

MONMOUTH

A CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE CHRONOLOGY, 16 JUNE-6 JULY 1778

This is a brief chronology of the Monmouth campaign and the fighting on 28 June 1778. It offers a frame of reference for the chief movements of American and British forces, with an emphasis on the battle itself. With certain exceptions, entries detailing the campaign before 28 June are day by day, while the battle chronology deals in hours.

Roads to Monmouth Court House

- 3 May 1778 British establish a post at Cooper's Ferry to protect wood cutters.
- 14 May British begin packing heavy baggage to ship to New York.
- 30 May Two regiments sent to Cooper's Ferry to reinforce garrison.
- 1 June British begin moving wagons and provisions to Cooper's Ferry.
- 14 June British destroy unserviceable equipment and stock, burn unfinished ships.
- 15 June More baggage, cavalry, and two German brigades cross Delaware River, camps extend well beyond Cooper's Ferry.
- 16 June Baggage, 17th Light Dragoons, and last of artillery cross river.

- 17 June** Last of sick taken aboard shipping. Remaining German and loyalist units cross river. Camps extend to edge of Haddonfield, New Jersey. Two English regiments sent to Gloucester Town to cover landing of army on the eighteenth. At Valley Forge, American council of war decides to await British movements.
- 18 June** Clinton completes evacuation, concentrating about 20,000 troops and the baggage train in and around Haddonfield. Royal Navy, with other troops, invalids, Tories, and heavy equipment, drops down Delaware. Small New Jersey militia attack near Gloucester Point costs British several prisoners. Near Haddonfield, Continental forces under Brig. Gen. Maxwell harass British. About noon, lead elements of patriot main army under Maj. Gen. Lee depart Valley Forge, heading north toward Coryell's Ferry. Brig. Gen. Wayne follows with second contingent about 3:00 P.M.
- 19 June** British 1st Division moves north toward Mount Holly; Jaegers kill militia captain. Lt. Gen. Knyphausen sends two regiments to cover the evacuation of the Billingsport garrison; their column harassed by a detachment of Continentals and militia. Knyphausen moves baggage across Cooper Creek. Early in the morning, Washington's men continue breaking camp at Valley Forge, with troops under Maj. Gen. Lafayette, Maj. Gen. Alexander ("Lord Stirling"), and Maj. Gen. DeKalb departing for Coryell's Ferry.
- 20 June** Rebels skirmish with British near Mount Holly; no serious fighting, but Americans actively try obstructing British march by felling trees, destroying bridges, and hanging on flanks of march. Knyphausen reaches Moorestown.

- 21 June** Knyphausen joins Clinton at Mount Holly; jaegers burn shipping in Rancocas Creek. Washington reaches Coryell's Ferry and crosses into New Jersey with balance of Continental Army. Rebels still unsure of direction of British march, but Washington moves south in effort to position his forces to intercept Clinton.
- 22 June** Washington orders Col. Morgan's light infantry and Col. Moylan's horse to reinforce harassing operations under Maxwell and militia. British reach Black Horse; rebel and British patrols exchange fire.
- 23 June** Washington establishes headquarters at Hopewell, learning that the British are approaching Bordentown. Knyphausen and Clinton separate. At Crosswicks Creek rebels and British skirmish, with Americans giving way after holding briefly.
- 24 June** Clinton reaches Allentown. British fire on American patrol near Allentown; rebels flee without returning fire. Clinton decides to move toward Monmouth Court House (Freehold) and to cross to New York from Sandy Hook. Knyphausen camps at Imlaystown. At Hopewell council of war, Lee speaks for a majority of generals in warning against a general action. Washington decides to avoid major fight while detaching 1,500 men to hang on British rear and left with orders to act "as occasion may serve."
- 25 June** Upon learning of British move toward Freehold, Washington strengthens advance detachment to about 4,000 men, with command to Lafayette. Detachment moves south, with Washington cautioning Lafayette against rashness. Main army moves from Hopewell toward Cranbury. Clinton marches east on Monmouth Road. Rebels harass rear of British column all day, at night, fire on encampment at Rising Sun Tavern. Knyphausen now farther east on Monmouth Road.

- 26 June** After difficult march through intense heat, British arrive in Freehold. American army reaches Cranbury. Lafayette decides to attack Clinton's rear on the twenty-seventh. Learning (from Lt. Col. Hamilton) of Lafayette's situation—he is short of supplies and out of supporting distance—Washington orders Lafayette to Englishtown to await Lee, who will assume vanguard command.
- 27 June** Clinton rests his men for the day in and around Freehold; troops loot a number of area homes. Lafayette arrives at Englishtown. Lee assumes command of advanced units (roughly 5,000 men) and meets with Washington and his brigadiers. Lee's orders are discretionary; he is to attack if possible, but not if, in his judgment, circumstances are unfavorable. Washington moves main army to Manalapan Bridge (Penelopen). About 2,000 New Jersey militia under Maj. Gen. Dickinson are on Clinton's flanks. Morgan has 800 men on the British left but is out of contact with Lee and Washington.

