

# *Washington Crosses the Delaware*

George Weedon



---

## **OVERVIEW**

During the American Revolution, General George Washington decided to surprise an ill-prepared Hessian (British) garrison at Trenton, New Jersey. On Christmas night in 1776, he crossed the icy Delaware River from Pennsylvania with 2,400 troops and on December 26, drove the enemy from the town. American Lieutenant Colonel George Weedon described the battle in a letter dated December 29, 1776.

**GUIDED READING** As you read, consider the following questions:

- How does Colonel Weedon characterize the disposition of the British troops?
  - How does Colonel Weedon view General Washington?
- 

I can now sit down with some satisfaction to write to my Countrymen, having spent my Xmas this far, with more real enjoyment than I ever did one, and the frolick not yet over as another Expedition into the Jerseys is this night set on foot. You will have seen the event of that on the 26th before this reaches you, but I know you want the particulars, & as I am at present unfit for duty, shall endeavour to give them to you.

Know then, that on the 25th part of our Army was ordered to cross the Delaware at a place call'd McConkeys Ferry, the embarcation to begin after dark. Agreeable to order, the Troops assembl'd. It took us till three in the morning to finish our crossing. We had then 12 miles to Trenton, where three Regiments of Hessians lay. . . . The weather set in extremely bad, however it did not check the ardour of our Troops. The noble example set by our General Washington made all other difficulties & hardships vannah. We got up by Eight next morning, and in so private a manner that the Enemy never suspected our approach till their outguards were attack'd by our advance. . . . The main body of our Troops soon after entered the Town in two different places as was first directed. The Enemy were put into confusion, and tho' they made several attempts to form, never could. Our men entered the Town in a trot, & pursued so close that in less than one hour we made ourselves masters of all their Field pcs (six in number), Baggage &c, and 919 Prisoners, amongst them Thirty Officers, none of higher rank than Cols. The whole loss on our side I believe sustained, which was not more than three privts killed & these two brave officers wounded. The Enemies loss, killd, was also inconsiderable, not more than 30 or 40, their wounded not so many, which is something extraordinary.

I was honored with his Excellencies Orders to take charge of the prisoners with my Regt. and that night returned to our old Quarters. The behaviour of our people in general, far exceeded anything I ever saw. It's worth remarking that not one officer or privt was known that day to turn his back. Should our prest Expedition prove equally successful, we shall have these Robbers that have so long lived upon the fat of the Jersey Farms, once more over the Hudsons river.