

Dover July 30th 1776

Capt. Gordon came with this with  
intention to accept of being Paymaster to the  
Delaware Battalion - I arrived at Home yesterday  
about 12 O'clock and found the Whigs in the  
spirit of permitting the Tories to obtain Officers  
in the Flying Camp - they affected to make a stir  
but only made a point to borrow three or four young  
men who said very desirous to go to Capt. J. Cadwell  
- The Tories never discovered this till the Capt. were chosen  
but then were astonished to find Skillington & Manlove  
were carried away - for the Whig Officers were evidently  
the Majority - The Tories wanted them to bring some  
of their own men but the Whigs were for having  
them of a piece & run them in - While the Elect.  
was going on the Comm. met & went in a body to the  
Court House where (the Election being stopped) the President  
the Declaration of Congress - & the Resolution of the  
House of Assembly for the appointments of a Convention  
each of which received the highest approbation of the people  
in these Parts - The Committee then went in a body  
back to their room where they sent for a picture of the  
King of Great Britain & made the drummer of the  
Infantry bear it before the President, and the Committee  
marched two thro, followed by the Light Infantry in  
slow time with music, round the Square - then forming  
a circle round a fire prepared in the middle of the Square  
for that purpose, the President, pronouncing the following  
Committee to the Names - viz. *Expelled by strong necessity*  
thus,

Thus we destroy even the shadow of that King who is refused to reign over a free people" - Thmes Augar again and the greatest joy in every countenance except a few long faces - The Whigs are in the highest spirits and are determined to carry the convention - which I believe they will accomplish -

I apprehend Collins has not made his return right as he has not sent you the dates (as I hear) of the officers commissions - I send you Capt: Caldwell - and I apprehend they have not elapsed their rights, as the Subalterns of the first rank ought to be with the Capt: of the first Rank, which they have not observed - but I think this is properly with you to settle - & upon this principle they will be thus -

1 Capt: Caldwell	2 Capt: Mellington	3 Capt: Manlove
1 Lieut: Lowbar	1 Lieut: Martin	1 Lieut: Gibbs
2 Lieut: Maxwell	2 Lieut: Gordon	2 Lieut: Manlove
Ensign Dill	Ensign Larky	Ensign Cahoon

This is agreeable to their Rank in the Malitia - The Tories have been talking a trick, and I am just informed that they seem generally to fix on

Tho: Collins  
Lieut. Cook  
J. Hunt  
Res. Bishop  
J. Sykes  
R. Smith  
G. Rodney  
G. Ridgely  
J. Clarke  
Y. White

But Doct: Ridgely publicly declares off - but this I take as a promise to stay clear of business till the day - I thus with the use of your name in the mean time to play the same card they did last October - but we shall take care - The Committee has adjourned to next Friday week to enquire into the insurrection here, to take depositions to be returned to the Convention - The Whigs insist on an enquiry - Get a opinion in the meantime - I think it is necessary

Thomas Rodney

James Sykes was  
Chairman of the Comm  
at this time -

James Sykes

Chairman of the Comm

at this time

20

The Hon.  
Gen. Rooney Esq:  
in  
Congress



Jan 20th 1796

LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE HON. CAESAR RODNEY ESQ<sup>R</sup> IN CONGRESS

