

a twelve-year-old orphan in 1795. His brother, Nehemiah, died in 1809. Among his assets were twelve slaves--one a man named Gambo, thirty years old. The slaves on Nehemiah Birckhead's plantation, it appears, perpetuated the heroic action of the Gambo who was killed, while futilely attempting to protect the women in the work gang from physical abuse, by naming the first male child born there in his honor.

CONCLUSION

The month of October 1777 had been momentous in many respects. The Battle of Germantown, which the Americans considered proof that they could plan and execute a crushing blow against the British as long as the elements did not foil their efforts, had been followed within days by the first reports of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga. As exhilarating as these events were, another month of war had taken its toll, both in lives and people's energy. Marylanders had been especially hurt at the Battle of Germantown, because the regiments under Sullivan took the brunt of the British offensive. The troops that survived, while in good spirits, were ill clad and cold weather already made life at camp virtually unbearable. Congress, with so many important matters to consider, kept such long hours that in the words of one member, Cornelius Harnett of North Carolina: "At present I can hardly find time to write a letter, Congress sits from morning 'till night, and Committees 'till 10 and 11 o'clock. In fact I am almost tired of my troublesome office, and heartily wish to be with my family."

Another person who was weary during the month of October 1777 was a young Marylander, just turned twenty-six, named Samuel Smith. Despite his youth, Smith had served valiantly at the Battles of Long Island, Harlem Heights, and White Plains in 1776, and as a Lt. Colonel in Col. Josias Hall's regiment he had participated in the abortive attempt to seize Staten Island. On September 24, Smith received an order instructing him to be at General Washington's headquarters at eight o'clock the next morning. Smith complied, and was informed that he was to take command of Ft. Mifflin, located on Mud Island in the Delaware River a few miles below Philadelphia. Ft. Mifflin was the center of American resistance to the British navy in its attempt to pass up the Delaware to Philadelphia. Elaborate defenses had been erected by French engineers during the past months, but when Smith arrived on the Island, barely a week before the first British Ships arrived he found the fort ill prepared to meet