

## TOUR 1, PART 2: ALLINGTOWN'S CAMPBELL MONUMENT

This tour will bring you and teach you red story of early American and Allingtown history, and then return you back to the Green. It is not a long joan often obscurney but, you will be climbing an intermediate level hill.

- Please cross Forest Road at the base of the triangle via a crosswalk and walk to the right to the first street, Orange Terrace. Turn left and proceed up the hill. Terrae Avenue will become Chauncey Street shift direction briefly but, continue on it until reaching Prudden Street. Turn left and walk about two thirds of the block, reaching a small park on the right. Follow the park's path to reach the fenced off area
- You are standing in front of the only known monument erected in the United States that honors an overseas enemy combatant. This stone recognizes Adjutant William Campbell, a British soldier, who lost his life in this immediate area. The exact spot is unknown. He was an essential player in a dramatic military engagement that took place during the Revolutionary War in Allingtown, in West Haven proper and in other parts of the New Haven area. Ironically, that day's events and Adjutant Campbell's unfortunate fate have long lived in relative obscurity. For decades, this true historical tale wasn't part of the U.S. History curriculum at local schools including the one at the bottom of the hill, although it sat on a spot where some of the action happened one day in July of 1779.
- Adjutant William Campbell was a seasoned soldier, a Scotsman who had worked his way up from common soldier to an officer second in command of an elite British battalion, one that had previously guarded the king. Campbell was in his mid-to late thirties and was a family man, with a wife and children back home in Scotland. Born not long after the 1745 Battle of Culloden,

which was followed by a slaughtering of Scottish civilians by British troops, Campbell was well familiar with this famous tragedy and, we can tell by his actions that day, determined not to abuse civilians.

- In the early morning hours of July 5, 1779, the British, on a series of raids along the Connecticut coast, disembarked some 3000 on both sides of the New Haven harbor. They came to raid and sack New Haven. Those on the west side of the harbor, numbering about 1,500, under the command of General Gage, came ashore to West Haven at Savin Rock, a prominent spot about three miles south of here. These British regulars marched to West Haven's center, harming and harassing both people and property, at first facing little resistance. One of those who did resist was the Reverend Noah Williston of the First Congregational Church on the West Haven Green. He had angered the invading forces by unsuccessfully attempting to hide church and civic documents from them. The vengeful British regulars were about to hang Williston for his transgression when Adjutant Campbell intervened and saved the elderly cleric's life. Campbell even ordered that Williston receive medical attention for a broken leg.
- As the Redcoat's resumed their march to the north and into Allingtown, resistance to their presence grew. In the hours after the landing a loosely gathered about growing militia of musket bearing farmers, clerks, and students had taken positions along points on this hill, including right about where you are standing. In similar fashion to what had famously taken place at Concord and Lexington Massachusetts four years earlier, the unorganized but lethal civilian force opened fire upon the exposed troops below the hill. Casualties mounted among the numerically superior but disadvantaged British regiment of footmen.
- The Regulars were in a tough spot, blocked on two sides. They had been planning to turn to the right, east, at the triangular green and head to the West River via the Boston Post Road (today's Orange Avenue,) cross it and assail downtown New Haven. However, cannon fire from just the

other side the West River in New Haven, was blocking their planned advance to their target, about two miles distant. Worse for the British troops, other militiamen were tearing down the West River bridge. The redcoats would have had to advance the better part of a mile down the Post Road in an exposed position, then, again under fire, find a way to cross the West River. While the invaders returned artillery fire and pondered what to do next, the militiamen on the Milford Hill, including a sizable group of Yale students, led by graduate Aaron Burr, in town visiting relatives and later Vice-President of the United States, were peppering the King's forces with cap and ball musket fire, to no small effect.

- Adjutant Campbell, anxious to remove the twin dangers, took the risk of riding up Milford Hill via the Post Road to spot the position of the locals here on the mountain and across the river. His appearance surprised a few of the men up here and, at least one of them fired his piece and gravely wounded Campbell. The officer was carried to a nearby dwelling (the specific site is unknown) where he died later that day. Campbell was then carried back up the hill and buried near the spot he had fallen.
- A century later, when the passions of that time had long become a memory, West Haven was to rename its main North-South artery for Adjutant William Campbell, who had been decent and honorable in a time when others were not. In further recognition, this stone before you, notable for its pertinent and short message, was erected in 1891 in place of a simpler marker from 1841. That one had been pilfered earlier, subject of another raid, apparently. The monument has been moved once before coming to this little park. Adjutant Campbells exact grave site is unknown. In recent years ground soundings of the area have not revealed evidence of a burial. This park has never been well patronized but, it seems to be better known than in the past when many of its Allingtown neighbors did not know of its presence or its story.

- As to later aspects of the of the raid, the invaders eventually decided to avoid a direct assault on the cannon and riflemen across the river in New Haven. Instead, still under fire from the shadowing group of locals, the British force continued north up Forest Road. This, in military terms was a flanking movement, an attempt to get on the northern side of those defending the river crossing on the Post Road. Now, with the terrain flattening, the Redcoats were also more effectively returning the fire of their civilian harassers. They soon reached the Derby Road and wheeled right, toward the east. Not long after, they were able to cross the West River at a still standing bridge and enter New Haven. The British raiders were quickly at the New Haven Green, reaching it in the late afternoon joined by those who had come up the east side of the harbor. There was plenty of time to plunder the town's goodies which included a large cache of rum barrels, promptly seized and liberally consumed, followed by a whole bunch of undisciplined behavior. The next day, the hung over British, opposed on three sides by ever increasing numbers of hostile Americans, left by the only exit open to them, the awaiting ships, reached off the coast of East Haven. The raid was over. The British reported several dozen casualties, among them, of course, was William Campbell. When the British left, the Connecticut responders stood down and returned home. Casualties, among their ranks, there were certainly some, were not tallied. The British soon conducted more raids along the Connecticut coast and the war went on for four more years.
- Just a few years after the new stone was placed, huge numbers of new arrivals, many of them, immigrants from European states, began to fill up the freshly laid out streets and the houses that quickly lined them. This was especially true of the area down the hill. The neighborhood you are passing through to get here and back, often looks and feels much more suburban. This part of town held its 19<sup>th</sup> Century look longer, then skipped ahead to add large numbers residents and housing in the post WWII era. A little elevation can go a long way. Befitting

Allingtown's tradition of providing a platform for people to get a leg up and, their pro-occupation to do just that, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century new arrivals and the many who have come since, as mentioned, have not always become aware of the events of that day in July, three years and one day into the new nation's history. But the facts are there, the story endures, and you have come to know it.

- While returning by the route you came, be sure to catch the view of New Haven from this part of Milford Hill while also appreciating the advantage the newly minted Americans had that day as they fired down on exposed troops from the protection of the forest.
- Once arriving back on the Green, you may choose another mini tour or continue with your day and return at another time.
- Thank you for your visit to the Campbell monument. To "Blessed are the Merciful," we might now add and those who climb hills to seek knowledge.