

Remembering the Revolution
The Hudson Valley Magazine
February 2004

In February 1779, both the British and American armies manned their major works around New York City and the Hudson Highlands, respectively. While most of the regiments under Maj. Gen. Alexander McDougall's command garrisoned Fort West Point, at least one guarded the depot at Fishkill, Dutchess County. Outposts in the southeastern corner of Westchester attempted to shut off British supply lines and trade.

At West Point, Polish engineer Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko focused his attention on preparing the rafts for the chain (for its placement back in the river in the spring) and designing Redoubt Number 4 to protect the western approaches to Fort Putnam. On the 6th, Kosciuszko advised McDougall that "not more than half the Logs will be fit for service again next Summer," and replacements must be procured from upriver (since proper logs could not be cut nearby). In the same letter, he offered his plan for the redoubt to be made of timber and fascines (long bundles of branches), noting that if McDougall approved, "it will be time to begin cutting the Timber [for the redoubt] immediately." On the 24th, he reported that he had enough timber in hand for the redoubt and that "The men was sent to day for the Logs of the Chain."

In New York, British Gen. Sir Henry Clinton "was tempted by the uncommon mildness of the season to beat up the enemy's quarters." On the 25th, he landed an expedition of 2,500 soldiers at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in an attempt to "surprise" Brig. Gen. William Maxwell's New Jersey Brigade of 800 men. Warned by militia outposts, Maxwell concentrated his troops and successfully repelled the British force. On the 26th, former royal governor and now Maj. Gen. William Tryon led a raid from King's Bridge against Horseneck (West Greenwich), Connecticut, that captured cattle; destroyed a salt works, military stores, and provisions; and burned three small ships. Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam rallied a force of Continentals and militiamen and captured 50 men from the British rear guard as it withdrew.

These types of raids would continue over the rest of the year as both sides contested "the neutral ground" in the quest for supplies and support. Clinton also started planning for a foray up the Hudson in the spring that would lead to the battle of Stony Point.

To keep track of events related to the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution, see the Hudson River Valley Institute's Digital Library at www.hudsonrivervalley.net. - Jim Johnson

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