

Conflict – Hardships -- Accounts

11 April 1777

The English do not smoke tobacco. Mostly they chew it, as our sailors themselves do, having it in their mouth and chewing it all day long. This chewing is most necessary and useful when a person is on the water, because the salted provisions and the stale, foul-smelling drinking water enables scurvy to enter the mouth and destroy the teeth and gums. Therefore, it is necessary for us to become accustomed to chewing in order to prevent this disease.

-- Johann Conrad Dohla, private, Fourth Company of the Bayreuth Regiment, Ansbach-Bayreuth



Painting of scurvy sufferers
Royal Navy Corporate Communication,
www.royal-navy.mod.uk

23 April 1777

On Sept. 18th, the Hartford newspaper wrote the following: "*Kingston, Sept. 1. We are credibly informed that Burgoyne, Chief and Director of the King of Great Britain's band of thieves, robbers, cutthroats, scalpers, murderers of every denomination now infesting the northern and western frontiers of several of the American United States, has not only discontinued the reward he had offered and given to the Savages, Tories, Indians, Britons, Hessians, ...and other profligate scum of the human race now in his service for the scalps they brought him...but also strictly prohibited the practice of scalping. It must not, however, be supposed that this chief of the ruffian bands was so weak as to be in the least influenced in this prohibition, by any motives of compassion or humanity.....he has found by experience that his rewards lessened the number of his emissaries, -- who not only scalped some of his Tory friends, concealed among the inhabitants, but also scalped one another. A scalping party of a lieutenant and about 30 men, whom he had lately sent out with a large number of Indians, were by the latter all killed and scalped; none of the party has been since seen or heard of, and the lieutenant's hair was known as being remarkably full, bushy, and red.*"

-- J. F. Wasmus, German Company Surgeon, 1776-1783



Indian Warrior with Scalp by Barlow, a 1789 engraving published by William Lane, London, England. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Campaign of 1777

Being pinched with hunger, I one day strolled to a place where sometime before some cattle had been slaughtered. Here I had the good luck (or rather bad luck, as it turned out in the end) to find an ox's milt, which had escaped the hogs and dogs. With this prize I steered off to my tent, threw it upon the fire and broiled it, and then sat down to eat it, without either bread or salt. I had not had it long in my stomach before it began to make strong remonstrances and to manifest a great inclination to be set at liberty again. I was very willing to listen to its requests, and with eyes overflowing with tears at parting with what I had thought to be a friend, I gave it a discharge.

-- Joseph Plumb Martin, Revolutionary Soldier, Continental Army



Valley Forge--Washington & Lafayette. Winter 1777-78. Copy of engraving by H. B. Hall after Alonzo Chappel.

