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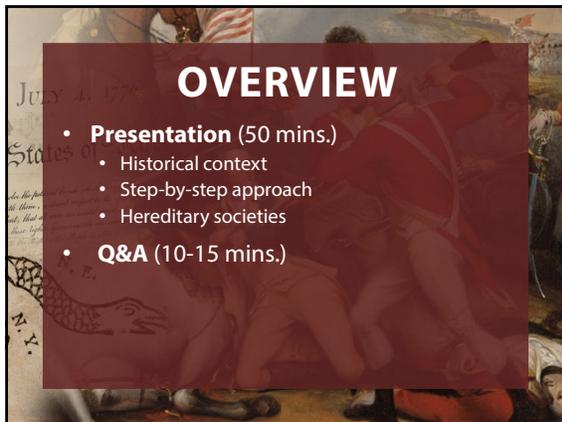
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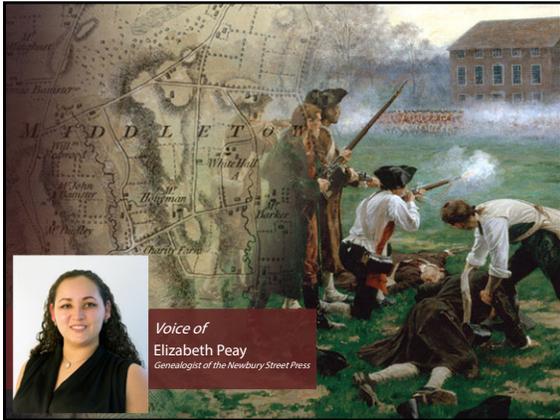
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## Events Leading to Revolution

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**Taxation**

- British Crown in debt after Seven Years' War and French and Indian War
  - Wars ended in 1763
- Needed to raise revenue from thirteen colonies
  - Revenue or Sugar Act of 1764
  - Stamp Act of 1765
  - Townshend Acts of 1767

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### Escalation

- Boston Massacre - 1770
- British Crown sought to subdue Colonies
  - Tea Act of 1773
  - Coercive Acts of 1774
- Bolstered Patriot cause



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### Articles of Association

- Those found guilty of subverting the Association were publicly renounced
- Names published in newspapers
- Publicly slandered



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### Emergence of Loyalists

- The Articles of Association were seen as catalyst
- Forced colonists to take a side
- Two groups emerged
  - **Whigs:** Supporters of Patriot cause
  - **Tories:** Supporters of British Crown

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### Battles of Lexington and Concord

- April 19, 1775
- Outbreak of war



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### Statistics

- About 231,000 soldiers served in the Continental Army
- About 145,000 soldiers served in the Colonial Militia
- Over 22,000 British soldiers were dispatched to North America for use in the British War Effort
- About 25,000 Loyalists Soldiers served in the conflict
- Roughly 12,000 French soldiers and sailors fought alongside the colonial army
- Nearly 30,000 Hessian soldiers fought alongside the British Army

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### Colonial Militia

- Militias were the main colonial military organization for defense
- Militias were only part-time and non-standardized



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**How were colonial militias organized?**

- Each town would primarily raise a militia consisting of local men
- In Massachusetts every town was expected to maintain at least one company (approx. 60 men) commanded by a captain
- Many local militia laws required nearly all men between the ages of 16 and 60 to serve, keep arms, and train

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**What did training look like for the men of the militia**

- Training was required by law 6 days each year: two days in April, one day each in May and June, and two days in October
- Regimental training days, called a “muster” were only held once every few years

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**Minutemen vs. Militia**

- Serving in your town’s militia company was required by law
- Minuteman companies were raised by volunteer
- Militia companies trained 6 days each year, minuteman companies trained two days each week
- Minutemen were also paid for training days, on average 1 shilling for each half day

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### Continental Army

- Founded on June 14, 1775 by the Second Continental Congress
- Forces were better trained and organized than the local militias



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### Colonial Navy

- 13 October 1775 - Continental Congress authorized the creation of the Continental Navy
- By 1776 - colonies had 27 warships
- Relied heavily on commissioning Privateering vessels
- A Privateer Commission was issued to vessels, called privateers or cruisers, whose primary objective was to disrupt enemy shipping

