1978


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LYNCH, PATRICIA
THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT: CONCORD, GLOUCESTER, AND
PITTSFIELD, 1763-1789, (VOLUMES I AND II)

THE LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COL., PH.D., 1978

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THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CONCORD, GLOUCESTER, AND PITTSFIELD, 1763-1789

Volume I

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of History

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studied the high town officers in three Massachusetts towns, the farming community of Concord, and fishing/merchant community of Gloucester, and the frontier town of Pittsfield, from 1763 to 1789 to discover whether or not the Revolution had sufficient impact to bring about a change, not only in leaders, but in the kind of leaders chosen. Collective and individual biographical sketches of the hundred and sixteen men who served as moderators, town clerks, selectmen, treasurers, and representatives form the bulk of the study. The biographies were drawn from town meeting minutes, tax and valuation lists, probate, business, genealogical, church, and militia records. Some evidence of economic standing was found for all but a handful of the leaders. Common leaders served whatever was the usual tenure in high town office, then reappeared only in committee assignments or tax lists. But each town had a group of larger leaders who served longer and often held multiple offices for many years. The towns not only retained their colonial officers, but these leaders often brought the towns into and through the Revolution, and in some cases continued in office into the 1790s. When they
were replaced it was by men from similar economic and social backgrounds. Even the merchant community of Gloucester had only one Tory to replace when the Revolution came, and the wealthiest men apparently took a turn in high town office as something they did as they prospered, rather than using it as a source of political power.

Most town leaders came from families long established in town, and they were often related by marriage to the families of other high town officers. Most of them fell into the top quarter of taxpayers or were prosperous to wealthy by the time they were elected. But newcomers and less prosperous men also served, and for some men militia service, education, or business experience was an acceptable substitute for minor offices where most began town service. The numerous and demanding minor offices held by many larger leaders indicate how extensively they were involved in the daily life of their towns. Trusted high town officers usually dominated the Committees of Correspondence, Safety, and Inspection, as well as those dealing with schools, roads, and meetinghouses. They were frequently their town’s delegates to the numerous county conventions, and wrote instructions for delegates and representatives, and served on the county courts. They were in a very real sense, town leaders.

The high town officers usually reflected the occupation of the townspeople, but displayed a remarkable degree of adaptability in turning to new sources of income after

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the war. Many turned from land speculation to dealing in securities, and they were involved in the founding of banks, with several serving as bank presidents. While many died insolvent, few had lived that way. Most lived as prosperous to wealthy members of their communities, reflecting and shaping their towns as leaders in peace, in the Revolution and beyond.
INTRODUCTION

Literature

In the 1960s, historians of the American Revolution began to re-examine the causes and impact of the Revolution through the study of different segments of American society. Some studied the urban mob to shed light on the motivation of the lower classes in American colonial society.¹ Others studied provincial officers and changing patterns of leadership to gain greater understanding of the impact of the Revolution on the top political leaders in the colonies.² These studies have broadened our knowledge and suggested new methods of research and historical analysis. Whether they


approached the revolution from the top down or from the bottom up, however, these writers all focused on the urban scene. But as Crane Brinton and many others have pointed out, American society in the 1760s was primarily rural not urban, and "the strength of the revolutionary movement in the long run lay with the plain people, not with the mob or rabble." It lay with "the country artisans, small farmers and frontiersmen." In Massachusetts, the strength of the Revolution lay not with the Boston rabble, but with the common people in the country framing towns that ringed the seaport cities, and that reached west, tier upon tier, into the Berkshire hills and the Connecticut River Valley. If, as James Franklin Jameson claimed, the Revolution began as a struggle for political independence from Britain, but then "spread abroad upon the land," profoundly altering "many aspects of colonial society," then we should be able to see those alterations in the rural towns that contained most of the Bay Colony's people, and most of her rebels as well.

Many excellent historians have focused on the officers and government in one or more of these towns, or even in a cross-section of towns. Among the latter are


5 Richard L. Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970); Edward M. Cook, Jr.,
Dirk Hoerder and Edward M. Cook, Jr. both of whom produced quantitative studies of town officers for a number of towns. Hoerder studied leadership from 1760 to 1780 in five towns: Amherst, Worcester, Boston, Weston, and Plymouth. While his choice of towns seems to have been influenced primarily by the availability of printed town records, his approach indicates the weakness of purely quantitative studies, for the individuality of the towns and the unique response to crises of each one is lost when we rely only on aggregate data. The interpretation of quantitative data without regard to the


personal background of the men and the town providing that data is suspect. Hoerder divided the town offices according to whether or not they required skills, special knowledge, or supervision functions. He then drew conclusions based on statistical data alone when the data themselves were shaped by custom. For example, often the average age for entering an office was not important, if, as was the custom, certain offices in some towns were reserved for young men, or for certain families. In others, whenever sensitive decisions had to be made regarding roads, only experienced and trusted town officers were chosen. Other offices which Hoerder claimed required no special talent demanded a whole range of political talents provided only by long service in town office. He also made more obvious mistakes, such as saying that militia titles were largely honorary—this at a time when Massachusetts spent ten out of twenty years at war. Finally, his study depends much too heavily on Boston, which was anything but typical.

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7Roberg Gross, The Minutemen and Their World is an excellent study of the leaders of a single town based on quantitative data and traditional sources.

8Hoerder, Society and Government, 34-36.

9Ibid., 49.

10Ibid., 38.
But Hoerder's main problem stemmed from trying to apply the definitions and expectations of 20th century democracy to eighteenth century political processes. This led him to conclude, for example, that "discontent and factionalism subsided when a united stand against the external enemy was necessary."¹¹ Though he admitted the need for further research, he had only to look as far as the Berkshire Constitutionalists in Pittsfield or the split in Gloucester over the organization of a Universalist church to see that discontent and factionalism subsided only in the presence of enemy forces, and sometimes, not even then. The best service offered by Hoerder's work is the more than fifty tables of officeholders in the five towns which may aid the formation of other interpretations for each town, interpretations which do not attempt to find a single pattern to explain all cases.¹²

Although five towns are not enough to provide a valid statistical sample from which to generalize about the entire colony or region, there is an advantage in looking at a cross-section of towns. Edward M. Cook, Jr. had studied seventy-four towns across New England to throw new light on the social assumptions underlying political behavior, to create a frame of reference for the interpretation of statistical data on the political behavior of the towns, and to suggest a topology within which the variations among single community studies are intelligible.¹³

¹¹Ibid., 91. ¹²Ibid., 95-124. ¹³Cook, Fathers of the Towns, xii.
This study investigated five top town leaders in each town: how they were chosen, their length of service, their family and church relationships, economic status, and prominence in county and province. Limited sources allowed the use of only a fraction of the towns for some of the tables, but Cook obtained statistical indices which indicate patterns of leadership according to the type of town. He developed tables or indices on town population, average length of tenure of town officers, percentage of taxes paid by the wealthiest tenth of the taxpayers, and the proportion of prominent individuals in the county and province. He discovered five types of towns: cities or urban centers, major county towns, suburbs of cities or secondary centers in rural counties, small self-contained farming villages, and frontier towns in a stage of development towards one of the other types.¹⁴

Cook's statistics, however, and especially the scattered years analyzed, raise questions as to how distinct the town types really are. And despite his reliance on statistical analysis, Cook reached some very common, and traditional conclusions:

Major officeholders were usually prosperous townsmen, were commonly in their middle age, were often church members, and had generally prepared for major responsibilities by serving the town capably in lesser offices. They varied substantially in family background and educational accomplishments, and ranged from men of purely local importance to men of colony- and even empire-wide prominence. Regardless of their overall prestige, however, the town officials of colonial New England were community leaders in a very real sense.¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., 165-66. ¹⁵ Ibid., 185.
Analysis of the Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety in twenty-eight towns revealed that the established town leaders also headed or dominated these committees. Yet because Cook analyzed many towns over many years, his findings contain some useful conclusions about town officers. Cook's findings, in other words, provide a perspective from which we may examine individual towns.

However, the very breadth of his study attests to the continued need for studies of particular towns and particular town officers using more traditional methods to flesh out the statistical portrait. The similarities and differences Cook found among a large number of towns at different times in the eighteenth century call for comparative studies of fewer towns during a single time period. We need studies of high town officials from the different regions of Massachusetts so that we can compare the officials representative of merchant communities on the seacoast with those representative of the farming regions and of the frontier over the entire range of the revolutionary period.

Objective

I have chosen to study the high town officers in three Massachusetts towns: Concord, Gloucester, and Pittsfield. The first was a farming community near Boston, the second, a fishing community engaged in world-wide trade, and the third was a frontier settlement. My main objective was

16 Ibid., 136-87.
to discover whether or not the Revolution had sufficient im-
pact on these towns to bring about a change, not only in
leaders, but in the kind of leaders chosen. With this objec-
tive in view I have studied colonial leaders, men in office
from 1763 to 1774, and Revolutionary leaders, men in high
town office from 1775 to 1789. Did such things as the Stamp
Act crisis, the Intolerable Acts, the fighting in and near
Massachusetts, the peace and postwar depression, and Shays'
Rebellion have any effect on the patterns of town leadership?
And if so, what effect?

The location of the towns and the time chosen allowed
comparisons of the towns before and after the Revolution,
as well as comparisons among the towns in the different
regions. Because the towns differed in age, location, and
economic orientation, their patterns of town leadership may
indicate whether changes in the towns in the quarter century
which led to and completed the Revolution were great enough
to suggest the presence of an internal revolution.

Organization

Two chapters are devoted to each town, the first
covering the town leadership during the years from 1763 to
1774, and the second covering the years from 1775 to 1789.
Each chapter is divided into three parts: first, an intro-
duction, second, an analysis of the town leadership which
discusses such things as the length of time the towns kept
a man in high town office; the second section also includes
collective biographies of the men who filled high town
offices in that time and place. The third part of each chapter presents, in effect, the evidence on which the second section was based. The third part of each chapter, therefore, consists of individual biographical sketches of the high town offices, one hundred and sixteen in all.

The introductions to the colonial chapters give a brief sketch of the town involved and the events which shaped it up to 1763. The introduction to the Revolutionary chapters follow the steps by which the town came into and supported the Revolution.

The main concern of the analysis or collective biographies was the pattern which the particular towns developed for each of the two periods in electing men to the high town offices of moderator, selectman, clerk, treasurer, and representative. How long did such men remain in office? What was the average tenure in each of the offices? What was the usual or common pattern of tenure and the average age on first holding a high town office? In Gloucester, for example, the high town officers usually served for a single year. In colonial Concord, however, they normally held office for four years. Few men served less than the usual tenure in a town, and those serving longer often shared other characteristics which set them apart as larger leaders. Besides longer tenure in office, such characteristics included multiple officeholding, high militia office,

17The introduction to Chapter I discusses local government and the role of these offices in the towns.
membership in the county courts and on Revolutionary com-
mittes. This search for patterns was extended to each high
town office, to Boards of Selectmen, and to whole slates of
high town officers.

Politics and public service beyond the town were
important areas of activity for most larger leaders. Key
town leaders most often served in the county courts, but
occasionally a larger leader served as a colonial or state
legislative leader, a member of the Governor's Council, or
the Senate, or eventually even as a congressman.

To fill out the portraits drawn from town election
meetings, I have sought evidence of the wealth of the
leaders from tax and valuation lists, and from probate and
business records. Information on family ties was included
to illustrate connections with others in the town, and with
the provincial elite, and especially with other high town
officers. Militia titles and service were included since
they implied acceptance by several levels of society. Church
office, education, occupation and profession, and service
beyond the town were factors which could increase or limit
a man's usefulness to the town. In all, this analysis and
summary of the collective biographies of the high town
officers gives a picture of the men and the kind of men a
town chose to govern it during two phases of the Revolution.

The third portion of each chapter is further divided
into two sections: the first gives the individual biographies
of the usual or common leaders, and the second gives the
individual biographies of the larger leaders. These individual biographies of the one hundred and sixteen high town officers are very uneven, reflecting the unevenness of the sources. The lives of most men who were especially active in the Revolution or had numerous descendants who remained in the town were well recorded by the local historians of the nineteenth century. Other men, especially those who moved into high town office after the Revolution, left scanty records. This is true even for some who were wealthy merchants. But sufficient sources were found to give greater clarity to the outline of the high town officers presented by the collective biographies. Petitions for legislative favors containing evidence of land grants and business accounts often indicate the extent of influence as well as the sources of wealth possessed by otherwise "common" high town officers, and add additional dimensions to the picture of town officers in late eighteenth century Massachusetts.

Sources

The sources for the study presented the usual difficulties found in most eighteenth century material. Fortunately, the basic sources, the town records, are available for the three towns for each year of the study. So we know whatever the town clerks and the committees which exercised control over the town records wanted us to know. Yet serious questions remain as to how much they wanted us to know.

18One set of election meeting minutes are missing, those for the March 1779 meeting in Gloucester.
Pittsfield was quite open about it. The town not only ap­
pointed a committee "to examine the Town papers, and destroy
such as may be of no further use," but it included the fact
in the minutes of the town meeting.¹⁹ At other times the
town directed the clerk to file, but not record, sensitive
material. Although they did not record the fact, Concord and
Gloucester may have followed similar practices. My main use
of the town records was in compiling the list of high town
officers, from the election meeting minutes, and these are
quite straightforward. But some statements of early patriotic
fervor should be accepted with considerable caution. Concord
mixed financial reports and other materials in with the town
meeting minutes, so there is less danger that it edited the
minutes of the town meetings than Gloucester, and especially
Pittsfield.

I found some evidence of the economic standing in
the town of almost all of the hundred and sixteen high town
officers in the study, through tax records, business accounts,
indications of occupation, the extent and value of their
property, evidence of land grants and speculation in frontier
lands. Tax and valuation lists were used as the most common
source of evidence of the economic position which the high
town officers held in their communities. Tax records in
every age are open to some question, and eighteenth century

¹⁹Town Meeting Minutes, Town Records of Pittsfield
[TRP] II, 244, Vault, City Clerk's Office, Pittsfield.
Massachusetts assessors were not above undervaluing the estates of friends and overvaluing those of any resident unpopular—and influential—enough to have to bear the extra tax burden in silence. There are several instances where this appeared to have been the practice. But the main problem in using the tax records to judge wealth in this study arose from the fact that they were not similarly available for all three towns.

Because it is extant for so many towns, the best tax records of the Revolutionary period is the 1771 Province Valuation of Polls and Estates. It is especially useful for this study because it falls late enough in the colonial period to include most of the high town officers who served in both periods covered. Both the 1771 Tax and the 1771 Valuation lists are available for Concord. The Valuation List is extent for Gloucester, but not the assessment list. So, using the tax law for that year, I estimated the distributed taxes in the town based on a random sample of fifty valuations.20

There is no 1771 tax or valuation list extant for Pittsfield, so a number of tax records were used in their place. We have an Assessor's List identified by the Berkshire Athenaeum as that of 1761, a Valuation List for

1784, and the State Tax list for 1789. Each of these sources presents its own particular problem. I have serious questions about the date for the Assessor's List of 1761. But even if the date is accurate, the information on different men is very uneven, therefore, although the details it gives on land holdings, the value of cattle and produce are important, these sources are perhaps more useful for developing loose estimates of wealth rather than hard figures. The 1784 Valuation List which does not give the "annual value" of real estate (i.e. the presumed annual rent or return of a particular tract) was used only for impressionistic evidence. The State Tax List for 1789 includes only the assessments laid on polls, on the annual value of real and personal estates and on faculties.\(^2\)

Whenever I had or could figure the total assessment levied by a tax list or sample, I divided the total amount paid into four equal quarters to find how each high town officer ranked among the taxpayers, and how the whole group of leaders of the period ranked. This sometimes left men in different towns who paid the same amount of tax ranking in different quarters of the taxpayers, but it reflected their standing in their own towns.

Probate records were used both for impressionistic and statistical evidence, but estate inventories do not

\(^2\)1761 Assessors List, William Williams Papers, Berkshire Athenaeum [MBA] Pittsfield; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Massachusetts State Library, 163, Schedule No. 1-8; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collectors Office, Pittsfield.
always show how well or poorly a man lived. Prosperous farmers who settled numerous children, or wealthy men who put real estate in their wife's name before they died, rarely had inventories reflecting the true extent of their wealth. Other wealthy speculators in land or business often died insolvent, especially if they died suddenly. In such cases inventories of personal estates often reveal that they and their families lived as wealthy members of the community. So, although the collective profiles reflect the range and average statistics for the high town officers, the individual biographies in the section on evidence present a clearer picture of how these men lived, even though they may have died insolvent.

Other manuscript sources proved valuable and offered few problems. The Massachusetts State Archives provided evidence of the extensive land speculation which attracted many of the men under investigation, as well as of their role in other business, political, and religious activities beyond the confines of their towns. The collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society proved an excellent source of evidence, especially in the areas of business accounts and detailed military records.

Secondary sources which proved indispensable for this study were local histories. Fortunately, among the best local histories produced in the nineteenth century were those covering the towns in this study. In addition to supplying general historical development and acting as a
guide through the confusion of town meeting, county convention, and committee activities, they furnished genealogical information for some of the more obscure men in the study.  

With these earlier historians as guides, and depending on the labors of generations of historically minded New Englanders who drew up, collected and preserved these sources, I have come to a better understanding, and to greater appreciation of the life and public efforts of the leaders of these extraordinary men: the high town officers who governed colonial and Revolutionary Concord, Gloucester, and Pittsfield, and who brought their towns out of the British Empire and into the New Nation.

22John J. Babson, *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Including the Town of Rockport* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1972 [originally published, Proctor Bros., 1860]); Lemuel Shattuck, *History of the Town of Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from its earliest settlement to 1832 . . .* (Concord: J. Stacy, 1835); J[oseph] E[dward] A[dams] Smith, *History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County) Massachusetts, From the Year 1734 to the Year 1800* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1869). Babson's book was especially valuable in providing family background. Smith's *Pittsfield* which contains many documents (without dates) gives only scattered information on family ties, but is a good guide through county conventions. Shattuck's work falls somewhere in between Babson and Smith in genealogy and is good on the work of Revolutionary committees.
CHAPTER I

COLONIAL CONCORD

Introduction

In the late eighteenth century the bulk of Massachusetts' rural population lay on Middlesex County's eastern plateau. Concord was located near the middle of the county, fifteen miles from Boston, in an important farming region. It was a healthy town where more than a quarter of the population lived past seventy. Numerous streams and rivers drained gently rolling hills and valleys of sandy, loamy soil. The Assabet and Sudbury rivers joined to form the Concord River in the center of the town. An average rainfall of forty inches fell evenly throughout the year. Long cold winters and short mild summers provided a growing season of five months, but this was sufficient for the growth of a variety of grasses which supported stock raising and small dairy herds.¹

General farming provided most of the staple crops (hay, rye, corn, and wheat) and a number of fruits and vegetables. The surrounding forests provided material for buildings, furniture, tools, ships, and fuel. The local farmers produced enough food to supply themselves and sold the surplus. Although Concord was located centrally in the county, it was too near the larger coastal settlements to be a market town, so smaller surpluses were bought by the local storekeepers in exchange for sugar, tea, cloth, and rum, while farmers with larger surpluses carried their products to Boston or Charlestown in ox-driven wagons. 

From the beginning, the inland settlers were skilled in more than farming. From the earliest days, they obtained furs from the Indians, fish from the rivers, and lumber from the woods, and sold them for a profit when they could. Concord supplied some of the lumber for the shipyards on the Massachusetts coast which constructed half the tonnage built in the American Colonies between 1769 and 1771.


Although cod was the backbone of Massachusetts' fishing industry, fish from the inland waterways had an important share in it. Alewives and shad runs in the spring and early summer reportedly turned the Concord River into "a solid mass of fish," which the farmers used to supplement their diet. But most of the catch was barrelled and sold on the Atlantic coast for bait. Some of the fresh water fish was salted and sent to the West Indies.\(^4\)

The international trade fostered smaller transactions. From the 1720s on, the intercoastal trade provided winter employment for the men and ships of the port towns, but the products they carried came from interior towns like Concord which raised enough rye, Indian corn, hemp, flax, and onions for both local needs and for market. Although colonies to the south supplanted New England as a source of wheat beginning in the middle of the eighteenth century, in 1771 Massachusetts exported twice as much wheat as it did all other grains combined. Black cattle and horses suitable for the West Indies were also a principal part of the produce of the

country. The export trade and the easy availability of a market in the expanding population of the coastal towns made commercial farming the chief occupation of nearly every rural inhabitant.  