Dover July 30<sup>th</sup> 1776

<sup>n</sup>  
Capt: Gordon came with this with intention to accept of being Paymaster to the Delaware Batalion - I arrived at home yesterday about 12 oclock and found the Whigs in the spirit of permitting the Tories to obtain officers in The Flying Camp - they affected to make a stir but only made a point to carry three or four young men who seem'd very desirous to go & Capt<sup>n</sup> J. Caldwell. The Tories never discovered this till the Capt<sup>ns</sup> were chose, but then were astonished to find Skillington & Manlove were carried so easy - for the Whig officers were evidently the majority. The Tories wanted them to trick some of their own men but the Whigs were for having them of a piece & run them in - While the Elect<sup>n</sup>: was goin on the Comm. met & went in a body to the Court House where (the Election being stoped) the President read the Declaration of Congress - & the Resolution of the House of Assembly for the appointments of a Convention each of which received the highest approbation of the people in three Huzas - The Committee then went in a body back to their room where they sent for a picture of the King of Great Britain & made the Drummer of the Infantry bare it before the President, and the Committee marched two & two, followed by the Light Infantry in slow time with music, round the Square - then forming a circle round a fire prepared in the middle of the Square for that purpose, the president, pronouncing the following committed to the flames - viz. "Compelled by strong necessity, thus we destroy even the Shadow of that King who refused to reign over a free people" - Three Huzas again and the greatest joy in every

countenance except a few long faces - The Whigs are in the highest spirits and are determined to carry the Convention - which I believe they will accomplish -

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<sup>n</sup> 1 Capt: Caldwell	<sup>n</sup> 2 Capt: Skillington	<sup>n</sup> 3 Capt: Manlove
<sup>n</sup> 1 Lieut: Lowbar	<sup>n</sup> 1 Lieut: Marim	<sup>n</sup> 1 Lieut: Gibbs
<sup>n</sup> 2 Lieut: Maxwell	2 Coe Gordon	<sup>n</sup> 2 Lieut: Manlove
Ensign Dill	Ensign Lacky	Ensign Cahoon

This is agreeable to their Rank in the Militia - The Tories have been talking a ticket and I am just informed - that they seem generally to fix on

<sup>s</sup>Tho. Collins  
<sup>o</sup>Jn. Cooke  
J. Stout  
<sup>n</sup>Resd. Bishop  
J. Sykes  
R. Smith  
C. Rodney  
C. Ridgely  
J. Clark  
T. White

<sup>r</sup>But Doct: Ridgely publickly declares off - but this I take as a manuver to steer clear of incur 'till the Day - & thus with the

use of your name in the mean time to play the same card they did last October - but we shall take care - The Committee has adjourned to next Fryday week to inquire into the insurrection here - to take Depositions to be returned to the Convention - The Whigs insist on an inquiry - Your opinion in the mean time - I think it is necessary.

Thomas Rodney

James Sykes was  
Chairman of the Comm.  
at this time -

Dover June 15<sup>th</sup> 1776.

Capt. We have been all in Confusion, this whole Week. The Night after you left us, an Express came from Col. Dagworthy, which you have seen: in consequence of which the Infantry with Captain Pope, marched next Morning to the Three Runs, and were joined on the Road by several Companies of the Lower Battalion, and together made a very formidable Appearance. We were the first entered Sussex County and Pitched our Camp at the Meeting House and stayed that Night, Waiting for some Officer to head the whole Force & give us some Instructions, but none such came. Col. Rhodes we never saw till next Morning, who came to Order us back again, much against our Will. Col. Collins not thinking I suppose of the Captains who marched from the Upper part of our County capable of directing their several small Corps, thought proper to march a Foot with them, and neither him or them we ever saw, until we Pass'd them on the Road as we Returned home next day. Major Battelle never left Horse, until the Next day, after he heard we were on the Way home, and then met us with a smiling Countenance. The Light Mares were exceedingly officious in settling the disputes. Lieutenant Chew took Charge it seems of settling it himself without the knowledge of Cap. Pope, who ought to have the Command there & give directions. He rode down to Ryleys Tavern as he says, and corresponded back & forth with Bradley who appears to be the leading Man among the Insurgents, and Returning to us in the Night, Produced a Number of Papers from Committee or Council Men &c which you saw by E. Cole, and Advised us the Insurgents were all dispersed. And Advised we should Return home, in consequence of which. Barst, Furby, & some others