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Ubj I 'q  
Determine  
if he fought

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**Too young or Too Old ?**

- Ages not listed, no town given
- Age range of typical soldier, 18-35
- Average birth year 1735-1760
- Extremes: early 1700s & late 1760s

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**How Did They Serve?**

- Military Service
- Loyalists
- Naval
- Provisions
- Boston Tea Party



*Americans throwing the Contents of the Tea-Ship into the River, at Boston*

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**Vital Records**

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### Vital Records

- Birth, marriage, and death Records
- Often provide the names of the individual's parents and/or spouse
- Depending on the state, records may be held on the state, county, and/or town/city level
- These facts will be the building stones of your research

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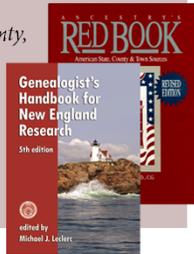
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### Vital Records: Resources

- *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*, 5th ed. (NEHGS, 2012)
- *Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources*, 3rd ed. (Ancestry Publishing, 2004)
- *The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy*, 3rd ed. (Ancestry Publishing, 2006)



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Cite as you write!

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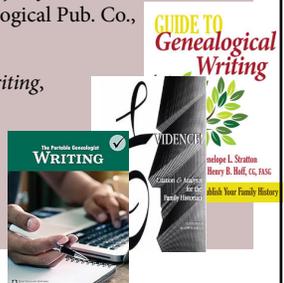
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### Citations and Footnotes

- *Evidence! Citation & Analysis for the Family Historian* (Genealogical Pub. Co., 1997)
- *Guide to Genealogical Writing*, 3rd ed. (NEHGS, 2014)
- *The Portable Genealogist: Writing* (NEHGS, 2017)



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### Alternative Vital Records



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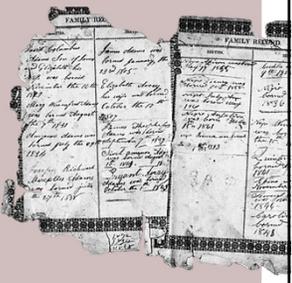
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### Bible Records

- Rare, but helpful
- Maintained by local historical societies, archives, or genealogical society (NEHGS)



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### Mismarked Graves




Gravestone of Captain Simon Gross (Lebanon, Conn.)

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### SIMON GROSS

**QUALIFICATION:** Rule of 1854

**MILITARY ABSTRACT:** 2nd or 3rd Lieutenant, Continental Frigate *Boston*, 12 Oct. 1776; taken prisoner, 9 July 1777; exchanged, 24 Jan. 1778; Lieutenant, Continental Frigate *Confederacy*, by 30 Oct. 1778; taken prisoner, 14 April 1781; released, summer or fall 1781; Subsequent Service: Captain, Revenue-Marine cutter *Active*, Jan. 1791; resigned, July 1792, succeeded by Captain David Porter; 1st Lieutenant, United States Frigate *Constellation*, 30 Aug. 1797; resigned or discharged, May 1798.<sup>1</sup>

**BIRTH:** His birth and parentage are unclear.<sup>2</sup>

**MARRIAGE:** Conjectural: (1) possibly Baltimore, Md. 14 Aug. 1787 to **MARY LEWIS**, whose birth is unknown, died before 1798; (2) possibly Baltimore 22 Jan. 1798 to **ANN JOB ALLISON**, whose birth and death are unknown.<sup>3</sup> Given the uncertainty of his birth and parentage, these marriages are speculative.

**DEATH:** After 1803.<sup>4</sup>

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### Family Relics in the Attic

- Letters
- Diaries
- Paintings
- Guns & Swords
- Discharge Papers
- Oral Traditions




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### Artifacts

- Mementos left by your ancestor can add more than you might think
- Weapons, badges, original commissions, clothing, personal effects
- Photos and Images



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## U to Z Research

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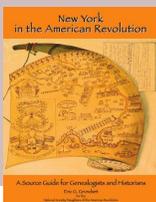
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### Where to Start?

- Eric Grundset's state-by-state source guide compilations
- Connecticut, Maine & Mass., New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, etc.



