

EAST HADDAM
REVOLUTIONARY HEROES

HISTORY HAPPENS HERE...

GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD PROJECT

2024

BY MATHILDA A. BURKE
EAST HADDAM, CONNECTICUT

Few if any towns in Connecticut have a brighter Revolutionary record [than East Haddam]. Nothing in the history of the town is more worthy of mention; nothing, probably, will be more highly appreciated than...the sublime patriotism of its early settlers.

History of Middlesex County, Connecticut
with Biographical Sketches of its Prominent Men
(J.B. Beers & Company, 1884)



ABOUT THIS PROJECT

Before this project became official, I met a wonderful man by the name of Forrest Anderson, the Commander of our local VFW. Forrest has a mission to recognize and honor all veterans from East Haddam. He calls his project The Wall of Honor. In the Fall of 2022, I began helping Forrest with his research. I became so interested in the Revolutionary War era and its patriots, I was inspired to create this Girl Scout Gold Award Project. My mission is to create a comprehensive list of Patriots who served representing my hometown of East Haddam. I'm also collecting stories of prominent individuals, historical data, and general information about the American Revolution. The more I research, the larger this project and website gets! I hope to inspire others to learn more about this important period in our country's history and their own hometown heroes of the American Revolution.

ABOUT ME

My name is Mathilda Burke, and I am an Ambassador Girl Scout in 12th grade. East Haddam is my hometown. History has always been my favorite subject (aside from music), and I feel so lucky to live in a town with so much history that is in need of sharing. Local history is the best history.

Mathilda A. Burke
March 2024



MY DATABASE

This database of Patriot names is the core of my project. There has never been a truly comprehensive list of Revolutionary Patriots for any town in Connecticut. Even in the small town of East Haddam which has many records from colonial times and well-preserved cemeteries, there are Patriots missing the honor and recognition they deserve. After spending over 300 hours combing through town records, family genealogies, and local histories and stomping through over 16 cemeteries, I've compiled a list of about 600 Patriots and their service records. Despite my efforts, this list is still not complete!

To qualify for my list, individuals must have a documentable Connecticut military service record and have an association with the town of East Haddam (familial roots, residency, or some other relationship with citizens of East Haddam). Many who qualify were born in East Haddam and spent their entire lives here. Others were in town just temporarily for work or visiting relatives when the call came to join ranks and serve the cause. If they were associated with East Haddam in any documentable way, they've earned recognition.

To view the complete database, go to:

www.revolutionaryheroes-easthaddam.com/east-haddam-rev-heroes



A BRIEF HISTORY OF EAST HADDAM

1662

The Wangunk tribe sold all the land that is now Haddam and East Haddam to Matthew Allyn and Samuel Willys who represented the original 28 proprietors (all from Hartford) of the Thirty Mile Plantation. The purchase was made for thirty coats (worth approximately \$100).

1670 - 1671

Two roads were built: Creek Row, about a quarter mile east of the river; and Town Street, or "Great Highway," about a quarter mile east of Creek Row. The town was laid out in nine parcels of three-quarter mile squares with the north/south roads as boundaries.

1685

The original founding families settle permanently in East Haddam - Bates, Cone, Brainerd, Gates, Chapman, Booge, Ackley, and Spencer families.

1693

The first burial yard was created: Old Cove Burying Ground along the Salmon River. The place was originally known as "Grave Yard Point." The first soul buried there in the winter of 1693 was Mrs. Arnold. Prior to this time, the settlers of East Haddam carried their dead back across the river to the Haddam cemetery. Mrs. Arnold had to be buried here because the river was iced over.

1701

George Gates was appointed first Captain of the East Haddam trainband or militia. The name comes from a "trained band" of men who were trained in military practices but were not yet used in battle.

1734

The town of East Haddam is incorporated.

1743

The first dwelling in East Haddam Lower Landing was built by Captain James Green.



1758 - 1760

Militiamen from the five local trainbands were organized into a single company to fight in the French and Indian Wars.

1766

The East Haddam militia companies became part of the 12th State Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Spencer.

