

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

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**NAME OF COLLECTION:**

United States Revolution Collection, 1754-1928

**LOCATION:**

Mss. boxes "U"  
Oversize mss. boxes "U"  
Folio vols. "U"  
Octavo vols. "U"

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**SIZE OF COLLECTION:**

5 manuscript boxes; 1 oversize manuscript box; 5 folio volumes; 4 octavo volumes

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**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:**

The five manuscript boxes, the one oversize manuscript box, and one folio volume are item-cataloged and listed in *Catalogue of the Manuscript Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, 4 vols. (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979), and in the card catalog in the Manuscripts Department.

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**SOURCE OF COLLECTION:**

Unknown

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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:**

This collection consists of an eclectic group of records pertaining to the American Revolution. Gathered from diverse sources, it includes correspondence, reports, returns, orders, rolls, military court records, copies of town meeting minutes, petitions, oaths, depositions, and receipts.

There is material relating to the early resistance of colonists to British efforts to tighten administration of the American colonies. Such events as the Stamp Act and its consequent resistance, colonial non-importation agreements, oppositions to the Tea Act and other unpopular measures, are all illuminated by documents in this collection, as well as the activities of Committees of Correspondence and town meetings. There are some especially interesting documents pertaining to the actions of the convention of committees of correspondence of Worcester County in the period 1774 to 1776.

Several items refer to the participation of the French in the American Revolution, including a few letters of Roderigue Hortalez & Co. that was an operation through which Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-1799) was able secretly to channel French aid to the American cause. Several documents written in French pertain to military organization and training.

There are several documents dealing with charges against and imprisonment of American Loyalists as well as confiscation of Loyalist estates. A series of interesting documents relate to the transport and detention of Loyalists from New York in Worcester, Mass.; a group of later documents reveals efforts by Worcester officials to obtain funds from New York to pay for the detention of New York Loyalists in Worcester.

The collection contains a large number of official military documents including returns (for troops, provisions, arms, etc.), lists of prisoners, hospital patients,  
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**COLLECTION DESCRIPTION (cont.):**

etc., guard reports, and documents pertaining to courts-martial and courts of inquiry. One such case for which there are many documents is that of the trial of Worcester militia captain Ebenezer Lovel (1730-1817).

Included is a document written in Old German script pertaining to the quarterly meeting of the German Society of the City of New York, 3 January 1785, with a list of its members, including Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin von Steuben (1730-1794).

There are a series of town resolutions enacted by Massachusetts towns and concerning the propriety of forming a new state government. There is also an interesting group of letters from Henry Marble ( -1841) to Breck Parkman (1749-1825), some correspondence of William White ( - ), of Boston, Mass., and several documents of George Webb (1740-1825).

Among the more notable individual documents in the collection are those with accounts of battles. Two Ethan Allen (1738-1789) letters relate to the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, while another by Joseph Hawley (1723-1788), of Northampton, Mass., stresses its strategic importance. There are several accounts of the action at Lexington and Concord and an excellent report of the Battle of Bunker Hill attributed to Peter Thacher (1752-1802). Other documents describe the Siege of Boston, the campaigns which culminated in the Battle of Saratoga, the Battle of Trenton, and other actions.

The collection also includes five folio volumes and four octavo volumes. Four of the folio volumes and three of the four octavo volumes contain records of the Continental Army.

The first folio volume contains, for the most part, weekly strength returns for the period 4 September 1779 to 16 June 1781 for the Third Massachusetts Brigade of Foot (consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiments, and, for a time, the 1<sup>st</sup> New York Regiment). The brigade was stationed at various times at West Point, Peekskill, Steenropie(?), Orangetown, and Camp Totowa. This volume also contains returns for the period 9 July to 27 October 1781 for the First Massachusetts Brigade of Foot (consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiments). This brigade was stationed at Peekskill.

The second folio volume, a continuation of the first folio volume, contains, for the most part, weekly strength returns for the period 3 November 1781 to 25 October 1783 for the First Massachusetts Brigade of Foot (consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiments). The brigade was stationed at various times at York Hutts, West Point, Camp Verplancks, and New Windsor.

The third folio volume is a record book of the 6<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment for the period 1777 to 1783. There are lists of field, staff, and commissioned officers, descriptive lists of non-commissioned officers and privates (noting age, physical characteristics, occupation, residence, birthplace, term and date of enlistment), records of courts-martial proceedings, lists of the dead and deserters, and registers of furloughs and discharges. This regiment was also stationed in the West Point area in the early 1780s toward the close of the war.

