

A SORT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND GENEALOGY

By Dea. Justin Hitchcock

Remarks and Observations Made by Justin Hitchcock

Transcription of a typescript
manuscript in the collections of the
Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and Historic Deerfield,
Deerfield, Massachusetts

Transcribed by
Robert T. McMaster
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INTRODUCTION

Justin Hitchcock (1752-1822) was born in Springfield, Massachusetts. His family moved to nearby Granville where he attended school until age fourteen. After completing an apprenticeship with a Springfield hatmaker, Justin moved in 1773 to Deerfield, Massachusetts, where he started his own business. In 1779 he married Mercy Hoyt of Deerfield. The couple lived in Deerfield for the rest of their lives, raising five children. Their last child, Edward, was born in 1793.

Justin recorded the events of his life as well as his reflections on the early years of American history from his birth through 1799. Exactly when he began writing his autobiography is unclear. In the first seven pages he discusses his family history and recounts his childhood. Entries beginning in 1767 may have been written contemporaneously, although it is unclear whether the phrase “this year” that appears in nearly every entry should be taken to mean that the entry was written at some point at the conclusion of that year or recorded from memory at some later time.

Several versions of Justin’s autobiography are held by the Memorial Libraries in Deerfield, Massachusetts, none of them originals. This transcription is from a typescript version that has been attributed to Justin’s great grandson, John Sawyer Hitchcock (1869-1928). Another hand-written copy may be the work of Justin’s grandson, Nathaniel Hitchcock (1812-1900). A section of the autobiography was published in the *The Grafton Magazine of History and Genealogy* 1, 24-34, 1909.

Years noted in brackets (1767 – 1789) were added by me and refer to the dates of the events described, not necessarily the year when the entry was made. Beginning in 1790 the author (or copier) entered headings for each year; these are shown without brackets. Page numbers and page breaks refer to the typescript version. Some spelling errors have been corrected for clarity; others (such as “genealogy”) have been left unchanged.

I am indebted to the Memorial Libraries of Historic Deerfield and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and particularly to David Bosse and Heather Harrington of the Libraries for preserving the

unpublished writings of the Hitchcock family and making them accessible to all. If you make use of this transcription, please cite your source including, of course, the Memorial Libraries of Historic Deerfield and the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association,

Readers wanting to learn more about Edward Hitchcock may wish to read my biography, *All the Light Here Comes from Above: the Life and Legacy of Edward Hitchcock* (Unquomunk Press, 2021), ISBN 978-0-9856944-9-4.

Robert T. McMaster

May 13, 2021

A Sort of Autobiography and Geneology
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[Justin Hitchcock, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association/Historic Deerfield,
Hitchcock Family Papers, Box 1 Folder 6]

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The first thing that I shall mention is an enquiry into the cause and ? of introducing surnames among mankind. The cause, undoubtedly was this that when any ? or people became populous and settled thick together something more than a single name or as we state it Christian name was necessary to distinguish one from another. It is likely that the names we bear are not of our own choosing but rather arbitrarily upon us without our consent in this way we can account for the use of many names among people which have an uncouth sound in pronunciation and are of dubious signification or no signification at all. It is very evident that many names that are use could never have been taken by the persons who are designated by them from their own choice but they are given to them by others whilst they are wholly passive in the matter. Some are given out of respect, others as terms of reproach, others from certain circumstances in life, character or business. A person follows others from the situation of his abode and others from some good or bad quality or conducting the possessor as for instance suppose in a society there was two men named John one residing on a hill he would be called John on the hill or John of the hill in the process of time it would be found more convenient to omit the after of and then he would be called John Hill. Again a foundling child picked up in the street would bear the name of street, a person living on a lane would be called Lane and living in or by the wood would be called wood. It is not likely however that we all obtain our names this way for we find that were mankind are divided into parties and disagree they will affix on each other a name and often one which they view as a term of reproach or ridicule and those names however disgusting and odious in their evident meaning yet by habit they will generally be so established that the party to whom they are given must be known by thy them tho ever so disagreeable. So in all probability many of our names were given to us not as a mark of respect but as a reproach not bestowed on us out of friendship but from ill-will. However the person first named might wish and try to avoid being known by such a name yet such is the power of habit that if he resented being called by such a name such the capricious humour of mankind that instead of getting rid of it would be nothing strange if his efforts did not serve to establish it upon him more firmly -- in some such way as I have described I think our name must have been introduced for I cannot think that any man would take it from choice.

As to the uses of surnames they are so evident that it is more difficult to conceive that how they could proceed before they were introduced to man. It is to show how necessary they are now in law proceedings in the choice of public...

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...officers and in all matters of record we should immediately run into confusion if they were omitted.

I believe the ancestors of our family emigrated to this country from England. I have read in several English publications the name of Hitchcock on of the name in London recommended Dilworth's Spelling book and one is mentioned in the introduction of John Arnoldo's singing book as keeping musical instruments for sale in London. I have read of one a female writer upon the Irish. Theatre of one who was a Magistrate and some of the name in the County of Cornwell were subscribers to Drews book. It is true then that it is an English name but whether we sprang from the first inhabitants of Great Britain the Saxons the Danes or the Normans cannot now be ascertained however desirable. I believe some of the of name came to this country in the early part of its settlement. Capt Aaron Hitchcock of Suffield in Connecticut told me that he had been informed that the first of our family who came to America settled in the District of Maine but were not long after driven away by the Indians and that they came to Weathersfield in Connecticut that one of those who moved then died leaving a wife and two sons Luke and John. That this woman married a Warriner of Springfield Mark and brought her two sons with her and from these two big Luke and John have sprung the numerous families at Springfield and elsewhere - this account is partly correct I have no doubt for in Governor Sullivan's history of the District of Maine he mentions two of the name who were settled at Saco of Wells but I cannot find by this this history whether they moved away. Capt Hitchcock said that one of the brothers staid in Connecticut and from him sprang the numerous families that have lived there. I cannot trace back in our family any further than my great grandfather his name was Luke he was a man employed in public business one of the Committee for regulating the settling the Town of Brookfield. he was a representative to the General Court for Springfield he is called Luke Hitchcock Esq. who having served God and his country in several publick officers died 1727 aged 72 now I think by comparing dates that this Luke was the brother of John. the children who came with their mother when she married a Warriner of Springfield for according to the account of his age above and time of his death he was born in 1655 and probably was son of one of those which are mentioned from the first who emigrated from England. My great grandfather Luke Hitchcock Esq. had three sons and I believe Daughter tho I cannot tell anything more than that my father spoke of an Uncle Colton of Longmeadow and was somehow related to the family of Ely at West Springfield and told me he called my name after that of Justyn Ely Esq. I will attempt to give a sketch of the family a far back as I can

Luke Hitchcock Esq.

Luke Ebenezer Pelatiah

which was the oldest of these three sons I cannot tell until I see the records at Springfield I thought Luke who was my grandfather was. he had four sons and two daughters. (Note He is called on the gravestone in Springfield

Luke Hitchcock

Martha. Caleb. Luke. George. Williams. Elizabeth

Martha married Josiah Hitchcock of Springfield a useful and respectable man they had a large family of children.

Caleb had a liberal education was once settled in the Ministry at Vernon in Con on account of some difficulty he was dismissed. he went into trade and I believe failed his Widow after his death married Maj Thompson of Palmer where her children by my unclear settled.

Luke my father was a farmer and married at Springfield and lived their until the year 1756 and then moved to Granville I shall speak of him more particularly hereafter.

George lived with my grandfather he was once a deputy sheriff and followed purchasing cattle I suppose got to be much reduced. he had only one child a son who lived in what is called Ireland in West Springfield.

William had learned the trad of a saddler soon after he was of age he enlisted into the Army and was killed in what was called the morning scout under Col Ephraim Williams had he lived he was to be married to Mariam Sexton her Father told me that his daughter suffered a great deal on the account of the death of that young man I have heard my parents say he was a very promising young man.

Elizabeth married Rueben Bliss an industrious honest joiner a respectable man they had several children but only one handsome promising daughter my aunt always appeared with a cheerful countenance till the death of her daughter she was about 19 years old in the bloom of life taken with a fever and soon became delirious and bathed the whole time of dancing and trifling matters till she died which made such a deep impression on her Mother that never saw her smile after this afflicting stroke.

Capt. Ebenezer Hitchcock my grandfather brother had a large family perhaps I shall now put his children according to there birth.

Capt Ebenezer Hitchcock Gad. Abner. Eben. Seth. Joseph. Phinehas. Stephen. David

Gad had a liberal education was settled in the Ministry at Pembroke obtained the degree of DD? and lived to a good old age.

Ebenezer, Phinehas and Stephen were farmers and settled in Springfield. Abner, Seth and Joseph settled at Stonyhill now Ludlow they were likewise farmers.

David had a liberal education and went into the study and practice of the Law at "Northampton but soon removed to Providence where he was considerably distinguished he was colonel in the revolutionary war (He had the command of about four hundred Rhode Islanders in the Battle of Trenton NH). He was with Gen. Washington in Surprising and capturing the Hessians at Trenton Dec 1777 he caught a violent cold in that storm which terminated his life in a few days.

Pelatah Hitchcock my grandfather brother settled at Brookfield and had four sons and how many daughters I cannot tell.

Pelatah Hitchcock David. Pelotiah. Enos.

David and Pelatah and one I don't remember his name settled in Brookfield one was a saddler one a joiner and one a farmer Enos had a liberal education and...

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...settled in the Ministry first at Beverly and afterwards at Providence hath some talent for writing there is a book published intituled --- of which he was the author.

I have endeavored to give some account of the families of my grandfather and his brother. I once had an opportunity to be better informed about them than at present and am sorry I did not better improve it if I find hereafter that I have made mistakes I shall endeavour to correct them.

I will now proceed to speak of the family from whence I sprang. My Father lived with my grandfather until he came of age the house and lot on which my grandfather lived was the second north of the ferry lane in Springfield I suppose he owned the place. My father married in April 1747 to Lucy Merick I believe my father at that time was about 22 years old my Mother had been twice married and I believe was a widow at the time my father married and he went to live with her she was deaf and could not hear preaching. I have seen a thick manuscript book of sermons which my Father wrote as they were delivered it was difficult for me to read them tho my Father was a very good writer but I have heard my parents say that their Mother would read them with ease.

My Father lived at the house long after owned by Capt. Joseph Frary I believe he did not own much land in Springfield and thought he might do better on a farm accordingly he moved to Granville in the year 1756 this was at that time a new Town or district and but few people settled there. I was four years old at the time and recollect it was woods near the house all round it my parents had twelve children who all except one lived to grow up to Manhood four were born before they removed to Granville and eight born while they lived there. Charles born at Springfield February 17th 1748

Dorothy born at Springfield January 18th 1750

Justin born at Springfield May 27th 1752

Merick born at Springfield April 15th 1754

in 1756 they moved to Granville when the rest of the family were born

John Born July 10th 1756 died near the end of that year

Abigail born April 15th 1758

Luke born July 2 1760

Chauncey born May 22 1763

Godfrey born January 3rd 1765

Lucy born May 19 1767

John born January 29 1770

Martha born May 8 1772

I shall occasionally give some account of the family as I proceed on with my observations. I was four years old when my father moved his family to Granville twenty miles west from Springfield it was then a new place which before had been called Bedford. I remember some few things before we moved that I went to the school house and saw the masters ferule and fescue or pointers for the children. I remember Aunt Pomeroy visited us and that rocked Brother Mirik and son Simo in one cradle. I remember being in the boat when we crossed Connecticut river and seeing the bottom where it was deep. There is nothing in the history of a boy that is worth recording. I shall only make some remarks occasionally respecting the family and myself which fell...

