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THE OLD BARRACKS,

AT

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY.

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READ BEFORE THE NEW JERSEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AT THEIR
MEETING AT TRENTON, JANUARY 20, 1881,

BY

WILLIAM S. ^{author}STRYKER,

ADJUTANT GENERAL OF NEW JERSEY.

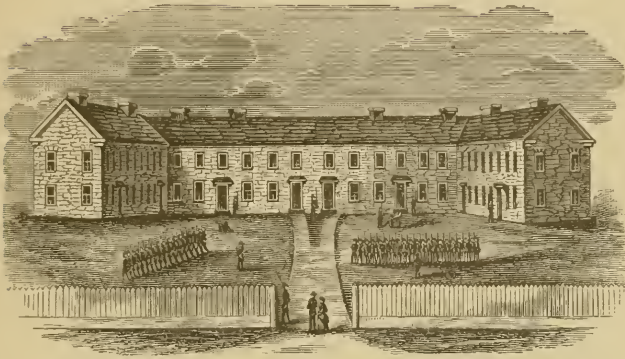
TRENTON, N. J.

NAAR, DAY & NAAR, BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.

1885.

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THE OLD BARRACKS AT TRENTON.



During the years 1755, 1756 and 1757 the inhabitants of the Province of New Jersey were in a state of constant apprehension of an attack by hostile Indians. The reports which reached them from the mountain districts of Pennsylvania of the atrocious cruelties of savages produced the most intense anxiety among the industrious farmers of New Jersey. The movements of French troops, with their Indian allies, contributed at various times to the distressing fear which pervaded the entire colony. This feeling was somewhat allayed whenever any large body of British soldiers passed through the Province, or were stationed for any period in their midst, or in the neighboring colony on the west of the Delaware River.

Among the military records of this State we find many items of peculiarly local interest in reference to the billeting of English troops for lodging and subsistence on the

inhabitants of Trenton. During the year 1757 and the early part of the following year John Allen had entire charge of this business in the village. He was a brother of Isaac Allen, a prominent lawyer in Trenton at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, who became Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Battalion of New Jersey Volunteers, General Skinner's command of Loyalists. In October, 1758, John Allen received from Samuel Smyth, Esq., Treasurer of the Province, £999, s. 16, p. 11, on account of monies paid to one hundred and twenty-four persons in Trenton for quartering soldiers. These persons seem to have been paid two shilling and five pence per week for each soldier. This mode of lodging became very annoying to the people of the State; the habits and the morals of the soldiers were not always such as they desired, and the whole system became exceedingly hard to endure. The near approach at times of the stealthy foe, the letters which were received in Trenton giving notice of the murder of men in Sussex county by the savages, made the people think some permanent arrangement should be made for their future protection.

The fears of the inhabitants of Trenton of incursions of the Indians first found expression in the winter of 1757, by a petition to the General Assembly of the Province. There are thirty-nine petitions of a similar character on file in the military records of the State. The names of the signers of these documents are particularly interesting to the citizens of Trenton, as the descendants of many of these men still reside in this city.

To the Honourable the House of Representatives of the Province of New Jersey in Generall Assembly now Met and Sitting at the City of Burlington in the county of Burlington, in the Western Division of the said Province.

The Petition of the Magistrates, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the Town

of Trenton and other places adjacent in the County of Hunterdon, in the s'd Province,

Humbly Sheweth

That altho we your Petitioners do with truly Loyal and gratefull Hearts acknowledge how much we Owe to our Most Gracious Sovereign, and his Parliament, for furnishing us with repeated supplies of Troops at this Criticall Juncture of Affairs when our all is threatened and endangered by our Inveterate and Potent Enemy, in Conjunction with surrounding nations of Cruel and deceitfull Savages. And altho we are chearfully willing to exert the utmost of our power to render these his Majesties Troops perfectly usefull, and to answer the just end for which they were designed, in proportion to the number that shall from time to time fall to our share to support: Yet such is the Scituation of Trenton being so great a thoroughfare, and consequently so many soldiers continually passing and repassing upon their Severall Commands, and Quartered upon us Night and day, that unless by the Assistance of this Honourable House we can by some wholesome Law and legal Remedy be eased of this present Distress, the Country will be no longer able to bear the Burden, nor the Officers have it in their Power to keep their stragling Soldiers under due Command and Subjection.

We shall not take upon us to dictate to this Honourable House what should be the method of this Remedy, but hope we may presume to offer our Sentiments, that if we could be provided with convenient Barracks it would answer all ends both as to the conveniency and safety that would redound to the Troops, as well as the great ease and advantage it would be to the Subject.