The fourth folio volume is the Record of the Committee to Settle Pay of Soldiers, 1779-1782, with Extracts of Massachusetts Laws, 1782-1784. It contains resolves of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and the minutes of the Committee  
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appointed by the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army, concerning the army's request for an adjustment in and settlement of the pay of the officers and soldiers because of currency depreciation. Also included are suggested means of obtaining the adjustment (e.g., by determining current prices of beef, corn, wool, and leather), a list of the committee's appointees and their duties, methods of raising taxes to cover the adjustment, and a series of Resolves and Committee Remonstrances over a controversy concerning the House's insistence on deducting from the proposed payment the original bounties given those who enlisted. The Extracts of Massachusetts Laws include the Confession Act of 1782, Marriage and Divorce, Larceny, and Executions.

The fifth folio volume (a cataloged folio folder) contains copies of letters of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, 29 April to 25 June 1775, including circular letters to Massachusetts towns calling for military preparedness in response to a possible British march from Boston, letters containing proposals for the seizure of Fort Ticonderoga, as well as those ordering supplies for Benedict Arnold (1741-1801) during the Ticonderoga expedition. Many letters reflect emergency efforts to raise troops from neighboring colonies, the unrest in the new army (including differences over appointments of officers and poor behavior of troops), and the Committee's refusal to seek cessation in hostilities. All the items in this folder are cited on the catalog cards as "U.S. Rev. Coll. Letterbook."

The first octavo volume contains the same records as the fourth folio volume, in different handwriting, concerning the Report of the Committee to adjust the salaries of officers and soldiers, although the folio volume includes additional memorials.

The second octavo volume is an orderly book, for the period 1782 to 1783, kept by Joseph Russell (1757-1837) for Captain Benjamin Heywood's (1746-1816) 5<sup>th</sup> Company, 6<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment. Included are lists of "stipulated prices" for work performed by tailors, shoemakers, and washerwomen; weekly and provision returns; rosters; inspection returns; and a copy of orders issued by Major-General Robert Howe (1732-1786), 17 November 1782, concerning the need to "restrain the marauding" spirit among the soldiers towards the inhabitants. Several provision returns mention women and children drawing specific amounts of supplies.

The third octavo volume contains extracts from several Congressional Resolutions (e.g., proclamations of peace, 1783); provisions to be distributed among wounded officers, 1776; salary scales, 1782; duties of the quartermaster-general and his subordinates. The volume includes examples of forms to be followed for recording returns and subsistence-allowance. Also copied into the volume is the Constitution of the Society of the Cincinnati (a fraternal organization of veteran officers), 1783, as well as a list of officers at the New Windsor Cantonment, 1783. This volume may have been kept by Lt. Col. Thomas Cogswell (1746-1810).

The fourth octavo volume is the receipt book, 1781, of Capt. Abraham Tuckerman ( - ), Quartermaster of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Brigade. The volume contains receipts for specific supplies sent to regiments at West Point and Peekskill, N.Y., and Philipsburg, Pa. There are also a few provision returns for Capt. Tuckerman, carpenters, blacksmiths, and others.

See Contents List.

25 August 1975  
revised 5 July 1977  
revised 15 August 1977  
revised 31 January 1979  
revised 11 September 1995  
revised 5 March 2010

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Contents List

Manuscript Box

- 1            n.d.; 1754 - 1775 April
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Folder 3    1754-1773  
Folder 4    1774  
Folder 5    1775, January - March  
Folder 6    1775, April
- 2            1775 May - 1776
- Folder 1    1775, May - June  
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Oversize Manuscript Box

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Folder 7    1782, February

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Oversize Manuscript Box (cont.)

Folder 8 1782, March  
Folder 9 1782, April - December  
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Folder 11 1784

Folio Volume

- 1 Returns, 1779 September 4-1781 June 16  
returns of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Massachusetts Brigade of Foot; Brig. Gen. John Paterson, et al., commanders  
Returns, 1781 July 9 - October 27  
returns of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Brigade; Brig. Gen. John Glover et al., commanders
- 2 Returns, 1781 November 3 - 1783 October 25  
returns of the 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Brigade; Brig. Gen. John Glover et al., commanders
- 3 Record Book, 1777-1783  
regimental record book of the 6<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment
- 4 Record of the Committee to Settle Pay of Soldiers, 1779-1782  
with extracts of Massachusetts laws, 1782-1784
- 5 Letters, 1775 April 29 - June 25  
letters of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety

Octavo Volume

- 1 Report, 1779 November 24  
report of the committee appointed by the Massachusetts line of the Army to adjust and settle the accounts of officers and soldiers
- 2 Orderly Book, 1782-1783  
kept by Joseph Russell; record of returns for Capt. Benjamin Heywood's 5<sup>th</sup> Company, 6<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment
- 3 Extracts and Congressional Resolutions, 1776; 1782; 1783  
possibly kept by Lt. Col. Thomas Cogswell; includes Constitution of the Society of the Cincinnati, 1783; blank forms for return records
- 4 Receipt Book, 1781  
kept by Capt. Abraham Tuckerman, Brigade Quartermaster, 1<sup>st</sup> Massachusetts Brigade, concerning supplies received by regiments at West Point and Peekskill, N.Y., and Philipsburg, Pa.