...under my observation during my living at Granville which was from four to fifteen years of age.

The farm was new and rough and my Father had to labour hard to bring it too as soon as the land was cleared and improved it produced great plenty of grass so that we could keep a large stock of cattle through the summer but the winters were long and severe the consequence was that we scarcely ever had hay sufficient to keep all the stock through and we lost some almost every spring. We used to make a single path in the snow in March when it was very deep to the woods which was near and the young cattle would go in such a place to browse upon the tops of the trees we cut for them. The road by where we lived was on the height of land and descending a little east and west of it the road was fenced with very fence on both sides and the snow usually drifted in so as to fill it soon to the top of the fence and the people had to do many a hard days work with their teams to keep the road passable when two teams or sleighs met they must all stop and tread the snow on each side so that the horses might stand and turn one sleigh upon the side while the other passed. It was almost impossible to get a horse out of the path and if you did he would flounce all over in the snow. When I was at school a gun was fired near the house and I was told it was a soldier just returned home from the army. This was the first I knew of war and soon after my Father came home one day and said such a man was pressed to go into the army. My ideas was that they laid aboard upon him and added a weight of stones to press him till he would consent to go into the service. We lived a mile or more from the school house so that I had to go so far to school. Deer were plenty in Granville and my father killed some almost every year. He caught a fawn one morning in July. He had a good hunting dog who sprang upon the fawn and had it down and appeared to be something it but on my Father coming up he found the dog had not hurt it. He tied the legs and brought it home. It soon grew tame except at certain times it would run away for several days. (we kept it two years), we killed it. It had become very fat. We made maple sugar every year enough for the family's use. The winters were very severe and great depth of snow. My Father went two journeys one to Boston and one to New York in one those hard winters I remember seeing him return from one of these a very high mare he owned and riding on the top of the snow it seemed as if he was very high in the air. He brought with him four potatoes two of them were so as to loose about half we planted however fourteen hill from what remained and had four bushels they were bilbos.

My Father was a Selectman and Assessor in Granville for many years and but few years of his life at that place passed without his being employed in public town business. About the time he moved to Granville one of his neighbours at Springfield moved their also and became his next neighbour. His name was James Burt. My Father was chosen Deacon in the Church and after this his neighbour Burt appeared on the reserve and unsociable, seldom visiting us. My parents intimated that they thought he was disappointed that he was not chosen to the office himself.

My Father went often to Springfield his native place in his return from that place once in December he called in at the house of Eldad Taylor Esq at Westfield just at the beginning of evening he had been without dinner that day and as he went into the room he received a nauseous smell which made him feel...

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...sick at the stomach as he went to the fire he saw two men who were drying their cloths they proved to be soldiers returning from the Army, he asked them if they had the smallpox they said they had it some weeks before but war cleansed from it now -- in about two weeks he was taken with the symptoms of it and what appeared strange after all the warning he had before he did not incline to think it was the smallpox.

He sent for a Doctor who never had the disorder and knew nothing how to treat it. we staid in the house with him until another Doctor came and said it was the smallpox he was broke out all over before we left him yet no person took it from him. it was now in the Depth of winter and a family of Small children all must immediately move out and go where the neighbours would take using a stock of cattle and horses to be taken care of at the barn and not more than three people in the Town that had ever had the disorder such was our unhappy situation at that time. to add to our trouble the family had the my Father had the disorder the smallpox extremely bad for fourteen day bereft of his reason in a great degree but through divine goodness we all lived through it and by the next spring were free from both disorders tho my father took the smallpox from just stepping into the house of E Taylor Esq yet neither his wife nor children who staid in the house all night none of them took it.

We had a farm of about one hundred acres and raised wheat it was found at that time that wheat could be raised in that Town easier than rye tho it has been the case long since that they cannot raise good crops of either -- we maid maple sugar every year their was a tract of land lying within less than half a mile of our house belonging to the heirs of one Mr Boylston of Boston we with the rest of the neighbours improved part of this land whether the heirs even gave consent or not I did not know but they knew it was improved and did not forbid it considering that it would command a better price improved than wild which proved to be true when they sold it. we raised large crops of wheat and had thirty or forty acres cleared up and made our sugar their. With regard to fashions in those days they varied as they have done since the men wore low crown hats and large brims generally down flat it was rare to see one worn cocked up their coats long skirts a large cuff on the sleeve with three large buttons on each and one each pocket flap the men wore leather britches and brass shoe buckles the women at one time wore a small cap no hat or bonnet the girls also afterward they wore a small hat without a crown down flat on the head woman and girls wore stays and some wore loops blue stockings with clocks of another colour. the men wore a weed round the hat for morning tied behind and the ends hanging down their backs the woman wore a large hood and veil which covered them all up.

Our family were fond of music my Father and Mother could sing my brother Charles played well on a violin. I was very fond of Music when young tho I made awkward work of it at first and never got my insight of the rules before I went from my Fathers. Being fond of singing I picked off a book of Music in square or diamond notes thus. My father was very careful to get us good an education as the circumstances in a new settlement would permit one Doct Smith kept the school a proper Tyrant he kept a stick by him long enough to reach every boy in the school and he improved his advantage so that tho we all feared him few if any felt any affection or real respect for him the consequence...

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...was that we learned but slowly. after him we had one Harvey a young man and a stranger of 19 years old but he used a very different method with us and instead of going to school as a task we now went as a pleasure tho we had more than a mile to go yet scarcely any storms or blowing storms stopped my Brother Merick and I from attending and it was to this school and instructor that we are indebted for the little we know of writing and spelling.

[1767]

Our business was husbandry and we had a great deal of driving plough to be done. This was a business I never liked. My Brother Merick showed more ambition as a good plough boy than I and I was willing to have him praised up as a teamster if I could thereby be freed from my turn of driving. I had an inclination to learn a trade. My father bought a hour clock maid of wooden wheels I studied it through and wished for the trade of a shop joiner that I might learn to make clocks. An opportunity soon offered for either Merick or I to go to the Hatters trade at Springfield. I interceded for the chance and obtained it withing to get free from so much driving team - in the month of September 1767 I went to live with Mr Moses Church for that purpose - I have omitted to mention that before I went to live at Springfield to learn a trade we had a great drought for two summers it was so dry that a fire would continue in the turf in the pastures for weeks together - and the farmers were often called from their work to guard their buildings and fences from fire. -- About this time the dispute between Great Britain and her colonies began to be more serious than ever before -- The Parliament passed the famous Stamp Act when it reached our country it caused a general uneasiness and was opposed universally here a Congress of Deputies from nine of the Colonies convened at New York the opposition which this Acts met with in England and here was expressed in petitions and memorials. A change of the Ministry took place in England about this time and the Stamp Act was repealed and much rejoicing took place upon the occasion.

Although I removed from an upland town thinly settled and went to live in a public house in a thick settled town full of company yet so strong had my attachments grown to the place where I had lived about ten years that I was very homesick and would have freely given up the plan of learning a trade if I had not been too proud to propose it to my Father -- after I had lived at Springfield some time I was as fond of the place and people as I had been before of Granville. I lived in a Tavern and there was many things to do every night and morning about the house and barn which fell to my lot being the youngest apprentice. After I had lived there some years I had to tend the bar which on those weeks in which the court were held was very fatiguing often kept up late at night.

When I went to live with Mr. Church he had but one apprentice younger in years but older at the trade than I was -- my mates often advised me not to submit to do all the drudgery of the chores but to insist upon his assisting of me I never made much complaint nor could I have altered established customs his name was Eliphalet Hall. His parents once lived at Enfield were poor and the Man and his wife parted. I had much difficulty to live peaceable with the fellow apprentice he was a quick active fellow and soon learned to make good work and this was almost his only good quality. He would tell a lie with as composed a face as any older practiced could -- one cause of trouble to me was his constant complaining that Mrs. Church was partial to me on account of the...

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...relation she being first cousin to my Mother -- when I informed her of his complaint she said I came there decently clothed and he almost naked and she thought it right that I should have as much of the article of clothing as he which would keep me better clothed. Finally when about eighteen he persuaded another apprentice to ask Mr Church to let him see an Indenture. Mr Church readily gave it to him the boy carried it to the shop to read and Hall as was agreed between them seized it and burnt it up and the boy immediately told Mr Church who came into the shop evidently much agitated tho he was a man of even temper yet now was in a passion he sent for his horse whip and put it on to him severely. Hall ran away the same day and after about five months and a great sum spent he was brought back but did his Master no good he ran away again and was heard no more of.

After I got over being homesick my time passed agreeably at Springfield. My Father recommended to me to spend my leisure time in reading and I following his advice in some measure and I read the history of England and other books but particularly dramatic pieces and some novels. Notwithstanding the great arg maid against the latter set I think my reading them has never don me harm but that if I know my anything of what is proper in the stile of writing I am partly indebted to this kind of reading as the language of these books is generally good.

I soon became acquainted with the young people and went into company enough for a lad of my age. I had a chance to gratify my self by learning to sing notwithstanding I had supposed I could go on very well provided I learnt the rules but when this was so far completed as to pass to tuning the voice and attempting to sing I found I knew nothing and I made awkward work of it especially beating time. The Master I went to was Mr. J Stickney he was at that time coarse in his manners and sovereign in the school. There was about a dozen boys placed on the counter we were put to the task of beating time and singing the tune at first and must get the piece given out the evening before so well as to sing it and beat the time singly before the whole school.

I with Ingersol and A Bliss being the largest boys on the counter were soon crowded to the bottom of the seat being the most awkward of the singers. At length the Master told us we could not learn and it was not best to try but in this he was too hasty for Ingersol became a good singer and taught a school and Bliss for many years was a singer of the bass. With respect to myself* [The following was inserted at the foot of the page in the hand-written manuscript, apparently by Nathaniel Hitchcock: **NOTE: It is said that the ruling passion is strong in death. The author of this sung the old tune called Winsor when dying. And it is probable was unconscious of it at the time. N.H.*] those who are acquainted with me will allow that did learn something in Music -- as it is not unlikely my children may read what I have written and as part of them are singers I will be more particular respecting my attainments in music. After the school kept by Mr Stickney was done I knew possibly as much as many others that is I could sing the counter to such tunes as had been hammered into my head by long practice I knew little or nothing of any other cleff and it was hard to call the notes to any other tune except those I had got by heart after sometime I could more easily call them out to tunes set on the natural place for Minor or F sharp my voice changing I had begun to practice upon the Tenor and bass I could not sing or call the notes to a new piece -- about this time on Joel Day who lived near me and was many years older frequently called into the shop he understood Music very well he brought some Music and would say to me come sing one part my reply was I cannot. He generally would get me to try and try again and as he came often I in...

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...compliance did try and after some time I succeeded beyond what I had expected as by practice and study I got much knowledge of the science that I could read of any piece of music with ease nor did I care on what line or space the me was if the book was set if I could know where it was hinder me from performing the piece if the book lay bottom up having advanced so far I studied with more attention into the nature of the scale of Music and its connection one part with another also into the two keys or dominant sounds on which all tunes are or should be founded to be acquainted with composition was very desirable and in this my friend Day assisted me he lent me Tensurs Grammer of Music and afterwards sold it to me here learned the rules of composing and from this book I got some tolerable good Idea of the Philosophy of sounds.