1770 - 1783

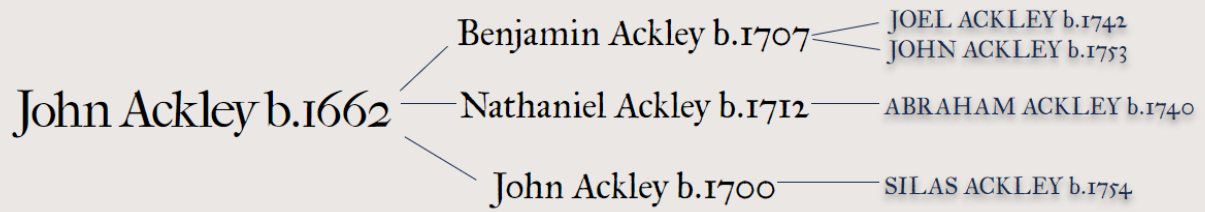
The citizens of East Haddam took up the cause of the colonies against the tyranny of England. Almost everyone contributed in some way and served throughout the Revolution.

1785

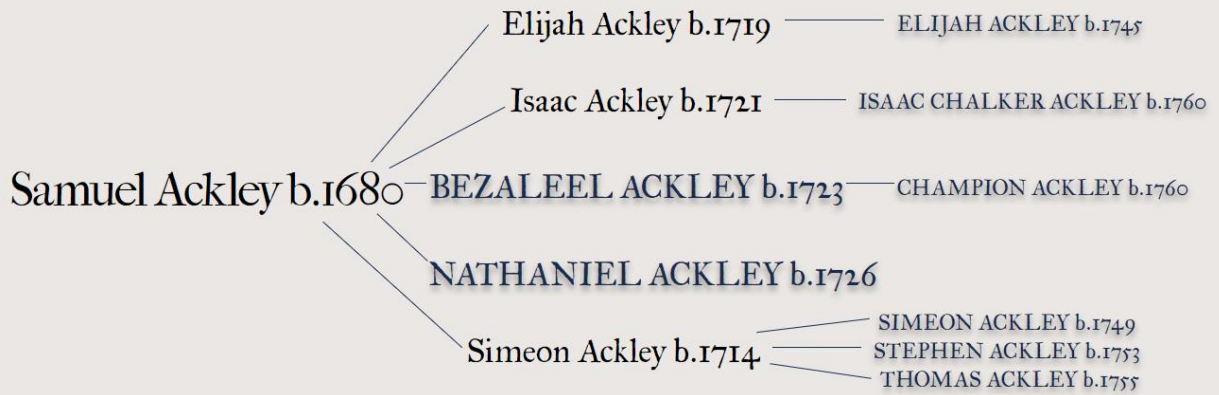
Middlesex County was formed, removing East Haddam from Hartford County. Middlesex County Court was established that same year, with Brigadier General Dyar Throop of East Haddam as its first judge.



SONS OF NICHOLAS ACKLEY



Thomas Ackley b.1664 — Job Ackley b.1703 — STEPHEN ACKLEY b.1739 — STEPHEN ACKLEY b.1763



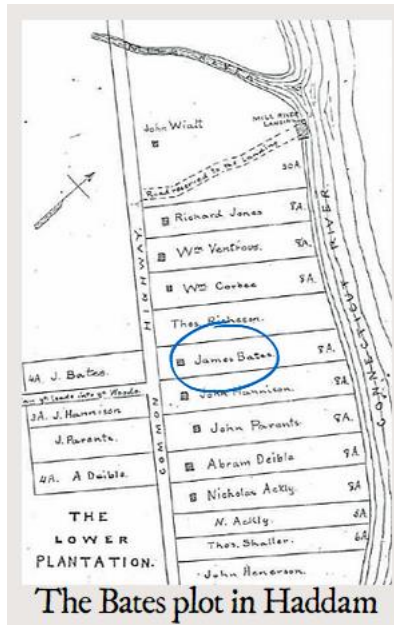


BATES

There are two Patriots from East Haddam with the surname Bates, however, I have been unable to connect them to a founding family member. The Bates family were founders of Haddam, and a John Bates did cross the Connecticut River to East Haddam. Reuben Bates and Eleazer Bates served representing the town of East Haddam.

REUBEN BATES b.1735

ELEAZER BATES b.1749





BRAINERD

Daniel Brainerd Sr., the first of his family in America, was probably born in Braintree, England, in about the year 1641. He came alone to the “New World” when he was about eight years old and lived as an indentured servant with either the Wadsworth or Wyllys family in Hartford. Most likely he could not read or write when he arrived. He stayed there until 1663, when he became one of 28 men to purchase land at Thirty Mile Island on the Connecticut River (30 miles south of Hartford). This became the town of Haddam.



THE HEADSTONE OF DANIEL BRAINERD, THE EMIGRANT ANCESTOR, AT HADDAM, CONN.

