

## The story of Pidcock involvement in the Revolutionary War as told by Susquehanna Jack

Here is some detail on Susquehanna Jack and how he could be used to tell a little about last year's reunion and introduce this year's theme.

Family member, John Moore (of Northumberland PA) created the character of Susquehanna Jack, a woodman from this area of 250 years ago. Men like this traveled the backwoods of NJ and Pennsylvania mixing with all sorts of people. They provided a means of gathering news and passing it on to isolated communities and across cultural barriers.

Susquehanna Jack paid us a visit at the 90th Reunion. He was searching for Pitcock's falls and in the process told us the history of the first 2 walking purchases as he had learned it from the Indians.

In 1776 he might have carried news of British and Hessian raids on the homes of Ferry keepers such as the Pidcocks, as remembered by Mary Godown Pidcock, wife of Jonathan Pidcock (1783-1861) grandson of Jonathan Pidcock (1729-1812).



This is what I think happened in December 1776.

I think Jonathan Pidcock and sons were operating the Prime Hope Mill in Lambertville, transporting their goods on the river via Durham boats and working Wells ferry (near now a days Lambertville Falls but back then called Wells Falls and 50 years earlier called Pitcock's falls). I think Charles Pidcock was in the local NJ militia and was part of the retreat across Jersey in the fall of 1776 (that is why he was disabled from hard marching). I think he decided to stop at home to recuperate from the march rather than cross the Delaware with Washington to PA because his home was right there on the river and the care for his feet would have been much better from family than an over worked camp doctor. Home might have seemed especially appealing since his Dad was active with caring for the sick & wounded soldiers. We read in the family genealogy:

"We also know that prior to the American Revolution Jonathan moved with his family from Lambertville, New Jersey, to Amwell, New Jersey. It is interesting that he named his son Emanuel Amwell Pidcock. There he purchased land and raised his family. When

America declared its independence from Great Britain in 1776 and war broke out, Jonathan and his son Charles joined the local militia. Though Jonathan was physically unfit for active service due to his age, he did make himself useful looking after the quartering of troops and caring for the sick and wounded. His son, Charles, on the other hand, participated actively in the war and at least on one occasion came into very close contact with the enemy."

However, the house was a target for the British/Hessian raiding party because of its connection with Wells Ferry. On Dec. 8th 1776 General Howe ordered General Cornwallis to march from Maidenhead (near Princeton) and seize the Ferries just south of Lambertville. (This too agrees with Gladys' story that the raiding party came from Trenton - this is the period of time Trenton was occupied by the Hessians) Ut-oh - Charles, a revolutionary soldier, is now in grave danger of capture because he is home, not with the army safely across the river.

"Gladys Pidcock records that one day a company of British Regulars and Tories came up from Trenton to hunt rebels. Charles was at home, disabled from hard marching. He tried to escape by the front door, but that was guarded. He went to the back door and there stood two armed men. Taking advantage of the darkness, he sprang past the guards and fled up the steep side of Goat Hill, the rocks cutting his feet at every step. A sharp volley of musket balls fell around him, and the soldiers rushed up the hill after him. Young Pidcock found a hiding place under a large rock; his pursuers even stood upon it; but failing to find him gave up the search. During the affair, the officer in command of the party lost his chapeau. Charles became the possessor and proud owner of the trophy. (See also Traditions of Our Ancestors by John W. Lequear, ed. and pub. by D. H. Moreau, Flemington, NJ, 1957, p. 9.)

According to Lequear, Jonathan's other sons also served in the Revolution under Captain John Phillips, Third Regiment, Hunterdon County Militia, New Jersey. They are also listed as members of the militia in the Military Census of New Jersey of 1793. It is recorded that only Charles received a pension for his military service. "

Apparently, although Charles escaped capture, the British/Hessians did confiscate their house according to Mary Godown Pidcock who learned it from Jonathan Pidcock.

This may have made Jonathan particularly happy with his post war assignment:

"Another event occurred during the war which is of interest since it pertains to Jonathan Pidcock. It seems that inquisitions were being held by the Committees of Safety in New Jersey towns to decide on the disposition of the property of persons known to have joined the Loyalist cause. One such case is documented in the History of Amwell, p. 123. The case was against a Joseph Smith who left Amwell to serve in the British Army. Serving on the Committee of Inquisition were twenty-two citizens of Amwell, including Jonathan Pidcock. The defendant was found guilty as charged. "

It is a good story that ties in very well with the events of Dec. 1776 and with the current Hessian weekend at the Park. It is interesting that we have a first hand account from ordinary citizens of the terror the Hessians - foreign troops - must have engendered. When war is done and history is written we tend to glorify it, but at the time it wreaks havoc on normal life. It is about nearly being killed from being shot at while trying to escape capture.

It is about losing your home because it is confiscated by the occupying power.

It is about God's grace and fate that the raiding party came at night and he was able to escape under cover of darkness. It is about knowing the home terrain and where to hide.