We therefore your Petitioners Humbly request that this Honourable House would speedily take it into Consideration and enable us to erect and Build such sufficient and Convenient Barracks for the purposes aforesaid or to give us such other adequate Remedy, in such Measure, and with such Power & Authority, and with such Clauses, Proviso's and restrictions as to this Honourable House, in their Wisdom shall think meet and fitt.

And your Petitioners as in duty Bound shall ever Pray &c.

Clotworthy Reed (The Stile Except'd), Jos. Higbee, Theo. Severns, W. Morris, Hezekiah Howell, Wm. Cleayton, Thomas Moore, Charles Axford, jun'r. (the stile excepted), Moore Furman, William Ball, John Chambers, George Davies, Alex. Anderson, John Rickey, Wm. Yard, Thomas Williams, James Cumine, Jethro Yard, Daniel Bealergeau, William Ely, Obadiah Howell, Jos. Phillips, Andrew Reed, Thomas Coalman, Benj. Biles, Chas. Pettit, Edman Beakes, J. Warrell, Jno. Barnes, William Dougless, Samuel Tucker, Jun., Neal Leviston, James Rutherford, Jos. De Cou, Rob't Rutherford, Sam'l Tucker, George Davies, Rob't Scarff, Michael Houdin, George Tucker, Gideon Bickordike, Edward Paxton, John Yard, Josiah Appleton, Alex. Chambers, Thos. Barnes, Willson Hunt, John Vancleave, Vincent Runyan, Aza'h Hunt, Hezekiah Stout, James Stout, David Price, Jonathan Furman, John Anderson, Abra. Cottnam, Richard Hoff.

Again, in February, 1756, the inhabitants of the county

of Hunterdon addressed a petition to Governor Belcher on the same subject :

To His Excellency, Jonathan Belcher Esq., Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of New Jersey and Territories thereon depending in America, Chancellor and Vice Admiral in the same & in Council

The Petition of the Inhabitants of the Several Townships in the County of Hunterdon in the said Province of New Jersey Humbly Sheweth :

That Whereas the most inhuman Barbarities committed by the Indians, a Savage Enemy, and their attempt upon the Christian People attended with Success, have depopulated, distress'd and laid waste the back inhabitants of some of our neighbouring Provinces (but more especially that of Pennsylvania) have given us too much Reason to Suspect & fear that they will make an inroad upon the Frontiers of our Province and soon penetrate into the Verry Body of the same, who, if not protected we see no remedy left to secure ourselves from being made a sacrifice to their Blood thirsty Wills, when nothing but Sword, fire and famine must be the Event. We first beg leave to return our Hearty thanks to the Legislature of this his Majesty's Province, who have been pleased lately to Pass a Law in order to fortify, and make provision for the frontiers of it, which when carried into execution may be of service to some parts; but from the opinion of the best Judges, cannot prevent the Enemy's invading us on other parts, or protect the whole. In order therefore if possible to prevent or put a stop to their inroads, we are not apprehensive of any other means than to repel force by force and God prospering our endeavours we might be able to extirpate them and disappoint the Councils of the Faithless French. And that your Excell'y with the other branches of the Legislature may not be disappointed of a proper to carry any scheme into execution that may be thought necessary & effectual to defeat the Wicked and most barbarous designs of such Traiterous Enemies, we have no reason to doubt (but are fully persuaded) the Inhabitants of this Province (upon mature Consideration of the Calamitous times that now Subsist in and are impending over ours and the Neighbouring Provinces, being Calculated against our lives, Estates, and Priviledges, Civil and Religious) will chearfully and without any Hesitation Contribute a competent proportion of their Estates for so laudable a purpose.

We therefore your petitioners do in humble manner pray! that your Excellency will be pleased to take the truly deplorable and distress'd condition of the inhabitants of this province under your mature and Judicious Consideration and that your Excellency will endeavour to bring about a Speedy Conjunction with the Neighbouring Province of Pennsylvania, and all other such ways and means as shall be thought just & Necessary, on this Emergent Occasion.

And Your Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever Pray.

Grand Jurors.

