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THE HISTORY

of

NEW DURHAM, New Hampshire

From the
FIRST SETTLEMENT TO THE PRESENT TIME

Including
THAT PART OF ALTON WHICH WAS FORMERLY
NEW DURHAM GORE

* * * * *

by
ELLEN CLOUTMAN JENNINGS

New Durham
1962



GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

They grew apprehensive as they learned about disturbing events taking place in faraway Boston. They wondered about the British "redcoats" stationed there, and why they should fire on the men of Boston in the "Boston Massacre". They spoke about the tax on tea and the "Boston Tea Party". They argued in the tavern about becoming separated from England and whether there would be a war, and whether the American colonies could stand by themselves.

In the spring of 1775, the news came about the battle of Lexington, but to New Hampshire men, what transpired in Portsmouth was of greater impact. Governor John Wentworth and his wife and child had been forced to flee their home, to take refuge in the damp and crumbling old Fort William and Mary, at Newcastle. He could not return to the city even to dissolve the general Assembly, for fear of death at the hands of the Patriots, many of whom had been his friends and supporters. His beautiful and costly home was pillaged and looted, Portsmouth was crowded with armed companies of men, Royalists were leaving the city by any means they could. War seemed inevitable.

CHAPTER SIX

The War for Independence

*Soldiers are citizens of death's grey land,
Drawing no dividend from time's tomorrows . . .
Soldiers are dreamers; when the guns begin
They think of firelit homes, clean beds, and wives.*

— Siegfried Sassoon.

Every school boy and girl knows the history of the American Revolution; how the ill-trained and outnumbered troops, sometimes poorly commanded and always insufficiently equipped, managed to achieve final victory, making it possible for the United States of America to emerge as an independent nation.

New Durham had been settled for only 25 years, by 1775, had been incorporated as a town for 13 years. Men were still laboring to lay out roads, clear fields and build decent homes. In 1770 there were forty two families in town; there were few males over sixteen capable of bearing arms who could be spared.

The soldier's life, even during a short term of enlistment, was not a merry one. He was ill-equipped in the matter of shoes, clothing and firearms; food was scarce and poor; disease and wounds often resulted in permanent and crippling disability or death. He was often not paid until after his service was over.

Desertions were not uncommon, and were less from lack of courage than from the urgent necessity of getting home to relieve his wife and children of the manual labor on the farm. There was hardly a family whose man was at war that did not suffer the most cruel hardships.

Since diligent research has failed to produce any previously-compiled list of Revolutionary war soldiers who were residents of New Durham and New Durham Gore at the time of their enlistments, we present the following roster with some confidence as to its accuracy:

Lt. Shadrach Allard	John Colomy
Capt. Robert Boodey	Richard Colomy
Joseph Buzzell	Ens. Timothy Davis
	New Durham Gore
Robert Carson	David Doe
Lt. Ephraim Chamberlin	John Doe
New Durham Gore	Jonathan Doe

Capt. Peter Drowne
 Josiah Durgin
 Lt. Thomas French
 Ens. John Glidden
 Lt. John Glidden
 New Durham Gore
 Barzilla Hinds
 Abraham Libbey
 Benjamin Libbey
 New Durham and the Gore
 Benjamin Mooney

Joseph Morrill
 New Durham Gore
 Edward Peavey
 Rev. Nathaniel Porter
 Capt. Joseph Roberts
 New Durham Gore
 Abraham Runnals
 James Runnals
 Joseph Runnals
 William Young
 John York

The first men to enlist from New Durham were Abraham Libbey, aged 26, Barzillia Hinds*, aged 25 and Robert Carson, aged 27, (variously spelled Karsen, Cason, Corson, etc.) all "yeomen" who joined Capt. Benjamin Titcomb's company of the Second New Hampshire Regiment under Col. Enoch Poor, on June 13, 1775. On the same day, Josiah Durgin, aged 28, and David Doe, aged 24, were mustered in to Capt. Jonathan Wentworth's company — on the 20th of June, William Young, aged 21, joined this company in Col. Poor's regiment.

On March 5, 1776, Col. Joseph Badger formed the Tenth Regiment of Militia, recruiting men from Gilmanton, Barnstead, Wolfeborough, Sanbornton, Middleton and New Durham. The Seventh Company in New Durham had as its officers: Capt. Robert Boody, 1st Lieut. Shadrach Allard, 2nd Lieut. Thomas French and Ensign John Glidden. The Fourteenth Company in the Gore officers were: Captain Joseph Roberts, 1st Lieut. Ephraim Chamberlin, 2nd Lieut. John Glidden and Ensign Timothy Davis.

Rev. Nathaniel Porter went from New Durham in July, 1776 as Chaplain in Col. Joshua Wingate's Regiment; in 1777 he served in the Third Regiment under Col. Alexander Scammel.

Abraham Runnals and Edward Peavey were privates in Capt. John Brewster's Company in Col. Long's Regiment at Newcastle, from Aug. 7 to Dec. 7, 1776.

In June, 1777, Col. Badger reported that he had six New Durham men enlisted for three years in the Tenth Regiment, namely: Edward Peavey, Robert Carson, Richard Colomy, aged 21, David Doe, Jonathan Doe, aged 25 and Joseph Runnals, aged 20. Three of these were re-enlistments. Col. Badger reported earlier in the year that in New Durham there were 56 men between the ages of 16 and 50 capable of bearing arms; in the Gore there were 20.

Peter Drowne, later to serve the town as Selectman, Town Clerk and Lot Layer, was a volunteer in Col. John Langdon's Company from Sept. 29 to Oct. 31, 1777 under Gen. Gates at Saratoga.

* Hinds enlisted from New Durham but he might have been a transient worker; he settled in Gilmanton in 1776.

