

Historic Deerfield

A PUBLICATION OF HISTORIC DEERFIELD, INC.

SUMMER 2026

REVOLUTION



P. B. H. H. H.
1771

IT WILL PROBABLY COME as no surprise to faithful readers of this magazine that our 2026 issue would be devoted to the topic of the nation's semi-quincentennial. In this we don't necessarily stand out from other history museums, art museums, or historic sites (and Historic Deerfield is all three of these in one!). However, a glance at the Table of Contents of this number should convince you that the multiple lenses that Historic Deerfield can bring to bear on the 250th commemoration are surprisingly varied, and in many cases, unique.

We start out with a fascinating article contributed by Wendy Bellion, of the University of Delaware, on the story of Deerfield's liberty pole. Professor Bellion has made a deep study of the significance and symbolism of liberty poles, a kind of embodied example of political speech that were erected in many towns and cities in the years leading up to the Revolution. Deerfield's pole, an early example of the type, was contested from the start and almost didn't get put up. There appears to be no physical trace remaining of that original pole, but our founders, Helen and Henry Flynt, erected a reproduction liberty pole 80 years ago, and it still stands to one side of the Stebbins House. This summer we will be translating the story of the pole into a series of three one-act plays, collectively titled *A Stake in the Ground: 1774*. These will be performed outdoors, on the actual sites where some of the events took place. There is more information about the project in Claire Carlson's conversation with the playwrights at the end of this magazine.

It is also a banner year for exhibitions at Historic Deerfield, as we are opening three of them at once—

**From
the President**

a first for us—with each one devoted to a part of the revolutionary story. This important programmatic initiative is also represented in the pages of this magazine, with contributions from the curators (Amanda Lange, Phillippa Pitts, Dan Sousa, and Lauren Whitley) exploring aspects of the shows they have created. *Picturing the Revolution* examines the visual culture of the struggle for independence and the events leading up to it, with a focus on maps, broadsides, prints, and portraits. *Dressing the Revolution* navigates the politics and stylistic reversals in dress and hair that took place during the decade of the 1770s and beyond—before, during, and after conflict. Finally, *A Town Divided* looks closely at the ways in which the residents of Deerfield experienced the war, with a near 50-50 split in sympathies between the patriots and the loyalists. While I recommend you make your own trip to Deerfield to see these three exhibitions, you will get a taste of what is on offer in the Flynt Center galleries through the curators' essays here.

As usual, the Table of Contents is rounded out by a number of additional essays contributed by present and former staff, trustees, summer fellows, and collaborators. These articles range in topics from colorful flags, banners, and maps, to a fascinating account of how the Abenaki peoples experienced and navigated the war, to several treatments of that remarkable Deerfield eyewitness and historical chronicler, Epaphras Hoyt. And there is much, much more that we are planning for the spring, summer, and fall of 2026; this is definitely the year to visit Historic Deerfield!

—John Davis, President, Historic Deerfield

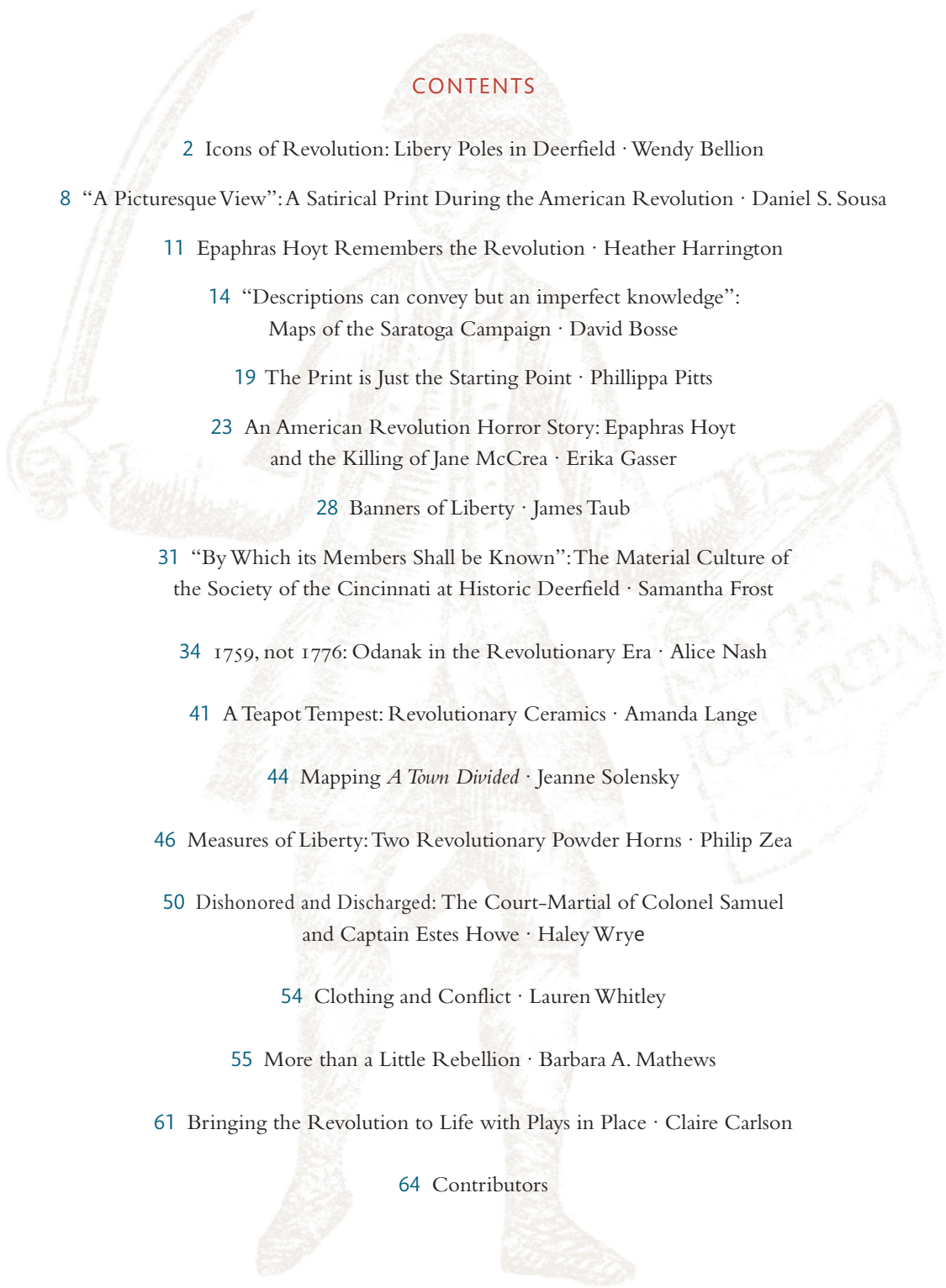
On the cover: *Silhouette of Major Hugh Maxwell of Charlemont, Massachusetts*, by Frederick Chapman, 1781. Paper, watercolors, ink. Historic Deerfield, Museum Collections Fund, 2003.51.5.

Back cover: A replica of the Liberty and Union (or Taunton) flag flying from Historic Deerfield's Liberty Pole.

Historic Deerfield

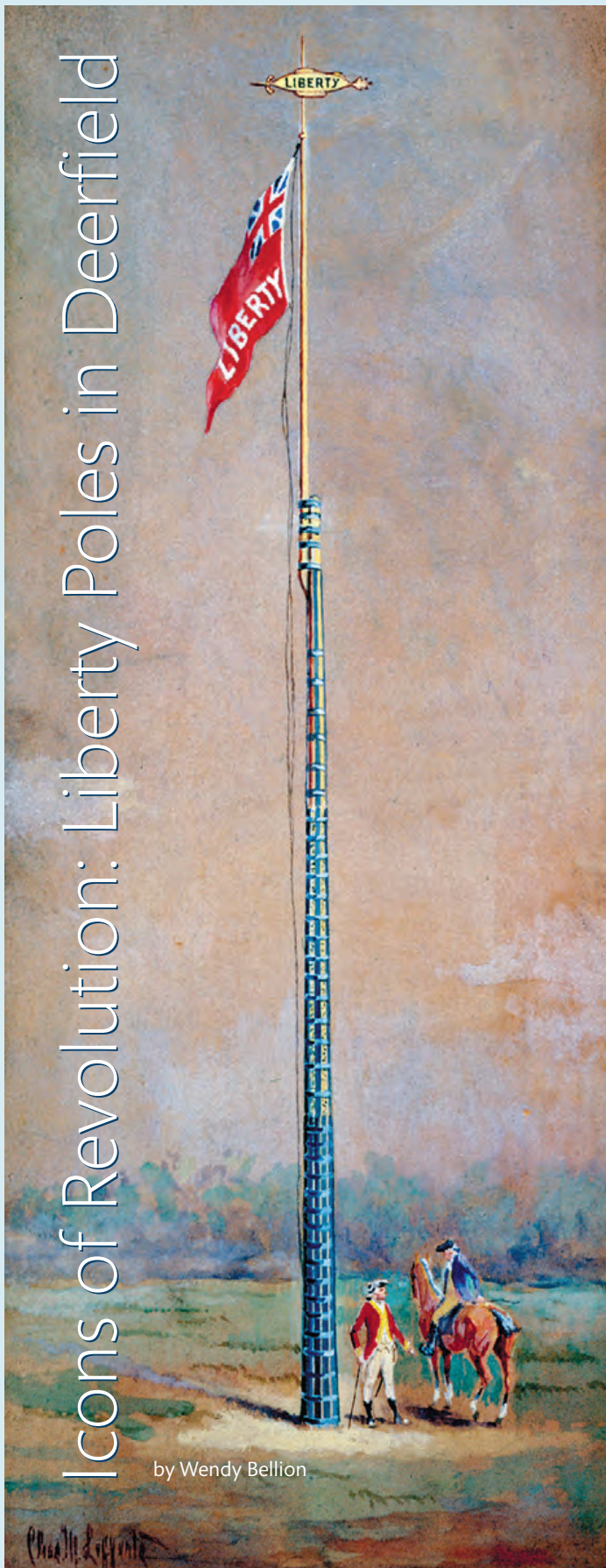
Summer 2026 · Volume 23 · ISSN 1535-2447

CONTENTS

- 
- 2 Icons of Revolution: Liberty Poles in Deerfield · Wendy Bellion
- 8 “A Picturesque View”: A Satirical Print During the American Revolution · Daniel S. Sousa
- 11 Epaphras Hoyt Remembers the Revolution · Heather Harrington
- 14 “Descriptions can convey but an imperfect knowledge”:
Maps of the Saratoga Campaign · David Bosse
- 19 The Print is Just the Starting Point · Phillippa Pitts
- 23 An American Revolution Horror Story: Epaphras Hoyt
and the Killing of Jane McCrea · Erika Gasser
- 28 Banners of Liberty · James Taub
- 31 “By Which its Members Shall be Known”: The Material Culture of
the Society of the Cincinnati at Historic Deerfield · Samantha Frost
- 34 1759, not 1776: Odanak in the Revolutionary Era · Alice Nash
- 41 A Teapot Tempest: Revolutionary Ceramics · Amanda Lange
- 44 Mapping *A Town Divided* · Jeanne Solensky
- 46 Measures of Liberty: Two Revolutionary Powder Horns · Philip Zea
- 50 Dishonored and Discharged: The Court-Martial of Colonel Samuel
and Captain Estes Howe · Haley Wrye
- 54 Clothing and Conflict · Lauren Whitley
- 55 More than a Little Rebellion · Barbara A. Mathews
- 61 Bringing the Revolution to Life with Plays in Place · Claire Carlson
- 64 Contributors

Icons of Revolution: Liberty Poles in Deerfield

by Wendy Bellion



JULY 28, 1774. MIDNIGHT. Three men skulk out of a Deerfield house under cover of darkness. One carries a saw. They approach a long tree trunk lying on the ground and cut it clean in half. The next day, the chief antagonist wanders around town, eavesdropping on the question everyone is asking: who sawed through the Liberty Pole?

The young physician Elihu Ashley (1750–1817) quickly realized the trouble he might face for his leadership of the nighttime escapade and extracted a promise from one friend to keep his role “as secret as Death.”¹ Perhaps he shouldn’t have worried. Within the same day, villagers allied with revolutionary politics raised a new Liberty Pole outside the store of David Field, a member of a group called the Sons of Liberty. Others, loyal to the British Crown, responded by erecting their own “Tory Pole.”²

In Deerfield, as in many towns from Portsmouth to Philadelphia, Liberty Poles displayed public sentiments about the brewing war with Britain in the years prior to the Declaration of Independence. Ashley’s account offers an unusually detailed chronicle of one community’s experience with such objects, suggesting how the creation of competing poles visualized growing divisions between two political factions. But Liberty Poles had not always connoted rebellion—and their significance would continue long after 1776. A closer look at the events of late July 1774 suggests how the Liberty Pole linked Deerfield to a changing landscape of political symbols and action.

When Ephraim Potter and Ned Lawrence—two “ignorant villains” new to Deerfield, according to Ashley—transported a 50-foot-long tree trunk into town in 1774, they were participating in a political ritual that had been developing for nearly a decade. The earliest Liberty Pole appeared in Manhattan in 1766. It was born out of the controversy surrounding the British Parliament’s Stamp Act, the first in a succession of taxes to generate widespread opposition in the American colonies. Colonists in New York, a busy international port, opposed the Stamp Act vehemently, burning an effigy of the lieutenant governor and destroying his carriage.

The artist imagined the appearance of the fifth Liberty Pole in New York City, sheathed in iron and capped with a declarative vane and flag, during the Colonial Revival of the early 20th century. Charles MacKubin Lefferts, *Scenes from the American Revolution: Fifth Liberty Pole on the Commons*, c. 1910. Watercolor, gouache, black ink, and graphite on board. New-York Historical Society, Gift of Charles MacKubin Lefferts, 1920.130. Photography ©New-York Historical Society.

When news of the Act's repeal reached the city, a joyous crowd raised a wooden "flagstaff" with signs thanking those believed to be responsible for the Act's retraction—King George III and Parliamentary minister William Pitt—and championing the principle of liberty. In so doing, they celebrated their civil rights as British subjects. They also established important precedents: nearly all future poles would be ornamented with flags and signs inscribed with the word "liberty." Independence from Britain was not yet on anyone's mind.³

However, the sheer act of raising a pole hewn from a tree was already an inherently troublesome statement. New York's Liberty Pole was probably an unused ship mast, stored at a nearby East River wharf. And masts began their lives as giant white pines—a tree widely admired as the "prince of the American forest"—which were harvested in northern New England for the explicit use of the British navy as masts, beams, bowsprits, and yards. "Broad arrow laws," so named for the shapes that royal surveyors carved into the largest of the trees, prohibited locals from logging the pines for their own purposes.

Colonists took offense, and then they took action. In 1764, men in Hampshire County, Massachusetts (just south of Deer-

field), seized more than 700 "mast trees" for their sawmills. In 1772, inhabitants of Weare, New Hampshire, swung pine switches at the backsides of the sheriff and his deputy after British officials tried to reclaim logs and levy fines. The "Pine Tree Riot" is sometimes credited with empowering Bostonians to enact an even more animated protest one year later: the Boston Tea Party. Little wonder that when American vessels sailed from Massachusetts ports in 1776, they flew flags picturing pine trees.

By the time they reached their destinations the trees that became Liberty Poles were already politically charged. In New York, the Sons of Liberty further aggravated authorities by locating the 1766 pole on the Commons, a public field adjacent to a barracks that housed British troops. To the eyes of soldiers entrusted with enforcing taxation, the pole was a blunt assertion of colonial will. In early August, they chopped it down.

Paul Revere's obelisk was covered on all sides with portraits, dedications, and allegorical references to the Stamp Act repeal. Boston's Liberty Tree, which was destroyed by British troops in 1775, prominently appeared on one side. Paul Revere, *A View of the Obelisk erected under Liberty-Tree in Boston on the Rejoicings for the Repeal of the Stamp Act 1766, 1766*. Engraving. American Antiquarian Society, Revere Box 2, Folder 2.





This drawing by an unidentified witness to the political skirmishes on New York's Commons represented the Liberty Pole as an animate actor capable of exchanging words with the imprisoned liberty boys at right. Unknown artist, Liberty Pole erected in New York, c. 1770. Pen and ink drawing, with pencil shading. The Library Company of Philadelphia, Collection of Pierre Eugène du Simitière, Print Department [396.F Vol. III].

Thus began a furious cycle of new poles erected by “liberty boys” and attacked by British footmen. The King’s troops soon cut down a second pole; within days, a third one went up in its place. It was demolished six months later, following celebrations marking the one-year anniversary of the repeal of the Stamp Act. When New Yorkers raised their fourth pole in 1767, they sunk it deep into the ground and fortified it with iron rings. It stood until 1770, when soldiers bored a hole into the wood and stuffed it with gunpowder. Unable to blow it up, they hacked the pole into pieces and left the parts for the liberty boys to find.

The destruction of the fourth Liberty Pole instigated armed clashes and mass meetings at the Commons. The Sons of Liberty doubled down. Determined to raise the tallest pole yet, they decorated and paraded two large masts through the streets to the cheers of supporters; at a site near the Commons they affixed the small mast to the longer one, hoisted it into

place, and secured it atop a platform of lumber, stones, and dirt. A band played “God Save the King.” It was a ceremony worthy of the dedication of a public statue, and “no Sort of Disturbance,” the *New-York Journal* reported, “happened during the whole Affair.”

As the crisis with Britain worsened over the next six years, New York’s Liberty Pole was increasingly imagined as a divisive political icon. To its proponents, the pole became a “memorial of Freedom”; to its detractors, including the governor who ordered its final removal, it was a “monument of insult to the Government, and of licentiousness to the people.” In addition to these metaphorical attributes, the pole marked a gathering place for the liberty boys. Its soaring height pulled the eyes upward and summoned them to protests. “When from some whimsical colours you waved,” the poet Philip Freneau later wrote, “we had nothing to do, but look up and be saved.”

Newspapers in New England reprinted and circulated accounts of the events at the Commons. Deerfield readers thus would have understand the significance of the poles as political sites and symbols long before they devised their own. They would have also known about similar objects fashioned closer to home. In 1766, residents of Dedham, Massachusetts, installed an eight-foot-tall “pillar of Liberty” topped with a wooden bust

of Pitt to honor the repeal of the Stamp Act. In Boston, Paul Revere crafted a temporary obelisk covered on every side with celebratory texts and images. One panel pictured a related sign of colonial resistance to British aggression: the Liberty Tree. Like the poles, Liberty Trees marked places of community activism and antagonized British soldiers.

Events in Boston precipitated the arrival of Deerfield's Liberty Pole in late July 1774. The preceding months had seen a rapid escalation of British might and the passage of the Intolerable Acts. These included the Boston Port Bill, which shuttered the harbor in retribution for the Tea Party, and the Massachusetts Government Act, which revoked the colony's charter and catalyzed the counter establishment of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress.⁴ On July 22, Deerfield's minister, Jonathan Ashley (1712–1780), flaunted patriot efforts to dissuade tea consumption by welcoming friends to his tea table. Six days later, and hours before taking a saw to the town's first Liberty Pole, his son Elihu willingly transported a pound of tea to friends in nearby Greenfield.⁵

Notwithstanding these bold decisions, Elihu Ashley eventually sought a neutral ground in the unrest that erupted in the Deerfield region over the ensuing months. His ambivalence may account for the perplexing way he described the purpose of the pole and his role in its destruction in a letter to an acquaintance. Potter and Lawrence, he wrote, “taking into their serious Consideration the Present Alarming Situation of N America occasioned by the oppressive hand of Power, and upon mature Deliberation thought the Erectg a Liberty Pole would have the most happy Tendency of restoring & Establishing Peace & Harmony between the Mother Country & the Colonies.” Ashley's report is infused with a tone of mockery that implies the men's naiveté. Nevertheless, his words demonstrate his awareness of the earlier history of Liberty Poles as testaments of colonial alignment with Britain. Even more curiously, Ashley pretended he had nothing to do with it: “by some Malicious Person Inimical to his Country the s[ai]d Pole was Sawn in sunder.”⁶

Others were less equivocal in their comments about Deerfield's Liberty Poles—the new one raised outside David Field's store as well as the competing “Tory pole.” Keeping an ear to the ground for gossip that might implicate him, Ashley noted that another physician thought both poles “very foolish”; his cousin, Israel Williams Jr., likewise suspected “such a Pole was a Profanation of the Ordinance.”⁷ Others invoked the religious language of idolatry to describe the strange allure of the poles and the passions they summoned. A minister denounced “the sin of erecting such an Idol” after more Liberty Poles were raised in nearby towns. One Son of Liberty laughed off the

charge: “An Idol made and Erected after the manner of a mast or May Pole with an Ensign of Liberty tacked to the top of it...is a form of making and setting up a God, which I believe neither Antient nor modern Idolaters hit upon.”⁸

However odd this banter may seem, it was a familiar part of the war of words that emerged from New York's Commons. In 1770, for example, one critic ridiculed the patriot crowd as “harmless idolater[s]” and accused them of “performing *Idolatrous and vociferous* Acts of Worship, to a *Stick of Wood*, called a Liberty Pole.” If such language was intended to diminish the



Engraving illustrating a satirical poem about the fate of unfortunate loyalists who were publicly shamed at Liberty Poles. In this picture, one man is hoisted up by a rope around his midsection while another is tied to the base of the pole. Elkanah Tisdale, “The Tory's Day of Judgment,” in John Trumbull, *M'Fingal: A Modern Epic Poem, in Four Cantos* (New York, 1795). Engraving. American Antiquarian Society.



stature of Liberty Poles, it backfired. By expending so much energy denouncing a thing of purported insignificance—or better yet, chopping it down—detractors betrayed their own anxieties about the effectiveness of the poles. Inadvertently, they called more attention to them.

This rhetoric reached its apogee in a drawing of New York’s fifth Liberty Pole that endowed the object with human powers of speech and sympathy. The pole vertically dominates the scene, its lower half encased in protective ironwork. In the jail house at right, members of the Sons of Liberty beseech the pole for assistance, asking, “Is there no other road to thee, Sweet Liberty?” It answers, “I am encompass’d with a ton and half of Iron, therefore can’t relieve thee.” The speech balloon evokes a person standing upright with a head and mouth; it even suggests a helping hand extending toward the liberty boys.

The Deerfield poles were not credited with the capacity to talk, but individuals did use them to make declarations. Much as one might tack a flyer to a bulletin board today, people posted papers to the surfaces of the poles. While some of the missives surely endorsed political causes, others aired personal quarrels. The practice appears to have spread to trees, at least on one occasion: Ashley was mortified to discover an “adver-

The artist conveys a spirit of civic triumph in this fanciful representation of an agreeable group of gentlemen and laborers effortlessly lifting a Liberty Pole into position as the nearby crowd celebrates. John C. McRae after Frederick Augustus Chapman, *Raising the Liberty Pole*, 1776, c. 1875. Etching and engraving. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division.

tisement which was Struck up on our Elm Tree in the Night respecting my Sister [Betsey], and which was a low and dirty thing.”⁹

A few loyalists endured much worse, as Liberty Poles soon transformed into places for humiliating political opponents. In October 1774, six loyalists were hauled before a Liberty Pole in Sandwich, Massachusetts, for harassing a local doctor. They had to apologize on site and pay a fine.¹⁰ A contemporary writer satirized such trials by public opinion in a poem that imagined a town constable ingloriously suspended by his waist from a Liberty Pole as punishment for his loyalist beliefs. He had to promise not “to cut your poles down while I’ve breath/Tho’ rais’d more thick than hatchel teeth.”¹¹

Indeed, it must have seemed that Liberty Poles were being “rais’d...thick” everywhere on the eve of the Revolution. During September and October alone, at least six more appeared

in New England towns. Proponents of the Liberty Pole in Hanover, New Hampshire, warned that “should any be so abandoned to all good principle as to cut down, remove, or any way deface this most beautiful, distinguished, and every way to be admired monument,” they could expect “the flaming vengeance of the majesty of the people.”

Liberty Poles did not disappear with the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783. During the tumultuous decade of the 1790s, various groups raised and destroyed Liberty Poles to signify their support for a range of regional and national conflicts.¹² Liberty Poles also remained a fixture in New York City through the antebellum decades, and during the Civil War era they became an evocative symbol of reunion. To commemorate the nation’s centenary in 1876, artist John F. McRae engraved a highly romanticized image representing a Liberty Pole going up. In the background, a signboard depicting George III comes down.

A Liberty Pole continues to stand in Deerfield today adjacent to the Stebbins House. It was erected in 1946, following the conclusion of World War II, to honor American forces killed at Pearl Harbor. For Henry and Helen Flynt, the founders of Historic Deerfield, the Liberty Pole represented “a custom prevailing during the latter part of the eighteenth century, a time when your and our forefathers asserted their rights.”¹³ Originally conceived to link the ground and sky, the Liberty Pole now also connected the past and present.



ENDNOTES

1. *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution: The Journal of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1773–1775*, ed. Amelia F. Miller and A.R. Riggs (Univ. of Massachusetts Press in association with Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 2007), 99–100, 107. I have reproduced all original spelling and grammar as transcribed in secondary sources. David Dickinson, who later served as a Continental lieutenant colonel, encouraged Ashley but did not join the antics. Instead, Ashley was aided by Phineas Munn and “Catlin” (possibly Seth Catlin, who was eventually detained for his loyalist politics). The same group unsuccessfully tried to persuade Ashley to demolish the second Liberty Pole. Deerfield’s “Tory pole” may have been a unique invention; a database search does not identify any similarly-named objects for the period. See *Readex: America’s Historical Newspapers*, <https://www.readex.com/products/americas-historical-newspapers-periodicals>.
2. George Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, 2 vols. (E.A. Hall & Co., 1896), II: 677–79. Field chaired the local Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety, one of many revolutionary committees established to monitor loyalist activities, and later led a minuteman unit. See *A Brief History of Old Deerfield*, photography by Samuel Chamberlain (1961), n.p.
3. My account of Liberty Poles draws from my publications “Mast Trees, Liberty Poles, and the Politics of Scale in Late Colonial New York,” in *Scale*, ed. Jennifer L. Roberts, *Terra Foundation Essays*, vol. 2 (Terra Foundation for American Art, 2016): 218–49; and *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (Penn State Univ. Press, 2019). Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations are from *Iconoclasm*.
4. “American Revolution in Massachusetts,” Boston Public Library, <https://guides.bpl.org/c.php?g=800717&p=10389861>.
5. Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 677; *Romance*, ed. Miller and Riggs, 96, 99.
6. Ashley to Patty [Williams], [July 31] 1774, in *Romance*, ed. Miller and Riggs, 295.
7. *Ibid.*, 100, 103.
8. Sheldon, *History of Deerfield*, 678–79.

9. *Romance*, ed. Miller and Riggs, 102.
10. “Newport, October 24,” *Newport Mercury* (Newport, Rhode Island), no. 842, Oct. 24, 1774: [3], in *America’s Historical Newspapers*.
11. “For the Massachusetts Spy. Mr. Thomas,” *Massachusetts Spy* (Boston, Massachusetts) IV, no. 196, November 3, 1774: [1], in *America’s Historical Newspapers*.
12. Shira Lurie, *The American Liberty Pole: Popular Politics and the Struggle for Democracy in the Early Republic* (Univ. of Virginia Press, 2023).
13. [Henry and Helen Flynt], “An Old Custom: The Liberty Pole of Deerfield 1774” ([December] 1946).

