

**AN EXPRESS OF '76: A  
CHRONICLE OF THE  
TOWN OF YORK IN THE  
WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE**

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An Express of '76: A Chronicle of the Town of York in the War for Independence by Lindley Murray Hubbard

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**LINDLEY MURRAY HUBBARD**

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MASSACHUSETTS,  
NEW YORK,  
INTRODUCTION.

THE JOURNAL OF GENERAL HUBBARD.

Once around the town clock of the new City Hall—which in 1825 had lately been finished—brings every day, observes General Hubbard in his journal, some new and remarkable happening; but strange things did happen fifty years ago, some of them being only just found out. 'Maybe,' he adds, 'the patriots of the Revolution did not know so much that was new and smart as people nowadays do, but they did know things which they do not always get the credit for, as there be those still living can testify. They set out a pretty big stent for themselves and they stuck to it to the finish, which is not always the fashion in these times.'

'You doubt at times,' General Hubbard continues a little farther on, 'if you ever really did know the bronze and marble figures that stand so stiff and haughty-like in public places—but the haughtiness is just put on for show, after all. Now and then you get a side glance under it, such as a play actor throws to a friend in the audience, that brings up familiar scenes, or some incident in which you took part.'

Last summer, when the old Hubbard residence was torn down, the early parts of General Hubbard's journal, which had been missing, were found between the

weather-boarding and the plaster. A workman who gathered up the sheets laid them aside on a pile of rubbish until he had called my attention. The old house was built by the late General Hubbard fully a hundred years ago. He spent the last twenty-five years of his life there. My father passed his boyhood in the house, and had a distinct recollection of his grandfather, who served, it will be remembered, with great credit in the Revolutionary War. The General often told the children stories of his experiences, and traditions of some of the incidents here related are still preserved in our family.

The General wrote with great care almost daily in his journal, always having a clean sheet of blotting paper between the pages. After his death the manuscript, which had become voluminous, was packed in a cowhide trunk and stored for many years in the attic of the old house. In my father's time the children had the run of the attic, and often, he said, rummaged the trunk and scattered its contents, which will account for the missing sheets having been thrown down the open space of the garret weather-boarding.

A few sheets are still missing, and all are stained, faded and nibbled by mice, but otherwise in fair preservation. This narrative which follows the General's own account, tells of his first arrival in the town of New York on an important official mission, in that summer of '76, and of his joining the army several months before the battle of Long Island, and the evacuation of the city. It is a personal experience of interest at this critical period. The estimate of his asso-



#### INTRODUCTION.

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ciates and contemporaries is that set down by the General himself in his later years.

What is related from General Hubbard's direct participation or recollection is assumed to be substantially accurate. Lady Claremont's identity, which history has hitherto concealed, sets forth more clearly the self-restraint of Washington, his single, patriotic purpose, and the influences brought to bear at this time. I had thought of turning over these documents to the Daughters of the Revolution, and may yet do so. Through the kindness of several friends who are authorities on Revolutionary history, I have obtained other interesting information of Lady Claremont's curious and remarkable participation in the Hickey arrest and trial, and in one or two subsequent incidents.

LINDLEY MURRAY HUBBARD.

*New York, April 15, 1905.*

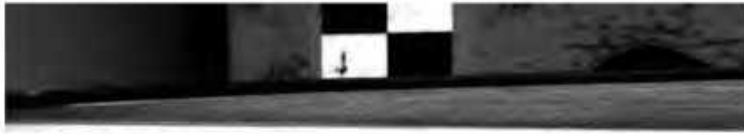


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## AN EXPRESS OF 76.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### 'AN EXPRESS FROM BOSTON.

One pleasant, early summer's afternoon about four of the clock, Robert Murray's great "leather convenience" returning from town, rumbled around the flanks of Murray Hill in sight of The Inlenberg, on the Boston Post Road, as a dust-cloud with heavy horse tramp came down from the north.

A soft air, the balmiest of June—fleecy cloud packs in the blue overhead, red clover in the field, and foliage on the hillside a moist green. No thunder-bolts fall from clear skies, we learn with after years. But who can foretell the thunder cloud, the withering flash, the hot blast, the smoke and crash that may come?

In 1776 the Quaker merchant's chariot and four, and its fat negro coachman and footman, were still among the luxuries and a source of admiration in the town of New York. Its present burden, a quartette of youth and beauty in summer array, of cool chintzes, and expansive muskmelon, Leghorn bonnets—not to mention the rich and healthful complexions, or flashing smiles and coquettish glances that are wont to shoot

from a battery of gay and youthful eyes—was no less a source of admiration to the eligible Continental officers quartered in town.

The dust-cloud had rolled down Breakneck Hill from Kings Bridge—the only point of connection between York Island and the main. Puffing and wheezing it had climbed the rocky and wooded cleft of McGowans Pass, and bowled along before the Black Horse Tavern, whose idlers laid wager that none but an express would raise so mighty a dust. A puff of wind revealed a passing glimpse of the rider bent over a heavy plow-horse, but giving little heed to tavern idlers; or to the Dutch farmers among the fields who shook their heads in solemn deprecation of his wanton disregard of good horsesh. . .

Fired with a patriotic mission and approaching the goal after forty hours hard riding over rough and dusty roads from Boston, all beyond was a closed volume to the Express, but of great promise—the present chapter, to leave a lasting impress upon his career.

His horse, laboring around the turn in the Post Road, encountered the chariot and four. The dust-cloud was an apparition in broad day to the startled coachman. The fat horses plunged and drew back in fright. Then the cloud enveloped the chariot. The coachmen tumbled from their seats. All for the instant was in confusion, a chorus of thrilling cries rising as the horses broke away with reins trailing.

The Express, springing to the ground, caught the lines and was dragged for a space in imminent peril of coach wheels and the horses' heels, until the coach-