

Parole: Warwick.

Countersigns: Woodbridge. Winchester.

The "I Don't Have Time for This" Countersign: Lady Washington

MARCH-IN OVERVIEW

"At 10 on the morning of December [19], 1777 most of the units of the main Continental Army left their 6-day encampment at Gulph Mills. Some troops left earlier, some as late as 12 noon; the sick and wounded were sent to Reading, Pennsylvania. About 11,000 men made the over 5-mile march to Valley Forge. Little is known about the actual march. We do know that there was a light snow for at least part of the day; there was snow on the ground and the ground was partially frozen. Hundreds of men had poor shoes or none at all, and in this march some blood was seen in the snow (although too much emphasis has been placed on this aspect of the winter encampment). We believe the soldiers made fairly good time, but arrived at different times all through the afternoon by slightly different routes, so we are not sure of exactly how long the march took."¹

CONTEMPORARY DIARY & JOURNAL ENTRIES

Colonel Israel Angell, 2d RI

Decr. 16th. This morning being very Stormy the Orders for marching was Countermanded and our tents Ordered to be brought to our Encampment where they arived about three oClock in the afternoon and was either pitched or Spread over our huts. And we Still Remained peasable in our Quarters the night following. It being a Stormy Night. One Scircumstance I cannot omit mentioning Just to show in what manner Some people live in this part of the Country. paymaster holden, and paymaster Green went out of Camp about three miles, and there Put up in an old farmers hous where they saw a large number of Turkeys and other fouls. they Enquired if they were to be Sold, they Said they were, and they bought one of the turkeys and would have it Rosted, and Desired the old woman of the hous to dress it for them but She said that She never Saw one rosted in her life. they then Enquired of her how She did dress them, She Said they never Eat turkeys nor no other fouls but always Solde them, as they would allways fetch Ready money. So great is their love for money.²

Decr. 17. We Recd Orders this morning at Seven oClock for the Waggons to march off immedately and the troops were to march at ten o Clock but it begun to Storm and the orders were Countermanded. So we Continued in our Encampment this day and the night following.

Decr. 18th. This day being Appointed as a day of thanksgiving through All the Continent, we had orders to Still Continue in our present encampment, and it was Strongly Recommended to all the Officers and Soldiers of the Army to attend Divine Servis. the troops attended Servis at three oClock in the afternoon.

19th. This morning was a Sever Cold one, as it Cleared off last Evening with a Strong Northwest wind which blew So that it blew our fires into Some of our huts and burnt them Down. it broke down one tree across a tent where five men lay a Sleep but providentially hurt but one man, and he had his thigh brooke. we Rec'd orders this morning to march as Soon as possible and before ten oClock the whole Army was a marching, pleas'd with the thoughts of going into winter Quarters, though in the woods. We marched all the day without provisions as there was none to be drawn in the morning and neither Could we get any at night. we marched but about Eight miles this day being played So bad With our wagons as the Roads was Excessive Bad and our horses very poor and weak. we Turn'd into the woods about Sunset where we built firesand encamp by them that night after Eating our Suppers of raw Corn, which we got out of a field near by our encampment. One Accident hapened this Day a wagon overset and killed one woman.

¹ "The March-In," obtained from Marc A. Brier.

² "The Diary of Colonel Israel Angell: Commanding Officer, 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, Continental Army," October 1, 1777 - DigitalCommons@Providence, accessed October 29, 2018, <https://digitalcommons.providence.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?filename=4&article=1000&context=primary&type=additional>.

Decr. 20th 1777. A fine pleasant morning for the Season. We drew provisions this morning which was very pleasing to the troops as they had more than one days Allowance in th(ose) for three days past. We Continued Still in the woods and Nothing remarkable happened during the Day, Except we Could git for our horses to Eat, as the County had been much Stript by the Enemy here and to appearance a much poorer part of the Country then we had ben in before. the last Encampment was in Chester County.

21st. Nothing Remarkable Happened this Day Except we Could draw no privisons. we Still lay in the woods.

Decr. 22nd. 1777. This Morning we Recd. Orders to hold our Selves in Readiness in march at a moments warning, on which our tents were Struck and the troops all under arms, but having no orders to march grounded their arms and returned to their fires, and afterwards recd. Orders for marching were Countermanded. we Remain'd quiet the Remainder of the day.

23rd. Fine weather nd Nothing Remarkable happened Except one womans being Drum'd out of our Camp to day by order of a Coart martial for Stealing.

