

wout made a return of his company, in which he reported two commissioned and three non-commissioned officers and forty-five men as fit for duty.¹

A question of precedence in rank, based upon the dates of their commissions as colonels, having become a matter of dispute among the commandants of the regiments forming Brigadier-General George Clinton's brigade, Colonel Jacobus Swartwout, in a letter to the New York committee of safety, dated at "Headquarters, King's Bridge," September 10, 1776, wrote:

"General Clinton tells me he has written you about the rank of the several regiments. I am almost confident my commission is the oldest of the regiments now raised, but, as the general has left the matter to you, I am content to submit the same to your consideration, not doubting but you will do justice."²

On September 15, a force of British troops landed on Manhattan Island, at Kip's Bay, in the East River, opposite the mouth of Newtown Creek. Being unopposed, "the British army at once marched to the heights of Inclenburg, or Murray's Hill, and a subsequent debarkation of troops was advanced so far northward as to make a chain of posts across the island from Bloomingdale to Horn's Hook, near Hell-Gate. General Howe established his own headquarters at the Beekman mansion, not far from those [at Robert Murray's house], just vacated by General Washington on Murray Hill. * * * *

"On the twelfth day of October, 1776, General Howe began the execution of his plan to cut off Washington's army from New England and Upper New York, and fasten it to his own lines for future capture. Unwilling to attempt the costly enterprise of storming the craggy and broken heights, where the whole country was defensive by small parties against superior force, and of forcing so many successive lines of earthworks and redoubts, he resolved to move from the coast of Long Island Sound across to the Hudson River, where his ships were lying, and also to occupy the entire rear of the American army by this movement. * * * *

"The Guards, Light Infantry, Reserve, and Donop's Hessian corps were embarked upon large vessels, and were transferred from the city to Frog's Neck [on the south-eastern extremity of Westchester County projecting into Long Island Sound], once known as Throckmorton's, or Throck's Neck, on the same day in safety."³

"It now became necessary," writes Major-General Heath, "immediately to quit the position in the neighbourhood of King's Bridge, the British being in the rear of the left of our army; and it is not a little unaccountable that they

¹ Diary and memoranda of Ensign Barnardus Swartwout, in possession of the New York Historical Society.

² American archives. Fifth series, vol. ii., p. 276.

³ Campaign of 1776. Memoirs of the Long Island Historical Society, vol. iii., pp. 227, 234.