His son, Daniel Brainerd Jr, born in 1665 in Haddam married Susannah Ventres and moved across the river to become one of the first settlers of East Haddam. He located his farm about a mile north of the East Haddam Landing near a spring of water at the southern end of Creek Row. He was town surveyor in 1688 and in 1692 and town constable in 1693. Daniel Jr held a life-long role as deacon in the Congregational Church in East Haddam. He served on numerous town committees.



A WORD ABOUT THE SURNAMES BRAINARD AND BRAINERD...

Back in England, Daniel Brainerd’s family name and origin varies wildly: Brainerd, Brainard, Brainwood, Branwood, Brainewood, Braynard, Braynerd, Branard, Branerd, Brannard, Baynard, Barnerd, Barneard, Barnard, Bernard, and Burnard. Poor handwriting, simple misspelling, a broken printing press, deafness, or simple disagreements

among family members are all likely sources of the many versions. In the 1600s (and earlier)



most people couldn't read or write, even those working in the church parishes where births and deaths were recorded. So, it's really no wonder there are so many spellings of this families' name. In probate documents following their father's death, all the sons of Daniel signed their names "Braynard!"

This family in England most likely descended from one Ralph Baignard, a lieutenant to William the Conquerer. Ralph built Baynard's Castle west of London and later was given land in what is now Essex County, England, where he made a home in "Raynes" which then became Braintree, England.

Another favorite theory passed down through the generations of the family is this:

The founder of the family was the great Saxon Chief Bran, the Hurd, who conquered the Scottish Border Counties and married the daughter of the chief of the Clan of Gordon, and lived and controlled the four border counties on the Saxon, English, or Celtic side thereof, and was known as Bran the Hurd, because of the great number of Cattle (horses, sheep, goats, etc.), which this great Chief owned and controlled. Bran lived in the time of James the Second and took part in the Saxon conquests of the previously owned English Isles by Eome. These islands were afterwards conquered by the Chevalric Normans and then in turn ruled by six French Kings following the battle of Hastings which placed the Duke of Normandy on the Throne to be afterward overthrown by the House of Plantagenet.

SONS OF DANIEL BRAINERD JR.

Daniel Brainerd b.1690 — DANIEL BRAINERD b.1720 — GIDEON BRAINERD b.1752
 DANIEL BRAINERD b.1755
 JERIMIAH BRAINERD b.1759

Bezaleel Brainerd b.1701 — BEZALEEL BRAINERD b.1737 — BEZALEEL BRAINERD b.1759
 ENOCH BRAINERD b.1749 — AMAZIAH BRAINERD b.1761

SONS OF JOSHUA BRAINERD B.1672 BROTHER OF DANIEL

Joshua Brainerd b.1712 — JOSHUA BRAINERD b.1738 — JOSHUA BRAINERD b.1763
 AMASA BRAINERD b.1742
 JONAH BRAINERD b.1747
 DAVID BRAINERD b.1750



