



MANUSCRIPTS AT NEHGS

Revolutionary War Collections at NEHGS

by Timothy G.X. Salls

THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL Society was founded in 1845, only sixty-four years after the Treaty of Paris ended the American Revolution in 1781. Consequently, early NEHGS members — some perhaps the children or grandchildren of those who participated in the conflict — donated a wide variety of manuscript materials dating from the War for Independence.

The Society's manuscript holdings include nearly twenty diaries kept during these momentous years. The *Guide to Diaries in the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections of the New England Historic Genealogical Society* (2008) and the NEHGS library catalog database briefly describe these diaries, including those of Samuel Armstrong; James Cox; Samuel Cutler; Luke Drury; Dr. Ezra Green; Samuel Hawes; Aaron Hayward; West Hill; John Varnum; John Walton, and Joseph Ware. This article will highlight other Revolutionary-era manuscripts, including select account and orderly books, military returns, and pay rolls.

Account books

Account book of Colonel William Bond of the 25th Continental Regiment, 1775–1776.

1 v., 378 p. Includes entries concerning supplies and their cost, lists of men with firearms in custody, monthly abstracts of the number of men in each company, and some records on officers' pay. Locations include Prospect Hill, Albany, Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Mss C 4883.

Account book of Lieut. Joel Pratt, 1777–1780.

1 v., 100 p. Account of supplies from various companies to "military stores." A large portion of the ledger lists casualties among the various companies of the 4th Mass. Regiment. Mss A 1401.

Account book of Capt. James Tisdale, 1781–1783.

1 v., 80 p. Account book concerning Captain James Tisdale's company in the 3rd Massachusetts Regiment. Entries include lists of clothing, firearms, and accouterments issued to each soldier. Mss A 1494.

Notebook of Josiah Walton, ca. 1776.

1 v., [14] p. Handwritten lyrics to three Revolutionary War-era songs transcribed by Josiah Walton (d. 1831):

(1) "An ode on the battle of Bunkers-hill"; (2) A military song by the army on General Washington's victorious entry into the town of Boston; (3) The goddess of liberty. Mss C 2075. [See also Margaret Hindle Hezer's "Songs of Revolutionary America, *Register* 130 (1976): 179–95.]

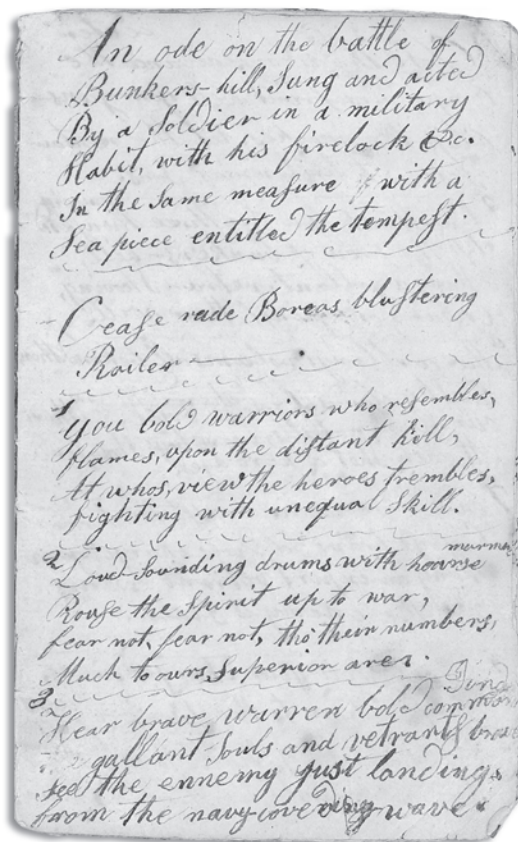
Orderly books

Orderly book of Jotham Ames, August 22 to December 17, 1775.

1 v., 180 p. Record of the general, regimental, brigade, and special orders recorded by Jotham Ames (1743–1812), a sergeant in Capt. Daniel Lothrop's (Artillery) Company, Col. John Bailey's Regt. Mss A 793.

Orderly book of Thomas Jackson, 1778–1779.

1 v., 168 p. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental,



A page from the notebook of Josiah Walton.

Return of the Regt of Foot in the Service of the United Colonies Commanded by Col. Jonathan Holman.