Later he was Captain of a Company in Col. Stephen Peabody's Regiment in Rhode Island Jan. 1 to Sept. 16, 1778. Capt. Drowne is listed as "of New Durham" in the War records, but his name does not appear in town records until 1780.

In June, 1780, three more regiments were recruited from this State. "The men were to furnish their own clothing, knapsacks and blankets and serve until the last day of December next following, or be liable to a fine of \$500. They were to be paid forty shillings a month, 'in money equal to Indian corn at four shillings a bushel, Grass-fed beef at three pence a pound, or Sole-Leather at eighteen pence a pound.' They were also to have five pounds each for clothing money, two dollars in paper currency per mile for travel, and money for rations until they could draw continental rations."

Benjamin Mooney and John York enlisted July 10, 1780 in the Third Regiment "for New Durham", which term meant that they did not necessarily live in the town they enlisted for. But a Benjamin Mooney was a settler here in 1770; in 1784, a Lt. Benjamin Mooney and an Ens. John York were listed on the town's poll tax list.

John Doe and John Colomy of New Durham and Joseph Buzzell of New Durham Gore enlisted for two months' service Sept. 21, 1781, for defense of the Northern frontiers of the State in Capt. Jacob Smith's Company of Rangers.

Samuel Small was of Rochester, John Bryant of Middleton: both men were hired by New Durham to fill its quota. They served six months at West Point in 1781.

Benjamin Libbey of New Durham Gore and James Runnals of New Durham were sent to Rhode Island in July, 1779 by Col. Badger to serve under Col. Hercules Mooney. The same Libbey gave his address as "New Durham" when he went in for Gilmanton to West Point for six months in Aug. 1781. Joseph Morrill of the Gore served in Gen. Stark's regiment in 1776; as a result of smallpox contracted in the service, he became almost totally blind and received a pension for life.

In July, 1782, New Durham was called upon for four men to make up its quota, and "hearing that the Town had no credit for their men formerly sent by said Town . . . voted that Capt. Robert Boody be the person to apply to the Committee of Safety . . . and present the returns and claims to certain soldiers employed in said service by said town and certify the same."

This touched off a little local war in the case of David Doe, both Rochester and New Durham claiming that he was of their quota. It was finally proved through many depositions that though he worked in Rochester, his home was in New Durham and therefore belonged to this town's quota. The case for Robert Cason (Carson or Corson) was stated by Capt. John Colomy and Josiah

Doe — depositions to the effect that he (Cason) came to New Durham and made his home with Capt. Robert Boody in March, 1775; that "He had no other home in this country but Capt. Robert Boody's in New Durham". Finally all claims were settled.

Several men, whose names are familiar in New Durham records, came here to make their homes after the war. Samuel Runnals, Esq., of Durham, was Captain of a Company under the command of Col. Hercules Mooney for the defense of Rhode Island in 1779. He moved to this town in 1782-3, married and had ten children. Lt. Asa Folsom, who served with Capt. Drowne in Rhode Island later moved here. Col. Thomas Tash, who commanded a regiment of New Hampshire men in 1776, moved here with his family in 1783. Zebulon Davis of Rochester and Elisha Thomas of Newmarket, both of whom were in Col. Tash's regiment, also came to New Durham to live, as did John Davis of Kittery, Capt. Joseph Berry and Benjamin Randal. Others may have been Jonathan Folsom, Lt. Stephen Berrey and Lt. Thomas Hays, though we have no proof.

The end of the war did not always mean the end of suffering. The following documents are examples of the aftermath of war.

This petition was addressed to the General Assembly, dated Jan. 4, 1787:

"Humbly Sheweth Elisha Thomas of New Durham in the County of Strafford, Yeoman, that in the Year 1776, he inlisted into Capt John Gordon's Company as a private Soldier, in the Regiment under the Command of Col. Thomas Tash of this State in the federal Service, that in the Month of November in the same year, at the Alarm at Planks Point on North River State of New York in Discharging his Gun, his Left hand, was torn 'to Pieces, by bursting of said Gun, and his Thumb carried away, and his Fingers and hand rendered almost wholly useless, by Means whereof, he suffered the most excruciating Pain for a long Time, & has ever Since been in a great Measure, deprived of the Means of gaining a Subsistance for himself & a numerous Family of Children — Wherefore Your Petitioner most Humbly Prays this honorable Assembly to take his Case in their wise and equitable Consideration and make him such Grant, or Allowance as Justice and Humanity may dictate for the Relief of himself & a Poor and Indegent Family and as in Duty Bound he will ever Pray —

Elisha Thomas"

After this accident, he was judged unfit for duty and discharged from the service, receiving a pension of twenty four shillings a month. In a report of 1789 of the invalids of the New Hampshire rolls, made by an examining committee, Sergeant Thomas is listed as dead. But he did not die as a result of war injuries. Elisha Thomas was hanged for murder.

Following is another petition:

"State of New Hampshire Concord Feb 3d 1791 —

To the Honorable the Congress of the United States of America, most humbly sheweth,

Richard Colomey of New Durham in said State — that he was a soldier in Captain Frederick Bells Company, in Col George Reids Regt in Genl Enoch Poors Brigade in the Late Continental Army — that on the nineteenth day of April, 1777 — in battle at Stillwater, he received two wounds, one in his knee & the other in his hip and the ball still remains in his hip — by means of which Your Petitioner and Memorialist is much disenabled — that by reason of his living remote in the Country being poor, ignorant & he never made application to be enrolled as an inviled penr in this State till the time of enrolling therein had expired —

Therefore he most ardently pray Your honl body to take his distressed case into consideration, and Grant him such relief in the premises as may appear Just and reasonable — and as in duty bound he will ever pray —

Test: Josh Atherton
John Young

his
Richard X Colomey
mark"