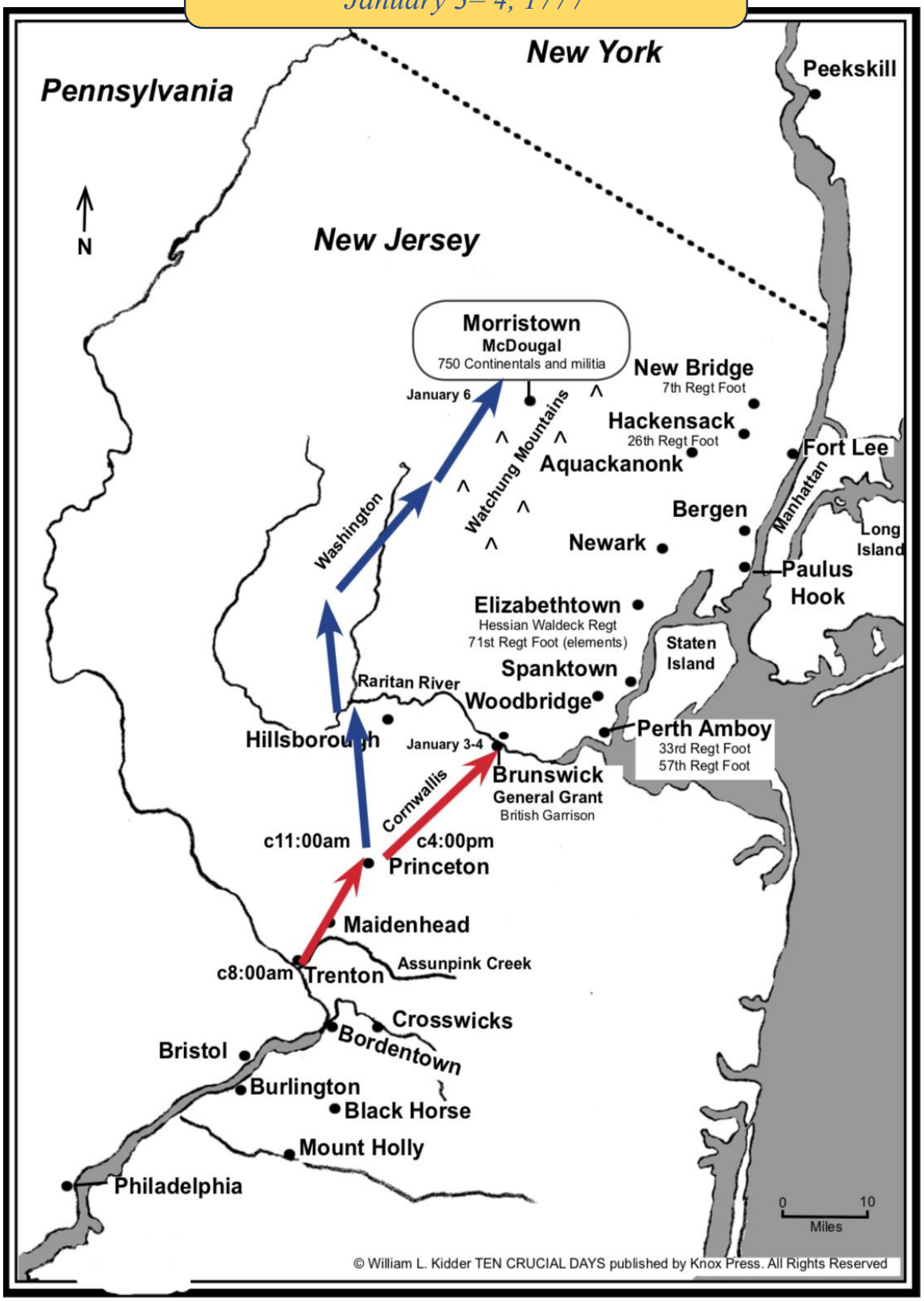
The Death of General Mercer at the Battle of Princeton, by John Trumbull, January 3, 1777ca. 1789ca. 1831Oil on canvas 21 30 3/4 in. (53.3 78.1 cm)Trumbull Collection, Yale University Art Museum