Daniel Brainerd b.1715—EBENEZER BRAINERD b.1760

Eleazer Brainerd b.1719—ADONIJAH BRAINERD b.1757

Timothy Brainerd b.1729—TIMOTHY BRAINERD b.1752

SONS OF WILLIAM BRAINERD B.1673
BROTHER OF DANIEL

Josiah Brainerd b.1711—JOSIAH BRAINERD b.1739

Nathan Brainerd b.1713—THOMAS BRAINERD b.1751

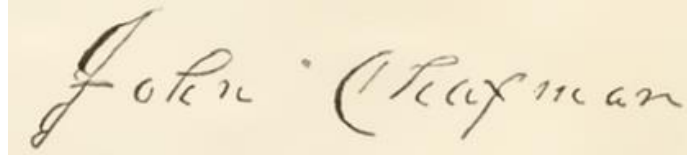
SONS OF CALEB BRAINERD B.1676
BROTHER OF DANIEL

Joshua Brainerd b.1707—ABNER BRAINERD b.1731



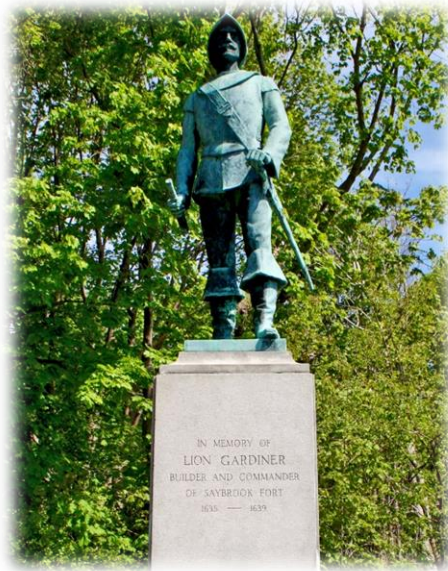
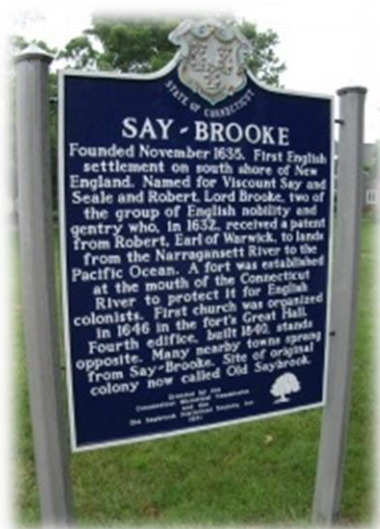
CHAPMAN

John Chapman born 1644 was one of the first settlers of East Haddam. At the session of the Connecticut General Court which convened May 10th, 1694, the following act was passed;



“This Court grants liberty to Captain John Chapman to set up a ferry over the Great River in Haddam for the future.” Chapman’s Ferry at Lower Landing was in continuous service from

that date until the completion of the swing bridge in 1913. John’s father Robert Chapman was one of the first settlers of Say-Brooke (what is now known as Old Saybrook). According to family tradition, Robert Chapman, born in 1617, came from Hull in England to Boston, in 1635. From there he sailed with Lyon Gardiner for Say-Brooke as one of the twenty men who were sent over by Sir Richard Saltonstall to take possession of a large tract of land, and make settlements, near the mouth of the Connecticut River. He was a friend of Colonel George Fenwick and participated in the Pequot War of 1637.



SONS OF JOHN CHAPMAN

Jabez Chapman b.1690 — JABEZ CHAPMAN b.1731 — JABEZ CHAPMAN b.1758



SONS OF ROBERT CHAPMAN b.1646 JOHN'S BROTHER

Robert Chapman b.1675

Robert Chapman b.1700 — ISAAC CHAPMAN b.1739
— JEDEDIAH CHAPMAN b.1741

Jonathan Chapman b.1702 — JONATHAN CHAPMAN b.1734
— JOHN CHAPMAN b.1739

Caleb Chapman b.1704 — CALEB CHAPMAN b. 1732 — SAMUEL CHAPMAN b.1755
— ZACARIAH CHAPMAN b.1740 — RUEBEN CHAPMAN b.1757

Francis Chapman b.1715 — SAMUEL CHAPMAN b.1750
— DANIEL CHAPMAN b.1751
— JOSIAH CHAPMAN b.1763

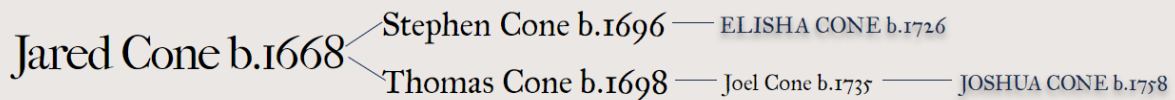
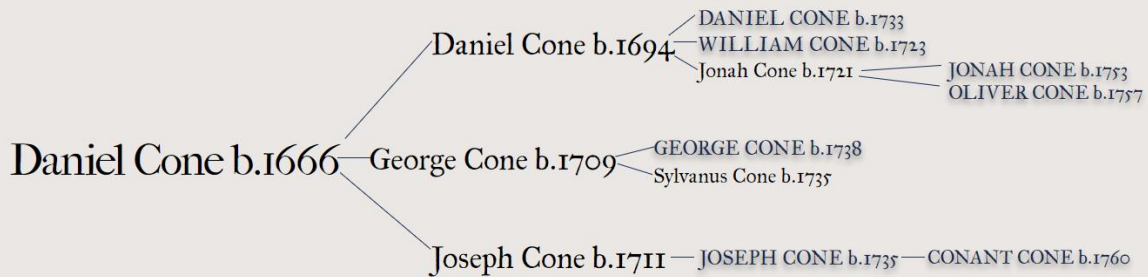
CONE