Companies	Officers Present										Rank & File										Alterations									
	Commission	Staff	Sergeants	Drummers	Trumpeters	Ensigns	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters	Private	Corporals	Drummers	Trumpeters
Capt. Woodhull	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	49	24	11	84														
Capt. K. Gates			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	3	86	10	12	78														
Capt. L. Gates			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	88	18	11	67														
Capt. W. Gates			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	31	28	12	71														
Capt. Woodbury			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	88	18	6	82														
Capt. Barber			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	42	21	12	75														
Capt. Nicholas			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	48	8	16	72														
Capt. Platt			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2	46	19	13	77														
Total	1	1	8	8	8	8	1	1	1	1	32	16	367	14	93	606														

A page from the orderly book of Jonathan Holman.

and brigade orders recorded by Thomas Lakeman while serving with the 4th Massachusetts in New York. Mss A 2050.

Orderly book of Nathaniel Longley, 1776–1778.

1 v. (124 p.); 20 cm. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental, and brigade orders recorded by Nathaniel Longley (1756–1842) while at the garrison in Rutland, Vt., and Chelsea Camp, N.Y. Mss A 2043.

Orderly book of Jonathan Holman, July 30 to September 20, 1776

1 v. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental, and brigade orders recorded by Colonel Jonathan Holman (1732–1814), commander of a regiment of foot stationed at Greenwich and Chelsea Camps in N.Y. Mss A 1940.

Orderly book of Jeronimus Hoogland and Henry Purketh, 1782–1783

1 v., 172 p. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental and troop orders issued to the Third Troop Second Continental Light Dragoons. Mss A 1103.

Orderly book of Abraham Peirce, January to March, 1778

1 v., 82 p. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental, and brigade orders recorded by Captain Abraham Peirce of Brighton, Mass., while serving with Col. Eleazer Brook's regiment of guards in Cambridge. Includes an abstract of a pay roll for Capt Peirce's company, April 3, 1778; copies of weekly returns for Capt. Peirce's company; return of provisions; and court-martials. Mss A 5740.

Orderly book, October 9 to December 21, 1775

1 v., [28] p. Handwritten list of individuals on guard and scout duty, recorded in a small handmade book.

Last page has roll of Capt. Luke Drury's company of Minutemen. Mss C 51.

Orderly book, April 11 to May 7, 1778

1 v., 84 p. Handwritten copy of the general, regimental, and brigade orders recorded by a soldier at Valley Forge. The record includes a copy of the order to fire the *feu de joie* [a gun salute] when France entered the war. Mss A 5725.

Rolls

Return of Capt. Topham's Company in Col. Church's Regiment Rhode Island forces, June 10, 1775

1 sheet; 54 cm. Handwritten list with the names of fifty-nine soldiers in the 3rd R.I. Regiment. Includes columns for name, age, height, birthplace, trade, color (hair, eye), and scars. Mss 911.

Pay roll of Captain James Lewis's company in Colonel Daniel Moore's regiment of New Hampshire Volunteers, marched from New Marlborough & joined the continental army at Saratoga, September, 1777

1 sheet; 37 x 30 cm. Handwritten account that includes each man's name, rank, time in service, and wages due. Mss C 2649.

Pay roll for a party of militia commanded by Lieut. Caleb Craft, Dorchester Heights, July, 1778

1 ADS; 21 x 33 cm. Handwritten form with columns for men's names, rank, dates of enlistment and discharge, number of days served, and subsistence money paid. Mss C 5731.

Return of a regiment of militia commanded by Lieut. Col. Samuel Pierce, June, 1779

3 DS; 21 x 34 cm. Statistical tables giving company-level tallies for various categories. Only commanding officers are named. Mss C 1272.

A return of the officers and vacancies in the county of Barnstable [Mass.] in the militia in the brigade under the command of Joseph Otis, Esq., September 30, 1779

1 ADS; 35 cm. Handwritten list giving every officer's name, rank, and residence. Mss C 2086.

Pay roll for the company commanded by Lt. Ephraim Grover of the 4th Regiment of militia in the County of Bristol [Mass.] commanded by Colonel Isaac Dean, August 1, 1780

1 sheet; 40 cm. Handwritten record with columns for soldier names, rank, dates of enlistment and discharge, length of service, and more. Mss 845.

Roll and muster of the light infantry company, 8th Massachusetts Regiment, commanded by Colonel Michael Jackson, April 1783.