3 January 1777
8:40 to 9:00 am
N
Post Road
6
Mercer Heights
55th Regt
Detachment
A
Scott & Stephen
400
St. Clair
400
Sullivan
2200
4
7
Worth's Mill
Mawhood
400
LDm
Orchard
LDd
3
17th Regt
5
Hand
200
Detachment to bridge
Washington
Hitchcock
353
c9:00am
Cochran's Hill
Mifflin
1800
2
Cadwalader
1500
Mercer
300
1
Stony Brook
Sawmill Road
0
.5
Miles
1 - Quaker Meeting House
2 - Thomas Clarke
3 - William Clarke
4 - Thomas Olden
5 - David Olden
6 - Major Robert Stockton
7 - John Johnson farm
A - Hill A
LDd - Lt Dragoons - dismounted
LDm - Lt Dragoons - mounted
Moulder's Battery
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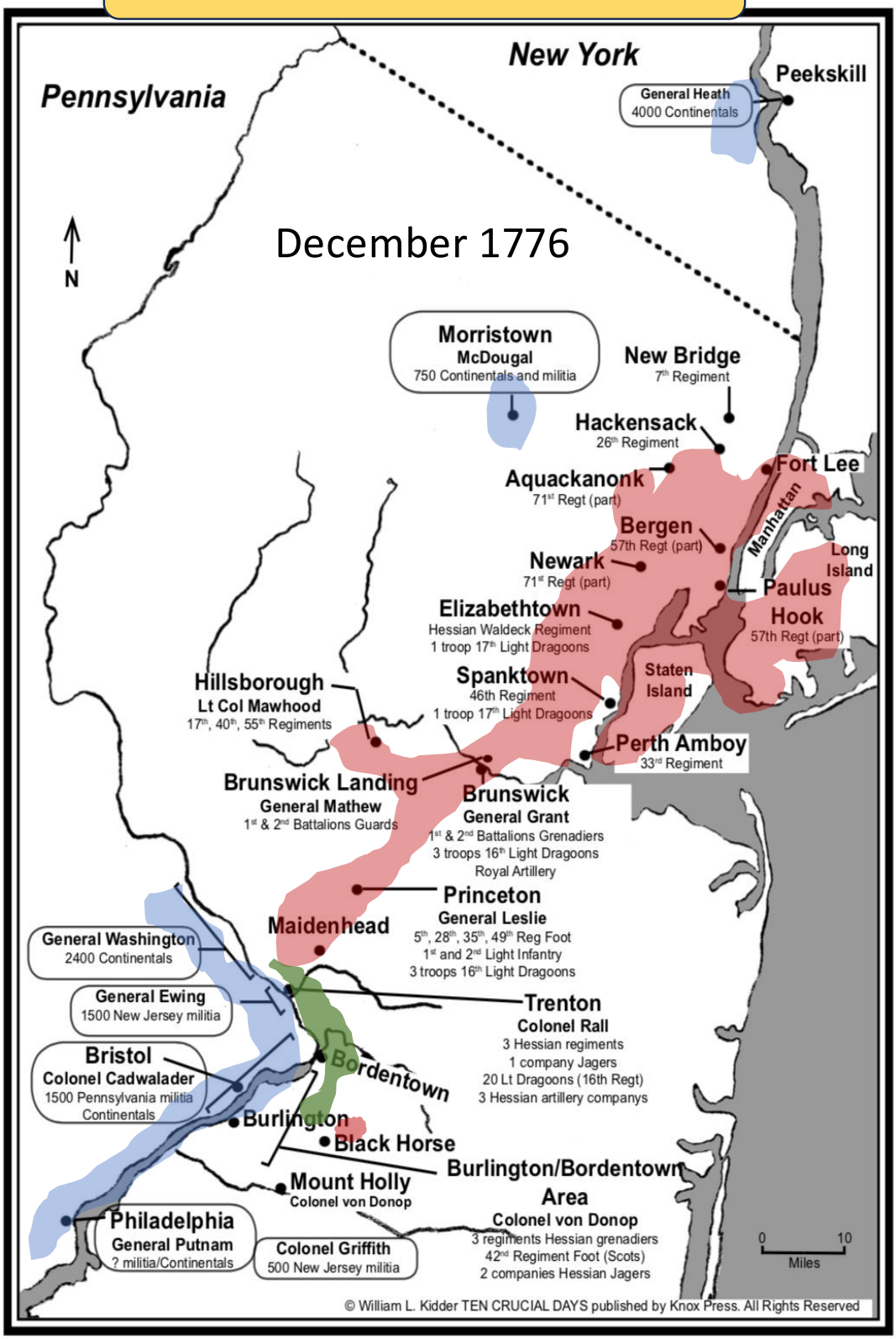

