

# PROMINENT TRENTON MEN NAMED TO REALIZE PARK AT WASHINGTON CROSSING

## Chamber of Commerce Takes Hold of Long-Neglected Project, With Senator Heath As Chairman of Committee Legislative Appropriation of \$100,000 a Year For Five Years Will Be Sought Plan to Develop River Front First, Then Camp Site, Memorial Bridge, Monument and Historic Boulevards

# WHY BATTLE OF TRENTON HAS SUCH A CONSPICUOUS PLACE IN HISTORY

Fitting announcement for today, the anniversary of the battle of Trenton, concerns the appointment of a strong Chamber of Commerce committee to take up the burden of making Washington Crossing Park a reality. Recently Pennsylvania has spent \$500 in making improvements on their side of the river. Much more is to be done by them, but New Jersey, as the originator of the scheme, has been put to shame for our entire accomplishment thus far has been the acquiring of about 100 acres of land at an expense of \$35,000 after eleven years of effort.

Another campaign which the Chamber of Commerce committee expects to get behind this winter is a campaign to have the federal government contribute its share to making Washington Memorial Park a truly national shrine by building a handsome memorial bridge on the line of the actual crossing. New Jersey and

Senator Heath proposes to introduce a bill into the 1922 session of the Legislature to provide a five-year program of development at the crossing. He will ask the legislature to provide \$100,000 a year for five years. With the first appropriation, it will be possible to purchase the remainder of the river front property at the historic site and to begin the actual development of the Jersey side of the park.

Among the features which may be advocated as parts of this national shrine will be a camp site within the park itself to provide a convenient spot for automobile camping parties. Camp sites have for several years been provided by the State on the west and practically every eastern tourist who has made the trans-continental journey by automobile is enthusiastically in favor of development in this section of the country.

It has also been proposed that the Pennsylvania delegations in Congress have already been approached and have expressed their willingness to build a beautiful concrete arch bridge to connect the park developments of Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

A further element of this plan will be a monument at the middle of the bridge erected at the joint expense of the two states. Mercer County and the City of Trenton will also have a direct share to bear in the proposed development.

Pennsylvania is talking of extending their boulevard system from Torresdale, 15 miles this side of Philadelphia City Hall, to connect up with the boulevard system they are building in their share of the Crossing Park.

According to the tentative plans of the Chamber of Commerce Committee, Trenton will be asked to work in co-operation with the county to extend suitable boulevards from the State highways connecting the North to the park drives which will be developed at the Crossing.

It is proposed to lay out high class thoroughfares along the two lines of advance made by the Continental troops and to mark with monuments the points where skirmishes took place. Much of this marking within the city has already been done, but the construction of two boulevards is for the immediate future.

Probably one of the boulevards which Trenton and Mercer County are to be asked to build will extend from the site of the old Bear Tavern to the Washington Memorial Monument at the Five Points in Trenton. At the Bear Tavern the plans for the park development will provide two main boulevards, one along the river and one along the old Pennsylvania Road, now extinct, but which in 1776 was the only road from Trenton to Washington Crossing.

It was along this now extinct road that the main body of Washington's troops approached Trenton. The old road will be restored and improved when the park is built.

The second boulevard will follow the main line of the river down which the Marquis de Lafayette marched his contingent of Washington's Army. An excellent road which follows this line should be widened and straightened, the grade crossings eliminated and Lombardy Poplars or some other stately type of tree planted along either side of the road.

mittee have seized upon a vision of unending development there. The hope to see every important event in this country's history portrayed there, either on the Pennsylvania or New Jersey side of the river, as may seem most suitable.

**MAY ASK NATION TO HELP**  
Their vision includes a nation-wide giving of dollar contributions. Every body who gives a dollar to the building of a magnificent shrine to the spot where American despair first saw the light of practical hope will have a personal interest in the task. This will lead to a vast increase in the pride with which visitors will come to the spot where Washington defeated American houses.

During this week the committee of the Chamber of Commerce is scheduled to get together to set all this wonderful scheme to going. It has been many years getting under way. It is to be exact. Meanwhile, the name of Trenton has always called to the minds of school children and their elders, wherever they may live in these United States, the vision of Washington turning bitter defeat into glorious victory.

