

# The Colonel From Erwinna



My 6th great-grandfather, Col. Arthur Erwin, was a Scotch-Irish immigrant of considerable means who came to America in 1768. After purchasing an estate in Bucks County Pennsylvania, he returned to Ireland to retrieve his family: a wife, seven children and a large contingent of relatives, tenants and servants. He chartered the ship, The Newry Assistance, to make the journey. Unfortunately, his wife and an infant son, who was born on the ship, did not survive and were buried at sea.

He remarried the following year and would have an additional six children with his second wife. When the Revolutionary war broke out, he was commissioned as Colonel of the Fourth and Second Battalions of Bucks County Militia. He was 51 years old. There are letters which have been preserved written by George Washington to Col. Erwin. One in particular, written on December 9, 1776, contained an urgent request by the General for Erwin to muster his men and proceed post haste to join the main body of the Army to help stop the advancement of the Enemy.

Erwin immediately took action and brought his battalions to Washington's Army which, as it so happens, was camping near his property along the banks of the Delaware River. Erwin proved instrumental during the famous crossing, furnishing and manning (with his tenants and servants) many of the boats which carried the Continental Army across the river. He was personally aboard the final boat to cross and actively participated in the Battle of Trenton.

After the war, he settled down to live the life of a country gentleman, continuing to add to his vast land holdings. He began buying large tracts of land in Luzerne County, PA and Steuben County, NY., which proved to be a fatal purchase. Territorial borders at that time were still much in dispute and some were angry at what they considered to be an illegal land grab. One day in 1792 while visiting at Tioga Point, Erwin was shot and killed, presumably assassinated by person(s) unknown. Despite a proclamation from Governor Mifflin and a reward offer of \$200, his killer was never identified. His body was returned to his home in Erwinna, PA and buried along the banks of the Delaware River.

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