



FILE – John Godzieba, as Gen. George Washington, second right, stands in a boat during a re-enactment of Washington's daring Christmas 1776 crossing of the Delaware River in Washington Crossing, Pa., on Dec. 25, 2016. Spectators were once again being invited to gather along the Delaware River to watch an annual reenactment of George Washington's crossing of the Delaware River on Christmas Day, Saturday, Dec. 25, 2021, a year after an online re-enactment was posted instead. (AP Photo/Mel Evans, File)

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Christmas 1776: When George Washington & A Few Thousand Volunteers Saved America & Made The World A Better Place.

By [Seth Grossman](#) / December 25, 2021

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Only a few hundred came out at noon today to watch the reenactment. The event was cancelled last year because of the coronavirus, and in previous years because of bad weather. Normally, several thousand visitors gather at noon each Christmas Day at the Washington Crossing Historic Park just north of Trenton, New Jersey. There they watch re-enactors dressed as George Washington and his soldiers of the state militias and Continental Army of 1776 board large wooden boats and row from Bucks County, Pennsylvania to the New Jersey side. This is done to remember what George Washington and his 2400 American patriots did on that remarkable Christmas night of 1776.

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That original crossing is depicted in the iconic 1851 painting by German artist Emanuel Leutze. That crossing began ten fateful days in New Jersey that saved America and changed the world.



Artist Emanuel Leutze incorrectly thought the Delaware River looked like the Rhein River of his native Germany when he painted this. However, he brilliantly captured the spirit of Americans fighting for and winning their freedom and inspiring Europeans to do the same. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of Germans, Poles and others who fought to establish constitutional republics modeled on American states in Europe in 1848, were crushed by the large, professional armies of German, Russian, and French armies of kings and princes. Many defeated Germans and others fled to the United States, where they actively opposed slavery and supported efforts by Abraham Lincoln and the the new Republican Party to end it.

Just six months before that Christmas night crossing, on July 4, 1776, representatives of thirteen British colonies in North America meeting in Philadelphi approved our Declaration of Independence . As President Abraham Lincoln later explained, that document declared far more than “*the mere matter of the separation of the Colonies from the motherland*”.

It also declared that our new nation would be guided by these “self-evident” truths:

“Each of us is created equal. Each of us is endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among us, deriving their just powers with the consent of the governed– That whenever any form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness”.



Abraham Lincoln at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on 2/22/1861: “I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence”. Lincoln’s strongest political feelings were that slavery in America was an evil sin that must be eliminated, and that most authors of our Constitution intended and expected its “ultimate extinction” in the near future.

Five months later, American independence and those words that inspired it seemed as dead as thousands of patriots in Ireland, Scotland, and India who fought and died in previous failed rebellions against corrupt and dictatorial British aristocrats.

One week after the Declaration of Independence was signed and published in Philadelphia, a massive British invasion fleet arrived in New York Harbor. Its 300 warships and 400 transports brought 30,000 well paid, trained, and disciplined British and German soldiers to Staten Island New York. The German soldiers were rented to the British by Hesse and other small German states to fund their governments while reducing taxes. These German soldiers, often called Hessians, were well paid, equipped, and trained, and considered among the bravest and most effective soldiers in Europe.



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During the next three months, British soldiers and their German, or Hessian auxiliaries overwhelmed George Washington's 10,000 poorly trained volunteers defending Long Island and Manhattan. They killed or captured half of the Americans. The German Hessians were especially brutal. They used bayonets to execute hundreds of Americans after they dropped their weapons, raised their hands and surrendered at Brooklyn Heights.

In November, 1776, George Washington and his 5,000 remaining soldiers crossed the Hudson River. They tried to make a stand in Hackensack with support from New Jersey militias. However, those militias failed to appear. Without their support, Washington's men were badly outnumbered. They had to quickly flee towards Philadelphia to avoid capture. They didn't stop retreating until after they crossed the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. They seized every boat on the Jersey side of the river so that the British could not pursue them.