set off immediately, fully satisfied of the Validity of  
Information. But Cap: Pope with myself, & Cap: Many  
and Caldwell (who with their Companies, were much at-  
tached to Us) all stayed on the Ground till Morning  
when Col. Rhodes arrived himself and directed his Bat-  
talion to Return. Major Hodgson also came, and  
was again returning, as was Pope & Myself: Cap:  
Pope immediately took Horse & rode to Evans's the  
Place of the Tories Rendezvous, but found Nobody & was  
informed they were all gone, but before he returned  
Col. Rhodes, with Captains Many & Jo. Caldwell  
with him, were left us: & his Company with the In-  
fantry left alone amidst the Tories; and on his Return  
We marched back, but by no means Satisfied of the  
Method of Settlement, as it appears very evidently  
the Troop had juggled the Matter, under Color of making  
Peace, and the Tories only dispersed with an Agreement  
to Meet as soon as we were gone: I think we had better  
been without them (the Troop). We were the next Mor-  
ning alarmed again, as you have seen by Lieut. Gordon, of  
Whom you have had full Information. Our Comp.  
are prepared again for the March as soon as a command-  
ing Officer arrives who wont be tripted with by a Troop  
or a Tory Deception, (but not before I believe). —

You were informed Rich: Smith turned out well on  
this Occasion, it is said the met at Dover very Nume-  
-rous, as he now has Roeb & part Lockwoods: but they got no farther  
and waited some considerable Time next day for our Return  
as they declared to give us a Timminy, but left of Town before  
we got in.

I am Sir Your Very H. S. Mark M. Call.

<sup>at</sup>  
Horse

Devoe

June 1776

Mark M'Callin

To Capt. Tho. Rodney

the Delaware regiment. Haslet drew his men back toward the north, but Rall fell upon him with full force. A part of the first three Delaware companies broke and were driven from the field, but Haslet held the rest of them, lined them up behind a fence and "twice repulsed the Light Troops and Horse of the enemy."<sup>12</sup>

"During the struggle thus made by the heroic Haslet"<sup>13</sup> the frontal attack was continued. The New York and Maryland troops were being driven back. Smallwood's Marylanders fought desperately, their colonel was twice wounded and, at last, his men were thrown back in confusion. Ritzema's New Yorkers made an equally gallant effort, but the weight of the onslaught was too heavy for them to sustain. McDougall saw that further resistance was hopeless. He retreated with the New York and Maryland troops to a road that offered a way to the main lines and held them there to protect the withdrawal of the Delawares. Haslet's men stood alone on the field.

But now the dragoons were returning from their chase and forming for a charge upon the Delawares, along with all the rest of the attacking force. "Seeing ourselves deserted on all hands," says Haslet, "and the continued column of the enemy advancing, we also retired." "In a great body, neither running nor observing the best of order,"<sup>14</sup> they were the last to leave the field, and they brought off their artillery.

Trevelyan says, "The Delaware regiment, which had learned at Long Island that prisoners are not easily made, unless they make themselves, brought up the rear and fought sullenly and composedly while any of the assailants followed them within shooting range."<sup>15</sup>

The retreating troops were met by a detachment from the main army, coming too late to help them in the fight. Haslet then reformed his men and "marched into camp in the rear of the body sent to reinforce us." "The British ascended [to the top of] the hill very slowly; and when arrived at the summit, formed and dressed their line without the least attempt to pursue the Americans."<sup>16</sup>

In this battle, the Delaware regiment lost 15 killed and as many wounded; among the wounded were Lieutenant Colonel Bedford, Captain Caldwell and Ensign Hazzard. Captain Adams was

killed.<sup>17</sup> The total American loss is, as usual, variously stated. Bancroft says less than a hundred killed and wounded. Irving says between three and four hundred, including prisoners taken. Marshall says the same. Whitton, citing an English account, says very definitely 313. Hufeland, citing regimental returns, says 175.<sup>18</sup>

The British and Hessian losses vary but slightly in the telling. Bancroft says 229. As officially reported, the British lost five officers and 23 of the rank and file killed, five officers and 121 men wounded, the Hessians 77.<sup>19</sup>

It was a technical victory for the British and Hessians, who had driven the Americans from the field and themselves held it, but it had taken 7,500 of them to overcome not more than 1,600 Americans, really only 1,200 after the militia had run away. The glory of the day was rather on the other side.