1 sheet; 47 x 38 cm. Includes columns for ranks, names, term of enlistment, casualties, date mustered, time

since last muster or enlistment, and altercations since last muster. Mss 616.

Roll and muster of the 7th Company, 8th Massachusetts Regiment, commanded by Col. Michael Jackson, April 24, 1783.

1 sheet; 47 x 38 cm. Form has columns for ranks, names, term of enlistment, casualties, date mustered, time since last muster or enlistment, and altercations since last muster. Mss 617.

Collections

Wagon Department returns, rolls, receipts, 1776–1783

This collection consists of ninety-nine returns, rolls, receipts, and letters concerning the U.S. Continental Army's Wagon Department, which reported to the Quartermaster General. Documents include returns of ox team brigades brought into service; returns of clothing received by the three Massachusetts Regiments; two returns concerning teams which served in the campaign of 1781; return and list of officers in the Wagon Master's Department; return of wagons, horses, and gear belonging to Col. Baldwin's Regiment of Artificers; return of wagoners enlisted in the state of New Jersey to serve with the Army for one year; return of enlisted wagoners; and a return of noncommissioned officers and soldiers of the 26th Regiment. Mss 1050.

Accounts, bills and receipts, 1760–1801, most 1774–1778). Great Britain. War Office. Quartermaster-General's Dept.

This collection consists of 393 documents (accounts, bills, and receipts) sent to and from Major William Sherriff, Deputy Quartermaster-General, in New York (October 1773) and Boston (1774–1775), and similar documents to and from Jonathan Clarke, Assistant Commissary General for the Convention Troops, in Cambridge, Mass., 1777–1778. Also included are two receipts from the Paymaster General at Halifax; two receipts from the Commissary General of Provisions for Canada; a receipt from the Commissary Storekeeper for Newfoundland; a quarterly return of provisions issued to a detachment of His Majesty's Royal Newfoundland Regiment at St. Johns; and some receipts for victualling troops. Mss 877.

William Clark papers, 1759–1815

This sixty-five-volume collection contains the journal of Dedham, Mass., native, and Loyalist Rev. William Clark; commonplace books (1761–1767, 1769, 1780–1814); and notebooks with political memorandums and remarks collected chiefly from papers published in London from December 1779 to August 1784. Mss 987.

Richard Clarke and Sons records, 1756–1775

1 linear ft. This collection contains business papers of Richard Clarke and Sons of Boston, Mass., one of the largest importers of tea prior to the American Revolution. Mss 1051.

John Ford Papers, 1765–1878

1 linear ft. Collection contains military, financial, and legal papers concerning the Revolutionary War activities of Captain John Ford (1740–1822) of Chelmsford, Mass., including muster rolls, orders, and a 1776 orderly book from Ticonderoga, N.Y. Mss 183.

Thomas Nixon Papers 1777–1800, mostly 1777–1780)

9 volumes. The collection is comprised mostly of orderly books for the 6th Massachusetts Regiment commanded by Thomas Nixon (1736–1800), plus two return books and a letter book for 1779. Mss 441

Return of ordinance and military stores on hand at West Point & its dependencies, 1779–1782

1 sheet; 35 x 469 cm. Handwritten record of ordnance and military stores. Mss 912.

The documents listed above are supplemented by individual letters preserved in the collection, such as Major-General Samuel Holden Parsons' 1782 letter to Captain Moses Greenleaf (Mss C 727) and John Hancock's 1776 letter to James Athearn (Mss C 2079). NEHGS collections include a petition from Boston Loyalist William Jackson (Mss C 5703), the 1783 narrative of Ezekiel Warner, who was captured and impressed by the British Navy (Mss A 2604), and "A true list of the persons inimical to the liberties of the colonies and now residing in the town of Boston with the crimes by them committed against their country" (Mss C 1013). The Society's also holds handwritten and typescript transcriptions of other Revolutionary War diaries, muster rolls, and manuscripts.

The New England Historic Genealogical Society remains committed to preserving and providing access to records that support family and local history. If you are considering donating such material so it may be preserved and made accessible to scholars, please contact Archivist Timothy Salls (tsalls@nehgs.org; 617-226-1232) or Assistant Archivist Judy Lucey (jlucey@nehgs.org; 617-226-1223). Although additional information on these documents may be available in the library catalog database (<http://library.nehgs.org/>), we are happy to answer questions related to this article or any of the holdings of the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections. ♦

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