

Woodbridge Forage Wars Essay

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January 5, 1777:

Dear diary,

I can't believe that this is the first time I'm writing in a diary or journal. I have to say, I'm pretty excited. Not many eventful things have happened this year so far, but it is only the first week of our new year. It's getting late, but I think I'll write more tomorrow.

- G

January 6, 1777:

Dear diary,

Today has been one of my most eventful days in a while. One of my friends—he lives in Spanktown—told me that the 'Patriots seized 1000 bushels of salt.'

(<http://nebula.wmsing.com>) But, lucky enough, someone who lived across the street from him thought fast. She wrote in black ink, "SMALLPOX" on her front door, and of course "once the warning was translated, the Hessians stayed well clear of her home so that they would not catch the deadly, but in this case, imaginary, disease."

(<http://nebula.wmsing.com>) Due to his quick thinking him and his family did the same thing to their door, and were safe from having anything important of theirs stolen. While he was telling this story, I couldn't help but be a bit scared. Would they come to where I lived next? Would they take our food? Our animals? For now, I think it's best that I go to bed.

- G

January 23, 1777:

Dear diary,

The past few weeks have been surprisingly uneventful. Though that's not necessarily a bad thing. I'm actually quite thankful. Me and my family have remained safe, and so have most of the other people in our town. You could say that we've been on the "winning side." It felt good to hear word that "We (Americans) trimmed two regiments near to Woodbridge". (<http://nebula.wmsing.com>)

- G

January 24, 1777:

Dear Diary,

I'm unsure if I've written about this before, but not long ago, The Inslee's oldest daughter named Elizabeth "barely avoided mutilation by a British soldier. He had caught sight of a ring and was about to brutally cut off her finger for it when an officer appeared and stopped the assault." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>) I was just pondering this event. This only supports my idea that the British are brutal thieves. I'd better get going before I start to write some things I wouldn't want my mother to read.

- G

January 30, 1777:

Dear diary,

I've been having nightmares more and more often. These small fights and the bigger battles have become increasingly closer to where I live, and the losses on both sides are increasing drastically. I often worry for me and my family's lives. There isn't much we can do about these battles, except try to remain safe. Rather safe than sorry, right?

February 24, 1777:

Dear Diary,

"Town elder Jonathan Inslee-" who was the father of Elizabeth Inslee "-was captured by Royalists, marched through the cold countryside and forced to wade through the river at Ford. Arriving in New Brunswick-" which is where I live! "-Jonathan, still in his soaking wet clothes, was shoved into a cold cell. His wife, Grace Moore Inslee, badgered the hailers until they released her husband. However the damage was done. Jonathan died soon after because of this brutal treatment." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>) Not only was

hearing this story scary because the British not only killed Elder Jonathan, threatened Elizabeth, and argued with Grace Inslee, all these events were happening in New Brunswick.

- G

March 8, 1777:

Dear diary,

Today I received word from my close friend from Spanktown, that there was a skirmish between the British and an American militia on Strawberry Hill. Rumour has spread that "they tried to assassinate Mary Dally with a musket shot to her window. It narrowly missed and lodged into the wall behind her." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>)

- G

March 22, 1777:

Dear diary,

"The British attempted to plunder provisions and the belongings of the Barnes family, but a local militia drive them off." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>) I'm proud to say that my father was part of the militia that drove them off. I'm glad to know that my family, or at least my father, had part in fending off these criminals. I have a feeling we'll begin to win these battles. I just have to try and hope.

- G

April 15, 1777:

Dear diary,

This morning I was woken up early, and with nothing better to do so early in the morning, I decided to read the morning paper. While I turned through the pages of the paper I wondered if there would be any more news of the British stealing from farms or robbing innocent people's homes, maybe more news about another Elder being brutally assaulted! But on the contrary, it was some of the best news I've received this month. "At 2:00AM a detachment of Colonel Cook's 12th Pennsylvania regiment under Capt. Alexander Patterson successfully attacked the British picket guard at the Bonhamtown area of Woodbridge." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>) I sure hope I don't jinx it, but I'm feeling more and more confident that the Hessian mercenaries and the British thieves are soon to be defeated. For now, I should get dressed for the day and ready to work. Today it will be hard not to wear a smile on my face.

- G

April 19, 1777:

Dear diary,

While in my last entry I was beaming with hope and a smile for an American victory, I'm now beginning to become less hopeful. Not only has "feeding horses become a major challenge" (<https://revolutionarynj.org>) but the Forage Wars are causing some towns to have "the fences destroyed, houses deserted, pulled in pieces, or consumed by fire." (<https://nebula.wmsing.com>) I can finally speak from personal experience, as I live in one of the towns affected. Last night me and siblings were snatched out of bed by our parents, and ran outside of our house in shock and fear. While we slept, the British were attacking ours and others homes and shops, setting fires, and plundering all we worked hard to build and maintain.

- G

March 1, 1777:

Dear diary,

This will be my last entry. While I am sad about giving up this journal, I have hopes that someone, 100s or maybe 1,00s of years later will find this. They might enjoy reading about the events from decades ago, or they may use my journal to teach children about our American history. For now I can say that the Forage wars have ended. At least in my town, we no longer fear for our lives, fear for our family and friend's lives, or wonder if tomorrow night we will wake up to the smell of burning wood. We've done our best to rebuild and reconstruct. Though the Forage Wars have ended, I cannot say our fight with the British has. I think it's time I stop writing and say goodbye now.

- Goodbye diary, signed

Grace