I believe I began to compose some pieces at the age of nineteen and not long after I put down a tune to the words from *All That Dwell Below The Skies* I sent it to Granville expecting to hear it praised it was

an attempt to imitate a tune called Pool one part moved while another continued the sound on longer notes-- but here I found I had quite overrated my own abilities and have since seen how easy we become pleased with our own productions and consequently cannot judge of them as well as others can tho they may not know so much of the art or science of which they treat -- continuing to study music and some practice on instruments I arrived to such knowledge of the theory of it that although it may appear to discover vanity yet I can safely say that although I have seen better performers I don't know that I have been acquainted with any who would teach me respecting the scale of music or rules of composition -- I have dwelt more upon this subject because it has been my study for many years and I think some pieces of composition will outlive me and speak for themselves. I should have published music but our country swarmed with authors who found but little encouragement. Whilst I lived at Springfield there appeared a comet in the south east it was to be seen in the month of September from 3 o'clock in the morning till daylight appeared. It had a very long tail of stream in and looked frightfully --

[1770]

About the year 1770 the political parties in our country began more generally to be known by the name given to parties in England half a century before. Whigs and Tories. Those who adhered to the English Government and were willing to submit to all their claims upon us were called Tories. Most of those were particularly attached to that government from having received civil Military Commissions from the King.

The most numerous party were the Whigs these were opposed to many of the claims of Great Britain especially to their claims of a right to bind us in all cases what ever and their right to tax us while we were not represented in their government. standing regular troops were stationed in Boston and the people were so irritated that they provoked them it is likely in March 1770 the troops fired upon the people in Kings Street and five were killed -- not only Boston but the whole country was in a ferment upon this occasion the governor removed the troops to the castle.

My sister Dorothy was married about this time to Elijah Stiles of Granville with whom she lived agreeably and comfortably during his life for he was a good husband and pleasant companion. not long after my brother Charles married Margaret Strickland their connection was not always so comfortable as could be...

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...desired. I remember about this time I had a turn of feeling very self sufficient and viewed the time long to serve for the trade and that I might of left to go away earn considerable for myself but I was cured of this turn soon after.

Mr Church had no apprentice that stayed his time out except me. tho he had several beside he put considerable confidence in me and I did something in keeping his book and especially in posting his books. I had learned by moonlight in the barn simply the game of all four at cards before I left Granville but payed but little one day as we were in the shop we got at the game in the forenoon my fellow apprentice said the cards wanted mixing and threw them all in confusion on the bench at that instant Mr Church came in... there was not time to take them up but we stroked them all into a hat and put the hat behind a trunk. Expecting after he had as usual asked a few questions and looked round the shop he would go away but he seemed that day to be more inquisitive than common and after looking into every hole he finally [????] forth to light the fated hat with all its cargo. We were beat and ashamed but did

not deny but that we sometimes played for diversion. He reprimanded us and left us and now I am upon the subject I will finish the history of my gaming. A young man about two and sixpence and not being able to pay it he proposed to play for it. Some others present joined in urging me. I consented played and lost it and I think I have never played since excepting while I had the smallpox.

Mr Church was a mild man and treated us well and so was his wife but she appeared to have much weight and influence in managing domestic concerns. She was a woman of considerable spirit and an excellent judgment in the management and economy of family affairs. we never sat at the table with them at supper or breakfast except Sunday mornings until I entered my twenty first year then I was called to breakfast with them -- I was assisting in a scrape which had almost brought me and others into trouble.

There was a man named Jones. Lived a hermit's life in Springfield he lived all alone and could not be persuaded to leave his house but staid there alone until the roof was fallen flat on the chamber floor, such singularity excited the boys to play tricks upon him. An old gentleman happened to say he wished the boys would drive him out that he might live like a human creature such a hint together with our natural disposition prompted a dozen of us to go and throw bricks and stones upon his house after we had discharged about two apiece upon the old crazy house we skulked down to hear what the man would saying. A few minutes we perceived the neighbours were in pursuit of us we all but one got away safe and he with any kind of prudence might have escaped, but he was taken and gave all our names to the man, we were threatened with a prosecution but escaped with a reprimand. I was sent once to Albany to get for the Smallpox was so prevalent there that I did not stay no longer than while a man could purchase fifty weight of beaver for me to bring home.

It was usual for me to go to Granville once a year to visit my friends. I commonly went in May as many of the inhabitants moved from Connecticut to Granville they introduced or rather kept up the practice of keeping election as a high day.

We had started days work at the hatters trade and in parts of it a quick workman might get his days work done so as to have some hours left this time I could thus gain. I sometimes spent in reading sometimes in fishing and hunting. I read about this time all the dramatic pieces I could get at. I read the...

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...history of England and the London magazines -- but I read but little of religious books before I came of age tho I believe I had formed a tolerable idea of the Gospel doctrines even at this age tho I did not comprehend the division of sentiments in the professors and teachers of religion. Mr Break the Minister of Springfield was a dull preacher tho thought by his people to be a very great divine and learned man he was I suppose an Arminian and there was no appearance of seriousness among the people while I lived there. The people at Springfield many of them were exceedingly addicted to gaming even boys would spend their earnings in the taverns turning coppers hustling or trying their luck at what they called the bite. Many of the poorer sort of men would get into our garret where the boys of the family slept and frequently stay their gaming drinking and chewing tobacco till they were ordered to go away leaving our room more in smell like a hospital than a lodging room.

There was also a higher class who passed for gentlemen would assemble at eleven of the clock and play to see who should pay for the toddy the same frequently met in the evening for the same purpose. I lived agreeably about this time was enough in the company of young people although I kept free from

gaming of all kinds yet I was so much with parties especially in the evenings that I could scarcely find money enough to bear the expense.

[1773]

And thus my time passed until the 7th day of June 1773 I was twenty one years old being born May 27th old still immediately engaged to work for Mr Church as a journeyman my wages were not very high and I was paid part in hats and part money it was customary for young men to pay their freedom as they called it but at that time the practice was to invite the company and have a dance accordingly Ebenezer Bliss who was a little older than I waited till my time was out and we joined and bore the expense of a dance.

June 7 1773. Now began a new era in my existence launched forth into the world and must take care of myself I found myself sufficiently somewhat to abate I worked at the same shop except one month I lived with Mr. Oliver Warner of Hadley until the next January. About this time things were preparing for a quarrel with Great Britain - Companies were formed in many places for learning the military art I was a fifer in one such company. The officers were chosen by the company they had no commissions and they treated the men so often that honor more than profit must have been their motive for serving. In January 1774 I went again to live at Hadley with Mr. Warner. I staid with him one month and then went to Deerfield and staid one month with A. Smith. I returned to Springfield the first of March having 20 hard dollars in my pocket I went to a dance of Ball not greatly satisfied but lightened of one dollar which at that time was a great sum for one evening Ball. About this time our publick affairs began to assume a dark aspect the Government of Great Britain had for some years past been trying to raise a revenue in the colonies we were their subjects but had a kind of subordinate government of our own. But we could not form or carry into execution Laws of our own which were not approved by them. We had no voice in their legislation nor was we in any way represented there except we were at the expense of sending agents to get relief from the burdens laid upon us. The Parliament of Britain passed a law to bind us in all cases whatsoever which was greatly complained of it was urged by the colonies that representation and taxation go...

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...together. Where the first is wanting the latter is unjust and illegal. To raise money here the Parliament of Britain laid a duty of three pence per pound on Tea. The Merchants entered into an agreement not to import from Great Britain. The East India Company sent three vessels laden with Tea to the colonies in each sea port. They had their custom house officers and the governor except Connecticut and Rhode Island being appointed by the King would encourage the landing of and sale of the Tea. One vessel came to Boston and when the Merchants and people refused to receive it the Governor on his part refused to give a permit to the vessel to depart.

The populace rightly judging that it would be landed and the duty paid went a party of them in disguise and threw it overboard into the sea. When the news of this reached England the Government were enraged and passed a law to shut up the port of Boston another to alter the Charter and other laws considered oppressive. The King appointed the Governor Council by This was taking away a check which the country had before upon the proceeding of the Governor who had been for many years before appointed by the King. Boston was shut up and could not send out a single vessel, about three regiments of regular stationed there. Genl Gage the newly appointed Governor arrived to carry into

execution the new laws respecting Massachusetts. It was a most serious time at least it so appeared to me. The people rose by mobs and forcibly stopped the setting of courts of justice and obliged the judges and Officers of the courts not to act and the Mandamus Counsellors either through fear or by constraint to resigned their seats.

[1774]

I went to Springfield as I had agreed the week before 1774 August Court to help Mr Church who kept a public house. Some of the Lawyers and Jurymen came into town on Monday night. A committee of the people also came in before sunrise on Tuesday morning. The Bell rung in West Springfield and soon a large party came into Town. Armed with white slaves they immediately took possession of the Court House door. By nine of the Clock the Town was full of people and everyone at liberty to do as he pleased. We were obliged to let them have what they called for as quick as possible. After the mob had got the court to sign an agreement not to act they formed a larger ring in the street into which they brought the Tories one by one to make their acknowledgement and sign a paper promising not to act under the present situation of the government. The people dispersed at night and little or no mischief was done. it was a day such as I had never before seen. -- similar transactions took place other counties and the administration of Justice and settings of Courts was at an end sometime this year the Governor dissolved the general court and the members of the house of Representatives either formed themselves as recommended the calling a state convention which convened and did what public business there was done by resolves and recommendation. The only road into Boston was across the neck and that the Governor began to fortify. steady people were at loss what to think or how to act to oppose Great Britain by force looked like a hazardous undertaking submit to all their Laws was to consent to be oppressed and loaded with shackles which their posterity would never be able to get rid of. The country was divided into two parties viz. Whigs and Tories, the Whigs were vastly the most numerous the Tories were such as held commissions or hoped for favors from the King. They consequently by their attachment to Great Britain and her measures tried to prevent the...

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...people from resorting to force, they became soon objects of the Just indignation of the people some suffered at home and many fled to Boston and took protection their under the Governor and his Army.

Our Ancestors came from England to avoid the arbitrary measures of the Court especially to be freed from ecclesiastical tyranny and oppression soon after their settlement here the people in England rose against their Government and proceeded so far as to dethrone and behead their King. and prostrate the Monarchy, with such a lesson before them and living three thousand miles from the seat of government and fond of liberty it was found that from the beginning they never very cordially submitted to be ruled by the King and Parliament of England and it is not to be wondered at that they should not be willing to submit to all the exactions of a government in which they had no voice or any kind of agency or influence yet as the colonies were British subjects it must be allowed that they owed allegiance to that government. but it could not be expected that they would continue to okay all their injunctions after they grew sufficiently numerous and strong to oppose their claims with success the time for trying of their ability seemed now to be fast approaching the Militia or voluntary Company. from their were formed and disciplined throughout the Province the Provincial Congress began to collect stores for war. the regular troops in Boston were sent out into the country towns to destroy the

powder in one of these attempts an alarm was maid in the country and the militia were preparing to march but before they marched it was found that hostilities had not get commenced. this was I thinking October we were expecting a war from this time till it broke out –

I went to Deerfield again in November 1774 and became one of a company of Minute men I got a gun tho I always played the fife for the company as I had done at Springfield. To show how little we were prepared for war I would observe that there was but part of the Militia that had officers appointed over them and very few if any in the country were ever called out and but a few had Arms in September. This year was held the first continental congress Delegates were sent from all the provinces except Georgia. Their doings were published consisting of a number of resolves an address to the people of England one to this people and one to the inhabitants of Canady.

