

Re-crossing Terrell's 23rd trip draws 10,000

Some 10,000 people braved freezing temperatures yesterday to watch St. John Terrell's 23rd reenactment of George Washington's 1776 crossing of the Delaware.

Following a small parade by revolutionary militia companies, speeches, cannon fire and much posing for pictures, Terrell and his contingent loaded into three sturdy Durham boats at Washington Crossing, Pa., and crossed the quick-flowing Delaware in less than 15 minutes.

Participants in the event were from all walks of life: doctors, students, a TV commentator, even David J. Bardin commissioner of the Department of Environmental Protection, got into the act, riding with Terrell, who portrayed George Washington, across the 750-foot span of the Delaware.

Estimated crowds of 30,000 to 50,000 people never materialized. Park and bicentennial officials had forecast such large numbers because of the bicentennial year's approach.

In anticipation of the large crowds, police on both sides of the river had a combined force of 40-plus officers, including a N.J. State Police helicopter which flew over the area for nearly two hours.

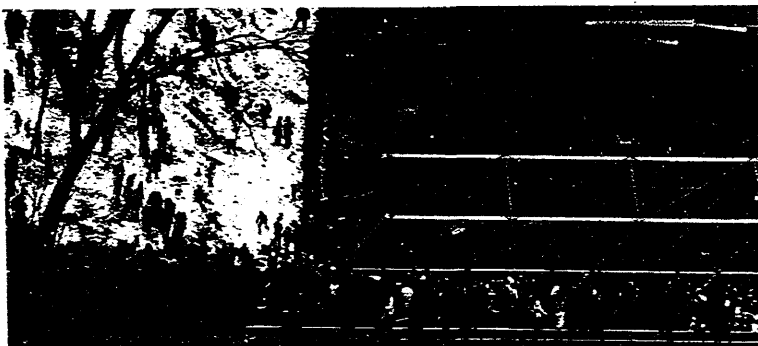
With 10,000 people, there were traffic problems nonetheless. Cars were backed up for two miles on Rt. 32 in Pennsylvania and half a mile on Rt. 29 prior to the crossing. Afterwards, there was congested traffic as people left the area to return to their holiday celebrations.

The reenactment depicts Washington's historic crossing of the Delaware Dec. 25, 1776, when, after crossing the river, he marched to Trenton with 2,400 troops and defeated the Hessians. That crucial victory was the turning point of the American Revolution.