Even many who had other occupations operated a farm, and every farmer had a trade. Most farm work was done by oxen, which dragged the heavy plows and harrows of the time; oxen were twice as numerous as horses in the town in 1771.  

Every farmer who kept oxen had at least a team, which enabled him better to cultivate his fields as well as to haul his crops to market; or he could hire the team out for work on the roads, or to his neighbors for plowing their land and for hauling their crops. Cows supplied milk and butter, and cattle were fattened in near-by Princeton before being slaughtered for sale in coastal cities or sent on their way to the West Indies. Their skins provided leather for domestic use as well as for trade. Numerous sheep provided wool for linsey-woolsey, the standard homespun in which rural New Englanders dressed. Diets were simple. Daily fare consisted of salted beef and salt pork with mutton and veal and poultry occasionally. Suppers of bread, milk, and cheese were common, even among substantial farmers. Bohea tea, coffee, and

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5 Jones, "Description of Concord," 237; Sutherland, Population Distribution, 52; Francis Bernard to the Board of Trade, Sept. 5, 1763, in Benton, Early Census Making, 53.

6 1771 Concord Valuation List, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston, Mass. [MSA], 132:205-10.
chocolate were for those well-off, but rum was a necessary part of the basic diet for rich and poor alike, especially at planting and harvest time.  

The settlement and defense of Concord had been hard work from its founding in 1635. From the beginning Concord men had to farm and serve in a militia. The early settlers had not spread far beyond the original division of land in the village when Indian raids increased, culminating in King Philip's War from 1675 to 1676, in which a sixth of the town's men died. Until 1725, Concord served as an important military post at which supplies were gathered, expeditions were mounted and those fleeing Indian raids were sheltered. During this period militia officers and the train band took on an importance that continued throughout the colonial wars of the eighteenth century. Concord men went to Cuba, to Louisbourg, to Nova Scotia, and to Crown Point, often as officers, and occasionally as field officers promised generous grants of land for their service. And when the wars ended,  


Lemuel Shattuck, History of the Town of Concord; Middlesex County, Massachusetts, from its earliest settlement to 1832 . . . (Concord: John Stacy, 1835; reprint ed. Boston: Goodspeed Book Store, 1971), 4-13, 52-73; Samuel A. Drake, ed., History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, containing carefully prepared Histories of every City and
Concord men were in the forefront of mid-century land speculations in Massachusetts, and her outstanding leaders became founders of towns within and outside the province. Following peace in 1763, the General Court sold nine townships and ten thousand acres in Hampshire and Berkshire counties to the highest bidders, including some Concord men. But settlers had built on the lands before the surveys were made and the purchasers had to petition the General Court before their titles were secure.

The Concord of the Revolutionary period took shape as boundaries were established between the town and its neighbors and as new towns were set off from parts of old Concord. Residents in the northern part of the town, for example, divided over the issue of setting up a new town, which would entail additional taxes. Unable to settle it themselves, they petitioned and counter-petitioned the General Court about the matter from the 1750s to the 1780s. These differences were rooted in the religious controversies

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Town in the County, by well-known writers; and a General History of the County, from the earliest to the present time (2 vols. Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1880), I, 383.

9AD listing the grantees of Narragansett townships, MSA 114:103-10; Purchasers of Western townships at public auction, June 2, 1762, MSA 117:872-73.

which shook the town in the 1740s and 1750s.  

Concord experienced first hand the exultation and division which swept the province during the Great Awakening, the greatest religious experience of colonial America. Reverend Daniel Bliss, Concord's minister from 1738 to 1764, was an important "enthusiastic preacher" even before the arrival of George Whitfield, who preached twice in Concord. Long-lasting divisions resulted from the zealous preaching of the Reverend Mr. Bliss. Some of those he alienated split off from Concord to form the new towns of Lincoln and Carlisle, but others, whose location would not permit them to separate remained to divide the town in spirit until after the Revolution.  

Concord's religious beliefs helped determine more than the town's boundaries. The character and structure of the Puritan church in New England were important factors in shaping the development of town government. The minister of the Concord Church and one of the town's founders described the church government as "in the hands of the people, who elect their own officers by whom they are

\[\text{Shattuck, History of Concord, 320-24; Concord remonstrance and tax list, relative to setting up Carlisle as a separate district, MSA 116:467-76; Petition requesting reannexation to Concord, MSA 117:205-07, 214.}\]

ruled and governed." With only slight variation, this applied to civil government as well, for Puritans considered themselves under a divine mandate to safeguard the church by overseeing the state. This mandate they carried out, in part, by transferring the form of church government to civil government, and encouraging active participation in, and a sense of the common good towards government. Both civil and religious meetings even took place in the same building, which was not a church, but a meetinghouse. 14

Three levels of government affected Concord's people directly: provincial, county, and town. Although each called for a different kind of leadership, Concord's leaders were by no means strangers to the highest levels of the provincial government. From 1642 to 1685, and again from 1746 to 1760, five men from Concord served, in turn, as members of the Governor's Council, the upper house of the General Court, and as judges of the Superior Court of Judicature. 15 During the French and Indian War, Concord's delegates to the House of Representatives moved into positions of leadership, serving on numerous important committees. The town's military importance brought many of

13 Quoted in Shattuck, History of Concord, 159-60.


15 Shattuck, History of Concord, 236.
its men before the Court to justify requests for land bounties. Other things brought Concord's men into contact with the General Court as well: petitions for and against setting off parts of the town as separate townships, testimony before committees to settle the location of meetinghouses, and the problems of providing for Acadian refugees. Moreover, when smallpox hit Boston, the General Court frequently met in Concord, and the delegates found hospitality among the farmers of the town.16

The Middlesex county court directly affected life in Concord through its broad administrative powers over the apportionment of taxes and county funds and the construction of county roads, bridges, courthouses, work houses, and jails. The court also licensed business men, including inn-keepers, approved town by-laws, and supervised town officials.17 From 1763 to 1789 twelve Concord men sat on that court as justices of the peace, and five were named to the Quorum, indicating that they had accumulated some experience and presided


over more serious cases, which required the presence of several justices. The country court was wholly appointed, and to this extent, it was beyond the influence of public opinion. Technically, the justices were appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of his council, but in practice, choices often depended on the recommendations of the men who held the greatest political power in the county. Those in Concord who had this kind of influence over court appointments—and therefore over the appointees—could exercise it annually because Concord was one of the shire-towns of Middlesex County where the Courts met. Each September the Concord townhouse attracted justices, lawyers, clients, jurymen, and witnesses from all over Middlesex to attend the General Sessions of the Peace. Justices stayed in the homes of the more prominent inhabitants, while others who came to the September court session overflowed the inns and filled the houses of the town.

The government that the Concord people came in contact with most often, that which most directly affected their daily lives, was their own town government. It required their direct participation, for the town was governed by a town meeting in which voting was open to a


19Taylor, Western Massachusetts, 25-26.
majority of townsmen. In practice not only could most adult inhabitants vote but every inhabitant could speak, and any ten inhabitants could put an item on the agenda for debate.

The town had many minor offices which had to be filled, further involving dozens of incumbents each year in some phase of town government. Constables, wardens, deer reeves, sealers of weights and measures, tythingmen, and surveyors of highways carried out the business, and often the directions of the town, throughout the year.

Many of these positions were menial and time consuming, and often went to younger men. Hogreeves, horse drivers and field drivers, had to round up and enclose stray livestock; deer reeves had to catch poachers and fence viewers had to walk the property lines throughout the town to see that the fences were kept in repair so livestock did not wander.

Other minor offices provided some elements of overseeing or inspecting the work others performed. Surveyors of highways not only laid out roads, they also were responsible for seeing that every man appeared to do his share of the work repairing the roads, or receive a fine. Tythingmen saw that public order was kept, especially around taverns and on the Sabbath. Other men, usually those recognized as excellent workmen themselves, served as inspectors of any products which would be sold out of town, and thus reflect on the reputation of the town in other markets. Such men could be clerks of the market who kept an eye on prices,
cullers of fish, or staves and shingles, sealers of leather, and sealers of weights and measures. Other minor officers had duties related to the public aspect of the town's inhabitants. Wardens had to help keep the Sabbath peace, constables had to collect taxes, post the warrants for town meetings, and maintain order. This was a difficult post to fill especially when times were hard, so many men preferred to pay the fine for refusing to serve, if their request to be excused was not accepted by the town.

The more important offices chosen at the March meeting were the moderator, who presided over the meeting, the town clerk, who kept the town records and wrote the minutes of the meeting, the town treasurer, who received and invested the town funds, and paid out town expenses, and the selectmen, three to seven men who were the chief executive officers of the town. In May the town met again to elect and sometimes to instruct their representative to the General Court. In practice the men who held these five offices were the town leaders. For convenience we may refer to them as "high town officers." These officers, and more especially the representative, who carried out duties in Boston, were sometimes instructed by the town meeting. The

20 Town Meeting Minutes, Town Records of Concord [TRC], 30 vols., Vault, Town Clerk's Office, Concord (microfilmed by Early Massachusetts Records, Boston) IV and V, passim, especially the March and May election meetings; Cook, Fathers of the Towns, 25-27, has provided this convenient division of minor offices used here.
town might appoint committees to examine the accounts of town officials who often had to report back to the town meeting and await its decision on major matters, and often on minor ones as well.

The involvement of the people of Concord with the several levels of government, their position as commercial farmers and tradesmen, and their military history as a frontier settlement made the people of Concord more complex and sophisticated than the tradition of "the embattled farmers" suggests. Their location and skill made them farmers, but they were commercial farmers, part of the network of the British imperial trade system. Their time and place in history made them local militiamen defending the near-by frontier, but it also drew them into regional and international imperial wars. Their religion made them inhabitants of a Puritan village, using church principles and forms of government to organize their town. But it also made them part of a county and province based on these forms and principles, at a time when they were being challenged by the larger empire of which they were a part. They were well aware of their privileges and rights, and resisted whenever they were threatened, either by a local group seeking separation, by a royal governor trying to by-pass their influence, or by the British Parliament's attempt to ignore it. The consent of the governed underlay their church and their town government, and it came to be the standard by which they judged county and provincial government as well. Thus
our understanding of town leadership in Concord and what the people thought of it is important for more than merely local history.

What qualities, then, did the people of Concord think a town leader should have? What kind of man did they tend to elect to high town office, and once chosen, how likely was he to keep the confidence of the town for years at a time?

Collective Profile

From 1762-1765 the people of Concord chose three selectmen, from 1765-1770, five, and from 1771 through 1789, three again. And they always chose the town clerk to be first selectman. From 1763 to 1774 thirteen men served a total of forty-eight terms as selectmen, averaging 3.7 years each. Moreover, the town generally tried during this period to keep an entire Board of Selectmen intact for at least four years. This pattern survived independence and continued until after 1789, but it had not been evident before 1762 and it may indicate the town's desire to retain proven and familiar leaders during the years when the trouble with England began and grew more serious.

In the early 1760s Concord developed a pattern of officeholding which she kept until the Revolution. The three men chosen as a Board of Selectmen in 1763 continued in office until 1766. When the town voted to elect five selectmen in 1765, rather than elect an entirely new board, it simply added two men to the three who had served together since 1763. This board of five served until 1766.
when the town clerk (and therefore first selectman) was joined by four new selectmen; the members of this new board served together for the next four years. The new three-man board chosen in 1771 served until 1773. The following year it was re-elected, but Timothy Wheeler refused to serve and was replaced by Nathan Meriam. Before the Revolution, the entire Board of Selectmen had been re-elected seven times in eleven years. An addition was made to the Board in 1765 and a replacement in 1774, but there was a complete turnover only once, in 1771. This preference for continuity extended beyond selectmen. Five times between 1763 and 1775 the town re-elected the entire list of high town officers. In two other years it re-elected all but one of the high town officers.21 (See Table 1)

But even within this pattern of continuity, several men stand out for length of tenure. John Cuming served a total of twenty-three years in one high town office or another. Charles Prescott served twenty-two and James Barrett served fifteen. They were all surpassed by Ephraim Woods who served a full quarter of a century. Moreover, some of these men were plural office-holders. Although Wood really served a total of fifty terms, he served them concurrently as town clerk and first selectman. James Barrett,

21 The entire list of high town officers was re-elected in 1765–66, 1768–69, 1769–70, 1771–72 and 1772–73. All but one officer were re-elected in 1768 and 1774.
### TABLE 1

Colonial Concord High Town Officers, 1763-1774

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despite his eleven years as representative, never held two high town offices concurrently. John Cuming did, once before the Revolution in 1764 and once during the war in 1776 when Concord sent two representatives to the General Court. Charles Prescott, on the other hand, held two high town offices simultaneously for four years, and three simultaneously for four years. Only in 1764 did he not serve in any office. That year Cuming was a plural office-holder. This blend of plural office-holding, and the long tenure of selectmen and other officers, and even of entire slates of high town officers, indicates a strong preference on the town's part for continuity in its local government.

Not only did the town tend to re-elect the same men year after year, it also tended to elect the same kind of men to high office year after year. Voters preferred to place the town's important affairs in the hands of middle aged men of substantial property, men who had already achieved some success in private life.

The average age at which men first assumed high town office was 41.7 years. In Concord, the average age for beginning high town office ranged from thirty-six years for town clerks to forty-nine years for town treasurers. The

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22 The public careers of Prescott and Cuming will be discussed in detail in the section on the larger leaders. Prescott was a multiple office holder from 1758-1762 as well.

23 Edward M. Cook, Jr., Fathers of the Towns, 103, found an average of 42.7 for all of New England.
youngest officer became a selectman at age thirty-two; the oldest first-time high town officer was also a selectman, who began to serve when he was fifty-four. Moderators averaged 42 years old when they first took office, representatives 46.5, and selectmen 40.6 (see Table 2).

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>40.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Treasurer</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age for assuming first high town office</td>
<td>41.7</td>
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</table>

Limited evidence permits only very general estimates about the wealth of these men, and the fluctuation of colonial currencies complicates the matter. Such evidence as there is, however, and in particular provincial tax and valuation lists, shows that there was a direct relationship between wealth and high civil and militia office in Concord, but that neither election to office nor holding militia commissions depended solely on wealth.²⁴

²⁴The Provincial Tax and Valuation List for 1771 includes all but one of the Concord larger leaders under study. MSA 132:199-210.
High town officers were generally chosen from among the town's prosperous farmers, though not necessarily from among the most wealthy. Over 90 percent of all high town officials before the Revolution ranked, according to the tax and valuation lists, among the top 25 percent of the property owners. Half of them came from the top 10 percent, and 92 percent of the town's leaders were from among the top 25 percent in taxable wealth.

According to the tax lists, town treasurer and merchant John Beatton was Concord's wealthiest man. He paid £3:14:1 in taxes, one and a half times as much as the second wealthiest man, who paid £2:3:1:2, and more than twice as much as high town officer John Cuming, the fourth wealthiest inhabitant, who paid £1:16:11, and James Barrett, who ranked eighth in wealth and paid £1:12:4:3. Charles Prescott, multiple office-holder and long-time representative ranked seventy-second among the tax payers, paying only 14s 6d. 25

Most of the high town officers paid taxes on enough land and farm animals to indicate that agriculture was their main occupation. But in addition to their farms, three of them had shops in separate buildings, three had shops adjoining their houses, one had a potash works, and one a grist mill. Twenty-four men and five women in Concord (comprising 8 percent of the taxpayers) loaned money out at interest. All told, the loans amounted to £2507:6:8, ranging

from £8 at one extreme to £900 at the other. The median
was £33:6:8. But only four high town officers had money out
at interest. Ephraim Wood had £8, John Cuming had £80, Jonas
Heywood had £133:6:8, and John Beatton had £900, as might be
expected of the town's treasurer and wealthiest merchant.26

Social position was often as important as economic
standing in winning a community's trust. All freemen had a
vote in the election of officers of the trainbands, so militia
office is a good indication of social position in the
Massachusetts towns in the late eighteenth century as
deference to members of leading families often influenced
the choice of officers, especially before the Revolution.
From these trainbands, officers and men joined the expedi­tions raised from the town during wartime. Because the wars
had been frequent, militia titles were common. As one
eighteenth century traveler wrote of a tavern in Massachu­setts where he drank punch and smoked tobacco with several
colonels:

collnells, captains, and majors are so plenty here
that they are to be met with in all companys and
yet me thinks they look no more like souldiers
than they look like divines, but they are gentlemen
of the place and that is sufficient.27

To be a gentleman was sufficient in Concord, too, although
Concordmen had more military experience than the gentlemen

26 Ibid.

27 Carl Bridenbaugh, ed., Gentleman's Progress: The
Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1775 (Chapel Hill:
of most places. Militia titles were more numerous among high town offices than among the townsmen as a whole. The thirty-three militia officers in the tax list constituted 10 percent of the taxpayers, but 62% of the high town officers (1763-74) held militia titles: two were colonels, four were captains, two were lieutenants, and two were ensigns. Most gained their commissions in the French wars and Concord remained a regional military center up to the eve of the Revolution. Concord tended to choose the same men for militia and civil offices.

Since there were few professional men in Colonial Concord, military commissions were important for social as well as military reasons. A few doctors, the minister, and the town's only lawyer constituted all of the Concord's professional class in the early 1770s. Few Harvard graduates lived in the town on the eve of the Revolution. Only one high town officer of the period had attended Harvard, and he did not graduate. Concord was able to hold few of her sons who were college graduates and it attracted few others who were until after the Revolution. As a result, the social prominence that usually went to colonial professionals probably went by default in Concord to militia officers, who held onto their militia rank long after the war in which they won it had ended.

The service of high town officers beyond the town from 1763 to 1774 was limited, with the single exception of the county court. Charles Prescott served as a justice of
the peace for Middlesex County as early as 1759. In the
1760s he was joined by John Jones, John Beatton, and John
Cuming. Daniel Bliss and Duncan Ingraham were appointed
Justices in 1773. None but Prescott appears to have been
very important in county government before the war. 28

The picture that emerges from the study of these
men is one of a small group who had a secure hold on the high
town offices through which they were able to exert some
degree of control over various aspects of town life. Active
as civil and militia officers, they were moderately wealthy
to wealthy farmers and well-to-do merchants, who, for the
most part, moved through lower offices before being elected
to high town office. Once there, they were usually assured
a tenure of at least four years if they chose to remain.
Two patterns emerge from the evidence. One was that followed
by the usual or common leaders who seldom served beyond four
years in high town office, and who influenced only the
affairs of the town. Most of these common leaders dropped
from the lists of town officers after serving four years.
Occasionally some served a later term as a warden, constable,
or surveyor of the highways, perhaps when difficult decisions
or actions were needed. At such times, their added prestige
might assure a just, or at least a peaceful, settlement
among contending factions.

But not all leaders followed this pattern. Some,

whom one may call larger leaders, served in high town office much longer and had influence beyond the town. These larger leaders, like Cuming and Prescott, moved into high town office without serving an apprenticeship in lower town offices. Each was a county justice of the peace having influence well beyond the town. In addition, Prescott was an important leader in the General Court. To these men may be added James Barrett who served in the General Court for nine years and was active beyond the town before the Revolution. All of them were involved in land speculation on the frontier. The influence of these men in Concord may have led to their larger role beyond it, and this in turn re-enforced their power in Concord. At any rate, there was a difference between them and the ordinary high town officers, as a look at their individual careers will indicate.

The Common Leaders

The common leader in Concord normally began his public career in minor office, such as fence viewer who saw that fences were kept in repair to restrain livestock, or horse officer, who was responsible for the care of horses on Court days. Some who held minor offices never moved any higher. As many grew older, however, and more securely established farmers, tradesmen and public servants, they began to appear in other positions. Usually members of long established families in town, these prosperous to wealthy farmers, part-time artisans, and shopkeepers were veterans of the French and Indian War who held lands in
neighboring towns. They usually were militia officers as well, which gave them increased contacts through which they were able to move into a high town office, usually that of selectman. If a man was going to move up to selectman, he normally did so in his mid-thirties. He would then serve the customary four years before occasionally moving on to important committee appointments, or to other minor offices. By age sixty such men had usually dropped from the election lists.

James Chandler (1714-1792) was typical of the common leaders among Concord's high town officers before the Revolution. Born in 1714, he was related to the Flagg and Melvin families of Concord and the Whitakers of Carlisle. He began serving as surveyor of highways in 1753 and 1758. In 1756 he was elected fence viewer. In 1759 he was chosen selectman and served from 1759-1761, and again from 1767-1770, for a total of seven years.

He must have been a good farmer for he got high yields—18.57 per acre—from his seven acres of tillage.

