

UNPRINTED HISTORY OF WASHINGTON'S STRATEGY.

Bridge Near Princeton Re- moved by General—He Had Taken Troops Across Creek.

Editor Sunday Advertiser:

Dear Sir—Some unpublished notes on Washington's famous flank movement in New Jersey, which came into my possession a few days ago I regard as timely just as we are observing the noted day of the Father of His Country.

About the year 1840, Thomas Carpenter, who had been a staff officer of the First Salem, N. J., Battalion, in the War of the Revolution, dictated a statement, long in the possession of his great grandson, James H. Carpenter, of Camden, recently deceased, from which the following extracts have been made. The paper gives some little additional information concerning the famous flank movement that resulted in the victory at Princeton. Carpenter was with Mifflin's brigade and had come in over the White Horse road the day before, and with some others had gone into a stone house and retired for a nap. When aroused about 2 o'clock on the morning of the third, and told that Washington and the army had gone, they mounted their horses and hurried down the White Horse road, supposing that was the road taken, when it was only the baggage train and escort that took that road.

At the White Horse Tavern they were told of their mistake and hurried off to the Northward with a young girl for a guide. When near Quaker Bridge they stopped at the house of one Biles, being cold, and on resuming their march they found the Quaker Bridge destroyed, and being strangers and no doubt finding the meadows, and perhaps the causeway also, covered with water and broken ice, they evidently thought the stream was a river and impassible, and while pondering how to get over they heard the noise of the battle at Princeton.

The manuscript ends without telling how they got across. This account appears to be the only one that tells that Washington's army took up this bridge after crossing. It was the right thing to do, and no doubt it was done, but no other account of this famous night march says so.

It also seems that Carpenter is the only contemporary to mention "White Horse Tavern." We have thought this name was of a late origin, the present White Horse road dating from 1802, and the road of Revolutionary days, leading towards the drawbridge and Bordentown, passed somewhere through the Colonial Cemetery; and the tavern of that day, we have heard, was near that place. However, it seems that it was then known as White Horse Tavern.

The Carpenter manuscript has been copied by General Alfred A. Woodhull, of Princeton, who kindly copied a portion of it for me. Some words are missing, but we can understand what is meant, and it reads about like this:

We had gone into a large stone house belonging to a Mrs. Clark, to be out of the cold, and went to sleep. When awakened about 2 A. M., the army had gone. In company with General Mifflin, we instantly set off to regain the army. We went the same road with it down to the White Horse Tavern, about four miles from Trenton, on the Bordentown road, when it had turned short to the left and taken the back road to Princeton. Obtaining a guide there, a girl of fifteen years, we proceeded on in company until within a short distance of the Assanpink near Princeton, when perceiving a light at a house near the road, where lived one Biles, all suffering much from cold, all, with the exception of Mifflin and Copeland, stopped at this house, and about daylight started again after the army. When we came to the Assanpink we found the bridge taken up and the place impassable, and when debating about the means by which we should get to the other side of the river, we heard the firing commence at Princeton.

It is very likely that the Mrs. Clark's house was well back from the lines. In their hurry they got on the wrong road and were following the baggage train. It is likely that a part of the escort of the baggage train left it at White Horse and turned north to join the main army. If Carpenter and party, being mounted, had taken the Sandtown road, which the main army took, they would have overtaken it.

JOSEPH H. WEST.