24th. This Day we begun to Clear the Ground and Cut timber for building our huts to winter in But Nothing Remarkable happened Still Remaining in the woo(ds).

25. This morning I was to have Sett out on a journey Into the jersies to Collect the Sick in General Varnoms Brigade, but the B.G. Major not making his Returns timely I did not Sett off till between 3 and 4 oClock in the afternoon. Crost the Schuylkill went to Norrington there tarried that night.³

Lieutenant Samuel Armstrong, 8th MA

Wednesday, December 17—Nothing Extraordinary happen[ed.] Somthing Rainey which deter'[d] our Marching [...]

Thursday, December 18—Thick Clouday Weather

We had neither Bread nor meat 'till just before night when we had some fresh Beef, without any Bread or flour, The Beef wou'd have Answer'd to have made Minced Pis if it cou'd been made tender Enough, but it seem'd Mr. Commissary did not intend that we Shou'd keep a Day of rejoicing – but however we Sent out a Scout for some fowls and by Night he Return'd with one Dozn: we distributed five of them among our fellow sufferers three we Roasted two we boil'd and Borrowed a few Potatoes upon these we Supp'd without any Bread or anything stronger than Water to drink!

Friday ye 19th. The Sun Shone out this morning being the first time I had seen it for Seven days. Which seem'd to put new Life into every thing – We took the Remains of two Days Allowance of Beef, being a Shin and two fowls we had left, of these we made a broth upon which we Breakfasted with a half a loaf of Bread we Begg'd and bought, of which we Shoud have had made a tollerable Breakfast, if there had been Enough!! By ten OClock we [_____] to march to a place Call'd Valley Forge being about five or six miles — and about Eleven oCK we Sit out, but did not arive there 'till after Sun sit. During this march we had nothing to Eat nor to drink, but when we arrived, our Boy went to work to Bake Bread and of this we Eat like Insatiate Monsters 'till they had made some Lilley P. of which eat 'till our Guts began to Ake when we thought it was time to quit and lay down to sleep.

Saturday 20th. Decr. – This day we draw'd some provisions, but when it came to Camp, there was a Committee appointed to Examine the meat, and Judged it not Wholesome to Eat. Report was made to the Genl. Who brought the Commissary to account, but he plead off and the Genl. Ordered him to deliver out Salt Provisions as much as three Barrells to a Brigade, which turned out 1/2 a pound to a Man; with this the Men seem'd a little Contented, & indeed Men never bore up with such bad Usage before, with so little Mutiny, for I believe it gratified them in a great

³ Israel Angell, "The Diary of Colonel Israel Angell: Commanding Officer, 2nd Rhode Island Regiment, Continental Army," transcription obtained from Marc A. Brier.

measure to think the Officers Endured the same and indeed there was amore mutiny among the Officers than among the men –⁴

Captain Paul Brigham, 4th CT

wensday 17th wet and Bad for ye men / Last night Some have fits and Some Cholicks Lying on yewet Ground / Bought a mare of Colo to Ride home / Expected to march this Day But Did not

On ye 18th Being the Continental Thanksgiveing Lay Still and Did not march / it Still continued Rainy and Dull weather / I kept Thanksgiving without Eateing any Bread all Day our Beaf was Poor and no Sauce and allowance Very Short

On ye 19th Last night it Cleared off[f] / Cold this morning / Loaded our Tents and prepared to march at a moments Warning / about 9 o'Clo[ck] marched Through ye mud 5 or 6 miles and Picked our Tents / I went a Little out of ye Road and Staid all night

on ye 20th went into Camp it was Cold and Clear / Provisions Very Poor and Scarce / not Enough to Seport the men

on ye 21th Last night I had a Sick night / Pleasent for ye Time of year

on ye 22th Still Continued not well / the Doctr advised me to Go out of Camp to Se if I could not Recrute my health / I traveld almost all Day before I could fined any Where that I Could Tarry / at Last I Got a Place at one George Veslars

On Tuesday 23d I took a Vommit which made me Sick Enough / Cloday and Looked Likely for Snow all Day

on ye 24th Last night it cleared off[f] / Cold and Clear / Sent Conant [Sawyer, Brigham's brother-in-law and private soldier in his company] into Camp this morning / he Came out to Se me a Little before night and Returned Back again⁵

Lieutenant James McMichael

December 12.—At 6 P.M. we marched to the bridge [made of wagons], which we crossed in Indian file, and at 8 A.M. encamped ner the Gulph [Mill], where we remained without tents or blankets in the midst of a severe snow storm.

