



Bergen County, Where America Begins



Loyalists, Refugees & Slaves

The 1782 Murder of Cornelius Nefie

Lecture by Todd Braisted

In the closing days of the American Revolution, the southern portion of Bergen County known as Bergen Neck (modern Hudson County) was still occupied by Loyalist inhabitants and Crown troops. As so many had throughout the war, inhabitants of the county clandestinely traded and sold goods in British-held New York City. On a hot summer's day in 1782, one of those inhabitants, Cornelius Nefie, a known Loyalist, was set upon, robbed and murdered by a group of black woodcutter/soldiers under the command of Major Thomas Ward, the major of the Refugee corps entrenched at Bergen Point. Was it simply a case of outlaw highwaymen seeking ill-gotten gain, or was there more to the story?

The lecture took place at the Steuben House on February 13, 2011, in front of about 47 people.

Todd Braisted

A long-time researcher of the Loyalist Military, Todd has appeared as a Guest

Historian on the PBS Series "History Detectives" and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "Who Do You Think You Are?" plus a coordinator for the recent New Jersey Network documentary "Ten Crucial Days." Co-author of *Moving On: Black Loyalists in the Afro-Atlantic World*; *The Revolutionary War in Bergen County*; and *Revolutionary Bergen County* as well as numerous journal articles. Editorial Board member and columnist for *American Revolution Magazine*. Mr. Braisted has lectured extensively throughout the United States and Canada, before such organizations as the United Empire Loyalist Association, the David Library of the American Revolution, The National Park Service, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Company of Military Historians, Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Montgomery, Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution and the 2009 Atlantic Loyalists Symposium at the University of Maine. Chaired the 2001 "Retreat to Victory" reenactment committee, as well as organizing numerous other living history events. Webmaster and creator of royalprovincial.com, the leading web site for Loyalist studies. His research has taken him numerous times to such institutions as the Library of Congress, William L. Clements Library, Library and Archives Canada and The National Archives in England. Todd will be an instructor at Fort Ticonderoga as a part of their 2011 National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture Workshops for School Teachers.

Mr. Braisted has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including chairman of the West Point Chapter of the Company of Military Historians; president, Bergen County Historical Society; president, Brigade of the American Revolution; trustee, 1759 Historic Vought House Association; president, 4th Battalion, New Jersey Volunteers reenactment group. In 2007, as an acknowledgement of his life's work to date, Todd was made an Honorary Vice President, United Empire Loyalist Association of Canada, the only American to have ever been so honored.

A lifelong resident of Bergen County, New Jersey, Todd currently lives in Mahwah with his wife Susan.

[**The Bergen County Historical Society**](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit volunteer organization, promotes preservation, study and appreciation of civil, political, military and the general history of the United States of America, particularly of Bergen County. Beginning in 1939, our museum collections were displayed at the Steuben House, a State Historic Site. The Steuben House is now open for special events. The Campbell-Christie House and the Demarest House Museum are located on 7 acres of Bergen County Historical Society land at Historic New Bridge Landing, River Edge, NJ. Some of our 4,000 object collection are on

display at HNBL. We have secured new offices in Westwood for our Rare Document and Library Collection.

We are not a government agency and have never received regular or significant public funding, we rely on private donations and membership.