

## Summit Historical Minute

Presented at Common Council Meeting of December 1, 2015

By Tim Childers, Senior – Summit High School

Hello everyone. My name is Tim Childers, I am a senior at Summit High School, and in the next minute I intend to shed light on an aspect of Summit's involvement in the Revolutionary War. Our city's name, as you know, comes as no surprise. Literally sitting atop a hill, Summit offers a view of the east and south coastal plains, including the entire seaboard of New York City. In 1777, General George Washington used this topography to his advantage and established his tenth signal station at the intersection of Hobart Avenue and Beacon Road. Here, a fire beacon and a carriage cannon, referred to as the "Old Sow," were set up as part of a signaling apparatus. The sound of the cannon and the brightness of the fire emitted from the beacon were audible and visible from great distances away. From this site, Washington, who was stationed in Morristown, could be warned of an approaching British force. In 1780, this semaphore helped rally the local militia units on June 7th and June 23rd to fight the Hessians in what later became known as "The Battle of Springfield." Although British general Clinton was able to advance initially, his army was met with a quick response and was eventually forced to withdraw. Washington praised the role of the New Jersey Militia and the efforts of locals in the battle, when he wrote, "They flew to arms universally and acted with a spirit equal to anything I have seen in the course of the war." This Continental victory crushed the hope of further British ambitions in New Jersey, and paved the way for the Battle of Yorktown and an eventual British surrender in 1781. In the Revolutionary War, as they have in every war since, the residents of Summit answered their nation's call to service.