December 19.—At 10 A.M. we marched from the Gulph and took post near the Valley Forge, where our ground was laid out for cantonments.⁶

William Parker Jr. writing from "Camp at the Gulph South side of the River Schuylkill 15 Mile from Philadelphia"
Tomorrow if it is fair weather suppose we shall March 6 miles further (as the rain has prevented us for two Days past) to the Valley Forge (a worse place than this by what I have heard) & there to build Cobb Houses to live in this Winter⁷

Gideon Savage, Colonel Baldwin's Regiment of Artificers & Artillery

Tuesday, December 16. Rain all day and we are out after a saw-mill.

⁴ Samuel Armstrong, "The Diary of Lieutenant Samuel Armstrong: 8th Massachusetts Regiment, Continental Army," transcription obtained from Marc A. Brier.

⁵ John U. Rees, "'None of you know the hardships of A soldiers life ...' Service of the Connecticut Regiments of Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall's Division, 1777-1778," Scribd Inc., page 23, accessed October 29, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/14059235/None_of_you_know_the_hardships_of_A_soldiers_life_Service_of_the_Connecticut_Regiments_of_Maj._Gen._Alexander_McDougall_s_Division_1777-1778.

⁶ "Between December 22, 1777, and January 8, 1778, Lieutenant McMichael obtained leave of absence to visit his family." McMichael, James. "Diary of Lieutenant James McMichael, of the Pennsylvania Line, 1776-1778." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 16, no. 2 (1892): 157. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20083473>.

⁷ Letter from W. Parker, Jr. to William Parker, Esq., dated December 18, 1777; transcribed by Lee Boyle, *The Picket Post*, (Spring 1973): 14-15; File Name: DEC18,\$,PARKER,William.doc.

Thursday, December 18. Rain all day again. We are at the Valley Forge.

Friday, December 19. Moved up to the Valley Forge.

Saturday, December 20. Began our house for winter quarters.

Sunday, December 21. Was the Sabbath.

Monday, December 22. No news of importance to-day.

Tuesday, December 23. Was very cold but pleasant for the time of year.

Wednesday, December 24. No news of importance.⁸

Sergeant John Smith, 1st RI

the 18th was wet & Dirty—in the afternoon the Brigade Paraded to Prayers & had a Short Sermon

the 19th—in the morning we marchd to our winter Quarters [i.e., at Valley Forge]—we marchd all Day without Victuals having nothing to Eat -- we went into the woods & Slept in huts as usual

[December 20]—we found a Corn feild where was Corn which we took & Eat after we Roasted it in the fire some—we Pounded with two stones & made Samp [i.e., “soupon”, or corn porridge] to thicken our Broth—Some we Carried to mill & Got it Ground into meal -- towards Night we Drew Some Poor Beef & one Days flower—this Decembr 20th 1777

the 21st Sunday—we had warm Pleasant weather & Nothing to Eat but a Little flower made with Coarse Indian meal & a Little Flower mixd with it -- at Night the fortune of war [i.e., foraging] Put into our hands a Poor Sheep which we Roasted & boild which Gave the Company a Good Super which we Eat & turnd in

[December 22]—Slept Quietly untill morning when we Receivd orders to march in fifteen minits—we Paraded the Regt. & Grounded our arms & Drew flower for one day & Baked it But no meat as yet but a Party of Volenteers turnd out to Goe to get Some Cattle from Toreys—we had nothing to Eat Untill 10 o clock at Night when we had a Ram Cooked roast & boild which 3 of our Company took & killd as they traveld on their way—about 10 o clock A Detachment went from here to Goe Down towards the Enemy etc.

23d—we turnd out a Party of men to Build huts for our winter Quarters—in the afternoon had some mutton Served out to us for one day & Drumd a whore out of Camp & set her over Schullkill River for theaft—this night Capt. Lee took 13 Light horse & 8 Riders of the Enemy & Brought them in

24th—we turnd out to worke on our huts again⁹

Surgeon's Mate Jonathan Todd, 7th CT

“Jonathan Todd penned a small note, perhaps an unfinished letter, with some jottings and interesting military commands on it; the last were perhaps distracted scribbling, but the phrases likely echo officers' directives given on the parade ground or in the field:

⁸ Charles Collard Adams, *Middletown Upper Houses: A History of the North Society of Middletown, Connecticut, from 1650 to 1800, with Genealogical and Biographical Chapters on Early Families and a Full Genealogy of the Ranney Family* (New York: Grafton Press, 1908), 652-53.

