

# Celebrating Our history

*Re-enactment of battle that marked conclusion of Revolutionary War*



Peter Ferwerda



Tim Hart

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Correspondent

On Dec. 27, LBI residents can enjoy the "quiet" between Christmas and New Year's by enjoying a moment in history — the annual re-enactment of the famous Affair at Cedar Bridge, a skirmish that has been documented as the last official land engagement of the Revolutionary War.

Centered around a small area on Old Halfway Road in Barnegat, the re-enactment will highlight the final battle between local American Patriots and a loyalist band of Pine Robbers led by Capt. John Bacon, who supported the King of England and roamed the coastline hijacking ships and looting residents and businesses. The area is marked by a small bridge and the Cedar Bridge Tavern, now owned by Ocean County and managed by the Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation. "Based on historical records, we're about 85 percent sure that on that spot on Dec. 27, 1782, a group of 21 American Patriots and their seven horses stopped at the Cedar Bridge Tavern to get a drink.

"Bound for the same watering hole, John Bacon and roughly 30 to 50 of his men are believed to have come up on the other side of the bridge, at which time a confrontation began," said Tim



Hart, Division chairman of the Ocean County Cultural and Heritage Commission.

"Both sides shot at each other and the Patriots appeared to be winning," he said, "but then Loyalist townspeople got involved and came to Bacon's aid. In the end, three people died and a few were wounded, but the outcome was not clear. In fact, two local newspapers of the time, one run by Patriots and the other run by Loyalists, each



published stories saying that their side had won."

Hart, who has been overseeing the Cedar Bridge re-enactment since the first year it was run in 2001, is proud of the annual event. He said he has had as many as 25 volunteers dressed in period costume participating in the re-enactment. One of the most faithful has been 41 year-old Manahawkin resident Peter Ferwerda, who has been involved in area re-enactments of all

kinds since 1995 and the Cedar Bridge event since it began.

"In the past, I have played both a Loyalist officer with the First New Jersey Volunteers as well as a Patriot officer with the Monmouth County Militia," Ferwerda said. "I enjoy being a part of this event because it helps educate the public and keeps our history alive.

"We hope that re-enactments like this will help spur people on to learn more about the rich history that took place in our very own backyard and the exciting events that helped forge separate colonies into one new nation," he said.

Hart confirms the first-hand experience that the re-enactment can provide to onlookers.

"I take 300 to 500 people out on tours to see the site every year, usually during the warmer months," Hart said. "On Dec. 27, it's obviously much colder out, and so attendees can get a good idea of what it was really like when the actual event took place."

Watching the re-enactment is free of charge. It will start at 2 p.m. at 200 Old Halfway Road in Barnegat, which runs between Old Halfway Road (off Route 72) and Warren Grove Road (between Routes 539 and 72).

For more information, call 609-296-8868 or visit [www.Tuckertonseaport.org](http://www.Tuckertonseaport.org).



Scenes from past re-enactments of the Affair at Cedar Bridge in Barnegat. (FILE PHOTOS)