Charles Edward Potter, ed., Genealogies of Some Old Families of Concord, Mass. and Their Descendants in part to the Present Generation (Boston: A. Mudge and Son, 1887), 84, 166, 191, 215. Hereafter cited as Potter, Genealogies of Concord. Unless otherwise specified, the minutes of the March election meeting of the given year is the source of election to town office. The office of representative was filled in May and is the exception to this.

and the 1771 tax list placed him in the top 20 percent of wealth. Beginning in 1767 he was an ensign in one of the militia companies. In 1774, when he was sixty, he held his last elected position as a member of the Committee of Correspondence. His house served as a depot for some of the provincial powder stored in the town in the spring of 1775. Although he lived until 1792, he was apparently not active in the town after the Revolution.

Humphrey Barrett (1715-1783), the son of Capt. Joseph Barrett and Rebecca Minot, was another typical common leader. He was the fourth generation of his family in Concord to work the same prosperous farm they had worked since 1640. He was related to most of the leading families in the town: the Barretts, Minors, Heywoods, Hunts, Hubbards, Lees, Jones, Farrars, Haywoods, Adams, Browns, and Parkers. Elnathan Jones, Jonas Heywood, and Col. Charles Prescott were other high town officers who were his in-laws. He served his apprenticeship in minor offices: fence viewer (1755), culler of staves and shingles (1757), field driver (1758), and surveyor of highways (1762 and 1775). From 1767 to 1770, he was selectman on a five-man board.

He was a prosperous farmer in 1771 ranking eleventh among the town's taxpayers. The farm, assessed at £1:10:6:1.

31 Shattuck, History of Concord, 97.

32 Lemuel Shattuck, "Minot Family," in New England Historical and Genealogical Register [NEHGR], I (April, 1847), 175; (July, 1847), 256; Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 5, 18;
supported sixteen head of cattle on forty-five acres of pasture, while his fifteen acres of tillage produced 250 bushels of grain and his thirty-three acres of meadows produced twenty-five tons of hay, making it one of the more productive farms in Concord. Firkins and flour from the provincial stores were hidden at this farm in March, 1775.

A lieutenant in the militia since 1762, Barrett served on the Committee of Safety in 1775. In 1776, at age 61, he was at Ticonderoga. After that his name no longer appeared on the list of town officers. When he died in 1783 he left his sons a substantial patrimony.

Timothy Wheeler (1723-1782) was the son of Timothy Wheeler and Abigail Munroe. His family was among the earliest to settle the town and was prominent in the militia throughout the colonial period. He was related to the Minot, Adams, Hunt, and Whittemore families.


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33 1771 Concord Valuation and Tax List, MSA 132:200, 207; Shattuck, History of Concord, 98.


35 MCPCR, No. 1183.

He must have been growing grain, most likely wheat, on the common ground by 1751 because he was among the signers of a petition to the General Court for the restraining of sheep from the common ground "during the period of growing grain." In 1755 he was a lieutenant in Captain Osgood's company in the expedition to Nova Scotia. Back in Concord, he delivered goods to Boston for the town and for local merchants. By 1771 he was a prosperous farmer ranking thirteenth in the payment of provincial taxes.

Wheeler began the usual path to high town office by serving as clerk of the market from 1753 to 1761, horse officer in 1754, warden in 1761, tythingman in 1762, and finally selectman from 1771-1773. He did not serve in high town office after he was fifty-one years of age. A farmer and miller in 1775, his barn was the hiding place for much of the provincial grain which he saved by claiming that the bags were his personal property when British soldiers searched his storehouse. When the British finished their search, he probably joined the militia company covering their retreat, as he is listed among the men at "Hartwell

37Petition for restraining sheep on the Common, Mar. 27, 1757, MSA 1:216.

38Shattuck, History of Concord, 72.

39Ibid., 98, 107-08.
Brook the first Everidge." In 1778 he appeared as a captain of the 2nd Guard at Cambridge.  

Although Wheeler's farm appeared prosperous in 1771, when he died in 1782 at the age of eighty, his entire estate was valued at under £500. Despite landholdings in Concord, Bedford, and Sudbury, his personal estate was balanced by his debts and his legacies had to come from the sale of real estate. It presents a picture of severely reduced circumstances. It may be that settling his five daughters and six sons drained most of his estate. But the £1:9 appraisal of his wearing apparel and the scant furnishings of his house and barn speak of a declined gentility.  

If in his earlier years his background was typical of the high town officers, at his death he stood apart.

A similar case was that of John Flint (1723-1792). His family had a long tradition of service in high town office. He was related to the Buttrick, Bulkeley, Bateman, Hunt, Esterbrook, Brown, Minot, Adams, and Wheeler families. His great-grandfather was president of Harvard College.  

In 1756 Flint began his public career as surveyor of the highways and in 1758 he served as tythingman. His tax valuation for 1771 shows that he was a careful farmer who got high

40 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XVI, 995.

41 1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:201, 208; MCPCR No. 24370.

42 Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 10, 105, 126, 130, 192, 260; Shattuck, History of Concord, 371.
yields from his lands, enough to rank him in the top twenty percent of wealthy townsmen, though almost sixty men in town were more prosperous than he was, or so the tax assessor thought. 43

The events leading to the Revolution coincided with his service on the board of selectmen (1771-1774). Thus he served on most of the important town committees, and in most of the county conventions during those years as a representative of the town. One of the first was the committee of nine men (1772) which drew up instructions for the town’s representative which denied parliament’s power to tax the colonies. 44 He did not serve in high town office after he reached fifty-two years of age. He may have been the Lieutenant John Flint in Colonel Ebenezer Bridge’s regiment in 1775. 45

When he died at the age of seventy in 1792 he had only £15 in silver, and fewer than a dozen cattle to divide among his sons. His remaining property and his debts went to his youngest son. 46 Like Timothy Wheeler, Flint’s case reminds us that not all who achieved high town office and prosperity remained among the elite at the end.

44Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:363-65; Shattuck, History of Concord, 77.
45Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XV, 81.
46MCPCR, No. 8017.
Another resident who followed a similar path to high town office was Jonas Minot (1732-1813). He was the son of Deacon Samuel Minot and Sarah Prescott of Westford. He married Mary Hall of Westford, and when she died he married the widow, Mary Dunbar, of Salem. Yet his family was mainly rooted in Concord and had ties with the Wheelers, Prescotts and Davises. Four of his sons-in-law were Barretts, and his half-sister married Elnathan Jones, who later served as treasurer.47

Jonas Minot served as constable for three terms (1762, 1771, and 1788). He was a selectman from 1767-1770. A member of the Alarm Company, he appeared in the list of men at "Hartwells' Brook" and as a captain in the militia among the eight-month men, probably in 1775.48

He was a relatively prosperous farmer, paying 18s 5d 2f and ranking forty-sixth among the 1771 taxpayers. He got fifteen bushels of grain per acre from his land and made twenty barrels of cider in 1771. But he also had two shops, one in each of his two houses or adjoining them. Moreover, he received a great part of Wilmot, New Hampshire as a grant.49 When he died intestate in 1813 his estate


491771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:201, 208; Shattuck, "Minot Family," NEHGR I (July, 1847), 261.
amounted to $5,248. Included in it were one hundred sixty acres of land in Concord, Bedford, and Carlisle, and promissory notes amounting to $539.46. Minot differed from most of his fellow high town officers in that he began and ended his service while relatively young, for he never served in such office after he stopped being a selectman at age thirty-eight.

Jonas Heywood (1721-1808), one of the most important high town officers of Concord, served the town for thirty years. He was related to the Barrett, Soper, Prescott, Hubbard, and Warren families. He worked on his father's farm in the summer and learned the carpenter's trade from him. In the winter he traveled through the farms in the area "whipping the cat," that is, living with a family while he did whatever carpentry work they had for him. Thus he was well-known by the time he began serving in public office. He was elected sealer of leather (1753-55), constable (1754), surveyor of highways (1760-61), and warden (1780). Men of his family had long served as town clerks and selectmen, a tradition he continued over a period of fourteen years from 1755-59, and from 1762-1770.

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50 MCPCR, No. 15242.
51 Potter, *Genealogies of Concord*, 74, 103, 185, 255, 262.
Although he was replaced when an entirely new board was chosen in 1771, Heywood evidently was not rejected personally, because he served on the Committee of Inspection to enforce the Articles of Association in 1774, and as chairman of the committee which found one of Concord's two tories, Dr. Joseph Lee, guilty of treason and confined him to his farm. Heywood served on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety from 1774 to 1783, charged with enforcing the boycott of British goods proposed by the Continental Association, keeping the town safe from Tories and maintaining communications with the committees in other towns throughout Massachusetts.  

He was in the company of Minute Men raised in 1774, and in 1775 he was one of two town officers in a long list of inhabitants who sold the town supplies for the poor whom the British had driven from occupied Boston. Provincial flour was stored on his property in 1775. The following year his appointment as justice of the peace for Middlesex County increased the range of his influence. In 1779 he was muster master, raising troops for the Army from Middlesex County. He belonged to the elite Social Circle, a social club which evolved from the Committee of Correspondence in the late 1770's.  

54 Ibid., 119, 121; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:409-10, 415.  

55 Shattuck, History of Concord, 97-98; Account of Concord for Donation Poor, Oct., 1775, Misc. Bound Mss. MHS.
1780s, and served in high town office and on Revolutionary committees until he was sixty-two years of age. In his will he divided a small amount of cash and his wearing apparel among his sons, provided liberally for his wife, and gave all his lands in Concord, Lincoln, and Winchendon near the Maine border to a younger son whom he named executor. Though a valuation is lacking for the time of his death, when his son died in 1831 the estate was valued at $4,273, not especially impressive for the heir of a member of the town and county elite, but far greater than the inheritance left by John Flint and Timothy Wheeler. Heywood's farm did not appear very impressive in 1771, but the public offices he held prior to that year left him little time to improve his estate. Perhaps that is why he turned to speculation and money lending. In 1771, he held interest-bearing notes worth £133:6:8.

John Jones (1718-1772) is one of several high town officers in this study with relatives of the same name who served before and after him, making the problem of


57 MCPCR, No. 10971.

58 1771 Concord Valuation and Tax List, MSA 132:199, 207. Heywood's ten acres of tillage produced only 100 bushels of grain and he got thirteen tons of hay from another twenty-four acres of meadow. His pasture supported only five cows.
identification difficult. Lieutenant John Jones was the son of John Jones and Abigail Wessen and was related to the following families: Wheeler, Potter, Brown, Minot, Bulkeley, Chandler, Adams, Hoar, Stow, Meriam, Lee and Brewer.\textsuperscript{59}

He entered public office as a tythingman in 1753 and continued service in a number of capacities: surveyor of highways (1756), fence viewer (1757-58), warden (1769), and selectman (1760-61, and 1765-1766). Most likely that year (he was forty-eight) was his last in high town office.\textsuperscript{60}

The 1771 provincial valuation lists only one John Jones placing him twenty-sixth among three hundred and thirty taxpayers when he was assessed $\$1:2:3:2$. Although his farm did not produce an especially high yield, it stood among the top dozen in acres under cultivation and in pasturage.\textsuperscript{61}

In 1772, when he was fifty-five years of age, he may have suffered a stroke, for his brief will is signed with his mark. It named his wife executrix and divided his estate equally among his nine children. The personal estate was valued at $\$298:3:7\frac{1}{2}$, and the real estate in Concord, Princeton, Lincoln, and Bedford amounted to

\textsuperscript{59}Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 12.

\textsuperscript{60}Another John Jones, possibly his father, appeared as a selectman in 1730-33, 1735, 1736, 1739 and 1755. A John Jones was appointed a justice of the peace in 1733, 1743-44, and in 1761 a justice of the quorum. Shattuck, History of Concord, 234, 377; Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 137-38.

\textsuperscript{61}1771 Concord Valuation and Tax Lists, MSA 132:201, 208.
£439:5:0. A second valuation raised the value of the real estate so that the worth of the whole estate may have reached £958. He was the only Concord high town officer in this study to die before the Revolution, but he followed the pattern discernible in the other cases. Concord chose her top officeholders from among those men who were prosperous to wealthy farmers, though provisions for numerous children may have brought them to reduced circumstances after their time in office had passed.

Simon Hunt (1704-1790) was the son of Jonathan Hunt and Mary Brown. His children married into the Wheeler, Barrett and Brooks families. His ancestors were among the first settlers in Concord and he followed their tradition of farming and militia service. Several Simon Hunts in the 1750s and 1760s served in high town office. In the early 1750s one was growing wheat on the common lands. In 1753 Hunt remonstrated as a resident of Carlisle against the area being set off as a separate district. In September 1756 he was paid by the General Court for conveying the French neutrals to Concord, a move the town protested.

62 MCPCR, No. 12861.

63 Shattuck, History of Concord, 234, 236, 376.

64 Petition that sheep be restrained from the Common, MSA 1:216; Charge for conveying French neutrals, MSA 23:204; Concord remonstrance against Carlisle being set off as a separate district, MSA 116:467.
He served as surveyor of the highways in 1753 and from 1759-1760. He was a constable in 1759 and a warden in 1769. A Simon Hunt served as selectman in 1749-50, 1754-55, and 1763-66. In 1754-55 a Simon Hunt was also a representative. The Simon Hunt who was a selectman (1763-66) was a militia lieutenant by 1763. By 1771 he was a moderately prosperous farmer paying 19s 6d 3f in taxes. He had a very good crop of hay for his acreage, but only an average return on his grain. He had lands in Acton, but he also practiced medicine as well as having carpenter's and cooper's tools. Though he lived until eighty-six, he retired from high town office at sixty-two years of age.

When Hunt died in 1790 his personal estate was valued at £377:13:2. This included £106:4:3 in promissory notes and £101:18:5 in continental and state loans. But his will is unusual in that it mentions in detail that "which I have heretofore given" heirs to the estate. During his lifetime and as a legacy afterwards his three daughters and five sons received a total of £1048:6:2. This adjustment moved the amount of his personal estate alone from the range of a middle class farmer to that of a prosperous one. If the real estate "in Concord, Acton, or elsewhere" is added,

65 Shattuck, History of Concord, 234, 236.
66 1771 Concord Valuation and Tax Lists, MSA 132: 203, 205.
67 It is unclear whether this includes the market value or the face value of the "Loan Office Certificate of one thousand paper dollars Continental Currency" he left his wife.
it would put him into the wealthy category. Despite his generosity to his children, Hunt was able to retain his economic position as part of the Concord elite with his pews in the Concord and the Acton meeting houses, his great annotated Bible, his cane, his clock, riding horse, his cart and wheels.  

John Beatton (1702-1777) was born in Scotland and came to Concord where he became wealthy as a merchant who invested his profits in real estate and lent a considerable portion out at interest. He dealt in general merchandise such as salt, molasses, yard goods, sewing supplies, almanacs, salters, funeral gloves, and occasional luxury items, as well as the ever popular rum. He was known for his honesty, integrity, and Christian virtue to the point that "as honest as John Beatton" became a local saying. He was treasurer from 1754 until 1770, when, at sixty-eight years of age, he refused to serve again. In 1765 he was appointed a justice of the peace for Middlesex County.

68 MCPCR, No. 12294.

69 John Beatton to Samuel Savage, Mar. 9, 1748/9, Savage Papers, MHS; Townsend Scudder, Concord: American Town (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1947), 137.

In 1771 he appeared to be the wealthiest man in town, for he paid a provincial tax of £3:14:1, more than a pound and a half higher than the second highest taxpayer on the list. He had a house, later described as a mansion house, worth £600, and a shop adjoining. He owned a slave, one horse, five cows, fifteen acres of pasture and four acres of tillage producing 60 bushels of grain. Sixteen acres of mowing land and meadows produced ten tons of hay. Although his small holdings prospered, farming was evidently a side line with him for besides his store he also had a winnowing mill and £900 in promissory notes. At his death in 1776 he had £1309 out at interest, a quarter of his estate. Chief among these notes was one for £500 to the Continental Loan Office, one for £100 to the town of Concord, and several large notes from high town officers. About half of his notes were for under £30, but over a quarter of them were for £100 and above. But over 70 percent of his wealth at his death was in real estate. He left legacies to the town of Concord; £100 for schools and £100 for the poor, as well as generous legacies to his wife, and to his relatives in Scotland. But four other women were left £100 each, and the four children of a Mrs. Ann Flatts were left £80 each.

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71.71 Concord Valuation and Tax List, MSA 132:200, 207. The Provincial tax list assessed property in Concord. As noted earlier, most high town officers had property elsewhere as well.
The remainder of his estate was to be divided among the heirs in the same manner. 72

The only evidence we have of Beatton's stand on the Revolution is the Continental Loan Office certificate for £500. His library and chaise indicate that he enjoyed some of the luxuries of his position. Evidently, his wife did too, for a year after his death she married Dr. Abel Prescott, the second wealthiest man in Concord. 73

Beatton differed from the usual high town officer in his lack of family connections in town, in the fact that his financial success was not grounded in farming, in the unusual amount of money he had at interest and in the extensive value of his real estate holdings. But despite his wealth, his long tenure as treasurer, and his reputation and position as a justice of the peace, there is no evidence to show that he was a political power in the area.

Six other men who held high town office before the Revolution also held it after the war began. Abijah Bond and Nathan Meriam both served the town during the war, but while Meriam was caught up in the Revolutionary activities, Bond does not seem to have gone beyond the conscientious performance of his duties as treasurer.

72 MCPCR, No. 1457.

73 Ibid.; Shattuck, History of Concord, 90.
Like all the treasurers elected in Concord during the period of this study, Abijah Bond (1726-1781) held no other high town office. He served as treasurer from 1771 (when John Beatton refused to serve) until he died in 1781 at the age of fifty-six. He was a trader dealing in general goods, handling flour, yard goods and occasional luxuries like chocolates.\footnote{Account with Caleb Davis, Sept. 14, 1762, C. Davis Papers, MBS.}

In 1771 he was the tenth highest provincial taxpayer in Concord, assessed £1:10:7. Most likely his son Abijah, who joined him in trade, was still under his roof. He had a shop adjoining the house, as well as a potash works, the whole worth £5:10 annually. That year he had £300 worth of goods on hand. He also had a horse, a team of oxen and ten sheep. He kept sufficient pasture to graze his livestock and raised thirty bushels of grain on three acres. Farming was not his main business; he did not even raise any hay, which almost everyone with any land did.\footnote{1771 Concord Valuation and Tax Lists, MSA 132: 199, 207.}

In 1775 provincial medical chests, powder barrels, and tents were hidden on his property.\footnote{General Thomas Gage's instructions to Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith, quoted in Allen French, General}
When he died intestate his sons, who had both followed their father as traders, divided his goods. The only evidence of the size of the estate is in the agreement about support made between his wife Elizabeth and her son Abijah, the executor of the estate. Elizabeth received one of the barns, a half of the pew in the meetinghouse, a chaise and the payment of "fifty Spanish milled Dollars in specie annually." Abijah Bond, treasurer, left little more than his wealth, and his balanced accounts, to show for his fifty-five years in Concord.

Nathan Meriam (1720-1782) played a more important role as a selectman during the crucial period of the Revolution for Massachusetts. He was related to the Hosmer, Brooks, Stow, Wright, and Wheeler families. He held a number of minor town offices as early as 1753 when he was constable. He was surveyor of highways in 1753 and 1759, warden in 1762, and selectman from 1774 to 1778.

In 1771 he was in the top 10 percent of the provincial taxpayers being assessed £1:0:5:2 on two polls, one dwelling house, and one shop adjoining, worth £10 annually. He had a horse, two oxen, nine cows, six sheep, two swine, and fifteen acres of pasture for his stock, eight acres of tillage each producing an average of seventeen and a half


77 MCPCR, No. 2134.

bushels of grain, and twenty-three acres producing sixteen tons of hay. He produced six barrels of cider that year as well. All this indicates a good and prosperous farm.  

As a selectman from 1774-1778 he was active on various committees connected with the Revolution. In February 1775 he was on the committee to inspect the Minute Men and enforce the articles of organization. On April 19th he was among the men at "Hartwell Brook." From 1777 until he died at the age of sixty-two he was a member of the Committee of Correspondence, and in 1779 he was chosen a delegate to the state constitutional convention. 

In his will he styled himself a yeoman, and directed that his wife continue to have "every necessary of life provided for her sufficient for one of her station in life and to treat her friends as usual." His four daughters and two of his sons received £43 in lawful silver money and the other two sons, executors, had to provide the special care for their mother out of the remainder of their estate that they divided equally.

79 1771 Concord Valuation and Tax List, MSA 132: 201, 207.

80 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, X, 642.