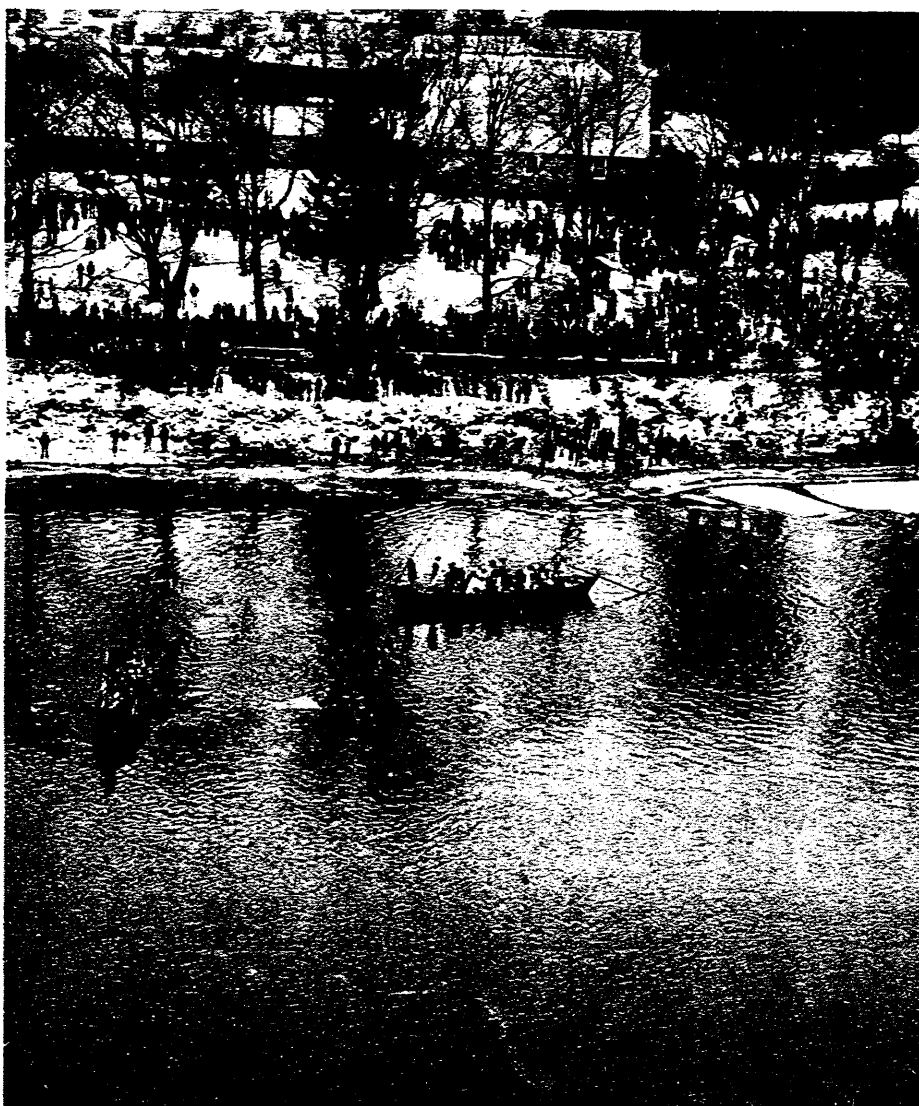
—J. STRYKER MEYER



Staff photos by John Pietras; aeriels by Warren Kruse



Spectators watched any way they could; from trees on the banks, from the Washington Crossing Bridge, and standing on the riverbanks on both sides, bundled up against the cold.



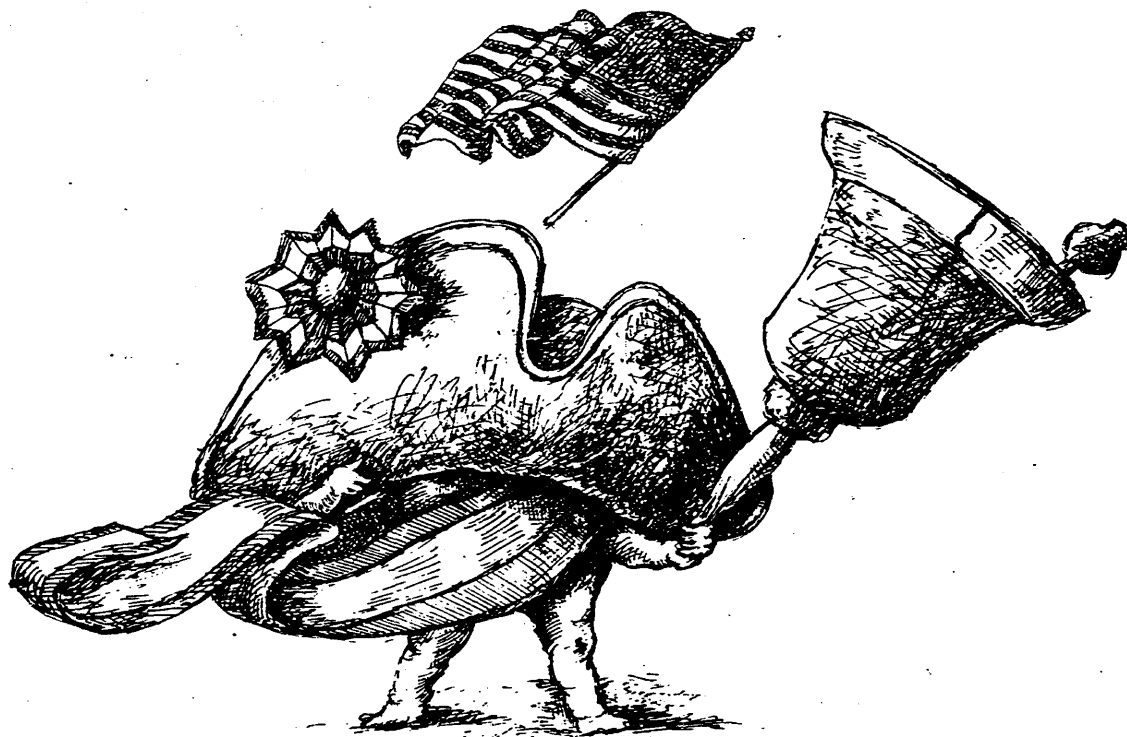
Remembering a small number of men who turned the tide