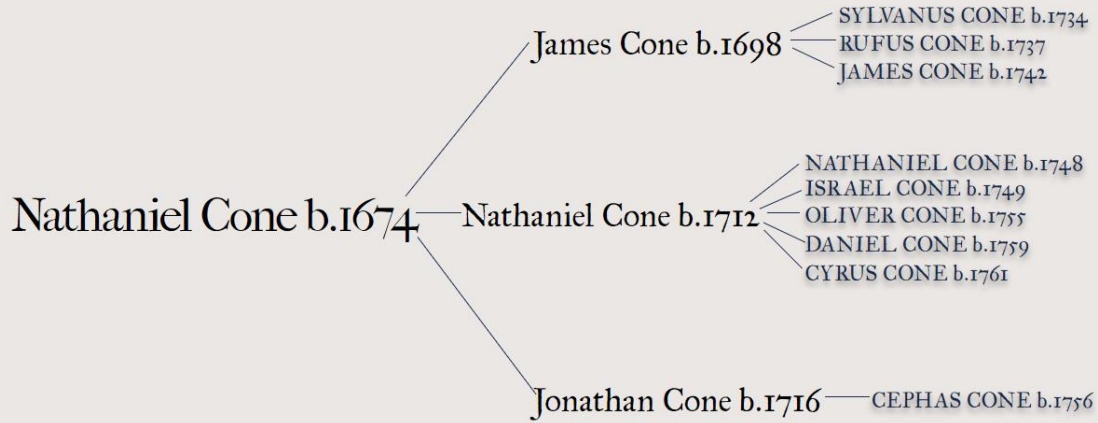
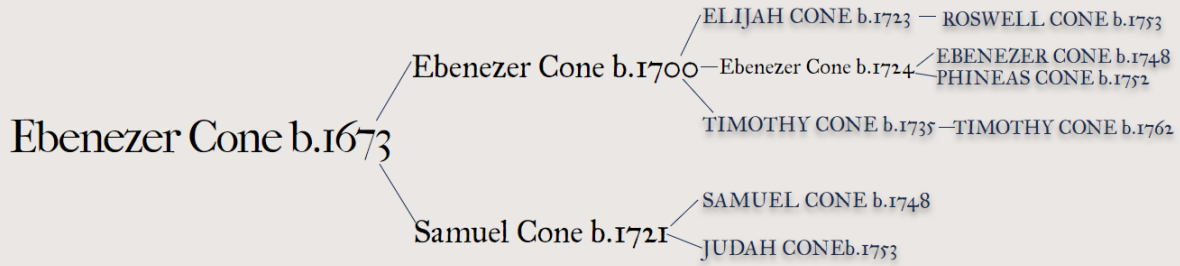
Daniel Cone was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1626. In 1651 he served in the Scottish army as a loyalist to King Charles II. He was taken prisoner at the Battle of Dunbar by English troops under the command of Oliver Cromwell. Parliament ordered the Scottish prisoners to be sent to New England as indentured slaves. Daniel was shipped to Boston and sold to John Giffard of the Iron Works of Lynn, MA to work at hard labor. He then worked as a servant for John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He eventually gained his freedom and became one of the original 28 settlers of Haddam. In 1685 he moved across the Connecticut River as one of the first settlers of East Haddam.



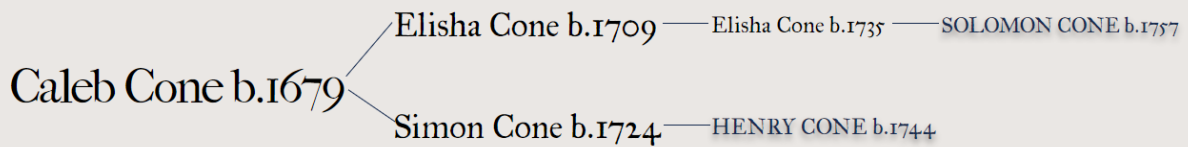
Daniel Cone b.1626

SONS OF DANIEL CONE





Stephen Cone b.1677 — Stephen Cone b.1706 — JARED CONE b.1733





GATES

George Gates was born in England about 1634 and came to Hartford at about the age of seventeen under the care of Captain Nicholas Olmsted. He married the daughter of his sponsor, Sarah Olmsted, and together they moved to Haddam on the west bank of the Connecticut River where they were among the original settlers. George later moved east of the river and helped establish the town of East Haddam. He was an active member of the Congregational Church, representative to the Connecticut General Assembly, town clerk, and captain of the militia. He outlived all the other original Haddam settlers, dying on November 12, 1724, at the age of 90.