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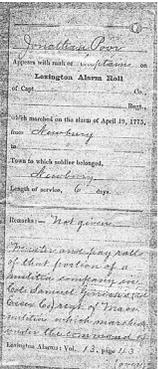
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### Useful Resources

- Muster rolls
- Pension files
- Quartermaster rolls
- Journals and diaries
- Published genealogies
- 1840 Census
- Correspondence from officers
- Maps
- Town histories
- *TIP: Adopt the regiment!*



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### Mass. Soldiers & Sailors

The following is his Revolutionary War sketch from *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War* (12559).

**Poor, Jonathan**, Newbury, Captain of a company of militia, Col. Samuel Gerrish's (2d Essex Co.) Regt., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 6 days; also, Captain; return of militia officers who joined Col. Jedediah Huntington's Regt., dated Roxbury Camp, Dec. 22, 1775; ordered in Council Feb. 3, 1776, that said officers be commissioned; also, Captain; list of officers of companies under command of Col. Huntington which reinforced the army; commissioned Feb. 3, 1776; also, copy of a return of said Poor's co. [year not given]; copy of a receipt dated Newbury, march 18, 1777, signed by men belonging to said Poor's co., for wages for 6 weeks service, appears on reverse of return; also, Captain, 1st co., Col. Daniel Spafford's (7th Essex Co.) regt. of Mass. militia; list of officers to be commissioned in said regiment; ordered in Council June 26, 1777, that said officers be commissioned; reported commissioned June 26, 1777.

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### Looking for the Sources

- **Poor, Jonathan**, *Newbury*, Captain of a company of militia, Col. Samuel Gerrish's (2d Essex Co.) Regt., which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 6 days; also, Captain; return of militia officers who joined Col. Jedediah Huntington's Regt., dated Roxbury Camp, Dec. 22, 1775; ordered in Council Feb. 3, 1776, that said officers be commissioned; also, Captain; list of officers of companies under command of Col. Huntington which reinforced the army; commissioned Feb. 3, 1776; also, copy of a return of said Poor's co. [year not given]; copy of a receipt dated Newbury, march 18, 1777, signed by men belonging to said Poor's co., for wages for 6 weeks service, appears on reverse of return; also, Captain, 1st co., Col. Daniel Spafford's (7th Essex Co.) regt. of Mass. militia; list of officers to be commissioned in said regiment; ordered in Council June 26, 1777, that said officers be commissioned; reported commissioned June 26, 1777.

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### Muster Roll Index Microfilm

- Massachusetts Muster Rolls
- (index file cards) of the Revolutionary War, 1767-1833
- 259 Microfilms

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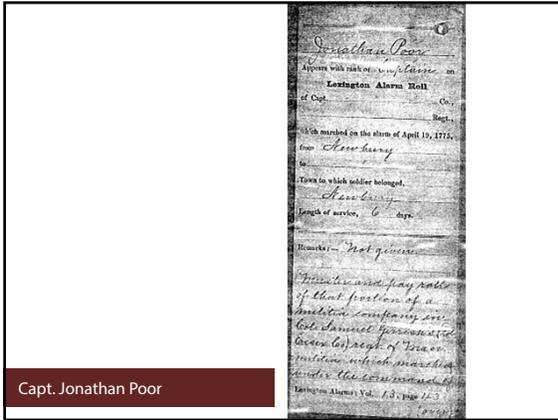
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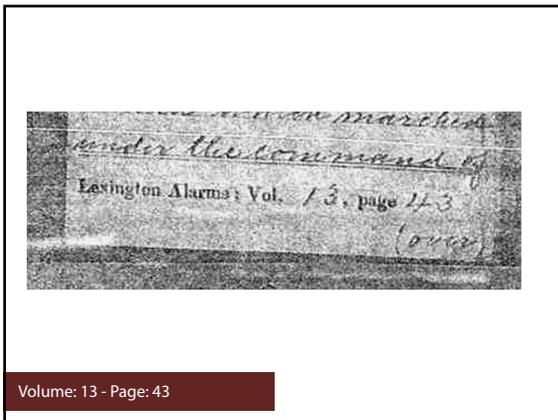
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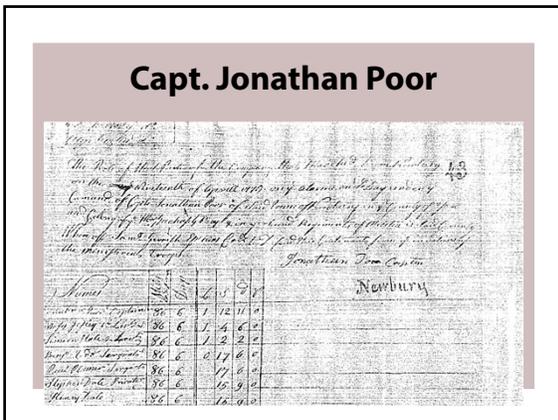
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### Muster Rolls