82 MCPCR, No. 15095.
Although the sums mentioned are not so much greater than those in Timothy Wheeler's will, the household furnishings Meriam left his wife included "all my lining of all kinds & small chests, & chests with draws & case of draws, chairs, tables, looking glasses . . . and all my brass & iron wear of all kinds." This inventory indicates a sufficiently high standard of living in 1782 to keep Nathan Meriam where his tax returns of 1771 had him, among the more prosperous farmers of Concord. He had the skill to keep his farm producing a profit while he spent time on the town's revolutionary committees and in the state convention as well. This ability to serve family, town, and the larger areas of county and state was characteristic of the larger leaders. Although Nathan Meriam displayed it in only a limited degree, his concerns remained those of the town alone and he never became one of Concord's more important leaders.

Larger Leaders

As high town officers, Bond and Meriam helped shape Concord's path to the Revolution, but their contribution was mainly within the town. Two other men who served the town in both periods (1763-1774 and 1775-1789) were David Brown and Ephraim Wood. Moderately prosperous farmers with wide family connections in town, they served an

83Ibid.; 1771 Concord Valuation and Tax List MSA 132:201, 207.
apprenticeship in minor offices before being chosen selectmen. Their activities before the war placed them among the usual run of high town officers. But the activities which raised them to the category of larger leaders were so closely connected with the coming and prosecution of the Revolution in Concord that they will be considered among the high town officers of Revolutionary Concord.

But three other men, Charles Prescott, John Cuming, and James Barrett, attained the stature of larger leaders before the war began. Cuming was an important leader from the time of the French and Indian War, and he continued to provide leadership in town, county, and state up to his death in 1788. Charles Prescott and James Barrett both died in 1779, but Barrett served at the center of Concord's Revolutionary efforts and his influence was felt beyond the town. Prescott, on the other hand, despite his earlier prominence, dropped from leadership before the war began. Like Barrett, his later career was tied to his stand on the war. The town rejected his moderate position and his public career was at an end.

Charles Prescott (1711-1779) was born in Concord, the son of Dr. Jonathan Prescott and Rebeckah Bulkeley. In 1736 he married Elizabeth Barrett. Among the Concord residents he was related to were the Hoar, Wheeler, Brown, Hall, Hunt, Adams, Brooks, Farrar, Brigham, Hosmer, Jones, Haywood, and Minot families. His half-brother, Reverend Benjamin Prescott, married the daughter of Sir William
Pepperrell and he had close relations with the Lawrence family of Groton where his cousin, James Prescott, lived.  

The year of his marriage he was witnessing land sales between some of Concord's oldest families, and he continued this role into the 1740s. In the 1740s he invested in the Land Bank by mortgaging part of his estate to the directors. In 1745 he commanded a company at Louisburg. In 1751 he was back farming in Concord where he had grain, probably wheat, planted on the common ground. He had business dealings in Groton where he won 40s in a suit in 1754. He was among those who were not pleased with the results of the various ecclesiastical court hearings about the conduct of the Reverend Daniel Bliss during the Great Awakening. This group of more conservative townsmen founded the West


85 Deed of sale of land of Peter Bulkely, June 10, 1736, Mss.-Large, MHS; deed for 300 acres sold by Ebenezer Hartshorn of Concord, Sept, 8, 1746, Dobeare Papers, MHS.

86 Persons who have mortgaged part of their estate to the Directors, Calendar of Land Bank Papers, Sept., 1740, MSA 102:109.

87 Louisbourg Muster roll, 1745, Parkman Papers, MHS; Stephen William's Journal, July 24, 1745, Parkman Papers, MHS; Petition for restraining sheep, Mar. 27, 1751, MSA 1:217; Writ of attachment, Nov. 4, 1754, Groton Papers, MHS.
Church and Prescott served as its treasurer in the 1740s and 1750s. 88

Before the Revolution, Prescott was one of the most active of Concord's high town officers and an important official in the county and province as well. He did not appear in any minor town office from 1753 on. He became selectman in 1756 and remained in high town office until 1768. His tenure was not as long as that of some others, but in those twelve years he served twenty-two terms in town offices alone. The year 1764 was the only one in which he did not hold high town office. He was a selectman in 1756-58, 1762, 1765-66, and moderator from 1759-61 and 1765-66. He served nine years as representative, 1758-63 and 1765-67. He was made a justice of the peace for Middlesex County in 1759 and in 1761 he was named of the quorum. In 1768 he was appointed a special judge in the Court of Common Pleas. 89 His militia commission dated from the expedition to Louisburg and by 1758 he was a colonel.

His greatest influence, however, was exercised in the General Court. It was noted earlier that Concord men served continuously on the governor's Council from 1642 until 1685. Then after a lapse of sixty years, James Minot was elected and served from 1746 until his death in 1759. 90

88 Shattuck, History of Concord, 179n.
90 Shattuck, History of Concord, 235-36.
Although three men represented Concord in the House in the early 1750s, their committee assignments were concerned with local issues, mainly petitions for veterans and minors. When Charles Prescott was first elected in 1758, he followed the same pattern. But the picture changed radically when the 1760-61 House met and Concord no longer had a representative on the Council. Prescott immediately joined the committee for "carrying up, sorting, and counting votes for Councillors." He continued in this manner, serving on committees to prepare provincial taxes, to investigate the need for alterations in Boston streets, to tally votes for collectors of the excise, and he waited on the governor with the request of the House for a recess. He continued the service of his predecessors, processing private petitions, but more often as chairman or second member of committees appointed to deal with them. On other committees he worked with such men as Bowdoin, Choate, Fletcher, Otis and Ward. He often served with Colonel William Lawrence of Groton who had headed almost every House Committee in the early 1750s when he seemed to bear the legislative burden nearly single-mindedly. Prescott was one of those Representatives who supported the policies of Thomas Hutchinson, and while he owed some of his influence to Hutchinson, he must have been quite capable, as well.
In 1761-62 Prescott served on financial committees and those involving some struggle with the governor. In 1762 he was active on committees studying the disposition of provincial lands and was added to the committee on the sale of lands. When its plan for the public auction of nine townships and 10,000 additional acres in Hampshire and Berkshire counties was implemented, Charles Prescott acted as surety for purchasers of two of the townships. He continued shaping fiscal bills and became a member of committees dealing with troops and supplies for the war, and bounties for agricultural products. An indication of his rapid rise and the security of his leadership may be found in the fact that he was first on the committee to consider Governor Bernard's message on the payment of troops, and first on a committee of the House to join the Council sorting and counting votes for civil officers: treasurer, receiver general, commissary general, impost and excise officers for different counties, and notary publics for the port cities. His support of Hutchinson made him outstanding among his peers in the General Court, a power to be considered in financial and political planning.

Prescott was sufficiently identified with the governing elite to vote against a bill to exclude justices

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93 Ibid., 38, pt. 1, 38, 64, 106, 123, 172, 190.
94 Auction of western townships, June 2, 1762, MSA 117:872.
95 JMH 38, pt.2:171, 181, 224, 227, 229, 245, 292-93, 304.
of the Superior Court from seats on the Council, perhaps because he entertained hopes of attaining one of these positions himself. That was in 1762, the fifth consecutive year he held plural offices. That year he outdid himself, serving simultaneously as a militia colonel, a justice of the peace for Middlesex, as well as Concord's moderator, selectman, and representative to the General Court. He continued his role in the legislature, the only variation being in the kind of business the House did. It handled a large number of grants to veterans from 1762-1764, and Prescott continued to use his position to win compensation if the lands he held were not what had been promised. In 1764-65 Prescott's place in the House was taken by James Barrett, another purchaser of Township No. 5, evidently so he could guide through to a satisfactory conclusion a petition for compensation for some of his lots which had already been settled by a man who had purchased them from the Indians. When the case was settled, Prescott returned to the House in 1764-65 to serve in the position he had attained earlier.

As he voted to keep the courts open in the wake of the Stamp Act, Prescott began his approach to the revolutionary period in a position of which the patriots approved.

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\[96\text{JMH 38, pt. 2, 319.}\]

\[97\text{JMH 40:74, 85; 51:255; 42:4.}\]
Though he voted against the act to compensate the sufferers of the Stamp Act riots while pardoning the offenders, it did not affect his position in the House. By 1767 he was carrying the business of the House to the Council by himself rather than in committee. That year he was one of the proprietors who received approval for an extension of time to pay for Township No. 5 at a time when eight such extensions covering six townships were approved.  

He appeared to be at the peak of his power, for in September, 1768, he was appointed a special justice of the Court of Common Pleas. Along with other leading men of Middlesex he petitioned for a transfer of the county courts to Concord. In the March Town Meeting, though John Cuming replaced him as moderator, he joined other Concord leaders on an important school committee. At the same meeting the town voted to approve the encouragement of manufacturing and industry to check the importation of foreign goods. A whiff of change was in the air, and in May Captain James Barrett was returned as representative from Concord. Despite the position of power he held in the House, Prescott was too moderate for the position the town took relative to Britain. In September the town chose Barrett as its delegate to the ...
convention to be held at Fanueil Hall "to Consult the Best Measures for the Good of the province in this Critical Day." 100

The 1771 tax returns show Prescott was not an unusually wealthy farmer. Yet his two houses and shops, his slave, and his riding horse indicate he had greater wealth than his province tax of 14s 6d would indicate. 101 John Beatton paid five times that on his provincial tax on his Concord estate that year. Yet the probate of the two men that same decade not only showed Prescott's estate surpassing Beatton's real estate by £80, but Prescott's personal estate was £1000 greater than Beatton's. The difference lay in the value of items not assessed in the provincial valuation, in items of conspicuous consumption. In 1779 Prescott's house, barn and homestead farm were worth £2987, and he had £92:4:7 at interest. His love of fine things is reflected in his wearing apparel. He had three gold rings worth £18, and at least four coats and jackets. One had silver buttons and was worth £45; another coat was snuff colored with a Lily Silk jacket worth £29; he also owned a decorated coat and jacket valued at £11:10. 102 Colonel Charles Prescott never appeared the simple country farmer during the years he

100 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:297-99, 301.
102 MCPCR, No. 18058.
mingled with the leading men of the province. But by 1771 those days had passed.

That year he did serve on a town committee "to lay out a road - if they think proper." He was on an important committee in 1772-73 which prepared instructions on the rights and privileges of the province for Representative James Barrett who "was chosen by a great majority of written votes." The committee report "being read in Town meeting Divers Times and very Cooly & Deliberately Debated upon," was "Passed in the affirmative unanimously in a Full Town Meet­ing."¹⁰³ It expressed a firm attachment to the King "while we are in enjoyment of our inestimable privileges, granted to us by royal charter." But it also noticed violations of the charter and declared the town's refusal to submit to Parliament's unconstitutional taxation of the colonies.¹⁰⁴ This was the last time Charles Prescott's name appeared among any town officers or committee members.

In the fall of 1774 he had to make a public confes­sion and express repentance for signing a statement "in favor of the late governor, Hutchinson."¹⁰⁵ Yet when his

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¹⁰³ Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:332, 356, 363.

¹⁰⁴ Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:363; Shattuck, History of Concord, 77.

¹⁰⁵ Shattuck, History of Concord, 89. This was a statement of support signed by sixty-one Middlesex magistrates.
final decision was made on April 19, 1775, Prescott was among the men at "Hartwell Brook" and he appeared among the eight-month men in 1777. Nevertheless, his fellow citizens never again placed Charles Prescott in any public office. He was not on the Committees of Safety, Correspondence, or Inspection with other older high town officers, such as Haywood and Cuming. Unlike Cuming, who refused high military command and still served as a civilian on the town's revolutionary committees, Prescott may have had to serve in the militia to prove his loyalty.

When he died in 1779 at age sixty-eight, his £6230 estate with its fine furniture, fashionable wardrobe, and extensive real estate remained a mute witness to the position he once held in Concord. A representative, yet above and apart from the town he represented, his success led him to a moderate position in 1774, which in turn, lost him the town's confidence. In rejecting his position, the town also rejected him.

John Cuming and James Barrett became larger leaders before the Revolution and continued and increased their influence as the war progressed. Both held offices in town, county, and state until they died. Thus they may serve as examples of larger leaders who served and were

106 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 750; Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 108, said he served with the militia troops until his death in 1779.

107 MCPCR, No. 18058.
well-served by their public offices both before and during the Revolution.

John Cuming (1729-88) was born in Concord, the son of Robert Cuming, a Scotch trader who settled there after the abortive Stuart uprising of 1715. Unlike most of the high town officers of his day, John Cuming lacked extensive family ties in the town. He entered the Harvard class of 1747, but left to teach for nine weeks at Nine Acres Corner in Concord in 1746. Then he went to Edinburgh to study medicine. He returned to serve in King George's War during which he was wounded. Captured by Indians, he was released in an exchange of prisoners. He proved to be an effective leader of troops in the campaign against Canada in 1758. He commanded as a lieutenant colonel in Colonel Nicholas' Regiment at Fort William Henry and at Lake Champlain. This tour as a combat officer rather than as a surgeon may be explained by a look at the rewards. A "cherurgeon" received £5:6:8 monthly, while a lieutenant colonel got £16:3:4 as well as a land grant of 5,000 acres as a field officer.


109 John Cuming to Captain Lawrence, June 1, 1758, quoted in "Capt. Thomas Lawrence's Company," Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings [MHSP] 2 ser., VI, 25, 82.

110 Ibid.
Cuming used his land grants well, becoming a proprietor of Marlow, New Hampshire and of Brandon and Leicester, Vermont, as well as purchaser of one of the townships Massachusetts sold in 1762.\textsuperscript{111}

By 1757 Cuming was building up his practice in Concord and the neighboring towns to include doctoring and boarding some of the town's poor, a practice he continued for a quarter of a century.\textsuperscript{112} Cuming's army command seems to have been accepted in lieu of service in minor town offices, as he did not fulfill what was the usual town apprenticeship for high town office.

In 1763, at the age of thirty-five, he was chosen a selectman and served the usual four years. But in 1764 Concord chose him as moderator of the town meeting, a practice the town continued off and on for some ninety meetings, including eighteen March election meetings.\textsuperscript{113} From 1764 to 1786 Concord's March meeting was moderated by Cuming with four exceptions: 1765, when Prescott served; 1775, when Whitney was chosen; 1783 when Hosmer served; and 1785 when James Barrett, Jr. Esq. moderated. All but Whitney were larger leaders. By 1768, Cuming was an agent for the town

\textsuperscript{111} Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 117-18; Wheeler, Concord, 103; Shattuck, History of Concord, 75.

\textsuperscript{112} Charge of John Cuming for professional services, June 14, 1757, MSA 23:437.

\textsuperscript{113} TRC, 3 and 4, passim; Shattuck, History of Concord, 253-54.
seeking the transfer of county courts to Concord. Privately, he petitioned the General Court for the completion of his grant to Township No. 5 in Berkshire County where he had erected two sawmills and hired preaching for several sabbaths. The township was settled in 1770 and established as a town in 1779.  

By 1771 the provincial tax lists show that Cuming was the fourth wealthiest man in Concord, paying £1:16:11 on a dwelling house and shop worth £20 annually, on two slaves, £80 at interest, three horses, four oxen, eleven cows, eight sheep, and three swine, seventy acres of pasture which could support twenty-five head of cattle and twenty acres of tillage which produced two hundred and fifty bushels of grain, orchards producing twelve barrels of cider, and twenty-two acres, which yielded fifty-five tons of hay. But farming was not his main occupation, for by this time he had established an extensive medical practice. When Harvard granted him a Masters degree in 1771 as a graduate of a European university, the diploma cited his fame as a physician and surgeon.

114 Petition urging transfer of County Court, June 29, 1768, MSA 44:649; Petition for grant of Township No. 5 [n.d.], MSA 46:562; Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Historical Data Relating to Counties, Cities and Towns in Massachusetts, prepared by Frederic E. Cook, Secretary of the Commonwealth (n.p., 1948), 23.


116 Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XII, 118.
But Cuming's services went beyond local politics and professional activities. He was a member of the committee of the First Church which initiated the return of members of the West Church after the death of Reverend Daniel Bliss in May, 1764. In 1765 he received an appointment as a justice of the peace under the Crown and he received one of the first commissions as a justice of the peace under the Provincial Government and he became a justice of the quorum in 1781.

Prominent as he was, Cuming served as representative only once, 1776, when the town sent two delegates to the General Court. In 1772 Cuming was on the committee to instruct Representative Barrett on the rights and privileges of the province. He chaired most of the early town meetings dealing with relations with Britain from 1772 to 1774. He acted as a physician to the wounded rather than as a soldier during the Battle of Concord, but after the battle


119 Shattuck, *History of Concord*, said Cuming was "often chosen representative in the General Court," but the listing of Representatives on p. 236 shows he was chosen only once.

120 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:362-63.
he reverted to his magistrate's role and took the depositions of the inhabitants on the events of that day.\textsuperscript{121}

Evidently the Provincial Congress thought his military experience should be tapped, for it twice nominated him for high military office. In January, 1776, the House of Representatives named him general of the Middlesex troops, but the Council rejected the appointment.\textsuperscript{122} Perhaps the Council already had it in mind to appoint him general over the reinforcements to Canada, which it did in July, 1776, but he declined this post. His health and the pleas of his wife were responsible for his refusing the command, but other problems may have influenced him as well. His minister, Reverend William Emerson, wrote of his uncertainty and depression, and a friend, Reverend Ebenezer Bridge, reported that he was "in a Very Low Condition, as to health, and every thing Else concerning the present day."\textsuperscript{123} Moreover, while Cuming served as virtually the only moderator of town meetings from December, 1767 to January, 1774, and though he moderated six town meetings between March, 1775 and March, 1776, they were meetings that dealt primarily with the town's ordinary business. Other men served as moderators of

\textsuperscript{121}Shipton, \textit{Sibley's Harvard Graduates}, XII, 118.

\textsuperscript{122}Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, IV, 207.

\textsuperscript{123}Wheeler, \textit{Concord}, 102; Shipton, \textit{Sibley's Harvard Graduates}, XII, 118.
seven of the more decisive town meetings during that im¬
portant year.

One might conclude from this fact that during the final move to Revolution, Cuming was busy with other aspects of the movement, or with his duties as a magistrate, except for two pieces of evidence. First, his house is not listed among the numerous depots for provincial stores in the spring of 1775, although its size and location made it as suitable as others that were used. The second piece of evidence is a document he drew up as the foreman of a coroner's jury on January 15, 1776, five months after the Provincial Congress had taken over direction of the courts. He began:

. . . in the Sixteenth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord the King by the Grace of God of England, Scotland, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. . .  

Perhaps he sought comfort in the old formula in the face of the object of the inquest: the body of an infant female child, which the jury concluded "was Barbarously, crewelly, Inhumanly and Felioniously murdered by Cutting its Throat with a Cow Knife." But even this does not allow us to picture him as the Concord historian, Shattuck, did, as a man wholeheartedly for the Revolution. Evidently Cuming paused to consider long and hard the choices open to him and their consequences, and finally accepted the Revolution.


125 Ibid.
Whatever qualms Cuming may have had, he evidently settled them to the satisfaction of the town by March, 1776 when he was unanimously elected moderator and added to the Committee of Correspondence, where he served as chairman almost every year for the rest of the war. The following May, when the town chose Joseph Hosmer, a relatively young man, to go to the General Court, it broke its custom of choosing only one representative, and sent Cuming along with him. Cuming spent most of the war in civilian occupations helping the town play its part in raising supplies and men. He contributed money for the hire of soldiers at the time of the marching to fight General Burgoyne in 1777, and a Colonel John Cuming was with Major John Brown in 1778.126

In 1779-1780 Concord sent Cuming to the state constitutional convention. Once the drafting of the constitution was handed over to committees, most of the eighty-two delegates went home, but John Cuming was one of the thirty-six who remained, working as a member of five or six committees.127 In March, 1788 he was again elected moderator of the town meeting, but resigned and received the thanks of the town.

126 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, IV, 207.

127 Samuel Morison, "The Struggle Over the Adoption of the Constitution of Massachusetts, 1780," MHSP, 3d ser., L. 358.
After the war he continued practicing medicine and was elected to the Massachusetts Medical Society. When he died in 1788 he left his estate of £1405:3:8 mostly in real estate, but including over sixty notes of interest amounting to over £900. He left goods and money to care for his wife and to be given as legacies. The sum of £1093 lawful money went to the town of Concord for schools and for the poor, to Harvard for a "chair of Phisic" and to the minister for communion plate. Without children himself, he left lots in Cumingham to two of his namesakes, and the lands left him by his father went to his sisters in Great Britain, and another lot to his "trusty friend," Ephraim Wood. His eight-day clock, his tankard, two porringeres, five spoons, two salt sellers, and one pepper box with his coat of arms on them, a library with holdings in "phisic" and surgery, books of law, sermons, and agriculture, and works by Milton, Young, and Butler gave some indication of his style of living.  