Replica of a 1776 Huntington Flag flying from Historic Deerfield’s Liberty Pole, c. 1990. It features a red field with the Union Jack in the canton and the word LIBERTY along the bottom. It is not known whether a flag was flown from Deerfield’s original Liberty Pole.



“A PICTURESQUE VIEW”: *A Satirical Print during the American Revolution*

by Daniel S. Sousa

BY THE TIME of the Revolution, a market for printed graphics had existed in the colonies for more than a century. While some were American made, the majority came from England. They perhaps represented the most affordable luxury goods available to consumers, who used them to decorate the parlors, stairways, halls, and dining rooms of their homes. Maps, portraits, and landscapes enjoyed a steady Anglo-Ameri-

can market.¹ During the Revolution, a substantial growth in the number and availability of this printed material occurred, which also included satirical prints.²

Satirical prints enjoyed a long history of use in England stretching back to the 17th century, reaching their heyday in the 18th century. Printmakers in both London and America utilized the genre to great effect, creating detailed allegor-

ical scenes that provided serious critiques of contemporary events, often highlighting the war's shortcomings. While many of these prints included a great deal of text in dialogue balloons or captions, others had virtually no words, such as *A Picturesque View of the State of the Nation for February 1778*. Drawing upon a visual vocabulary of symbols familiar to Anglo-Americans, viewers readily understood these striking satires.

Originally published in London's *Westminster Magazine* of March 1778, *A Picturesque View...* expressed the concerns of the British people regarding the nation's precarious military and economic state as a result of the war in North America. Begun two years earlier, the war had set in motion a protracted conflict that lasted just over seven years—much longer than Britons had anticipated. Britain's highest military commanders in America seemed partly responsible for the nation's sluggish military efforts, incapable of dealing the Americans a decisive blow.³ For instance, rather than continue fighting the American army following his victory at the Battle of Germantown in the fall of 1777, General Sir William Howe (1729–1814) made camp in Philadelphia that winter where he and his army reportedly engaged in a great deal of reveling.

To make matters worse for the British, France officially entered the war on the side of the Americans in February 1778. Other countries also began to side with France and take advantage of Britain's entanglement in a war with her colonies. Spain became France's ally in 1779, and the Netherlands entered the war in 1780. On multiple fronts Britain found herself in difficult circumstances; some took to communicating their concerns in print.

In this print the slightly emaciated cow, symbolizing British commerce, stands in the midst of a group of men (representing various countries) who seek to draw upon and deplete the cow's resources. A man in a feathered headdress, representing America, saws off a piece of the cow's horn. Several gentlemen standing near the rear of the cow (symbolizing the French, Spanish, and Dutch) carry away bowls of milk. The man with clasped hands to the right of the cow represents the British merchant, who laments the negative effects of the war on British commerce. To his right, a small dog relieves itself on the back of a sleeping lion, an icon of the British nation. Howe and his brother, Admiral Richard Howe (1726–1799), who appear inebriated and socializing at a table, are pictured in the background along with

images of the Admiral's ship the *Eagle*, and Philadelphia harbor—a likely criticism of Howe's decision to camp in Philadelphia rather than pursue the enemy.⁴

The use of a cow in British satirical prints and paintings had a long history, suggesting that the motif would have been quickly recognizable and understood. In 1666, a satirical British print with a cow representing the Netherlands commented on the struggles associated with the Second Anglo-Dutch War. In 1745, at the time of Charles Edward Stuart's failed Jacobite revolt, a similar print titled *The Benefit of Neutrality*, with a cow representing British commerce, was published in England. In addition, two earlier paintings with similar cow caricatures exist: one titled *Queen Elizabeth I Feeds the Dutch Cow* (c. 1586),⁵ and a second called more

Opposite: *A Picturesque View of the State of the Nation for February 1778*, London, England, 1778. Etching, laid paper, ink. Historic Deerfield, Museum Purchase with Generous Funding from Anne K. Groves, 2018.27.

Right: Jug, Liverpool, England, 1807–1809. Creamware with transfer printed decoration and gilding. Historic Deerfield, Museum Collections Fund, 2021.10.



Plate, manufactured in Staffordshire, England, and printed in Liverpool, England, c. 1780. Lead-glazed, cream-colored earthenware (creamware); overglaze black enamel, transfer print. Historic Deerfield, Museum purchase with funds provided by Ray J. and Anne K. Groves, 2009.24.



simply *The Dairy Cow* (c. 1633–1639) in the collection of the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam).⁶ The use of the satirical cow caricature continued in the years after the Revolution, as evinced by a transfer-printed jug which criticizes President Thomas Jefferson's 1807 Embargo Act.

A *Picturesque View* . . . found wide appeal with versions created for Holland, France, and America, each possessing subtle differences. Further demonstrating the print's popularity is its presence on ceramics, such as the transfer-printed creamware plate pictured here. Transfer-printing made the quick and cheap application of detailed scenes onto pottery possible; images copied directly from a variety of print sources included satires. Beginning in the second half of the 18th century, potters in North Staffordshire and Liverpool produced transfer-printed creamwares in large quantities for both the English and American markets. However, this particular transfer-printed design is a rare survival. Examples have also been recovered at American archeological sites, including the National Constitution Center site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Rocketts Landing in Richmond, Virginia.⁷

The survival of these fragments bearing this satire reminds us that the visual culture of the Revolution went beyond books, periodicals, broadsides, maps, and engravings; it could also be found on everyday objects that likely made strong statements about their owner's political leanings.

ENDNOTES

1. E. McSherry Fowble, *To Please Every Taste. Eighteenth-Century Prints from the Winterthur Museum* (Charlottesville: For the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, by the Univ. Press of Virginia, 1987), 5, 15; Rosemary Troy Krill, *Early American Decorative Arts, 1620-1860* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2010), 210.
2. Donald Creswell, *The American Revolution in Prints and Drawings* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1975), ix.

3. Willard E. Keyes, "The Cow and the Sleeping Lion," *Magazine Antiques* no. 1, 39 (1941): 25.
4. Keyes, "The Cow and the Sleeping Lion," 25-26.
5. Karen Hearn, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (London: Tate Publishing, 1995), 87.
6. Identical plates can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. no. 35.105.1), the Winterthur Museum (acc. no. 1999.0038.001), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (acc. no. 1917-183), and the Reeves Museum of Ceramics at Washington and Lee University (acc. no. 2019.21.1).
7. Debbie Miller, "April 2014—Artifact of the Month, Political Pottery," Philadelphia Archeological Forum, <http://www.phillyarchaeology.net-philly-archaeology/artifactindex/april-2014-artifact-of-the-month/> (accessed Oct. 30, 2020); L. Daniel Mouer, *Illustrations*, vol. 3 of *Rocketts: The Archaeology of the Rocketts Number 1 Site* (44He671) Lot 203 in the City of Richmond, Virginia (Richmond: Virginia Dept. of Transportation, 1992), plate 17.

EPAPHRAS HOYT *remembers the* REVOLUTION

by Heather Harrington

“Born December 31, 1765, at the time of the opposition to the British Stamp Act, my first distinct recollection of events is what is called the massacre in Boston 1770. A printed hand bill, posted up in my father’s bar room, beginning with these lines — ‘Awake! Awake! my muse, Awake O Earth & tremble at the news’; containing a view of Kings Street & Capt. Preston’s guard is still on my memory; as are nearly all transactions of the Revolutionary War.”

SO BEGINS the journal entry written by Epaphras Hoyt (1765–1850) on his 83rd birthday in 1847. He quoted, accurately, from the handbill he had seen 77 years before!

When this handbill lamenting the death of Christopher Seider and the lack of punishment for his killer came out in 1772, Hoyt was just six years old.¹ It could have been one of the first things he learned to read. It certainly left an impression on him. Indeed, experiencing the Revolution as a child and teenager helped to form Hoyt into the military historian and lover of history that he became.

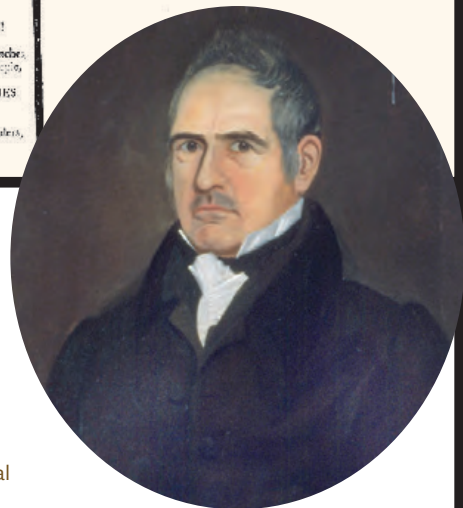
Epaphras was the fifth child of eight born to David and Silence King Hoyt in Deerfield.² David ran the Old Indian House tavern on the Common, which later became known as the “Tory tavern.” Epaphras and his many siblings spent their childhood in a public place, listening to the men of the town talk about politics, both national and local, while they ate and drank. This would make a strong impression on any child. For Epaphras, it



AMERICAN
REMARKS ON THE
The HORRIBLE MASSACRE
perpetrated in King-Street, Boston,
New-England.
On the Evening of March the Fifth, 1770
What rash of your fellow countrymen,
GRAY, MARYON, CALDWELL, ATTWOOD
and CARL.
Lay wallowing in their Gore!
Being *Left*, and *not* *deliberately*
MURDERED!
And SIX others before us present!
By a Party of the XXIXth Regiment,
Under the command of Capt. Tho. Preston.
MURDERED!
That Two of the Murders
Were capital of MASSAUGHTER
By a Jury of seven I shall say
NOTHING.
Branded in the land!
And *Shall*,
The others were *Acquitted*.
And their deaths *REASONED*!
Afo.
READ IN DEERFIELD
That on the 22d Day of February, 1770
The infamous
EBENEZER RICHARDSON, Informer
And traitor to Murders of hirings,
And *deliberately*
MURDERED
CHRISTOPHER SEIDER,
An innocent youth!
Of which crime he was found guilty
By his Country
On Friday April 20th, 1770.
But returned *Acquitted*
On Saturday the 22d Day of February, 1772
What the Oath he swore
For Suffolk County.
Were informed, it requeth
By the Judges of the Superior Court,
THOMAS BARNARD, RICHARDSON’S *Capt.*
That day *March* the 17th, 1772.
The *Order*, *for* *Relief*
This day, *March* the 17th, 1772,
Demands *REASONED*!
Let *these* things be *read* to *Posterity*!
And *handed* down
From Generation to Generation,
Till Time shall be no more!
Forever may AMERICA be preserved,
From *weak* and *unskilled* men, who,
Treasoned *Members*,
Abandoned *Governors*,
Their *Unlawful* and *Heinous*!
Afo may the
Murderers of *truth*, *degrading* *wretches*,
Who would ENSLAVE THIS People,
Leave to the end,
Let their NAMES and NAMES
Be *handed* to *eternal* *oblivion*,
And the PRESS
For a *FOOTING* to *Political* *Rules*,
Remain F.R.E.

A MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION
ON THE
Fifth of March.
To the *Unlucky* LINES
On the Enlargement of
EBENEZER RICHARDSON,
Convicted of MURDER.

AWAKE my drowsy Thoughts! Awake my muse!
Awake O earth, and tremble at the news!
In grand defiance to the laws of God,
The Guilty, Guilty murder walks abroad.
That city mourns, (the cry comes from the ground,)
Where law and justice never can be found:
Oh! sword of vengeance, fall thou on the race
Of those who hinder justice from its place.
O MURDERER! Richardson! with their life-breath
Millions will curse you when you sleep in death!
Infernal horrors fire will shake your soul
When o’er your head the awful thunders roll.
Earth cannot hide you, always will the cry
Of Murder! Murder! haunt you till you die!
To yonder grave! with trembling joints repair,
Remember, SEIDER’s corpse lies mould’ring there;
There drop a tear, and think what you have done!
Then judge how you can live beneath the Sun.
A PARDON may arrive! You laws defy,
But Heaven’s laws will stand when KINGS shall die.
Oh! Wretched man! the moulder of the times,
You were not hung “by reason of *old* Lines,”
Old Lines thrown by, ’twas then we were in hopes,
That you would soon be hung with *new* *weak* Ropes;
But neither *Ropes nor Lines*, will satisfy
For SEIDER’s blood! But GOD is ever nigh,
And guilty souls will not unpunish’d go
Till they’re excus’d by judges here below!
You are enlarg’d but *curst* is your fate
Tho’ *Captain*’s cas’d you from the prison gate
The *Bridge of Torment*, it has borne you o’er
Yet you a’er long may meet with HELL’s dark shore.



Top: Broadside posted on the Old Indian House Tavern wall that Hoyt could still quote from decades later. Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Above: Portrait of Epaphras Hoyt, c. 1835. Oil on board. Courtesy, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association’s Memorial Hall Museum, Deerfield, MA, 1983.504.02.



Detail from painting showing the Old Indian House where Hoyt grew up. Robert Havell, Jr., *The Old House of the Rev. Mr. Williams which escaped the Conflagration in Deerfield, Mass. in 1704*, c. 1840. Historic Deerfield, Museum Purchase with funds provided by Mrs. Max Adler, Dr. S. Arthur Localio, Hon. J. William Middendorf, Mrs. Alexander O. Vietor, Jeptha H. Wade, an anonymous donor, and the Frary House Collections Fund, 85.030.

formed part of his understanding of politics and the wider world.

Among the many journals Epaphras kept, now in the possession of Historic Deerfield, he occasionally mentioned events of the Revolutionary War, including a British deserter training the militia on the Common. With the Old Indian House located near the edge of the Common, Epaphras would have had a good view of the exercises. For a young boy, the training of the militia was undoubtedly more exciting than studying or doing chores.

Some of the militia soldiers would have included his father David and his brothers David Jr. and Jonathan. Serving in the militia was expected of all men in the town prior to the Revolution. However, at the outbreak of hostilities in 1775, not all militia members were eager or willing to fight the British. David Hoyt may have been one of them. Besides owning the “Tory tavern,” he also paid various amounts of money to avoid the draft for himself and his sons between 1775 and 1780. To avoid military service, in April of 1775, he paid eight shillings; in September he paid £6 for Jonathan when he was drafted. In June 1777, he paid £10 for David Jr.’s drafting; a year later, he paid £20 for his own drafting. In

June of 1780 when the price had gone up, he paid £150 each for himself and David Jr. for avoiding the draft.³ To Epaphras, a young boy interested in military history and wartime adventure stories, this must have been frustrating, as his family was not in the fight.

While he never specifically mentioned it, Epaphras must have witnessed Deerfield men leaving to fight, first on the Concord alarm in 1775, and later in 1777 to fight at Saratoga. When Deerfield received the news about the alarm in Concord, the fighting had already ended, but Deer-

field militia nevertheless rushed to attention and left for Concord as quickly as they could. By the time they arrived, the British had returned to Boston, other militia companies had dispersed, and the immediate crisis was over. Some Deerfield men returned home, while others marched towards Boston and Cambridge to reinforce the militias already there. When they returned to Deerfield, they had little to tell as they had experienced no action or performed no heroic deeds. Epaphras may have found this disappointing. In adulthood he showed little to no interest in the Concord and Lexington fights. He never reported visiting the sites or recording accurate accounts, even though Concord was the closest battlefield to him. The same cannot be said of the Saratoga battles.

The second time Epaphras must have witnessed militia mustering to a battle was the call to Saratoga in 1777. Deerfield men left in August of 1777, on their way to Bennington, Vermont, where patriots were setting up a defense. According to George Sheldon’s *History of Deerfield*, they arrived after the battle was over. They then preceded to march to Saratoga (i.e., Schuylerville) to join other militia and Continental troops to make a stand against the invading British led by Lt. General John Burgoyne. In September of 1777, another group of Deerfield men marched north. This time David Hoyt, Jr., was among them. Whether inspired by patriotic accounts of events during this campaign, or an inability to pay a second time to keep him out of the war, David Jr. would join the Revolution. Epaphras now had a personal connection and stake in the battles of Saratoga.

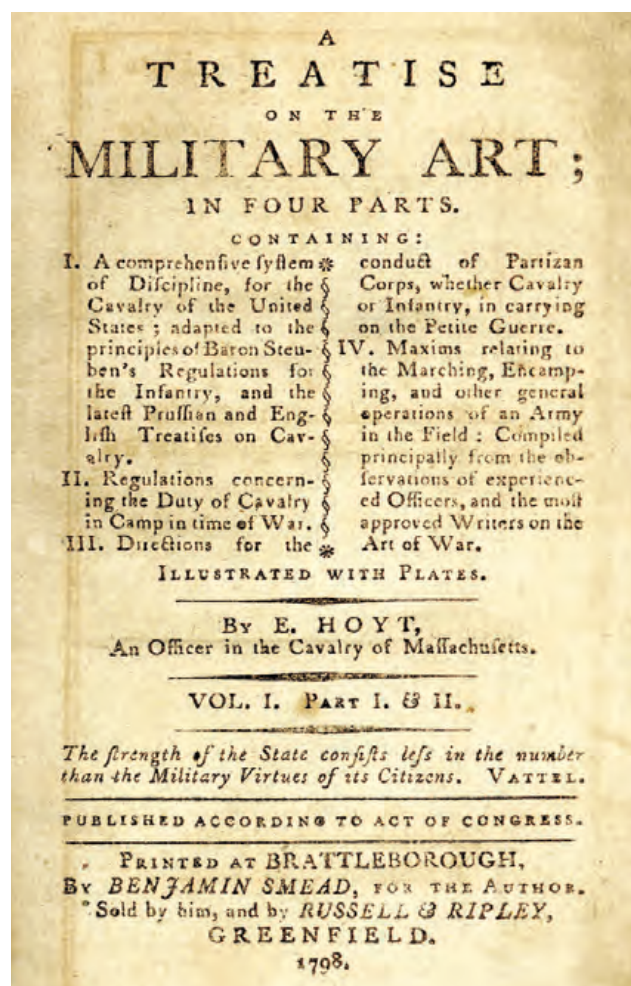
While David mustered in after the beginning of the Saratoga campaign, he likely witnessed the final battle and the surrender of Burgoyne. After the surrender, the Deerfield men returned to town triumphant. Not only had it been a great American victory, but Deerfield participants had seen few casualties. The men this time had many stories; for the young Epaphras these must have made the war real in a way that previous battles had not. He now heard first-hand accounts of fighting and tactics instead of reading about them weeks later in a newspaper or handbill. Epaphras likely questioned his brother about everything he saw and did during the battle. Perhaps this is what fueled his fascination with that battle, for he would visit the Saratoga battlefield at least four times in his adult life, and he attempted to write the de-

finitive account of events.

The war officially ended when Epaphras was 17, and he never got the chance to serve. Perhaps to compensate for this he joined the local cavalry unit of the militia in which he served for many years, eventually becoming a General. His dreams for a great military career came to an end after he married Experience Harvey in 1792 and started a family. Epaphras was offered a commission in the regular army a few years later but turned it down, probably due to his growing family and need for a settled life in Deerfield. Though he continued in the militia well into the 1800s, a symbolic end to his military career came when he bartered his cavalry saddle to Elisha Barnard in 1798 in exchange for a “full-leaf table,” six dining chairs, two candle stands, and two small Windsor chairs.⁴ Clearly, setting up his family home was more important than riding off to war.

Epaphras was left with one outlet for his military desires, his writing. In addition to the Saratoga history, he started a book-length manuscript on the history of the French and Indian war, specifically focused on the battle of Lake George, another event that fascinated him. He never finished the manuscript, which is now in the Historic Deerfield Library. He also wrote and published several books on military history: *A Treatise on the Military Art: In Four Parts...*, 1798; *Practical Instructions for Military Officers...*, 1811; *Rules and Regulations for Drill, Sabre Exercise, Equitation, Formation and Field Movements of Cavalry*, 1813; and *Antiquarian Researches: Comprising a History of the Indian Wars...*, 1824.

Epaphras Hoyt spent the rest of his life trying to preserve the memory of the Revolution and its military history through his writings; his many surviving works suggest that he succeeded.



Title page of *A Treatise on the Military Art: in Four Parts* (Greenfield, 1798), one of several military works Hoyt wrote. Historic Deerfield Library.

ENDNOTES

1. Christopher Seider was killed by Ebenezer Richardson in February of 1770 and convicted in April of that year. The author of the broadside laments that Richardson was never sentenced, due to his ties to the monarchy.
2. David's first wife, Mercy Sheldon, gave birth to four children before her death in 1751, making Epaphras one of 12 siblings.
3. Inflation of Massachusetts currency in part accounts for the great cost. David Hoyt Account Book, 1751–1782, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.
4. Elisha Barnard Account Book, 1794–1839, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.



*“Descriptions
can convey but
an imperfect
knowledge”*

Maps of the Saratoga Campaign

by David Bosse

WALLOOMSAC. For many present-day readers, even students of the American Revolution, the name holds little significance as the better known Bennington, Vermont, has become associated with the events that played out there in the summer of 1777. Yet the battle fought on that small river in Rensselaer County, New York, led to the first surrender of any British army. Beginning in June 1777, an expedition of British regulars, Hessians (so called), Loyalists, and Natives under the command of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne (1722-1792) advanced south from Canada with the goal of seizing Albany and isolating New England from other colonies.¹ Following victories at Fort Ticonderoga and Fort Ann, New York, and Hubbardton, Vermont, Burgoyne's army began to seek provisions to sustain the invasion. Reports of grain, fodder, livestock, wagons, and military stores at Bennington turned his attention in that direction.

German Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum (1727-1777) led a detachment of 600 Hessians and an additional 400 Loyalists, British regulars, and Natives toward Bennington and what

they believed to be lightly guarded supplies. On August 11 they encountered militia at a mill on the Walloomsac River in what was then Albany County, New York, west of Bennington. Easily dispersing them, Baum's column proceeded, unaware that more than 2,000 men under John Stark (1728-1822), Brigadier General of the New Hampshire militia, had gathered to oppose them. Outnumbered and misled by patriot guides posing as Loyalists, Baum was forced to adopt a defensive posture, and on August 16, 1777, met with an overwhelming defeat with nearly all of his forces killed or captured. The battle at Walloomsac essentially determined the outcome of Burgoyne's campaign; seven weeks later the British army surrendered at Saratoga, causing the war to swing in America's favor.

Well before Burgoyne's capitulation, militia from western New England, including Deerfield, responded to the threat of invasion. Local officers such as Lieutenant John Bardwell, and Captains Agrippa Wells and Joseph Stebbins, whose house graces Deerfield's main street, distinguished themselves during different phases of the four-month cam-

paign. This Deerfield connection may have motivated Epaphras Hoyt (1765–1850) to study and write about the nearby battles of 1777. As a precocious boy living in the Old Indian House where his father kept tavern, he would have heard stories that veterans of the campaign told, sparking his imagination and curiosity. The fact that he heard firsthand accounts of the Saratoga Campaign from his older brother, David Hoyt, and David's commanding officer, Joseph Stebbins, conceivably added to his interest.

Epaphras matured and became a skilled surveyor, held numerous public offices, and achieved the rank of Major General in the Massachusetts militia. His

abiding interest in local military history led him to make several trips to the sites of the Saratoga Campaign, beginning in 1819. These led to what he would title "Review of the Military Operations in the Northern Campaign in the States of New York & Vermont in 1777."²

While never published, Hoyt's "Review" did circulate as evidenced by an editorial notice in the *Boston Commercial Gazette* (June 28, 1824), later repeated in the *Franklin Herald* (Greenfield). The unidentified writer noted Hoyt's "frequent and minute surveys" of the ground and declared the work a "more accurate history of the campaign than has yet to appear," words Hoyt himself used when describing his work.

Opposite: Following the battle hundreds of German, Loyalist, and British prisoners were taken to Bennington. This Works Progress Administration mural contains several misconceptions, such as captured Native Americans, New England militia dressed in uniforms, and an early American rather than a militia flag. Detail from *Prisoners taken at Bennington Battle, August 16, 1777*, by Leroy Williams, 1938. Bennington Museum, Bennington, VT. A2048.

Below: Desmaretz Durnford, "Position of the Detachment under Lieutt: Col: Baum & Attacks of the Enemy on the 16th August 1777 at Walmscock near Bennington." Library of Congress, Geography & Map Division.





Detail from William Faden's engraved copy of Durnford's manuscript showing the location of Baum's forces on the heights above Walloomsac River still known locally as Hessian Hill. Each of Faden's maps in Burgoyne's report is dated February 1, 1780. Historic Deerfield Library.

He was entirely capable of measuring and plotting topographical features, but his visits to the battlefield did not involve surveying.³ In fact, the maps that he drew for his "Review" mostly replicated the battle plans printed in Burgoyne's earlier account of the campaign.

Titled *A State of the Expedition from Canada: As Laid Before the House of Commons* (London, 1780), Burgoyne's report consists of a narrative of the campaign, orders and dispatches gathered to validate his conduct as commander, and transcriptions of testimony before Parliament by him and several of his officers. Accompanying these are five printed plans of the various skirmishes and battles, plus a sixth overall map encompassing the Canadian outlet of Lake Champlain south to Albany, New York.

London cartographic engraver and publisher William Faden (1749–1836) produced the maps, the first and only

contemporary printed depictions of Burgoyne's campaign. With the exception of the map representing the larger scene of conflict, each plan documents military actions. Based on information gathered on site before or during the battles, the maps depict topography, roads, buildings, and troop positions for the different engagements. Faden's finely engraved large-scale plans closely conform to the manuscript plans made by British topographical engineers who served under Burgoyne.⁴ The work of four different engineers appears in *A State of the Expedition*, including a map of the battle of Walloomsac by Lieutenant Desmaretz Durnford (1752–1783).

Before he could draw a plan of the battle, Durnford was captured at Walloomsac. This occurred prior to Burgoyne signing the "Articles of Capitulation," known also as the Saratoga Convention, which allowed British officers to keep their baggage and effects—including mapmaking materials.⁵ Given the accurate, detailed plan that Durnford later made, he must have retained his notes and sketches. The so-called Convention Army of British and German prisoners marched via Wil-

liamstown and Northampton to Cambridge, Massachusetts, arriving in November. But rather than obtain transport to England as promised, the captured officers and troops remained in Cambridge for the better part of a year before being sent to Virginia.⁶

During that time Durnford almost certainly made the map titled "Position of the Detachment under Lieutt. Col. Baum & Attacks of the Enemy on the 16th August at Walmscock near Benington." Without documentation of his process, we can assume that when making his map Durnford consulted any available small-scale printed maps of the area and incorporated the notes and sketches he made during the three days of movements that culminated in the battle on August 16.⁷ With Burgoyne quartered in Cambridge near captured British commissioned staff, the general likely ordered his engineers to cartographically document the campaign. Later, as he prepared to bring a defense of his military command before the public, Burgoyne shared those plans with William Faden, who engraved them for the General's report to Parliament.