- Just because a soldier is listed as part of a regiment or company, there is always more to the story
- Never Assume
- Transcribed rolls don't always include remarks




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## Consider Adopting the Regiment or Crew

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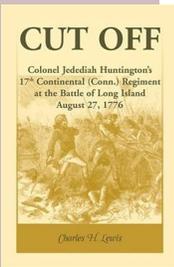
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### What Makes This Different

- Adopting the Regiment allows a researcher to learn more about the regiment itself and possibly more about your ancestor.
- Your ancestor is just a small piece of the puzzle, and widening your lens will allow you to understand more.




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### Where to Begin

- Start with what you know
  - State, Regiment, Company, Ship, etc.



Continental Army Uniforms, by Charles M. Lefferts



USS Confederacy, Navy Art Gallery

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### Research The Officers

- Written Records
  - Journals
  - Official Correspondence
- Biographies, Military Histories
- The bigger the name, the more written works that likely exist




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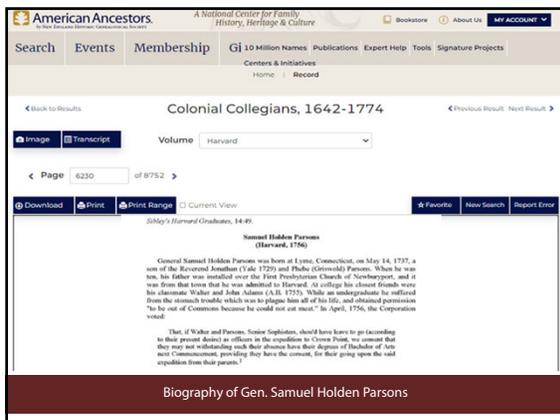
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The screenshot shows the AmericanAncestors website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for Search, Events, Membership, and a search bar. Below the search bar, there are filters for 'Colonial Collegians, 1642-1774' and 'Volume: Harvard'. The main content area displays a search result for 'Samuel Holden Parsons (Harvard, 1756)'. The text of the result includes a biographical sketch: 'General Samuel Holden Parsons was born at Lyme, Connecticut, on May 14, 1737, a son of the Reverend Jonathan (d.1729) and Phoebe (Griswold) Parsons. When he was ten, his father was installed over the First Presbyterian Church of Newburyport, and it was from that town that he was admitted to Harvard. Of college his closest friends were his classmates Walker and John Adams (A.B. 1773). While an undergraduate he suffered from the stomach trouble which was to plague him all of his life, and obtained permission "to be out of Commencement because he could not eat meat." In April, 1756, the Corporation voted: "That, if Walker and Parsons, Senior Sophomores, should hereafter be so succeeding to their present duties as officers in the expedition to Crown Point, we consent that they may not relinquish such their absence their degree of Bachelor of Arts until Commencement, providing they have the consent, for their going upon the said expedition from their parents.'

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### Pension Timeline

- **1776:** Half pay for officers and men disabled in the service and were incapable of earning a living.
- **1780:** Half pay for 7 yrs. To widows and orphans of officers.
- **1806:** Pensions allowed to veterans of State troops and militia for the first time.
- **1818:** Pensions for life based on a period of 9 mos. or until the end of the war.

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### Pension Timeline

- **1820:** Certified inventories of pensioner's estate and income were required.
- **1832:** Pensions granted to those with service less than 6 mos.
- **1838:** Widows were authorized pensions for 5 yrs. if they had married the veteran before 1794.
- **1848:** Widows were authorized pensions for life if they had married the veteran before 1800.

