

John Peck

John Peck the third child of Joseph and Jemima (Lindsley) Peck. He was born in 1732, in Newark, New Jersey. He married Mary Elizabeth Dodd on January 26, 1757. Mary was born in 1737, the daughter of John Dodd and Elizabeth (Lampson) Dodd. John and Mary had three children, all boys; Joseph, born in 1758, Stephen, born in 1760, and Jared, born in 1761. Mary Peck died in 1761, possibly in childbirth with their youngest child, Jared, leaving John with the three boys.

John was remarried in 1762 to Mary Harrison. Mary, the daughter of Joseph and Martha (Sargeant) Harrison, was born about 1734 in Orange, New Jersey. Together they had five children, Rhoda, Betsey, Sarah, born in 1777, Aaron, born in 1771, and John, born in 1773.

John was prominent in all the local events that preceded the Revolution. On December 7, 1774, he was one of twenty-three representative citizens chosen as a Committee of Observation for the Township of Newark to watch and report any inhabitant of the colony found to be disloyal to the Congress.

After the war started, the British army was encamped in the Newark area. John made himself especially bothersome to them, and he frequently fled to the mountains to escape their vengeance.

During the Revolutionary War, he served as an assemblyman. He joined the Second New Jersey Regiment. On November 29, 1776, he was a Second Lieutenant. He was promoted to First Lieutenant on November 10, 1777. John served as Regimental Paymaster from January 1, 1777, to April, 1783. Following his service as Paymaster, he remained in the Second New Jersey Battalion, and was promoted to brevet Captain on September 30, 1783. His service ended on November 3, 1783.

During John Peck's years of service, the 2nd New Jersey Regiment was remarkable for its breadth of service and the actions it fought. During the regiment's seven year existence it participated in six battles and one formal siege (Short Hills, Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, Springfield, Connecticut Farms, Yorktown), as well as several minor actions and numerous skirmishes. The regiment also took part in several large winter camps (Valley Forge, Morristown; and the final cantonment at New Windsor).¹

He was elected an elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Orange in 1784.

¹ "Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army During The War of the Revolution, April 1775 to December 1783", Francis B. Heitman, Washington, D.C., The Rare Book Shop Publishing Company, Inc., 1914, p. 433.

After the close of the war he became Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and although he had no college degree, he was a man of good judgment and sound common sense. He was extremely lenient towards his old neighbors who, because of their adherence to the Crown during the War of the Revolution, were obliged to flee to Nova Scotia, and who, after the war, desired to return to take advantage of the Act of the New Jersey Legislature passed June 5, 1777, and it is said that he sometimes "stretched a point" to assist them in saving their property from confiscation.²

He died December 28, 1811 in East Orange, New Jersey.

² "Genealogical and Memorial History of the State of New Jersey, Vol III", Compiled by Francis Bazley Lee, Lewis Historical Publishing Co., NY 1910, pp. 1135-1136