Those maps figured prominently in Hoyt's history of the campaign. At various times in 1819 and 1821 he examined the New York and Vermont battlefields of 1777 when preparing his "Review." Subsequent visits also occurred, including one in 1825 that was recounted in *Visits to the Saratoga Battle-grounds, 1780–1880* (Albany, 1895). How—or if—he incorporated these later excursions into the original manuscript shared with a Boston journalist in 1824 remains unclear. In the "Review," Hoyt describes how he "carefully reconnoitred the ground...taking sketches and notes of the battles and skirmishes in some instances as pointed out by old soldiers who were on the ground at the time," and acknowledged having a copy

of Burgoyne's book with him.⁸ The similarities in geographical scope, topography, and troop positions suggest that Hoyt also had Faden's plans at hand when he prepared the maps for his history. Copies of the English maps provided his readers, few as there may have been, with a visual guide to the military action his text described.

While Faden's engraved plans served as models, Hoyt contributed two original maps to his "Review": the battles at Fort Ann, and Walloomsac.⁹ Titling the latter map "Battle with Baume & Breyman [sic] at Bennington, so called [his emphasis] August 16th 1777," Hoyt may be the first American historian to point out the tendency to misidentify the battle's location, and he even included a note, "The Battles in the Town of Hoosuc, near the west Line of Vermont." The map corrected Durnford's misidentification of the Walloomsac River as the Hosack [i.e., Hoosick], a nearby stream. Hoyt also included a north arrow to show his map's orientation, rather than following Durnford, who had unconventionally laid out his plan with north to the right, and neglected to add a directional symbol for clarity.

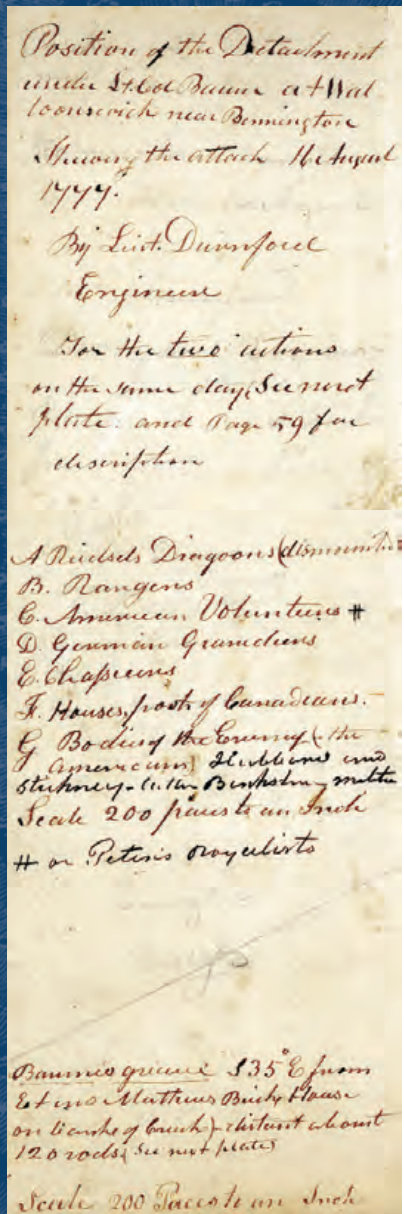
More importantly, Hoyt extended his map, drawn at a slightly smaller scale, farther north and south, allowing him to add features absent from the English plan. This let him locate the camp of John Stark's forces on the road from Bennington prior to the battle and indicate the late arrival of dismounted German dragoons under Lieutenant Colonel Heinrich von Breymann, belatedly sent by Burgoyne, and their repulse by militia commanded by Colonel Moses Nichols. By the time of the German's attack, Durnford would have already been taken prisoner. Other details not found on the Durnford/Faden plan include the routes of New Hampshire militia as they initially engaged Baum's troops and the location of his death and gravesite.

By studying the reports and memoirs of other campaign participants, Hoyt had access to intelligence from the American perspective—possibly influenced by bias or the passage of time—that was unavailable to Durnford. He also had the benefit of walking the battlefield alongside veterans of the campaign, who pointed out features in the landscape as he took notes and made sketches. These exchanges may have influenced his decision to direct readers to the relevant pages in his manuscript, creating a dialogue between map and text, rather than use a key to explain the map's capital letter designations marked on "Battle with Baume & Breyman at Bennington."

The significance with which Hoyt regarded the American victory at Walloomsac is demonstrated by his inclusion of two maps of the engagement, one being almost identical



Detail from Hoyt's map of Walloomsac titled "Battle with Baume & Breyman at Bennington, so called August 16th 1777," showing John Stark's camp (G) prior to the battle, the cottage where German commander Fredrich Baum died of his wounds, and the location of his grave. The dashed line labeled H indicates the march of New Hampshire militia under Col. Moses Nichols, who flanked Baum's position before engaging von Breymann's troops. The diagonal dashed line shows the New York-Vermont boundary. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.



Detail of the key of Hoyt's map titled "Position of the Detachment under Lt. Col. Baum at Walloomscoick near Bennington Showing the Attack 16th August 1777," that closely follows the Durnford/Faden plan. An insertion added to reference C, "or Peter's Royalists," indicates locals known as the Queen's Loyal Rangers, who sided with the British under the command of Lt. Colonel John Peters. At reference G Hoyt mistakenly identified New Hampshire militia under "Hubbard" [i.e., Colonel David Hobart], and [Colonel Thomas] Stickney's Berkshire militia. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.

to the Durnford/Faden version in Burgoyne's report. Hoyt's additions to that map's key identify the American forces that Durnford had simply labeled "bodies of the enemy" [i.e., detachments]. A note on the verso of "Battle with Baume & Breyman at Bennington" explains that it appeared after his version of the Durnford/Faden plan in the "Review." As all his maps are now loosely gathered at the rear of the volume and have been examined by untold hands, this fixes its intended location. Hoyt's note also made a distinction between his map of "the two actions" of August 16 and Durnford's plan, which only depicts the first phase of the battle that day. Whether the second map was originally part of his "Review" or resulted from a later visit to the battlefield, as the placement note suggests, is a matter of speculation. Whichever the case,

Epaphras Hoyt created the first and only map of the entire engagement at Walloomsac.

Hoyt made it clear in the preface of his manuscript that he did not intend to write a general history of the Saratoga Campaign. Instead, he set out to closely examine the specific tactics of each of the constituent engagements. As a surveyor, mapmaker, and student of military history, he recognized the unique role cartography played in conveying the spatial component of military events. In the preface of the "Review," Hoyt summarized the value of maps as analytical tools by declaring, "without plans that mark the topographical features of the ground and various positions of the troops engaged, descriptions, however minute in detail, can convey but an imperfect knowledge of the various movements in the action."

ENDNOTES

1. Support of Burgoyne's incursion from the south and west never materialized. General William Howe marched his army to Philadelphia, leaving Burgoyne's army undersupplied and eventually outnumbered. Colonel Barry St. Leger's forces advancing from Lake Ontario stalled at the Battle of Oriskany and played no further role in the campaign.
2. The "Review" is a bound volume of 229 pages of text and maps. Hoyt Family Papers, Box 2, Folder 1. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.
3. Hoyt does include a few compass bearings in his discussion of different actions but gives no indication of surveying the battlefields. Numerous surveys and plans in the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library and Historic Deerfield Library attest to his abilities.
4. Each of the British manuscript plans are now part of the Faden Collection at the Library of Congress, acquired in the 1830s.
5. Horatio Gates, "Articles of Convention between Lt. Gen. Burgoyne & Majr. Gen. Gates." Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: www.gilderlehrman.org/collection/glc04782.
6. Congress reneged on the terms agreed to by Burgoyne and Gates, delaying the departure of captured British troops. Information regarding the Convention Army is found in Samuel F. Batchelder, "Burgoyne and His Officers in

- Cambridge," *Bits of Cambridge History* (Cambridge, 1930), 3–113, and Sean C. Halverson, "British Plans to Rescue Convention Army Prisoners in the American Revolution," *Early American Studies*, 2021, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Fall 2021): 769–814.
7. Baum's troops took up positions on high ground above Walloomsac River on Aug. 14, allowing Durnford time to reconnoiter the ground. The attack by militia opposing their advance did not occur until Aug. 16.
 8. Preface to "A Review of the Military Operations..." Writing to his brother, Elihu, in Boston on Jan. 28, 1818, Epaphras expressed his desire to borrow the copy of Burgoyne's report owned by "Major Davis," promising to safely return it. "Without the work," he continued, "I cannot gallop my hobby one inch," indicating its importance. Hoyt Family Papers, Box 4, Folder 7. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.
 9. Hoyt's map titled "Battle near Fort Ann July 9 1777," appears to have originally been part of his "Review," but was later removed and tipped into one of his sketch books. Sketch-book No. 6 (November 9, 1836–February 21, 1837), Historic Deerfield Library.

The author thanks Heather Harrington for sharing her knowledge of Epaphras Hoyt and Mary S. Pedley for her insightful comments.

The Print is Just the Starting Point

by Phillippa Pitts

PRINTS HAVE LONG BEEN LAUDED as one of the most democratic forms of image production. Relatively inexpensive to create, reproducible in large quantities, and easy to transport, the medium can disseminate striking images and bold ideas to a global audience. Eighteenth-century Americans were particularly enthusiastic consumers of prints, from imported impressions made from finely engraved copperplates to the rougher, smaller woodcuts included in almanacs and broadsides. What we often forget, however, is that these prints were just a starting point for a wide range of individual artistic production.

In Historic Deerfield's collection there are two strange objects that exemplify the creative bricolage often practiced in this period but rarely preserved: a pair of hand-colored satirical prints of Boston on the brink of secession, framed in deep shadowboxes, encrusted with shells. To our modern eyes the result is a somewhat jarring combination of the violent and the decorative, the pretty and the political.

While we can identify the engraver and the publisher of the original prints, we know almost nothing about the person who designed and created these multimedia objects. Research has offered few answers. Instead, it has generated even more intriguing questions that unsettle our understanding of how prints functioned in early American spaces. Even more interesting, they illuminate an often-overlooked aspect of women's political participation in the American Revolution.

Top: Philip Dawe, *The Bostonians Paying the Excise-Man or Tarring & Feathering*; and shellwork shadowbox, 1774 and 1774–1775. Hand-colored mezzotint, glass, wood, and other materials. Historic Deerfield, Museum purchase, 56.198A.

Right: Philip Dawe, *Bostonians in Distress* and shellwork shadowbox, 1774 and 1774–1775. Hand-colored mezzotint, glass, wood, and other materials. Historic Deerfield, Museum purchase, 56.198B.



Although shell-collecting was a popular hobby across genders throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, women predominantly practiced shellwork. Like drawing, dancing, music, and math, it was part of a lady's fashionable education. Young girls arranged shells into ornate designs and even three-dimensional sculptures, ranging from freestanding figurines to miniature worlds contained in shadowboxes. These works often incorporated other media, such as wax figures, fancy fabrics, porcelain animals, paper painted in marbled or wood patterns, and dried coral, moss, or grass. An elaborate shellwork piece was proof of a young woman's refinement and gentility, evidencing her access to rare skills, materials, and leisure time; her patience and dexterity; and often her interest in religious, scientific, or cultural topics.

In comparison with the minutely patterned surfaces and gravity-defying projections typical of shellwork, one might be inclined to dismiss these two shadowboxes as simple or even amateurish. However, close examination reveals the skill, knowledge, and care involved in their creation. The shells are carefully arranged to leave minimal visible cement. Their bright colors and varied shapes would have been prized by period viewers. (Instruction manuals of the time even include directions on how to dye or paint dull local shells to mimic vivid foreign ones.) Similarly, the wet shine on these shells' surfaces was painstakingly achieved using manual burnishing, chemical solvents, protective wax coatings, and layers of either egg white or gum water.¹ Looking closely, we see that the coral is also coated in red wax or thick paint for added color and dimension. The maker even covered the edges of the prints and any small interstitial spaces with finely ground shell and mica, which glisten in multicolored hues. While the frames' designs may not be figurative, they are skilled.



Lydia Calhoun (attr.), *Figure (Woman)*, 1760–1850.
Earthenware, shell, glass, wood, and other materials.
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Bequest of
Henry Francis du Pont, 1959.1596.

The subject matter of these two shadowboxes is also notably different from the grottos, architectural fancies, and religious references that we expect to see in shellwork. Instead, these frames showcase two satirical prints by London engraver Philip Dawe. The first, entitled *Bostonians Paying The Excise Man, or Tarring and Feathering*, depicts a jeering crowd forcibly pouring a pot of tea down the throat of a man covered in feathers from head to toe. Behind them, a version of the Boston Tea Party unfolds in the harbor. The second print, *The Bostonians in Distress*, imagines the results of the subsequent punitive Intolerable Acts. Emaciated Bostonians are trapped in a cage, surrounded by British ships, troops, and cannons. Three men in a small dory pass fish up to them through the bars, trading food for a bundle of future “promises.” Neither are pleasant scenes—nor comfortable histories—to reflect upon. Why then would an unknown woman—who scholars suggest was likely from Boston—choose to commemorate these pictures?²

The answer may lie in the type of violence depicted and the meanings ascribed to it in that period. Tarring and feathering held particularly strong but contested associations.

Although the practice dates to at least the medieval era, it experienced an abrupt revival on the east coast of North America in the 18th century, likely encouraged by the Sons of Liberty. There it joined a broader culture of theatrical protest that ranged from hanging effigies and constructing paper monuments to physically hauling ships out of the harbor and dragging them through city streets.³ The process of applying heated pine tar and feathers was just the start of the act. There followed a punitive parade to public sites such as the Liberty Tree, which appears in both of Dawe's prints, where additional humiliating performative spectacles transpired. The sensational nature of tarring and feathering captured the public imagination.



Exhibit Case or Shadow Box, Philadelphia, PA, 1730–1760.
Shell, glass, wood, and other materials.
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, Bequest of
Henry Francis du Pont, 1966.1092.

Reports of attacks, both real and imagined, filled newspapers. The ritual was mimicked at costume parties and pantomimed on London stages. The British press called Americans “the tar and feather tribe” and renamed the result “the American suit.”⁴

For many English readers, tarring and feathering became emblematic of American incivility. Violence against bodies and belongings by riotous mobs was a not uncommon occurrence in towns and cities throughout the British Empire. However, tarring and feathering was framed as an unprecedented attack on a person’s dignity. The application (and subsequent removal) of the tar caused physical injury, but the public dehumanization of being partially or fully stripped and paraded as a half-bird, half-human creature crossed the line into social taboo.⁵

On the other side of the Atlantic this emphasis on dishonor was also part of the meaning. In Boston, the Sons of Liberty styled tarring and feathering as a moral punishment for immoral acts, specifically for instances of imperial overreach and tyranny. They repeatedly condemned uses of the practice for even egregious interpersonal crimes, noting “We reserve that Method for bringing Villains of greater Consequence to a Sense of Guilt and Infamy.”⁶ As simmering protest grew into the war for independence, tarring and feathering only spread further, becoming popular in 1775 and 1776 as a way for Patriots to punish traitors and purge Loyalists.

Dawe’s print thus becomes a slippery image. Not only does a noose hang from the Liberty Tree on the right, but the teapot detail anchors this victim as John Malcolm, perhaps the best-known survivor of this form of punishment, who almost died of his wounds before fleeing to England.⁷ This image confirms Boston’s reputation as a violent “mobbish” town in need of imperial intervention. However, the print also leaves space to read tarring and feathering as a form of political protest – its violence unfortunate but justifiable in the face of a long history of intolerable acts, as referenced by the inverted Stamp Act pinned to the Liberty Tree. Moreover, Malcolm was not only a customs officer, he was also widely disliked and well known as corrupt, having been dismissed from his post in North Carolina and recently tarred and feathered in Maine.⁸ The ambiguity within this scene is not accidental. While its London publishers Sayer and Bennett personally leaned towards the Whigs, they prioritized their pocketbooks. Prints that could appeal across the political spectrum offered greater profit with less risk.⁹



Detail from *The Bostonians Paying the Excise-Man or Tarring & Feathering*

How then do we imagine our creator interpreted this print as she spent hours arranging, placing, and attaching each individual shell? If we understand the two shadowboxes as a pair, then a scene of righteous resistance in the first and unjust punishment in the second would work together to justify the Revolution. This logic does not frame secession as a choice, but as an inevitable consequence of untenable circumstances. Given the deprivation and destruction of the eight-year war, the choice to elevate this steadying narrative with hand-coloring, heavy framing, and laborious shellwork would be understandable. And we should not imagine her as ignorant or naïve about the violence involved in this process, particularly if she lived in Boston. Women were certainly among the crowd of 2,000 Bostonians who watched Malcolm paraded through the streets, beaten, threatened, and assaulted. The brutality of this event made it the last to occur in Boston.¹⁰ We can also find accounts



Detail from *Bostonians in Distress*.

of women who actively engaged in tarring and feathering. In 1775, one newspaper even recounted the story of young girls in Kinderhook, New York, who paused their quilting bee to tar and feather a young man whom they identified as “an enemy to the liberties of America,” albeit using molasses and the fluffy tops of plants in a neighboring field.¹¹ These two prints may exclusively depict men, but their remaking invites us to consider women’s participation in the full spectrum of Revolutionary activity.

We are left with no answers to the questions of when, where, and by whom these shadowboxes were created. However, perhaps the expanded context makes the disconnect between the prints and the frame less jarring. Moreover, it encourages us to do what numerous scholars have encouraged: to see fancywork as more than just “mere pastimes that enabled women to while away their time while gilding the cage in which they were expected to reside.”¹²

ENDNOTES

1. Mrs. Hannah Robertson, *The Young Ladies’ School of Arts, Containing a Great Variety of Practical Receipts in Gum Flowers, Filligree, Japanning, Shellwork, Gilding, Painting...* (Edinburgh: Wal. Ruddiman Jr., 1767), 17, 62-66.
2. Although it is impossible to say definitely where or when they were produced, Historic Deerfield has long attributed these shadowboxes to Boston, dating them to around 1774-1775. See “The Prints,” *Deerfield Issue, Antiques*, vol. 70, no. 3 (Sept. 1956): 264, and Donald R. Friary, “Illustrations for a New England Village: Print Collecting at Historic Deerfield,” *Imprint* (Spring 2005): 5. Ads for shellwork instruction do appear in the city’s papers as early as 1751. See *The Boston Evening Post*, 6 May 1751 3-2, 7 April 1755 4-2, and 27 March 1758 4-2 for a few early examples. The frames also match the type made in Boston at the time, painted in simple black, assembled using rough handmade nails, and incorporating visibly repurposed wood on the back of one. The choice of prints—two scenes referencing events in Boston’s history—also supports this attribution.
3. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), 218-20. See also Alfred F. Young, *Liberty Tree: Ordinary People and the American Revolution* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 2006), and Richard Archer, *As If an Enemy’s Country: The British Occupation of Boston and the Origins of Revolution*. (Oxford Univ. Press: New York, 2010), 82-91.
4. Barry Levy, “Tar and Feathers,” *The Journal of the Historical Society*, vol 11, no. 1 (March 2011): 88-90; Benjamin H. Irvin, “Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768- 1776,” *The New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2003): 199-200.
5. Levy, 94-100.
6. Reproduced in Frank W.C. Hershey, “Tar and Feathers: The Adventures of Captain John Malcolm,” *Transactions of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, vol. 34 (April 1941).
7. Some elements of tarring and feathering were unique to each instance. In Malcolm’s case, he was forced to consume gallons of tea in the form of repeated satirical toasts.
8. Malcolm was a native New Englander who pursued customs work for the Crown but quickly became infamous as a debtor, an embezzler, and a general belligerent. After being dismissed from his position in North Carolina for corruption, he was then tarred and feathered at his next post in Maine for seizing the ship *Brothers* on a shaky technicality. The subsequent incident in Boston arose from an altercation with George Robert Hewes after Malcolm allegedly struck a child who had accidentally hit him with a sled. See Hershey, unpaginated, for the most extensive account.
9. See Emily (Ann) Katherine Torbert, “Dissolving the Bonds: Robert Sayer and John Bennett, Print Publishers in an Age of Revolution,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 2017), 200-206
10. Irvin, 213.
11. Ibid, 223-24, 197.
12. Megan A. Smetzer, “Female Crafts: Women and Bricolage in late Georgian Britain,” in *Women and Things, 1750-1950: Gendered Material Strategies*, ed. Maureen Goggin and Beth Fowkes Tobin (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 91.

An American Revolution Horror Story: Epaphras Hoyt and the Killing of Jane McCrea



IN 1836, DEERFIELD native Epaphras Hoyt (1765–1850) traveled to Fort Edward, New York, to investigate the purported site of the killing of Jane McCrea, a young colonial woman whose death at the hands of British General John Burgoyne’s Native allies in July of 1777 launched a deluge of propaganda that indelibly shaped a pivotal moment in the American Revolution. While her Patriot-allied family fled Fort Edward in advance of Burgoyne’s combined force of British regulars, colonial Loyalists, German mercenaries, and Native allies, McCrea stayed behind with an older female companion to await the arrival of her Loyalist fiancé, David Jones. The tragic events that followed when Native

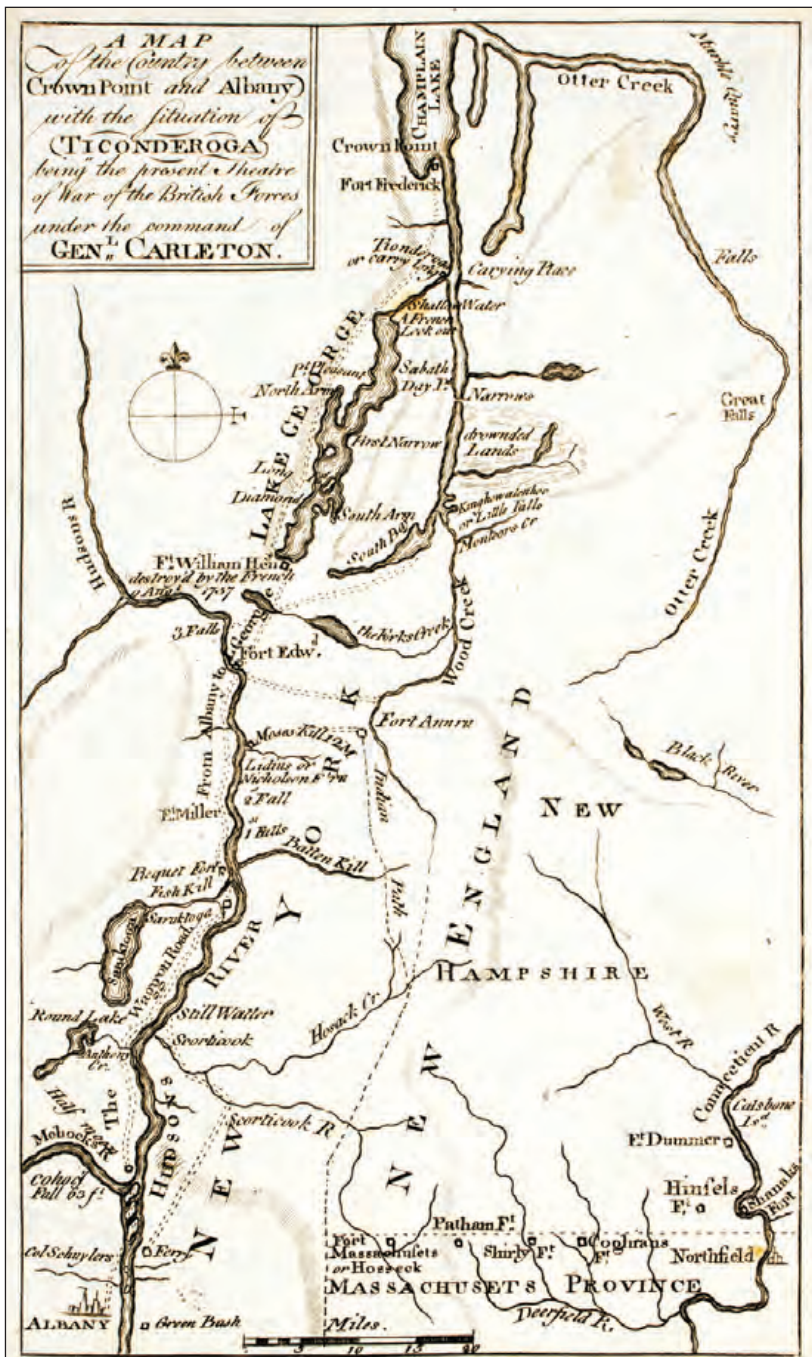
allies arrived were chaotic and difficult to pin down, but instead of being escorted to the British line, McCrea was seized, stripped, hatcheted, and scalped, likely by a warrior from the Great Lakes region.

The American commander of the Northern Army, Horatio Gates, immediately grasped how Burgoyne’s failure to control Native forces was an effective indictment of the British general’s propaganda that played upon colonists’ fears by threatening to unleash his Native allies upon them. The outcry over the death of this young, female civilian was taken up by Gates and by a wide assortment of Americans who seized on the story as a perfect demonstration of Brit-

ish outrages that justified armed rebellion. As the story evolved, some of its elements were embellished while others—such as the betrayal of her Patriot family by choosing a Loyalist fiancé—were diminished. That the case fanned anti-British sentiment in the colonies just in time for the critical battle of Saratoga a few months later led some to credit it with creating a surge in enlistment and military resolve. Little evidence supports such claims for soldiers’ motivation while much points to its importance to public discourse more broadly.¹ By 1836, when Hoyt journeyed to the site of her death, Americans remained obsessed with the romantic tragedy of Jane McCrea and what kind of identity it had helped to forge for the new nation.

Hoyt wrote that “[h]er tragic death has furnished a fruitful theme for our poets; but it still calls for a master hand.”² Hoyt had good reason to believe that he was a worthy candidate to correct the facts of Jane McCrea’s story; he had long been interested in military history and was well read in fields as varied as the natural sciences, poetry, and travel. The volumes of his sketch books in the Historic Deerfield Library reveal an obsessive attention to detail but also his sensibility and patriotism. As a man of learning, Hoyt sought the community of other men of learning. We know from the *Proceedings of the New-York Historical Society* that in 1847 Hoyt sent them a record of his conclusions about Jane McCrea’s burial place, perhaps in a bid to become known as the master hand who could, finally, fix the facts of her death within the fevered prose that had grown up around it over the intervening

Above: John Vanderlyn, *The Murder of Jane McCrea*, 1804. Oil on canvas. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Purchased by Subscription, 1855.4. Photo by Allen Phillips.



70 years.³ That was not to be, but through no failing on Hoyt's part. Rather, the story of Jane McCrea's death had been so powerfully transformed into sensationalist propaganda that it became impossible to invoke her as a person without recourse to her legend. Though Hoyt might have hoped to replace exaggerated accounts with facts, his interest in the tale coincided with the obsessive retelling and re-depicting of McCrea's final moments that lasted well into the 19th century. Poets, historians, and artists continued to find significance in the story, but largely by amplifying the sensational aspects that had made it useful propaganda in the first place.

As those familiar with Deerfield's history know, the arrival of European colonists in New England set off cycles of cooperation and violence that were exacerbated by repeated imperial wars. Over the 17th and 18th centuries, English villages were attacked and burned, and captives marched to Canada. Wampanoag, Nipmuc, Narragansett, Pocumtuck, and many other polities experienced dispossession and forced servitude and were sold into slavery by colonists after the Pequot War (1637), King Philip's War/Metacom's Rebellion (1675-1676), and imperial wars such as Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), which included the raid on Deerfield in 1704.⁴ These conflicts devastated both European and Native communities; Europeans handled the cognitive dissonance that resulted from their own violence through propaganda that depicted Natives as inherently barbaric and themselves as only temporarily barbaric out of necessity. Shocked by Native traditions tied to the taking of scalps from fallen combatants, the English created their own bounty systems to reward colonists for taking the scalps

Top: A Map of the Country between Crown Point and Albany with the Situation of Ticonderoga being the present Theatre of War of the British Forces under the command of Genl. Carleton, 1777. Etching on laid paper. Collection of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, 2005.0050.002.