John Cuming died in July, 1788 on a journey to visit some patients and to take care of some civil work as a justice. He died as he had lived, a physician and magistrate. He left his wealth where he had his roots: to the town, church, and Harvard. He was a man with roots and

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128 Donation Book, TRC 14; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 118-19; Wheeler, Concord, 102-05.

129 Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 118-19.
fortune in colonial Concord. Once he decided to accept the Revolution, he worked steadily to keep the support of the town in the struggle.

There is no evidence to suggest that Colonel James Barrett (1710-79) had any hesitation in supporting the Revolution. He was born the son of Benjamin and Lydia Minot Barrett. He had extensive family ties in the town and was related to many of the high town officers of the period. He was the nephew of James Minott, the Councillor, the brother of Deacon Thomas Barrett, and the double first cousin of Selectman Humphrey Barrett, two of whose daughters married high town officers (Elnathan Jones and Colonel Charles Prescott). In 1732 James Barrett married Rebecca Hubbard, whose mother was a granddaughter of Peter Bulkeley, the Councillor, and a great granddaughter of Reverend Peter Bulkeley, the town's founder and first minister. Barrett's first son, James Barrett, was a larger leader of Revolutionary Concord; his second son, Nathan, was a militia colonel. His daughter Rebecca married Deacon George Minot; all the men were high town officers of the period.130

Barrett's own family was "the most substantial and prosperous of the farmers in Concord," having the largest herd of cattle.131 James Barrett continued the tradition

130 Potter, Geneologies of Concord, 5, 35, 75, 135, 210, 275.

131 Edward Jarvis, Supposed Decay of Families in New England, Disproved by the Experience of the People of
of public service and prosperous family farming, so that in 1771, when he had settled his older sons on their lands, he was the town's eighth wealthiest resident, paying £1:12:4:3 in provincial taxes. His nine teams of oxen and five sons often worked on the town and county roads in lieu of taxes, and to obtain cash. In 1771 his taxes were assessed on two polls, one dwelling house worth £11:13:4 annually, one horse, seventeen oxen, eighteen cows, two swine, forty-three acres of pasture supporting nine cows, seven acres of tillage on which he raised 140 bushels of grain, fourteen acres of English and upland mowing land producing ten tons of hay, and sixteen acres of fresh meadow producing sixteen tons of hay. He had on hand that year twelve barrels of cider from his orchard, as well.\(^{132}\)

He had begun his successful farming long before 1771 however. In 1751 he was among the leading men who petitioned the General Court that sheep might be restrained from the common lands because of the damage they did "to English grain, especially wheat on the common."\(^{133}\) By 1756 James Barrett was a representative in the General Court. The

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\(^{133}\) Petition for restraining sheep on the Common, Mar. 27, 1751, MSA 1:217. The petition was signed by several high town officers, three of whom served as representatives.
following year he was a militia captain. He became a selectman in 1754 and 1755 and again in 1760 and 1761. He held a few minor offices, such as surveyor of the highways in 1762 and warden in 1763. The town chose him representative in 1756, 1757, 1764, and from 1768 to 1775. Yet he never served in two high town offices concurrently.

In the General Court, Barrett played a minor role before the Revolution, handling private petitions and serving as agent for the town when it had business before the Court. In this activity his role was similar to Prescott's, while Barrett's uncle, James Minott, was still on the Council. In 1764 and 1765 his committee assignments grew in importance, though not to the extent Prescott's had, and he still continued to handle private petitions. His main business at the General Court in 1764 and 1765 seems to have been to straighten out difficulties which had arisen concerning his lots in Township No. 5 which he found already settled and improved by one Ephraim Keyes, who had purchased the land from the Indians. Although he had not been among the original purchasers of the land in 1762, he was related to four of the six persons who posted bond for it. By the

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135 JMH, 41:15, 85, 93, 184.
following year only Cuming, Barrett, and Prescott were listed as proprietors. 136

In 1775 Barrett was Concord's delegate to the Provincial Congress which organized an army of 15,000 militiamen and named him a colonel. The Committee on Supplies put him in charge of the provincial stores sent to Concord. He received orders on March 15, 1775 to keep a night guard over the stores and to engage a number of teams to be in readiness on the shortest notice, by day or night, sufficient to carry off the stores, on a courier's informing him of attempts being ready to be made on the magazine; on a courier's informing him of danger, he was to alarm the neighboring towns. 137

Barrett supervised those engaged in military preparations, stationed guards at the old south and north bridges and on the Boston road to search teamsters suspected of carrying goods to the British, and directed the activities which made Concord, once again, "a distinguished military post." On April 18th and 19th he was busy getting the arms out of the town, or hidden in near-by woods or in the furrows of freshly plowed fields. That task completed, he was in command at the North Bridge when the fighting began. 138

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136 Ibid., 41:255; release of lands by Ephraim Keyes, MSA 46:504; petition for completion of acreage in Township No. 5, MSA, 118:4.

137 J. Piglon, Clerk of the Committee on Safety to James Barrett, Mar. 15, 1775, quoted in Shattuck, History of Concord, 95.

Because he had been brought out of retirement at age sixty-five to command the militia, once the fighting began his role changed. He was the second member the Provincial Congress added to a joint committee to receive and distribute donations for "ye poor of Boston," and "for those wounded in the Battles of Lexington and Concord and widows and children of those slain." Barrett next served on a committee to aid the Quartermaster General obtain and deliver hay and wood from the property of Loyalists for the use of the army, as well as blankets and firearms from the Middlesex towns. He was second on a committee for Middlesex to obtain funds for the invasion of Canada through the exchange of Continental bills for silver and gold. In the fall of 1777 he was appointed muster master for Middlesex County and hired soldiers for the campaign against Burgoyne. Again in 1778 he was muster master for two regiments to be stationed at Providence for the defense of the four northeastern states. That summer he was mustering men for Colonel Henley's and Colonel John Nixon's regiments.

139 Ibid.; French, Gage's Informers, 14.

140 Acts and Resolves, XVIII, 52, 68-9, 121, 197, 260.


142 James Barrett to General William Heath, Aug. 21, 1778, William Heath Papers, MHS.
When James Barrett died suddenly on April 11, 1779, he was sixty-nine years of age. His estate was valued at £3861:1:4, most of it in real estate (£2557:1:4), but he had £514:16 in cash and £710:8 in state notes. Four people owed him money for notes at interest amounting to £776:10. The extent of his varied business interests can be seen in some two hundred pounds of hides and sheep skins which the administrator of the estate sold for £34. His will directed that his fat cattle and notes of hand be turned into money to settle his debts of £177:6:8. Half of his lands in Holden, Worcester County were left to his son Stephen, and his buildings and lands remaining and his grazing stock went to his youngest son. He had already provided well for his older children.143

In a sense, Colonel James Barrett typified the older members of the larger leaders of Revolutionary Concord. At the approach of the Revolution he was at the peak of his career, and he helped lead the town into the forefront of the Revolution. More than the other larger leaders, Barrett was a farmer. Like his fellow high town officers, he chose to be prepared, if required, to defend his property and the liberties of the town. He acted with sufficient skill and planning to warn the Crown that dealing with embattled farmers could be very costly indeed.

143 MCPCR, No. 1194.
CHAPTER II

REVOLUTIONARY CONCORD

Some aspects of Concord's "road to revolution" took place "out of doors," while others depended on the actions of the Provincial Congress in the fall and winter 1774-75, but many important developments originated in the town meeting. Perhaps the most remarkable facet underlying the strength of the revolutionary movement lay in the continuity provided by the town meetings which permitted the extraordinary changes and decisions to appear ordinary, and take on the dimensions of legitimacy. This was especially true where leaders from the colonial years took the lead in bringing the town into the Revolution. In Concord the men who led the town into the Revolution were, for the most part, past and present high town officers.

Many of Concord's leaders were involved in the town's approach to the Revolution. In the decade of the sixties, Concord had opposed the Stamp Act and instructed its representatives to "unite in all constitutional measures to obtain its repeal." It even voted not to pay the sufferers of the Stamp Act Riots, and when ordered to
pay, the town refused. In 1767 Concord accepted the non-importation agreement and chose the selectmen as a committee to report on those measures which "threaten the country with poverty and ruin." The town voted to encourage industry, economy, frugality and manufacturing, and sent Captain James Barrett to a meeting in Faneuil Hall in September, 1768 called to discuss measures for the good of the province.

In December, 1772, in its instructions to James Barrett, its representative to the General Court, the town conditioned its loyalty to the King upon continued enjoyment of privileges granted by the royal charter. When those who attended the town meeting added that their charter rights were being unconstitutionally infringed upon, Daniel Bliss, a justice of the peace and Concord's only lawyer, refused to sign. This was the first indication of a split in the town over the fundamental issues of the Revolution. In January, 1773, when the town committee answered an address from the citizens of Boston on the distressed state of the province, they again tied their loyalty to the King to the continued enjoyment of their charter privileges, but they

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2 Shattuck, *History of Concord*, 76.

3 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:362-63; Gross, *Minutemen*, 43-44.
went a step further and denied the power of Parliament to tax them without their consent.4

On January 10, 1774, less than a month after the Boston Tea Party, the town refused to set up a committee of correspondence to keep the citizens informed about the tea act, but they did make a non-importation pledge. Later that month the town meeting adopted seven resolutions drawn up by the selectmen. The resolves spoke strongly of their rights and condemned the tea tax as unconstitutional because Concord taxpayers were not really or virtually represented in Parliament. They thought that the purchase of illegally taxed articles like tea would be a resignation of their liberties and privileges, and they charged that the tea act was "meant to catch us in those chains of slavery that have long been forged for that purpose." While they pledged to defend both the King and their charter rights, they promised to treat tea importers as enemies and promised not to sell or use East India Company tea, "or any other with duty affixed by an act of Parliament for raising a revenue in America."5

Events in May and June brought Massachusetts—and the town of Concord—closer to armed resistance. In May General Thomas Gage arrived in Boston, accompanied by four regiments of soldiers, with orders to close the port of Boston on June 1st and to keep it closed unless the town paid

4Shattuck, History of Concord, 75, 76.

5Town Meeting Minutes TRC 4:387; Shattuck, History of Concord, 77-79; Wheeler, Concord, 99.
for the tea it had destroyed. On May 10th the Boston com-
mittee of correspondence called on the towns to suspend
trade with England. Early in June the province's militia
officers began resigning their royal commissions and or-
ganizing new militia units with popularly chosen officers.
On June 20th, more than three hundred Concord residents
signed a non-importation agreement, and one week later they
signed the Solemn League and Covenant, which committed them
to avoid buying, selling, or consuming any British goods
after the first of August. The covenant, which exempted
arms, ammunition, and medicines, was to continue in force
until the Boston Port Bill had been repealed and the colony's
charter rights restored.

When Massachusetts received a copy of the Massachu-
setts Government Act in July, the temper of the people around
Concord was so threatening that Tory sympathizer Dr. Joseph
Lee rode to Cambridge to warn one of the men named mandamus
councillor against a rising of the people. Concord's town
meeting called a county convention to meet at Concord, and
on August 30th and 31st, 1774 a hundred fifty delegates
convened in the first county convention in Massachusetts.
Ephraim Wood, Jr., John Flint, and Nathan Meriam, the Board

6 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:400 ff.
7 Shattuck, History of Concord, 79-81.
8 Ibid., 89-90.
of Selectmen, were Concord's official delegates, but at least two other Concord citizens took part in the debates. Daniel Bliss, Esq., justice of the peace, lawyer, and sometime legal aid to Governor Hutchinson spoke eloquently in favor of obeying the Massachusetts Government Act. Joseph Hosmer, cabinetmaker, militia officer, and favorite of the younger men of the town spoke of the wars and struggles their forebears had waged to win for them their lands and liberties. He insisted that they must be as prepared as their ancestors had been to fight for their liberties if they were to keep their lands. The convention recommended that a provincial congress be called and that the courts be boycotted and suits suspended until they learned the results of the provincial and continental congresses. The convention further declared that actions taken by civil officials under the Massachusetts Government Act were unconstitutional and should be opposed, and civil commissions issued by the Royal government should be ignored.  

That same week British troops took two field pieces and some powder from Cambridge. From the neighboring towns hundreds of men, some armed, met in Concord and marched to Cambridge on September 2nd. This "Powder Alarm" was the first answered by the Minute Men and as many as 20,000 appeared. They found the danger had passed, but the incident

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9Ibid., 82-87; Wheeler, Concord, 101-02.
made it clear that the supply of provincial arms must be stored away from Cambridge. When the time came to establish a depot for arms for the province, Concord would become the center for supplies and the military post of the province. But that was some months off and other efforts to test the Intolerable Acts were tried first.

On September 13, 1774 when the Court of Sessions and the Court of Common Pleas were to meet in Concord, the people of the area met to prevent them from sitting with sheriff-chosen juries. The crowd set up a committee representing each town which voted that the court should not be opened. The court, so advised, issued a statement that it was inexpedient to sit "lest it be construed that we act in consequence of the late unconstitutional act of Parliament." It was signed by all the justices present, including Daniel Bliss of Concord. While the crowd was at it they made Colonel Charles Prescott sign a public retraction and expression of repentance for having joined sixty Middlesex justices in a letter of support for Governor Hutchinson.

Later that week people from the surrounding towns met on Concord common and chose a committee to bring

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11 Shattuck, History of Concord, 88-89.
suspected Tories to trial. Dr. Joseph Lee had to sign a confession for giving warning of the rising and to declare that "for the future I will never convey any intelligence to any of the court party . . . by which the designs of the people may be frustrated in opposing the barbarous policy of an arbitrary, wicked, and corrupt administration." 12

These "sudden assemblies of the day" continued in the midst of a strict regard for the Solemn League and Covenant, but they lacked legitimacy. They were made legitimate by a town meeting at which the whole town resolved itself into a "Committee of Safety to Suppress all Riots, Tumults and Disorders in Said Town, and to aid and assist all untainted magistrates . . . in the Execution of the Laws of this province against the same." 13 Though the town meeting expanded the Committee of Correspondence, all the members were high town officers. 14 The same meeting voted to raise "one or more Companies by Enlistment" and directed that they "Chuse their officers out of the Body so Enlisted."

12 Ibid., 90.

13 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:407; Shattuck, History of Concord, 90.

14 Shattuck, History of Concord, 91, 92, 94, 121. The Committees of Safety and Inspection from 1775 to 1777 were more likely to contain militia officers and older leaders, but most of the members were high town officers. In 1776 all of the Committee of Correspondence were high town officers. From 1778 to 1782 Josiah Meriam was the only member of the Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety who did not hold a high town office.
The meeting further voted pay for the companies when called out of town, and to buy additional powder and lead for the town's stock of ammunition, as well as a chest of firearms for those unable to supply themselves. In all this the town was more concerned with providing military preparation and arms so the people might "have the advantage of them if necessity calls for it," than with imposing order on anyone but Tories. But the town had exercised control over the "out of doors" assemblies and approved their actions.\textsuperscript{15}

From this point on Concord's actions were dictated by events in the province. General Gage recognized that his hopes of gaining an advantage through an early meeting of the General Court were frustrated, so he cancelled the session and discharged the members from attendance. He gave as reasons "the tumults and disorders since the September first writ, the resolves passed in many counties, the instructions to Representatives by Boston and other towns and the great disorder and unhappy state of the Province."\textsuperscript{16} But nearly one hundred representatives to the General Court met in Salem on October 5th and when neither the Governor nor the Council appeared on the sixth to administer their oaths, they resolved themselves into a convention and elected John Hancock President and Benjamin Lincoln Secretary. They

\textsuperscript{15} Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:406-08.

\textsuperscript{16} George Tolman, \textit{Preliminaries of Concord Fight} (Concord: Concord Antiquarian Society, n.d.), 5.
adopted resolutions noting that once the Governor called a session of the General Court he had no right under the charter to prevent its sitting. He could not prorogue, adjourn or dissolve the body until it had met and convened. Moreover they said the tumults the Governor complained of were due to his attempts to supersede popular rule by military force. They then voted to join the Provincial Congress and adjourn to Concord.\textsuperscript{17}

The two hundred and eighty-eight members of the Provincial Congress which convened in Concord October 11, 1774 included delegates chosen by the towns to serve in both the Congress and the General Court. Concord Representative Colonel James Barrett was to serve in both bodies, with Samuel Whitney and Ephraim Wood as additional delegates to the Provincial Congress.\textsuperscript{18} Once the Congress opened it chose Concord's minister, Reverend William Emerson, as chaplain, adopted a statement on public affairs, and an address to General Gage and adjourned to meet in Cambridge on October 17th, probably for easier communication with the capital.\textsuperscript{19} That month the Provincial Congress named

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid.; Wheeler, \textit{Concord}, 105.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:407-08.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Tolman, \textit{Preliminaries}, 5; Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 91-92.
\end{itemize}
two committees which would have important dealings with Concord, the Provincial committees of Safety and Supplies.\footnote{Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 94 lists the members of the two committees.}

The presence of the Provincial Congress in town speeded Concord's preparation for war and tied it closely to the military preparation of the province. On October 13th several cannon were purchased and brought to town and on October 24th the meeting directed the selectmen to mount them and purchase cannon ball, grape shot and powder.\footnote{Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:408; Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 92.} On November 2nd the Provincial committees of Safety and Supplies voted to procure and deposit flour, rice and peas at Concord.\footnote{Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 92.} The following day a town meeting directed the constables to pay the provincial taxes to Henry Gardner, who had been appointed Receiver General by the Provincial Congress.\footnote{Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:409-10; Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 92; Wheeler, \textit{Concord}, 101.} Concord annulled the non-consumption covenant of the previous June and substituted the Articles of Association of the Continental Congress, and appointed five high town officers as a Committee of Inspection to see to its observance. On January 2, 1775 the town meeting voted to pay Minutemen one shilling four pence for each of two half-days' drill a week. But Concord men still hoped economic
pressure would win restoration of their liberties, so they
formally adopted the Continental Association on January 25,
1775.24

On January 9th regulations for the Minutemen com-
panies were ready. The selectmen were then directed to pro-
cure a master to teach the Alarm Company the use of the cannon.
By the end of the month there were two companies of Minutemen
with fifty men each.25 But the town was still unable to
look independence full in the face and to cut completely
its ties with the crown. On the very day the town regulated
its Minutemen, it resolved:

First that we whose names are herewith Subscribed
will to the utmost of our Power Defend his Majesty
King George the third his Person Crown and Dignity.

Second That we will at the Same time to the utmost
of our Power and abilities Defend all and every of
our Charter Rights Liberties & Privileges and will
hold Ourselves in Readiness at a minutes warning
with arms & ammunition thus to Do.

Thirdly, that we will at all times & on all Places
obey our officers Chosen by us. . . .26

During February, 1775 several meetings were held to
encourage and insure the keeping of the Articles of Asso-
ciation. The Committee of Inspection reported the names of
three residents who had not signed.27 But the town voted to

24Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:409-10.


27Shattuck, History of Concord, 94; Gross, Minute-
men, 58.
postpone the matter of the Association so "those who had not signed could have further consideration." It also voted to except medicines for the sick from the list of articles not to be imported.\(^2^8\)

During February the Provincial Committee of Supplies took steps which turned Concord into a military depot, and the center of the rebellion. Provisions and military stores for 15,000 men were to be sent there and to Worcester, though relatively few supplies went to Worcester. On February 13th the Committee of Supplies asked Colonel John Robinson of Westford, a field officer of the Middlesex regiment of militia, to send four brass pieces and two mortars to Concord. The committee voted to buy 15,000 canteens. On the 21st one hundred bell-tents for arms, 1000 field tents, ten tons of lead balls, cartridges for 15,000 men, and beans, molasses, and fish were sent to Colonel James Barrett who was placed in charge of the stores. On the 23rd rum, candles, salt, oil and wine for the injured arrived and 1500 yards of Russian linen and fifteen chests of medicine for the wounded. This was quite obviously preparation for war.\(^2^9\)

From February to April the carts rolled in, the men unloaded them and hid the supplies in dozens of locations throughout the town. Both the Province and General

\(^2^8\)Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:417.

\(^2^9\)Shattuck, History of Concord, 97-99, 105; Tolman, Preliminaries, 21-24; Wheeler, Concord, 105.
Gage knew the importance of the stores at Concord. And every Minuteman knew that when he heard the alarm, it would be a call to defend the arms and supplies at Concord. The decisions of the Provincial committees of Safety and Supplies had chosen the town for the beginning of the Revolution.  