3 January 1777
9:00 to 9:15 am
Hausseger Orchard
Princeton
13
14
12
15
7
8
9
11
10
16
55th Regt
Detachment
40th Regt
c330
6
B
Frog Hollow
Washington
Post Road
Scott & Stephen
A
St. Clair
N
17
Mercer Heights
c9:15am
4
18
5
Sullivan
Worth's Mill
3
Mifflin
Detachment
to destroy
bridge
Cochran's Hill
2
Sawmill Road
1
Stony Brook
Quaker Bridge Road
0
.5
Miles
1 - Quaker Meeting House
2 - Thomas Clarke
3 - William Clarke
4 - Thomas Olden
5 - David Olden
6 - Baldwin Farm
7 - Jonathan D. Sergeant
8 - Presbyterian Church
9 - Gen. Leslie's HQ
10 - Nassau Hall
11 - Hudebras Tavern
12 - Dr. Absalom Bainbridge
13 - James Moore's tannery
14 - Sign of the College Tavern
15 - Richard Stockton
16 - Stockton - the Barracks
17 - Major Robert Stockton
18 - John Johnson farm
A - Hill A
B - Hill B
- Artillery position
- Earthwork defense
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After the Battle of Princeton

January 3– 4, 1777

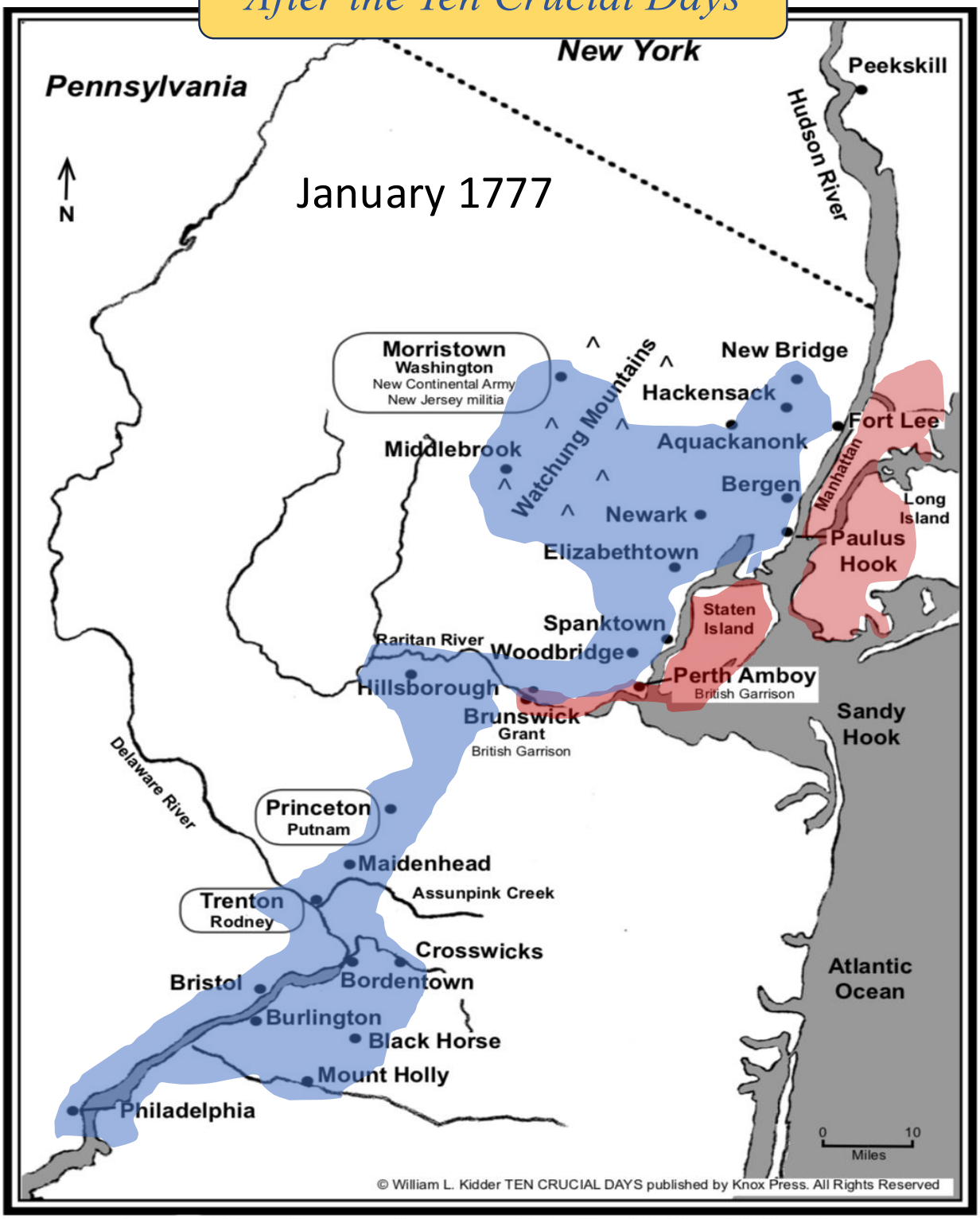


Before the Ten Crucial Days



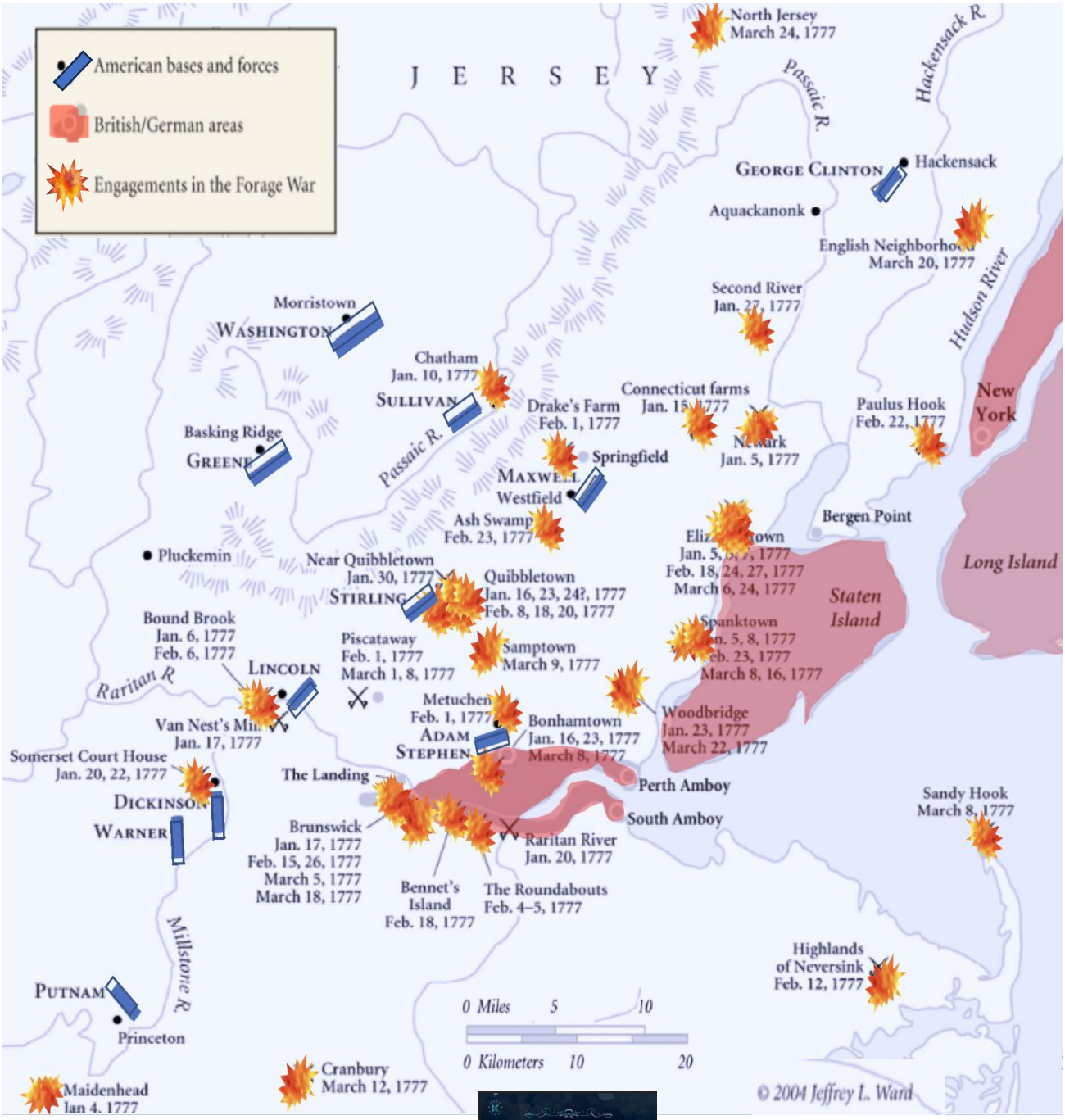
British Occupation of New Jersey - December 25, 1776

