

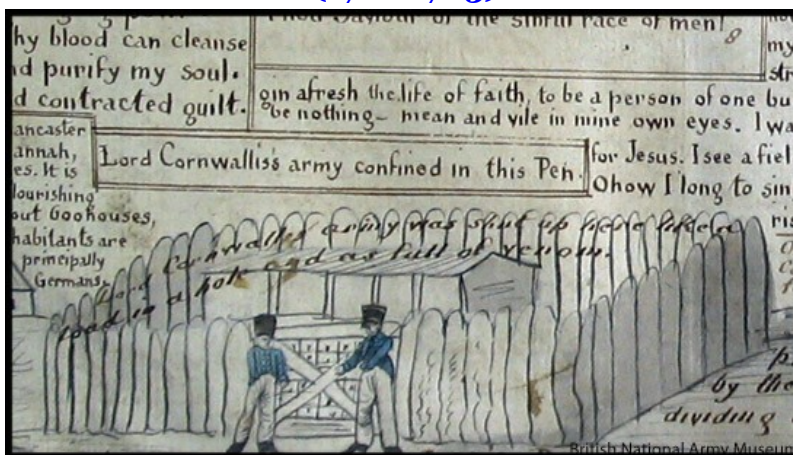
# Friends of Camp Security

2017, Edition 11



## A Revolutionary War Prison Camp

(1781-1783)



Picture possibly drawn by Sergeant Roger Lamb, a British prisoner at the camp.

## Camp Fever

There were accounts of camp fever at Camp Security resulting in the deaths of a number of prisoners. What is meant by "camp fever"? According to the Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, camp fever is defined as: ***"any epidemic fever occurring in camps, chiefly typhus"***.

Encyclopedia of the American Revolution: Library of Military History  
COPYRIGHT 2006 Thomson Gal

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/camp-fever>

Hygiene was a problem during the American Revolution. ***"Compounding problems, close quarters, poor sanitation and hygiene, and contaminated food and water supplies contributed to the rampant spread of disease in army barracks."***

Witness to the American Experience  
New York University Libraries  
New-York Historical Society

[http://maass.nyu.edu/resources/r1/lesson\\_plans/health.html](http://maass.nyu.edu/resources/r1/lesson_plans/health.html)

George Washington recognized cleanliness as a problem, and he made it a priority to address the issue. ***"In 1775, George Washington took command of New England troops who had fought the American Revolution's opening battles and now surrounded Boston to keep the British cooped up there. The***

*newly named American commander found his army an unruly gathering of restless young men in generally filthy and unhealthy camps. He wrote many letters to Congress about the need to change this situation before disease struck and, in one, approved of his men bathing in the Charles River."*

"To Bathe or Not to Bathe" by Edwards Park  
Trend & Tradition Magazine  
<https://www.history.org/foundation/journal/Autumn00/bathe.cfm>

The efforts to educate the troops began to pay off as the war continued .  
*"Things began to improve during the course of the war when the military establishment began to realize how much disease was spread as a result of poor hygiene. In 1776, the book "Military Hygiene" by Dr. John Jones and "Diseases Incident to the Armies Within the Method of Cure" by Baron von Sweeten were published. Benjamin Rush, mentioned earlier, would publish "Directions for Preserving the Health of Soldiers," which recommended daily washing of the hands and face, stressed the importance of clean drinking water and general hygiene. While such advice sounds like common sense today, hygiene was poorly understood at this time."*

Revolutionary War: Surgical and Hygienic Advances  
Qualified Supplier Directory  
<http://www.qmed.com/mpmn/gallery/image/revolutionary-war-surgical-and-hygienic-advances>

The "great sickness" affected the prison population but not the camp guards. Furthermore, Benjamin Shield, a Surgeon Mate in Burgoyne's Convention Army, noted that, *"in about five weeks [they] buried upwards of forty men, women, and children..."*

Horace Sellers (ed), 1895  
Letter of Surgeon's Mate Benjamin Shield to Brigadier-General James Hamilton, 1781  
Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 19, pp. 116-118  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/i20083625>

It is likely the prison population was more vulnerable because their immune systems were depleted by poor nutrition, stress, walking for hundreds of miles from their Virginia camp, and life in close, unsanitary quarters.

Whatever the nature or cause of the "camp fever", it took its toll on the prisoners at Camp Security. According to John Gibson, in the book he published in 1886: *"While there a plague of some kind broke out among them, and a large number of them died. Their graves are still visible marked with stones."*

History of York County Pennsylvania  
John Gibson,  
Chicago: F A Battey Publishing Co., 1886  
<https://archive.org/stream/historyofyorkcouoingibs#page/n177/mode/2up>

## Where In the World is John Crawmer?



**If you have been a volunteer at Camp Security, you are familiar with a volunteer and then Assistant Archaeologist, John Crawmer. Many of you have asked about him and have wondered what John is doing now. John has quite an extensive resume!**

**John Crawmer is a graduate of Spring Grove School District. Upon graduation from high school, John completed basic training as an Infantryman in the Pennsylvania National Guard. Continuing his education, he attained B.A. Degrees from Penn State in Anthropology and Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies while taking courses at the Archaeological Field School in Akko, Israel. Along with those studies, John attended the Archeological Field School in Akko, Israel in 2013 and 2016.**

**In addition to working as Assistant Archaeologist at Camp Security, John has worked as an Archaeological Field Assistant at sites in Lansdale, Pittsburgh, and Fort McCoy, Wisconsin. He also had the opportunity to work at the American Museum of Natural History in New York this past year. Recently, he worked on a prehistoric site in Wisconsin. Presently, he is in Israel working for Penn State supervising a portion of an excavation and teaching students the basics of digging. This September he'll be moving to Boston to start grad school at UMass Boston. John will be studying Historical Archaeology; more specifically, slave populations in southeast and Caribbean plantations.**



Everyone who worked with John at Camp Security, couldn't help but be impressed with his archaeological abilities and knowledge. More than that, as volunteers we appreciated his supportive nature, his pleasant personality, and his wonderful sense of humor. Thank you, John, for all you have done for Camp Security, and we wish you all the best as you continue your studies at UMass.

## **Membership Drive**

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