Concord and her neighbors were primed for the battle on March 13th when Reverend William Emerson preached to a review of all the military companies in the town that "God himself is our Captain," and when he repeated the service in Acton a week later.  

On the 15th John Pigeon, Clerk of the Provincial Committee of Safety, ordered Colonel Barrett to set a night guard of ten men over the stores and to have teams ready to carry them off. Barrett posted guards on the bridges and on the Boston Road to search suspected teamsters. On the 17th the Committee of Supplies sent men to Concord to help prepare the stores, all in secret.  

On Sunday, March 20th General Gage sent Captain Brown and Ensign D'Bernicre to report on the natural defenses around Concord and on the specific location of the stores. Though

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30 Tolman, Preliminaries, 28.

31 Shattuck, History of Concord, 94; Tolman, Preliminaries, 72.

32 Shattuck, History of Concord, 95; Gross, Minutemen, 69-70.
Daniel Bliss gave them both information and warning, he had to escape out of town with them on short notice.\textsuperscript{33}

From March 22nd to April 15th the Provincial Congress met in Concord where it continued the organization of the Provincial Army and encouraged tax payments and loans, and even adopted rules and regulations for a continental army "should one be raised." On April 8th the Congress voted to raise an army for defense against attack by the re-inforced British troops in Boston. During this time Concord's Committee of Correspondence met daily. The militia companies drilled frequently, even carrying their guns to church on Sunday, with the approval of their militant pastor.\textsuperscript{34}

When the Provincial Congress adjourned on April 15th, it gave the Committee of Safety and members from the neighborhood authority to call the Congress back into session before May 10th, if it became necessary.\textsuperscript{35} The Provincial Committee of Safety met in Concord up to April 17th when it ordered Colonel Barrett to mount two of the cannon and to raise an artillery company, and to begin scattering the arms. Four cannon went to Groton and two to Acton. On April 18th, when the Committee of Safety learned of planned British troop movements, it met in West Cambridge and

\textsuperscript{33}Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 96; Gross, \textit{Minutemen}, 110-11.

\textsuperscript{34}Shattuck, \textit{History of Concord}, 97, 99.

\textsuperscript{35}Gross, \textit{Minutemen}, 113.
ordered the military stores in Concord scattered to nine towns. Most of the food went to Sudbury; heavy equipment for earthworks went to Sudbury, Stow, and Concord. Worcester, farther inland, received 1000 iron pots. Colonel Barrett and the men of Concord worked moving the stores out of Concord and hiding what remained until the British troops marched up the Lexington Road into town. When the British returned along this road the war had begun. Concord would go through the war under the leadership of the men who brought her into the Revolution, the high town officers and their successors.

Collective Profile

The shooting revolution that began in 1775 eventually destroyed an empire, but it left formal town government in Concord relatively unchanged. Concord held to the tradition of keeping the town clerk on the Board of Selectmen, and it continued to keep the town treasurer out of other high town offices. War and independence brought no great influx of "new men" to high town office, in part because there were no Tories who needed to be purged from influential posts. During the fifteen years from 1775 to 1789 only nineteen men served in high town offices for an average of 5.6 terms each. But no more than two new men took office in any year, and in five of these years (1777,

36 Shattuck, History of Concord, 99.
1778, 1780, 1783, and 1789), no new men were elected at all. During the same period four colonial leaders continued to serve in high town office for a total of twenty-one terms (see Table 3).

During and after the Revolution Concord preserved its tradition of keeping some men in office for a long time. For example, the town clerk, Ephraim Wood, Jr., who had held the office since 1771, continued to hold it throughout the Revolution and beyond until 1795. Between 1775 and 1789, selectmen served an average of five years, as did the town treasurers. Even where the statistics seem to indicate relatively rapid change, close analysis suggests the opposite. Five men, for instance, served as moderators of the regular March town meeting between 1775 and 1789, an average of three years each. But three of the five sat for only one meeting, while another held the chair for three. John Cuming, the traditional moderator in the colonial years continued to preside over the March town meeting, and most of the other town meetings called during the war as well. The town clearly preferred to keep his familiar hand on the gavel throughout the turmoil of war and revolution whenever it could.

When age, or politics, or popular appeal opened an office to a new man, the town tended to keep that man in office year after year. Joseph Hosmer, for instance, first became representative to the General Court in 1776, but then he sat in the office continually except when he moved
### Table 3

**Revolutionary Concord High Town Officers, 1763-1789**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>1763</th>
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<td>George Minot</td>
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<td><strong>Larger Leaders</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Colonial Leaders Who Served After 1774</strong></td>
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<td>James Barrett</td>
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</table>

M - Moderator; S - Selectman; C - Town Clerk; T - Treasurer; R - Representative;
D - Delegate to Provincial Congress.

*Chosen Representative, but also chosen State Senator.*
John Cuming went as a second representative when Hosmer was first elected, but the others, for the most part, were chosen to replace Hosmer when he was elected to the Senate. Once Hosmer was firmly established in the Senate, the town went back to electing the same man for four or five consecutive terms.

Some things, however, did change. Perhaps because town office demanded more time during the Revolution, or perhaps because the town listened to and agreed with the denunciation of plural officeholding the popular press had leveled at the Royal government, Concord's town leaders were much less likely to hold more than one high town office after 1775 than they had been before. With the exception of the traditional combination of the office of town clerk and selectman, there were only four cases of plural officeholding after 1775. Four men served as moderator and representative simultaneously: Cuming in 1776, Hosmer in 1783, and Duncan Ingraham in 1789, while James Barrett, Esq., who served as moderator and selectman in 1785, did so again in 1786 and that year also went as representative to the General Court to replace Hosmer who became a state senator for Middlesex County. Before the war, Concord apparently used the office of selectman to train men for other high town offices, but this practice ceased after 1775. The town also broke the four-year pattern of officeholding it established before the war, but retained the element of continuity by
re-electing the same men to particular offices year after year. It even returned whole slates of officeholders in 1777-1778, and in 1779-1780. Perhaps the war depleted the supply of available men, so that willing and able leaders were not easy to find. When they were discovered, the town had no qualms about keeping them in office for a long time.

The war in Concord was not the work of young men either, for, during the Revolution, the town chose leaders who were from five to six years older than its colonial leaders had been when they were first chosen. Perhaps there were fewer young men available because the war made demands on soldiers and farmers alike. Before the Revolution the bulk of high town officers (eleven out of sixteen, or 68%) began their services between their thirtieth and forty-fifth year, but once the war began, only half of the beginning high town officers came from this age bracket. The rest began office between the ages of forty-seven and sixty-five. Before 1777 the younger men and older men serving in a particular high town office were evenly divided. After 1778 the younger men were outnumbered four to one (see Table 4). Long after the war moved from Massachusetts and the peace treaty was signed, men in their late forties and fifties continued to be elected to their first high town office, indicating a more conservative attitude in the town after the war.

More than half of the high town officers held militia titles, which for some of them, like Hosmer and Wood, were just stepping stones in their political careers. Although
TABLE 4

Average Ages on First Entering High Town
Office, Concord 1763-1789

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Colonial 1763-1774</th>
<th>Revolutionary 1775-1789</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>44.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Treasurer</td>
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<td>51</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>50.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>46.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range for First Time</td>
<td>32-54</td>
<td>36-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>in High Town</td>
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there were few professionals, as a whole Concord war leaders come through as much more businessmen than their colonial predecessors. While only Timothy Minot was a Harvard graduate, both Minots were practicing physicians, as was Nehemiah Hunt. George Minot and Joseph Chandler held honorable positions in the community by reason of their election as deacons after the war, and Ephraim Wood, Jr. practiced law.

A great change did occur in Concord's representation in the county courts. Only three high town officers were justices of the peace before the war. Cuming was appointed in 1765, shortly after he took high town office. Prescott was appointed in 1768 and Duncan Ingraham in 1773. All told, in the eighty-three years from 1692 to 1774 only eleven men from Concord were named to the court, relatively few for a co-shire town. 37 But with the Revolution this changed, possibly because the town's leaders were so much in the forefront of the change on a county level, and because Cambridge, the other co-shire town, had a considerable number of Tories who had to be replaced. Nine Concord men were named to the court in the fourteen years after 1774, and four of those were named Justices of the Quorum. Cuming, Wood, and James Barrett, Esq. were named regularly and moved to the Quorum, while Cuming served as President

of the Court of Sessions for twenty years. While Cuming was returned immediately to the court under the Provincial Congress, Duncan Ingraham did not return to the post he had held as a crown appointee until 1792. In addition David Brown was named County Coroner in 1775 and again in 1781. In 1794 Joseph Hosmer was named High Sheriff of Middlesex County and served until his death in 1808. These years must have been busy ones for the larger leaders as they held both town and county offices. It is no wonder that James Barrett, Esq. did not continue in town office as his father had done: the wonder is that the men of colonial Concord could have given so much time to public service.

Concord continued to choose prosperous to wealthy members of the community with a few significant differences. While the men of colonial Concord gained wealth through land speculation and money lending, their successors were mainly shopkeepers and artisans of various kinds. Thirty-seven percent of the high town officers of Revolutionary Concord had shops, mills, or warehouses, compared with only 19 percent in colonial Concord.

In 1770 thirteen of the nineteen high town officers of Revolutionary Concord (68%) paid taxes on estates which placed them in the top quarter of wealth among Concord citizens. Seven of them (36%) were in the top 10%. Yet more of

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38 Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-87; 1787-1806, MSA.
colonial Concord's high town officers were men of wealth: 92% fell in the top quarter and 50% fell in the top decile. But the difference is much less striking if we take a closer look at the six Revolutionary leaders whose estates fell below the top quarter in 1771. Joseph Chandler and Asa Brooks were still living with their parents in 1771, but their subsequent careers place them among the wealthy. Asa Brooks died leaving an estate of $13,000 and as Joseph Chandler was a deacon and for eleven years a representative, one can assume that by the time he was a high town officer, he was among the prosperous if not wealthy members of the community, for few men who were poor could afford to attend the legislative sessions in Boston. The two men who were small farmers in 1771 died possessed of estates which placed them in the prosperous to wealthy category. Jacob Brown died possessed of an estate worth $7,000. Ephraim Wood advanced from a small farm of thirty-two acres, a shop, and some money at interest in 1771 to become judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and founder of the Social Circle. He left an estate of $6,700, nearly $2,000 of it in notes of hand.\(^{39}\)

In 1771 Duncan Ingraham was still a merchant in Boston where he was taxed on sufficient property to rank him among the wealthy when he married a Concord widow and moved to town the following year. Elnathan Jones moved to Concord as a

\(^{39}\)1771 Concord Tax List, MSA 130:494; MCPCR No. 25454; Social Circle, 8.
wealthy merchant with a house, shop, warehouse, and stock in trade, and prospered enough to compete with Duncan Ingraham in providing elaborate suppers for the Social Circle.

Though it is difficult to ascertain the exact proportion of men in each category, there is sufficient evidence to say that Concord did not change its mind about the economic standing expected of its high town officers. An estimate based on 68% of colonial Concord's and 66 2/3% of Revolutionary Concord's leaders probated wealth shows that the greatest number of town officers in each period came from the moderate to prosperous citizens. But while colonial Concord's high town office attracted the men of outstanding wealth, and fewer men of smaller though substantial fortunes, the exact reverse was true in Revolutionary Concord. This may point to less of a monopoly on wealth because there was more of it to be shared. 40

On the whole the Revolution brought little change in the kind of men Concord chose as high town officers. Before the Revolution town leaders had many things in common: family ties, wealth, militia experience in the colonial wars, lands in neighboring towns, and an apprenticeship in lower

40 Of the 343 Massachusetts towns, districts, and plantations in 1784, Concord ranked in the first decile of the Commercial Index (36.33). Van Beck Hall, Politics Without Parties, appendix 3. It was 27th in the state in stock in trade, 17th in silver, and 65th in money lent. The amount of tonnage indicating the amount of shipping registered in a port was included as a factor in the index and only seven other towns lacking tonnage ranked higher commercially than Concord.
town offices. Most larger leaders had roots from the first and second generation and often intermarried among themselves. They were likely to fall in the top 10% of wealth, to have had high militia rank, to be partners in land speculation, to have held county office, and to have served in the General Court.

Leaders who emerged once the war began displayed differences of degree rather than kind. They were generally older. Most were not as wealthy as earlier leaders, but more had substantial fortunes. Though all were farmers, their source of additional income was more likely to be a shop or trade rather than a profession. Out of the small group of men who served in high town office, a few became larger leaders on a wider stage. Several of these by-passed the office of selectman and while more common leaders during the Revolution had actual military experience, none of the larger leaders had his reputation in military campaigns. Neither did they speculate in lands the way earlier leaders had. While they were still united by family ties, they were not allied with as many of their peers as formerly. After the Revolution, the leaders were more likely to be members of the county courts. This reflected the loss of influence around the governor as much as the rewards the Concord men received as Middlesex leaders. They still served the province in constitutional conventions, in proposing and serving as mediators in troubled times, and in the upper house of the General Court.
The Revolution, for example, moved Joseph Hosmer to prominence in and beyond Concord. In normal times he would have been a high town officer, and have served as a selectman, but it is unlikely that he would have become a larger leader, known all over the state, and he certainly would not have attained a seat on the Council. James Barrett with the best of connections would have become a larger leader and followed in his father's footsteps. But because the Revolution gave Hosmer an opportunity to fill and nearly monopolize the office of representative, Barrett had to turn to service on revolutionary committees, and to the benefits and burdens of being a justice of the peace, which job he received as a reward for his father's services.

During the conservative reaction accompanying the depression of the 1780s, newcomer Duncan Ingraham was quickly accepted by the town, which normally tended to distrust outsiders, because of his wealth and business experience. Only John Cuming and Ephraim Wood could cut across time and class as model town officers in both periods. In office before the Revolution, Wood helped move the town to the forefront of the movement. Once decided, Cuming joined him in a position of leadership in the town and county. Neither ever lost his identification with the town and Wood retained his feeling for the "real grievances" of the people.

All the larger leaders came from positions where they had proved their worth in the town before they served the county or province. They exercised their power on
different levels of government at different times, depending on where they served. After the French and Indian War they used this power in the House of Representatives, during the war in the revolutionary committees and the county courts, and after the Revolution in the county courts and the Senate.

From this it appears that the real locus of power lay neither in the towns, the county, nor in the General Court, but with the particular men who rose quickly to top positions of leadership in town, county, and province. They were chosen by their peers for a variety of reasons: a family tradition of political leadership, ability reflected in economic prosperity, and a stated desire to serve in high position. In Concord the top leaders worked at jobs and volunteered to serve the public in ways which made them highly visible in the town. Prescott and Cuming led Middlesex men in the French and Indian War and Cuming returned to Concord to build up a large medical practice in the area. Barrett worked with his many teams of oxen on the roads. Hosmer delivered furniture from his shop, and Wood sold shoes throughout the town. These activities gave the townspeople an opportunity to see how well a prospective officeholder could organize men and work, and to judge how well he could size up situations and men. If a man could organize other men for work or collect taxes without leaving too many bruised feelings in his wake, he could most likely conduct an investigation, shape legislation, or compel compliance with town ordinances without creating a division.
In the end, though there were requirements, the men in whom the power lay were chosen by the voters of Concord, so that power lay not so much in the particular men as in the hands of the people—just where they described it so matter-of-factly in requesting a constitutional convention for Massachusetts. Representative government was a long standing practice with them before they ever had to articulate it as a theory of civil government, though they had expressed it as a theory of church government long before. The Revolution did not change their practice or the kind of men they chose, but it required a statement of theory to justify that practice. When a man had talents or resources the community needed, the sovereign people called on him to use them to execute the will of the town. If he succeeded beyond the will of the town, or failed to give due respect to the town's instruction, he was removed.

High town office could be a tension rope between a man's ambitions and the sensibilities of a sovereign people. In the late eighteenth century, more than two dozen Concord men walked that tight rope; more than a few crossed it with grace. From 1763 to 1789 they even changed some of the threads without breaking the rope, no mean feat for country farmers. But we shall see that they were so much more.
The Evidence

Common Leaders

Asa Brooks (1746-1816) was the son of Job and Ann Brooks. Most of his family had lands in that part of Concord which was set off as Lincoln in 1754, but his father petitioned to remain in Concord. He married twice, both times to women from outside the town, and so he was not related to many high town officers from 1763 on.41

In 1771 he was not on the list of polls and estates probably because he was the second poll listed in his father's house, though the list of rates included him as paying 9s 7d. The list of polls and estates showed his father having six oxen, and eight cows. The Valuation List credited his father with only four oxen and four cows, while he appeared in another list as having two oxen and four cows. Either his father settled some of his estate on him during the course of the year or the list of polls and estates credited his father with the whole by mistake. At any rate he could have worked off his provincial tax by working a day and a half on the roads.42

41 Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 167. Family and family relationships, while not over-riding factors in the emergence of the local governing elite, in Concord at least were factors. While a man's ancestors, remote and immediate, seem to have played a part in determining his rank in the community, so did the family connections made by the office-holders and their children.

42 1771 Concord Tax List, MSA 130:475.
The town chose him as constable in 1774. During the war he was among the first guard at Cambridge. Then he served as a sergeant in Captain George Minot's company in Colonel Eleazer Brooks's regiment when they went to reinforce the Continental Army on March 4, 1776. Thus he was among the men brought in to fortify Dorchester Heights. The following spring and again in late July, Asa Brooks went with Captain Minot for two months' service in Rhode Island. He remained in the 3rd Middlesex Regiment, and became a Second Lieutenant in Captain Jacob Brown's 1st Company (stationed in Concord) on August 3, 1779.43

In 1780 he returned to town office as warden and from 1785 to 1795 he served as selectman. When he died in 1816 he was a widower with five children, all minors. But he left them a handsome estate. His interest in some Lincoln lands which came to him from his second wife, was to be sold to pay his debts and legacies. His three daughters received his furniture, the use of his house until their marriage, and their maintenance, necessary support and education until they were married or twenty-one, at which time each received $1,000. His two sons received all his remaining personal estate, goods, chattel, and lands. This included cattle at Princeton, boarded with six different farmers, forty tons of ship timber, fourteen cords of oakwood and nine cords of pine,

43 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, II, 568-9; Shattuck, History of Concord, 358.
valued at $585.75, and notes of hand amounting to $704.26. His personal estate alone totalled $13,216.40. His lands in Concord, Bedford, Acton, Lincoln and Princeton would have placed his estate among the most valuable held by high town officers of Revolutionary Concord. He could well afford the ten years he spent in public service to the town.

**Jacob Brown** (1736-1816) the son of Abishai and Mary Brown, was born in Concord. He was a cousin of Captain David Brown and related to the Flint, Buttrick, Wheeler, Munroe, Farrar, Hubbard, and Hosmer families. His father kept a tavern on the Groton Road and became a major in the Revolution. In 1759, he married Mary Jones who was related to the Merriam and Farrar families. In 1761 he was elected hogreeve, beginning his service to the town in this office which was traditionally assigned newly married men.

By 1771 he had a house, a horse, four oxen, four cows, two swine, twenty-three acres of pasturage and sixteen acres of tillage which produced 200 bushels of grain (12 ½ bu. per acre), not an especially good yield. He did better with his meadow lands, for he got a ton of hay from each of English mowing and upland meadows, and seven tons of hay from nine acres of fresh meadows, indicating a small but

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44 MCPCR, No. 2790, 2792.

45 Potter, _Genealogies of Concord_, 64, 140, 217; Shattuck, _History of Concord_, 222.
efficient farmer. That year he paid 12s 10d 2f provincial taxes on his estate, just making the top quarter of wealth as reflected in provincial taxes.\textsuperscript{46}

In 1774 he was constable and when the war came he was an active officer in the militia. He received his commission as a First Lieutenant in Captain John Bridge's 3rd Company in Colonel Samuel Thacher's regiment and he marched to New York and New Jersey. He was one of the officers drafted from the 3rd Middlesex regiment and ordered to Fairfield, Connecticut in December, 1776 under Brigadier Oliver Prescott. Evidently he had resigned his commission, because he was recommissioned in August, 1779. By 1781 he was a farmer back in town office as a warden, and from 1788 until 1795 he was selectman.\textsuperscript{47}

He died in 1816 possessed of a personal estate of $1,665 including $591 in notes of hand and 125 acres in Concord and in Maron County, New Hampshire, worth $5,400, for a total estate of $7,065. He left his clock, his two beds, his wearing apparel, and 1/3 of his household furniture to his son who was non compos mentis. He left a grandson the care of his son as well as his farming tools and

\textsuperscript{46}1771 Concord Valuation Lists, MSA 132:206.