March of the 2nd Division

- 28 June**
- 2:00–4:00 A.M. Knyphausen prepares for marching: column includes the provisions train, artillery park, pontoons, and baggage of both divisions. Column extends six to seven miles.
- 4:00–8:00 A.M. Knyphausen's column begins march, moving out the Middletown Road. By about 8:00 A.M. all wagons are moving and the rear guard can march. Rather than the direct route toward Middletown, Clinton, fearing the Americans are at Scots Meeting House and will outflank them, orders the column to take the easternmost road to Middletown. When they reach the forks of the road outside of Freehold, they are to turn east toward Shrewsbury.

8:00 A.M.—noon Late in the morning, Monmouth and Middlesex militia attack the baggage train but are repulsed. The 2nd Division reaches Polhemus Hill about noon, stops to rest.

2:00 P.M.—midnight Knyphausen's column resumes march, crosses Hop Brook at Polhemus Ford. The head of the column arrives at Nut Swamp (about three miles outside of Middletown) around sunset and encamps for the night.

29 June

Midnight—5:00 A.M. The column continues to arrive through the night. There are many stragglers; the jaegers bringing up the rear arrive after dawn.

Battle of Monmouth

28 June

March of the 1st Division

2:00—8:00 A.M. At 2:00 A.M., the Queen's Rangers march north to guard the Amboy Road crossing of Spotswood North Brook. At 5:00 A.M. the remainder of the 1st Division begins march toward Monmouth Court House. There they wait for the 2nd Division to move out. The column resumes marching sometime between 8:00 and 9:00 am.

10:00 A.M. The rear guard begins marching.

Continental Advance Force Marches from Englishtown

1:45—3:00 A.M. Lee receives Washington's orders to send a party of observation to watch British. Col. Grayson receives order to command these troops about 3:00 A.M.

4:45—5:00 A.M. Lee receives word that the British are marching. Main advance force begins assembling.

- 6:00-7:00 A.M. After delay to find guides, Grayson leads "party of observation" toward Freehold; Lee follows with main advance force about 7:00 A.M. Maj. Gen. Steuben and aides already reconnoitering British encampments at Monmouth Court House. Washington puts main army into motion from Manalapan Bridge, approximately three miles west of Englishtown.
- 7:15-7:30 A.M. Clinton sends Queen's Rangers to capture Steuben. Rangers stumble into Hunterdon County militia at Hedgerow; Grayson arrives just in time to see resulting skirmish. Rangers retreat.
- 7:40-8:55 A.M. Lee arrives at Hedgerow. Dickinson warns him not to bring his troops across West Morass, as Clinton may attack. After hesitation due to conflicting intelligence, Lee orders advance toward Monmouth Court House.
- 9:45-10:00 A.M. Continental advance force arrives at Amboy Road. Lee and Wayne reconnoiter; British rear guard (Lt. Gen. Cornwallis) marches out of Monmouth Court House on Middletown Road; Capt. Edwards sent to reconnoiter roads to left.

Lee Attempts to Envelope British Rear Guard

- 10:00-10:25 A.M. Wayne with Cols. Butler, Grayson, and Jackson and Lt. Col. Oswald ordered to right to fix British in place while Lee and remainder of vanguard circle left to get on enemy flank.
- 10:30-10:35 A.M. Enemy rear guard halts. British 16th Light Dragoons charge militia horse and are ambushed by Butler. Oswald opens fire with two guns; Wayne feints an attack on enemy. British open fire with 3-pounders.

- 10:35-10:45 A.M. Clinton learns of Continentals threatening his rear guard, rides back, ordering 1st Division to follow.
- 10:35-10:50 A.M. Lee reconnoiters, finds Wayne on enemy flank. He intends Brig. Gen. Scott to follow Wayne. Enemy advancing toward courthouse on road, so Lee and Lafayette lead troops to block this advance. British 6-pounders in action.

Clinton Foils Continental Envelopment

- 10:55-11:30 A.M. Second British column appears; Lee sends aides to Scott to direct him to hold position in woods along brook; aides cannot find Scott. Lee leads troops back to defensive position in Freehold; Scott sees Lee apparently withdrawing. Scott and Maxwell withdraw toward woods on west side of East Morass, Oswald with six guns cannonades enemy from Wikoff cider orchard (11:15-11:25 A.M.).
- 11:25-12:10 P.M. Lee—his numbers reduced by absence of Scott—retreats to Ker farm. Oswald covers retreat with six guns from west side of East Morass (11:40-11:45) and then with ten guns from a hill west of road (12:00-12:10 P.M.).
- 11:30-12:20 P.M. British troops begin arriving at East Morass and village. Clinton reconnoiters, then orders forced march to overtake Continentals. Light infantry and rangers sent north to outflank bridge.
- 11:35 A.M.-
12:30 P.M. Washington, after late breakfast in Englishtown, rides after troops. Meets Hamilton at crossroads south of meeting-house. Hamilton warns of danger of being outflanked. Washington orders Greene to march down roads to right.

