

# NEWS



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For Immediate Release

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## 07-20-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

When it comes to history, this week was a busy one for Orange County. July 22 marks the 232<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Minisink; the only major skirmish of the American Revolution fought in the northern Delaware Valley. The First Battle of Bull Run, or the First Battle of Manassas, as the Confederate forces called it, was fought 150 years ago on July 21, 1861 in Prince William County, Virginia. Participants on both sides of the battlefield had ties to Orange County.

The area of the upper Delaware River Valley was frontier during the American Revolution. The remoteness made the settlements there – what are today Port Jervis and Deerpark – easy targets for raids by Loyalists, Tories, and Indians. The most significant of these raids, now known as the Battle of Minisink, began July 20, 1779, and was led by Joseph Brant, a Dartmouth-educated Mohawk with a commission in the British army.

Brant, along with a band of 90 or so Tories and Iroquois, plowed through the Neversink Valley leaving destruction in their wake. The following day, July 21, two groups of militia, one led by Lt. Col. Benjamin Tusten of Goshen, met in Mahackamack (present day Port Jervis) and started their pursuit of Brant up the Delaware River. That same day, they met up with Col. John Hathorn's militia unit from Warwick. Now 120 men strong, the militia discovered Brant and his forces crossing the Delaware River, ready to start their ambush. Brant was warned of the pursuing militia when a scout's gun went off. Responding swiftly, Brant and his men outflanked the patriots, cutting off one of the militia units and leaving the other two in shambles. Beating a hasty retreat, the remaining patriots continued to battle Brant, but they lost too many men and were soundly defeated.

Each year, the Minisink chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of American Revolution (NSDAR) holds a ceremony honoring the courageous efforts of the patriots who died in the Battle of Minisink on July 22, 1779. The ceremony will once again be held at the Minisink Battle monument in Goshen (in front of 124 Main Street, across from the 1841 Courthouse) on Friday, July 22 at 11 a.m. Ms. Marion Wild, author and Village of Montgomery historian, will receive a national community service award from NSDAR and historian John Conway will talk about the Battle. Congratulations Marion!

The First Battle of Bull Run was the first major battle of the Civil War, and while it took place nearly five hours away from Orange County by car today, Orange County played a role in this significant battle. The Union commander, Gen. Irvin McDowell, and both Confederate commanders, Gen. Pierre Beauregard and Gen. Joseph Johnston, received their military educations at West Point. The same was true for many of the officers on both sides of the field. Augustus Van Horne Ellis, who would later train the 56<sup>th</sup> New York (Orange and Sullivan) and command the 124<sup>th</sup> New York Orange Blossoms, also participated in the battle leading a company of men armed with two howitzers. Captain Ellis received recognition for successfully getting his men off the field with coolness and skill in the face of defeat.

From the American Revolution to present day, Orange County residents have proudly served our nation's armed forces and played many significant roles in shaping the history of our great country. To learn more about Orange County history, visit the Historian's web pages at [www.orangecountygov.com](http://www.orangecountygov.com) or stop by the 1841 Courthouse at 101 Main Street, Goshen. There, you'll find a wealth of information.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana  
County Executive