

## ***New Jersey Militiamen and Their Families at War – by Larry Kidder***

Larry will go over the trials and tribulations of the members of the New Jersey Militia members and their families during the American Revolution – 1776-1783.

During the colonial period and then the American Revolution, by law, every man between the ages of 16 and 50 in New Jersey was required to enroll in his local militia company. These companies were expected to be a local, emergency defense force, but the nature of the Revolution in New Jersey radically expanded the scope of their duties. As a result, every man, and his family, faced the simultaneous requirements to keep a farm or business going while men of the family were frequently ordered to spend periods of time, often at critical points in the farming year, away from home to defend various parts of the state. The inadequate nature and enforcement of the militia laws meant that those men who responded consistently to militia call outs accepted, along with their families, a “disproportionate burden” among New Jersey citizens who supported the Revolution.

### **Biographical Sketch – William L. (Larry) Kidder**



Larry Kidder received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Allegheny College in Meadville, PA. A retired 40+ year high school history teacher, Larry taught for 32 years at the Hun School of Princeton, NJ and served four years in the US Navy, assigned to the US Navy Research and Development Unit, Vietnam, and then the destroyer USS Brownson, home ported in Newport, Rhode Island. In the 1980s, he was the lead researcher and writer for the creation of the Admiral Arleigh Burke National Destroyermen's Museum aboard the destroyer museum ship USS Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. (DD850) at Battleship Cove in Fall River, Massachusetts.

For more than twenty-five years, Larry has volunteered at the Howell Living History Farm of the Mercer County Park System, in Hopewell, New Jersey. He has volunteered as an historian, interpreter, webmaster, and draft horse teamster. This interest led to the writing of his first book, *The Pleasant Valley School Story: A Story of Education and Community in Rural New Jersey*, which won the 2013 Scholarship and Artistry Award of the Country School Association of America. This book tells of the local schoolhouse, now part of the Howell Living History Farm and a case study of a rural school in central New Jersey from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. His second book, *A People Harassed and Exhausted: The Story of a New Jersey Militia Regiment in the American Revolution*, was published in November 2013. In May 2014 he published his third book, *Farming Pleasant Valley: 250 Years of Life in Rural Hopewell Township, New Jersey*. He has also authored a chapter for the new book *The American Revolution in New Jersey: Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front* recently released by Rutgers University Press. He was also a contributor to and editor of the book *Meet Your Revolutionary Neighbors* published by Crossroads of the American Revolution in 2015. He is currently researching a book about life of 1774 to 1783 in Trenton, truly at the crossroads of Revolutionary activity.

Active in historical societies in Ewing, Hopewell, and Lawrence townships, Larry has given talks on local history to a variety of civic groups. He is an active member of the Association for Living History, Farm, and Agricultural Museums (ALHFAM), the Washington's Crossing Roundtable of the American Revolution, and the New Jersey Living History Advisory Council. He is a member of the Advisory Council for Crossroads of the American Revolution and is working with Crossroads as volunteer coordinator of its Meet Your Revolutionary Neighbors project.