

PRIMARY SOURCES ON HUT CONSTRUCTION

“General Orders, 20 December 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-12-02-0584>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 12, 26 October 1777–25 December 1777, ed. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr. and David R. Hoth. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002, pp. 641–644.]

“General Orders, 15 January 1778,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0203>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 243–246.]

“The sick in Regiments are by no means Provided for, as they ought to be; and the Trifle of small Comforts provided for the Men, it is said, are commonly used by the Surgeons, to the great injury of the Sick: Each Regt ought to be furnished with a Hutt in Winter, and a large Hospital Tent in Summer, and no more of the Sick sent to Hospitals than cannot be avoided, as their Distance from the Regiments, affords great opportunity for unnecessary absence from Camp, & finally Desertion.”¹

General Jedediah Huntington

December 20, 1777

“We are going to work with all our might and Diligence to House the Army in huts at this Place. General Washington seems resolved to concentrate our army here. Our Men are almost worn out with the constant Marches and Fatigues of the Campaign, but the army is well disposed and will try to make the best of it. I wish could tell you that I was coming home to see you, instead I am going to build me a House in the Woods.”²

Thomas Paine

“General Washington keeps his station at Valley Forge, I was there when the Army first began to build huts. They appeared to me like a family of beavers, everyone busy; some carrying logs, others mud, and the rest plastering them together. The whole was raised in a few days and it is a curious collection of buildings, in the true rustic order.”³

Jonathan Todd

December 25, 1777

“We are now about to build Hutts for shelter this winter Expect in a few days to be comfortable, tho we have nothing convenion to work with - Axes are very scarece - [...] we have but one dull ax to build a Logg Hutt When it will be done knows not [...]”⁴

“That the timber prevalent about Valley Forge, previously to its being fallen for the use of the American army, in the autumn of 1777, and winter and spring of 1778, consisted of white oak, black oak, spanish oak, rarely interspersed with scrubby chestnut and hickory.”⁵

Read Also:

¹ “Colonel Daniel Brodhead to Lieutenant Colonel Tench Tilghman, 30 December 1777,” Founders Online, National Archives, last modified June 13, 2018, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-13-02-0057>. [Original source: The Papers of George Washington, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 13, 26 December 1777–28 February 1778, ed. Edward G. Lengel. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003, pp. 59–63.]

² General Jedediah Huntington to Relatives, 20 December 1777, Jedediah Huntington Papers, Chicago Historical Society.

³ Paine, Thomas, “Military Operations near Philadelphia in the Campaign of 1777-8.” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 2, no. 3 (1878):294. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20084349>.

⁴ Jonathan Todd to Timothy Todd, 25 December 1777, Roll 1561, M806, RG 15, National Archives, Washington, DC.

⁵ “On Timber at Valley Forge,” Letter from Isaac Wayne, Esq., Eastown, Chester County (PA) to Richard Peters, Philadelphia, 4 March 1814, in “Memoirs of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, Containing Communications on Various Subjects in Husbandry and Rural Affairs,” Vol III. (Philadelphia: Johnson and Warner, 1814), 376.

Marc A. Brier, "Tolerably Comfortable: A Field Trial of a Recreated Soldier Cabin at Valley Forge," Valley Forge National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Valley Forge National Historical Park, published August 1, 2004, <https://www.nps.gov/vafo/learn/historyculture/upload/tolerablycomfortable.pdf>.