I say the two Miss Adams and Sullivan and Fulsom when they returned from Philadelphia they wore hats high brim behind the sides cut low and cocked up we were evidently ripening fast for a civil war or a war with Great Britain it was a time of anxiety and foreboding the spirit of opposition on our past and the steady determination of Great Britain to enforce their laws and edicts left no room to doubt on the minds of the people but war must follow. It was a momentous season. I cannot well describe the sensations of my mind at that time to submit must be abject slavery to fight and be overcome rebellious but I felt a preference to try the p,32 of war rather than submission without an effort to free ourselves.

There was a day of fasting held throughout the country in July. the people in Boston being restrained from trade were supplied with liberal donations of provisions from many parts of the country I went to Deerfield in May this year notwithstanding my attachment to Springfield I found it to be more for my interest to live at Deerfield for here I kept but little company but at Springfield it cost me to much.

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[1775]

As war appeared to be inevitable there was companies raised in almost every town called Minutemen was considered as Fifer for the company in Deerfield and always attended when they met for exercise I bought me a gun and learned the manual exercise the first I learned was called the Norfolk the next the 64th and then Stebbins -- in the Norfolk and 64th the men paraded and marched in three ranks in firing the front rank kneeled the center stepped to the right and the rear keep their position. I found the Town of Deerfield divided into parties. The cause of division was a difficulty in the Church. Mr Ashley had a majority in the church and called Mr Samuel Barnard to an account before them for slandering the Minister. Mr. Ashley a number of the members were dissatisfied the church proceeded to discipline Mr Barnard and voted to withdraw communion from him, the dissatisfied members withdrew from the church and from the ministry of Mr Ashley, thus was the town situated when the war commenced those attached to Mr Ashley war Tories the other Whigs thus passed away the year 1774 and preparations were making in the beginning of 1775 if we had stores of powder laid up in any of the Towns the British troops were sent to destroy them. The provincial congress (our state government was prostrate) had collected some stores at Concord and a detachment of British troops were sent to destroy them... they met or found a company of Minute men paraded in Lexington the British officers called to them to disperse you damned Rebels. it does not appear that this company had any orders to resist the British in their March or that they molested them. But a British officer have his troops orders to Fire and eight of the company were killed the British officer commanding that day stated that the Lexington company

fired first but it is likely he was not believed even in Great Britain and certainly he was not there. I have seen a pamphlet containing affidavits testifying uniformly that the British troops fired first and no fire on our part. This happened on the memorable 19th of April 1775 early in the morning the British troops marched immediately to Concord and destroyed a part or all of the stores and here they were attacked by Provincials which soon caused their retreat they were followed up close and fired upon from behind fences and stone walls as well as in the rear and many were killed in their retreat they got back that night under the cover of their ships or fortifications.

The War was now begun in earnest and the country alarmed and in motion and in less than a week the British troops now in Boston were surrounded by perhaps twelve or fifteen thousand of the Militia. This was a trying time with us we were by no means prepared to engage in a war with so powerful a Nation as Great Britain and the most sanguine amongst us were not free from apprehensions. We were destitute of cannon fire arms and ammunition or had but a small supply I went with minutemen from Deerfield as a fifer I also carried a gun when we marched into Cambridge common I beheld more men than I had ever seen together before not standing I had been joined to company's for exercise at Springfield and Deerfield for three or four years past yet I never saw a regiment paraded until I came to Cambridge After we had been there a week or more it was said that a lot had been east to seek who should return home and who should be enlisted for eight months. I was told that my lot was to stay, I then hired on Smith of Sudbury to make my place for ten dollar I then went to Roxbury where I found my brother Merick and my brother...

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...in law Elijah Stiles. Mr Stiles was going home but Merick stayed through the Campaign.

I went home through Brookfield to Springfield and at Brookfield I heard of the death of my grandfather. he died at my father's.

I have mentioned that I went to Cambridge with the Militia Company from Deerfield the officers were Jonas Lock Capt. Thomas Bardwell, Lieu Joseph Stebbins 2 Lieu there was no ensign allowed at that time.

I went as it is likely many others did unprepared for after I had got from home I found myself destitute of so necessary an article as that of a blanket. Capt Lock got the birth of commissary of wood Lieu Bardwell returned home and Lieu Stebbins was promoted to a captain and staid though the campaign eight months. The Congress of the United Colonies was at this time setting at Philadelphia and soon after they heard of the commencement of hostilities they chose George Washington commander in chief of all their armies. The civilized world know this man and long will they know and esteem him. It would be folly for me to undertake to describe his worth. Indeed I feel myself unfit for of all the great Men I have ever heard or read of he far exceeds them all and I am too much prejudiced in his favour to say more than that in every particular in which a man appears dignified and great he appears to outshine all that have gone before him. Before Gen Washington had arrived at the theatre of action near Boston namely on the night before the 17th of June our Army had sent a detachment onto Bunker Hill or some hill near it they immediately threw up entrenchments which alarmed the enemy in Boston as soon as daylight discovered these works to them they immediately sent a large detachment under Genl Howe to dislodge the Americans from the hill. The first Party that advanced were repulsed by the well directed fire of our men now under cover and a second party was likewise so galled as to be obliged to retreat a great effort on the part of the enemy seemed to be necessary to carry the place some of their ships lay so as to expose our men for cements and from their forts in Boston they sent the Town of

Charleston on Fire with red hot balls. At this time Genl How made a desperate charge at the head of his best troops and succeeded in taking the hill it is universally allowed that the want of ammunition was the cause why he succeeded. Our men had fired away all they had before many of them thought the enemy gained the ground yet it was dearly purchased. They lost about a thousand men and it fell heavy upon the officers. The loss was not great on our side as our men fought under cover. We lost Genl Warren who had the command that day he had just been appointed a Major General by the Government of Massachusetts. In July Genl Washington arrived to take command of the Army at Cambridge he found good raw materials for an Army but not much discipline and less ammunition and war like stores as the war had begun the Americans fitted out privateers and one commanded by Capt Manly had success. He captured one vessel soon which was loaded with just such war like stores as our army wanted. After the Battle of Bunker hill the two armies lay pretty quiet through the summer our Army had taken the forts on Lake Champlain early in the summer and St Johns was besieged and taken late in the fall by Genl Montgomery who advance into Canada with his army. A detachment under Col Arnold had marched from Cambridge up the Kennebec and down the river Chandeau were now near Quebec where Genl Montgomery joined them. As the time for which these troops were enlisted...

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...would expire on the last day of December these officers found that they must either abandon the enterprise or make one bold attempt to take Quebec. They attempted the latter but failed Montgomery was killed with many brave officers Arnold was wounded and many of the troops made prisoners. This year 1775 thinking February I began to teach a singing school in Deerfield the Town and Church were unhappily divided and I was rather bashful and diffident but I succeeded so as to get the singing considerably revived which had almost run out before.

[1776]

Congress had issued two or more emissions of paper money notwithstanding every man knew that there were no funds provided for the redemption of the bills yet it passed current in payment of debts and purchasing articles. It was not depreciated this year but was taken and paid equal to silver money. In March 1776 this year the British Troops were under a necessity of evacuating Boston. General Washington had fortified the heights in Dorchester which would expose the Town and harbour -- on the 17th they left the Town and put off to sea. Our Army had been newly organized by enlistments and were marched to New York expecting the enemy would attempt that place next. Some of the troops were sent into Canada but a reinforcement having arrived from England. Our Army were forced to retreat out of Canada. The smallpox prevailed among them which made their retreat distressing. Among others who died of this disorder was Elijah Stiles my brother in law. He had been chosen an Ensign the year before and served as such he had been out in the French wars and did not seem to fear the bullets but dreaded the smallpox and it proved his death. He was an agreeable man and in him my sister found a good husband as long as they lived together.

Some time this summer the British fleet and Army came and took possession of New York. Our army had established a post on Long Island in August however they were obliged to leave it with loss an attempt was making to assassinate the commander-in Chief and deliver up our forts and armies. One

LtCol and some others were arrested Genl Washington in writing upon the subject coolly observed that people amused themselves with such things but did not profess to know or care much about it.

Our northern army retreated out of Canada and crossed Lake Champlain. The main army under Gen Washington were kept retreating and skirmishing through the campaign without any action of importance. A fortress of great strength and importance was taken from us in November called Fort Washington about 27 hundred men surrendered and were treated in the following winter in the Churches and prison ships in New York in such an inhuman and brutal manner as to move a heart of stone. It did the enemy no good eventually. Late in the fall we had a fleet of vessels and gunboats defeated and lost on Lake Champlain.

I had concluded to try my fortune by myself and in Oct 1775 had hired a shop in Wethersfield con intending to begin business their soon. In the course of the winter the affairs of our country looked so gloomy and it was so difficult to procure stock and the money though received and paid as silver yet began to be so plenty that it was not possible it should hold it credit long. Mr Smith with whom I had worked almost two years offered to enter into partnership with me. Accordingly gave up the notion of setting up the trade and went to Wethersfield and had to pay rent for the shop the owner was disappointed at my not setting...

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...their. Mr. Smith was indebted to me so that I easily purchased half the stock and tools.

In October this year I made a journey to Boston, Salem and Newburyport. the weather was good and I had an agreeable journey and bought some wool and fur. In my way homestead one night with my Father at Watertown, he was Representative for the Town of Granville this year. And the Gen Court sat at Watertown. The smallpox was frequently in our Armies and the soldiers returning home exposed us to it sometime in November. I went to Chesterfield and was inoculated and had it rather light and returned in about a month. For some time past and about this time I had I had become more seriously impressed upon religious subjects. I had formed religious habits in some measure before. I always attended public worship from a child and a pious woman living in the family had first persuaded me to ask a blessing at the table and afterward to pray in the family. When the head of the family was absent I was young and bashful yet I got through it tolerably well and think it was beneficial afterward to me about this time I began to practice secret prayer and became more satisfied that it was my duty to own Christ before men and make a public profession. There were great difficulties in the way in Deerfield. The Town was almost equally divided between Whigs and Tories some of the principal men in the Town had withdrawn from the Church and did not attend the Ministry of Mr Ashley these were generally Whigs a majority of the Church and others adhered to Mr Ashley these were generally Tories. In this divided state I hesitated and delayed I however drew up a paper stating the difficulties which lay in my way. Then proceeded to make sacred dedication of myself to God and wrote and subscribed a covenant which I kept until joined the Church and I believe I was as sincere and honest in this transaction as ever I was in any About this time I formed a resolution in my own mind (though I did not write and sign it) that I would not use any dishonest means to obtain wealth or if I could avoid it be guilty of any mean low tricks to obtain anything of this worlds goods.

The close of this year and the beginning of the next may be considered as the lowest state of American affairs our Army driven out of Canada and our fleet lost on the Lake. The main army retreating before a superior force the forces almost entirely subdued and our men having served out the time for which they engaged. Genl Washington found himself in a critical situation. It was about this time that he suggested to some confidential friend that rather than grace the of the enemy he would with a chosen few retire beyond the Allegany Mountains.

It was well for us he did not disband but as difficulties arose his genius brightened and he prepared to meet the crisis.

When all seemed to be lost and the enemy grown in a measure secure the brilliant affair at Trenton served to revive the desponding hopes of the country and Army.

[1777]

Our public affairs afforded but a gloomy prospect the beginning of this year. Genl Washington surprised and defeated a party of British troops at Brunswick which added to defeating the Hessians at Trenton relieved us some...