SONS OF GEORGE GATES

Joseph Gates b.1662 — Joseph Gates b.1695 — Joseph Gates b. 1722 — JOSEPH GATES b.1754
 — Bezaleel Gates b.1726 — BEZALEEL GATES b.1751
 — AARON GATES b.1753
 — HENRY GATES b.1757

George Gates b.1705 — NEHAMIAH GATES b.1732
 — GEORGE GATES b.1737
 — PHINEAS GATES b.1747

Thomas Gates b.1663 — Thomas Gates b.1693 — GIDEON GATES b.1747
 — CALEB GATES b.1738
 — TIMOTHY GATES B.1730
 — Thomas Gates b.1724 — THOMAS GATES b.1752
 — ZACHARIAH GATES b.1753
 — NATHANIEL GATES b.1755
 — JONAH GATES b.1758

Joshua Gates b.1708 — JOSHUA GATES b.1737
 — DANIEL GATES b.1739

Daniel Gates b.1680 — Judah Gates b.1727 — JEHIEL GATES b.1758

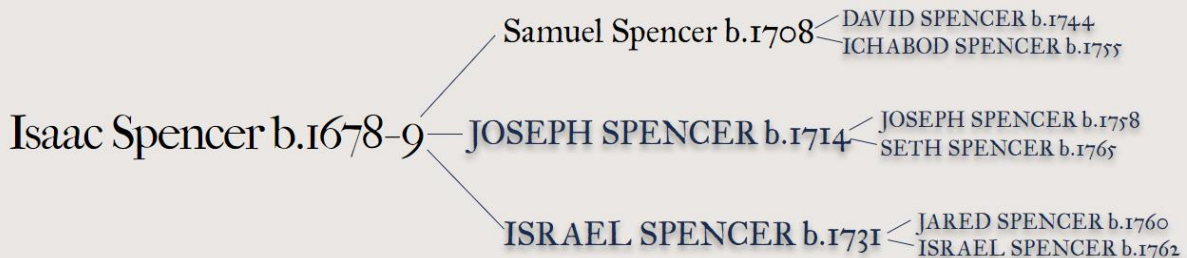
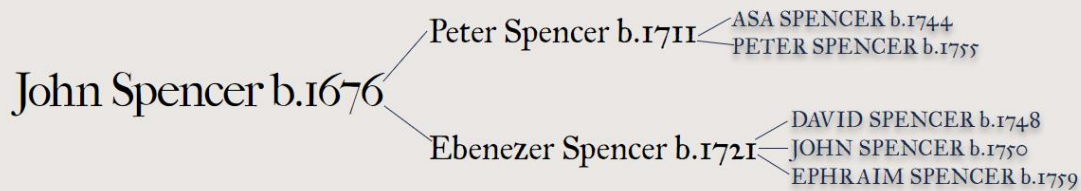
Samuel Gates b.1681 — James Gates b.1721 — SAMUEL GATES b.1754
 — JAMES GATES b.1760



SPENCER

Samuel Spencer born 1650 was one of the first settlers of East Haddam. He built a log house in 1687 on the south part of Town Street, probably within the limits of Hadlyme Society. Samuel's father Gerard Spencer was born in Stotfold, England, in 1614. He came to America in about 1630 with three of his brothers, Thomas, William, and Michael. He settled in Lynn, MA and later came to Hartford. From there he went on to become one of the original 28 settlers of Haddam. In 1675, Gerard was Ensign of the Haddam "trayne band" in King Philip's War.

SONS OF SAMUEL SPENCER



SONS OF WILLIAM SPENCER B.1656 BROTHER OF SAMUEL

Joseph Spencer b.1680 — Joseph Spencer b.1712 — ISAAC SPENCER b.1745



James Spencer b.1690 — THOMAS SPENCER b.1725
 — Joel Spencer b.1731 — JOEL SPENCER b.1762

Micajah Spencer b.1693 — Jonathan Spencer b.1723 — JAMES SPENCER b.1754
 — Jedediah Spencer b.1736 — THADDEUS SPENCER b.1754
 — ZACHARIAH SPENCER b.1741

Hezekiah Spencer b.1697 — SIMEON SPENCER b.1733

William Spencer b.1699 — Matthias Spencer b.1723 — AMAZIAH SPENCER b.1753
 — TIMOTHY SPENCER b.1756
 — WILLIAM SPENCER b.1762

WOMEN DURING THE WAR

Women contributed and endured so much during the Revolution, they also deserve to be listed as Patriots!