That December, a disgusted George Washington wrote a letter to his brother saying:

"The conduct of the Jerseys has been most infamous. Instead of turning out to defend their country. . . they are making their submissions as fast as they can. . . The few militias that were in arms disbanded themselves. . . and left the poor remains of our army to make the best we could of it".

Patriot journalist Thomas Paine was with Washington's army and was just as angry. He said the British left Massachusetts and the rest of New England alone and chose to invade and occupy New York and New Jersey because "New England was not infested with Tories (British sympathizers), and we are!"

Thomas Paine was particularly angry at one "noted Tory who kept a tavern in Amboy, New Jersey". According to Paine, that Tory agreed that Americans would sooner or later have to fight for independence from the British Empire. However, as he stood next to his 8 year old child, the Tory said he would not help George Washington's soldiers because he wanted "peace in my day".

This infuriated Thomas Paine, who wrote,

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“A generous parent should have said, ‘If there must be trouble, let it be in my day so that my child may have peace!’ Paine continued “This single reflection, well applied is sufficient to awaken every man to his duty”.

Thomas Paine’s experience in New Jersey inspired him to write and publish a pamphlet called *The American Crisis* on December 23, 1776. It began with these words:

These are the times that try men’s souls: The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it NOW, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.



While Thomas Paine was writing, George Washington’s battered soldiers got help from a most unlikely source– Quaker farmers from South Jersey who were known to be pacifists! Quakers came to America because they opposed the wars Britain was fighting against Spain, France, and Holland. Those pacifist Quakers included William Penn who established Philadelphia. They also included the Smith, Somers, Risley, Scull, Conover, and Leeds families who settled near what is now Atlantic City.

However, once in America, these Quakers slowly changed their thinking. They still still believed that God did not permit them to fight wars of conquest or aggression. However, Benjamin Franklin wrote that many of these American Quakers in and around Philadelphia came to believe that God permitted them to build and buy weapons for self-defense. They believed God permitted them to kill if necessary to defend themselves, their families, their towns and villages against anyone who attacked them. Later, these Quakers became known as “fighting Quakers”.

When German soldiers hired by the British occupied Central Jersey, they began stealing food, destroying property, and abusing women in the Quaker towns and farms they occupied.

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Companies of militias with “fighting Quakers” throughout southern and central Jersey began to fight back. One of them was the Gloucester County Militia led by Colonel Richard Somers of Somers Point. Colonel Somers was the father of the future Barbary Wars/Tripoli navy hero with his same name. At that time, Gloucester County included what are now Camden and Atlantic Counties.

The words of Thomas Paine and the actions of these “fighting Quakers” persuaded Washington to return to New Jersey and attack the 1,200 Germans (Hessian) troops who had occupied Trenton.

On Christmas Day, 1776, Washington’s George Washington assembled a force of 2,400 soldiers, 200 horses, and 18 cannons in the woods near the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River just north of Trenton. When it got dark, they began crossing the river in large wooden rowboats.

At that time, it began to rain. During the night it got colder, the winds picked up, and the rain changed to sleet, then snow, then freezing rain. Washington hoped to complete the crossing by midnight, and attack Trenton while it was still dark. However, the bad weather delayed the crossing by three hours. Daylight came while Washington’s men were still marching south towards Trenton. Two of Washington’s exhausted soldiers fell and died from the cold.



When the Americans arrived at Trenton, Henry Knox and his assistant, 21 year old Alexander Hamilton, skillfully deployed their 18 cannons. At 8 am, George Washington personally led the attack. The Hessians came out, formed a line, and fired at the Americans. However, the Germans were mowed down by American cannon fire.



Henry Knox was a bookseller from Boston with no military training. He learned to operate cannons by reading books. The previous year, Knox helped George Washington drive the British out of Boston by transporting 59 captured British cannons from Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York 300 miles away. Knox surprised the Hessians at Trenton a year later at Trenton by “keeping his powder dry” in a windy,

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freezing rainstorm. Knox did it by using the same wax seals and packaging he used to keep books dry when he shipped them to customers.