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...yet still the enemy were superior and generally successful. They sailed with an expedition to the Delaware Bay and landed an army in July. Gen Burgoyne came to Ticonderoga which was abandoned by our army under Gen St. Clair thus the northern frontier was left open to the enemy. This considered as gloomy time by the people of New England. We thought there was great danger of all being lost. The Militia were called out but they did but little good in checking the enemy. The British Army under Burgoyne crossed the Lake accompanied by Indian and Canadians said to be almost eleven thousand and marched to Fort Edward. our Army retreating before them they marched down Hudson River as Still Water or near to it and encamped at what was then called Freemans farm. And the American army now commanded by Gen. Gates Lincoln and Arnold encamped at a what was then called Bemus heights. The hostile army's met near Germantown and it was said that Genl Washington lost one advantage over the enemy through a thick fog by which he could not discover their situation and also failed of another advantage because the enemy had left a fortified house in their rear and it being contrary to the rules of war to leave an enemy behind. Bonaparte and other Generals in Europe have since acted differently. The enemy pushed on and took possession of Philadelphia in the winter having lost many men and a fifty gunship before they took our fort at Redbank on Mud Island. Amongst the Militia who turned out to oppose the army under Burgoyne my father went and my neighbors left him at Moses creek for ought they knew well when they came away about the first week in August. After the battle of 19th of September the Militia were sent for again Mr Smith started two days first as he expected I should not go his wife being sick but the call was urgent and I turned out. When I was at Jones tavern in Adams I had a letter from Mr Smith informing that my father was dead. I could scarcely credit the account at first but had it confirmed soon my brother had sent me a letter but it had miscarried. My Father was past the age to be called upon in the Militia but being disposed to help forward the cause he went to encourage others he was taken with the dysentery and set out to return home on horseback he suffered for want of care and shelter for lodging. He found one Mr Douglass friendly enough to take him in for the night and he died at that house. it was at New Lebanon in New York. I felt that it was an irreparable loss to me and especially to my younger Brothers and sisters I had lived from home ever since I was fifteen years old yet I wanted a Father to counsel and advise me and I knew that to my mother and the family the loss

must be more affecting and of more consequence than to me. My father I believe was not fifty years old he had been in public business almost every year after he moved to Granville and the year before he died was a representative for that Town. His zeal in the cause in which our Country was then engaged prompted him to make this campaign when perhaps it would have been more prudent not to have gone. He was an active Man and often engaged in assisting others. He was as I have observed a Deacon in the Church in Granville and after I left home that church was divided and I think my Father asked and obtained a dismission from the office. My brothers and I had heard that there was a mortgage upon his estate but we did not know as it was so I once took the liberty to ask him. He gave me no direct answer But I suspected the it was so after his death Brother Merick and I went to see Col Worthington he was at that time soured against the proceeding...

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...of the country (being a Tory) he answered us very roughly and could scarcely believe but that we must know the situation of my father's estate. And indeed it appears strange that he should choose to keep a matter of so much consequence from his sons after they had become heads of families. The only reason I have ever been able to give why he persevered in this profound secret was that as he was not an old man he still hoped to redeem the place and pay the mortgage but I think more of pride than good policy is discovered in concealing such a thing from children when they come of age. We found to our mortification that the farm was mortgaged and lost to us My Brother administered upon the Estate which did not prove sufficient to pay the debts. And I would remark that tho a man may appear to possess an estate that may be beneficial to his children yet if he know that it is involved to such a degree as to afford no home of anything being left for them it is in my view a duty he owes to them to let them know the actual situation of his affairs that if they must depend entirely on their own exertions the sooner they know it the better. The death of my Father was a severe stroke tho my situation just then going out in the army perhaps diverted my mind from reflections which I might have indulged had I been peaceable at home.

It was now September and the gloom which overspread our country in July when Burgoyne with his army came over Lake Champlain began to be dispelled. Burgoyne was elated with his success at first and he appeared to think this force sufficient to overrun the country. He published a proclamation the most bombastic and haughty that every I read. I have only to give the word (says he) and innumerable savages will be ready to assist me to quell this rebellion. He detached a considerable force under Gen St Leger to attack Fort Stanwix and another detachment was sent towards Bennington to procure horses to mount some German Dragoons. St Ledger failed of taking the Fort Stanwix and tho other detachment was defeated and captivated mostly. After the Battle of the 19th September the Militia were pouring in from the country in large bodies and took possession of the country along the bank of Hudson River. Above the British army and Ticonderoga retaken by 1777 our troops on the 7th of October. About two in the afternoon began another serious action between the two armies it terminated in our favour and a part of the works of the enemy was carried by force. Immediately after this Burgoyne began to retreat but could not proceed no farther back than Saratoga where he was completely surrounded and he surrendered on the 17th of October with his whole Army to the amount of five thousand and some more. This event raised the spirits of the people The British army at New York made a movement up the river and took a fort from us and burnt the Town of Esopus. The burning of so many of our Towns never helped their cause but the contrary if they considered us rebels it was no good policy to ruinous to

subdue us and I believe every wanton burning of Towns served more than anything else to fire the people in a determined opposition to any terms short of Independence. I did not mention in the proper place that before I left Springfield I contracted a habit which if it is not foolish is at least needless. My friend Ray was a snuff taker and generally before he began to sing a tune with me would present his box and I in complaisance would take a pinch and soon began to carry a box myself and thus established the habit I might have left off when I inoculated...

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...having gone without any for a month but I inconsiderately began the use of it again which is like to continue.

When I consider how universally tobacco is used I often wonder how the first man that began the use of it happened to do it. It is a nauseous herb which no animal but man would smell of much less taste perhaps mankind need something a little to amuse them or to beguile the time While their minds are agitated with a thousand thoughts and cares. If so then this plant is well adapted forth purpose it is found the use of it never dos much hurt except the expense I think I should have smoked or chewed tobacco if had not taken snuff. Before this time My sister Abigail married to Amos Rose they were both young and my sister had trouble enough by this connection. Brother Merick about this time was married to Abigail Strickland sister to Margaret married Brother Charles. My parents were opposed to this match and persuaded me to write to Merick while he was in the army all the effect it had was that he came home and married.

[1778]

This year 1778 began with rather better prospects as to our publick affairs so large an army of the enemy being killed and captivated greatly revived our North and West frontier. In February this year I went to Boston with Mr Isaac Parker and his wife I had been at Cambridge and Roxbury before but not into Boston.

I stayed there more than a week living free of expense with the relations of Mr Parker. Whilst I stayed there I went one day to Cambridge to hear the court martial upon Col Henley instated by Genl Burgoyne or called by his Burgoyne and his army were there kept at Cambridge or Charleston I heard Burgoyne speak to the court sometime he was an eloquent speaker and had a handsome address. The court adjourned and was not finished this day.

This year our public affairs were no worse than the last commissioners had been sent from England to propose terms to us but the conditions were that should still be under them whilst we insisted that they should withdraw their Armies and allow us Independence or we did not desire face with them and nothing was done. The British army had wintered in Philadelphia but now endeavoring to march by land to New York were attacked at Monmouth by our forces there was some failure on our part Genl Lee was to begin but retreated before the main body came into action Washington blamed Lee and he justified himself Lee asked for a court martial which was granted the court suspended Lee for one year and he did not join the army any more There was an action on Rhode Island this year and one at Savannah in Georgia.

Having been long seriously impressed with a sense of my lost conditions by nature and that I had exposed myself to Gods displeasure by innumerable actual sins I was in earnest to find if there was any way to obtain divine favour and forgiveness tho the Gospel gives abundant encouragement to the penitent yet it was no easy matter to satisfy myself that I had in exercised that repentance and faith which the Gospel requires. The unhappy division in the Church in Deerfield had kept me back from making public profession of religion at length. I felt persuaded to make it I was induced to do it in a great measure from a serious consideration of the words of Christ Mark 8th 38: if Christ had a cause in the world and I pretended to hope for salvation though...

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...him I felt satisfied that I ought to make it known by obeying his command I therefore joined the Church in November the last year 1778. I had by this time concluded to settle in Deerfield and had the last year bought an acre of land on which I was now preparing to build a house I had had brick the last year and cared about 30 loads of stone and this winter I got the timber. Ever since February 1775. I had led in the singing in this Town and kept a singing school. Occasionally sometimes being paid and sometimes gratis. The political parties in Deerfield were so near equal that at one time the Tories prevailed and at another the Whigs. This year the Tories had the Majority in the choice of Town officers. They chose them from their own party they however chose Maj David Dickinson a Whig for Town Clerk. He had been Clerk since 1775 but now declined serving they chose two more who also declined. The Town chose me clerk pro tempor at first and finding that the others they had chosen declined it they chose me into the office for the year. I was now 27 years old and as I attended public worship and led in the singing their I thought the Tories might have some hope of gaining me to their party by this mark of distinction I undertook the business with diffidence and got along tolerably well with it and instruction by it.

[1779]

As soon as the spring opened I began to build my house having the materials mostly prepared beforehand in May 1779 the frame was raised and in July the chimnies were built. I boarded out myself and had to get all the workman boarded many of my neighbours were very kind and obliging to help me forward and duty requires that I should mention Mr. Tahok Hawks Mr Ezra Mudge and Mr Jonathan Hoyt who helped me and waited till I could pay them. Our public affairs continued much in the same situation this year. Stony Point was taken from the British by storm we met with a severe loss at Penobscot our whole squadron at the north of that river was taken by the enemy. Paulus Hook [NJ] was attacked Genl Lincoln and Count Degras failed in attempting to storm Savannah. Count Pulaski a Pole in our service was killed in this attack. The paper money had more depreciated and was running down fast. Congress in order to carry on the war had issued so much that the country was full of it and no public or private men had any expectation that it would be redeemed. It passed however at some rate or other. Large taxes were laid on the people and we in Massachusetts paid in so much that if other states had paid their proportion it would probably have continued in circulation longer. The paper money having so much depreciation that it was difficult to do business. There were committees in the Town who were to set the price of articles. But it did no good trade will regulate itself if a Man had grain to sell provided he did not like the price that the committee set it at would say he had none to sell. If they did not sell at the price they were threatened with a mob and to be published as enemies to the country. But after all they could sell their grain at the price which they set if not openly yet in some way as much to the owners advantage. I had to pay considerable sums to furnish men for the Army. Gen. Washington tired out with trying to carry on the war by draughts of the militia had obtained from Congress authority to raise men

for three years or during the war. And I had to pay several class taxes to procure the men for this purpose. Towards the close of this year having got the lower rooms of my house finished I was married and went into it to live. As I have said nothing before about settling in a family state it will be proper here to observe that ever since...

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...the year 1776 I had in expectation of marrying as soon as I could get a place to live in and according on the 25 day of November 1779 I was married to Mercy Hoyt of Deerfield. We were the last couple that were joined in marriage by Mr Ashley. It will be proper here to give some account of the family to which my wife belonged. The first I find any account of as belonging to Deerfield was Deacon David Hoyt whom Mr Williams speaks of in his narrative as being captivated by the Indians and carried to Coos. And their starved to death. His eldest son David was married and had two daughters he was killed infighting with the enemy in the North meadow. He had three sons Jonathan Ebenezer and Benjamin who were carried away captives. On a subject like this I have often thought and reflected little matters will sometimes make us complain of hard times and severe treatment but it might still our complaint to compare our circumstances with those of a family like Dea Hoyts. Just settled in a new country and trying to obtain support for a growing family to be thus attacked and have his family all carried away and scattered and himself left to perish in the wilderness for want of food is suffering indeed which we in a time of peace or even in subsequent wars form no correct idea of.

