

**Records of Westborough's Involvement in the American Revolution, the
Massachusetts Militia, and the Continental Army, 1774-1792**

Finding Aid

Last Revised: February 8, 2021

Collection Summary

- Collection number:** OD.005
- Collection title:** Records of Westborough's Involvement in the American Revolution, the Massachusetts Militia, and the Continental Army, 1774-1792
- Dates:** 1774-1792
- Size:** 2.5 linear feet (1 box + materials in the Military Oversize Box).
- Creator/Collector:** The Town of Westborough, the Westborough Unit of the Massachusetts Militia and the Continental Army, and Charles H. Reed.
- Acquisitions info.:** Transferred to the Westborough Public Library from the Town Clerk's Office, which retains official custody of the collection.
- Custodial history:** This artificial collection was among a group of historical records that were transferred from the Town Clerk's Office vault to the Westborough Public Library during the renovation of Town Hall starting in 2013. The documents in the collection were housed in a wooden box labeled, "War of Revolution," and had been organized by Charles H. Reed. There is no record of ownership or stewardship of the documents before or after this time.
- Language(s):** English
- Repository:** The Westborough Public Library
- Processed by:** Charles H. Reed, 1929; reprocessed by Anthony T. Vaver, 2014

Rights and Access

Access restrictions: Collection is open for research.

Physical access restrictions: None, although researchers are encouraged to use any available digital images from the collection.

Publication rights: All records are in the public domain.

Organizational History

In response to a call for towns to form a militia in 1774, the Town of Westborough established a militia unit and elected Captain Edmund Brigham (1733-1806) as its commanding officer. The British attack at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775 prompted forty-six men from Westborough to march to Lexington and on to Charlestown that same night.

The militia unit would continue to fight throughout the American Revolutionary War, and Westborough soldiers saw action at Bunker Hill, Dorchester Heights, Bennington, Saratoga, White Plains, Philadelphia, Monmouth, Newport, and other places. In addition to supplying men to the Continental Army, Westborough also contributed money, clothing, shoes, cattle, grain, and other supplies to the cause, and blankets woven by Westborough women were sent to the soldiers stationed at Valley Forge in the winter of 1777.

Scope and Content Note

These records document the Town of Westborough's role in forming, arming, and supplying the Westborough Unit of the Massachusetts Militia and the Continental Army through the American Revolutionary War, and they demonstrate the sacrifices the Town made to support the war effort. The collection mixes muster rolls, military orders, and personnel records of the Militia Unit with Town records related to supporting the general cause of the American Revolution, including meeting minutes, reports, financial accounts, bills and receipts, and interactions with the State of Massachusetts. Documents of note include the Proclamation of Independence by the General Court of MA Bay on January 23, 1776 (Military Oversize Box, Folder 1.04) and a 1774 Tax Bill to the towns signed by Samuel Adams (Military Oversize Box, 1.07).

This collection was among a group of historical records that were transferred from the Town Clerk's Office vault to the Westborough Public Library during the renovation of Town Hall starting in 2013. Charles H. Reed, a town member with an interest in history, first gathered the records and organized them in 1929, and afterwards the artificial collection was stored in a wooden box labeled, "War of Revolution." The index he created for the collection and the envelopes he used to organize them are stored in the final folders of this collection, and they provide important and interesting information about the contents of the collection. In 2014, the collection was reorganized to conform as much as possible to current practices for organizing archival materials, and the records were transferred to archival quality storage containers.

Note: an envelope labeled "14 – The Hessian Prisoners, Nov. 4, 1777" was originally indexed by Charles H. Reed, but was not found in the collection and is currently lost.

Note: A tax notice issued to the town in 1775 appears in the Historical Records of the Evangelical Congregational Church (LH.082) collection in folder OS.13.