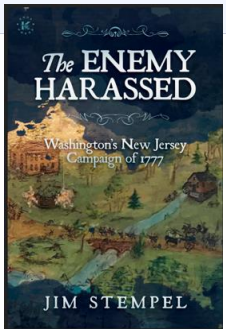
After the Ten Crucial Days



New Jersey - January 1777 after Battle of Princeton

The Forage War
January to June 1777





Perspectives on the Ten Crucial Days of the American Revolution

Adapted from the article by David Price, author of Winning the Ten Crucial Days: The Keys to Victory in George Washington's Legendary Winter Campaign, in The Journal of the American Revolution, March 2, 2023.
For the full article, go to ***https://tinyurl.com/ur6zjj25***

The "Ten Crucial Days" winter campaign of 17761777 reversed the momentum of the War for Independence at a moment when what George Washington termed the "glorious Cause" of American independence appeared on the verge of final defeat. Washington's offensive realized a spectacular degree of success in a remarkably short span of time: more than 1,700 British and Hessian soldiers killed, wounded, captured, or missing in action, as compared with fewer than two hundred American casualties; seizure of a substantial quantity of arms and supplies; and expulsion of His Majesty's forces from most of New Jersey. . The campaign would ultimately be judged among the most brilliant in military history. The Continental Army and its supporting militia bested an adversary who boasted superior training, discipline, and experience, and in the process overcame manifold challenges—supply shortages; harsh weather; desertions; expiring enlistments; and the effects of disease, malnutrition, and exhaustion.

British historian Sir George Otto Trevelyan (18381928), from his history of the Revolution more than a century afterwards. "…That was a long and a severe ordeal; and yet it may be doubted whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater and more lasting effects upon the history of the world . ."

Maj. Gen. William Howe (17291814), **commander of the British army in America** from 1775 to 1778, writing in January 1777 to Lord George Germain, British Secretary of State for North America and principal architect of his government's strategy for defeating the American rebellion. "It is with much concern, that I am to inform your Lordship, the unfortunate and untimely defeat at Trenton, has thrown us further back than was at first apprehended, from the great encouragement it has given to the rebels. I do not now see a prospect of terminating the war, but by a general action, and I am aware of the difficulties in our way to obtain it, as the enemy moves with so much more celerity than we possibly can."

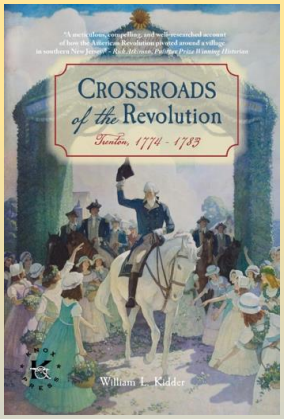
Lord George Germain (17161785), **British Secretary of State for North America** and principal architect of his government's strategy for defeating the American rebellion, speaking to Parliament in May 1779. ". . . we had a fair prospect of a successful campaign, and of the happy termination of the war in the course of it. But all our hopes were blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton."

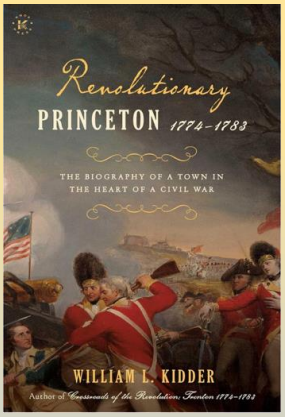
British Lt. Gen. Charles, Earl Cornwallis (17381805), reportedly responded to a toast at a dinner for British, French, and American officers hosted by George Washington after Cornwallis's surrender at Yorktown, Virginia—the last major military engagement of the Revolutionary War—in October 1781. "When 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."

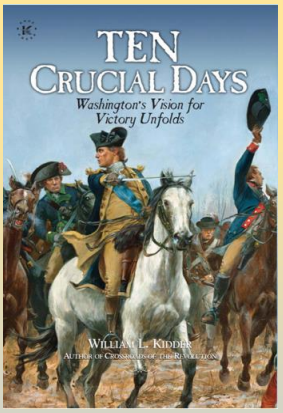
Hessian Jäger Capt. Johann Ewald (17441813), writing in his diary, "Thus had the times changed! The Americans had constantly run before us. Four weeks ago we expected to end the war with the capture of Philadelphia, and now we had to render Washington the honor of thinking about our defense. Due to this affair at Trenton, such a fright came over the army that if Washington had used this opportunity, we would have flown to our ships and let him have all of America. Since we had thus far underestimated our enemy, from this unhappy day onward, we saw everything through the magnifying glass."