Dea Hoyt above mentioned had a son Jonathan who returned from captivity and settled in Deerfield. He had but two sons David and Jonathan And my wife was a daughter of David Hoyt by a second wife. I was 27 years old the June before and she was 24 the October before we married.

It will be proper to observe that when I began to live in a family of my own I began to put in practice a resolution I had formed before and that was to attend to morning and evening prayers in the family. And if my advice is worth nothing I can freely advise all young men to do the same. They will find less difficulty in performing this duty at the commencement of their family state than they will ever after. We lived for some time without any other in the family. The winter following was extremely severe and a vast quantity of snow lay on the ground and the American Army were in danger of perishing for want on account of the difficulty of transporting provisions to them. The roads were so block up with snow.

In September this year a Convention met at Cambridge to form a constitution for Massachusetts their labours were so far successful as to present that excellent form of government which was accepted by a majority of the people and under which enjoy as much freedom as is consistent.

[1780]

Tho the winter was very severe yet according to the divine promise that summer and winter seed time and harvest shall not fail. The spring opened as usual at the annual March meeting. I was again chosen Town Clerk in May the constitution framed for Massachusetts was submitted to the people I had to read the whole three times in Town Meeting I kept a singing school the last fall and past winter. I had composed several pieces of music some of which I introduced into the school and were sung in public worship they were chiefly fuguing tunes as such music was much in use about this time. Mankind are rarely content with a medium in anything. When I learned music the slow tunes were all we sung and a fuguing tune in quick time would drive people out of the meeting house. About this time fuguing tunes

in the Allegro movement were chiefly in use and people approved to be pleased with them tho some thought them too light and airy. I had worked in partnership with Mr Smith ever since the year 1775. I began about this time to be dissatisfied with the partnership.

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Mr Smith was a very talkative unstable man and some of his proceedings gave me uneasiness. I found there was a shop to sold which had two rooms in it and might be fitted up so as to work at the trad in I partly engaged to buy it before I knew the conditions. it was now a time when the paper money was completely down and did not pass. And a foolish notion prevailed that silver was not worth so much as it was before the war began and it was said that a dollar now would buy no more than four shillings would before the war. While in this state I was told by Mrs. Busfell the owner of the shop that she expected I should give my note to Mr Joseph Stebbins for the shop and that it must be priced and soon after she told me that two experienced carpenters had priced it at 21:7. I thought it very high but did not think as I ought to that it was more than the worth of it. There is so much instability and inconsistency in mankind that at one time they will think a thing extravagant and at another reasonable. Certainly it was extravagant to give such a price for the shop I believe I did not ask advice but gave my note and took it. There was time sufficient afterwards to regret this hasty foolish bargain. I got it moved and began to working it this year.

In May this year 1780 Genl Lincoln was obliged to surrender Charleston in South Carolina and his whole army to the enemy and in the course of the summer Genl Gates was completely defeated at Campden. And Lord Cornwallis who commanded the something forces had nearly subdued all the country south of Virginia Tho some parties of Americans were hovering around him and at length several of them collected and attacked Major Ferguson at the Kings mountains and killed him and killed took and dispersed his whole party. I have observed that the paper money had now run its race and had gone to rest. I cannot avoid making some remarks upon it. I think that the people generally supposed that this money never possessed any intrinsic value for Congress who passed it and who did all public business never possessed any further power than to resolve advise and recommend. Beside as every one might know that no funds were established to redeem it yet it was for five years the circulating medium of the Country and very little other money was used. It had got into every ones hands and all the people seamed somehow to choose to have it pass tho continually running down. it was the means of carrying on the War. And when it finally failed their was not such convulsions as I had expected. Many individuals were distressed and even ruined by it especially such as had sold their property and had it on hand when it stopped passing.

Genl Green had the command of the southern Army since the defeat of Genl Gates and he was in a critical situation the enemy were so powerful and he so weak that for a season he was obliged to move his camp in the night to avoid being surprised and taken. In July Genl Morgan effectually defeated Col Carlton a famous partisan Officer under Cornwallis. Morgan had taken about 500 prisoners Green immediately moved towards Morgan to direct that the prisoners should be marched to Virginia to avoid being retaken by Cornwallis who pursued Green and Morgan near five hundred miles but could not get up to them or retake the prisoners. There was something so remarkable in the escape of Green Army by the sudden rise of the river after he had passed that the enemy could not pass that some supposed it a special act of providence in their favour. Genl Green it is said declared when he took command of the southern Army that he would do something or perish in the attempt According...

...he was ever in motion after securing the prisoners taken by Morhan. He got his Army concentrated and in March engaged with Cornwallis at Guilford Courthouse. This was allowed to be the most regular battle fought in the War. Had Green commanded troops as well disciplined as those of the enemy it is highly probable he would have conquered but he had part Militia his regular troops did well and handled the enemy so roughly that they did not pursue when he retreated from the ground. And tho they claimed the victory yet it was dearly bought. The enemy lost that day many valuable officers And Lie Col Webster fell in this action a severe loss to Cornwallis.

Green fought again with the enemy in September for four hours and would have defeated them no doubt if they had not got into a brickhouse from which he could not drive them. I believe Green fought more battles and overcome more difficulties than any other officer under Genl Washington.

[1781]

On the 13th of January 1781 born and was baptized by Mr Reed of Warwick occasionally preaching here. We called her name Charissa to loan up the name of a sister of my wife who died young of the Dysentery. In relating the occurrences of the last year (1780) I omitted mentioning the death of Mr Ashley the Minister of Deerfield he had been so unwell for several months that he did not preach. There was an attempt made early in the spring to bring the unhappy controversy subsisting between him and a large part of the Church and people to a settlement. And Mr Ashley and the aggrieved part of the church chose a mutual council which met in May and after sitting a number of days found they were equally divided and could do nothing and the dispute remained as it was until the 30th of August Mr Ashley died and not long after his death the parties became united.

An important event happened this year (1781) which prepared the way for peace between Great Britain and America. I mean the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his whole Army. France was before this time at war with Great Britain and Spain had or was about to join. Congress had sent Mr Laurens to Holland to engage them in the war -- he was taken by of ship and carried to England his papers discovered his business and England finding the United provinces about to join in the war did not wait but declared war against them. In addition to all this the northern powers of Europe were forming what they called an armed neutrality. It was the naval power of Great Britain that caused this opposition. The feet of France was at this time powerful. They had been on our coast and in some of our Ports. In the season of the Hurricane in the West Indies before this year there was a French Army commanded by Count De Rochambeau stationed at Rhode Island in the summer of 1780. Genl Washington met Count Rochambeau at Hartford to agree upon a plan of operations. In his return to WestPoint he found things in disorder their Genl Arnold who commanded that post had agreed to give it up to the British But had not quit completed his treason when Maj Andre the agent sent out by Genl Clinton was taken in disguise and as soon as Arnold heard of it he went off to the British. But Andre was brought in tried and executed as a spy. It is a pity the right rogue was not hanged. This year 1781 there was a large French fleet and more troops arrived and Genl Washington planned the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his Army in order to cover his designs from the enemy he moved the Army as though attack was to be made upon New York and placed troops on the Jersey shore and ordered works to be constructed by this show of...

...an attack he kept the enemy in New York while he at the same time was moving the Army to the southward And it was said he gained three days march before Genl Clinton understood his designs. The French fleet under Cond De Grass had now blocked up the Chesapeake Bay and Lord Cornwallis had taken post at Yorktown in Virginia. Thus in a very short time that commander who had almost overrun and subdued the southern states found himself completely surrounded by the American and French Armies an attempt was made by the British fleet at New York to force De Grass from his station at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay but it proved ineffectual and the siege of York Town was carried on with vigor and success by the combined armies under Genl Washington until the 19th October when Lord Cornwallis surrendered his whole army prisoners. This was an important event and was the closing scene of active warfare on both sides. England had now besides America France Spain and Holland at war with her and the Northern Nation had formed an armed neutrality which was aimed as a blow upon her commerce. In this state of things petitions were presented to the King to allow us our independence and the House of Commons had a majority in favour of peace with us which was agreed to the next winter. Although the definitive Treaty was not signed till the year after. Thus indeed this long and arduous struggle which continued almost eight years I was at an age when the whole conflict was likely to interest me and was impressed with it so much as to have the events as they took place fixed in my memory and it is not likely that the like or those of vastly greater importance will ever engage my attention to such a degree again.

When Long Island New York and Fort Washington were taken from us it appeared as tho we could not defend anything and must be subdued again the next year after being defeated on Lake Champlain the year before to have Ticonderoga and all the country down below Fort Edward ravaged and overpowered by Burgoyne's army presented to us properly a dark day. And I entered fully into all the feelings excited by such events sometimes the cause in which we were engaged appeared to be desperate beyond recovery. A question has often arisen why Britain did not subdue us. And I have assigned several reasons for it. One was they had a contemptible opinion of our courage strength and means for carrying on a war. As our commerce had been confined to them before they imagined we should be destitute of war like stores as soon as they had stopped our trade which they easily could do. Again they suffered the war to linger had they sent sufficient force. The first campaign to have driven into the country while the consternation so generally excited by being engaged in was with so powerful a nation and the fear of being treated as rebels lasted had they done this instead of lying blockades in Boston through the whole year there was a much fairer chance for them to have subdued us.

Another thing was a cause of uniting us and heightening our opposition to them their cruelty in the no savages ever treated prisoners of war with more cool determined cruelty than they treated our prisoners confined in New York in the winter of 1777 besides their burning so many of our populous towns. Casco Bay Norfolk in Virginia Esopus Fairfield Danbury New London served to inflame the minds of our people and was a wanton and very impolitic mode of warfare perhaps these cruelties and destruction was more owing to the vindictive spirit of the Tories who had some influence and authority among them...

...than to any orders from the British Government. Another thing was the vast expense of maintaining an Army at such a distance and the difficulty of repairing their losses of men seasonably. If we were defeated we fell back and our ranks could be soon filled by recruits if they met with losses they must cross the Atlantic three thousand miles to repair them. And it is generally supposed that their commanders or troops some of them at least were not the best.

I may add as one cause why we did not sink under our difficulties and become subdued was the prudence perseverance and skill of our worthy commander in chief in the year 1776 and 1777. He retreated before the enemy so much and Genl Gates had been successful in capturing Burgoyne's Army that a party in Congress proposed to remove Genl Washington and give the command to Gates. This did not however take place and the people in general had confidence in him and could see after the war that the measures he adopted were the occasion of saving us from being overcome and subdued. Above all I ascribe it to an act of Divine providence over ruling all things And did so order events that after a severe conflict we should be separated from Great Britain and the civil connection be dissolved. Reason shows that a kingdom however powerful could not expect to keep another people inhabiting a vast territory and fast increasing always in subjection especially when they are parted by a sea of three thousand miles.

The crisis into which the country was brought by a dispute with Great Britain called into exercise the powers and faculties of our greatest men. And I believe we were favoured at that time with many both in the cabinet and the field equal to any country ever produced. Several officers of distinction from Europe joined us and had command in our Armies Gen Lee and Genl Gates were British officers before they joined us. The Baron De Calb and Steuben were Prussians. Pulaski was a Pole and the Marquis de Lafayette a Frenchman. It is understood that most of the Nations of Europe were in favour of our cause in the war. Doct Moors tells us in his travels that this was the case and says the Great Frederick of Prussia was decidedly on our side and gives it as his opinion that power and strength of England especially their naval power excited the envy and ill will of the other nations and therefore they wished to see them checked and humbled.