Saml. Stout, Stephen Johnes, John Hart, John Bainbridge, Samuel Hunt,

Joseph Pearson, John Wilson, Daniel Howell, Joseph Moore, Tunis Quick, Samuel Hart, Jacob Sutphen, Thos. Cain, Josiah Hart, Henry Ringo, Samuel Hunt, Philip Robarts. Jonathan Stout, Benj. Merrell, Chas. Clark, John Garrison, Andrew Reed, Theo. Severns, Benj. Biles, Wm. Cleayton, J. Warrell, John Burroughs, Thomas Roberts, Dan. Coxe, David Cowell, John Woolsey, Jona. Dodd, Jno. Allen, Sam'l Henry, Jasper Smith, Abia Cottnam, Will. Pidgeon, Enoch Anderson, R. L. Hooper, John Hackett, Moore Furman, Josiah Furman, Ralph Norton, Rob't Rutherford, Sam'l Tucker, jr., George Tucker, Joseph Price, James Rutherford, Jos. Higbee, Ralph Akers, John Cuming, Edward Broadfield, Richard Phillips, Alexander Cadmus, Josiah Furman, jr., Benjamin Everitt, Robert Guthrey, James Bell, George Davies, Benjamin Robinson, Josiah Rogers, Andrew Smith, John Hart, Isaac Eaton, Jos. Stout, Wm. Bryant, Joseph Scudder, Edward Hunt, Timothy Hunt, Joseph Brown, Stephen Field, Thos. Kennedy, John Bates, Jr., Corn. Ringo, Daniel Bealergeau, Samuel Hardin, Adam Henry, Nicolas Albersen, Jacob Laron, Ralph Smith, Joseph Tindall, Wilson Hunt, Andrew Martin, Clotworthy Reed, Thomas Pursley, Benj. Yard, Alex. Chambers, Michael Houdin, James Cumine, Neil Livingston, Samuel Hooper, Jun., Charles Axford, Joseph Tucker, Will. Ball, John Chambers, Jona. Stout, Samuel Stout, junior, Benjamin Cornell, Samuel Price, Samuel Smith, Sam'l Moore, James French, Philip Titus, Stephen Humphrey's, John Marselis, Thos. Hooten, Hezekiah Howell, Thomas Moore, John Dagworthy, Jno. Holden, Daniel Clark, Richard Howell, Jacob Bright, William Yard, William Ely, John Rickey, Edward Paxton, Job Sayers, Maurice Justice, Jos. Montgomery, Thos. Barnes, Daniel Temple, Joseph Jones Andrew Foster, Thomas Houghton, Jonathan Furman, Henry Woolsey, Thos. Craven, Andrew Muirheid, Joseph Woolsey, Moses Morgan, Nehemiah Howell, Benj. Temple, John Bainbridge, Patt'k Kelle, Benjamin Ketcham, Patt'k O'Sharky, Henry Hendrickson, Daniel Hunt, Daniel Connor, Jonas Wood, James Price.

The inhabitants of the county of Hunterdon also sent a petition to the General Assembly of the Province respecting the raising of troops in the uncertain state of the country :

To the Hon'ble The Representatives for the Colony of New Jersey in General Assembly conven'd. The Petition of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Hunterdon in Behalf of themselves and the rest of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the said County. Humbly showeth :

That, as the French and Indians in their Alliance have now beyond all Doubt made several Encroachments on his Majesty's Territories of Virginia and Pennsylvania, and erected sundry Forts there in direct Violation of the most solemn Treaties and have committed many Hostilities against his Majesty's Subjects, sent from Virginia to prevent and impede any further Insolence and Depredations, it is impossible to know what Bounds and Limits so

treacherous, perfidious and (which is still more shocking and terrible) so near a Neighbour may not presume to prescribe, even to his Majesty's good Subjects of New Jersey.

And, as we have the sincerest Attachment to and gratefull Zeal for our most sacred Sovereign's Honour and Glory, whose paternal Care for his distant Subjects has (among the rest) been uninterruptedly felt by us during his glorious and auspicious Reign, We hope the Honourable House will be pleased not only to reflect what is due to the best of Kings, but also what is owing to Yourselves, your Constituents, and to your and their Wives and Families.