Left: Fort Edward in 1777. Wood engraving. Collection of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, 2002.0417.

of Native people throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. Fear is a powerful and distorting lens, and while we have more surviving European documents than Native ones, unquestionably the suffering during those wars was a shared experience.

The long history of Europeans writing justifications for violence in religious and political propaganda became amplified during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), which colonists referred to as the French and Indian War (1754–1763) to mark its earlier origins in the brutally contested Ohio territory. This global conflict formed an essential precursor to the American Revolution, not only politically and economically (as the ascendant British had to pay for the war they had won through extravagant expenditure), but also militarily and diplomatically (as the defeat of the French meant that Native polities such as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy lost the ability to play European powers against one another). The Seven Years' War also developed a social and cultural discourse, centered on shocking depictions of Europeans killed by Natives, which delivered a powerful rhetorical tool that brooked no challenges. Newspapers published descriptions of mutilated white bodies curated to enflame readers' emotions and to delegitimize any interpretation that strayed from the prevailing theme of innocence struck down by barbarism. The images and language of this propaganda pervaded memory-making about the Seven Years' War so completely that it constituted something newly powerful, which historian Peter Silver has called the "anti-Indian sublime."⁵ After centuries of trauma and selective memories, European writers had created a "savage Indian" that stood in for all Native peoples and an "innocent victim" that stood in for all European peoples; these two images became so



linguistically reflexive that they left little room for anything else.

Silver charted the maturation of the anti-Indian sublime in the Pennsylvania backcountry during the war, as colonists who were troubled by their own religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity found ways to conceptualize themselves as one body against the vastly diverse collection of nations and linguistic groups lumped together as "Indians." This kind of rhetoric perpetuated cycles of retributive violence but also provided one way for European colonists to imagine themselves as bound together in a collective identity as Americans. The anti-Indian sublime developed in the period leading up to the Revolution, by which point it was common to invoke its view of relations between Europeans and Natives in ways that were chronologically slippery, as when all the repeated stories of past violence could stand in for the present violence. Ephraim Hoyt's journals were written nearly a century after the Seven Years' War but replicated that chronological slippage as he traveled among New York's battle sites and referred to events of 1758 prac-

The earliest known image of the event is a preparatory sketch by the artist for a painting that was never realized. John Trumbull, "Miss McCrea, Fort Edward", 1787. Bennington Museum, Bennington, VT, 2006.65.

tically in the same breath as the events of 1777. We cannot understand Hoyt's interest in substantiating the details of Jane McCrea's story without grappling with the colonial roots of the anti-Indian sublime. He may have hoped to delineate the history of her killing from the propaganda, but not by challenging the story's central thesis. Against such a powerful, centuries-long convention, the precise positioning of hills, trees, and graves stood little chance of making an impression.⁶

Whatever history could tell European colonists and Americans in the New Republic about the horrors of war paled in comparison to the emotional impact found in literature and art. The American incarnation of one literary genre, captivity narratives, powerfully transformed these events into national myths—"myths" in the sense that they took on new life as powerful stories with broader cultural implications than when

Romanticized depiction of the capture of McCrea. Frederick Coffay Yohn, *Capture of Jane McCrea*, 1900-1930. Chapman Museum, Glens Falls, NY, 2000.25.8.



they took place. Since Mary Rowlandson's 1682 account, which established a Puritan interpretation of her capture during King Philip's War in 1676, scores of writers transformed colonists' experiences of war into attention-getting pamphlets that were easily adapted in service of new lessons and arguments. While Jane McCrea's killing in 1777 preceded some of the most overtly titillating captivity narratives of the 19th century, accounts of her death already capitalized on the explosive commingling of horror and excitement. Authors waxed eloquent about her pale whiteness, her beauty, her imminent marriage, and the gruesome possibility that her betrothed identified her scalp by her long, brown (or red, or blonde) hair. Public appetite for the story created, and was created by, numerous reprintings of the story in colonial newspapers that linked the tragedy of her death to broader indiscriminate violence that threatened the colonies.⁷ The British press reprinted letters from Horatio Gates often enough that the influential orator Edmund

Burke, who along with John Wilkes constituted the most outspoken advocates in Britain for an independent America, could refer to Jane McCrea in speeches without having to explain who she was. Burke explicitly blamed Burgoyne for what had happened to McCrea, and his and other published speeches changed the parameters of the debate between England and the American colonies.

By the time that Hoyt traveled to New York to investigate her fate, Americans had continued to build upon the power of her story to the point that it became synonymous with the frontier conditions that convinced colonists to support the Revolution. Perhaps the most powerful demonstration of the national obsession with the tale can be found in John Vanderlyn's unsettling 1804 painting, *The Murder of Jane McCrea*. Vanderlyn had grown up in a New York family whose community was burned to the ground by the British in 1777, and that lore informed his determination to record a history of British violence and depravity in a visual lan-

guage undergirded by the sensational accounts of McCrea's killing. Vanderlyn had traveled to Paris, where fellow American Joel Barlow commissioned him to illustrate key scenes to accompany his epic poem, *The Columbiad*. Vanderlyn's resulting painting drew on age-old conventions in visual culture and themes from the classical past, but with an early 19th-century American sensibility. Like the most successful captivity narratives, the painting sparked a blend of horror and excitement that transcended its particulars. It leans upon the productive ambivalence created by a culture's implicit resentment of and disgust for Native Americans while rendering the men in gorgeous, classical proportions. The viewer is encouraged to linger on the corporeal details not only to heighten the tension but also to suggest a palpable sense of the present in the past. Jane McCrea's pose might have had ancient precursors, but her clothing would have made her current among fashionable young women at the turn of the 19th century.⁸

Vanderlyn's painting would have constituted an important part of the cultural climate around Jane McCrea's story that encouraged Hoyt to pursue it as an historian, and his interest in correcting some of the exaggerations that had taken hold did not mean that he held himself apart from the story's emotional impact. Like many men of his day, Hoyt appreciated poetry and literature, and it was common for genteel, educated men to express their sensibility as a sign of their refinement. Nonetheless, Hoyt's drive to revisit the McCrea case centered on questions of historical accuracy, a fitting aim for both an historian and a patriot: "At the present period when avarice seems to have usurped the place of sympathetic feeling few perhaps, are to be found who feel an interest in contemplating the toils and adventures of our fathers; but as respects myself, I must say, that I have felt a strong desire to look over this ground where so many of them 'commingled in bloody strife' and left their bones to moulder in obscurity." Hoyt reviewed the landscape to note the fields, trees, and rivers that featured in McCrea's story and took pains to record the memories of "a respectable soldier" who told Hoyt that "he was one of the party who [t]ook up and carried the

mangled body to the fort."⁹ Rather than rely on the sensational published accounts, he went in person to evaluate the legend in relation to the geography. Furthermore, he solicited a firsthand witness account that held the promise of greater objectivity and reliability. Hoyt's report to the New-York Historical Society reflected the predominant interpretation of the event, with "bloody wretches" who sunk a "hatchet into her head," but even this showed a degree of restraint in comparison to most accounts of her death.¹⁰

Reading McCrea accounts today, it is difficult to avoid the limitations of war propaganda, which recognizes the tragedy of deaths that happen to one's own people while minimizing the humanity of others. But this smoothing over of the jagged edges of the realities of war is precisely what made the story such good propaganda. At the heart of it, she was an innocent who was killed in a war that spilled over its sanctioned boundaries. The story was useful because it was shocking, and broadly effective because it was not, after all, unimaginable. To some 18th- and 19th-century readers and viewers, she represented a family member, while to others she represented the idea of a war for in-

dependence, or for a new nation. Epaphras Hoyt traveled from Deerfield to walk the landscape of McCrea's death, and we can imagine the emotions that her killing inspired in him as he reviewed battle sites that blurred the 1750s with the 1770s, and perhaps also the 1830s, as contemporary removals of other Native peoples from their lands required ongoing memory-making. It is worth remembering Hoyt's interest in providing a master hand to shape McCrea's unruly story, perhaps less for his review of its particulars than for his engagement with its emotional power.

ENDNOTES

1. Brian Burns, "Massacre or Muster? Burgoyne's Indians and the Militia at Bennington," *Vermont History: The Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (Summer 1977): 133–44.
2. Epaphras Hoyt, Sketch-book No. 6 (Nov. 9, 1836–Feb. 21, 1837), 226. Historic Deerfield Library.
3. "Stated Meeting June 1, 1847," *Proceedings of the New-York Historical Society*, 77–79.
4. Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).
5. Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: Norton, 2007), xvii–xviii.
6. Hoyt, "Book No. 2 or D—Notes and Extracts, Deerfield 1820, Containing data for History," 161, Historic Deerfield Library; Hoyt, Sketch-book No. 11 (June 4–Dec. 31, 1838), 275–76. Historic Deerfield Library.
7. See for example *Pennsylvania Evening Post* III, no. 390, August 12, 1777: 423; *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, August 11, 1777, 3; *Independent Chronicle and the Universal Advertiser*, August 14, 1777, 1.
8. Paul Staiti, *The Killing of Jane McCrea: An American Tragedy on the Revolutionary Frontier* (Yardley, PA: Westholme Publishing, 2025).
9. Hoyt Sketch-book No. 6, 225; 226.
10. "Stated Meeting June 1, 1847," *Proceedings of the New-York Historical Society*, 78.

Monument to Jane McCrea in Fort Edward, NY, erected in 1901 by the Jane McCrea Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution. Text reads: *Memorial to Jane McCrea massacred near this spot by the Indians July 27, 1777.*



Banners of Liberty

by James Taub

“The aged, as well as the young, daily march out under the banners of liberty, and discover a determined resolution to maintain her cause even until death.”

The Pennsylvania Mercury, June 9, 1775

THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY of the start of the American Revolution provides public historians with an opportunity to explore the early growth of American identities and the ways in which they have changed over time. The Museum of the American Revolution approached this topic through the lens of the first symbols used by the soldiers of the Continental Army and Revolutionary militias to identify themselves and share their cause. With close to 30 flags from these military organizations still in existence, the Museum brought together 15 examples for a rare display in Philadelphia during the spring and summer of 2025 titled *Banners of Liberty: An Exhibition of Original Revolutionary War Flags*. Using these treasured flags, the exhibition charted the story of the United States of America’s struggle for independence.

By following the course of the American Revolution through military flags, visitors explored how the fighting of 1775 for rights as British North Americans turned, in 1776, into a war for American independence. The British Grand Union carried by colonial militias gave way to various symbols of the new nation, and the Continental Army asserted its new identity. Occasionally, visual expressions of loyalty to King George III remain on the banners below the 13 stripes of the newly created states, marking these objects as prime examples of the material culture of the changing goals of American revolutionaries. Others retained the essence of British symbols as soldiers of the new nation sought to define themselves.

Highlighted here are several examples of surviving flags carried by New England regiments, or with connections to the Northeast. Militiamen and Continental soldiers from this region formed the backbone of the early fights for American independence, and the symbols that waved above them in battle highlight changing attitudes towards the war, as well as newfound connections with other colonies, turned states. Unity emerged, as expressed through these historic flags.



MASSACHUSETTS MILITIA FLAG

c. 1775. Silk. Brian and Barbara Hendelson.

This crimson banner, often referred to as the “Forster Flag” because of its provenance to the Forster family of Massachusetts, was likely used by the company of soldiers from Manchester in the 6th Essex County Militia Regiment. Samuel Forster, a merchant and shipmaster in Manchester, served as an officer in the company as Massachusetts prepared for a possible war with Britain. While training and drilling, Forster and his militiamen may have looked upon this banner, which was probably emblazoned with the British union in its canton or upper quarter. The presence of the union on the flag showed that these men remained loyal to their king, but they were prepared to fight to restore their rights as Americans within the British Empire.

Militiamen from Manchester turned out on April 19, 1775, when word reached them of the fighting at Lexington and Concord. Rushing the 30 miles to the scene of the action, and possibly bringing this flag with them, they found the British Army retreating to Boston.

This flag's design has been altered. There is no longer a British union in its canton. Instead, six short white stripes (and seven more on the reverse) are stitched on the flag to represent the 13 United States. This change likely happened around the time of the Declaration of Independence. The dark area of the upper corner of the flag suggests its original design.

2ND NEW HAMPSHIRE REGIMENT FLAGS

Made by Fanny Johannot Williams, painted by Daniel Rea, Jr., Boston, MA, 1777. Silk, paint. New Hampshire Historical Society, Gift of Edward Tuck; Conserved with support from the Artist Preservation Group and the Society of the Cincinnati in the State of New Hampshire, 1913.002.01-.02.

In 1777, the New Hampshire Committee of Safety provided each of the state's regiments with funds to purchase flags.

Captain Samuel Blodgett hired Fanny Johannot Williams, a milliner in Boston, to provide four yards of buff silk for the flags, while his brother, Nathan, supplied blue silk. With the fabric secured for the flags, Williams sewed them together before handing them over to Daniel Rea, Jr. to paint.

On the buff-colored flag, Rea painted the "Chain of States" with the motto "We Are One" to represent unity among the states. Benjamin Franklin had developed the "Chain of States" symbol, which also appeared on Continental currency from the same period. The blue flag features the motto "The Glory Not The Prey." Each flag has a British union stitched in its canton.

By May 1777, these flags reached the regiment at Fort Ticonderoga where the unit prepared to defend the vital waterways linking Canada and the Great Lakes to New York. Outmaneuvered, the Continental Army abandoned Ticonderoga on July 5. The 2nd New Hampshire Regiment marched with the rear guard of the army and engaged the British at the Battle of Hubbardton (July 7) in present-day Vermont.

However, the regiment's colors moved separately from the unit with the baggage of the army. As the regiment fought at Hubbardton, Lieutenant



Colonel Hill of the British 9th Regiment of Foot captured the flags 30 miles away at Fort Ann in a bloody encounter with Continental soldiers.

Sent to England as war trophies, the flags were donated to the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1913.



COMMANDER IN CHIEF'S STANDARD

1777–1783. Silk, linen. Museum of the American Revolution, Conserved with Funds Provided by the Pennsylvania Society of Sons of the Revolution and its Color Guard, 2003.00.0662.

According to the traditions of the Washington family, General Washington used this silk standard to mark his headquarters

and his presence on the battlefield. Its rough and uneven stitching, as well as the various shapes of its stars, suggests its possibly hasty creation. It was likely made in 1777 after the Continental Congress adopted the design of the flag of the United States, which featured a “new constellation” of 13 stars on a blue field.

George Washington’s ability to be seen by his troops in battle through the smoke from muskets and cannons could rapidly change the fortunes of the Continental Army, as well as the American Revolution. At the Battle of Monmouth in 1778, he rallied retreating elements of his army, while at Yorktown in 1781 he fired the first American cannon of the successful allied siege. This standard could have witnessed those moments. Washington may also have used this standard to identify his headquarters tent, the same tent now on display at the Museum of the American Revolution.

In the early 1900s, descendants of George Washington’s sister, Elizabeth “Betty” Washington Lewis, donated this flag to the Valley Forge Historical Society. Two of Lewis’s sons served as private secretaries for General Washington, and a third served as an officer in Washington’s “Life Guard” during the Revolution.

2ND REGIMENT OF LIGHT DRAGOONS STANDARD

Connecticut, 1777. Silk, paint. Museum of Connecticut History, Connecticut State Library.

The Continental Army’s 2nd Regiment of Light Dragoons, one of four light dragoon regiments authorized by the Continental Congress in 1776, carried this blue silk standard. Light dragoons are soldiers trained and equipped to fight on horseback and on foot. Since they needed to hold their flags while on horseback, light dragoons carried standards, which are much smaller than the colors of infantry regiments.

The field of this standard features a winged cloud with thunderbolts protruding from it. The regiment is identified on the scroll above the design, while a separate scroll below bears the Latin motto, “Patria Concita Fulminant Nati” (the nation expects its sons to respond with rolls of thunder). The canton of the flag features 13 stripes representing the United States.

The 2nd Regiment of Light Dragoons often supplemented George Washington’s Commander-in-Chief’s Guard by providing mounted security for the Continental Army’s headquarters. Parts of the regiment served at many of the major battles of the American Revolution, including Brandywine, Germantown, Saratoga, Monmouth, and Yorktown. However,

the regiment primarily operated in the region north of New York City along the Connecticut border.



Although these flags may now be faded and tattered, their distinctive colors and decorations originally made them stand out on the battlefield. Today, these rare and fragile artifacts help to tell the story of the American Revolution by serving as iconic links to the revolutionary generation. Under these flags, diverse people forged a new nation based on the ideals of liberty, equality, and self-government.

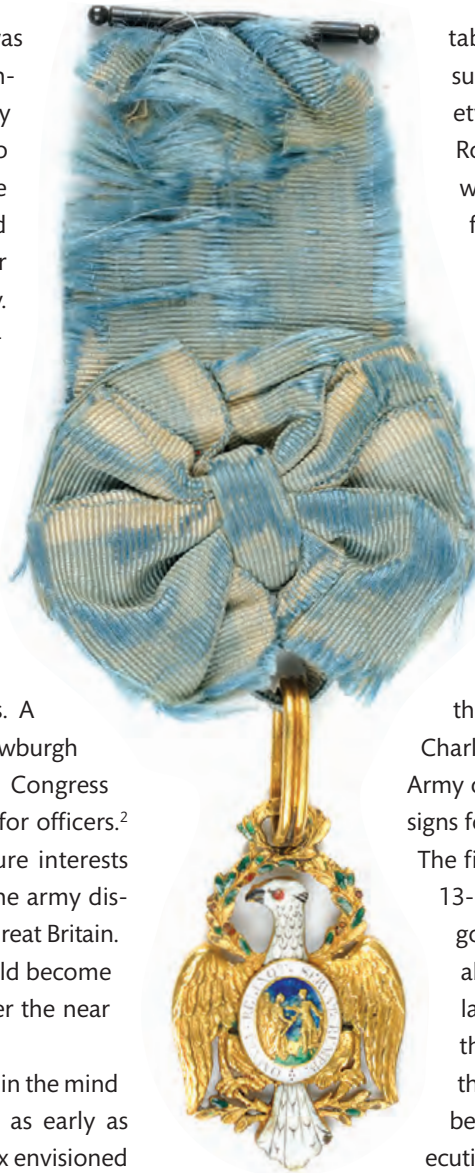
“BY WHICH ITS MEMBERS SHALL BE KNOWN”

The Material Culture of the Society of the Cincinnati at Historic Deerfield

by Samantha Frost

BY THE SPRING of 1783, mutiny was in the air in New Windsor, New York. Continental Army officers grew increasingly displeased with Congress's inability to provide back pay for their service in the War for Independence and were prepared to force those in power to settle their grievances or disband the army entirely. In a March 12th letter to Alexander Hamilton, George Washington described the situation as “distressing beyond description.”¹ Refusing to let his officers descend into mutiny, Washington instead ordered them to meet in Newburgh, New York, on March 15th, where he delivered a speech sympathizing with their concerns yet denouncing the violent measures they planned to take if Congress did not meet their demands. A week after Washington delivered the “Newburgh Address” and laid the uprising to rest, Congress agreed to provide five years of full pay for officers.² However, officers feared that their future interests would no longer be protected should the army disband following a peace agreement with Great Britain. Thus, the seeds were sown for what would become the Society of the Cincinnati shortly after the near mutiny of March 1783.

The Society of the Cincinnati formed in the mind of Massachusetts General Henry Knox as early as 1776. Wanting a “Society of Friends,” Knox envisioned an organization that could maintain the “mutual friendships which have been formed under the pressure of common danger.”³ In May 1783, out of a desire to maintain mutual friendships, advocate for officers' interests, promote the ideals of the Revolution, and provide charity to needy members and families, Knox es-



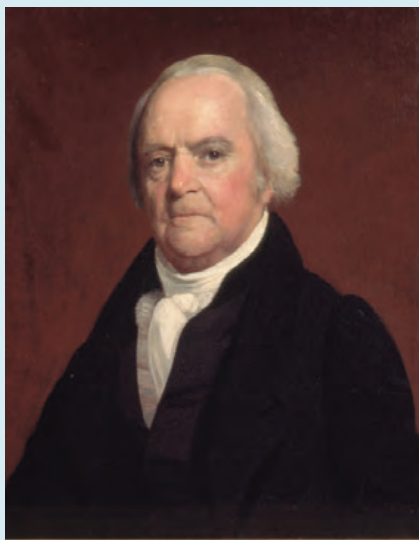
Society of the Cincinnati Eagle insignia owned by Tench Tilghman, made by Nicolas Jean Francastel and Claude Jean Autran Duval, Paris, France, 1784. Gold, enamel, silk, metal. The American Revolution Institute of the Society of the Cincinnati, Inc., Gift of Harrison Tilghman, Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland, 1953, M.1953.224.

tablished the Society of the Cincinnati with support from other retired officers. The Society was named in honor of the ancient Roman hero Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, who was called upon by the Senate to defend Rome from the Aequi in 458 BCE and shortly retired to his farm after leading the Roman army to victory. The Society's members “resolved to follow his example by returning to their citizenship” after sacrificing their own private interest for the good of their country as had Cincinnatus.⁴

Less than a month after the Society's inception, the elected officers—including George Washington as president general and Henry Knox as secretary general—began working on the insignia for the new organization. Pierre-Charles L'Enfant, a French artist and Continental Army officer, presented the Society with two designs for a badge at the convention of June 19th. The first design featured a gold eagle holding a 13-point star, while the second comprised one gold eagle with a separate design for a medallion on its breast.⁵ The Society adopted the latter design, and L'Enfant travelled to France the following fall to oversee the making of the eagle-shaped badge and medallion, as he believed Parisian artists were “capable of executing it to perfection.”⁶ Craftsmen Nicolas Jean Francastel and Claude Jean Autran Duval created 225 gold eagle badges for Society members in 1784; these included a medallion depicting Cincinnatus at his plow while receiving a sword from two Roman senators, suspended by a blue silk ribbon edged in white representing the union between France and the

United States. The Society's principal guiding document, known as "The Institution," held that this gold eagle badge and medallion would be the order "by which its members shall be known and distinguished."⁷

The eagle became the institution's most prolific emblem. It appeared on several types of goods such as Chinese export porcelain, as seen on a 38-piece tea service in Historic Deerfield's collection. Originally belonging to Dr. David Townsend, a surgeon-general during the war and Secretary of the Massachusetts State Society of the Cincinnati, the 1790 tea service bears the bald eagle badge over the initials "DT" in gold leaf on a white ground. The tea service was given to Townsend from Samuel Shaw, a fellow Society member and former aide-de-camp to Knox. Shaw wished for "something emblematic of the institution of the order of the Cincinnati executed upon a set of porcelain" while serving as the first Consul to China.⁸ On December 20, 1790, Townsend's Cincinnati tea set (originally comprised of 45 pieces) was



Dr. David Townsend, attributed to Francis Alexander (1800-1880), Boston, Massachusetts, c. 1825. Oil, linen canvas, pine, gilding, gesso. Historic Deerfield, Gift of Henry N. Flynt and Helen Geier Flynt, 65.238.1.



Tea Set, China, 1790. Hard paste porcelain, overglaze polychrome enamels, gilding. Historic Deerfield, Gift of Henry N. Flynt and Helen Geier Flynt, 56.105.

shipped from Canton to Boston, along with a letter from Shaw that reads:

*Accept my dear friend, as a mark of my esteem and affection, a tea set of porcelain, ornamented with the Cincinnati and your cypher. I hope shortly after its arrival to be with you, and in company with your amiable partner, see whether a little good tea improves or loses any part of its flavor in passing from one hemisphere to the other.*⁹

In addition to Townsend, Shaw ordered porcelain tea services for nine other Massachusetts Society members, including Knox, Henry Jackson, I.L. Stoddard, Benjamin Lincoln, Dr. William Eustis, and Constant Freeman.¹⁰

The Eagle insignia likewise appears on the Society diploma which L'Enfant suggested every member receive in addition to the order and silver medal. The eagle is imprinted at the center top of the diploma, while a personification of American liberty sprawls across the bottom in the form of an armed soldier bearing a Union flag in one hand and a sword in the other. Beside the armed soldier is an eagle whose talons project lightning toward the British lion, while Britannia, depicted as a young woman, moves toward the sea with a crown falling from her head.¹¹ The diploma iconography was sketched by L'Enfant and

later redrawn by artist Augustin-Louis Belle, so that it could be rendered as a copperplate engraving by the distinguished engraver, Jean-Jacques Le Veau. Knox, having seen and approved L'Enfant's original drawing of the diploma before he left for France, described it in a letter to Washington as "a noble effort of genius."¹²

Historic Deerfield owns two Society of the Cincinnati diplomas, one formerly belonging to David Townsend, and the other to Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Maxwell of Heath, Massachusetts. Maxwell was born in Ireland in 1733, emigrating to the American colonies with his family that same year and settling in Bedford, Massachusetts. In 1755, Maxwell served in the Provincial army during the French and Indian War, preparing him for the role of lieutenant that he assumed in 1775 at the start of the American Revolution. Maxwell became a major in 1777 and raised a company of 86 men to serve at the battles of Trenton, Princeton, Saratoga, Monmouth, and the siege of Boston.¹³ By the end of the war he held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the 3rd Massachusetts Regiment under Major General William Heath with whom he joined the Society of the Cincinnati in May 1783.¹⁴

Even though the Society of the Cincinnati quickly gained hundreds of

members and developed local and state branches across the original 13 colonies and France, it also garnered much criticism. In a 1784 letter to Washington, Knox described the Society as an “object of jealousy,” reporting that his New England contemporaries claimed that it was “created by a foreign influence, in order to change our form of Government.”¹⁵ After the success that Continental Army officers achieved by pressuring Congress to receive back pay for their war service, suspicions arose that the Society’s motives were to advance their personal interests in other ways.¹⁶ In the same letter Knox wrote, “The cool dispassionately sensible men, seem to approve of the institution generally, but dislike the hereditary descent.”¹⁷ Membership in the Society was originally granted to commissioned officers who resigned at the end of the war, or who had served for at least three years, as well as their eldest male posterity. The idea of inherited membership raised concerns about the creation of a hereditary nobility amidst a new democracy. Fears of a perpetual

military class dissolved over the following decades, as sons and nephews joined the Society, and the “remnants of the Cincinnati no longer occasioned suspicion or alarm.”¹⁸ Membership in the Society remains hereditary to this day.



Silhouette of Major Hugh Maxwell of Charlestown, Massachusetts, Frederick Chapman, New York, New York, 1781. Paper, watercolors, ink. Historic Deerfield, Museum Collections Fund, 2003.51.5.



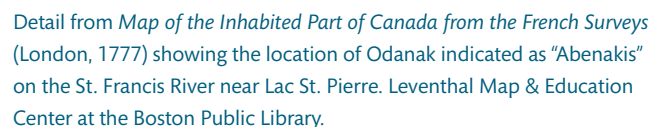
Society of the Cincinnati Diploma, designed by Pierre Charles L'Enfant (1754–1825), Paris, France, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Parchment and ink. Historic Deerfield, Museum Collections Fund, 2003.51.1.