1781

I was Town Clerk this year being the third I had been chosen. Taxes were high and I had in addition to the ordinary Taxes to pay two class taxes for procuring man for the Army. I don't know as I felt any new impressions or experienced any new exercises in religion this year. I was constant in attending on the public and private exercises of it. My sentiments of religion were as was the universal sentiments of this and the neighboring church as truly Calvinistic. Nor did I at that time imagine the Church in Deerfield would on any account embrace any other opinion.

I will briefly state the sentiments of Calvinists as well as I am able in short terms. They believe that all Mankind are in consequence of their relation to the first parents of Mankind who sinned born into this world with a propensity to evil and a natural aversion to that which is good or in other words wholly and entirely depraved. They also believe that God did from eternity elect a certain number of his fallen creatures to salvation through the atonement of Christ. While the rest were left to pursue the ways of iniquity to their own ruin. They...

...think that God's law is immutable and the demands of it just. And that his justice requires that the threatenings of that law must be executed either upon Man or his surety. And therefore conclude that Christ must be divine and Almighty or he never could satisfy the demands of God's law and justice for

sinner. They further believe that mankind are so depraved in their natural state that they never will of themselves seek after salvation And therefore that they need the special influences of the holy spirit to regenerate them. And that such divine assistance is promised and is afforded to all who obtain salvation. They also believe that all who are renewed and sanctified by divine grace will persevere and be kept from final apostasy. There are other important doctrines held by Calvinists but these five particular ones are what divide and distinguish them from Arminians Socinians and Unitarians.

If these Five points of Doctrine are admitted Viz original sin, election, special grace and the absolute Divinity of Christ with the perseverance of the saints. The Gospel appears to be a regular system. And the scripture abundantly support them. So I think we may see that each of them are connected with the other so as to harmonize and God is glorified in the salvation of sinners. But if these doctrines are called in question or disputed I must confess I cannot see a consistency in the Gospel or understand why Christ has given up his life for us. If he has not satisfied God's Law and Justice for us that law and justice must still require our punishment and no reconciliation is made between God and Men.

No events in my manner of life took place this year except it be that I was not chosen Town Clerk worth mentioning. I had been chosen in 1779 by the Tories and the two following years. As I had reason to suppose they hoped to gain me to their party by giving me that office so I suppose that they now found that their object was not attained and therefore they let me drop. One of the observed to me that I came in that door. To whom I replied that he could not find fault as I sent out at the same door.

I worked principally at the trade but did not carry it on to any great extent. I took some land upon shares to raise Indian corn and we were in health and economical and made out to live comfortable. We had but a small family. We felt the effects of the cost of the War and taxes were high and money rather scarce. I shall relate some things I omitted in their proper place. On the 17th of May 1780 there was a darkness over the country which was extraordinary. it happened about 8 o'clock in the morning. And was so dark that it seemed like night. Various were the conjectures as to the cause. On the 2nd day of May 1780 my brother Charles died. Although I ought to be tender of the reputation of a Brother yet I ought not to suppress something that may be useful to survivors. My Brother married rather young And they had children very fast. He did not live with his partner in such peace and harmony as could be desired. He had also contracted a habit of using too much spirits which might enhance his domestic trouble. He received from my fathers estate full wages for his services after he came of age till he got married he however was poor. And went into the army and when at home went out to day labour when they wanted him. And being at work for one Mr Lloyd chopping wood at the door. He had observed Mr Lloyd set his bottle up after he had given him a drain in the forepart of the day. He went into the house in the afternoon and their...

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...being no person in the room. He took the bottle as he supposed from which he drank before. But it proved to be a preparation of some strong poisonous ingredients prepared for a young woman who was to take but few drops with other liquid. He it is probable took a full draught and went to his work but was immediately seized all over and carried in. The Doctor was called and on finding what he had drank said he must die unless a vomit could ease him but it was too late. He died that night. And appeared to have all his flesh consumed as much as if he had pined away in a consumption. However unjustifiable it might be for my Brother to take down that bottle when none of the family were present. Yet I think that those who set a bottle of such deadly poison within the reach of the children of the family are more to

blame still. If they were not exposed to prosecution in the civil law yet I think they can hardly be freed from guilt. In the present case no such composition ought to be kept within the reach and power of the young and inexperienced.

[1782]

In February this year definitive treaty of Peace between England and North America. They at length gave up to us all we asked. And we were left in almost as critical a situation as when we began the war. We had a heavy debt to pay. And the trade that now opened upon us drained off the money the people had lived so long with but little trade that they were destitute of money articles of necessary use. And in debt at the stores and old debts began to be called for. Tho each State had formed a constitution for themselves. Yet their was no power in the hands of Congress to raise money or bind the States. And we had got possessed of such truly republican sentiments that every man thought himself as good as his neighbours and some better. Tho we were freed from the calamities of war. Yet we were not free from danger from ourselves.

[1783]

This year I had a son born whom we called Henry. He was born on the 6th day of November 1783. He was baptized the next sabbath by Mr Newton of Greenfield.

A man needs to live his life twice over in order to get experience respecting what is the wisest course to pursue. And after all it is more possible he will play the fool.

I was now in debt for the land on which I lived and for the Old Shop. I had bought yet very wisely hired a piece of Meadow land this year for which I gave my note about twenty three dollars. Before this time my brother Merick moved his family to Greenfield with him came my sister Lucy and soon after the widow of my brother Charles moved there also with her children. She married to Ephraim Hastings by whom she had a son. Their lives were very uncomfortable whilst they lived together. And at length they finally parted for good and all.

Our publick affairs wore a very gloomy aspect. Money was scarce taxes called for often. And people getting into debt at the stores. And a spirit of insubordination began to show itself and the Government complained of as the cause tho it was evident they did all they could to ease the people of their burdens but they had not the power to do it. They made a tender act and many a debt which ought to have been paid in money was paid at the of an execution in pine boards bulls and stags a they were prised off to the creditor.

[1784?]

I was for the first time called to serve on the Jury of trials at Northampton the county sat in February this year. Our public affairs were discouraging.

Congress earnestly recommended to all the states to lay a duty of five per cent on...

...imported goods. Some of the States complied especially Massachusetts, but New York laid no duty. And Congress had no power to enforce their recommendations. The event proved that it turned all the trade to New York. As they could go their free from duty. Massachusetts was obliged to repeal their law in self defense in order to obtain their share of the trade. Government being so defective of power to raise any revenue the whole balance of trade was against us. And in favour of other Nations who required us to pay a duty upon the goods we bought of them. Their was much complaining and uneasiness. And proposals for county conventions and other popular meetings to advise what was best to be done. Those however did no good but served to inflame the public mind. A spirit of revolt often discovered itself and sheriffs and constables were sometimes opposed in the discharge of this duty. But the chief threats were directed against the courts of justice.

[1785]

On the 3rd day of November this year I had another son born and was baptized the next sabbath by Mr Newton of Greenfield. We called his name Charles. This year I built a small barn I had staked my hay abroad but their was a great loose and cattle could not be well sheltered under a hovel. I bought a piece of a barn and was about to set it up but by advice of friends I got more timber and had it framed over new and set up the frame in August. I had not got shingles but covered the roof with boards so that it was very beneficial this winter.

[1786]

The coals of discontent tho partially buried kindled afresh this year and burst into a flame. At the time of holding the court of common pleas at Northampton a mob assembled and prevented the court sitting. This was in August the supreme court at that time was held in Springfield in September. The Government sent for its friends to turn out and protect this court. I went with a company of Deerfield above forty well armed. The Mob turned out at the same time and we frequently passed them as they us on the road but was no dispute. We marched to Springfield in about 24 hours and passed by the Mob stationed on the west side of the road above the ferry lane when we came to the courthouse we found it well guarded by the friends of Government who were well armed and had too pieces of Artillery. The court was setting but could not do business amidst the noise and confusion. The Mob were numerous and they marched by us by agreement I counted the sections and allowing 8 men to a section I made them from 1200 to 1300. Others did the same. Daniel Shays was at their head. About 300 in the front were armed the rest not or not generally so. The friends of Government were fully Armed though I thought the Mob the most in number the court adjourned. And we had no further business. A sort of agreement was entered into with the Mob by which we all returned home in peace. The Mob assembled at Worcester in November and stopped the court setting there. They were out in two severe storms. Thus at the close of this year all law and government was completely prostrate in Worcester Hampshire and Berkshire, James Bowdoin Esq. was now our Governor and he and the council with the Genl Court were about trying whether they should rule of a Mob.

[1787]

The beginning of this year was truly an alarming crisis. The Government ordered Genl Shepperd to assemble an armed force at Springfield. The latter part of January and the friends of Government turned out with alacrity and Zeal and the insurgents as the mob were now called turned out also probably in...

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...self defense as they supposed the Government might easily take them if they remained at home. The party under Shays were at Ludlow Palmer or Wilbraham. Another party under Capt Luke Day were at West Springfield and a third party mostly from Berkshire were at Chicopee under Eli Parsons. Genl Shepperd with the friends of Government were posted on the hill to guard the public stores and had it in their power to be completely armed and supplied with artillery and ammunition. About a week after they had got collected the insurgents marched to Springfield from the East under Daniel Shays. Genl Shepperd sent to them to inform that he had orders from the secretary of War to defend them public stores if they advanced he must fire upon them. They however marched on and the Genl kept his word and fired with Artillery. The second or third shot killed four of them and wounded one. The killed were Spicer of Leyden, Hunter of Shelburne, Root of Bernardston and Webster of Gill. The effect of this firing upon the insurgents was surprising. They immediately retreated and scattered in every direction it was said that Shays was backward to head them that he was constantly surrounded with a council of old men who rode on each flanking their attack. And when they saw the effect of the Artillery they turned their horses about and called a loud to the armed men to do so which had the effect they desired and Shays and his officers could as well command the wind as the men he headed. Their intention no doubt was to obtain arms and military stores of which they had no supply but the firing at them turned the scale effectually. they retreated to Amherst and then to Pelham a great proportion left the cause and went home. Genl Lincoln arrived about two days after at Springfield with a Division of troops from Boston and its vicinity. And immediately went in pursuit of Day and Parsons. But both these parties ran away and but a few were taken. Genl Lincoln marched to Hadley. And the insurgents to Petersham Lincoln set out with his troops in the night It was a pleasant evening just after a new snow but after midnight the wind blew hard the cold increased. And snow flew so that the men suffered very much they came to Petersham in the morning And the Mob dispersed. the leaders went out of the state and others home so this concluded the farce. Genl Brooks had marched with another division of troops but was not wanted. Some skirmishing took place in Berkshire County after this but was soon over. The Government kept a regiment for four months in these counties. But they found no enemy any longer. Their were parties of cavalry sent out to bring in the insurgents. In attempting to take Jason Parmenter of Bernardston he fired and killed Jacob Walker from Whately. Parmenter was taken and one Mr Culler were tried and convicted and sentenced to the gallows but were pardoned at the place of execution. Mr John Hancock was chosen Governor this year who was for lenient measures. There were none executed for their treason against the State.

On the 14th of Feb this year the Rev John Taylor was ordained to the work of the Ministry in Deerfield after the people had been without a settled Minister ever since Sept 1780 six years and a half. Mr Taylor was a son of Eldad Taylor of Westfield whose patriotic exertions during our contest with Great Britain are well known. His son John he settled here was well established in the doctrines of grace or those called Calvinistic and preached the same to the people. He taught the doctrine of the entire moral depravity of all mankind. The need of a special divine influence in their regeneration that the regenerated were...