By WILLIAM M. DWYER
Staff Writer

Let's raise a toast not only to the officers (from Lieutenant James Monroe to General George Washington) but also to the enlisted men, the die-hards who stuck with the Continental army and won the brief but crucial first Battle of Trenton. They made it happen 199 years ago this morning.

Let's hear it for Joseph White, a 19-year-old artillery sergeant from Weymouth, Massachusetts, and for the rest of the Continentals — some 2,400 of them — who slogged through a stormy night and took the fabled Hessians by surprise in one of the most celebrated maneuvers of military history. ("It may be doubted," British historian George Otto Trevelyan would write of the action at Trenton, "whether so small a number of men ever employed so short a space of time with greater or more lasting results upon the history of the world.")

DECEMBER 1776 was a time when the American Revolution appeared to be coming apart. The British and their Hessian mercenaries seemed invincible. The summer soldiers of the American army had gone home. The sunshine patriots were swearing allegiance to the King and in return receiving "protection" papers from the British. Even Washington admit-



Drawing by Geoffrey Moss

ted, in private, that the game might be nearly up. And then he and his small band of men proceeded to save the revolu-

tion. They began crossing the Delaware about eight miles above Trenton on Christmas afternoon. It was almost 4 o'clock the following

morning when they and their artillery were all across. They marched to Trenton and achieved the first real American victory of the war, killing

or wounding dozens of Hessians, and taking more than 900 of them as prisoners.

THIS VICTORY, as Sergeant White said, "raised the drooping spirits of the American army, and string (sic) anew every nerve for our liberty and independence."

White was casual about things like spelling, punctuation and syntax (as were most of his contemporaries). But he got it down on paper; he was one of the few American combat soldiers who left any record at all of their service. Several decades following the action he sat down and wrote "An Narrative of Events, as they occurred from time to time, in the Revolutionary War."

White was not a man to waste words. "The privations and sufferings we endured, is beyond description — no tent to cover us at night — exposed to cold and rains day and night — no food of any kind but a little raw flour." That was the extent of his description of the Continentals' dispiriting retreat across New Jersey and into Pennsylvania.

He was similarly laconic in recollecting the first Battle of Trenton, even though he took part in one of the most dramatic and decisive developments of the action.

"ON THE AFTERNOON of the 25th of December 1776," he wrote,



T.M.

"our whole army after marching several miles up the river Delaware, in a violent snow storm, crossed it, in order to attack a body of Hessians posted at Trenton, under the command of Col. Rhol (Rall), who was killed in the battle.

"At day light (of December 26), their out guard, posted about three or four miles off from their main body, turned out and gave us a fire. Our advanced guard opened from right to left, we gave them four or five cannisters of shot, following them to their main body, and displayed our columns:

"The 3d shot we fired broke the axle-tree of the piece, — we stood there some time idle, they firing upon us. Col. Knox rode up and said, My brave lads, go up and take those two held pieces sword in hand. — (Continued on Page C2, Col. 4)