⁹ Bob McDonald, “Thro Mud & Mire into the Woods,” *RevWar75*, accessed October 29, 2018, <http://www.revwar75.com/library/bob/smith.htm>.

Valley Forge one Mile West [of the] Schuylkill
20 Northwest [of] Philadelphia Decr. 20th 1777

Jack Srout Returnd from Philadelphia Yesterday Where he has been With a Flagg and Informs that the Enemy Have
Gone into Barracks for [the] Winter. Likewise Genll. Howe Calls our Encampment Log Town -

Your heads up! Your Peices Dressed!
Yesterday afternoon Yesterday [illegible word]
Yesterday is Gone forever

Close Your Ranks!
Frome the right & Left wings
form Battallion! March!
Grenadiers Front!
Light Infantry form!"¹⁰

"Camp Valley Forge one Mile West of Schuylkill &
20 [miles] NW of Philadelphia 25th Decr. 1777
Honour'd Father

I write now pr. Mr. Elisha Crane who came to Camp Yesterday - He Bro't A Letter from My Honour'd Master Doctor
[Benjamin] Gale, but none from you, for which Am Sorry, Likely you did
not Know of his Coming - Since I wrote you pr. Ensn. [Gershom] Willcox
[Sherburne's Additional

Regiment] have nothing Remarkable - but Just to inform that I am Hearty for which I desire to return hearty Thanks to
my Great Benefactor - I know If I put my Trust in him I shall be Protected in all times of Danger - Can assure you that
I never saw A Christmas when I had no other Covering than Tow Cloth before - On the Day appointed for the
Continental Thanksgiving We drew 1/2 Gill of Rice pr. man which with Beef & Flower were the dainties of our Feast -
We are now about to build Hutts for shelter this winter Expect in A Few days to be Comfortable, tho we have nothing
Convenient to work with - Axes are Very scarce - the Adjutant, Q.M. Chaplain, Paymaster, & 2 Doctors all are to live
in one Hutt / we have but one Dull ax to build A Logg Hutt When it will be done know Not - I hear that yesterday our
Out Parties took 13 Light Horse & 10 Dragoons - Our soldiers are now well Cloathed & in good spirits alth'o they
have been almost Naked & Very scarce allow'd for Provisions. 2 Days we were without Entirely - but now we have a
plenty from Connecticut - Connecticut hath done beyond Account as to Clothing[*]¹¹
- hope that selfish & Oppressive spirit is abating amongst you - Would not have you sending Leather breeches as I
wrote for - but hope you wont forget my shirt and watch by no means - should be glad of A handkerchief but dont
much Expect it - I would have daddy have my Leather breeches - I have got a New Pair of Leather Breeches & shoes
I have A plenty - Dr. Swift went home Last Sunday upon A furlow of 35 Days - When he Returns [it is] probable I can
have A furlow for A short time - shall try for one if the Weather is not too bad - God grant that we may all Endure with

¹⁰ John U. Rees, "None of you know the hardships of A soldiers life ...' Service of the Connecticut Regiments of Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall's Division, 1777-1778," Scribd Inc., page 23, accessed October 29, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/14059235/None_of_you_know_the_hardships_of_A_soldiers_life_Service_of_the_Connecticut_Regiments_of_Maj_Gen_Alexander_McDougall_s_Division_1777-1778.

¹¹ Other state's regiments did not fare so well. The men of the New Jersey Brigade began the year in a ragged and ill-clad condition. As Capt. William Gifford of the 3rd Regiment wrote on 24 January from "Camp at Valley Forge": "... I fancy we may give up our Notions of Jersey & Content ourselves in these Wigwams this winter / We have a large Army in every respect fit ... for Action, Tho' some are very bare for Clothes, I wish with all my heart our State wou'd make better Provision for our Brigade, respecting Clothing & other necessaries than they do, if they had any Idea of the hardships we have & do undergo, they Certainly wou'd do more ... than they do. I assure you Sir we have had a very severe Campaign of it, since we came in this State." William Gifford to Benjamin Holme, Camp at Valley Forge, 24 January 1778, Revolutionary War Documents, New Jersey Historical Society.