It is the spirit of '76 that moves staid business men to a degree of self-sacrificing enthusiasm seldom entailed even among youths. They have bent themselves to the task of making Washington Memorial Park a reality.

One hundred and forty-five years ago this morning an event occurred in the then village of Trenton which was destined to make every school boy and girl of this country learn to connect our city's name indelibly with Washington's crossing of the Delaware River. It was between 7 and 8 o'clock on a bleak winter's morning that the battle of Trenton took place.

Months later, George Canning, the British Colonial Secretary, on hearing of the event, exclaimed: "All our hopes were blasted by that unhappy affair at Trenton!"

That phrase well described what took place. For the British hopes had risen to a high point of expectancy. They were merely awaiting the freaz-



State Senator Heath Chairman of Committee Which Plans to Make Washington's Crossing Park a Reality.

was the only commander among the three colonies of American troops who had a doubt determination to force his plan to completion. The troops assembled at Taylorsville were the only ones who crossed the Delaware River that night.

Darkness began soon after dark in a few minutes which had been previously ordered behind an island at that point. The entire force had reached New Jersey by 5 a. m.

Dividing his little army once more, Washington divided the command of

one force to the Marquis de Lafayette and gave him instructions to march down the river road to Trenton. With the other half of his force he set out across country by the old Pennsylvania Road to attack Trenton from the direction of Princeton.

Unbeknownst to the Hessians, Washington's army had reached the Five Points, now marked by the Trenton Battle Monument. They began to tumble out of the houses in which they were quartered as the Americans opened fire. Two small cannon Washington had brought mem-

orial project.

ing of the Delaware River to forever crush the American Rebellion.

Indeed, Washington himself declared afterwards that he had before him a splendid choice of disasters and only one fortune hope. It was a last desperate chance that Washington took when he took his contingent of about 2,000 men across the river at the point now known as Washington Crossing, enduring immensurable hardships, facing a certain defeat, between victory or death.

What a victory it was! It killed black despair. It aroused a fiery enthusiasm and one to the other of the 13 colonies. In the Battle of Trenton the Americans not only whipped the Hessian soldiers but showed the treatment which had settled over the colonists. The victory at Trenton paved the way for that whole train of events leading to the crossing at Yorktown.

Three times during the course of the Revolutionary War, impending disaster for the Continental Army was turned into a decisive defeat for the British Army. The first of these momentous occasions was the Battle of Trenton, fought on the morning of December 23, 1776. The second was the battle of the Clouds, and the third was the battle of Saratoga.

The third was the battle of Saratoga and the surrender of Cornwallis.

At the time the Battle of Trenton was fought, the American Army had just defeated every where. New York had fallen. The British Army under Howe had followed into New Jersey, capturing most of the American artillery and vast stores of ammunition accumulated for the defense of the Hudson.

They had then literally chased Washington's army from New York City and across the Delaware River. Washington's overthought in seeing that all the boats along the Delaware crossed the river with him and that the British on the Pennsylvania side delayed the contingent. Howe who was content to settle down in New Jersey to await the freezing of the river before continuing his advance.

Howe believed he could easily crush the remaining life out of the American cause at any time he liked. Howe's belief. They had all but given up hope. Desertions and expiring enlistments had reduced Washington's force to about 6,000 men.

**STRATEGY OF WASHINGTON**  
Washington knew the immense physiological value a victory in battle at this time would mean for him. He knew that his hope would revive among the colonists once he had met and defeated a considerable force of the British. He therefore laid plans to strike a master blow at the Hessian force to whom Howe had entrusted the outpost line along the river. The main force of Hessian was located at Princeton, although there was also a considerable force at Bordentown. Howe's headquarters were located at Princeton.

along were planted so that they swept King and Queen Streets (now Warren and Broad Streets).

The Hessian officers did their best to rally their men. But a few scattering shots at the Americans was about the limit of their resistance. Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, young aides-de-camp to General Washington, distinguished themselves when they rushed forward and dispersed a group of Hessians who were trying to bring a cannon into action against the Americans from a point near what is now Ferry and Warren streets.

Lafayette's force had been delayed and did not reach the scene until after firing had commenced. The battle was soon over. Not a single American had been killed. The Hessians suffered a loss of about 80 dead and 1,200 prisoners. Colonel B.M. Stouffer captured a cannon, was mortally and died the next day.