The Americans killed 22 Hessians, including their commander. Another 83 were wounded, and roughly 900 more were taken prisoners. The Americans suffered no deaths other than the two who died from the cold. Five more Americans were wounded. News of this lopsided victory by the Americans against the most feared soldiers of Europe quickly spread throughout America and the world.

The British tried to minimize the impact of their defeat by inventing fake news about the battle. The British falsely claimed that their German auxiliaries were defeated because they were half drunk or asleep from a late night Christmas party. The truth was that the Germans were very prepared. Their sentries quickly spotted the Americans and sounded the alarm. The Hessians quickly grabbed their weapons and lined up for battle. They were tired because smaller groups of Americans had been attacking them for weeks, including the night before. The Germans did not have patrols out the night before only because nobody thought an entire army could assemble, march, and “keep its powder dry” in such horrible weather.

The Americans did not punish the captured Germans for their brutality against surrendering Americans three months before in Brooklyn, New York. George Washington specifically ordered his soldiers to “treat them with humanity”. It was a propaganda coup. The German prisoners wrote letters home to Germany praising the Americans. This caused widespread opposition in Germany to the renting of more of their soldiers to the British. It also persuaded many Hessian soldiers to desert to the Americans. After the war, about 5,000 Hessian soldiers settled in America rather than return to Germany. Many sent for their families in Germany to join them.

After learning of Washington’s attack, General Charles Cornwallis, the British commander, quickly marched his main British Army of 8,000 men to Trenton. At first, it looked like most of George Washington’s army would disappear before the British got there. The enlistments for most of the American soldiers expired on December 31. However, George Washington persuaded most of them to stay for another month by making an emotional personal appeal, and by persuading Congress to supply a \$10 hard money bonus for each man.

On January 2, 1777, Washington’s outnumbered forces stood their ground in the Battle of Assunpink Creek, often known as the Second Battle of Trenton. The British then prepared to overwhelm the Americans the following day. However, Washington instead quietly marched his army out of Trenton that night, and attacked the British from behind at nearby Princeton the next day, January 3.

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News of these three victories, and the inspiring words of Thomas Paine, quickly spread throughout the American colonies. Thousands of young Americans volunteered to join Washington's army. There would be five more years of hardship and struggle. However, American independence, liberty and prosperity were all saved during those ten fateful days in New Jersey that began with Washington's Crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night in 1776.

Years later, in 1941, America ended the Holocaust and saved Europe from Hitler and Communism. America also saved China and East Asia from mass murder and brutal invasion and occupation by Imperial Japan. Without the America that was saved during those ten days in New Jersey that began on Christmas, 1776, today's world would be a much darker place.

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Energy Plan as Law

By [Fred Willis](#) / December 18, 2021

<https://www.njspotlightnews.org/2021/12/energy-master-plan-state-law-assembly-senate-bill/>

- Assembly Bill A5720 must be defeated!
- Making the EMP law replaces persuasion and evaluation with force.
- If there was verifiable evidence the EMP could provide reliable and affordable energy, it would be easily embraced. However, European, California and Australia experience show as quantities of unreliable renewable electricity increases, so do increases in grid blackouts and costs.
- To ignore experience, the bill proponents plan to impose the plan, by law, regardless of economic impact.
- The EMP, as a law, will require various amounts of the energy to be renewable regardless whether anyone can obtain it or afford it. This demand is actually an admission the plan is a failure at providing affordable and reliable energy. It imposes a `Save The World` wish as the New Jersey standard for energy generation.

We are a group of about 200 ordinary citizens who mostly live near Atlantic City, New Jersey. We volunteer our time and money to maintain this website. We do our best to post accurate information. However, we admit we make mistakes from time to time. If you see any mistakes or inaccurate, misleading, outdated, or incomplete information in this or any of our posts, please let us know. We will do our best to correct the problem as soon as possible. Thanks.

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9:30 am - 10:30 am

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[Sal's Coal Fire Pizza Cafe](#)

Somers Point

Feb 5

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

[February 5 Fundraiser Brunch With Congressman Jeff Van Drew](#)

[Sal's Coal Fire Pizza Cafe](#)

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