ENDNOTES

1. “George Washington to Alexander Hamilton, 12 March 1783,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-03-02-0179>. [Original source: *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 3, 1782–1786, ed. Harold C. Syrett. New York: Columbia University Press, 1962, pp. 286–288.]
2. Minor Meyers, Jr., *Liberty without Anarchy: A History of The Society of the Cincinnati* (University Press of Virginia, 1983), 15.
3. *Ibid.*, 17.
4. “The Institution of the Society of the Cincinnati,” *The Society of the Cincinnati*, August 13, 2021, <https://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/institution-the-society-of-the-cincinnati/>.
5. Meyers, 33.
6. *Ibid.*
7. “Object Record,” *Society of the Cincinnati Eagle* insignia owned by Tench Tilghman - M.1953.224. *The American Revolution Institute*, accessed December 19, 2025, <https://americanrevolutioninstitute.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/BEAD C89E-FC8F-4479-A78D-781710288844>.
8. Amanda E. Lange, *Chinese Export Art at Historic Deerfield* (Deerfield, MA: Historic Deerfield, 2005), 251.
9. *Ibid.*, 252.
10. *Ibid.*
11. “The Society of the Cincinnati Diploma,” *The Society of the Cincinnati*, July 26, 2021, <https://www.societyofthecincinnati.org/the-society-of-the-cincinnati-diploma/>.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Caitlyn Walsh, “Manuscript 27 Hugh Maxwell Military Records and Correspondence, 1776–1818, Bulk 1776–1784: Guide,” *Home - Statewide Databases - LibGuides at Massachusetts Library System, Inc.*, October 2013, <https://archives.lib.state.ma.us/server/api/core/bitstreams/1f24a2a2-a59f-4bdf-9e8d-10f5b6c175ec/content>.
14. “Hugh Maxwell,” *Shays’ Rebellion - Person: Hugh Maxwell*, 2008, https://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/shaysapp/person2414.html?shortName=hugh_maxwell.
15. “Henry Knox to George Washington, 21 February 1784,” *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/04-01-02-0103>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, *Confederation Series*, vol. 1, 1 January 1784–17 July 1784, ed. W. W. Abbot. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992, 142–44.]
16. Wallace Evan Davies, “The Society of the Cincinnati in New England, 1783–1800,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 5, no.1 (1948): 4.
17. “Henry Knox to George Washington, 21 February 1784,” *Founders Online*.
18. Davies, “The Society of the Cincinnati in New England,” 25.

Odanak in the Revolutionary Era

Odanak, formerly known as St. Francis, is a small community on the north side of the St. Francis River in Quebec, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, east of Montreal, and west of Quebec City. In the 17th century, French and English colonists disrupted Indigenous patterns of subsistence, trade, alliance, war, and gender relations, and new diseases shattered Indigenous communities. It required enormous resilience for Abenaki people to reconfigure themselves in what archaeologist Peter Thomas has called “a maelstrom of change.”⁷ Odanak became a relatively safe haven as the Abenaki made



34 · HISTORIC DEERFIELD



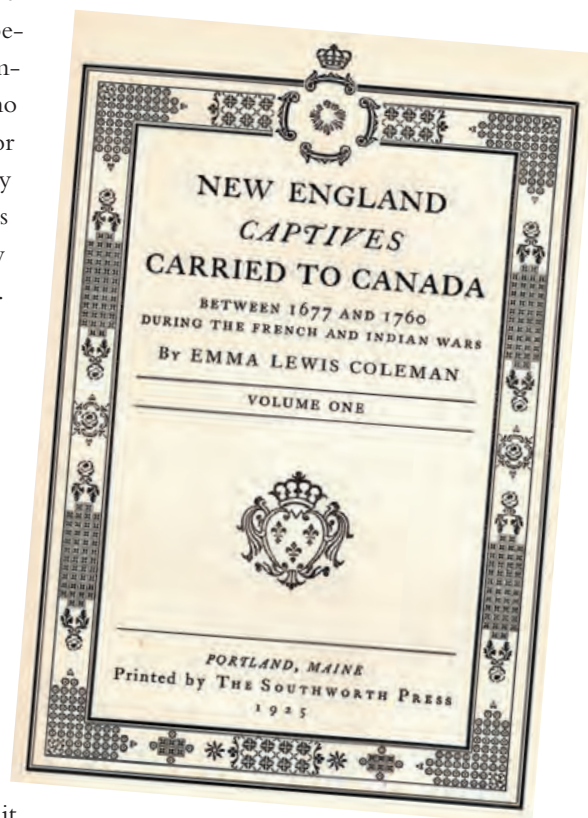
An 18th century watercolor of an Abenaki woman and man by an unknown artist. Courtesy of the City of Montreal Records Management & Archives, Montreal, Canada.

These dynamics are exemplified by the family of Samuel Gill (1687–1758), an English captive taken from Salisbury, Massachusetts, in 1697, when he was ten years old. His story fits the model of “white captives” who found new families and never returned to New England. Samuel, identified in Quebec records by his baptismal name of Joseph, married another English captive known to us only by her baptismal name of Rosalie.⁹ (I refer to him as Samuel for clarity since there are other Josephs in this story.) Samuel and Rosalie were raised as Abenakis. Together, they had seven children who intermarried with Abenaki and French–Canadian families. Gill descendants today include Abenaki families at Odanak, non–Abenaki families in and around the contiguous village of Pierreville, and Innu families at Mash-teuiatsh in the Lac Saint-Jean region of Québec.¹⁰

Their oldest son, Joseph-Louis Gill (c. 1720–1798), is well documented for his activities during the American Rev-

olution.¹¹ In fact, George Washington recognized his contributions by granting him the rank of major in the Continental Army as well as a salary and rations.¹² However, Joseph-Louis also signed an oath of loyalty to the British Crown in 1780. He wanted to return to Odanak after two years of hiding in Vermont to avoid prosecution for helping American prisoners to escape from a Quebec jail.¹³ Calloway cited these and other actions when he described Odanak’s role in the American Revolution as “ambiguous.” Ambiguity might seem like duplicity if one is asking either/or questions. It also represents an Abenaki rhetorical style seen in oral tradition and naming practices. Unlike Aesop’s fables, designed to convey a specific moral lesson, Abenaki stories leave room for interpretation. Stories about enemies can become stories about friends and relatives. This “both/and” approach is reflected in Joseph-Louis’s Abenaki name, Magouaouidombauit, which means “he who is a friend of the Iroquois” or Mohawks.¹⁴ The name deftly evokes a series of associations that highlight the ambiguity of his position at Odanak. He was Abenaki but also English. The English were friends and allies of the Mohawks, traditional enemies of Abenaki people. But Mohawks and Abenakis had established peaceful relations as signatories of the Great Peace of 1701 and as Catholic communities known as the Seven Fires or Seven Nations of Canada. In brief, Magouaouidombauit is descriptive, ironic, teasing, and sharp-edged, all at the same time. Ambiguous indeed!

Afficionados of Deerfield history might recognize Samuel and Rosalie Gill from their entry in Emma Lewis Coleman’s magisterial work, *New England Captives Carried to Canada*.¹⁵ Coleman built on the research she did with C. Alice Baker, who in turn benefitted from others, including Joseph-Pierre-Anselme Maurault, the missionary at St. Francis who published *Histoire des Abénakis* in 1866,¹⁶ and Charles Gill, a direct descendant of Samuel and Rosalie. In 1877, Charles Gill published a history of the family that included oral tradition and archival research, in part to correct errors that he found in Maurault.¹⁷ He published updates in 1889 and 1892¹⁸ to acknowledge new information, especially two documents shared by Baker, who had found conclusive evidence of Samuel Gill’s origins in the Massachusetts Archives. Young Samuel’s father,



Title page of Emma Lewis Coleman’s *New England Captives Carried to Canada* (Portland, ME: The Southworth Press, 1925).

Sergeant Samuel Gill of Salisbury, Massachusetts, husband of Sarah *née* Worth, tried to redeem his son in 1700 and again the following year.¹⁹ The data compiled by Baker and Coleman is an impressive testament to the power of letter-writing and obsessive research in the days before the internet.

Young Samuel might have met Stephen Williams, taken from Deerfield in 1704 when he was ten years old. Williams mentions “some English children” who mocked him.²⁰ As a grandfather in his 60s, Samuel likely met Susannah Johnson, a wife and mother taken from Charlestown, New Hampshire, (Fort Number 4) in 1754. Johnson mentions an interpreter, and we know that Samuel became trilingual and acted as an interpreter for the Abenakis. Johnson was adopted into the family of Joseph-Louis Gill. In her words, she became “allied to the first family; my master was son in law to the grand sachem, was accounted rich, had a store of goods, and lived in a style far above the majority of his tribe.”²¹

Maurault is the original print source for the story of how Samuel and Rosalie got married. He says that the chiefs debated whether to have them marry among the Abenaki to strengthen their ties to the community, or to marry each other to preserve the “white race” within the village. (This conflicts with everything known about Abenaki leadership, which was never coercive, at least in the early colonial period, and the role of women, who would surely have had opinions about a marriage.) The priest solved the dilemma by hastily marrying them to each other.²² It may be that the Abenakis were thinking about relationships rather than “race” as a fixed category. Subsequent events suggest two truths: that Samuel and Rosalie had genuine affection for each other and that the Abenaki community benefitted from their New England connections during the Revolutionary era. By the third generation, as some Gills married into French-Canadian families, the interests of Abenaki and French-Canadian Gills diverged, and the latter were banned from owning land at Odanak.²³

In her summary of Samuel Gill’s life, Coleman mentions but does not quite know what to make of a 1768 document published by Charles Gill.²⁴ Coleman and Baker, her mentor, were mostly interested in genealogical clues. The document, a petition from all seven children of Samuel and Rosalie, asks permission to send one of the siblings to New England in search of their relatives. Coleman rather condescendingly describes the petition as naïve, typical of the “friendly simplicity of the *habitant* of today.”²⁵ She implies that they saw some advantage in asserting their English heritage after the 1763 takeover of New France by the British. Today, we can see the document as part of a nuanced (not naïve) strategy to invoke a network of alliances in a time when vectors of power were

Henri Vassal, the Indian Agent for Odanak and a great-grandson of Joseph Louis Gill and his second wife, Suzanne Gamelin, found the petition in the papers of his late uncle Louis Gill. Vassal shared it with Charles Gill, another great-grandson, who included it in his 1887 history of the Gill family. The document is attached to a cover letter: Charles Gill to Henri Vassal, Sorel, Québec, 27 January 1884. Petition from the children of Samuel and Rosalie Gill asking for permission to search for their relatives in New England. February 26, 1768. Centre d'Archives Régionales Séminaire de Nicolet, Fonds Henri Vassal F249/A1/3/1.

TRANSLATION BY THE AUTHOR:

We, Joseph Louis, François, Joseph Piche, Robert, Magdeleine, Josephthe and Marie, have come together to delegate one of us to seek the relatives of our late father, who was a native of New England.

We have never known with certainty where he was taken, only that he was taken about eighty years ago by the Indians of St. Francis when he was seven or eight years old and continued to live with them. His name was Same [Sammy] Gille. We also know that our grandfather, Sargent Gille, sent twice to look for him, but as he was taken so young he became attached to the nation

Mais ayant esté pris si jeune, & estoit attaché à la Nation de son
 Jamais voulu les quitter; Et comme
 Vous serions grandement flatter
 de connoître Nos parents; Nous
 supplions Messieurs qui
 peuvent avoir connoissance de cette
 famille, d'introduire Notre frère que
 Nous députons à cet effet, chez
 quelqu'un de nos parents,
 Nous supplions Messieurs Les
 gouverneurs qui ont autorité de
 Vouloir Bien Nous faire la grace
 de la charité de Vous protéger Et
 Nous aider dans la poursuite des
 Recherches que Nous faisons de nos
 parents tant de celle de notre père
 que de Notre mère, Notre mère a été
 prise à Quenibanc, quelques temps
 après la prise de notre père pris d'un
 moulin dont toute la famille fut

and never wanted to leave them. And as we would be greatly pleased to know our relatives, we beg the gentlemen who may have knowledge of this family to introduce our brother, whom we have sent on our behalf, to any of our relations.

We respectfully ask the officials who have the authority to assist us to have the grace and charity to protect and aid us in our search for the relatives of our father as well as those of our mother. Our mother was taken at Quenibanc [Kennebunk, Maine], near a mill, some time after our father was taken. Her entire family was taken to Canada except her father and mother, who were dispatched (killed) on the spot.

We respectfully beg the Generals to have pity on us, to protect and aid us in this enterprise. We will not cease to offer our prayers for their well-being.

Joseph Louis Gille Joseph Gille

Fransoie Gille¹

I, the undersigned former missionary, certify that the above-named were all baptized in the village of St. Francis, and that their mother and father were married there en face de l'église (legally married in the Catholic church)

prise Et emmenée En Canada à
 L'exception du père Et de la mère qui
 furent envoyés sur Lechamps
 Nous supplions respectueusement
 Messieurs Nos Généraux de nous faire
 la grace de se vouloir donner des
 grâces, En Nous protégeant Et Nous
 aidant dans Cette Entreprise, Et
 Nous Nécesserons d'offrir Nos vœux
 pour Leur Conservation
 Joseph Louis Gille Joseph Gille
 Françoise Gille
 j'ai sousigné ancien Missionnaire certifie que les
 susnommés ont été tous baptisés au village de St.
 François, Et que leur père Et mère y avoient été mariés
 en face d'Eglise étant encore fort jeunes l'un Et l'autre
 je les ai vus Et connus Et instruits leurs Enfants Et
 petits Enfants: à Québec le 26 février 1768
 M. L. Lefranc Missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jésus
 Francis Robert Gille, to all, whom the above may concern,
 & that can assist him to find out his relations near Boston
 Guy Carleton
 Castle of St. Louis, Quebec
 February 26th 1768

when they were very young. I have seen them² and known and instructed their children and grandchildren.

At Quebec on February 26, 1768.

M.L. Lefranc, Missionary of the Company of Jesus.

Frances Robert Gille is recommended to all, whom the above may concern, and that can assist him to find out his relations near Boston.

Guy Carleton. Castle of St. Louis, Quebec, February 26, 1768.

by the Lt. Governor's Command, J. Goldfrap, D. Sec'y

NOTES

1. Archives du Séminaire du Nicolet, Fonds Henri Vassal (F249), folder A1/3/1.
2. Problem: Rév. Père Marin-Louis Lefranc did not come to New France until 1751. Rosalie died about 1738. He might have known Samuel, who lived until about 1758. J.B.A. Allaire, *Le dictionnaire biographique du clergé canadien-français* (Montréal: Impr. de l'Ecole catholique des sourds-muets, 1910). Thank you to Bertrand Desjardins for the reference.

changing rapidly.

The Gill children—“Joseph Louis, François, Joseph Piche, Robert, Magdeleine, Josephthe and Marie”²⁶ (notice how many bear their father’s baptismal name) grew up at Odanak like other Abenaki children: speaking Abenaki, French, and at least some English; practicing Catholicism; and participating in all the social and subsistence activities that were part of the community’s daily life. Their father told them stories of his boyhood, as evidenced in the details of the petition. Their mother apparently did not. Rosalie is said to have died in 1738, soon after the birth of Robert in 1737. The children knew only that she was taken at Quenibanc (Kennebec, Maine) near a mill, that her mother and father died in the attack, and that her siblings were taken to Canada. It is suggestive that she used the Abenaki place name. Was that the word used by her adoptive father when he talked about the raid that brought her to their family?

The original church records no longer exist, but the accepted date for Samuel and Rosalie’s marriage is 1715, since their first child was born in 1716.²⁷ This does not fit the tradition that Samuel and Rosalie were young when they married, perhaps 14 and 12, as suggested by their descendant Charles Gill,²⁸ since Samuel would have been 28 in 1715. The petition carries an affirmation from Father Marin-Louis LeFranc,²⁹ a Jesuit missionary, that the parents married in the Catholic church at a young age and that he knew and taught their children and grandchildren.

The endorsement by Guy Carleton, the British officer appointed as governor of Quebec after the fall of New France, recognizes “Frances Robert Gille” as the family representative for the search for their relatives. Francois, who signed the petition, might have intended to make the journey but had other matters to attend to. On July 18, 1768, he married at Odanak with his brother Joseph-Louis as a witness.³⁰ Robert, the youngest brother, made a better candidate for an extended trip, since he was unmarried at the time.³¹ The outcome of Robert’s mission, if he went, is unknown.

Possibly the Gill siblings hoped to claim an inheritance, as Esther Wheelwright and Aaron Littlefield, both taken from

Wells, Maine, in 1703, had previously succeeded in doing.³² Wheelwright, who became a nun and eventually Mother Superior of the Ursuline convent in Quebec City, leveraged her status as the daughter of a prominent English family to protect the Ursuline community under British rule.³³ However, a more likely reason stems from the circumstances in which the missing church records were destroyed.

In 1759, a raiding party from Massachusetts known as Rogers’ Rangers attacked the village, looting the church of precious objects such as a small silver statue of the Virgin Mary given by the Canons of the Cathedral at Chartres in 1701, before setting fire to the church and the village.³⁴ Rogers took at least three members of Joseph-Louis’s immediate family captive: his wife, Marie Jeanne Nanamaghemet, the daughter of the grand chief at the time, and his sons Xavier and Antoine. The latter might have also been known as Sabatis, the Abenaki form of Jean-Baptiste. Marie Jeanne and Xavier died or were killed in captivity.³⁵

When Rogers and his men reached Charlestown, New Hampshire, they met Susannah Johnson, returned from her captivity at Odanak. She wrote, “He [Rogers] brought with him a young Indian prisoner, who stopped at my house, the moment he saw me, he cried, my God, my God, here is my sister; it was my little brother Sabatis, who formerly used to bring the cows for me, when I lived at my Indian masters.” She added, “I felt the purest pleasure in administering to his comfort.”³⁶ Unlike his grandfather Sergeant Samuel Gill, who tried



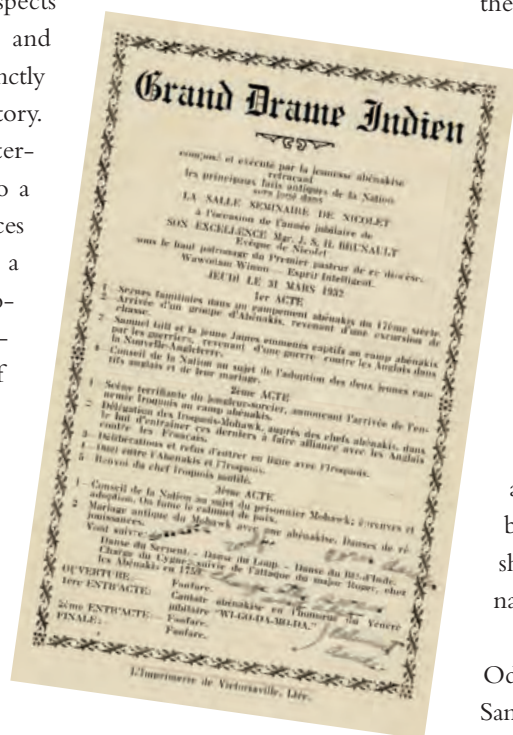
Esther Wheelwright (1696–1780) was born in Wells, in York County, Maine and was one of almost 100 people taken captive in 1703. She lived with an Abenaki family in Norridgewock for about five years but later lived among the French. She maintained close ties with other English captives and might have known Rosalie Gill, since Kennebunk was originally part of Wells. She joined the Ursuline convent in Quebec City and took the name Esther-Marie-Joseph de l’Enfant-Jésus, becoming their Mother Superior in 1760. *Portrait of Esther Wheelwright*, c. 1763. Oil on canvas. Massachusetts Historical Society.

to redeem his son Samuel in 1700 and 1701, Joseph-Louis had no clear channel to pursue for recovering his wife and children in the aftermath of the raid. He never gave up the search. In 1778, a British offer attested that Joseph-Louis had gone to Boston to look for his son.³⁷ No other record of “Sabatis” has been found, so he might be the same person as Antoine, who eventually returned to Odanak and died there in 1787.³⁸

In 1768, the year of the petition, the Abenaki began to rebuild their community after Rogers’ Raid. They re-lit their council fire and chose two new chiefs to replace those who had died.³⁹ The years between 1759 and 1768 saw great changes in Quebec as British forces claimed victory over the French in 1760, and the administrative transition from New France to British Canada became official with the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Rogers’ Raid is little known today on the U.S. side, but it holds a large place in the historical memory of Odanak.

The young people at Odanak produced a historical pageant in honor of the Silver Jubilee of the Bishop of Nicolet in 1932. The vignettes include two “outsider” marriages: the marriage of Samuel and Rosalie and an “ancient” marriage between a Mohawk man and an Abenaki woman. The program highlights colorful aspects of Abenaki history and culture within a distinctly Catholic mission history. Almost as an afterthought, tucked into a list of traditional dances to be performed, is a “reenactment” of Rogers’ Raid on the village.⁴⁰ The Fall of Quebec, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and Confederation of Canada are nowhere to be found in this depiction of Abenaki history.

Program from a performance held in the hall at Nicolet Seminary in honor of the Bishop of Nicolet, 31 March 1932. Théophile Panadis sent this program to A. Irving Hallowell with a note saying, “Our show was a real success. We filled the hall three times in succession. It is too very bad you didn’t see it.” *Grand Drame Indien*, 1932. A. Irving Hallowell Papers, Serie V Abenaki—A—Abenaki—Kinship #2, Ms.Coll.26. American Philosophical Society.



Rogers’ Raid memorial, Odanak, Quebec. Photograph courtesy of Susie O’Bomsawin.

In 1959, 200 years after the raid, ethnohistorian Gordon M. Day found a strong oral tradition at Odanak that explained and corrected errors in the English record. It seems that one of the “Indian scouts” with Rogers and his Rangers had relatives at Odanak. The scout warned a young girl, who warned the village. As a result, most of the Abenakis hid before Rogers set their houses on fire. The Abenaki survivors—and there were many—fled to places such as St. Regis (Akwesasne) for a few years. The existence of the village today confirms that they eventually returned. When Théophile Panadis told this story to Gordon Day, he recounted it so precisely that he used a different dialect for the stranger who gave the warning. Based on this evidence, Day theorized that the stranger came from Schaghticoke, a village in the Housatonic Valley of western Massachusetts, partially populated by refugees from the Connecticut River Valley who fled during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.⁴¹ The story of Rogers’ Raid is an example of how Abenaki people suffered from colonial warfare but survived, and a reminder to current generations that they should never forget, as seen in the monument erected at Odanak for the bicentennial of the raid.

The trauma of the Rogers Raid continues to be felt at Odanak. It affected every family, not just the descendants of Samuel and Rosalie Gill. As a community they were courted by competing interests during the Revolutionary era, valued for their strength as potential allies, and feared for their strength as potential enemies. The Abenakis did not have the numbers or resources to drive out the newcomers. They lost their French allies in 1763 and could not predict who would win the American Revolution and what that would mean for their own lives. The Revolution did not bring independence to the Abenakis.

Rather, it created new difficulties as the United States and later Canada developed federal policies to protect their claims to sovereignty over and above Indigenous nations. Their survival today is a testament to the myriad strategies and alliances that helped them to navigate through these tumultuous times.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Many thanks to Daniel Nolett and Suzie O'Bomsawin for their feedback, and to Lucie Gill for sharing her family history and many years of friendship with me.

ENDNOTES

- Gordon M. Day, "The Identity of the St. Francis Indians," Canadian Ethnology Service Paper no. 71 (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981), 41–55.
- Alice Nash, "Odanak durant les années 1920: Un prisme d'histoire abénaquise," trans. Claude Gélinas, *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec*, 31:1 (2002): 26.
- Day, "Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 42.
- Gordon M. Day, "Dartmouth and St. Francis," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 32:2 (1959): 28–30.
- Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), 1–15.
- Colin G. Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995), xiii–xiv.
- Peter A. Thomas, *In the Maelstrom of Change: The Indian Trade and Cultural Process in the Middle Connecticut River Valley, 1635–1665* (NY and London: Garland Publishing, 1990).
- Gilles Havard, *The Great Peace of Montreal of 1701: French-Native Diplomacy in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Phyllis Aronoff and Howard Scott (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2001), 34–37.
- Joseph (Samuel) and Rosalie Gill, PRDH family# 45379. The Programme de recherche en démographie historique/PRDH (<https://www.prdh-igd.com/>) The data is available in print as Hubert Charbonneau et Jacques Légaré (eds.), *Répertoire des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture et des recensements du Québec ancien*, 1991. Montréal Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.
- Joseph A. Maurault, *Histoire des Abénakis, depuis 1605 jusqu'à nos jours* (NY: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1969 [repr. 1866]), 344–77; Day, "The Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 80.
- For an overview of Joseph-Louis Gill's life, see Thomas-M. Charland, "GILL, JOSEPH-LOUIS (Magouaoudimbaouit)," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003). See also John C. Huden, "The White Chief of the St. Francis Abnakis—Some Aspects of Border Warfare: 1690–1790," *Vermont History* vol. 24, no. 3 (July 1956): 199–210 and (October 1956) 337–55.
- George Washington to Samuel Huntington, 3 November 1779, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-23-02-0134>. [Original source: *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, vol. 23, 22 October–31 December 1779, ed. William M. Ferraro (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2015), 144–45.
- Huden, "White Chief," (October 1956): 342.
- Day, "Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 80.
- Day, "Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 80. The modern orthography, per Daniel Nolett, is Magwawid8baît.
- Emma Lewis Coleman, *New England Captives Carried to Canada Between 1677 and 1760 during the French and Indian Wars* (Portland, ME: Southworth Press, 1925), 1:361–65.
- Maurault, *Histoire des Abénakis*, 344–77.
- Charles Gill, *Notes historiques sur l'origine de la famille Gill de Saint-François du lac et Saint-Thomas de Pierreville: et histoire de ma propre famille* (Montreal: E. Senecal, 1887). <https://n2t.net/ark:/69429/m0fx73t9dg5m>
- Charles Gill, *Notes additionnelles à l'histoire de la famille Gill* (Montreal: E. Senecal, 1889), <https://n2t.net/ark:/69429/m0mp4vh5cr67>; and *Nouvelles notes sur l'histoire de la famille Gill* (Montréal): E. Senécal & Fils, 1892), <https://n2t.net/ark:/69429/m0ws8hd7s98z>.
- Coleman, *New England Captives*, 1: 361–62.
- Stephen Williams, "What Befell Stephen Williams in his Captivity, c. 1707," 158–70. in Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney, eds., *Captive Histories: English, French, and Native Narratives of the 1704 Deerfield Raid* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 167.
- Susannah Willard Johnson, *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson, Containing an Account of her Sufferings during Four Years, with the Indians and French* (Walpole, NH: David Carlisle, 1796), 65.
- Maurault, *Histoire des Abénakis*, 346. Charles Gill reflected the prejudice of French Canadians in his day when he wrote that, thanks to this action, the majority of Samuel and Rosalie's descendants had no "Indian blood." Gill, 1887, 23–24.
- Isabelle Bouchard, "Land Ownership and Inheritance among the Abenaki of Odanak. The Process of Family Reproduction in the Gill Household," Peter Gossage and Lisa Moore, eds., *Family and Justice in the Archives: Historical Perspectives on Intimacy and the Law* (Montreal: Concordia Univ. Press, 2024).
- Gill, 1887, 15–19.
- Coleman, *New England Captives*, 1:362–63.
- Marie Appoline Gill married a Mohawk spouse, Gabriel Annance. Their grandson, Noel Annance, is the subject of Jean Barman, *Abenaki Daring: The Life and Writings of Noel Annance, 1792–1869* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2016).
- Maurault, *Histoire des Abénakis*, 348; PRDH family #45379.
- Gill, 1887, 7–8.
- J.B.A. Allaire, *Le dictionnaire biographique du clergé canadien-français* (Montreal: Impr. de l'Ecole catholique des sourds-muets, 1910). Thanks to Bertrand Desjardins for the reference.
- François Gill Langoumois married Marie Anne Coutourier Labonté at Odanak on July 18, 1768. PRDH family #45378. The groom's deceased parents are listed as Joseph Gill and Rosalie [no surname given]. Charles Gill says that "Langoumois" is the Frenchified form of the old Abenaki word *alang8mo* (the 8 is pronounced as *ou*), or "my relative." Gill 1889, 22. His descendants are sometimes referred to as Langoumois rather than Gill.
- Robert Gill married Louise Marguerite Morin Chenevert on January 25, 1774. PRDH family #50153.
- Coleman, *New England Captives*, 1:398, 403–9, 425–35.
- Ann M. Little, *The Many Captivities of Esther Wheelwright* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2016), esp. chapters 5–6.
- Maurault, *Histoire des Abénakis*, 488–94; Gordon M. Day, "Oral Tradition as Complement," *Ethnohistory*, 19:2 (Spring 1972): 99–108.
- Day, "Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 80.
- Johnson, *Narrative*, 72, 137.
- Huden, "White Chief" part 2, 338.
- Charles' father told him that Antoine was commonly known as "Toân" and Xavier as "Savie" but made no mention of a Sabatis. Gill, 1887, 35. Antoine Gill, PRDH individual #561512.
- Day, "Identity of the St. Francis Indians," 101.
- Grand Drame Indien*, 1932. A. Irving Hallowell Papers, Serie V Abenaki--A -- Abenaki--Kinship #2, American Philosophical Society, Ms. Coll. 26.
- Day, "Oral Tradition as Complement," 99–108.