Related Collection

- Historical Records of the Evangelical Congregational Church, Westborough, MA, 1784-1914 (OD.009)

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Town Actions

Box 1

Folder

- 1.01 Town Warrants, Meeting Minutes, and Reports, 1776-1777
- 1.02 List of Males Over 16 Years Old, 1777

Series 2: Personnel

Box 1

Folder

- 1.03 Draft of Men, 1777
- 1.04 Account of Service By Members of the Minute Company, 1775
- 1.05 Orders to March to Grafton, with List of Soldiers, 1777
- 1.06 List of Men Who Returned from Bennington on Their Own and Ordered to Be Arrested, 1777
- 1.07 Certification of Soldiers Who Fought at Bennington and Discharged, 1778
- 1.08 Certifications of Service in the Continental Army, 1776-1780
- 1.09 Substitutes for Serving in the Army, 1776-1781
- 1.10 Discharges, 1780-1781
- 1.11 Fines for Not Serving in the Army, 1777-1779
- 1.12 List of Male Inhabitants of Westborough Over 16 Years Old in the Year 1777, 1929
- 1.13 List of Soldiers from Westborough in the War of Revolution, 1928

Series 3: Finance

Box 1

Folder

- 1.14 Reports on Payments to Soldiers, 1776-1777
- 1.15 Account of Payments to Soldiers, 1775-1780
- 1.16 Call of Payment to Soldiers, 1781
- 1.17 Order for Payment to Soldiers, 1781
- 1.18 Orders for Payments to Soldiers, 1777-1794
- 1.19 Receipts for Payments to Soldiers, 1777-1782
- 1.20 Distribution of Munitions by Selectmen, 1775-1776
- 1.21 Account of Provisions Paid By the Town, 1775
- 1.22 Accounts for Supplies and Services, 1775-1777
- 1.23 Orders for Payments for Supplies and Services, 1775-1779, n.d.
- 1.24 Bills and Receipts for Supplies and Services, 1775-1781
- 1.25 Receipts for Supplying the Town's Quota of Beef, 1781
- 1.26 Receipts for Donated Clothing Sent to Soldiers at Valley Forge, 1777-1778
- 1.27 Complaint to the House of Representatives from Selectmen Regarding the Neglect of Payment for Supplies, 1778
- 1.28 Accounts of Promissory Notes Issued by the Town, 1781
- 1.29 Promissory Notes Issued by the Town, 1776-1779
- 1.30 Promissory Notes Issued by the Town, 1780-1781

- 1.31 Promissory Notes Issued by the Town, 1782-1783
- 1.32 Abatements, 1776
- 1.33 Payments by the State of Massachusetts to Westborough, 1779-1792
- 1.34 Letter Regarding Payment of the Continental Tax, 1782
- 1.35 List of Homeless People Displaced by the Battle of Bunker Hill and Bills for Their Care, 1775

Military Oversize Box

Folder

- M.01 Assessments of Costs for Soldiers, 1778
- M.02 Town Financial Report, 1783

Series 4: Actions by the State of Massachusetts and Other Printed Material

Box 1

Folder

- 1.36 Call for Representation by the British Government, 1775
- 1.37 State Constitutional Convention for Massachusetts, 1777-1780
- 1.38 Address on Framing a New Constitution for the State of MA Bay, 1780
- 1.39 Finance Resolutions from the State of MA, 1776-1784
- 1.40 List of Worcester Protestors (Tories), n.d.

Military Oversize Box

Folder

- M.03 Appeals from Inhabitants of Boston, 1774-1779
- M.04 Proclamation of Independence by the General Court of MA Bay, 1776
- M.05 Calls for Soldiers by the State of MA, 1776-1780
- M.06 Calls for Supplies by the State of MA, 1775-1780
- M.07 Tax Bill to Towns [Signed by Samuel Adams], 1774
- M.08 Act to Prevent the Export of Certain Articles from the State, 1779

Series 5: Indexes and Envelopes from the Old Storage Box

Box 1

Folder

- 1.41 Indexes to the Original "War of Revolution" Box Organized by Charles H. Reed, 1929 and 2014
- 1.42 Storage Envelopes from the Original "War of Revolution" Box, 1929