

COLONEL JOHN HASLET

John Haslet, son of Joseph and Ann (Dykes) Haslet, was born in Ulster, Ireland, probably at Coleraine between 1727 and 1735. He was ordained a Presbyterian minister at Bally Kelly, County Derry, Ireland, in 1753. Shortly afterward he emigrated to America, for in 1758 he held a Captain's commission in James Burd's 2nd Pennsylvania Battalion, which saw service at Fort Duquesne. The first evidence of his presence in Delaware is a letter datelined New Castle, May 15, 1759. By 1764, he was practicing medicine in Kent County. About 1765 he was married there to Jemima, the daughter of Henry Molleston and widow of John Brinckle. He appears to have been active in public affairs, for he was Colonel of one of Kent County's two militia companies, and is said to have been elected several times to the Assembly in the period just prior to the Revolution, years for which no legislative Journals have survived.

On January 19, 1776, John Haslet, Esquire, upon the nomination of the Three Lower Counties on Delaware, was chosen by the Continental Congress to be Colonel of the battalion to be raised in those Counties. When the troops had been recruited and outfitted, and had seen some home defense duty, especially in Sussex County, the battalion proceeded to Wilmington in mid-July, 1776, then to Philadelphia on August 3. On August 8 they were detailed for the attempted defense of New York, which they reached via Amboy, New Jersey. Although the Delaware men served gallantly at Long Island, Haslet himself was on detached duty on the day of the battle. He took a prominent part in a skirmish near Mamaroneck, and the ensuing battle at White Plains in October, in the retreat across New Jersey, and in

DOES "COL. JOHN HASLET" MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU

A Short Biography Of A Noted Delawarean or A Scrap Of Important State History.

Colonel John Haslet was Irish by birth, but for several years preceding the Revolutionary war lived at Dover. He had been educated for the Presbyterian ministry, and preached frequently after coming to America, but subsequently abandoned the pulpit and became a practitioner of medicine. He was a large, athletic and handsome man, and in courage and impulse a typical Irishman. From the earliest days of the American conflict he was a stalwart Whig, and Caesar Rodney early fastened upon him as a fit man for military command. Rodney wrote him daily from the Continental Congress in the early summer of 1776, inciting him to the work of raising troops. When the Declaration of Independence was adopted Rodney despatched a mounted messenger, Ensign Wilson, on the night of July 4th, to carry the news to Haslet. He found Haslet at Dover, extremely busy enlisting men. "I congratulate you, sir," wrote Haslet in reply, "on the important day which restores to every American his birth-right,—a day which every free man will record with gratitude, and the millions of posterity read with rapture." A fine turtle feast at Dover announced and anticipated the declaration of Congress. After the death of Haslet, at Princeton, his body was deposited in the burial grounds of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. In 1783 the Delaware Legislature caused a marble slab to be placed over his grave, and on February 22, 1841, they appointed a committee to superintend the removal of the corpse to a vault to be built in the Presbyterian Church at Dover, and authorized them to have a suitable monument, with appropriate inscription and devices, placed over his final resting place. On July 1, 1841, his remains were disinterred and conveyed to Dover, escorted by the military of the city of Philadelphia; and on July 3rd, after impressive religious services and an eloquent address from the Hon John M. Clayton they were deposited in the vault prepared for them.

Colonel Haslet left a son and two daughters. The son, Joseph Haslet, was twice, in 1811 and 1823, elected Governor of this State, an honor Delaware never conferred upon any other citizen. One of his daughters, Jemima, married Dr. George Monro, who was a skillful and learned physician, resident in Wilmington from 1797 until his death in 1820. Of Dr. Monro's children, the only survivor was Mrs. Mary A. Boyd, of Wilmington. The other daughter of Colonel Haslet married Major Patten, but died childless.

Colonel Haslet was in command of the Delaware militia in March 1776 when the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety was informed that the enemy were in Lewes Road, they ordered four of the armed boats to exert their utmost endeavors to take or destroy all such vessels of the enemy as they might find in Delaware. Col. Haslet was on the lookout and kept Mr. Read, then President of Congress, fully informed of the progress of affairs.

The first regiment raised was that of Col. John Haslet, which was in fact, in process of formation before independence had been declared. They were State troops and the regiment comprised eight companies of about one hundred men each. A large portion of the regiment was in Dover on July 5th, when the news of the Declaration of Independence reached there. The troops were assembled under the direction of the

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Committee of Safety and a picture of King George was procured. The drummer bore it before the President and after a march around the square, a circle was formed about a fire which had been prepared and the picture was cast into the flames, the President pronouncing these words: "Compelled by strong necessity, thus we destroy even the shadow of that King who refused to reign over a free people."

On July 20th the regiment was ordered to Philadelphia where it attracted much commendation. On August 7th Congress directed that the regiment be equipped with arms lately imported and then report to General Washington at Amboy, N. J., where they were brigaded with some Pennsylvania and Maryland troops, under command of Brigadier General Stirling.

