

In November 1779, Smith's Clove (or just the Clove) was a beehive of activity as George Washington's Main Army marched through it from the vicinity of West Point to winter quarters in New Jersey. Named in its upper reaches for Thomas and David Smith, who had settled in Mountainville and Monroe, Smith's Clove was the long pass through the Ramapo Mountains that extended from Suffern in Rockland County (Sidman's Clove) to Mountainville in Orange. During the Revolution, the 23 miles of the Clove Road served as the military route for the American army as it moved to and from the Hudson River Valley some 15 miles to the east. According to Washington, the Clove was "so exceedingly important that [the British] should never be suffered to possess it." The road was defined by the seven public houses or taverns that served as landmarks and refuges along the way.

Gen. John Sullivan's Western Army was the first to arrive in the Clove on November 2 with the brigades of Brig. Gen. Edward Hand, James Clinton, and Enoch Poor. After a four-day encampment, Sullivan's troops departed for Pompton, New Jersey, where they were greeted by the commander in chief, who had made his way through the Clove from West Point and would use it again for his return. In his General Orders of October 17, Washington had congratulated Sullivan's army on its "complete and full success . . . against the Senecas and other tribes of the six Nations: As a just and necessary punishment for their wanton depredations, their unparallel'd and innumerable Cruelties, their deafness to all remonstrance and intreaty, and their perseverance in the most horrid acts of barbarism, forty of their towns have been reduced to ashes." From mid-November until mid-December, more than 10,000 American



Remembering the
Revolution
by Jim Johnson

troops would pass through the Clove en route to Morristown and points as far south as Charleston, South Carolina. Washington followed his troops to Morristown on November 30. In their "log-house city," he and his army faced the "cruellest" winter of the century, which, one author has written, "tested the soul of the American cause" even more than Valley Forge.

In the environs of New York City, the British and their German allies were also settling down into winter quarters. Hessian Captain Johann Ewald noted in his diary on November 16 that "All the outlying works beyond Kings Bridge [at the northern tip of Manhattan Island] were demolished and abandoned, so that we were

still more restricted this year than in the past." This withdrawal allowed Washington to keep "us as if besieged with his parties" from Tarrytown to the Long Island Sound. Near the Morris mansion in Harlem,

Ewald's Jäger Corps "had to rebuild their own dwellings again. About this time the winter began to set in; consequently, the men suffered very much until they had dug and built their hovels so well that they were protected against the frost." The winter of 1779-1780 was going to test both armies.

The Continental Congress declared Thursday, December 9, "to be a day of public and solemn thanksgiving to Almighty God for his mercies, and of prayer for the continuance of his favor and protection to these United States . . . in the enjoyment of peace, liberty, and safety." We ask the same 225 years later. Happy Thanksgiving

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