The Provision State

During the American Revolution, each town was responsible for providing clothing for their troops. For the women and girls of East Haddam, making and distributing items of clothing was their important contribution to the conflict. Socks, mittens, blankets, shirts, coats, overalls, breeches, and shoes were all needed. Women of the town got together by day and by firelight to spin wool, weave the yarn, and in some cases make shirts and coats in just one day. Women also had to be in charge of the farms when their husbands were at war. Connecticut became known as the “Provision State” of the Revolution, providing not just clothing, but the food for all the troops as well.



Tragedy

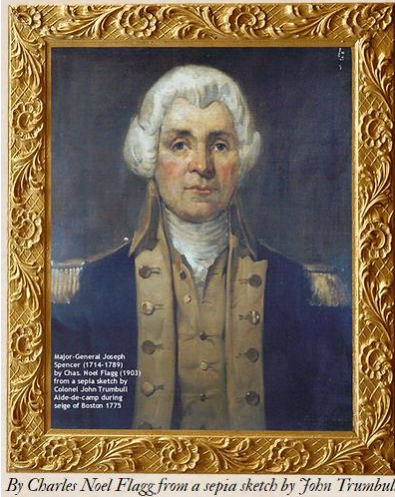


Women also suffered greatly from British raids. Many towns in Connecticut were violently destroyed, houses burned to the ground, livestock killed, and property stolen. Women and children were often violently abused by British soldiers. Some were forced to abandon their homes. The raid on New London and Groton in 1781 was especially traumatic for the

wives of the soldiers who lived near Fort Griswold. Many had to evacuate with only things they could carry, and without their husbands.

IMPORTANT EAST HADDAM INDIVIDUALS

MAJOR GENERAL JOSEPH SPENCER



By Charles Noel Flagg from a sepia sketch by John Trumbull

Major General Joseph Spencer was one of the most patriotic figures from East Haddam. He was born on October 6, 1714 and died January 13, 1789, and it is said he had been engaged in the service of his country from an early age to the time he died. His first commission was in 1747 as Lieutenant of the Millington Trainband. In 1750 he was appointed Deputy from East Haddam to the Legislature, and he became the Judge of Probate for the District of East Haddam in 1753. He was appointed Major in 1757 for the French and Indian War. He then served as Colonel of the East Haddam company for the

Lexington Alarm April 19, 1775. He became Brigadier-General for the 2nd Regiment in June 1775, and then his final rank of Major General August 9, 1776. He served in the battle of Bunker Hill and was present at the battle of Long Island.

CAPTAIN JOHN WILLEY

John Willey was born October 11, 1732 and died December 26, 1805. He was a descendant of one of the second wave of settlers of East Haddam. John Willey, Joseph Spencer, and Eliphalet Holmes must have been close friends at the time of the Revolution. All three served together from East Haddam for the Lexington Alarm. When the militia regiments were made official in the spring of 1775, John Willey and Joseph Spencer stayed together, along with most of the men who served under them in the Alarm. John Willey's highest rank was Captain.

CAPTAIN ELIPHALET HOLMES

Eliphalet Holmes was born February 3, 1746 and he died February 14, 1833. He was the son of Deacon Christopher Holmes of Hadlyme. After serving with Joseph Spencer and John Willey, he was Captain of the East Haddam Minutemen in 1776. He was also Captain under Colonel Samuel Selden of the 4th Battalion and later under Colonel Jedediah Huntington of the 1st regiment. Many East Haddam

Patriots served with him, just as they stayed with Major General Spencer and Captain Willey. After the war, he was a farmer and owned a grist mill.

CAPTAIN JAMES GREEN

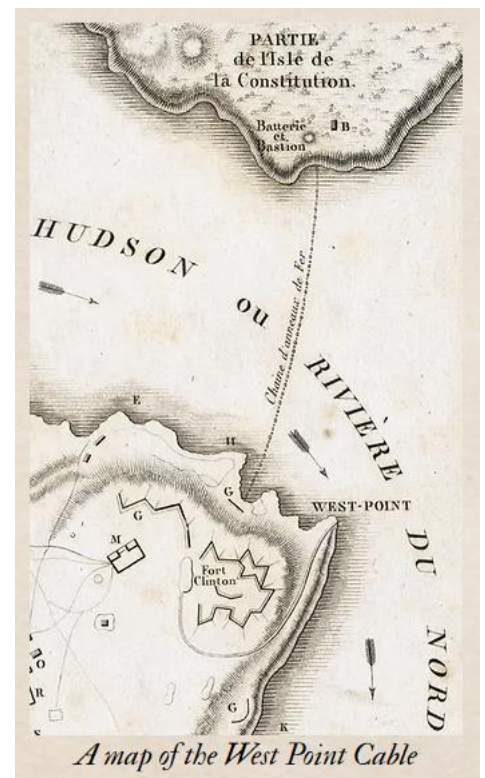
Captain James Green did many patriotic services before and during the Revolutionary War. He was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts September 17, 1728 and died in East Haddam March 11, 1809. He was a blacksmith by trade and made guns and ammunition for the army. When he was teaching here in 1773, Nathan Hale stayed in James Green's house with his family. It is said that James' children loved Nathan Hale. James' son William became attached to Hale and was very upset when they heard the news of Hale's death. It inspired him to join the service. He joined the navy but drowned on his way back to America after being imprisoned in England. In 1779 and 1780, James was the captain of the 2nd Reg of Light Horse dragoons with many other Patriots from East Haddam.