Several years ago, when I came to Trenton for the first time, almost my first question was: "Why did Washington cross the Delaware?" Go where you like in this country and tell the people you are from Trenton and they will tell you they visited this city, they will ask you some question connected with that event.

But if it were not for the Society of Cincinnati, the Jersey landing used by the Continental army would not be marked. And until a few years ago a marker placed by the Hudson County Historical Society was the only thing to show where in Pennsylvania the movement of troops had been launched.

It is only within a few weeks that negotiations for the purchase of the McKonkey Ferry and headquarters of the American army that famous night, have been completed by the State of New Jersey. In fact, the people of Trenton and its vicinity slept on the job for 133 years before a single definite move was made to erect a memorial to one of the greatest events in American history.

**WHEN AWAKENING OCCURRED**  
"Washington's Crossing? Oh yes, there's a railroad station by that name about eight miles up the river. They tell me it's quite a camping place in summer time. That's just about how much interest Trentonians took in the issue."

An awakening took place, however, on October 12, 1909, when James Keeney, editor of the Trenton Times, speaking on behalf of the Knight of Columbus at the first Columbus Day celebration here, proposed a national memorial park at the historic site.

The proposal met with instant favor and Governor Fort appointed a commission of 28 members. The Legislature was asked to set behind the project. Pennsylvania was so much interested that they have actually begun work on their park, but New Jersey stopped some way short. It had secured an original appropriation of \$25,000 and acquired a plan for developing about 550 acres.

Not a foot of the river front was acquired by the original commission. Finally it expired, in 1917, the Department of Conservation and Development took over its functions. Prosecution of the war at first prevented any activity for the park by the new commission. Later it began to ask for money. Last year Assemblyman Blackwell of this county, who was on the appropriations committee, secured \$10,000 with which to buy the McKonkey House and about six acres of land, including in this purchase the first river front property secured.

Securities have been completed for this property and the deeds will be signed within a few weeks. An additional \$25,000 has been asked this year by the Conservation Department with which to acquire the remaining river front property, consisting of about six acres. But now a much larger and more comprehensive program is about to be launched.

In 1926, Philadelphia will hold its 150th anniversary celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Part of the Pennsylvania plan for that year includes completion of Washington Memorial Park on their side of the river, together with a complete system of boulevards connecting to Philadelphia. Pennsylvania is making the part of the joint memorial project.



WASHINGTON CROSSING THE DELAWARE (Reproduced from Leutze's Famous Engraving)

## Interest Is Welcome But Keep Your Nose Out

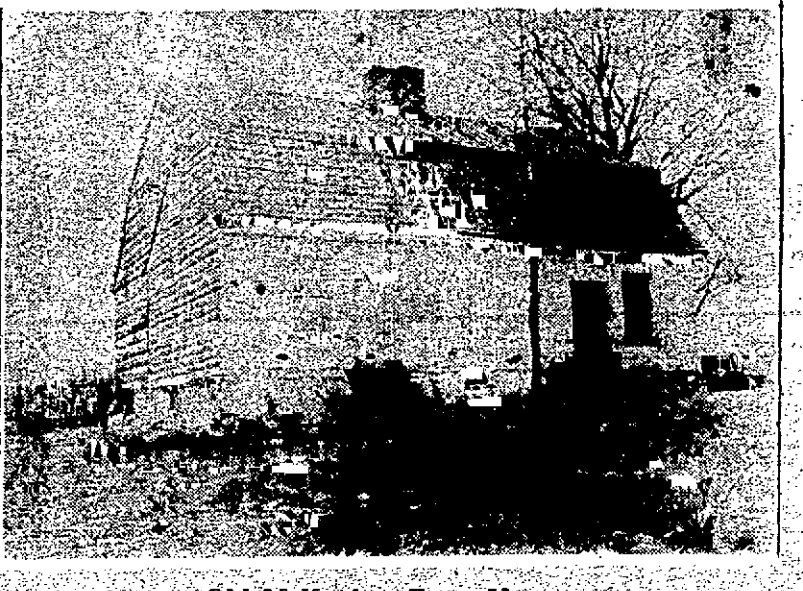
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