The American troops engaged, especially Haslet's and Smallwood's men have received from the historians due praise. Bancroft speaks of their "determined resistance." Irving says "a brave stand was made . . . by Haslet, Ritzema and Smallwood." Greene praises the effective resistance made by "two excellent regiments in McDougall's brigade." Carrington says "Haslet's Delaware and Smallwood's Maryland had again confirmed their reputation." Reed notes that "again the Maryland and Delaware regiments . . . were in the thickest of the fight." Trevelyan says "these few slender battalions . . . defended their position with coolness and tenacity."<sup>20</sup>

This battle, measured by the numbers engaged, was an unimportant affair, but, like that on Harlem Plains it had important results. The check Howe had received changed the expected course of events, as will be seen.

Delaware patriots during the war. Like their associates of the other States, they were not prepared to accept the Yorktown surrender as the end of the war. They did not at first understand that King George III. and his ministry had been crushed by the tremendous power of the French alliance, and the defeat of the flower of the British army under Cornwallis. The recruits who had seen the Yorktown surrender were returned home, and disbanded in January of 1782. Seymour's diary tells of the movements of Kirkwood's men after they had no more fighting to do in the South. He wrote :

"On November 16th, 1782, the Delaware Regiment had orders to hold themselves in readiness to march home from the southward. On the same day started from Head-quarters on the Ashley river for home, coming by way of Camden. Having arrived there November 22nd, were detained thirteen days by orders from General Greene; left on December 5th; coming by way of Salisbury, Petersburg, Carter's Ferry, on James River, we arrived at Georgetown in Maryland, January 12th, 1783; left there the same day and arrived at Christiana Bridge on the 17th, after a march of seven hundred and twenty miles from Encampment on Ashley River, which was performed with very much difficulty, our men being so very weak after a tedious sickness which prevailed amongst them all last summer and fall."

The "Blue Hen's Chickens," a *sobriquet* which the Delawareans had been honored with since the beginning of the war, resumed their duties as citizens upon their return home. The appellation dates back to the days of 1776, when Captain Jonathan Caldwell's company, of Haslet's regiment, took with them game chickens, celebrated in Kent County for their fighting qualities, and said to be of the brood of a certain blue hen, renowned through the country-side. Mr. Whitely, in collecting this information, found the following names of the officers and members of the company :

Jonathan Caldwell, captain.	John Corse, 4th sergt.
John Patten, 1st lieutenant.	John McCannon, 1st corp.
George McCall, 2d lieutenant.	John Dewees, 2d corp.
James Stevens, ensign.	Robert Oram, 3d corp.
John Depoister, 1st sergt.	Isaac Matthews, 4th corp.
Joseph Campbell, 2d sergt.	Robert Thompson, drummer.
John Rown, 3d sergt.	Cornelius Comegys, fifer.

*Privates.*

John Shearn.	John Hart.
James Millington.	Francis Blair.
John Manning.	John Wilson.
John Kinnamon.	John May.
Michael McGinnis.	Thomas Flinn.
Robert Solway.	George Riall.
William Plowman.	Peter Grewell.
John Allen.	William Perry.
John Butler.	Ephraim Townsend.
Jacob Wilson.	Isaac Cox.
Nathan Bowen.	John Matthews.
John Pegg.	William Hall.
George Bateman.	Mark Ivans.
Joseph Robinson.	Hosea Wilson.
James Carson.	John Edingfield.
John Nickerson.	Nathan Gaus.
John Spring.	Lewis Humphreys.
Zachariah Baily.	Kimber Haslet.
Peter Bice.	Garrett Fagan.
James Robinson.	Harman Clarke.
John Simmons.	John Tims.
Robert Graham.	Lambert Williams.
John Kelly.	William Mott.
Allen Robinett.	Alexander McDowell.
William Edingfield.	Daniel Lawley.
Robert Ferrell.	Peter Wilcox.