Patience Whatever is assigned us here & At Last be Rec'd to A World of bliss - My Love to all Friends - I Remain Your Son-

Jonathan Todd

26th Decr. Since Writing Yesterday - Jethro A Negro from Guilford belonging to Capt. [Stephen]Halls Compy. Died in his Tent the first man that hath died in Camp belonging to our Regt."¹²

Corporal Ebenezer Wild, 1st MA

17 Dec—We had Orders to March at 10 o'clk but the Weather prevented it. We turned out at 11 o'clk to roll call, and at 4 o'clk in the afternoon.

18 Dec—We had orders to turn out to roll call at 9 o'clk, but it began to rain so fast we did not turn out then. About 12 o'clk we turned out to roll call with arms. We had orders read to us that the Genl. determined to take up winter quarters in this place. The troops are to make Huts for them Selves and Make our Selves as Confortuble as We Can, in Order to Ceep the Armeey together.¹³ We Shuld have Moved to Day but this Being the Day Set apart by the Congress for A Day of Publick Thanksgeiving. The Troops are Orderd to Lay Sill and the Caplens of the difrent Brigades to proform Divine Sarves, and Offrs. and [Soldiers was] Desird to attend. We had no Chaplin in [our Brigade] and We had but A poor Thanksgiven, Nothing but Fresh beef and Flour to Eate without aney Salt & but Very Scant of that.

Friday the 19th of December. This Morning Clear and Cold & very Windey. About 12OClock We Marchd of for the place Whare We Was to Take our Winter Quarters. We Marched about 6 Miles Up Lankester rode and Incampd in the Woods.

Satterday the 20th December. Fare Weather this Morning. We Remane hear in Camp & Shall Till We Buld our huts.

Sunday the 21st December 1777. This Morning the Weather is Something Codey. We Drew a small Quantity of Salt Poork. We Sill Remain hear in Camp, Nothing Farther this Day.

Monday the 22 Decemebr. This Morning is Dark & Clodey and Loaks Very Likely for a Snow Storm. The Weather Sune Cleard away Was Pleasant all Day. We Drew Three Days aloance of fresh Beef and Two of flour. The Tools Ware given Out and Ground Layd Out to Buld our huts upon. We had Orders to Cook all Our Provishon and Be Redey to March at the Shortest Notis. Thare Was Two partys of men Out of the Regt. This Evening.

Tuesday the 23d Decer. This Morning We Turnd Out Just after Sunrise to Role Call. After the Roles was Calld the Whole Brigade Formed A Line & Was Conted of. After that We Marchd On our One Parade and Lo[e]ckd Our armes. In the afternoon We Went work on our hut[s.] At Sun Down We parade to Role Call & Tuck in our armes Latter.

Wensday the 24th Decer. Unsetteld Weather to Day. This Morning Went to Work on our huts but thar Was Some Misunderstanding about the Ground, & We Left of Work and Went to camp agane. We Workd No more [to] Day.¹⁴

¹² John U. Rees, "None of you know the hardships of A soldiers life ...' Service of the Connecticut Regiments of Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall's Division, 1777-1778," Scribd Inc., page 24, accessed October 29, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/14059235/None_of_you_know_the_hardships_of_A_soldiers_life_Service_of_the_Connecticut_Regiments_of_Maj_Gen_Alexander_McDougall_s_Division_1777-1778.

¹³ Ebenezer Wild, *The journal of Ebenezer Wild (1776-1781): who served as corporal, sergeant, ensign, and lieutenant in the War of the Revolution* (Cambridge: John Wilson and Son, University Press, 1891), 30. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/chi.56986164?urlappend=%3Bseq=34>

¹⁴ Ebenezer Wild, "The Diary of Corporal Ebenezer Wild: 1st Massachusetts Regiment, Continental Army," transcription obtained from Marc A. Brier.

Read Also:

Albigence Waldo, "Valley Forge, 1777-1778. Diary of Surgeon Albigence Waldo, of the Connecticut Line," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 21, no. 3 (1897): 299-323. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20085750>.

Marc A. Brier, "They Passed This Way: An account of the many long forgotten marches and fatigues of the Continental Army from the Battle of Brandywine to the winter encampment at Valley Forge presented to commemorate the 225th anniversary of this 1777 campaign that took place in Southeastern Pennsylvania." Valley Forge National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Valley Forge National Historical Park, published September 2002, <https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/upload/TheyPassedThisWay.pdf>.

Shiela Vance, "Valley Forge's Threshold: the Encampment at Gulph Mills," *Journal of the American Revolution* (November 5, 2019), <https://allthingsliberty.com/2019/11/valley-forges-threshold-the-encampment-at-gulph-mills/>.