TIMOTHY SMITH

Timothy Smith is the only Patriot from East Haddam to have served in The Commander-in-Chief's Guard, or "Washington's Life Guards". This regiment was created in March of 1776 and was a hand-picked regiment for the protection of George Washington. General Washington's requirements for the officers included that they must be between five feet eight inches and five feet ten inches tall, well built, intelligent, and reliable. Evidently, Timothy Smith fit all those criteria.

SAMUEL CONE JR. AND ARUNE/ARUNNA OTIS

Samuel Cone Jr. and Arune/Arunna Otis both helped with different aspects of the great cable that cut off the Hudson River at West Point to prevent British ships from traveling farther north. Samuel Cone Jr. was a blacksmith and helped forge some of the links on the chain. Links weighed from 140 to 180 pounds each. Arune/Arunna Otis was enlisted to help lay the cable at West Point in 1778. To do this, it was floated on large log rafts.





NATIVE AMERICAN AND SLAVE PATRIOTS

Several Native Americans and slaves served in the Revolution from East Haddam and neighboring towns. Sadly, very little is known about these Patriots.



On soldier rolls that were listed alphabetically, there were sometimes a small number of names out of order at the end. Those were probably slaves or Native Americans in that company. Here is a list of Patriots that were from East Haddam and most likely slaves.

- Nero Free
- Pomp Free
- Prince Free
- Eber Hopkins
- Benjamin Hubbard
- Cuff Freeman/Negro/Smith



Nero Free, Pomp Free, and Prince Free were likely relatives, probably brothers. They served in the same regiment, and all died in 1778. They were from Hadlyme.

Several Native Americans served from East Haddam, Lyme, and Salem:

- Robert Brown
- William Sobuck
- Adam Sobuck
- Samuel Tatten/Tatoon/Tatson



Robert Brown was of mixed decent, but it is unknown from what tribe. William and Adam Sobuck were father and son and were of the Nehantic Tribe. Samuel Tatten/Tatoon/Tatson was also of mixed decent, possibly of the Mohegan Tribe.



HOW TO FIND YOUR OWN PATRIOT

Here are some tips for starting an investigation into your own Revolutionary Patriots!

START WITH YOURSELF

You are the first step of finding your ancestors! Collect all the vital information you can, first you, then your parents, then grandparents. This is the best time to start organizing your family tree. If you get too far without a plan or place to organize your information, you might lose or miss important details.

NAMES, DATES, PLACES, AND RELATIONSHIPS

These are the four pieces of necessary information to find your ancestors. Dig into any family objects or photos you might already have. Family bibles, newspaper clippings, letters, or diaries can hold timeline and relationship information. Don't forget to contact any relatives who may have more photos or stories that could help you with your search.

FIND YOUR RECORDS

There are many repositories for Federal, State, and County records for you to investigate. The National Archives and Records Administration maintains records that are of great use to genealogical researchers (Archives.gov). Important town and church records include birth, marriage, and death records.

Notes on records: The first census of the United States occurred in 1790, and prior to the 1820s large-scale town or county records are scarce. You will need to be diligent to find records of Revolutionary Americans. They're out there!



LOOK AT THE BIG PICTURE

You might get stuck if you just look at one ancestor at a time. If you're having trouble, see if there are friends or neighbors of the ancestor you're looking for. They may have more records and could be linked to your ancestor.

FREE GENEALOGY SITES

Here are some good starting point websites for genealogy research that are free:

Family Search (www.familysearch.org)

Access Genealogy (www.accessgenealogy.com)

Find-A-Grave (www.findagrave.com)

Library of Congress (www.loc.gov)