ON APRIL 18, 2026, the exhibition *A Town Divided: Deerfield in the Age of Revolution*, opened at Historic Deerfield's Flynt Center. It explores how a rural community of more than 700 people responded to the upheaval of the 1770s and 1780s. Deerfield's community was deeply divided between those who chose loyalty to the Crown, those who remained neutral, and those who supported the Patriot cause. Debates over ideas of liberty and equality, as well as protests throughout Massachusetts, tore neighbors, friends, and even families apart. Deerfield's residents struggled to adapt to an ever-changing social, political, and economic landscape as rebellion and armed conflict affected villages

far from urban centers and coastal cities. Using objects, documents, and personal narratives, the exhibition presents multiple perspectives on the ways in which residents embraced, rejected, or questioned Revolutionary ideals. *A Town Divided* explores the promises—and contradictions—of the Revolution by interpreting Deerfield's stories that highlight a period when Americans faced severe challenges but emerged a new nation and society.

No commodity at this time was more controversial than tea. Beloved by almost everyone, from landowner to laborer, tea was deemed an expensive but necessary beverage that relaxed, revived, and restored early New England col-

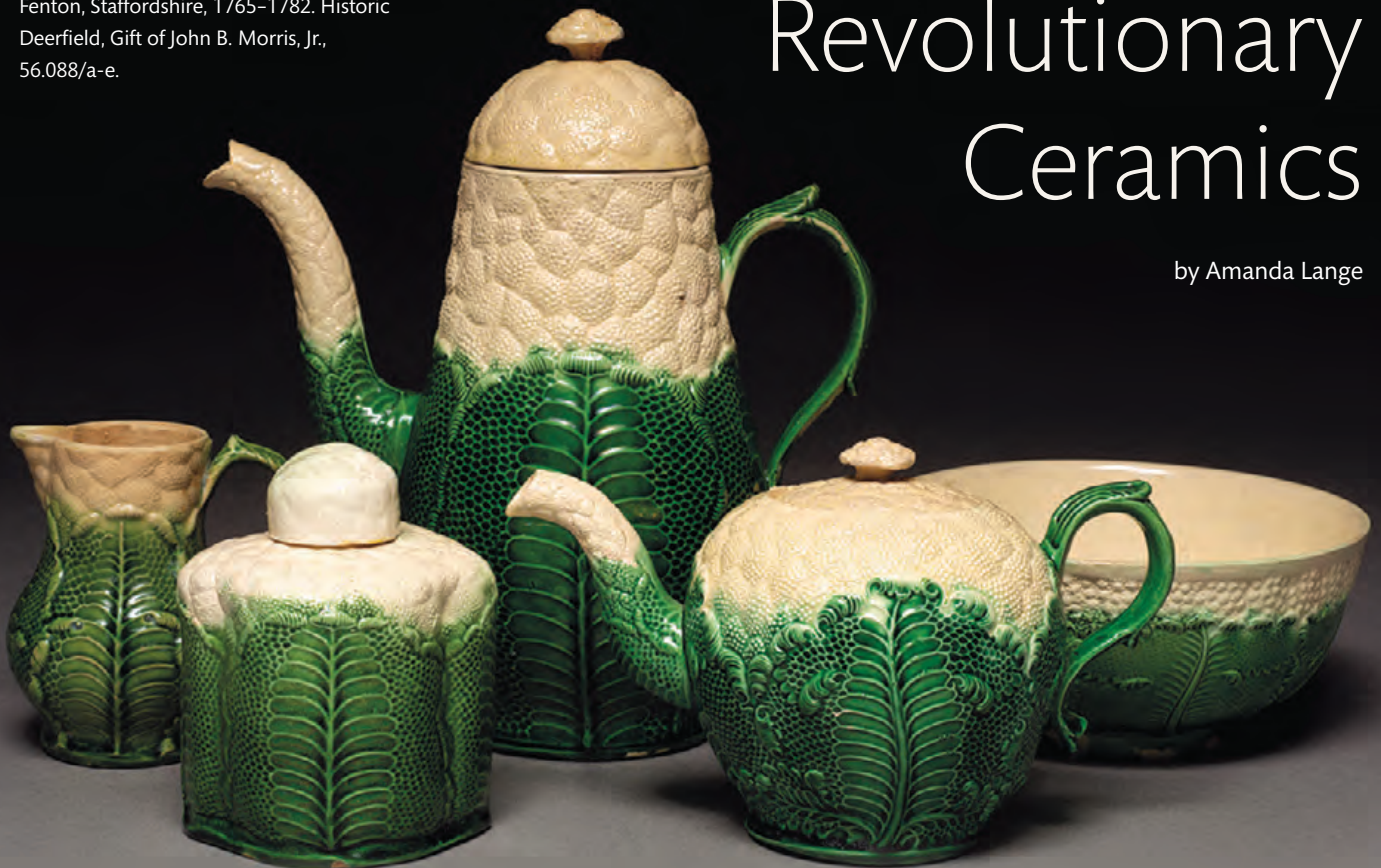
onists. (Tea cost about four times as much per pound as coffee.)¹ Holding a special place within the home, tea could be served twice a day, once at breakfast and then again in the afternoon. While tea at breakfast was a family occasion, afternoon tea drinking proved a more social event, with a mixture of family, neighbors, and visitors gathering around a tea table.

Pouring hot water on dried leaves and drinking the brewed liquid called for a variety of equipment: a tea kettle, a tea pot (preferably of silver or porcelain), a tea canister, a sugar bowl, sugar tongs, a creamer and milk pot, tea cups and saucers, teaspoons, a spoon tray, a slop bowl, chairs, and a tea table. The array

Cream-colored earthenware (creamware) with green glaze, often referred to as "colly" wares, appeared on tea tables throughout New England. Attributed to William Greatbatch, Fenton, Staffordshire, 1765–1782. Historic Deerfield, Gift of John B. Morris, Jr., 56.088/a-e.

A Teapot Tempest: Revolutionary Ceramics

by Amanda Lange



of tea wares (silver, pewter, porcelain, or pottery) depended on your pocketbook and social ambitions. One writer in a New York newspaper commented on the younger men of the city perceived as “excessively Awkward and Ridiculous” when it became obvious that they were “altogether unacquainted with the Ceremony . . . at the Tea-Table.” The writer recommended that they buy “a set of China or (if they should be less Extravagant) *Earthen ware, such as Cups, Saucers, Slop-Bason, etc.*,” and employ a knowledgeable hostess “to teach them the Laws, Rules, Customs, Phrases and Names of the Tea Utensils.”² Armed with a piping hot serving of tea, guests at such occasions supplied polite conversation, town news, advice, and gossip. Tea served as the glue that kept social networks together.

All that changed in 1766-1767, when the British Parliament imposed the Townshend Acts to generate revenue on

a variety of commodities (including paint, paper, glass, lead, and tea). Substitutions for these items were difficult to find as none could be easily made or grown in America. Several colonies resisted the Acts by signing non-importation agreements, committing to boycott British merchants who sold taxable goods. Their protests effectively repealed most of the Townshend duties in 1770, but the tax on tea was retained and colonial complaints continued.

Matters came to a head in December 1773, when Patriots dumped 92,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor. David Field, Deerfield’s representative to the Colonial Assembly in Boston, returned with news of the “Boston Tea Party.” Whigs celebrated the event at David Sexton’s tavern and then marched through Deerfield’s streets singing, “They made a duced mess of tea in one of the biggest dishes/I mean they steep’d in the sea & treated all the fishes.”³ Loyalists

condemned the destruction of property at David Hoyt’s tavern and mourned the breakdown of law and order. This incident, according to Elihu Ashley (son of Deerfield’s minister), marked the beginning of turmoil between the town’s Loyalists and Whigs.

Featured in the exhibition are a group of cauliflower-shaped tea wares, probably manufactured in Staffordshire, England, around 1765-1770, and composed of a light-colored ceramic body called creamware ornamented with a brilliant green glaze. As Deerfield’s merchant and farming families grew more prosperous in the mid-18th century, they purchased imported fashionable furnishings to ornament their parlors and participated in refined behaviors such as tea drinking. Deerfield residents consumed a vast array of British goods—ready-made clothing, hats, shoes, rugs, iron and brass hardware, candlesticks, and snuff boxes, as well as glass bottles,

Bostonians eventually reacted to the tax on tea by clandestinely destroying a shipment on Dec. 16, 1773. “Americans throwing the Cargoes of the Tea Ships into the River, at Boston,” From W.D. Cooper, *History of North Americas* (London, 1789). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.





North parlor of the Ashley House, Deerfield. The Reverend Jonathan Ashley served tea to Loyalist guests in defiance of the ban on the British import.

decanters, and pottery tea sets. From the mid-1760s until the American Revolution, Massachusetts consumers selected among Chinese porcelain, delftware, white salt-glazed stoneware, agate and tortoiseshell patterns, and items molded and glazed to resemble pineapples, melons, and cauliflowers for their tea wares. Deerfield merchants such as Elijah Williams, who operated a store just off the Common, accepted agricultural produce as credit for purchases of tea, sugar, and teapots. Connecticut River Valley gentry found these cauliflower tea wares, often termed “colly” or “collyflower,” extremely desirable.⁴

Parliament’s taxation efforts made Massachusetts colonists grow more ambivalent toward consumer goods, which reminded them of their dependence on Britain. “Publicus” (a pen name) explained to the readers of the *Boston Gazette*, “We have taken wide Steps to Ruin, and as we have grown more Luxurious every Year, so we run deeper and deeper in Debt to our Mother Country.” After

observing how extravagantly the people of Boston decorated their parlors, how they piled their sideboards high with silver plate, and how they collected costly china, this writer concluded, “I wonder not that my Country is so poor, I wonder not when I hear of frequent Bankruptcies.”⁵

As the early years of the 1770s gave rise to more protests and rhetoric about liberty and freedom, Massachusetts colonists began rejecting British goods, including cauliflower tea sets and the tea served in them. By refusing to consume British manufactures, some Deerfield men and women expressed an ideological commitment to the Revolution and participated in acts of political defiance. Peer pressure from their neighbors might have persuaded the undecided to halt their purchases. In Montague, Massachusetts, across the river from Deerfield, one of the town’s residents “having inadvertently purchased a small quantity of tea of a pedlar, several of the neighbours being made acquainted therewith,

went to his house and endeavoured to convince him of the impropriety of making any use of that article for the present, while it continues to be a badge of slavery.”⁶

Deerfield minister and Loyalist Jonathan Ashley made his own political statement, defiantly holding a tea party on July 22, 1774, to express his commitment to the Crown, a rebuttal to the Whigs in town, and an assertion of his diminishing authority. Who would have thought that a cup of tea occupied a place at the front lines in the fight for liberty and independence?

ENDNOTES

1. Inventory book of Elijah Williams, Williams Family Papers, Box 3, Folder 6, July 8, 1756. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library, Deerfield, Massachusetts. In 1756, Williams purchased 40 pounds of tea, chocolate, and coffee, paying 37 shillings, six pence for a pound of tea, 10 shillings for a pound of chocolate, and 8 shillings for a pound of coffee.
2. Quoted in Esther Singleton, *Social New York Under the Georges, 1714-1776* (New York, 1902), 380-81.
3. David Field’s undated description of the destruction of tea in Boston Harbor, Dec. 1773. Deerfield Town Papers, Box 5, 8-IV, Folder 3. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library.
4. The Wadsworth Atheneum owns a cauliflower teapot which belonged to Eliphalet Williams (1727-1803) of East Hartford, CT, pastor of the East Hartford Congregational Church, and one of the most influential men in the lower Connecticut River Valley; merchant John Williams (1751-1816), purchased cauliflower sugar bowls and teacups from Boston china merchant Ebenezer Bridgham in 1773, noted in Williams and Upham, Invoice book, October 23, 1773, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association Library. Fragments of cauliflower teawares were found within Historic Deerfield’s Barnard Tavern Bar Room (constructed in 1795) and recovered during the University of Massachusetts archaeological excavation of the Barnard Tavern ell in 2005.
5. *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 1, 1764, quoted in T. H. Breen, “Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, 119 (May 1988): 89.
6. *Massachusetts Spy* (Boston, MA), Dec. 23, 1773, quoted in Breen, “Baubles of Britain,” 99.

Mapping A Town Divided

by Jeanne Solensky

ALTHOUGH NO BATTLE of the American Revolution occurred on Deerfield's soil, the town experienced conflict of another sort. Scarred by external forces in the town's early years, the community now saw danger within. A once close-knit village of residents bound together by blood, who practiced the same faith and farmed and served on town offices alongside one another, was torn asunder in the 1770s by the growing political crisis. Relatives and neighbors found themselves navigating a new divide, with some vocal and steadfast in their beliefs. Others were caught between sides, either unsure or unwilling to declare loyalties. Tensions continued to intensify and affected every single person throughout this small community.

Fractures were evident by the time of the Boston Tea Party in December 1773. When news of the event arrived in Deerfield, Loyalists gathered at David Hoyt's tavern in the Old Indian House on the town Common to condemn the act, while Whigs celebrated at David Sexton's tavern a few doors away. In the following years Whig mobs attempted to force Loyalists into switching sides yet stopped short of outright violence. When one group gathered outside Loyalist storekeeper John Williams's house ready to break down his door, tavern keeper Seth Catlin brandished his musket from a second-floor window to prevent the action. Williams then deescalated the tense sit-

uation by inviting several men inside to debate the issue over glasses of flip (a sweetened, spiced liquor mixed with eggs); the once angry men departed in good spirits, inaccurately declaring their host a good Patriot. In 1781, Williams, along with Catlin, and Jonathan Ashley, Jr. (son of the Reverend Jonathan Ashley), led an effort in town to support peace negotiations with Great Britain that narrowly passed. Success was merely temporary: the General Court in Boston decreed this a seditious act and imprisoned the three men for several weeks.

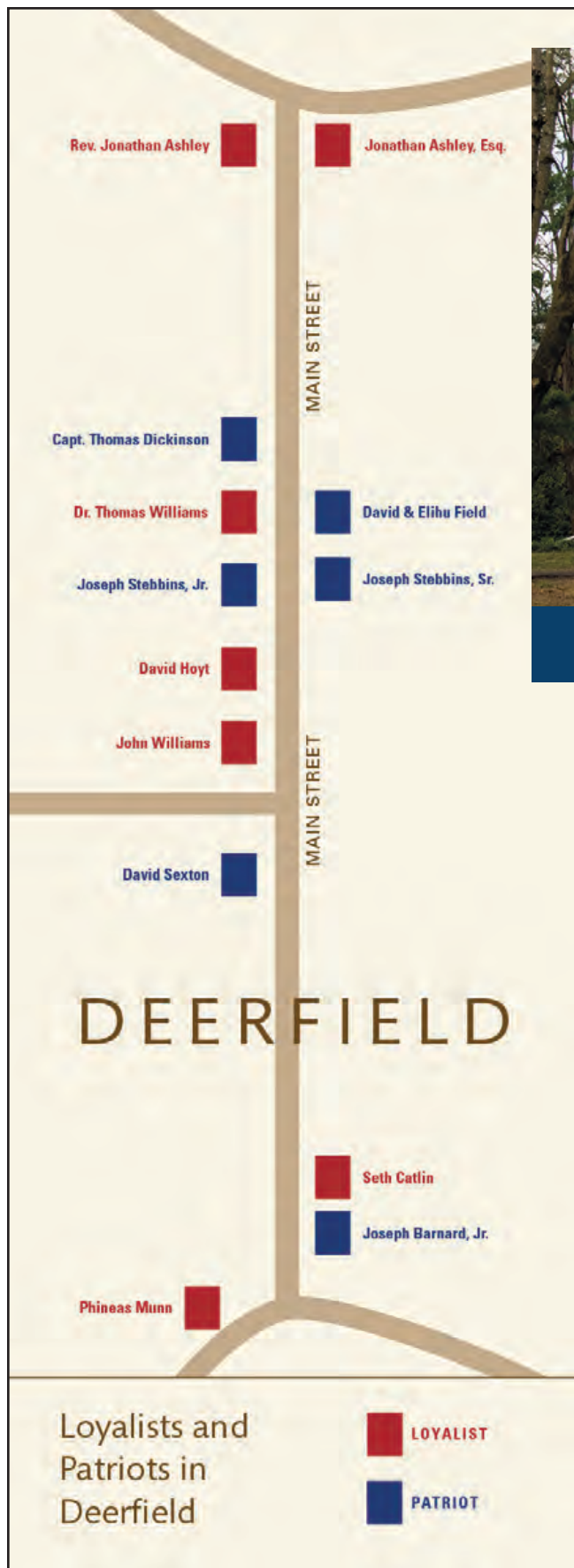
Deerfield Whigs used other retaliatory measures against advocates of the Crown, as in the case of staunch Loy-

alist Reverend Jonathan Ashley, the town's spiritual leader since 1732, who preached that the Lord was on the side of the King. Ashley's hosting of a tea party in defiance of a boycott and refusal to announce fast days set by the provisional revolutionary government engendered further discord in town. The Whigs in charge reciprocated by withholding a portion of the minister's salary and firewood allotment for several years, only restoring the amount in arrearage when Ashley's executors filed a claim against the town after his death in 1780.

The political affinities of other residents were not as obvious, perhaps because of conflicting and changing loyalties. Elihu Ashley, second surviving son



Loyalist Dr. Thomas Williams's house



Patriot Joseph Stebbins, Jr.'s house

of Reverend Jonathan Ashley, adhered to his father's politics when he and Seth Catlin prevented the town's first Liberty Pole from being erected in July 1774. However, he was not as politically vocal as his father and brother and remained close friends with David Dickinson, who had encouraged him to saw the Pole in half, and Elihu Field, son of leading Whig David Field, who owned the store in front of which the second Liberty Pole was raised. Dickinson later served in the Continental Army and Field and David Hoyt, Jr., in the militia, the latter perhaps signaling the ambiguous loyalties of his tavern keeper father.

The opposing factions reunited after the Revolution thanks to longstanding ties that withstood the crisis. Existing and new marital bonds between families helped to heal the divisions: Jonathan Ashley, Jr. had been married to David Field's daughter Tirza since 1771, and his sister Elizabeth married David Dickinson, Elihu Field's brother-in-law, in 1783. Jail time did not prevent residents from electing Seth Catlin and John Williams to local offices after the war. Even Phineas Munn, Seth Catlin's brother-in-law, was reintegrated into the community after a turbulent few years. The third man involved in the destruction of the first Liberty Pole, Munn was soon after attacked by a Whig mob and three years later fled to British General Burgoyne's camp in New York and then to Canada. Munn was later captured in New Hampshire and sent to a Northampton jail. He returned to Deerfield in 1778 and lived there peacefully until his death in 1820.



MEASURES OF LIBERTY:

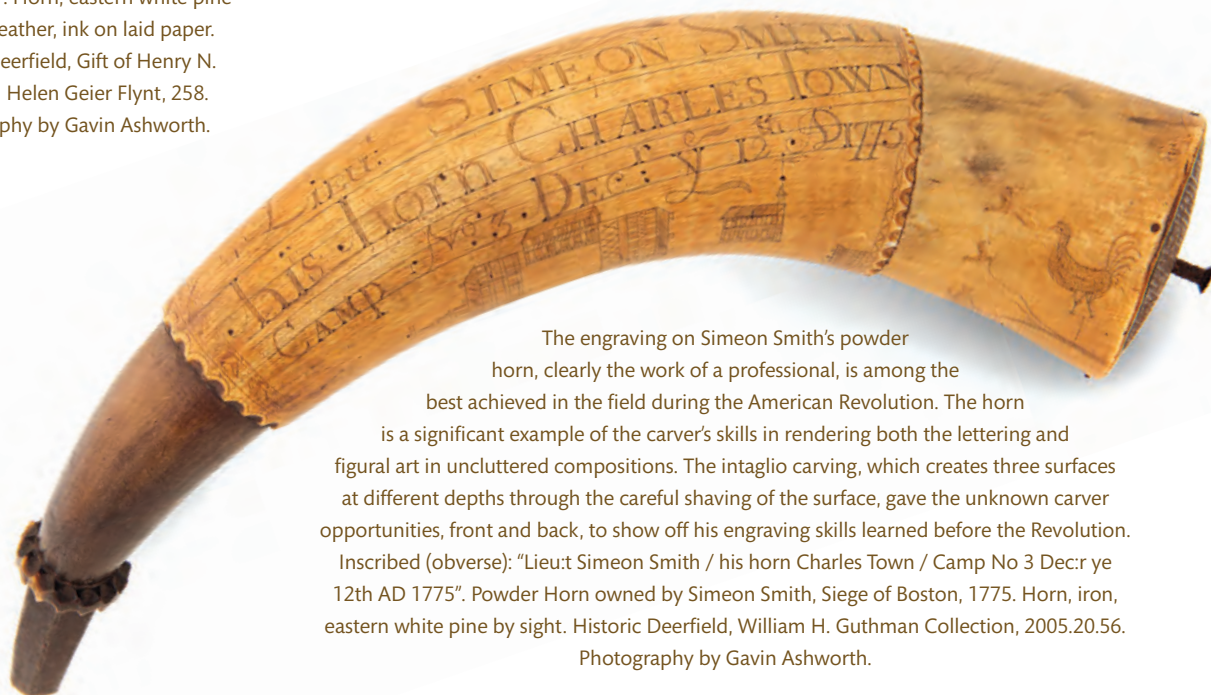
Two Revolutionary Powder Horns

Perfectly elegant in its plainness, Joseph Stebbins's powder horn became a lasting symbol of patriotic fervor the minute he inserted a hand-written proclamation in its butt.

Probably first protected by glass held by wooden pins, the message is among the earliest known personal statements of open sedition from the American Revolution. Powder Horn owned by Joseph Stebbins, Jr., Deerfield, MA, before 1771. Horn, eastern white pine by sight, leather, ink on laid paper. Historic Deerfield, Gift of Henry N. Flynt and Helen Geier Flynt, 258. Photography by Gavin Ashworth.

FOURTEEN YEARS before the “Shot Heard Round the World” the rhetoric of dissent and treason was heard. The cost of funding the worldwide Seven Years’ War against France and Spain (called the French and Indian War in America) led Parliament to levy the Sugar Act in 1764. Next followed the Stamp Act, a colonial tax on various documents, newspapers, and even playing cards that brought swift protests of taxation without representation. The hated Townshend Acts of 1767 added levies on paint, glass, paper, lead, and tea, creating a new layer of bureaucracy personified by despised customs agents.

In the autumn of 1768, 2,000 British troops arrived in Boston to keep the peace with the opposite effect. A year later, Customs Commissioner John Robinson cudgelled pamphleteer James Otis (1725–1783) in Boston’s British Coffee-House for being an enemy to the “rights of the crown.” Otis never recovered from the attack.¹ By March 1770, the slightest provocation—even a snowball—was enough to ignite the



The engraving on Simeon Smith's powder horn, clearly the work of a professional, is among the best achieved in the field during the American Revolution. The horn is a significant example of the carver's skills in rendering both the lettering and figural art in uncluttered compositions. The intaglio carving, which creates three surfaces at different depths through the careful shaving of the surface, gave the unknown carver opportunities, front and back, to show off his engraving skills learned before the Revolution.

Inscribed (obverse): “Lieut Simeon Smith / his horn Charles Town / Camp No 3 Dec: r ye 12th AD 1775”. Powder Horn owned by Simeon Smith, Siege of Boston, 1775. Horn, iron, eastern white pine by sight. Historic Deerfield, William H. Guthman Collection, 2005.20.56.

Photography by Gavin Ashworth.



Rather than inscribe the surface of his horn, which had hardened with age, Stebbins inserted a dated label in the butt. Its traitorous text, complete with corrections, remains as powerful as it is ephemeral. Inscribed on paper: “the / August / 6 1771 / [illegible] / Blood A Son / of Liberty.” Detail, Powder Horn owned by Joseph Stebbins, Jr. Photography by Gavin Ashworth.

“Boston Massacre” and kill five Bostonians in front of the State House.

Otis was an early casualty of the revolutionary process, if not the Revolution itself. His eloquence galvanized the Boston Sons of Liberty. After he went into seclusion, other Sons of Liberty closed ranks and pushed forward—both Adamses, Hancock, Revere, Doctor Joseph Warren, and the printer, Isaiah Thomas, among others. The cause grew through the colonies, north to south, drawing members from all walks of life. Concerned that Parliament threatened their rights as British citizens, they also felt that their livelihoods were jeopardized by their Loyalist neighbors. In response, the Sons of Liberty became activists, inciting violence under their Liberty Poles and Trees and serving in their town’s Committees of Safety and Correspondence under new revolutionary governments. The Crown’s delegates called them villains.²

Active Whigs were everywhere, not just in urban areas. Deerfield was home to Whigs and Tories in roughly equal numbers, regularly threatening to destroy one another’s property and either to raise or raze the town’s Liberty Pole.³ Tempers flared. While loyalties and crimes were public in Deer-

field (forever a small town with no secrets), stating one’s ardent beliefs in the written word, rather than the spoken one alone, took protest a step further toward treason against King and Country.