- 12:25-1:00 P.M. After briefly resting at Ker's farm, Lee resumes retreat. Maxwell to cover road, while Lee forms troops west of Middle Morass to cover rear units. Meets Harrison (12:45 P.M.), then Washington.

Continental Delaying Actions

- 12:20-12:55 P.M. Except for light infantry and rangers circling to north, British advance in three columns, with light dragoons and artillery in center. Approaching Middle Morass, Clinton sends 3rd Brigade across Spotswood Middle Brook to outflank bridge.
- 12:30-1:10 P.M. Washington meets retreating troops, then Lee. He reconnoiters, sends Wayne with three battalions into Point of Woods, returns command to Lee, and rides back to array troops arriving on Perrine's Hill.
- 1:10-1:40 P.M. Wayne fires on Brigade of Guards and is routed. British storm Hedgerow, outflanking it to right (infantry) and left (light dragoons). 2nd Grenadiers cross bridge and are beaten back by Continental artillery.

The Great Cannonade

- 1:45-3:45 P.M. Clinton opens fire on Continental guns with 6-pounders, 12-pounders, and 5.5-inch howitzers. Continentals respond with over a dozen guns.
- 1:10-3:00 P.M. British 3rd Brigade pursues Scott's picked men across Craig and Sutfin farms; Continental artillery stops British advance. Two British battalions cross Spotswood North Brook to outflank Perrine's Hill; shortly they are joined by rangers and light infantry. Washington sees threat to his left and counters by repositioning Lafayette and Continental second line.

- 3:45-4:00 P.M. Greene's artillery opens fire from Combs Hill. Clinton shifts his grenadiers and withdraws his artillery. British north of Spotswood North Brook begin withdrawing.

Continental Harass Withdrawing Enemy

- 4:10-5:10 P.M. Washington sends officer to reconnoiter north of Spotswood North Brook, then orders two battalions of picked men to attack the battalion of 42nd Foot covering the British withdrawal across Sutfin farm. After skirmishing, last of British flanking force fords Spotswood Middle Brook and marches for courthouse.
- 4:30-5:00 P.M. Clinton orders British grenadiers guarding rear to join Hessian grenadiers and artillery on Ker farm. Washington sends Wayne with three regiments across the bridge to attack British rear.
- 5:15-6:00 P.M. Wayne attacks 1st British Grenadiers. Grenadiers, joined by 33rd Foot, push Wayne back into Parsonage buildings and enclosures. Greene's artillery drives back British, who withdraw to hill on Ker farm.

Clinton Retreats, Washington Moves Forward

- 5:30-9:00 P.M. Washington sends message to Steuben to bring Englishtown reserves to battlefield. Orders Brig. Gens. Woodford's and Poor's brigades to advance on enemy's flanks; troops on Perrine's Hill move forward to Hedgerow; reserves take position on heights. Darkness prevents contact. After dark one company fires on enemy picket.
- 6:00-11:00 P.M. At the Ker farm and Monmouth Court House, Clinton rests his men until 11:00 P.M., then prepares to march to join Knyphausen's column at Nut Swamp.

The Campaign Closes

29 June

At midnight Clinton moves, leaving behind more than forty of the most seriously wounded. His column marches through the night, arriving at Knyphausen's camp between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. British push on to Middletown, where they spend the night. Washington, finding the enemy gone, returns to Englishtown, leaving behind parties to bury the dead and assist with care of wounded from both sides. Morgan's light troops and the New Jersey militia sent forward to shadow the British withdrawal toward Navesink and Sandy Hook.

30 June

Washington rests the army at Englishtown. Clinton marches to secure positions in the Navesink Highlands, overlooking Sandy Hook. Light troops screen the British positions and patrol toward Middletown to prevent American raids; Clinton starts organizing his sick, wounded, horses, and equipment for embarkation to New York. For several days, most of the British army gets badly needed rest.

1-6 July

American army marches before daybreak toward New Brunswick, arriving on 2 July. After resting and celebrating the Fourth of July, most of the army marches early on 6 July toward the Hudson River Highlands. On 5 July the bulk of Clinton's men move onto Sandy Hook, where they board Royal Navy vessels for New York City. By the sixth, all troops have embarked, arriving at positions on Staten Island, Long Island, and Manhattan. American troops assigned to shadow the British withdrawal move to rejoin the main army, while the New Jersey Brigade takes up positions in Elizabeth, Woodbridge, and Newark.