Therefore, we humbly pray this Honourable House will be pleased to pass such Bill or Bills as will be quite effectual to answer his Majesty's Pleasure and convince the neighboring Colonies that we are well disposed and inclined to carry on the common Cause.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

Wm. Clayton, Theo Severns, Chas. Clark, Andrew Reed, Ralph Norton, James Rutherford, Aaron Seyoe, John Laurence, Harman Rosekrans, Joseph Reed, Charles Hoff, Jun'r, George Tucker, Heny Inglehart, John Bates, Peter Hankinson, John Cuming, Joseph Phillips, Abraham Anderson, Ralph Jones, Benj. Temple, Samuel Smith, Neil Livingston, William Ely, John Chambers, William Carter, Arthur Howell, Eden Merseilles, John Price, Hendrick Lake, Joseph Brissin, William Yard, Philip Titus, John Seidmore, Benj. Biles, William Douglass. Benj. Yard, Alex'r Chambers, George Davies, Sam'l Dunbar, William Brown, James Bell, James Cumine, Edward Paxton, David Bellerjeau, John Marseilles, Hezekiah Howell, Charles Axford, Robert Spencer, J. Warrel, Dan. Coxe, David Cowell, Thos. Kennedy, Abra. Cottman, Jos. Higbee, Sam'l Tucker, Jun'r, Rob't Rutherford, Will. Pidgeon, Jno. Allen, Sam'l Henry, Will'm Coxe, R. L. Hooper, Moore Furman, Rob't Hart, Richard Green, George Green, Noah Wills, And'w McCreery. Tim'y Smith, James Price, Samuel Hunt, Isaac Cooper, Zebulon Stout, Josiah Furman, John Evins, Edmond Hering, Jacob Bright, John Burroughs, Jacob Blackwell, Thos. Sackett, Edmond Palmer, John Vancleave, Joseph Tindall, Jacob Carle, Obadiah Howell, Daniel Clark, Jonathan Furman, Stephen Rose, Dan'l Laning, Benjamin Hart, Samuel Hart, Stephen Laning, Richard Howell, Benjamin Moore, Benjamin Clark, John East, Isaac Green, John Burt, David Howell, jun'r, George Miliner, James Merseilles, John Davis, John Lyne, John Yard, Christopher Howell, Jun'r, Isaac Howell, Benjamin Holdin, John Tucker, Benjamin Reed, William Burrows, Edward Broadfield, Will. Ball, Richard Furman, Richard Laning, And'w Oliver.

But it was not until the 15th day of April, 1758, when a law was passed by the Council and General Assembly to provide for the erection of barracks:

An Act for building of Barracks within this Colony, and for other purposes therein mentioned.

Whereas it is found by experience that the admitting soldiers within private Houses in this Colony, during their winter Quarters is not only attended with a very heavy publick expence, but many other pernicious consequences to private Families, for prevention whereof for the future,

Be it enacted by the Honourable John Reading, Esq., President and Commander in Chief of this Colony, the Council and General Assembly and it is hereby Enacted by the Authority of the same, that it shall and may be lawful for the Treasurers of this Colony, out of any Money now in their Hands, made current for the service of the present war, or out of such Money as may come into their Hands, by virtue of an Act of Assembly pass'd this Session, entitled An Act for augmenting the Regiment of this Colony of New Jersey to the number of One Thousand effective Men, Officers included, and making provisions for the same to pay unto Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield and Jacob Dehart, Esq'rs or any two of them such sum or sums of Money, as they, or any two of them, may think necessary for erecting and building Barracks sufficient to contain three hundred Men, at each of the respective places of Burlington, Trenton, Perth Amboy, New Brunswick and Elizabeth-Town, which Barracks they are to build according to their discretion, as soon as may be, in the best and most substantial, most commodious and frugal Manner they are capable of, together with the necessary Conveniences thereunto belonging.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, that the said Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield and Jacob Dehart, Esq'rs, or any two of them, residing in the Place where the respective Barracks are hereby ordered to be built shall forthwith purchase a suitable piece of Ground not exceeding one Acre, for erecting the same and take the Advice and Directions of the Members of the House of Representatives of the City or County where the said Barracks are to be built, respecting the Quantity and Situation of the Ground so to be purchased; And to the end, the said Ground and building may be effectually secured to the Use of this Province.

Be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid that the Honourable Andrew Johnson, James Hude, and Richard Salter, Esq's and Robert Lawrence, Charles Read, William Morris, John Johnson, Ebenezer Miller, and Richard Smith of Burlington be and they are hereby appointed Trustees for the Colony of New Jersey in whose names the respective Deeds of the said Grounds, shall be taken, to them, and the survivors and survivor of them and the Heirs of the Survivors of them forever; yet nevertheless to the uses, intents and purposes hereinafter specified, and to no other use, intent or purpose whatsoever; that is to say, to and for the use of Barracks for the Quarter-

ing of Soldiers whenever they may be sent by proper Authority to reside in any of the places aforesaid; And the said Ground and Barracks when built shall be under the Care and Direction of the two principal Magistrates and the two Freeholders chosen for the City or Town where they are respectively built, and they may at their discretion, occupy the same or suffer the same to be occupied at all Times hereafter, when no Soldiers are there; so always that proper care be taken to keep them from Damage as much as may be and to have them at all Times free for the use of the Soldiers as aforesaid. *Provided Always*, and it is hereby declared to be the true Intent and Meaning of these presents, that no part of the said Grounds shall be converted into or made use of for erecting any sort of a building thereon besides Barracks as aforesaid; with the necessary Fencing with which the said Grounds so to be purchased shall be enclosed and remain for the uses aforesaid forever.

