

The information which you gave your correspondent "W. M. C." in last Sunday's TIMES about the cold Winter of 1820-21 might be supplemented by citing the phenomenal Winter of 1779-80, during which the Hudson and East Rivers and New York Harbor were frozen over, greatly to the alarm of the British.

The letters of Major Gen. James Pattison, commandant of the city and garrison of New York, and the journal of the Hessian Lieutenant, Von Krafft, indicate how seriously the British were concerned for their safety, owing to the loss of the insular character of Manhattan Island and the paralysis of the British fleet.

On January 17, 1780, Von Krafft crossed on the ice from New York to Long Island with an orderly without fear. During January and February people crossed the Hudson to New Jersey, and not only cord wood but the heaviest cannon were hauled between Jersey City and New York on the ice—"an event unknown in the memory of man," wrote Gen. Pattison to Lord Germaine.

On Feb. 19 provisions were transported from New York to Staten Island and a detachment of cavalry marched from Staten Island to New York on the ice. The British, deprived of the use of their fleet, were in a fever of anxiety. Von Krafft says:

"The rebels had now the best opportunity to attack us from all sides to the best advantage. We expected it hourly."

Gen. Pattison says:

"It was strongly reported that Gen. Washington was meditating a great stroke upon New York with his whole force, by different attacks."

Consequently, the sailors from the ships were landed, and armed with muskets and pikes to aid in repelling the expected assaults, and all citizens between 17 and 60 years of age were mustered into service temporarily and supplied with arms. Even convalescents were pressed into the service.

No less than forty companies, enrolling 2,660 citizens, were organized from the different wards. Extra patrols were established. Cannon were placed in new situations and were mounted on sleighs, so as to be transported rapidly to any point. The cannon in the principal works were kept loaded, day and night.

An elaborate code of signals, by gun fire, rockets, and flags, was established, by means of which an alarm could be transmitted from Kingsbridge to McGown's Pass, and so on down to the Battery if the Americans should attack from the north, and similar arrangements were made to give warning of approach across either the Hudson River or the East River. A lookout was stationed at the Battery to watch the signal flag on Staten Island.

While the inhabitants were thus suffering from anxiety, they also suffered for lack of provisions and fuel. The latter was so scarce that "old ships were assigned to all the English and Hessian regiments for firewood," and even then they had only half enough. The cold snap lasted till Feb. 22, when Gen. Pattison wrote:

"The Rigor of the Frost is now happily abated and we are flattered with the Prospect of a Compleat Thaw, so that all Ideas of an Attack are now at an End."

EDWARD HAGAMAN HALL.