

James Pattison

You are James Pattison, an officer of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and a major general of the British Army.

You were born in 1723, to James Pattison, a successful merchant, and his wife Mary Pattison (née Maxey). The second of three sons, you are the only member of your immediate family to pursue a military career. (Your brothers followed your father's footsteps into the world of trade and now play prominent roles in the silk industry in Cheshire.)

You joined the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1740. In the thirty-nine years that followed, you saw active service in the long campaign that culminated in the battle of Fontenoy (1742-1745) and the "Fantastic War" between Portugal and Spain (1762-1763.) In times of peace, you assisted the Republic of Venice to modernize its artillery and served as lieutenant-governor of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. In the former assignment, you gained much experience with the art of working with civilian authorities while enjoying many opportunities to add to your collection of fine paintings. In the latter posting, you reformed the regulations related to the conduct of cadets.

Your service in North America began in September of 1777, when you were given charge of the entirety of the artillery serving with British forces on that continent and direct command of the artillery of the main British field army, then based in New York.

In July of 1779 you took on the additional duty of serving as military commandant of New York. As that city was then under martial law, this meant that you were responsible for the full range of municipal services, as well as the fortifications surrounding the city, the militia, and the behavior of troops with respect to the civilian population. Thus, the first project that you undertook as military commandant was a scheme for preventing the inhabitants of the city of New York from "throwing filth and rubbish from their houses into the street."

Your wife, Mary Pattison, is the daughter of Albert Bogard (1659-1751), the first colonel-commandant of the Royal Regiment of Artillery. This marriage has produced one child, a son named Nathaniel, who died in 1755, before reaching the age of two.