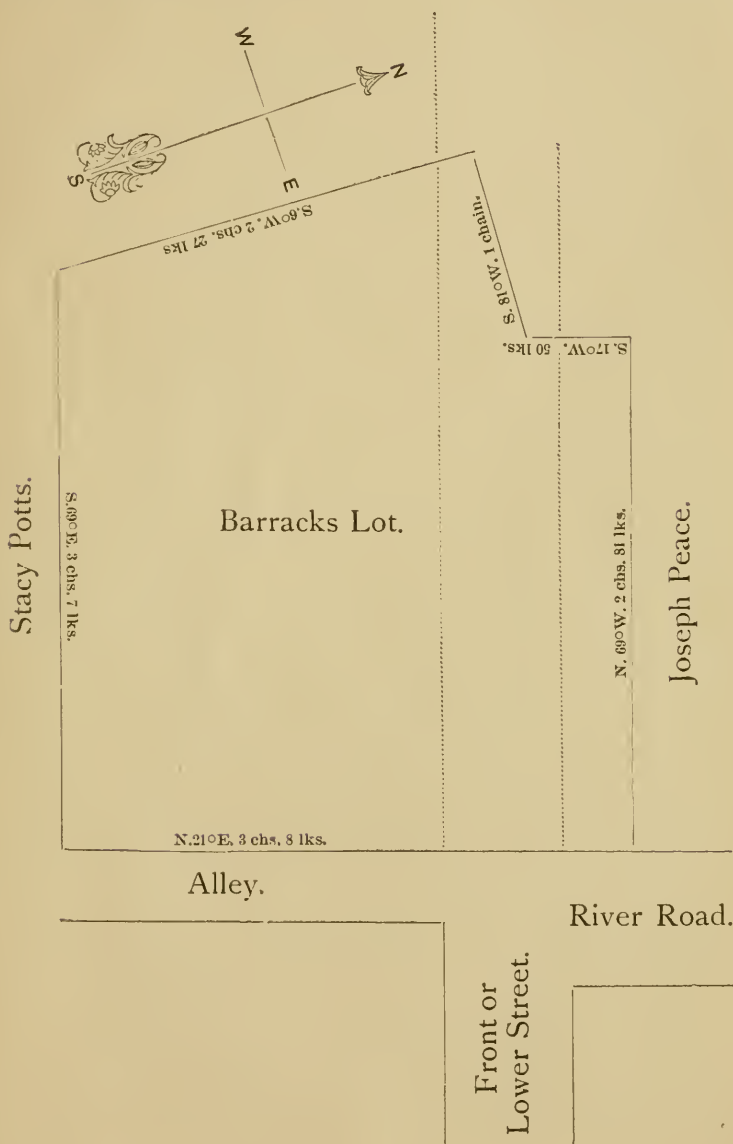
And be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid that receipts from the said Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield and Jacob Dehart, Esqr's or any two of them or orders drawn by the said Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield and Jacob Dehart, Esqr's; or any two of them, with a receipt thereon, when produced by the Treasurer's of this Colony or either of them to the General Assembly, shall discharge them the said Treasurer's or either of them, their Heirs, Executors and Administrators of and from any Money, they may pay in consequence thereof.

Provided always, that the said Hugh Hartshorn, Thomas Scattergood, William Skeels, John Allen, Joseph Yard, Theophilus Severns, Reuben Runion, Henry Fisher, Joseph Mount, Samuel Nevill, Thomas Barton, John Smyth, Robert Ogden, Cornelius Hatfield, and Jacob DeHart, Esqrs, or any two of them, shall not have Power to draw for any Sum exceeding Fourteen Hundred Pounds for the use of the Barrack or Barracks to be built at any one of the Places aforesaid.

And be it enacted by the Authority afore-said, that it shall and may be lawful for the Persons appointed to build the Barracks as aforesaid to retain in their hands Five per cent as Commissions for their trouble.