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### Pension Timeline

- **1853:** All widows restrictions were eliminated.
- **1869:** Daniel F. Bakeman last pensioner dies.
- **1878:** Widows authorized pensions for life if the veteran only served 2 weeks.
- **1906:** Esther (Sumner) Damon the last widow to collect a pension dies in Vermont.

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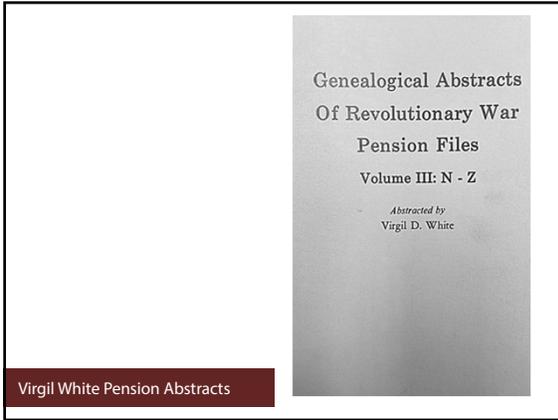
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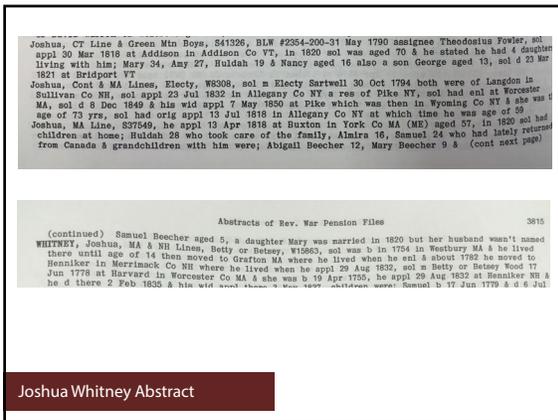
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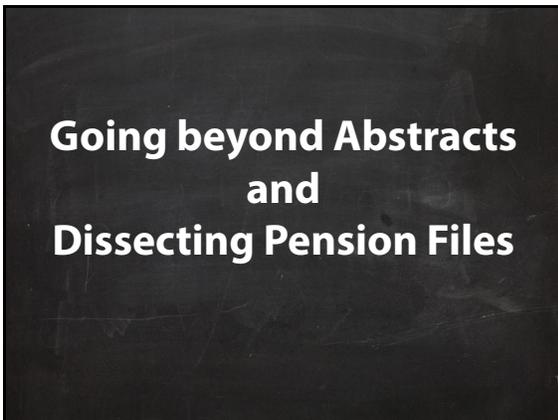
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### Newspapers

**D**ESERTED from Capt. William Richards's Company in Col. Huntington's Regiment, a Soldier, who calls himself Christopher Shermund, of North Kingston in the State of Rhode-Island; he is 5 Feet 7 Inches high, has blue Eyes, short light Hair, light Complexion, a pretty well set Man; he enlisted January the 9th 1777, and went towards New-London. Whoever will apprehend said Defeater, and secure him in any Goal in the United States, and notify the Subscriber, at Say-Brook, shall receive five Dollars Reward, and all necessary Charges.

**HENRY HILL, Lieut.**

*Connecticut Gazette, 11 April 1777*

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### Journals and Diaries

- Published journals
- Transcribed accounts
- Local historical societies
- Diary of Lt. Jabez Fitch (New York Public Library)



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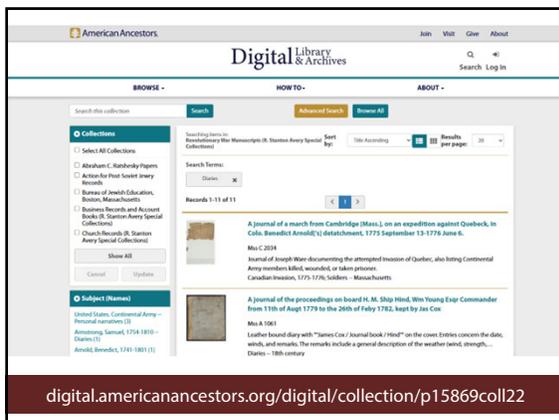
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### What To Do With Your Research

- Write a biography
- Write a book on a regiment
- Start a social media group/Connect with your fellow enthusiasts
- Apply to a lineage society

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### Applying to Hereditary Societies