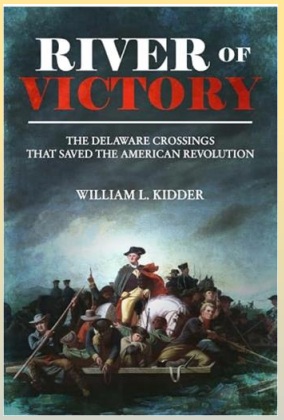
Nicholas Cresswell (17501804), **Tory English diarist** who journeyed throughout the American colonies from 1774 to 1777, wrote in January 1777. "The minds of the people are much altered. A few days ago they had given up the cause for lost. Their late successes have turned the scale and now they are all liberty mad again."

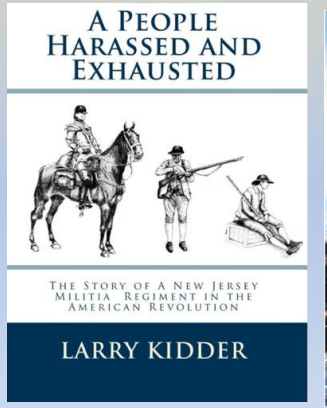
Frederick II or "Frederick the Great" (17121786), **King of Prussia**. "The achievements of Washington and his little band of compatriots between the 25th of December and the 4th of January, a space of ten days, were the most brilliant of any recorded in the annals of military achievements."

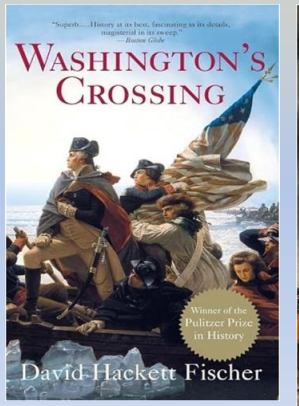


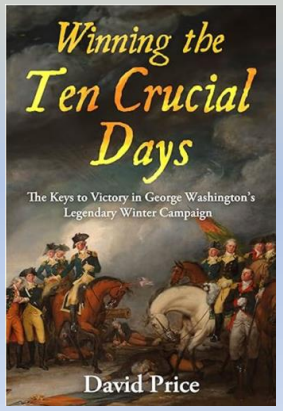


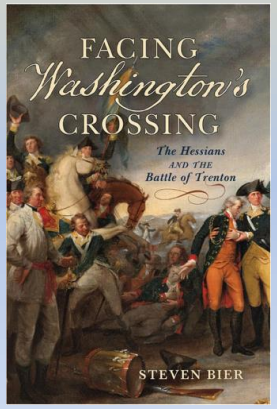


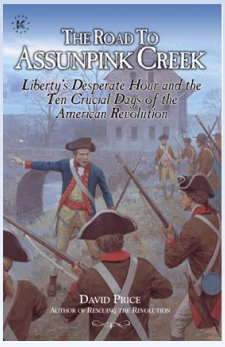


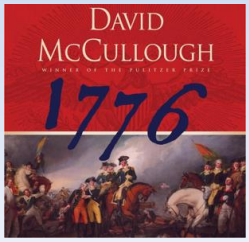




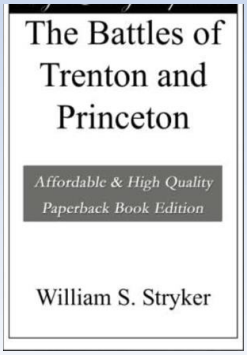


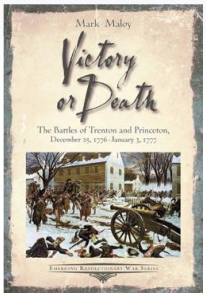


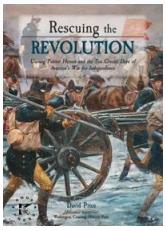


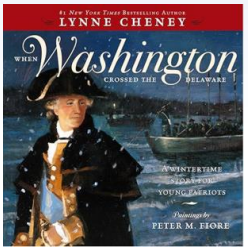


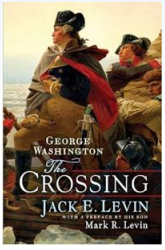
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Larry Kidder
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Roger S. Williams
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44