Few artifacts surviving from the Revolutionary era bear undeniable, early testimony to the cause of liberty. A possession of a famous person or a silent witness to a famous place or event carries most people back in time. Sometimes relics reach absurd proportions, such as George Washington’s cherry tree hatchet with its replaced head and twice replaced haft, or the vast number of beds prized because Washington “slept here.” Most relics are not grand at all. Even if common in their own day, surviving examples may be few, making them rare and worth keeping.⁴

Powder horns are a good example, and the best of them encapsulate art, facts, and beliefs rolled into one personal statement. Made to carry gunpowder for personal use, horns engraved with words and pictures reflect the opinions of the individuals who made and/or owned them, replacing anonymity with a dose of authenticity. Documented powder horns mirror the opinions of the individuals who made

and/or owned them at a given point in time.

The plain powder horn made anonymously for Joseph Stebbins, Jr. (1749–1816) of Deerfield speaks volumes. While unengraved, it is carved and shaved to a beautiful shape and, like most powder horns, was first made for hunting. In the case of the Stebbins horn, the added layer of political unrest changed its meaning forever. Not easily re-carved because the horn had hardened with age, Stebbins later inserted in the butt a forthright paper message like those engraved on powder horns:

the / August / 6 1771 / [illegible] / Blood A Son / of Liberty.

Stebbins wrote the note between the Boston Massacre in 1770 and the Tea Party in 1773. Only 22 years old, he boldly identified with Bostonians rankled by British occupation and the suspension of their inalienable rights as colonial English men and women.

In Deerfield, as in other New England towns, the protest grew toward revolt, but there is no question where the young Stebbins stood. Deerfield’s Doctor Elihu Ashley (1750–1817) recorded Stebbins’s Whiggish leanings in his diary several times,



While the outer surface of Smith's powder horn bears his name, rank, location, and date as well as the British warships in Boston Harbor, this side, closer to Smith's body, shielded rebellious sentiment from Loyalist eyes. Inscribed (reverse): "Grait Liberty inspire our Sons / And Magnify Our Zeal / Grait God of Worship protect Our Cause / And We'll Submit Thy Will". Powder Horn owned by Simeon Smith. Photography by Gavin Ashworth.

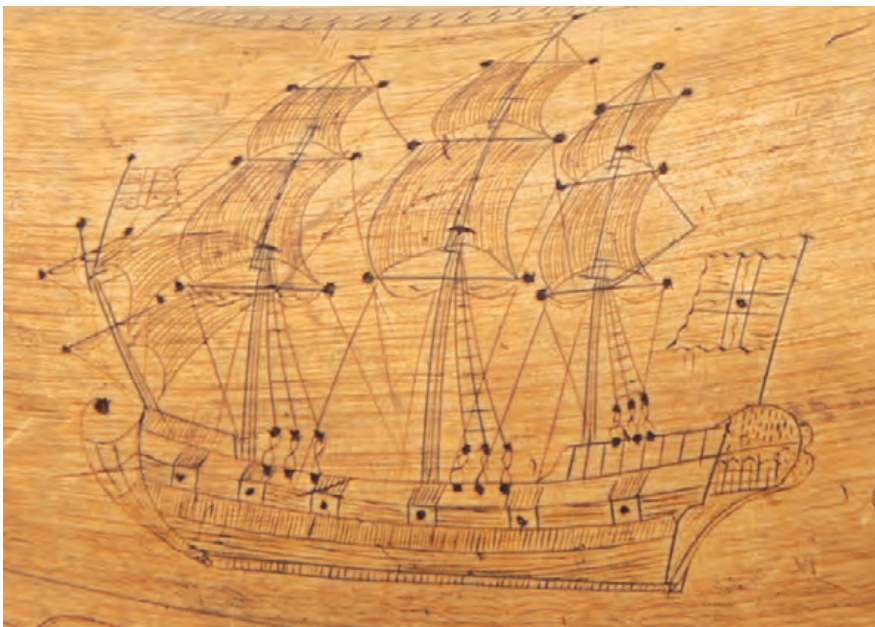
including his loyalty to the town's Liberty Pole.⁵ Four years later, Stebbins followed his convictions to the Lexington Alarm, probably with this powder horn at his side. He was elected lieutenant in Captain Hugh Maxwell's company from western Massachusetts that May. On June 17th, as an acting captain, he helped to hold the line at Bunker Hill. Stebbins later served during the Continental retreat from Canada in 1776 and as a captain of his own company in the Saratoga Campaign to save western New England from British invasion in 1777.⁶

Compared with Stebbins's plain example, the handsome powder horn made for Lieutenant Simeon Smith (1735–1777) in December 1775, during the Siege of Boston, shows expertise in balancing utility and aesthetics. The horn's maker was clearly

a professional copperplate engraver whose workmanship harnessed the skilled use of his burin and whose eye shaped the open space around his engravings to balance the composition. He removed raw horn from his "canvas" at either end to create a central panel that hides the horn's purpose in storing gunpowder as well as its bovine origins. The proportions of the intaglio panels are perfect, with flawless execution of the lettering on scribed lines like a musical score, not to mention the large, three-masted ships and streetscape, all nicely spaced renderings of the view from Camp 3 across the river to Boston. Only a few men in the camps possessed skills at this level. Yet we do not know the name of the carver. Smith, a teamster from Amherst, Massachusetts, served in the company of Captain Thomas Knowlton of Ashford, Connecticut. A year later, he was promoted to captain in General James Wadsworth's Connecticut Brigade and served in the New York campaign. He witnessed the failed defense of Fort Washington on November 16, 1776, and the capture of more than 2,800 Continental soldiers. Gravely wounded, Smith escaped only to die at home the following March.⁷ His horn is impressive in size and contour with words unmistakably treasonous:

*Grait Liberty inspire our Sons
And Magnify Our Zeal
Grait God of Worship protect Our Cause
And We'll Submit Thy Will.*

The legend is discreetly carved on the inner surface of the horn next to Smith's



Detail of British warships on Smith's powder horn. Photography by Gavin Ashworth.

Detail of buildings on Smith's powder horn.
Photography by Gavin Ashworth.



body. Meanwhile, Stebbins's paper message was more visible to friend and foe alike. While the name panel on the outside of Smith's horn identifies him by rank, location, and date, the message on the inner arc of the horn projects his commitment at all costs, which Smith paid. The horn's refined aura and language elevates the fervor of both the owner and maker in the cause of Liberty.

Few objects characterize the mood of an age—particularly a revolutionary one. The rebels surrounding Boston, including Stebbins and Smith, celebrated their just cause through powder horns with lofty themes worth the fight.⁸ One expects blood in battle, but the idea of calling “Blood a Son of Liberty” on a fragile piece of paper for all to see in 1771 elevates political preference to a radical belief in rebellion at an exceptionally early date. Its deafening quiet still screams injustice 250 years later. Since relics are a kind of messenger through time, Joseph Stebbins's plain powder horn, along with Simeon Smith's elaborate one, are powerful reminders of what patriotic fervor sounded like in the Massachusetts countryside at the start of the American Revolution.

Philip Zea's book, *Art of Independence: Engraved Powder Horns from the Revolutionary World*, reveals powder horns as a window on the lives of citizen soldiers and more broadly the revolutionary process in America. Historic Deerfield will publish the book in 2027.

ENDNOTES

1. John J. Waters, Jr., *The Otis Family in Provincial and Revolutionary Massachusetts* (Williamsburg, VA: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1968), 122–25, 141–42, 177.
2. Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765–1776* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 77–112, 161–77, 188.
3. George Sheldon, *A History of Deerfield, Massachusetts*, 2 vols. (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1896), 2:677–85.
4. See Matthew Dennis, *American Relics and the Politics of Public Memory* (Amherst MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2023), passim. A supreme example of the preservation of a relic through reverential symbolism is the doorway from the 1699 John Sheldon House on view in the Memorial Hall Museum of the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association. The doorway was saved after the house was demolished in 1848 because it had survived the 1704 Deerfield Raid and symbolized the colonial fortitude of the town's English settlers.

- The relic status of the doorway is immense but equaled by its documentary value as a unique 17th-century exterior door and frame.
5. *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution: The Journal of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1773–1775*, eds. Amelia F. Miller and A.R. Riggs (Deerfield, MA: Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 2007), 96, 100, 102, 392.
 6. Sheldon, *Deerfield*, 2:320–21. The tricorne hat worn by Joseph Stebbins, Jr., is in the collections of the Memorial Hall Museum, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 1927.28. See Eric H. Schnitzer, *Don Troiani's Campaign to Saratoga* (Guilford, CT: Stackpole Books, 2019), 253. Historic Deerfield also owns the engraved powder horn of Joseph Stebbins, Sr., of Deerfield dated 1750, 63.52.
 7. Sylvester Judd, *History of Hadley, Massachusetts* (Springfield, MA: H.R. Huntting & Co., 1905), Part 1, 384, 411; Part 2, 127, 131. Hard to imagine now, the earthworks of Fort Washington stood on Manhattan just north of the eastern abutment of the George Washington Bridge.
 8. Judd, *Hadley*, Part 2, 127, 131.

DISHONORED AND DISCHARGED

The Court-Martial of Colonel Samuel and Captain Estes Howe

by Haley Wrye

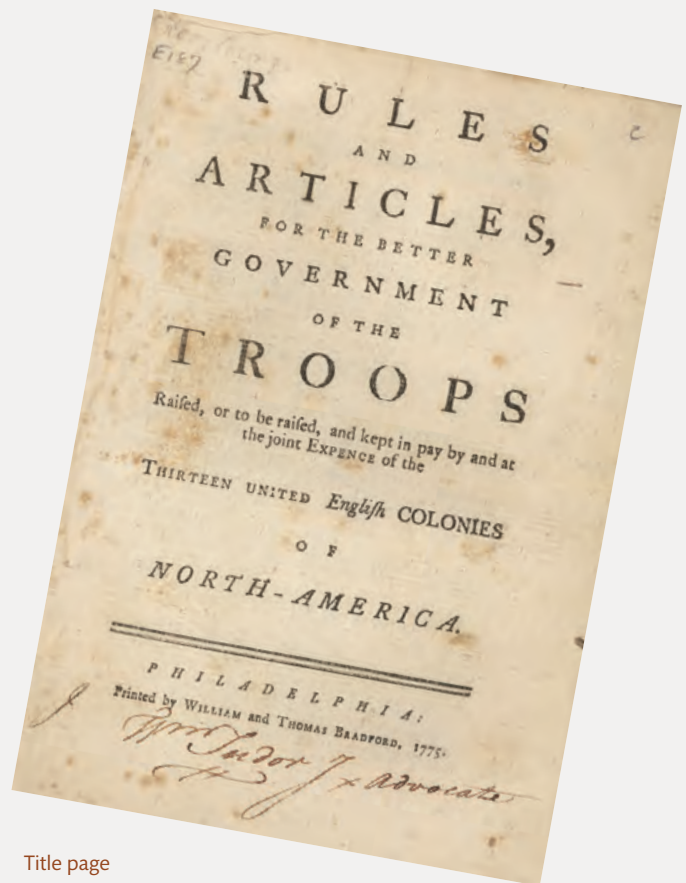
TUCKED AWAY in a folder in the Historic Deerfield Library, its edges slightly peeking out, sits an eight-page court-martial transcript that once belonged to General Elisha Porter (1742–1796) of Hadley, Massachusetts. Courts-martial during the American Revolution were somewhat common.¹ Depending on the severity of charges, they could result in the execution of a soldier or simply with a warning and slap on the wrist. When George Washington took command of the newly formed Continental Army in 1775, he quickly recognized the need to enforce rules and discipline in order to keep the army together. With that in mind, he enacted a military justice system modeled on that of the British army, with courts-martial figuring prominently.

Elisha Porter sat on several courts-martial during his career. He originally attended Yale but transferred to Harvard, where he studied law, graduating in 1761.² He went on to train as a lawyer, became High Sheriff of Hampshire County from 1775 to 1796, and served as colonel of a regiment of the militia in Hampshire County during the American Revolution. He also served as courier to the newly appointed Commander-in-Chief, George Washington, in 1775, and was later commissioned by Washington to help raise troops for the 1775–1776 Canadian Campaign.

According to an almanac that Porter used as a diary from January to August 1776, he participated in four courts-martial while stationed at Fort Ticonderoga.³ Undoubtedly, the most significant was his participation in one brought by Colonel Benedict Arnold (1741–1801) in July 1776. Porter's name appears alongside others in a letter written to an unknown recipient as a member of a court-martial after Arnold tried and failed to indict a rival officer, Colonel Moses Hazen (1733–1803).⁴ The charges of disobeying orders and losing supplies were later dismissed. Arnold would face his own court-martial in 1779, which would lead to a verdict of treason the following year.

In the late spring of 1777, the court-martial of Colonel Samuel and Captain Estes Howe took place in Springfield, Massachusetts, over three days. The proceeding, set in motion by Major General Timothy Danielson of Brimfield, indicted Samuel

Howe (1719–1784) of Belchertown and his son, Estes Howe (1747–1826), also of Belchertown, on nine charges of high crimes and misdemeanors. At the time of the trial Samuel served as a colonel in the militia of Hampshire County. He had begun his service at the alarm of Lexington and Concord, riding out as a lieutenant colonel in Porter's regiment. This regiment stayed in eastern Massachusetts following the alarm and later engaged in the Battle of Bunker Hill.⁵ Estes served as both captain and surgeon for the American cause. In 1775, and from 1777 to 1779, he worked as surgeon; in 1776 he was listed as a



Title page
of the Continental Congress's
*Rules and Articles, for the Better Government
of the Troops* (Philadelphia, 1775). Collection of the Massachusetts
Historical Society.

captain under his father's command.⁶ During that time the father and son allegedly engaged in behavior that led to a court-martial the following year.

The court-martial of Samuel Howe was presided over by Colonel Charles Pyncheon and consisted of 12 officers. Elisha Porter served as Judge Advocate.⁷ The trial began on May 22, 1777. After reviewing the list of charges against Howe, the court allowed him to state his defense. He went to great lengths to deny the jurisdiction of the court to try him for the allegations. He believed that only the appointed commander-in-chief of the department at the time the alleged crimes took place could bring charges against him. He also argued that the testimony of others was unavailable and that while under the command of General Benjamin Lincoln "he was not amenable to the militia officers of the brigade for any action then committed and especially those which the Gen. were informed of at the time."⁸ After hearing Howe's opening statement the court decided that they did have grounds of jurisdiction and proceeded to call witnesses.

The first witness, a Dr. Moffatt, addressed the Article 1 accusation of discharging a soldier for his family's gain [see sidebar].⁹ He stated that "when Col. Howe[s] regiment to which he belonged was at East Chester [New York] he heard that a declaration was made by Caleb Hannum that he would give a silver watch to any man who would secure a discharge for him from Col. Howe."¹⁰ Dr. Moffatt later said he went to speak with Hannum about his declaration but was not given a proper answer. Later that day, Moffatt went to see Captain Howe who, while speaking, pulled the silver watch from his pocket. Supposedly Captain Howe had asked Hannum what he would take for his watch and Hannum's response was "a stand in his room [a substitute] and a discharge." Captain Howe agreed to the exchange and stated that "he would get both in 48 hours or return his watch."

A few days later Howe saw Hannum but had not procured what he had promised. When Captain Howe offered to return the watch, Hannum supposedly refused, telling him to keep it for another day or so. After waiting, Hannum went to find Howe to retrieve his watch since the terms of their agreement had not been fulfilled. He then received a note from Howe saying he had got a "man in his room" and a discharge. With this news, Hannum left East Chester and returned home.

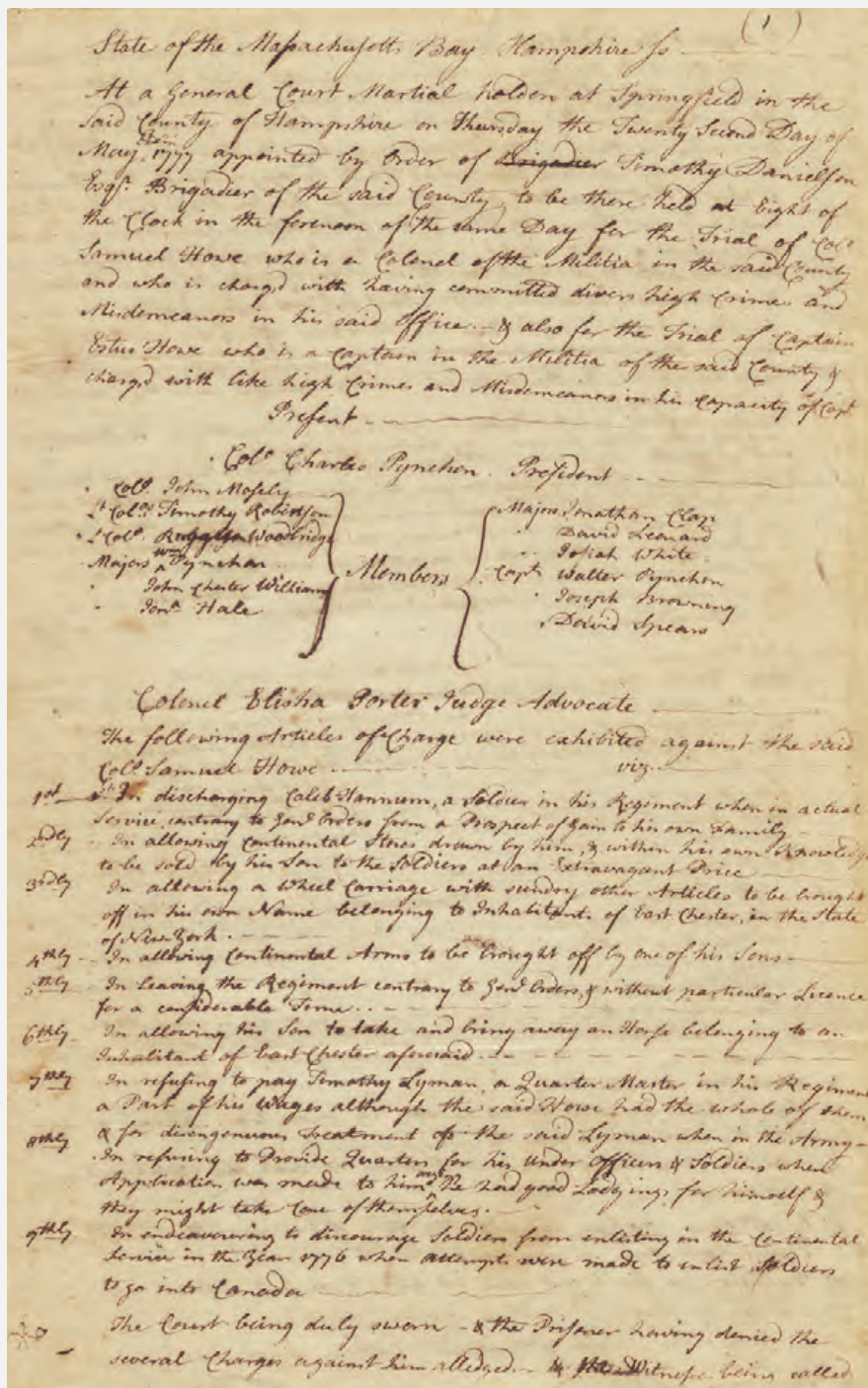
After Moffatt's testimony, Colonel Howe addressed Hannum and asked whether Captain Howe had kept the silver watch in question. Hannum responded by saying

Articles of charges against Colonel Samuel Howe

1. *Discharging Caleb Hannum, a soldier in his regiment when in actual service contrary to general orders from a prospect to gain his own family.*
2. *In allowing Continental stores drawn by him and within his own knowledge to be sold by his son to the soldiers at an Extravagant price.*
3. *In allowing a wheel carriage with sundry other Articles to be brought off in his own name belonging to inhabitant of East Chester, in the state of New York.*
4. *In allowing Continental Arms to be brought off by one of his sons.*
5. *In leaving the regiment contrary to Gen. Orders and without particular license for a considerable time.*
6. *In allowing his son to take and bring away an horse belonging to an inhabitant of East Chester aforesaid.*
7. *In refusing to pay Timothy Lyman, a Quarter Master in his regiment, a part of his Wages although the said Howe had the whole of them and for disingenuous treatment of the said Lyman when in the Army.*
8. *In refusing to provide Quarters for his under officers and soldiers when application was made to him. Says he had good lodging for himself and they might take care of themselves.*
9. *In endeavoring to discourage soldiers from enlisting in the Continental Service in the year 1776 when attempts were made to enlist soldiers to go into Canada.*



Detail from Tobias Lotter, *A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of New England*, (Augsburg, 1776). Cold Spring, southeast of Hadley, was the original name for the area now known as Belchertown. Historic Deerfield, Gift of Paul Geier, 56.159.



Left and right: First and last pages of the eight-page court-martial transcript of Col. Samuel and Capt. Estes Howe, 1777. Historic Deerfield Library.

home. Smith alleged that Colonel Howe refused to believe that there was a substitute for Hannum. After Smith's testimony, the court erupted in a multitude of questions that lasted until adjournment at 3 o'clock.

The trial continued the following day with more witnesses relating to Article 1. It began with the testimony of David Worthington, who had lived with Captain Howe as a waiter and had been a witness to John Stephen agreeing to live with Howe for no more than a week. Witnesses Timothy Marsh (1751-1796) and Waitstill Cooke (1752-1823), both of Hadley, confirmed the testimony of Caleb Hannum. The court then proceeded to call witnesses for the remainder of the charges. Colonel Howe swore in one of his other sons, Lieutenant Moses Howe (1751-1814), who allegedly borrowed rum from his father to sell at an extravagant price and bought and sold arms with his father's knowledge. Enos Smith supposedly witnessed arms "fastened upon the wheel carriage" guarded by a soldier who said that they belonged to Lieutenant Howe. There is no record of Moses Howe ever being tried for this infraction.

Article 7 had the most witnesses as it dealt with nonpayment of a soldier. Colonel Howe acknowledged that he did not give Quarter Master Timothy Lyman the entirety of his pay but argued that Abner Eddy replaced him for part of the time. When sworn in at the request of Colonel Howe, Eddy stated that "he was appointed by the field officer of the regiment as a Quarter Master in the room of Timothy Lyman and officiated as such—Gen. Lincoln approved of the Appointment when Q. M. Lyman came

that it was not until after he returned home that he realized Captain Howe had lied about securing a substitute. In response to Hannum's accusation the court asked whom Captain Howe had procured. The person in question was one John Stephen, who Howe claimed was 16. Others maintained that, judging by his slight build, he was likely no older

than 12 and that he had been staying with Howe at the time when he was reportedly asked to fill in for Hannum.

The next witness, Lieutenant Enos Smith (1745-1836) of Hadley, recalled the day the enemy appeared at Horse-neck, New York. Hannum left camp alongside others and afterward Smith learned that Hannum had returned

Clothing and Conflict

by Lauren Whitley

Dressing the Revolution: Fashion and Politics, 1760–1789 opened in Historic Deerfield's Textile Gallery on April 18, 2026. The exhibition includes more than 30 ensembles, accessories, textiles, and images that illuminate the complex role of clothing at the time of the American Revolution. Drawing on the museum's significant holdings of Revolutionary-era clothing, as well as key loans from outside institutions, the exhibition poses new questions about fashion's relationship with class, race, and gender explored in five separate sections.

The show begins with the consumer revolution of the mid-18th century as experienced in America and the excitement, at all social levels, for new and fashionable goods from Britain, especially textiles and clothing. It next explores the shifts in perception around fashionable dress after the imposition of onerous tariffs by Britain in the 1760s. While consumption of imported items resumed with vigor in the early 1770s, fashionable dress remained the subject of public scrutiny with extremes in clothing and hairstyles increasingly judged along gender and political lines. Dressing equaled messaging in the volatile pre-war years. When war did commence, colonists were forced to adjust to clothing themselves with less, often reworking and updating older garments or tapping existing stocks of cloth. The exhibition concludes with a look at competing attitudes toward fashionable dress during the early years of the new nation as America struggled to maintain not only political but economic independence.

By exploring fashion through cultural, political, and economic lenses, *Dressing the Revolution* places clothing at the center of the debates, shedding light on dress as a powerful tool that communicated not just status and identity, but political affinities before, during, and after the Revolution. *Dressing the Revolution: Fashion and Politics, 1760–1789* will be on view until January 3, 2027.



The extreme hairstyles adopted early on by Europeans, and then by fashion-conscious Americans, provided ripe fodder for satirical prints. Matthew and Mary Darly were among several British printmakers who exploited images of the stylish "high roll" to poke fun both at American pretensions to fashion and political independence. Matthew and Mary Darly, *Oh Heigh Oh*, London, England, 1776. Engraving on laid paper with hand-coloring. Historic Deerfield, Gift of Henry N. Flynt and Helen Geier Flynt, 56.029.

ONLY THREE YEARS after the American Revolution ended, thousands of Massachusetts citizens took up arms against their new state government. What Thomas Jefferson famously referred to as “a little rebellion” would go down in history as “Shays’ Rebellion,” part of a crucial period when the survival of the American experiment in government hung in the balance.¹

A severe post-war recession challenged optimistic assumptions that peace coupled with independence would bring prosperity and plenty to all Americans as the new United States entered the world stage. The intensity of the currency contraction and recession of the 1780s varied, but its effects were widespread. Violence or the threat of violence was present in every state. George Washington warned in December 1786, “There are combustibles in every State, which a spark may set fire to.”²

Shays’ Rebellion was a direct consequence of the Massachusetts government’s attempt to pay off its heavy war debt despite a severe economic downturn. The fiscal strategy to bring in the necessary revenue to pay the principal and interest on the State’s loans was simple: increase direct taxes and make them payable only in gold or silver. Under the leadership of Governor James Bowdoin, the tax rate jumped an astonishing 1,000% between 1774 and 1786.

High taxes payable only in hard currency proved a disastrous combination, mainly because there was not enough cash in circulation to meet the increased demand. A frustrated Matthias Rice of Pepperell replied to his creditor’s repeated demands for payment that “if I was to sell Every thing that I have



MORE THAN A LITTLE REBELLION

by Barbara A. Mathews

on Earth it would not obtain Money, you must Sir be very Sensible that it is out of the power of pepol in general to command cash at this time.”³

As defaults increased, the number of people imprisoned for non-payment of debts skyrocketed. By December 1785, more than 20 debtors were crowded into a tiny unheated garret in the Worcester County debtor’s prison, where they plaintively petitioned for relief from conditions “by no means fit for any of the Human Race.” Petitions pleading for legislative relief inundated the General Court. Citizens of Athol reported that “our property is torn from us Our goals filld [with debtors] and Still our Debts not Discharged but our property Daily Diminishing.”⁴

In the summer of 1786, thousands of people calling themselves Regulators protested this policy, resorting to the strategy Massachusetts Patriots had used on the eve of the Revolution to resist the British government. Angry citizens marched on Berkshire, Hampshire, Middlesex, Bristol, and Worcester County Courts to halt what they believed were unethical, even illegal, prosecutions for debt. From Great Barrington to Concord, Regulators successfully prevented Courts from convening and prosecuting cases for debt “for their own good and that of the Commonwealth.”⁵

An anonymous letter in the *Hampshire Gazette* blamed the pervasive unrest and court closings on high taxes: “The body of the people do not understand politicks; but they know...that greater sums in taxes are demanded of them than many of them can pay.”⁶ To make matters worse, tax revenues were going to pay the interest on state securities bought up at

depreciated rates by speculators. Now, asked “An Old Soldier” in the *Hampshire Herald*,

*Shall the man, who has sauntered at home during the war, enjoying the smiles of fortune: wallowing in affluence, and fattening in the sunshine of ease and prosperity:—and shall I be taxed with my little farm to make them good in the hands of the present holders, who are mostly men of this description: forbid it humanity: forbid it gratitude and justice.*⁷

But the protests told only half the story. Other citizens, including many veterans, rallied to the government’s call for militia to maintain law and order, ready to defend the courts, judges, and lawyers. Jonathan Judd of Southampton confided in his journal, “Monarchy is better than the Tyranny of this Mob.”⁸

Matters came to a head in September 1786. Anticipating trouble at the Supreme Judicial Court’s session in Springfield, the government called up the militia, commanded by Continental Army veteran General William Shepard of Westfield. Hundreds responded, including a company of 40 Deerfield men led by Captain Thomas Dickinson. Large numbers of Regulators also came, led by another veteran, Captain Daniel Shays of Pelham.