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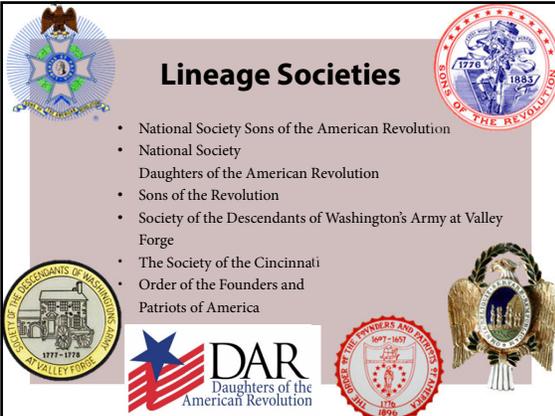
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### Lineage Societies

- National Society Sons of the American Revolution
- National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
- Sons of the Revolution
- Society of the Descendants of Washington's Army at Valley Forge
- The Society of the Cincinnati
- Order of the Founders and Patriots of America



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**QUESTIONS?**  
Schedule a consultation  
*consultations@americanancestors.org*  
Hire Research Services  
*research@americanancestors.org*

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AmericanAncestors.org/discover-your-revolutionary-roots-researching-patriot-ancestors

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Revolutionary Roots  
Do You Have Revolutionary Roots?  
Find Out More →  
revolutionaryroots.AmericanAncestors.org

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*Upcoming Events*

AMERICAN INSPIRATION HYBRID AUTHOR EVENT  
**Writing History: Rick Atkinson Talks with Ryan J. Woods about American History and The Revolution Trilogy**  
January 21, 2026, 6:00 – 7:15 PM ET

HYBRID LECTURE  
**Researching Black Patriots and Loyalists During the Revolutionary Era**  
Presented by Danielle Rose  
February 7, 2026, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

AMERICAN STORIES, AMERICAN LIVES GALA  
**Commemorating Revolutionary Roots**  
*Honoring Glenn Close and Dr. Jane Kamensky*  
Boston Harbor Hotel, Boston, MA  
April 23, 2026, 6:00 – 9:00 PM ET

[AmericanAncestors.org/Events](https://AmericanAncestors.org/Events)

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**THANK YOU!**  
[AmericanAncestors.org](https://AmericanAncestors.org)

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**NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**  
[AmericanAncestors.org](https://AmericanAncestors.org)  
Copyright ©2026

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The screenshot shows the DAR Ancestor Search interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Ancestor' highlighted. Below it, the 'Ancestor Search' title is displayed. A message states: 'You must enter a value in at least one of the marked fields.' The search form includes fields for Ancestor Last Name (with a red asterisk), Ancestor First Name (with a red asterisk), State of Service, Ancestor Number, State of Birth (with a Year dropdown), State of Death (with a Year dropdown), Spouse Last/Maiden Name, and Spouse First Name. A 'SEARCH' button and a 'Clear Form' button are at the bottom of the form. To the right, there is a 'Search Options' sidebar with links for Overview & Help, New Search, Advanced Search, Child Search, and Refine Search. Below the sidebar is a 'Become a Member!' section with a photo of three women.

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The screenshot shows the DAR profile page for Jonathan Poor. The profile information includes: Name: POOR, JONATHAN; Ancestor #: AD99836; Service: MASSACHUSETTS Rank: CAPTAIN; Birth: 1201797 NEWBURY ESSEX CO MASSACHUSETTS; Death: 9191807 NEWBURY ESSEX CO MASSACHUSETTS; Service Source: MA SOLS & SALES, VOL. 12, P. 589; Service Description: 1) COLS SAMUEL GERRISH, JEDEDIAH HUNTINGTON, DANIEL SPAFFORD; 2) LEXINGTON ALARM, ESSEX CO MILITIA. The 'RESIDENCE' section lists: 1) City: NEWBURY - County: ESSEX CO - State: MASSACHUSETTS. The 'SPOUSE' section lists: 1) SARAH DOLE. To the right, there is a sidebar with search options (Advanced Search, Child Search, Recent, Refine Search) and a 'Become a Member!' section with a photo of three women and the text: 'DAR members are women who come from diverse backgrounds and hold a variety of interests. Their common bond is their line!'

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