

# November 2005 NewsLetter

## Prelude To Camp Reading - 1778

The year leading up to Camp Reading saw the troops on the march. They marched hundreds of miles to the different encampments. They were trained by Baron von Steuben. They learned to build log huts. They were constantly on watch for British raids. They fought a gallant battle at Monmouth, and won the field. They were hungry, hot or freezing. They needed shoes and clothes. They griped.

One of the best books describing the the everyday life of these troops is *Private Yankee Doodle*, the diary of a young CT soldier named Joseph Plumb Martin who tells all about these events. He was one of the troops in Reading. His descriptions are priceless.

### 3. White Plains, NY



After Monmouth, Washington assembled his Army at White Plains in Westchester. He reorganized the entire army and assigned regiments into the various brigades. During July and August, the Continental Army was at its greatest- ever, strength – almost 24,000 troops.

### 2. Monmouth, NJ



When the British Army left Philadelphia, the Continental troops were hot on their trail. The Battle of Monmouth was the first major engagement the Americans were in after their intensive training at Valley Forge. After a near retreat and disaster, the Americans fought an excellent battle. The Brits retreated during the night. Steuben's training paid off.

### 1. Valley Forge, PA



The New Hampshire brigades, Hazen's Canadians and two CT regiments wintered at Valley Forge. This winter camp set the precedents for winter cantonments. Rules for drill, tactics and even hut building were established here by Washington and his officers. The long march back to the Reading camps began here.

### 4. Fortress West Point to Fredericksburgh, NY



From White Plains the army went to Fredericksburgh NY, (now Pawling and Patterson). The General made his new headquarters at the John Kane House. The army

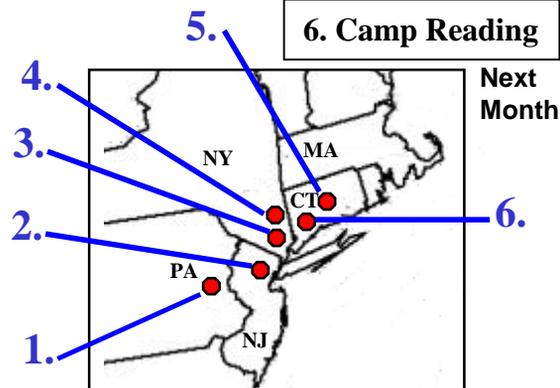
Was positioned on a line from Danbury through Fredericksburgh and on to the Hudson Highlands ( where in fact many of the CT troops had spent the entire year). The main army was there from mid-September through the end of November. Orders were issued by Washington for the various winter encampment locations for the brigades. Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam's Division was ordered to Reading CT. Once again, the troops marched.

### 5. Hartford, CT



Some of Putnam's regiments had been sent onto Hartford to be in an advanced position to move to Boston if necessary. Some of these troops were given a special assignment to escort the "Convention Troops" through north-western CT to the NY border at Sharon. These were the 5,000 plus British prisoners of war who were captured at Saratoga the year before. They were being moved from Cambridge to Charlottesville VA. On or about December 1<sup>st</sup>, all of Putnam's troops were headed for the Reading encampments.

### 6. Camp Reading



## November FAN's Meeting



The November meeting of the Friends group was held on Tuesday November 15th at the Redding Town Hall.



### Discussions held included:

1. Rosemary Payne covered the current Treasurer's Report
2. Nancy Cowles reported that next May's *Living History School Days* program is already booked up for the 5-day week. Area schools have given her their commitments in advance.
3. Nathan Hale showed the group the metal letters which will spell out PUTNAM PARK on the main entrance gate. Old photos show the gate had letters in the early 1900's. The gate is being constructed at the park maintenance barn.
4. Plans for the upcoming annual *December Walk In The Park* event were discussed. The Visitor Center and the park Colonial Museum will be open and staffed with FANs volunteers. Tour participants will meet at the Visitor Center. The 5thCT Regiment will be in attendance for the event. Refreshments will be available at the Visitor Center. Times: 11:00am to 1:00pm. **Please join us!**
5. Jeanine Herman said that there was still some confusion over grant applications to pay for outside consultants to develop a plan for the visitor center; including audio-visual production, AV equipment, displays, store sales, staffing etc. The DEP is going to advise us regarding their grant acceptance regulations.

### PAVILION PLAN



**Happy Holidays To all Friends & Neighbors of Putnam Park**

### Next Meeting

**NO DECEMBER MEETING**



The next FAN's Meeting will be on **Tuesday Evening January 10th** at the new **Visitor Center** at Putnam Park.

The meeting will start at **7:00pm**. The monthly meetings will now be on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday** of each month at the park.