Not all the militia the government had called upon had decided which side they should join. Justus Forward of Belchertown recorded in his diary that his town sent two companies: “This morn the militia marched off from here about 3 PM also a Party for the Mobb.” Government men wore white paper cockades in their hats; the men Forward called “the Mobb” wore green sprigs identifying them as Regulators.⁹

On their way to protect the Court, Captain Agrippa Wells of Bernardston and the men under his command encountered a number of Regulators. Many were men they knew and respected. Wells and his men joined the ranks of the Regulators, who successfully prevented the Court from conducting any business. Jonathan Judd was among a group of 70 militia determined “to support the government.” He somberly wrote, “A very sorrowful day Brother against Brother Father against Son The Mob threaten Lives of all that oppose them.”¹⁰

Daniel Shays’ leadership at Springfield marked a turning point for him personally and for the Regulator movement in general. The government interpreted the disruption of the Commonwealth’s highest court as a direct assault on the State’s sovereignty. Many contemporary observers assumed the Massachusetts Regulation could be traced to a few ambitious, unprincipled men. Shays was, by all accounts, including his

own, a reluctant leader. He nonetheless rose practically overnight to the top of the government’s most wanted list, identified as the “Generalissimo” of the movement that would forever bear his name.

Governor Bowdoin and the Massachusetts General Court mounted a stern and swift response. In October, the Legislature passed an act empowering any justice of the peace, sheriff, or constable to disperse any gathering of more than 12 people and holding them blameless “if any such person or persons shall be killed or wounded, by reason of his or their resisting the persons endeavouring to disperse or seize them.”¹¹ A list of private subscribers contributed money to fund a militia led by General Benjamin Lincoln to maintain the peace. The Governor himself headed the list of contributors. Such actions only further antagonized Regulators and their allies.

Rhetoric on both sides escalated, as did the prospect of violence. General Shepard had observed that many of Shays’ men carried only sticks and staves. He urged that measures be taken to safeguard the United States Arsenal at Springfield. In a letter to General Henry Knox, the Confederation’s Secretary of War, Shepard shared his concern that, should the Regulators seize Arsenal weapons, they would terrorize the state:

*If they are determined to carry their point, and subject the whole State to their lawless sway (which they boast is in their power) will they tamely pass by the very means which they want to effect their purpose, without making one serious effort?*¹²

That the government militia lacked sufficient weapons themselves added to the sense of crisis. General Lincoln was on the way from Boston with 4,000 more men, but they had not yet arrived. Knox acknowledged Shepard’s concern but could not authorize him to use the Arsenal weapons without permission from the Confederation Congress, which was not in session.

With or without Lincoln’s militia, Shepard had no intention of letting the Regulators get to the Arsenal first. Under his command, militia from area towns took possession of the Arsenal on January 18. Men and supplies continued to arrive over the next several days. Judd recorded in his diary that “the Slieghmen return from Springfield and inform above 1000 are collected.”¹³

Shepard decided to access Arsenal weapons, writing to Bowdoin “it would be highly absurd that the Magazine should finally fall into Enemies from too punctilious observance of Forms.” Epaphras Hoyt of Deerfield reported that Shepard told him and other militia “that the enemy would attack us that we should maintain our ground to the last—that if the enemy should conquer us our lives and propertys would be taken

from us—which I think not an improbabl[e] conjecture”¹⁴

On the afternoon of January 25, 1787, Captain Daniel Shays and 1,400 of the men Shepard called “a wicked Banditti of rebels” advanced on the Arsenal. In their way stood the 1,200 men from surrounding towns who had answered the government’s call to defend the Arsenal. Militia from Colrain and Greenfield readied an Arsenal cannon and a howitzer to use against the Regulators, who included men from their own communities.

Determined to defend his position “at all hazards,” Shepard nonetheless hoped to avoid bloodshed. He sent out Captain Samuel Buffington of Worthington to persuade Shays to abandon his plan. Buffington later testified that he told Shays, “I am here in defense of that country you are endeavoring to destroy,” to which Shays responded, “if you are in defense of this country, we are both defending this same country.” Despite Buffington’s warning that he would encounter deadly force, Shays ordered his men to continue and rode to the rear to bring up the rest of the army with more speed.¹⁵

Did Shays or his men doubt the government militia defending the Arsenal would in fact fire on members of their own and neighboring communities? Hoyt heard “their commander had told them that we should not dare to fire on them, which they generally believ’d.” The Regulators disregarded warning shots fired over their heads and continued to advance through the snow in column, eight abreast. Only then did Shepard give the fateful order to fire the artillery into the approaching army “at waistband height.” Under the experienced command of Major William Stevens of Colrain, both gun crews fired several rounds. Cannonballs and grapeshot ripped into the center of the advance, killing three men instantly and wounding more than 20. Cries of “Murderers!” rose amid the din as the center of the Regulator army dissolved into chaos, leaving Wells and other veterans at the front with no choice but to retreat.

The Regulators dispersed in confusion. Many fled to their homes. Those who remained with Shays retreated first to Pelham and then to Petersham, where they were routed on February 4 by



This woodcut is the only known contemporary likeness of Daniel Shays (left), but it is unknown if its creator ever saw Shays. *Bickerstaff’s Genuine Boston Almanack for 1787*. Courtesy National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.



Shays’ home in Pelham, MA, later destroyed in the 1930s during the construction of the Quabbin Reservoir. C.O. Parmenter, *History of Pelham, Mass. From 1738 to 1898* (Amherst, MA, 1898).



Conkey Tavern in Pelham, MA, (no longer standing) where Shays and other Regulators met to plan their actions. *The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts* (Amherst, MA, 1896).

ing and disenfranchising Regulators offered little prospect of defusing what was still a tense situation. Rather, Madison saw an opposite effect: "a great proportion of the offenders chuse rather to risk the consequences of their treason, than submit to the conditions annexed to the amnesty."¹⁸

Former Regulators and their sympathizers flocked to the polls in the spring of 1787. The election was a resounding defeat for Bowdoin and his program of reprisal, replacing him with the perennially popular John Hancock, under whose leadership the government was expected to shift to a policy of clemency, pardons, and lower taxes. However, many believed that the men who had led "the mobb" were undeserving of mercy. Benjamin Franklin approved of Bowdoin's handling of the rebellion. Samuel Adams, among the earliest and most ardent of Massachusetts revolutionaries, spared no pity for any of the 18 Regulators condemned to die, declaring "the man who dares rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death." Hardliners such as Adams believed that only harsh punishment of leaders of an insurrection would safeguard the government and insisted that treason was a capital offense.

A compromise negotiated behind closed doors played out in a publicly enacted drama in Northampton before hundreds of unwitting witnesses. On June 21, 1787, an armed guard led 36-year-old Henry McCulloch of Pelham and 53-year-old Jason Parmenter of Bernardston from the jail where they had been incarcerated since their convictions for high treason. It was the first day of summer, far removed from the January afternoon when McCullough, mounted on a spirited horse and waving a sword, had urged Parmenter and other Massachusetts men in arms to storm the Springfield Arsenal.

Parmenter and McCullough climbed the scaffold erected on Pancake Plain, the traditional place of execution. The ropes

were placed around their necks, their hands tied, and their faces covered. A spectator reported that there was hardly a sound "except the deep breathing of the multitude." Sheriff Elisha Porter of Hadley stood by, ready to give the final word to the hangman. Only at the last possible moment, in accordance with the secret compromise negotiated between hardliners and Governor Hancock, did Porter solemnly produce the document announcing a stay of execution. Thus, "On Thursday last," reported Boston's *Independent Chronicle*, "Jason Parmenter and Henry McCulloch had LIKE to have been hanged."¹⁹

The sudden turn of events proved to be too much for Parmenter. The devoted husband and father of seven fainted on the scaffold. McCullough remained conscious but must have been equally relieved. The shaken prisoners returned to jail; Governor Hancock fully pardoned them both, along with several other condemned Regulators, on September 19. Of hundreds of Regulators arrested and indicted, all were released except for John Bly and Charles Rose, who were executed in December, 1787, at Lenox for looting. A year later, Daniel Shays received a pardon. He returned to Pelham but moved to New York in 1795, where he lived until his death in Sparta (now Conesus), New York, in 1825.

Shays' Rebellion loomed large in the minds of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that warm summer of 1787. Every state except Rhode Island sent delegates; Massachusetts chose four. Rufus King wrote to

Satirical print highlighting economic distress and unrest during the 1780s in Connecticut. Rival factions quarrel, with a person on the top right saying "Success to Shays" while a wagon in the top center sinks under heavy debt. Amos Doolittle, engraver, "The Looking Glass for 1787: A House divided against it self cannot stand." Engraving and watercolor on laid paper. Library of Congress, Prints and Photograph Division.



Elbridge Gerry pleading, “For Gods sake be careful who are the men; the times are becoming critical.” King must have been relieved to be among them, and that the crisis had pulled Washington out of retirement to preside over the Convention proceedings.

The delegates quickly decided to scrap the Articles of Confederation entirely. Only in a setting where all had agreed not to divulge a word of the proceedings could Roger Sherman of Connecticut have spoken so bluntly when he declared, “The people . . . should have as little to do as may be about the Government,” because “They want information and are constantly liable to be misled.” Gerry could not have agreed more. “The people do not want virtue, but are the dupes of pretended patriots. In Masss. it had been fully confirmed by experience that they are daily misled into the most baneful measures and opinions by the false reports circulated by designing men . . . hence in Masss. the worst men get into the Legislature.” Delegates reasoned “a more perfect Union” would “insure domestic tranquility” and quell internal unrest against duly elected, representative governments.²⁰

After the Convention, attention shifted to the states, where the fate of the proposed new Federal Constitution would be decided. Dozens of Massachusetts towns sent former Regulators to the State’s ratifying convention in 1788; dozens more sent delegates with the same concerns and fears about powerful centralized authority on either the federal or state level. By a slim margin Massachusetts became the sixth state to ratify the Constitution, 187 for and 168 against, modeling a process for later state conventions of accommodating opposition by

holding out the prospect of amendments, including a bill of rights. Jubilant celebrations notwithstanding, delegates from towns who had taken part in or were sympathetic to the Regulation generally voted against ratification. Most towns in present-day Hampshire and Franklin Counties, including Deerfield, voted no.

In this context, even as official histories eulogized those credited with putting down the Regulation, communities remembered the events differently. The Massachusetts House of Representatives passed a resolution commending Shepard’s “exertions & spirited defence of the Federal Arsenal at Springfield against the attempts and attack of the Insurgents.” However, within his own community of Westfield, Shepard was a pariah. He told Knox in 1790 that his actions at the Arsenal on that winter day in 1787 had resulted in death threats and vandalism to his property that included mutilating his prized horses—agrarian retribution at its ugliest.²¹

Perhaps most intriguing is the continuing appeal and perennial reinvention of Daniel Shays as the heroic leader of the Regulation. Persistent counternarratives and continued interest are themselves part of the history of Shays’ Rebellion, its consequences, and long-term legacies. Denounced by their opponents as desperate debtors and anarchists, the Regulators and their sympathizers made lasting contributions in the creation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

For further reading, *From Revolution to Constitution: Shays’ Rebellion & the Making of a Nation* <https://shaysrebellion.stcc.edu/>

ENDNOTES

1. Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, Feb. 22, 1787, in *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, ed. Lester J. Cappon (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1959), 173.
2. George Washington to Henry Knox, Dec. 26, 1786, *The Papers of George Washington* Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008).
3. Matthias Rice to Luke Drury, March 28, 1786. Box 2, Folder 23, Drury Papers, W.E.B. Dubois Library, Univ. of Massachusetts.
4. “A Register of all Prisoners Committed to Gaol in Worcester County since March 5, 1785,” Box 2 Folder 2, Worcester County, MA, papers, American Antiquarian Society; Petition of the town of Athol to the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives, May 1, 1786, Shays Rebellion Collection, Folder 2, American Antiquarian Society.
5. Petition presented to the Court of Common Pleas at Worcester, Sept. 5, 1786, quoted in Sidney Kaplan, “Shays’ Rebellion,” unpublished manuscript.
6. *Hampshire Gazette*, Sept. 26, 1786.
7. “An Old Soldier,” *Hampshire Herald*, Dec. 7, 1786.
8. Journal of Jonathan Judd, Special Collections, Forbes Library, Northampton, MA.
9. Diary of Justus Forward, Sept. 26, 1786, American Antiquarian Society.
10. Journal of Jonathan Judd.

11. *Acts and Laws, Passed by the General Court of Massachusetts* (Boston, MA: Adams and Nourse, 1786), 502–3. Chapter 8 passed Oct. 28, 1786.
12. William Shepard to Henry Knox, Jan. 12, 1787. Shepard Papers, Historic Deerfield Library.
13. Journal of Jonathan Judd. The “1,000 are collected” refers to Regulators.
14. Epaphras Hoyt to Seth Hoyt, Jan. 26, 1786, Swann Auction Galleries, April 14, 2015, auction catalog.
15. Deposition of Samuel Buffington, Feb. 1, 1787, Forbes Library.
16. Petition to the General Court from the Town of Grafton, Feb. 1, 1787, American Antiquarian Society.
17. George Washington to Henry Knox, Dec. 26, 1786, *The Papers of George Washington* Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel (Charlottesville: Univ. of Virginia Press, 2008).
18. James Madison to Thomas Jefferson, General Correspondence, James Madison Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.
19. Quoted in Marion Starkey, *A Little Rebellion* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955), 222.
20. James Madison, “Notes on the Debates in the Federal Convention”, 31 May 1787.
21. Resolves Approving the Conduct of General Shepard, Feb. 5, 1787, *Records*, 189:112, Massachusetts State Archives; William Shepard to Henry Knox [1790], Shepard Papers, Historic Deerfield Library.

Claire: Can you tell our readers about Plays in Place? What is unique about the plays you write and produce?

Talya: Plays in Place is a theatre company that produces original site-specific theatre in collaboration with museums and historic sites. As playwrights, rather than starting with a story from our own imaginations, we begin our conversation with experts at the sites who tell us stories, show us their spaces, and give us access to primary source materials.

Patrick: Our work is always grounded in place. So we're trying to understand the space where we're performing and how our characters existed in it. The project partnerships usually require a time span of multiple years from inception to production, so everyone is making a big commitment.

Claire: What is your process once you have a site to work with? What inspires and challenges you? How do you develop the specific themes and structures of your plays?

Patrick: Every site has a story, sometimes more than one, and every place is different. We are presented with the puzzle of what is the best story to develop into a play, and how do we make it work in a way that is theatrically engaging for audiences while taking advantage of the particular elements of that specific place. Solving those challenges is always exciting for us.

We create a lot of plays that center around slavery and abolition in New England, as well as plays in the Revolutionary War period, and also plays dealing with women's history and the fight for women's suffrage. So we have a strong interest in exploring issues of race and gender. We are always trying to develop characters in ways that highlight their full humanity, their complexity. We try to "unflatten" historical figures and moments.

Claire: Can you describe what "in place" means to you and your company? How does the setting guide you as you write the plays and bring the characters to life?

Patrick: We really are trying to find ways to use the site, almost as an additional character. Our mantra as playwrights in writing site-specific plays is "Don't fight the site." Use the place. We don't build sets; we don't add banks of lights. Our main design elements are costumes and sound. Even if the site isn't exactly

as it was in the era of the story we're telling, we still try to use it as it is at this very moment.

This doesn't mean that every show needs to operate in a completely realistic style. But it does require us to be thoughtful about how time and place operate in our plays. Because our work is always a commission, we're always building from the ground up, so the script and its relationship to the physical space is not "generic," not just written to be done on any stage, anywhere. Our work is specifically tailored to where we're at, and we use the inherent meaning that the space and its history brings.

Claire: How do you approach interpreting hard topics in your plays such as votes for women or the history of slavery in New England?

Patrick: The main thing is that we're not looking at the "issues" first, we're looking at the people. What can we find out about them through research, which is often limited because their records might not have been preserved? How do we fill the gap if they might not

have had the time or resources to create documents that recorded their thoughts? We can learn details about them—births, deaths, baptisms—that help paint a portrait of them as people with full lives. We have to use the historical record and also our imaginations. A lot of time we find things that historians have overlooked, little tidbits, because we're asking different questions, we're looking with a different lens. We need to understand everything we can about the periods we're writing about, talk to lots of historians, read books, examine the archives, but then go back to what we as playwrights know about how people behave in relationship to each other.



Bringing the Revolution to Life with Plays in Place

A conversation with Claire Carlson, Historic Deerfield's Director of Museum Educations and Archaeology, and Patrick Gabridge, Producing Artistic Director, and Talya Kingston, Producer and Playwright, of Plays in Place about *1774: A Stake in the Ground*, commissioned by Historic Deerfield.

Claire: How do you balance your vision with feedback from the host sites, directors, and actors?

Talya: The collaboration between writers/producers, artists (actors, designers and directors) and the site historians and stakeholders continues at all stages of the play's development. We first present a proposal for a play (or series of plays) and solicit feedback (sometimes even going back to the drawing board). After we write a solid first draft we hire actors for an internal reading of the script and conduct a post-show discussion wherein we discuss any plot holes, historical inconsistencies or character problems. This feedback helps us to come up with a more solid script draft to take into production.

As playwrights we tend to prioritize historical or contextual feedback over artistic critique from the historical experts. It is helpful to bring a director in early in the process to help the writers to see how their writing can be actualized given the confines of performing in a non-traditional space (for example, plays that are performed outside cannot use blackouts for scene changes!) Actors are very helpful in letting us know if the language is too convoluted or the relationships between characters too hard to understand.

Through it all, the playwrights need to have a strong grasp of the story they are telling in order to incorporate feedback without flattening the dramatic impact.

Claire: What can audiences expect at the plays you are doing for Historic Deerfield?

Talya: At Historic Deerfield we were drawn to the backdrop of the street, and how, in the lead up to the Revolution, neighbors had very different perspectives on what the future of the country should look like. In this hot political climate, the neighbors were also intertwined personally with love affairs, rivalries, and feuds. Audiences can expect these characters to come to life in a way that will leave them with questions and a new appreciation for the history of the town as it headed towards Revolution.

Patrick: The key thing is that this is a lively experience, it's not a lecture or history lesson. It's a play that tells an interesting story about people we hope you will care about. Our goal is that people see our show and come away wanting to learn more because now this place and these people matter to them.



A Stake in the Ground: 1774

Staged at Historic Deerfield, *A Stake in the Ground: 1774* is a series of three site-specific plays, set in Deerfield, on the eve of the American Revolution.

In the summer of 1774, seeds of revolution began to germinate in Deerfield when a Liberty Pole is brought to town. The characters in three new one-act plays explore the political division, tangled family relations, and the complexities of enslavement from all sides. Join us this summer to experience this vibrant, immersive examination of the historical split that will define America.

Produced by Plays in Place, written by Talya Kinston, Valyn Lyric Turner, and Patrick Gabridge, and directed by Brianna Sloane, *A*

Stake in the Ground: 1774 will be performed outdoors at the locations near where the characters lived in the past, including outside the Ashley House, the Allen House, and the Stebbins House.

Each performance includes all three plays and will end with a post-show conversation. Shows take place on Fridays (6:30–8:30 p.m.), Saturdays (6:30–8:30 p.m.), and Sundays (2:30–4:30 p.m.), July 10–August 16.

Note: All shows (except for weekend of July 31, August 1 and 2 which will be held inside the Deerfield Community Center) will take place outside and the audiences will be walking to each location.

Visit historic-deerfield.org/ events for more information and to purchase tickets.

Scan the code for tickets.



REVOLUTION 250



**A TOWN
DIVIDED**

**DRESSING THE
REVOLUTION**

**PICTURING THE
REVOLUTION**

Three new exhibitions · through January 3, 2027 at the Flynt Center of Early New England Life

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Wendy Bellion is Professor of Art History and Sewell C. Biggs Chair in American Art at the University of Delaware. She is author of the books *Citizen Spectator* (2011) and *Iconoclasm in New York* (2019) and editor of collections of scholarly essays. Her current research explores the women of the Peale family of artists in the Revolutionary-era United States.

David Bosse is retired librarian of Historic Deerfield and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

Claire Carlson is Director of Museum Education and Archaeology at Historic Deerfield, where she plans and manages public programs. She holds an M.A. in Anthropology from UMass Amherst, with a specialization in New England Historical Archaeology, Indigenous Histories, and K-12 Education.

Samantha Frost is Assistant Registrar at Historic Deerfield. She joined the staff in 2024 after graduating from Northeastern University with her M.A. in public history and a certificate in digital humanities.

Erika Gasser is Director of Academic Programs at Historic Deerfield, where she oversees the Summer Fellowship Program and other seasonal lectures. Before moving to the area in 2023, she was Associate Professor of History at the University of Cincinnati, where she taught early American history and published about gender and religion in the British Atlantic world.

Heather Harrington is the Associate Librarian of Historic Deerfield. She holds an MS degree in Information Science with a concentration in Archives and Records Management from the University of Albany (SUNY). She has spent several years reading and transcribing the journals of Epaphras Hoyt.

Amanda Lange is Curatorial Department Director and Curator of Historic Interiors at Historic Deerfield. She curated the exhibition, *A Town Divided: Deerfield in the Age of Revolution*, currently on view.

Barbara Mathews is an independent historical consultant. She holds a Ph.D. in history from Brown University and served as Historic Deerfield's Director of Academic Programs from 2012 to 2023. Barbara was the lead historian and writer for the Shays' Rebellion website created by the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in partnership with Springfield Technical Community College and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Alice Nash is Associate Professor of History at UMass Amherst. She is the recipient of four grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to co-direct Summer Institutes for Teachers on Teaching Native American Histories, most recently with Linda Coombs (Aquinnah Wampanoag). In 2003–04 she held the first Fulbright–Université de Montréal Distinguished Chair and taught a course on the 1704 Deerfield raid. She is a member of the Historic Deerfield Board of Trustees.

Phillippa Pitts is the Luce–Americana Curatorial Fellow for American Art at Historic Deerfield. She holds an M.A. in Art History and Museum Studies from Tufts University and is a Ph.D. candidate in Art History at Boston University.

Jeanne Solensky is the Librarian of Historic Deerfield and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association.

Daniel S. Sousa is a former Associate Curator at Historic Deerfield. He is a contributing curator to the exhibition, *Picturing the Revolution*, currently on view.

James Taub is Associate Curator at the Museum of the American Revolution. He specializes in public history with a focus on France and America during the 18th through early 20th centuries. He received his BA from Dickinson College, and his MA from the University of Glasgow. He previously worked at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, Fort Ticonderoga, and with the United States WWI Centennial Commission.

Lauren Whitley is Curator of Textiles and Clothing at Historic Deerfield and previously worked at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she was senior curator in the Dept. of Textiles and Fashion Arts.

Haley Wrye is Assistant Archivist at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia. She previously worked at Historic Trappe as Assistant Curator and is an Alumna of the Historic Deerfield Summer Fellowship Program (2024). She holds dual Bachelor degrees in Hospitality Management and Early American History from the University of Central Florida.

Philip Zea was employed by Historic Deerfield for two 18-year stints, mostly as Chief Curator and President. He retired in May 2021.

The Revolution Lives Here

Silhouette of Major Hugh Maxwell of Charlemont, Massachusetts, 1781, by Frederick Chapman.

2003.51.5;
purchased with
Museum Collections
Fund.



In 2026, Historic Deerfield marks the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution with major exhibitions, immersive demonstrations, and newly commissioned theatrical performances that bring Revolutionary Deerfield to life.

Through three new exhibitions *Picturing the Revolution*, *Dressing the Revolution*, and *A Town Divided*, visitors will explore how loyalty, conviction, and daily life shaped a community divided by revolution. Across the village, history is experienced as much as observed—through hands-on programs, historic trades, and stories rooted in one of the best-documented early American towns in North America.

Support to the Annual Fund sustains the preservation, scholarship, and interpretation that make this work possible.

As we open this landmark season, we invite you to stand with us.

Make your gift today at historic-deerfield.org/donate



Trustees of Historic Deerfield

Lynn H. Ball, Washington, D.C.
Nancy J. Barnard, Lincoln, MA
Fraser Bennett Beede, Northampton, MA
Anthony Berner, Williamsville, VT
Lawrence C. Caldwell, New Canaan, CT
Courtney Marsh Chapin, Washington, D. C.
Deborah Dearborn, Deerfield, NH
David De Luca, New York, NY
H. Richard Dietrich III, Chevy Chase, MD
Heidi Holloman Flanagan, Dallas, TX
Suzanne L. Flynt, Dummerston, VT
Wesley C. Fredericks, Jr., New Canaan, CT
J. Ritchie Garrison, Newark, DE
Joseph P. Gromacki, Chicago, IL
Gregory Gross, Sewickley, PA
Lynda McCurdy Hotra, Rochester, NY
Barbara A. James, Westport, CT

Elise Singer Langan, Bronx, NY
Gerald C. Mingin, Burlington, VT
Alice Nash, South Hadley, MA
Paul C. Peters, Dallas, TX
Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier, Orleans, MA
Sarah E. Thomas, Baltimore, MD
William P. Veillette, Amherst, NH

Historic Deerfield is published annually by
Historic Deerfield® Inc.

A portion of Historic Deerfield's operating funds has been provided through grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

This magazine is a benefit to members of the Friends of Historic Deerfield. Single issues may

be purchased by calling 413-775-7170 or by e-mailing museumstore@historic-deerfield.org.

Magazine Advisory Board

John Davis, President and CEO; David Bosse, Contributing Editor; Claire Carlson, Director of Museum Education and Archaeology; Amanda Lange, Curatorial Department Director and Curator of Historic Interiors; Anne Lanning, Senior Vice President; Jeanne Solensky, Librarian; Brienne Thomson, Museum Photographer and Digital Assets Coordinator.

Designer Allison W. Bell

Please address comments and suggestions to:
Historic Deerfield magazine, Historic Deerfield, Inc., Box 321, Deerfield, MA 01342
TEL 413-774-5581 · FAX 413-775-7220
www.historic-deerfield.org



Historic Deerfield

Opening Doorways To The Past,

P. O. Box 321, Deerfield, MA 01342-0321

Non-Profit Org.

U. S. postage

PAID

Permit #5860

Springfield, MA