In the meantime the seat of the war had been transferred to New York which city the British General, Sir William Howe, determined to take and for the purpose landed over twenty-thousand troops on Long Island. Washington, who with the main army, was fortified on New York island, placed General Putnam in command of about eight thousand men posted in Brooklyn. Generals Sullivan and Stirling were under General Putnam with their brigades. Early on August 27th, General Putnam notified General Stirling that the enemy was approaching along Martense Lane and ordered him to take three regiments "advance beyond the line and repulse the enemy." Hastily gathering Haslet's Delaware battalion, some Pennsylvania and Maryland troops, Stirling advanced upon the left wing of the enemy. About eleven o'clock, the enemy received two thousand reinforcements whereupon Stirling ordered forward his Delaware reserves and a sharp contest ensued. After this battle the regiment went into camp at King's Bridge, Westchester County, New York. On October 28th the battle of Chatterton's Hill took place and again the Delaware men were called into the thick of the fight by the orders of General Washington.

The general army returned of November 3rd, 1776, showed Colonel Haslet's to have fit for duty 28 commissioned and no-commissioned officers and 273 rank and file; 254 men were sick and 21 were detailed on special duty. Washington was compelled to retreat through New Jersey to the banks of the Delaware and when Haslet's regiment was in camp there on December 22nd, the whole number present and fit for duty were 15 officers and 92 men. Much of this depletion was due to the fact that a large number of its officers as well as the rank and file had returned home to enlist in a new regiment which was being organized under a law of Continental Congress, for service during the war, and under conditions offering better pay and regularity of promotion. With less than a hundred men Haslet took part in the battle of Princeton on Christmas Day, 1776, but there are no records of the performance of the command in that affair. Its last service was in the battle of Princeton, January 2, 1777, in which Colonel Haslet was killed while leading his handful of men gallantly into action. They had reached Stony Brook at sunrise and were marching along the Quaker road when they came upon Mawhood's British Regiment. In the fight that immediately ensued Haslet was shot through the head.

HASLET, OF DELAWARE.

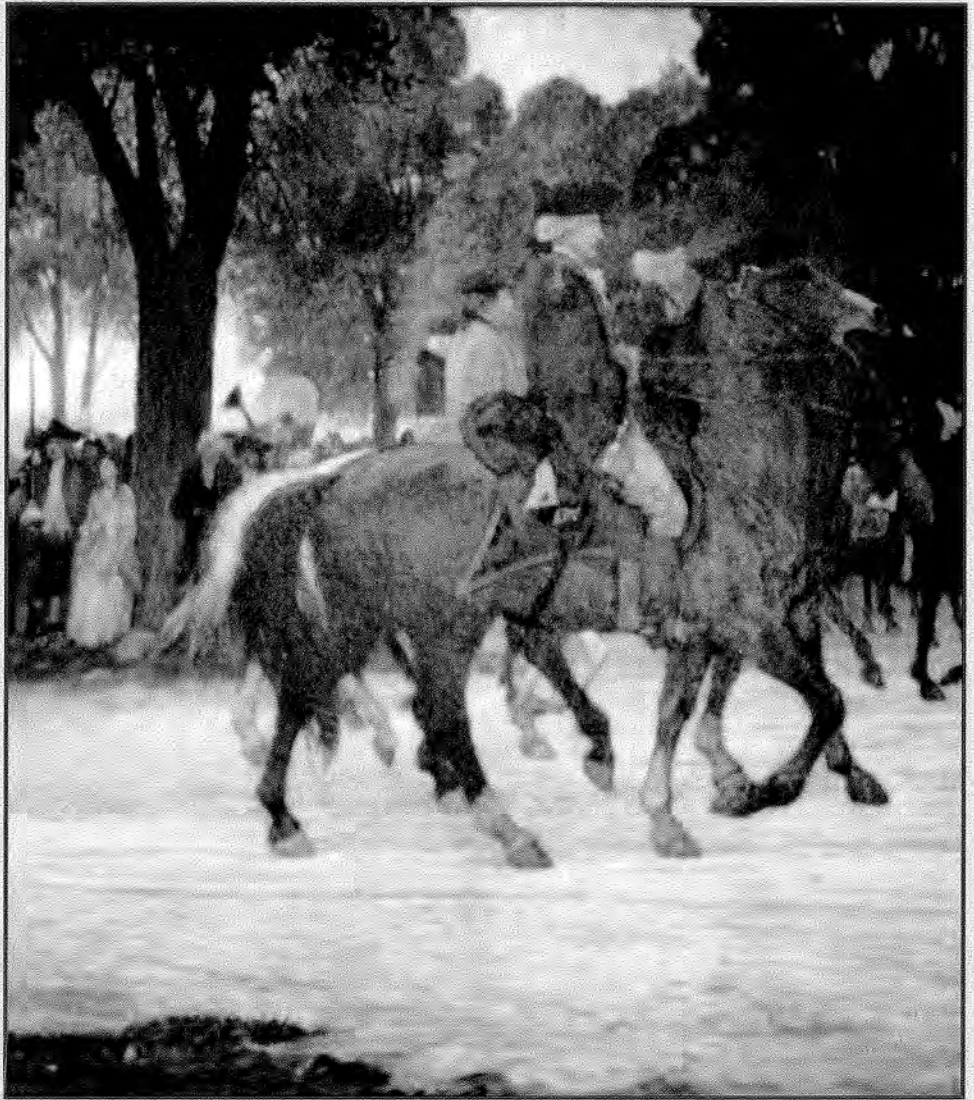
A manuscript left among the papers of the late William McKin, of Baltimore, Md., states the Haslet family was represented in Delaware and Maryland prior to the Revolution by three (3) brothers, John, Joseph and William Haslett (as the name was then spelled), natives of the north of Ireland and of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian stock.

