

Rebels and Redcoats

The Aftermath of the Battle of Ridgefield

Wilton experienced the invasion of the British through the actions leading to the Battle of Ridgefield and their troops' subsequent retreat via Ridgefield Road.

During General Tryon's march to Danbury, two Wilton men were captured: Lambert Lockwood, a messenger for General Silliman, and Jacob Patchen.

The Wilton militia participated in the Battle of Ridgefield led by Lieutenant Seth Abbott. John Waterbury Jr. and Theophilus Mead were wounded and Nathan Betts IV was killed. Other Wilton militiamen known to be at the battle included Captain Azor Belden, Ensign Samuel Olmstead, David Dunning, Nathan Gilbert, Matthew and Ezra Gregory, Matthew Hanford, Alvin Hyatt, Uriah Keeler, Jesse Olmstead, and Moses Scott. Elihu DeForest was a captain in the Ridgebury militia. Jesse Nichols of Wilton witnessed the moment of General Arnold's near capture, when his horse was hit with nine bullets and killed.

Following the battle, British troops passed through Wilton on their way south to Compo Beach. Benjamin Keeler of 742 Ridgefield Road was the only citizen arrested during this march, most likely for firing on the British troops as they passed.

During their march down Ridgefield Road, the British stopped to loot and destroy Patriots' property. They stole several cows from Samuel Keeler IV of 652 Ridgefield Road. At Captain Samuel Comstock's home at 433 Ridgefield Road, his wife, Mercy, set the table with food and drink for the British soldiers. She buried the silver and hid herself behind the house. When Mercy emerged, the food was eaten but the house was otherwise untouched.

At 384 Ridgefield Road, a brass kettle was destroyed and at 274 Ridgefield Road, a mirror was broken. They entered the house of Daniel Gregory at 11 Belden Hill Road, where Gregory's mother was waiting for them with a fireplace poker "to show them which side I am on."

The British took a detour down Mill Road to avoid a potential ambush, which led them to a massive supply of military stores concealed by the bridge across the Norwalk River. After destroying the cache, they laid waste to stores that had been hidden with Captain Clapp Raymond, of 249 Danbury Road (now the Society's Sloan Raymond Fitch House). General Tryon continued his march up Dudley Road, pausing to pillage 149 Dudley Road, the home of Lieutenant Seth Abbott.

After General Wooster was wounded in his second engagement with British troops in Ridgefield, Colonel Jedediah Huntington took command of Wooster's troops and led them to Wilton. The militiamen engaged in a skirmish on Chestnut Hill, where six Patriots were wounded. From his spot on Chestnut Hill, General Tryon saw another militia in wait by the Saugatuck River. Guided by local Loyalists, Tryon crossed the river further north avoid an encounter, and continued to his ships at Compo Beach.