Soon after the passage of the law a lot was purchased of Mrs. Sarah Chubb, at a place on the west end of Front Street, where the River Road entered Trenton. The purchase money was forty pounds, and the lot contained about one acre. Joseph Peace, the father of Mrs. Chubb, purchased this lot in a tract of thirty-six acres, from James Trent, son

of William Trent, March 10, 1732, for one hundred and seventy pounds, silver money.



The erection of barracks commenced on the 31st day of May, 1758, and it was pushed on so rapidly that we find that more than one half the building was filled with soldiers on the sixth of November following. It was, however, not fully completed until March, 1759, as appears by an inscription on the building. Joseph Yard had charge of the erection of the walls of the barracks and of procuring the furniture therefor. For some time afterward he had the supervision of them, attended to the repairs and to the expenses of quartering the soldiers. His bills show a most plentiful supply of rum furnished to the workmen engaged on the building. On the 2d day of October, 1759, we find the barracks was occupied by a Regiment of Highlanders, whose peculiar dress created much interest among the people of the town. In December, 1759, a small addition was built to the barracks for the use exclusively of the officers in charge of the English troops. The building was originally designed to hold about three hundred men, but we find at one time four hundred and fifty men quartered therein. The first appropriation of twenty-six hundred pounds had to be supplemented by other moneys from time to time, and it is quite evident that the barracks cost at least five hundred pounds more before it was finished. It was built entirely of stone, undressed, two stories in height, the main building 130 feet in length and $18\frac{1}{2}$ feet in width, with two wings, each 58 feet in length at either end thereof, and projecting at right angles from the front of the barracks. For several years after the barracks were finished they were constantly filled with troops. During the year 1765, peace having been fully established with France, the buildings seem to have been unoccupied, and the attention of the General Assembly was called to the fact in May of

that year, and they ordered that the perishable articles therein should be sold, that the building should be simply kept in repair, and, if possible, rented. William Clayton and Abraham Hunt were appointed commissioners to carry out the orders of the Legislature of the Province. They immediately sold all the furniture in the barracks, the "two substantial ladders and the twenty leather bucketts excepted." The building and premises were rented, a clause in the lease requiring them to be given up at any time on suitable notice from the Governor of the Colony, that they were needed for the use of British soldiers. The commissioners received five per cent. from all moneys which accrued in carrying out the law. From the year 1766 to the breaking out of the Revolutionary War, Abraham Hunt and Alexander Chambers, the two leading merchants in the town, had charge of the building and were called Barrack-Masters, and received ten pounds per annum for their services in looking after the property. It may be noted that in less than a year after the sale was made of the furniture of the barracks, so many of the King's Troops were passing through and quartering in the Colony, that the General Assembly were compelled again to refit the building, give up the rents and purchase "bedding, blankets, firewood and other necessaries," not to exceed one hundred pounds in value.

During the Revolutionary War the barracks was occupied at various times by companies of British troops, the Hessian mercenaries and recruits for the American Army en route to join their command. For the two weeks prior to the battle of Trenton a party of English Dragoons and some German Yagers occupied the building, with a large number of Tory refugees from Monmouth and Burlington

Counties, who were trying to place themselves under the protection of the arms of the English King. A week after the battle the building was filled with American militia, and so continued until the end of the war as a place for quartering the soldiers of either army.

For three years after the war the barracks remained in disuse. On the first day of June, 1786, the General Assembly of the State, sitting at New Brunswick, directed the Commissioners of this State to sell all the barracks and all the lands attached and turn the proceeds into the Treasury. Moore Furman, of Trenton, one of the Commissioners for the State, sold the property February 18, 1787, to William Ogden and William Patterson for three thousand two hundred and sixty pounds.

In the year 1813 Front street was opened westward one block, and forty feet of the building was taken down, and this detached the north wing of the barracks from the main building. This north wing, on the north side of Front, was turned into three residences. The porches on the main building were taken down, and in the year 1855 it was occupied by the Widows' and Single Women's Home Society.

Built in the middle of the eighteenth century, when the fear of the Indian knife and tomahawk raised a great alarm among the good people of King George the Second, its halls filled twenty years later with the tramp of the patriot soldier who had enlisted to deliver his country from the rule of a foreign power, or noisy with the revels of the hireling grenadier who for gold was trying to subjugate a people determined to be free, it is to-day, in this year of peace, the quiet retreat of the aged, worn with the toils and trials of three score years and ten.



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