Another brother, James Haslett, remained at Coleraine in Ireland, and left two (2) sons, who about the year 1800 entered into business in Baltimore, Md., as merchants, but finally settled at Charleston, South Carolina.

The eldest of the four brothers, John Haslett (or Haslet, as he eventually wrote his name), was educated for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, but after his immigration and settlement in Mispillion hundred, Kent county, Delaware, he took up the practice of medicine. During the colonial wars with France he commanded a company in Colonel James Burd's 2nd Pennsylvania Battalion in the expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758 and '9. (See Penna. State Archives, 2nd series, vol. II).

At the outbreak of the Revolution, he accepted the command of the Delaware regiment furnished by the state upon the call of the Continental Congress, being commissioned on January 19, 1776, and remained in service till killed at the battle of Princeton, January 3, 1777. He was buried in Philadelphia, but in 1841, his remains were removed by the State of Delaware and buried with great ceremony on July 3 in the Presbyterian churchyard at Dover, where a monument marks their resting place.

John Haslet: A Useful One



by Fred B. Walters



JOHN HASLET'S WORLD

*An Ardent Patriot, the Delaware Blues,
and the Spirit of 1776*

David Price

Author of *The Road to Assunpink Creek*

L
LIFE OF COLONEL JOHN HASLET OF DOVER

By

Catherine W. Tarburton

Historical and Literary Reciprocity Committee

Col. Haslet Chapter, B.A.R.

Dover, Delaware

FOREWORD

Information for this paper was secured from the following sources:

Scharf's History of Delaware

Historical and Biographical Papers of Delaware

Records in the State Archives of Delaware

I am indebted to Judge Henry C. Conrad for his assistance in obtaining and collecting this information from the Dover State House. Also to Mr. John W. Hering of Milford, Delaware whose ancestral chart of Col. Haslet I have used.

The Delegates from this State to Congress
in 1783, who were impowered to cause a
Marble Tomb Stone to be erected over
the grave of Col. John Hart, at the
~~expense~~ of this State, beg leave to Report

That owing to the death of
the Person first employed, and sundry
other disappointments which it is
~~unnecessary to mention, the work~~
was not completed till the last
Summer. That a handsome Marble
Tomb Stone is now erected in the
Burying Ground of the Presbyterian
Church in Market Street, Philadelphia,
upon which the following inscription
is cut, viz.

To the Honourable the Senate and House
of Representatives of the State of Delaware
now in Session.

The undersigned, a Committee appointed by
Joint Resolutions of the Senate and House of Rep-
resentatives of the State of Delaware adopted at
Dover, on the 22^d February 1841, and charged with
the duty of proceeding to the City of Philadelphia
before the fourth day of July then next following,
for the purpose of bringing the remains of the late
Col. John Haslet, Commander of the Delaware
Regiment in the Revolutionary War, who fell at the
Battle of Princeton in January 1777, from their
depository in said City, and placing them in the
burying ground of the Presbyterian Church in
the Town of Dover, and to cause a suitable mon-
ument, with appropriate inscriptions and de-
vices, prepared by a skilful artist to be erected
over them under their superintendance, respect-
fully ask leave to make the following report of
their proceedings:

In the month of May 1841, pursuant to
previous arrangement the Committee met toge-
ther in the City of Philadelphia, and entered up-
on the discharge of the duty assigned them. —
Having ascertained that the body of Col. Haslet
was interred in the old burying ground belong-
ing to the first Presbyterian Church in said City,
they visited the place, and were shown the spot
where his remains lay, over which they found a
marble slab which had been placed there by order
of the General Assembly of this State in the year 1783,
with the following inscription:

In Memory of
John Haslet, Esquire,

*The
Dedication
Of
The Colonel John Haslet Monument*



*Sunday, the Thirtieth of December
Two Thousand and One*