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...elected before the world was made. That so fatal was the fall of all mankind that none shore of a Divine Person could satisfy God's law and justice for them. He therefore taught that Christ was God as well as man and that those whom he called by his grace and were born again would according to his promise never be lost.

In September this year the convention of the United States met at Philadelphia to adopt a constitution for the states. This was an important and necessary measure. Congress under the confederation possessed no power to enforce their resolutions and individual states were too jealous of each other to act in concert in any national transaction. And the insurrection in Massachusetts plainly shewed the necessity of a National Government. And it is likely hastened on the adoption of it the convention chose Genl Washington their president and formed the constitution under which we live. Other Nations have had their Governments established by the sword here was a novel scene a great people sending their greatest men to form for them in a peaceable and tranquil manner a form of government which was to be binding on them and their posterity. And they happily succeeded.

[1788]

Nothing very remarkable took place this year the several states held conventions of Delegates to take into consideration the Federal Constitution prepared for the United States by the General Convention last year. There was considerable opposition to it in each state but a majority having adopted it in nine states the Legislatures chose senators and the people chose electors of President and Vice President and Representatives to Congress from this time we may date the rise of the political parties in our country. Those who were in favour of the Federal Constitution were called Federalists and those opposed it Democrats.

[1789]

On the 16th of January this year I had a Daughter born and on the 18th she was baptized by Rev. Mr Newton of Greenfield. We called her Emilia. *[Note: She was married to Jan 7 1824 to Capt Henry P Billings of Conway Mass and died August 22 1854 of the dropsy. NH]*

This year some important events took place. One was the meeting of Congress at New York. The people by unanimous voice chosen Genl Washington President of the United States and John Adams was chosen Vice President by a good majority. The want of a system of National Government had been felt ever since 1783. All the people placed the Greatest confidence in their present rulers with the Great Washington at their head. This year was also distinguished as the beginning of the revolution in France. The King and the Government of France early joined us in the Revolutionary war with Great Britain. They had an Army in this country and officers in ours amongst which the most distinguished was the Marquis de Lafayette after seeing the Liberty enjoyed by the people here. They grew uneasy with the arbitrary government under which they lived. And this year it broke out into insurrection and in their zeal or rage they demolished the Bastille a strong Prison ins=which state prisoners were confined.

It will be proper to mention some things here which have omitted. For several years past the canker worms had been so numerous in the old Towns in particular that they destroyed all hopes of any fruit the orchards generally by July looked as tho they were dead. All the leaves were eaten and no apples would grow. As to myself I had sometimes dark prospects as to obtaining a support for my growing family. I never was calculated for launching forth into great schemes and projects I worked at trade and some of the time in the...

...summer abroad And sometimes by the day for others people I raised some corn and got hay by taking land upon shares. I had hired a piece of land owned by Mr Hannah Williams of Pittsfield and before I could pay the rent was sued and had to pay about five dollars cost and to sell a cow to get through with it. And sometimes I found it very difficult to get grain and wood. All this time the debt I owed to Mr Stebbins for the shop was accumulating. I never despaired of getting along somehow was generally well but laboured hard.

1790

Nothing remarkable happened this year except it was the effect our National government had upon all classes of people. Confidence was restored in the government and a new spring to all kinds of business was the effect. People were encouraged to cultivate their lands under a sure prospect of a ready market and good price for their produce.

1791

The revolution in France continued like a furious tornado to deluge that nation in blood. A war was the consequence. It began first between the revolution fist in France and Germany. Its an ill wind that blows nobody good. This war was a favourable circumstance for the United States These nations at war wanted our productions and the price of them was raised so that our people were encouraged to make greater exertions than before. In the month of Nov this year Genl St Clair and the army he commanded was defeated by the Indians. It was a heavy loss of men and the remainder of the army were obliged to retreat to a great distance for safety. A writer in the newspaper soon after observed that the los to the country was not so great as many thought it to be for a great proportion of those that were killed were thieves and rogues. And the country was now freed from them. St Clair was almost executed for abandoning Ticonderoga in the year 1777. And now so completely defeated by the Indians that he got the name of the unfortunate General to such a degree that a foreign officer observed that he ought to be killed because he was always unfortunate. After all it does not appear but that he was a man of courage and a good officer. But many circumstances operated against him. In December this year my Mother died. Ever since the Death of my Father in 1777 she had lived on her dower or thirds of the estate. My Brother Luke lived with her. It was his custom to make fire in her room before she got up having don this he spake to her but had no answer and ongoing to the bed he found her in a fit of apoplexy or numb palsy she lived but a short time after and never recovered so as to speak. Thus I and the rest of us were deprived of both our parents. I remember my Mother will sentiments of respect and esteem. She was small in person, modest in deportment, a keeper at home and a kind Mother of a large family. She was a professor of religion and exemplary in her life and conversation.

1792

I met with an accident in February this year which caused much pain and loss of time. I came out of the house of Mr Bull in Shelburne going to the sleigh and slipped down in the snow path and I suppose much of my weight came upon one hand. My thumb of my right hand was put out of joint it shot up so

much that the skin was broke on the inside. And probally the cap broke also for it ran out some days after. My thumb swelled greatly and seamed to be hollow. It was twice cut open and too pieces of the bone taken out. The Doctor would have cut it off if I had consented But I felt a great reluctance to it not only from my natural timidly But from a desire I always had to preserve it if possible for the sake of its being so necessary in writing and I was right in my...

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...judgment for it had been taken off I should have been scarcely able to write after about four months it got well the joint is stiff but it is of very great use to me still. NI

I have omitted to mention that on the 19th day of August 1788 their was a great wind which did much damage in the woods and among buildings. It began to blow from the south in the forenoon and increased till near two of the clock then shifted to the west and was then form some minutes a hurricane. It took off some of the roof of my shop and damaged many buildings. I was attentive to religion in these years and often found comfort and satisfaction from it. My outward circumstances were in some instances rather dark and doubtful. Tho my family were as free from sickness as we could expect. Yet I found it hard times to get along. One cause of difficulty the accumulating debt I owed to Mr Stebbins for the purchase of the old shop which grew larger every year. I every year recollected my birthday which happened on the 7th of June but I never kept as a day of mirth and rejoicing. I endeavored to call to mind the Divine Goodness to me in the year past. And to be thankful for it. I generally let the day pass without noticing it to others but never forgot it myself it was to me a day of humiliation considering how long I had been spared how much condescending goodness had been exercised towards an unworthy reptile dhow little I had done for God or Man. And the sins of another year were now to be added to the long catalogue unless they were graciously pardoned through the all powerful atonement made by Jesus Christ. I sometimes wrote something upon my birthday. And some of my friends received from me monetary pieces upon their birthday for several years.

1793

Under the good and wise administration of our National government at the head of which was that extraordinary Man Genl Washington our country now enjoyed peace and unexampled prosperity. The terrible conflicts in Europe occasioned by the revolution became a source of wealth to us as they necessarily required so many of the men to carry on their wars. Their lands were not improved to advantage and they stood in need of supplies from us. The French nation thought that we should take an active part on their side. But our wise President issued his proclamation of neutrality so that we were left at liberty to supply any of the nations except military stores. The French revolution went on still and every step was marked with blood. They had put to death Luis 16 their rightful King sometime before this and this year they brought the Queen to trial and the fatal. It was enough to chill the blood of a stoic to read an account of the horrid blasphemes and shocking butcheries and inhuman murders which took place in Paris under direction of the Jacobin club and perpetuated by a ferocious mob. The offscouring and filth of France worked up to a pitch of rage which was rarely if ever seen in the world. If any who remember these transactions can doubt the doctrine of total depravity it well be difficult ever to convince them of it. Tho our country prospered yet we had at war with the Indians ever since the defeat of Genl St Clair and even before.

1794

A singular event took place this year. The apple trees had been almost destroyed by the canker worms for many years past. They were in blossom this year early and the blows all fallen and little apples formed before the 20th of May about the 17th of this month there was a frost so severe that it killed them all. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good. It was found that...

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...this very frost effectually destroyed the canker worms also. The Indians were completely defeated this year by our army under the command of Genl Wayne and peace was established with them.

1795

Before this time General Washington had been a second time elected President of the United States. Under his wise administration and by the assistance of those great men associated with him in the government our country flourished beyond a parallel. Tho the French Minister Plenopo who were here trying every method to involve us in the wars of Europe. Yet we maintained our neutrality and lived in peace. In consequence of the destruction of the canker worms last year by frost, there was a great quantity of apples this year more than I had known before in one year.

1796

In the March this year, Cephus Hoyt had the measles. He had been a journey and the Doctors thought he had the smallpox and they inoculated for it nearly one hundred persons who all were carried safely through the disorder. My two sons Henry and Charles were among those who were inoculated.

Before this time there had been a serious insurrection in the back part of Pennsylvania. Congress had laid a duty upon spirits distilled in the country. These people lived remote from the sea and depended chiefly upon whiskey which was distilled from grain for their use and thought Law severe toward them and refused to comply with it. A military force was called out and the disturbance stilled without bloodshed.

1797

This year Genl Washington finished his second four years Presidency. The country had flourished under his administration beyond a parallel. But as if we were to have a new proof of the deep depravity of the human heart a strong party had arisen. At the head of which was Mr Jefferson who ever vilifying the character of that great Man and endeavoring to draw him from his steady adherence to neutrality and engage the whole country on the side of France in the dreadful contest which desolated Europe.

Mr John Adams was chosen President a great politician but more fluctuating and passionate than his predecessor. The Democratic party gained strength. The cause of freedom supposed to be that which the revolutionists in France had in view was the ostensible reason made use of by this party. And their public agents (those of France) which come here were indefatigable in striving to engage us in their quarrel with the Nations.

1798

This year was like the last the wars in Europe raged terribly and we had almost engaged in war with France. Our country however flourished and the business of all kinds went on well, the war in Europe occasioned a demand and high price for all our produce.

In November this year I was chosen a Deacon in the church in Deerfield not considering perhaps my own deficiencies sufficiently I accepted the office.

We were in such expectation of a war with France that an army was forming. And Genl Washington was appointed to command it which he accepted.

1799

Our public affairs continued in much the same situation. The party styled Republicans or Democrats were evidently gaining ground and the public newspapers and periodicals publications were sent forth full of abuse and misrepresentation against President Adams and Genl Washington.

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This year the Academy in Deerfield was built. And also the first bridge over Deerfield river at Cheapside. it proved to be a poor contrived thing and did not last long. -

In June this year I cut my foot badly. There was something singular in the manner in which it was done. I was cutting a bushing the heat of the day with a sharp axe which caught a branch of another bush when I was striking with almost my strength and so turned the ax as to bring it right across my toes with such force as to cut off my boot both upper and sole leather with four of my toes. The great toe though the middle of the nail the next three near the middle the little toe escaped. I felt a shock but did not know that I was cut until I looked down and saw the ends of my toes lying on the ground. Notwithstanding it was so severe a wound it was all healed up in six weeks.

On the 14th of December this year Genl Washington died. I have never witnessed an event in our country except the breaking out of war with Great Britain in 1775 which had so strong effect on all classes of people in our country. He came the nearest to perfection in my opinion of any man I ever heard of. The loss of such a Man was deeply lamented throughout the United States such was my respect and attachment to him (tho I never saw him) that the sound of his name excited emotions that I cannot describe. It sounds like that of a Father and friend. Historians will do justice to his character which I cannot.