In the intervals of duty Caldwell's men used to amuse themselves with pitting their game-cocks, and the fame of the matches spread throughout the

army and into cotemporary history, so that the "Blue Hen's Chickens" became a synonym for the Delaware veterans. Their record may fittingly be concluded with Henry Lee's remark, in speaking of the Continental line, that "the State of Delaware furnished one regiment only, and certainly no regiment in the army surpassed it in soldier-ship."

Ramsey, in his "History of the United States," vol. i. p. 209, says :

"The Delaware Regiment was reckoned the most efficient in the Continental Army. It went into active service soon after the commencement of the contest with Great Britain, and served through the whole of it. Courting danger wherever it was to be encountered, frequently forming part of a victorious army, but oftener the companions of their countrymen in the gloom of disaster, the Delawares fought at Brooklyn, at Trenton and at Princeton, at Brandywine and at Germantown, at Guilford and at Eutaw, until at length, reduced to a handful of brave men, they concluded their services with the war in the glorious termination of the Southern campaign."

Doctors Latimer and Tilton were the medical officers of distinction whom Delaware furnished. Whitely says of them :

"Dr. Henry Latimer was born in Newport in 1752. He commenced the study of medicine in Philadelphia, and completed it by graduating at the Medical College of Edinburgh. Upon his return home he commenced the practice of his profession in Wilmington, but in 1777 he, as well as Dr. Tilton, were appointed surgeons in the Continental Army, and were attached to what was called the Flying Hospital, and were with the army in all the battles in the Northern Department, from Brandywine to Yorktown. He acquired quite a distinction as a surgeon, and on peace he returned to the practice of his profession. He was elected a member of our Legislature after our State organization; also to Congress from 1793 to 1795, and was elected in 1794 by the Legislature one of the Senators from this State in Congress, and served out his constitutional term. He died in 1819.

"Dr. James Tilton's history is about the same as Dr. Latimer's. He entered the army as surgeon of Colonel Haslet's Regiment. He was also skilled and honored as a surgeon. Upon the return of peace he settled on the property now owned by William Howland; was Surgeon-General of the army in the War of 1812, and died in 1818."

The concluding incident of the war in or around Delaware, occurred April 8, 1782, when the American sloop-of-war "Hyder Alley," Captain Barney, defeated the British sloop "General Monk," at the entrance of the bay. At the session of the Legislature on January 25, 1782, President Dickinson sent in a long message, in which he congratulated his countrymen upon the successes of the American cause in the South, but reminded them of what appeared to be the decision of the British ministry to push the war to extremes, and to break the Franco-American alliance. The final paragraphs of his message are an exhibition of the spirit prevalent in Delaware, to continue the war unto the last stage of exhaustion, if necessary. He wrote :

"We, knowing that a vast majority of the inhabitants of these States will, at every hazard, maintain their independence, now indispensably necessary for supporting their honor and happiness, and desire no peace but upon this ground, and that not one in a hundred would risk life or property for reconciliation upon any other terms, have relied too much upon this solid mass of opposition. Relaxation ensued and has been followed by its natural consequences. Happily for us, indeed, virtue has frequently paid the arrears of prudence. On the other hand, our enemies, viewing the same subject through the deceiving mediums of passion and prejudice, believe that the thinness of our battalions and the dilatoriness of our supplies are in a great degree occasioned by the disaffection of large numbers to our cause. This error produces another, and leads them to expect a dissolution of public credit from dissatisfaction at the burthens imposed, and a flattering comparison between their