\textsuperscript{47}Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, II, 628; Shattuck History of Concord, 358.
livestock. His lands were divided between his surviving daughter and the heirs of a deceased daughter. 48

John Buttrick (1731-1791) was born in Concord, the son of Jonathan Buttrick and Elisabeth Wooley of Stow. His father's family had been in Concord since the earliest settlement and Stow was originally granted to petitioners from Concord, including John Buttrick, an ancestor of this high town officer. On his mother's side, Buttrick was related to the Blood family which held most of the lands in the northern part of town and to other high town officers in the Barrett, Flint, Wheeler, and Brown families. He married Abigail Jones in 1759. 49 That year he began holding public office as a fence viewer. In 1761 and 1762 he was a field driver, and in 1768 and 1769 he served as constable. He was selectman for six years from 1779 to 1784. He was on the Committee of Correspondence, Safety, and Inspection from 1777 to 1782, as well as being active in the Middlesex militia.

In 1771 he was taxed 19s on two polls, a house and lands worth £7:10 annually, a horse, two oxen, eleven sheep, and two swine. He had twenty-three acres of pasturage and nine acres of tillage which produced 120 bushels of grain (13½ bushels per acre). He got sixteen tons of hay from

48 MCPCR No. 3044.
49 Shattuck, History of Concord, 7, 366; Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 8.
only six acres of English upland and mowing lands, and ten tons of fresh meadow hay from only four acres of meadow. This yield of hay is exceptionally high, indicating unusually fertile land or the extensive use of fertilizer.\(^5\)

Besides service as a selectman and member of the Committee of Correspondence during much of the war, Buttrick was active in town, county, and state efforts to establish control over prices, acting as a delegate from Concord to the state convention called for this purpose in the summer and fall of 1779. But Buttrick is best known for his role at the Battle of Concord.\(^6\)

The Provincial Congress had urged the towns to select from the ranks of the militia younger men able to assemble at a minute's notice. Not every town had these Minutemen but Concord had enrolled about a hundred in two companies. John Buttrick was elected Major over these troops, who then met and drilled together and were paid by the town. While Colonel James Barrett of the militia had overall command in Concord, his main responsibility was to secure the provincial stores. He was engaged in this task up to the time the British crossed the North Bridge. This left Major John Buttrick, the elected head of the Minutemen, in charge of the troops. He got Joseph Hosmer to act as adjutant and they organized the men as they arrived from

\(^{5}\)1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:206.

\(^{6}\)Shattuck, History of Concord, 121-22.
the surrounding towns on April 19, 1775. It was Buttrick who first ordered Americans to fire on the King's troops at Concord Bridge. Because of this, the accounts frequently mention Buttrick, but he also went on to serve in more actions than any other militia officer from Concord.

This organization of the Minutemen paid by the towns ceased that day when militia General William Heath, one of the five senior officers the Provincial Congress had appointed over the Provincial troops in case of hostilities, took command at Cambridge. The day after the battle Buttrick was in Cambridge at the head of fifty-six Concord men where they stayed into June as members of Colonel John Nixon's regiment under General Israel Putnam. The officers were commissioned June 5, 1775. He was Field Officer of the Guard on June 16, 1775, so presumably he saw action on the 17th at Bunker Hill, since one of the Concord companies was stationed there.

Many of the men Colonel James Barrett and Captain Joseph Hosmer raised as Muster Masters for Middlesex served with Colonel Buttrick. His was one of the Massachusetts regiments detached to reinforce the Continental Army under

\[52\] Ibid., 103, 106, 115.

General Gates in New York. In September, 1777 Buttrick commanded a volunteer company of sixty-three men from Concord and Acton. They arrived at Saratoga after a seven days march, camped two days, and then went to Fort Edward on September 13th. The next two days they went out scouting and captured fifty-three Indians, several Tories, and some women. On the 17th they received an express order to return to Saratoga to witness the surrender of Burgoyne's army. Later they guarded British prisoners on their return route to Cambridge.  

On April 12, 1778, Colonel Buttrick served on a town committee to hire eleven men to go to the defense of Rhode Island under General Spencer. Major Abishi Brown and Colonel John Buttrick served in the campaign. In June, Lieutenant Colonel John Buttrick was sent with twenty-six men from Concord to serve six weeks in Rhode Island as reinforcements for General Sullivan, where Buttrick was wounded during Sullivan's retreat. From this time on, though he kept his rank, he fulfilled his duties at home. In June 1779 he served on a town committee to procure four six-month men to go to Rhode Island again.  

In October, 1780, new commissions were posted and John Buttrick was again a Lieutenant Colonel in the

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54 Shattuck, History of Concord, 353, 366; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, 972.

55 Shattuck, History of Concord, 357; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, 972.
re-organized 3rd Regiment of the Massachusetts Militia, which included four companies of Concord men. By December 20, 1780 the town was having trouble filling its quotas, so it set up a committee, on which Buttrick served, to divide the town into equal classes, each class to procure a man.⁵⁶

In 1791, at the age of fifty-nine, he died leaving his wife and family £379:18 in real estate including a lot in Winchester Township, and a personal estate of more than £315:3:5, for a total of £695:1:5. He had left three sons £100 lawful silver money each and two daughters £31 each in lawful silver money. His estate included £197:15:7 in notes, £20:3:6 in provisions, and £50:4 in livestock. But he had only £9:3 worth of wearing apparel, £28:17:4 in household furnishing, and £9 in husbandry tools.⁵⁷

By no means wealthy, Buttrick had more than appeared in the will and inventory for his wife asked that her son John be appointed administrator of "a considerable personal estate undisposed of by his will." Debts and charges to the estate amounted to £218:5:1 by March 1792.⁵⁸ Though he came from an old family in the area, he does not appear to have inherited lands in the surrounding towns the way others did. Moreover only two of his sons settled in

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⁵⁶Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, 972; Shattuck, History of Concord, 358.

⁵⁷MCPCR No. 3795.

⁵⁸Ibid.
Concord; the other four went to western Massachusetts. He was one high town officer who did not benefit financially from his period in office and from the long years he spent in active service with the militia and the Continental Army.

Joseph Chandler (1748-1813) the son of James Chandler (see Chapter I) and Mary Flagg was born in Concord. He was related to the Melvin family in Concord and the Whittakers of Carlisle. His mother's family had property in Bedford and in Grafton since 1728 and was active in the French and Indian War. His father was active in town affairs as a Concord selectman in the 1750s and 1760s, and as a member of the Committee of Correspondence in 1774.59

Though Joseph Chandler was merely a poll in his father's house in 1771 he continued farming, and like his father, won high town office. He was selectman in 1787 and again in 1796. He served as representative from 1799 to 1803, and again in 1811. He was elected a deacon in 1791 and served until he resigned in 1811 for reasons of health.60

In 1775 his father's house was one of the depots for the provincial stores. Joseph was in the group of militia who were at the North Bridge. On April 23rd in Lexington before several Middlesex justices of the peace, including Ephraim Wood and Colonel John Cuming of Concord,

59 Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 173; Shattuck, History of Concord, 73, 75, 234, 363; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:408.

60 Shattuck, History of Concord, 194, 236.
he signed some depositions about the movement of the colonial militia and the British troops on April 19th. During the war he served as a sergeant in Captain Charles Miles' Company, of Colonel Jonathan Reed's regiment. [Joseph Reed's battalion?] He was at Saratoga in 1777.61

Joseph Chandler died in Concord in 1813 leaving no probate evidence of the economic position he had attained.

Another high town officer of Concord for which we have scant evidence is **Isaac Hubbard** (1729-1804) the son of Samuel and Prudence Hubbard. In 1753 he married Sarah Darby. In 1771 he had two polls rateable, a dwelling house and lands worth £8 annually. He had a horse, two oxen, eight cows, three swine, thirteen acres of pasture, and got twelve and a half bushels per acre from his eight acres of tillage. He also had fifteen acres of fresh meadows from which he got eleven tons of hay, a good yield.62 He began his service in town office as hogreeve in 1755, followed by horse officer in 1761 and 1762. In 1762 he was also a constable. In January, 1776, he served on the coroner's jury with Colonel Cuming and Colonel Buttrick. He returned to town office as a warden in 1769. He did not serve again until 1785 when he was again warden. Then in 1787 when Joseph Hosmer was state senator, Hubbard served one year as a


representative during Concord's temporary rejection of its usual leadership.

Hubbard died in 1804 at the age of seventy-five, leaving his wife well provided for. Although there is no extant inventory or accounting of the estate, when his son Samuel was named administrator, he was bonded for $30,000, an indication that the estate was a valuable one. Two of Hubbard's daughters who had married out of town received legacies of $266.67 and $333.33, respectively, and his unmarried daughter was to receive $1,000 and share in the homestead with her mother. So evidently Hubbard died a prosperous to wealthy man, representative of the kind of wealth expected of the usual high town officer after the Revolution.

Nehemiah Hunt (1721-1785) was the son of Samuel Hunt and Dorothy Bulkley. He married Submit Bateman in 1762 and died November 14, 1785, age sixty-four. His family had been active in town affairs since the seventeenth century, with a Nehemiah Hunt appearing in the first list of settlers. In his generation, he was related to high town officer Simon Hunt. His father was moderately prosperous at the time of his birth, as were several other kin named Nehemiah Hunt. In 1717 they held real estate worth from £5 to £14 annually. He began public office as the sealer of weights and measures in 1756. He was deer reeve in 1758, and constable in 1764.

63 MCPCR No. 12187.
In 1761 he was settled enough to supply wood and livestock for one of the French families in town. When he was forty-four he was chosen selectman and served from 1775 to 1778, continuing the four-year tenure usual before the war. 64

In 1771 he paid 15s 3d 2f on a dwelling house and real estate worth £10 annually, on two oxen, four cows, eight sheep, two swine, twenty-two acres of pasturage, eight acres of tillage producing thirteen and a half bushels per acre, orchards producing twenty barrels of cider, nine acres of English and upland meadow producing six tons of hay and ten acres of meadow producing eight tons of hay. He sold part of his farm to Colonel James Barrett for his son Captain Nathan Barrett. 65

His service as selectman during the early years of the war may have kept him from the army, but on the day of the Battle of Concord, the troops gathered on his farm and the officers on his doorstep, and he himself was among those signing the roster at Hartwell Brook, near the Lincoln border. He contributed $8 to the military expenses at the taking of Burgoyne, and was later in a detachment with Colonel Thacher. 66 In addition to their regular duties, during

64 Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 102, 214; Wheeler, Concord, 38-41, 84, 200, 213.  
65 1771 Concord Valuation List; MSA, 132:205; Wheeler, Concord, 222.  
these years the town named its selectmen to be assessors and often overseers of the poor too. In addition, Hunt and the men who served with him during the early days of the war until the British left Boston worked in close cooperation with the Committee of Safety and had to stretch the tax money to cover the additional costs of the war.

He died intestate in 1785 age fifty-nine, leaving an estate of £801:13:5, £609:10 of which was in 131 acres of real estate. His £192:3:5 in personal estate included half a pew, and £25 in notes. But though this indicates he was among the prosperous farmers of the region, the estate had to provide for his widow and nine children.

**Elnathan Jones** (1737-1793) was the son of Elnathan Jones and Hannah Jones. He was related to the Jones who were among the town's first settlers, as well as to the Barrets and Colonel Charles Prescott of revolutionary times. His marriage to Mary Minot made him kin to Timothy, George, and Jonas Minot, all high town officers.

In 1771 he was in Boston and taxed 1s 8d on property worth £10 in Concord, though another list had him paying taxes on a house with a shop adjoining, a warehouse worth £7:10 annually, on eleven acres of pasture, four acres of tillage producing forty bushels of grain (not an especially

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67 MCPCR No. 12275.

high yield), orchards producing five barrels of cider, and
five acres of meadows producing three tons of various kinds
of hay. 69

In 1774 he was definitely back in Concord for he
served as warden that year. In 1775 his house was a depot
for the provincial stores of ammunition and supplies. In
January, 1776 he served on the coroner's jury. In 1777 he
was constable and from 1786 to 1791 he served as town treas-
urer. In 1788 he was named a justice of the peace. 70

In 1782 he was a founding member of the Social Circle,
a social club of the town's economic and social elite, which
evolved out of the Committee of Correspondence towards the
end of the war. More than a third of the members were high
town officers. The competition between him and Duncan
Ingraham to outdo one another in providing the members with
elaborate suppers led to a temporary break-up of the group.
He was a successful trader and built a fine house on Main
Street with a store adjoining. His contemporaries thought
him "addicted to display." He had visited England, acquired
property, and "lived here in considerable state." When he
died of apoplexy in 1793 at the age of fifty-six, he owned
£236:19:8 in store stock, and a half interest in a pot-and-
pearl-ash house worth £30:19. His household furniture was

69 1771 Concord Tax and Valuation Lists, MSA 130:471,
132:209.

70 Shattuck, History of Concord, 97; Report of
Coroner's Jury, January 15, 1776, Manuscript Collection,
worth £148:7:1 and he had notes worth £119, but clothing worth only £13:12:6. His real estate, valued at £1491:13, was double his personal estate, but he owed £1450:19:3 to the firm of James Barrett and Jonas Lee, and his estate fell short of covering his debts by £302:18:4. But he had lived as a wealthy merchant, and in a style befitting the treasurer of a prosperous town.

George Minot (1741-1808) was the son of Samuel Minot and Dorcas Prescott. He was related on his father's side to his uncle James Minot, the Councillor, Dr. Timothy Minot, and to his cousins Colonel James Barrett and James Barrett, Esq., and Humphrey Barrett. On both sides of his family he was related to Captain Timothy Wheeler and the Hunt family. He married three wives by the name of Barrett: Rebecca, the daughter of Colonel James Barrett, Elizabeth, the daughter of Humphrey Barrett, and Lydia, the daughter of John Barrett and widow of Silas Mann. His three daughters by his first wife each married the sons of high town officers.

He began town office in 1770 when he was constable. The following year he paid a provincial tax of £1:6:3:3 on

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Boston Public Library; Records of Civil Commissions 1787-1806, 26, MSA.


72 Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 12, 13; Shattuck, "Minot Family," NEHGR, I (April, 1847), 176, 262.
two dwelling houses and real estate worth £16:3:4 annually, on one servant for life, two horses, eleven cows, two sheep, two swine, twenty-eight acres of pasture and ten acres of tillage producing sixteen bushels per acre (a high yield). His orchards produced eight barrels of cider, and he got twenty-five tons of hay from thirty-eight acres.\textsuperscript{73} Evidently he stressed the production of grain and did not work to increase his yield of hay. Perhaps the hay was not so important to him as it was to other farmers in the town, since he had lands elsewhere, especially in Princeton, well known as an area for fattening cattle.

As the Revolution approached, George Minot was a militia captain and the pressure actively to join the patriot's cause increased. He told William Brattle that he had been repeatedly asked to prepare his company to meet at a minute's warning equipped with arms and ammunition. Brattle wrote General Gage that Minot had refused but feared that he would have to give in or be forced to leave his farm and town. When Brattle warned Minot that he had better lose his farm than his life and "hang for a rebel," Minot told him that many captains had given in to the patriots, though not in his regiment. Evidently he came around to the rebel side because he was among those answering the alarm on March 4, 1775. Over 14,500 lbs. of rice from the provincial stores were deposited at his house in 1775. Moreover, he

\textsuperscript{73}1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:208.
remained a militia captain over the younger men available at a minute's notice (Minutemen) and on April 19, 1775, he was among the men who signed the roster at Hartwell Brook. He saw service as the Captain of the 1st Company of Concord in the 3rd Regiment of Massachusetts militia organized in February, 1776, and he served at Ticonderoga under his cousin, Major Nathan Barrett. He was a physician by profession, and served as such in Colonel Eleazer Brook's regiment. He went to Rhode Island on an alarm July 23, 1775, with the men drafted from Concord's companies, and later to Ticonderoga with the town company's draft for three months. He was listed as a captain in Colonel Samuel Ballard's regiment and went as far as Scarsdale, New York. He later commanded a company at Saratoga.

Though he retained his commission, he did not serve out of town after 1777. In March 1776 he was named to the Committee of Correspondence. From 1779 to 1784 he was a selectman. He had settled in the eastern part of Concord and was also chosen as a deacon of the church Aug. 3, 1779, continuing in this post until his death at the age of sixty-five. In 1799 he served on the first school committee.

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74 William Brattle to Gen. Gage, August 29, 1774, Artemus Ward Papers, MHS; Shattuck, History of Concord, 110, 353; Tolman, Concord Minute Men, 25.

75 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, X, 817; Shattuck, "Minot Family," NEHGR I (April, 1847), 262.
to take over the supervision of the schools from the select-
men. In 1780 he and two other Concord captains resigned
from Captain Francis Faulkner's regiment "because of the
appointment of a junior officer to a superior command." When he died intestate in 1808 his son-in-law,
James Barrett, Jr., was appointed administrator of an estate
valued at $21,252 including $9,500 in promissory notes,
$10,000 in real estate, and lands in Concord, Carlisle,
Bedford, Lincoln, and Princeton. His personal estate in-
cluded plush vests, olive velvet breeches, silver knee
buckles, and, silk gloves, and numerous shirts of linen and
cotton. The silver tankard and spoons graced a mahogany
table set with fine linen and china and reflected his well
stocked barn and storeroom. His long list of promissory
notes and valuable real estate placed him among the wealthiest
of the high town officers of revolutionary Concord.

Timothy Minot (1726-1804) was the son of (Rev.)
Timothy Minot, the town schoolteacher and his wife Mary
Brooks. He was related on his father's side to Colonel
James Minot, the Councillor, and to his cousins, Colonel

76 Shattuck, History of Concord, 121, 222; Town
Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:441; Wheeler, Concord, 146-47.

77 Shattuck, "Minot Family," NEHGR I (April, 1847),
262; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, X, 817.

78 MCPCR No. 15229.
James Barrett and Humphrey Barrett, George Minot and Elnathan James, as well as the Wheeler and Prescott families. One of his daughters married Tilly Merrick, Esq. and another married Colonel John Parker of Billerica, both prominent men in later years.  

With the help of two scholarships, Timothy Minot entered the Harvard class of 1747 where he was a classmate of Henry Gardner who later became the Receiver General of the Province. For a few years after graduation he followed in his father's footsteps as schoolmaster but by 1753 he had built up a steady medical practice, developing a reputation for his treatment of rheumatic cases. In 1756 he married Mary Martyn, the daughter of Reverend John Martyn of Northborough.  

In 1771 he paid £1:5:10:2, the eighteenth highest provincial tax in the town, on a dwelling house and grist mill and real estate worth £15 annually. He had one horse, four cows, eight acres of pasture, one acre of tillage producing twenty bushels of grain, orchards producing four barrels of cider, and sixteen acres of meadow producing fourteen tons of hay, indicating small but careful husbandry.
After the Battles of Concord and Bunker Hill, Dr. Minot treated the wounded, and while Cambridge was the location of the encamped army, the county probate records were stored in his house in Concord. He served as warden in 1777 and 1783 and as treasurer from 1781-1785, when taxes were hard to collect.82

He was a founder of the Middlesex Medical Association and died in 1804, age seventy-eight, leaving an estate of £10,704 including $502.80 in notes of hand and a pew in the Concord meetinghouse, a gristmill and lands in Concord and Cambridge.83 Proper family connections, professional recognition and wealth from a variety of sources made him an acceptable high town officer after the Revolution.

David Brown (1732/3-1802) is a good example of men who were common leaders of Concord before the Revolution and who moved to positions of greater influence during the war. He was born the son of Ephraim Brown and Hannah Wilson. He married Abigail Munroe in 1756. He was related to Nehemiah Hunt and the Flint, Buttrick, Wheeler, Farrar, Hubbard, and Hosmer families.84

He first appeared in town office as a surveyor of highways in 1757 and 1760. He became a tythingman in 1762,

82Wheeler, Concord, 132.

83Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XV:194-95, MCPCR No. 15249.

84Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 64, 133.
a constable in 1764, and was selectman from 1767 to 1770. He served as warden in 1722, but his militia service and committee work for the town probably kept him from other town offices during most of the 1770s. He was captain of the Minute Men at Concord on April 19th, 1775 and at Bunker Hill in June. On September 29, 1775 he was appointed county coroner and served until his death in 1802, twenty-seven years. He saw six weeks' service in December, 1775 and again in January and February 1776, most likely on the line at Cambridge in Colonel John Nixon's Regiment. Later Captain David Brown signed for eight months service and was in charge of the stores moved from Concord to Boston during an alarm in 1777. 85

In the town, perhaps because of his militia experience, he served on the Committee of Safety, Inspection, and Correspondence all but two years from 1776 to 1781. At any rate, his reputation grew enough during the war so that he was chosen representative in 1781 in place of Joseph Hosmer, who was elected a state Senator from Middlesex. In 1779 Brown was a member of the two state conventions to set prices. In 1783 he served as warden again, but this time in company with the town treasurer and representative at a point when the town was unusually

85 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, II, 613, 912, 922; Shattuck, History of Concord, 110; Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1789, n.p., 12, MSA; John S. Keyes, "Memoirs of David Brown," in Social Circle, 76 says he was not in service after April 19, 1775 but this is incorrect.
concerned about economy and frugality due to the deteriorating economic situation. After the war he was one of the founding members of the Social Circle.  

He served as a delegate to the county convention which met in August 1786 to consult on the grievances underlying Shays' rebellion. The delegates were instructed by the town to "oppose every unconstitutional measure." In September when the county court convened at Concord, he was one of the committee chosen to mediate between the authorities and the armed body of men Job Shattuck had raised to prevent the court from sitting. The committee later called a county convention to deal with the issues, and while there was confrontation in Concord, there was no violence.  

What were the economic circumstances which allowed David Brown to raise ten children and pursue this active militia and civil career? In 1760 he was a petitioner for lands at Casco Bay for services performed by his family during the Indian Wars. In 1764 he was one of the grantees of the Penobscot township, granted for this service. Yet in Concord he paid only eighteen shillings in province taxes in 1771. He was taxed for his house and lands valued at £9 annually. He had a horse, two teams of oxen, seven cows, nine goats and sheep, and two swine. He got over

86 Shattuck, History of Concord, 121-23, 139; Social Circle, 8-9; Keyes, "Memoirs of David Brown," 74-78.

87 Shattuck, History of Concord, 130-31.
twenty-one bushels of grain per acre from his seven acres of tillage, and one ton of hay per acre which was also a good yield, indicating a small but very efficient farm. 

When he died at sixty-nine in 1802 his personal estate was appraised at $640.61 and his real estate at $3,024, a total of $3,664.61. This placed him fifteenth in the list of the seventeen high officeholders of Concord who died between 1772 and 1816 and whose estate valuations we have. Even if we were to include the amounts settled on his married children, it would only move him up to twelfth in the list and would make his estate worth only about half what Timothy Minot's estate was worth in 1804. Yet he had stood surety for Nathan Barrett when none of the latter's family would.

Prosperous, but not as wealthy as many of his peers in high town and county office, David Brown was the usual high town officer writ large, in his long service in high town and county office, in his active militia service and numerous committee assignments during the war, and his support of the government afterwards. For a man with ten children, this was no mean feat.

Samuel Whitney (1734-1808), the son of Benjamin Whitney and Abigail Bridge, was born in Marlborough, the

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88 Casco Bay petition, MSA 117:601-605; confirmation of the grant to six townships in Maine, MSA, 118:206; 1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:205.

89 MCPCR No. 2976; Keyes, "Memoirs of David Brown," 77.
fifth generation of his family in New England. He may have been related to Thomas Whitney, a justice of the peace in Concord from 1763 to 1773. His father died when Samuel was about three, but the following year his mother carried out his plans to set up a mercantile business in Boston, evidently selling the farm to obtain the necessary funds. She must have been quite successful for when Samuel took over the business in 1755 there was a branch store in Salem. He strengthened his business ties by marrying Abigail Cutler of the Newburyport merchant family. 90

In 1767 he joined other descendants of soldiers who were in the 1690 expedition into Canada in a petition for grants of land from the province. In 1769 he moved to Concord and bought a house. In 1771 his estate was valued at £1:4:4:2 placing him twenty-first on the tax list. He had a house and real estate in town worth £8:6:2 annually, two servants for life, a warehouse with £150 worth of stock, a horse, four oxen, two cows, three sheep, three swine, twenty acres of pasture, two acres of tillage, and ten acres of meadows producing seven tons of hay annually. While he was more a merchant than a farmer, he must have practiced some scientific agriculture for he got twenty-five bushels

90 Joseph Cutler Whitney, "Memorial of Henry Austin Whitney, A.M." NEHGR, XLV (July, 1891), 176; petition to the General Court in behalf of Samuel Whitney, etc., MSA 17:547.
of grain for each of his two acres, an unusually high yield for Concord land. 91

Whitney's name appeared suddenly and briefly in the town records in 1774 and 1775, when he was in the forefront of revolutionary activities. He served as moderator of the September, 1774 and March, 1775 meeting, on the Committee of Correspondence in 1774, and on the Committee to examine the state of the firearms of the minutemen in January, 1775 and on the Committee of Safety that month also. 92

He served as the chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in 1774 and 1775, as a delegate to the first Provincial Congress. He was muster master for the Minutemen in January, 1775. His house and store were especially mentioned in General Thomas Gage's instructions to Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith as the hiding place for "a large Quantity of Powder and Ball." Yet when the British troops appeared, he panicked and fled with his family. Later his name appeared in a return of Captain James Hendricks Company in December 1775 and in a list of Continental soldiers in 1777, but the town dropped him from high town office. 93

91 Petition of descendants of soldiers in Canadian expedition of 1690, MSA, 118:281, 284; Wheeler, Concord, 89; 1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:208.

92 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:407-22.

93 Shattuck, History of Concord, 93; Whitney, "Memorial of Henry Austin Whitney, A.M." NEHGR, XLV, 185; return of Captain James Hendricks Co., Dec. 23, 1775 and list of Continental soldiers, March 13, 1777, William Heath Papers, MSA.
Almost as soon as the British evacuated Boston he returned to the city where he took up his mercantile business until he moved to the area of Castine, Maine in 1793. He died there in 1808, evidently a man of some wealth, which his son Joseph lost as a result of the embargo before the War of 1812.94

Because of his short stay he was not typical of the usual high town officer in Concord. But the fact that the town chose him, a prosperous newcomer, to moderate some of its most important committees and meetings and sent him to represent the town in the Provincial Congress suggests that he was outspoken against the British and perhaps enjoyed close enough connections with the Popular Party in Boston to be recommended to the townsmen as a true patriot.

**Larger Leaders**

**Ephraim Wood, Jr.** (1733-1814) was born in Concord, the son of Ephraim Wood and Mary Buss. His father's people had been in Concord from its first settlement and they were kin to the Wheelers and Hosmers. Ephraim, Sr. was selectman in 1749 and 1750 and he was among those petitioning the General Court in 1751 to protect wheat on the common lands against sheep. He later invested in the Land Bank and was the guardian of Joseph Buss. Ephraim Wood, Jr. married Mary Heald of Lincoln in 1758 and they had ten children. After

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his wife died he married Millicent, the widow of James Barrett, Esq. As his father lived on the family farm until he died in 1789, Ephraim worked the farm he inherited from his mother and built a house, barn and shop on it.  

The town schools provided his formal education. His huge stature—he weighed two hundred fifty pounds—made him outstanding in any group, but it was his keen mind, good judgment, and willingness to serve on numerous public committees which made him more than the usual high town officer. In addition to farming, he kept busy in the winter "whipping the cat," that is, going from farm to farm making shoes for all the family, a trade which was the basis of his prosperity. The practice also brought him into close contact with the men who would keep him in public office for over a quarter of a century.  

He began in 1753 with election as fence viewer, then a tythingman in 1754 and 1759. In 1759, 1769, 1770, and 1776 he was sealer of leather, a reflection of his professional judgment on the leather which would be marked as coming from Concord. In 1760 he was among a group of younger men who were elected surveyors of the highways. He was


96 Social Circle, 153-54; Gross, Minutemen, 13.
tythingman again in 1759, 1762, and warden in 1768, and constable in 1771. In 1771 when the town voted to have but three selectmen and put in a new board, Ephraim Wood was named town clerk and first selectman. The same meeting also named him to a committee to settle accounts with town treasurer John Beatton who was retiring. He was also on a committee with other town leaders, Colonel Prescott, Jonas Heywood, and Captain Stephen Hosmer to lay out a new road. Thus he began the service in high town office which was to last until the dawn of the next century.

In 1771, Ephraim Wood was paying 11s 5d on two polls rateable in his dwellinghouse with shop adjoining. His real estate was worth £6:3:8 annually. He had £8 at interest as well as a horse, three oxen, three cows, two swine, and thirty-two acres of cultivated lands which returned only a modest yield. This indicates a greater dependence on his shop than on the farm. But even the shoe business must have been run largely by apprentices during most of the 1770s, because Ephraim Wood was busy with the revolution in the town where he stood as a causeway between colonial and revolutionary Concord and beyond into the beginnings of the nineteenth century.97

In January 1773 Ephraim Wood sat on the committee which reported the Instructions to Representative James

97 1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA, 132:208; Gross, ibid., 157-58 called him the "workhorse of the community."
Barrett on infringements of the rights and privileges of the Province. As a selectman in 1774 he was one of the committee to answer Boston's correspondence about the Tea Act. That year the selectmen were named assessors and overseers of the poor, a practice which continued through much of the decade. Wood was one of the committee which visited the homes of crown officials in Cambridge after the Powder Alarm to get their resignations. That fall he was elected delegate to the Provincial Congress to meet in Concord and named to the Committee of Correspondence.

Early in 1775 he was one of three who drafted articles for the Minutemen and was added to the Committee of Inspection of the Continental Congress Association. The same meeting considered the firearms of the Minutemen and the cost of the arms and cannon for the town. Some of the Provincial powder was stored at his farm in March, 1775.

He was engaged in scattering the provincial stores on April 19, 1775 and afterwards appeared on the roster at

98 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4, 362ff; Shattuck, History of Concord, 77; Wheeler, Concord, 99; Gross, Minutemen, 43-44.

99 Shattuck, History of Concord, 77-79, 87-88, 91, 121; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:393-94, 407-08; Wheeler, Concord, 100; Gross, Minutemen, 53.

100 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:411-17; Shattuck, History of Concord, 93-98.
Hartwell Brook. However, most of his contributions to the war would be in the home front, though he contributed money at the taking of Burgoyne in 1777. As a selectman he was one of the Committee of Correspondence which tried Dr. Joseph Lee as a Tory and confined him to his farm. As a selectman and a member of the Committees of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety every year except 1777, Wood was busy raising supplies, clothing, and men for the army, as well as the taxes to pay for it. As the head of the Associated Committees of Correspondence for Middlesex County, Wood kept in touch with the committees in each of the towns in an effort to coordinate activities.

In 1776 the House of Representatives proposed to the towns that the legislature write a constitution for the state. Ephraim Wood was chairman of the committee which rejected that proposal and said that as sovereignty rested in the people, they should choose delegates to a constitutional convention which would write the constitution and then dissolve, while the people voted on the document they had drawn up. When such a convention was called in 1779, Ephraim Wood was one of Concord's delegates to it. In 1779 there were county and state conventions at

101 Shattuck, History of Concord, 108, 118-21, 355-56; Social Circle, 155; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XVII, 734; Loammi Baldwin Account of County Expenses, Misc. Mss. 1781-82, MHS; Gross, Minutemen, 160-61; Ephraim Wood to Sudbury Committee of Correspondence, Aug. 6, 1776, Sudbury Papers, MHS.
Concord to stabilize prices and Wood served as delegate to each of them, and as secretary of the county convention. While the war emergency eased after the British evacuated Boston, nevertheless 45% of the 975 men Concord raised for the army were raised after the evacuation, as were many of the supplies from the town. By 1780, inflation had driven wages for working on the highways up to 4:1 and Ephraim Wood was relied on to see that Concord continued to support the war and to make provision for the families of men in the Continental Army. 102

Wood was on the committees which instructed the representatives in 1782 to curb government spending, in 1783, to work against restoration of Tory estates, for the repeal of the Congressional impost, lower taxes, land grants for soldiers and greater frugality in state government. These years also brought such great difficulty in the collection of taxes that it was hard to find men willing to serve as constables, but the selectmen, headed by Ephraim Wood, continued to act as assessors from 1780 to 1789. During the same years, the town directed the selectmen to warn out non-residents, and concerned itself with settling the "old town debts occasioned by the late war." The town was a center of militia activities during Shays' rebellion and Ephraim Wood was one of the justices against whom Job

102 Shattuck, History of Concord, 122-28; Gross, Minutemen, 156; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:119-20, 541-53; 5:75, 85-86.
Shattuck and his men marched. But when Shattuck was tried in Concord and condemned to death for treason it was Ephraim Wood who acted as his attorney and obtained a full pardon for him before the year was out. 103

Wood was on the first list of justices of the peace when the Provincial Congress began to govern Massachusetts, and he was re-appointed in 1781 and again in 1788 when he was added to the Quorum. In March, 1795 he was appointed a Special Justice of the Court of Common Pleas; two years later he was named a regular justice of this court, and in 1802 he was listed among those who might qualify civil officers. His long and steady service to the town and county continued after he retired as town clerk and selectman. He was representative to the General Court in 1797 and 1798 and in the Constitutional Convention in 1779-80. He was still assigned to committees entrusted with the more important town business, such as adjusting the minister's salary because of inflation. He served as a link between the old and new social structures, too, when he became a founding member of the Social Circle. 104


104 Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1787, pt. 1, n.p.; Records of Civil Commissions, 1787-1806, 26, 29-32, MSA; Shattuck, History of Concord, 228, 236; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 5:274; Social Circle 8; Gross, Minute-men, 174. The Massachusetts State Library has a list of members of the General Court, 1780 — , which notes that Wood was in the House in 1787 as well, though this does not appear in the town records.
When he died full of years and honors in 1814, he left an estate of $6,781, including real estate valued at $3,712.50 with the bulk of his personal estate ($1,998.30 out of $3,068.78) in notes of hand. Considering that he had raised and settled a family of ten children, this was a fair estate for a man who had held the highest posts in town and county for nearly forty years.

Joseph Hosmer (1735-1821) was the son of Thomas and Prudence Hosmer, third cousins. The first Hosmer to come to Concord arrived with his brother-in-law, the founder, Major Simon Willard, with whom he had migrated from Kent. They were related to the Wheeler, Hartwell, and Wood families. Prudence Hosmer was known for her "command of language, taste for literature, and love of reading and poetry." While Joseph's father was not a high town officer, his uncle Stephen had served as company commander at Fort Edward, as clerk of the West Church, and as selectman in the 1750s, as well as holding membership on some Revolutionary committees. Joseph was born on his father's farm, and before he grew up his father had acquired another farm, so he was able to divide his farms between his two oldest sons when Joseph

105 MCPCR No. 25434.

reached twenty-one. He built a house and had apprentices living with him. He had learned the trade of cabinetmaker from a Frenchman who married his cousin, and became known for his fine cherry and mahogany desks throughout the county. When Hosmer married Lucy Barnes, the daughter of a high town officer of Marlborough in 1761, he continued making furniture and managing the farm and another he inherited, and fattening his cattle on pastures he owned in Rutland, Princeton, and Acton.107

In 1771 he paid 19s 4d on three polls rateable, a house and shop adjoining worth £8:13:4 annually, one horse, seven cows, six sheep, and two swine. He had only six acres of tillage from which he got a hundred bushels of grain. He got a ton of hay from each of his three English and upland mowing meadows, and nine tons from eleven acres of fresh meadows.108 Such prosperity was sufficient for a high town officer in normal times, but the Revolution would raise Joseph Hosmer even higher.

Hosmer became hogreeve in 1760 and constable in 1767. Building up his farm and business left him little time for public office until the troubles with England needled him into action. He was one of those asking for a special town meeting in response to the Tea Act in 1773. Once he answered the argument of Tory Daniel Bliss at the

107 Hosmer, ibid., 115-16; Gross, Minutemen, 101.

Middlesex Convention by skillfully presenting British actions as threats to the lands and liberties of the townsmen, Joseph Hosmer was at the forefront of the town's revolutionary movement. Bliss called him "the most dangerous man in Concord, for he has all the young men at his back, and where he leads they will surely follow." He was on the first Committee of Correspondence the town chose in 1774 and on the Committee of Inspection to see to the observance of the Continental Association. 109

Six and a half barrels of powder were stored at his house in the spring of 1775. He was a lieutenant in charge of one of Concord's militia companies at the Bridge, and acted as Major John Buttrick's adjutant, lining up the men as they arrived from the surrounding towns. It was he who asked if they were going to let the British burn the town down. After the war began he was continually in public office, first as representative (1776-80, 1783-85) and then as state senator (1781, 1785-1793) and high sheriff (1794-1808). 110


110 Shattuck, History of Concord, 98, 111; Records of Civil Commissions, 1789-1806, 28, MSA; Gross, Minutemen, 125, sees this as a challenge to the town's leadership, but as it was only one of many calls for action that morning, it most likely would not have been remembered as decisive if Hosmer had not used the Revolution as a political mounting block.
With the beginning of the war, Hosmer was offered a colonel's commission, but he refused it, believing "he could do the country more good by working at home for the army than by going to war." He became quartermaster and rode over the state to collect supplies, bringing news from the War Department, making speeches, and telling stories. He was mustermaster, paying bounties and collecting recruits. In 1777 he raised men for the northern or Canadian Department, distributing £1723:8 in the process. In 1779, when he was collecting clothing for the army, Middlesex gave him 1,497 shirts, 1,546 pairs of shoes, and 1,344 pairs of hose. He would pick up State Lottery tickets in Boston to sell on his rounds through the towns, making the returns on his next stop in Boston. He filled the post of collector of public supplies without payment because "it was somebody's duty to do so, and he might as well as another man." He sent his fifteen-year-old son off in the middle of the night to hurry the flow of supplies from the Connecticut River towns to the army. In addition he was agent of absentees' estates, though he had only Daniel Bliss’s property to worry about. In 1780 he was captain of Concord’s Light Infantry and later major.  

Joseph Hosmer took Colonel James Barrett's place in the House of Representatives when the latter retired in

1776. He stayed in the General Court, moving to the Senate in 1781. When he failed to be returned to the Senate in 1782, he had a year out while James Barrett, Esq. was sent to the House with a strict set of instructions. Barrett voted for tight money policies and the town must have regretted its choice, for the next year they returned Hosmer with words of confidence, though they were but a preface to a similar strict list of instructions. After long service on the Committee of Correspondence, he was one of that group which founded the Social Circle in 1782.¹¹²

In 1786 Hosmer headed a committee writing other towns to suggest a meeting to discuss measures to meet the unrest associated with Shays' rebellion. The committee sought to have local leaders mediate between the government and the "opposition" to calm the people's minds. While the members disapproved the stopping of the courts in the western counties, they noted that the rioters had real grievances. They urged leniency towards the rioters, and efforts to get them to use legal and constitutional means to obtain redress. As a result, twenty-four towns sent representatives to Concord where they drew up an address and sent Duncan Ingraham to present it to the governor. Because of their efforts, the call for the militia was cancelled and mediation attempted, though it failed. Another

¹¹²Gross, Minutemen, 165; Social Circle, 8.
result was that the people took their advice to seek constitutional redress and turned out three-fourths of the representatives, including Joseph Hosmer, at the next election. 113

That year, 1787, Hosmer was named a justice of the peace and of the Quorum. Re-appointed in 1794, he was named high sheriff of Middlesex County the same week, serving in that capacity until he was superseded in 1808. In 1788 Concord named him to the state convention with instructions to ratify the new federal constitution. He retained into his old age his power of attracting all ages and classes, and some of the courage he needed to oppose Bliss in 1774 remained with him to the end, for he defied Governor Hancock to his face on the floor of the Senate when he thought it was necessary to carry out the instructions of the town.

He could also slip money into the hands of persons so poor that he had to preside over the sale of their property for debts. His reputation for "natural, unaffected, but energetic eloquence" and a strong, active mind remained in his later years. He and the minister, Reverend Ezra Ripley, had an agreement with the innkeeper that he would call them whenever an interesting veteran stopped there, and the talk would continue far into the night. But his interest in

113 Joseph Hosmer to Selectmen of Cambridge, Sept. 9, 1786, Misc. Bound Mss., MHS; Shattuck, History of Concord, 132-33; Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 5:341.
public affairs and the claims of Concord did not cease with age. In 1814, when he was seventy-nine, he was one of the agents of the town who tried to get the Court of Sessions moved to Concord. He died in 1821, age eighty-five, the last of the Revolutionary leaders of Concord.\footnote{114}

James Barrett (1733/4-1799) the son of Colonel James Barrett and Rebecca Hubbard, was born in Concord. Besides inheriting the strong network of family ties his father enjoyed, the son had the advantage of observing his father in high town office from the time he was twenty. He married Milliscent Esterbrook in 1758 and their children, in turn, married the offspring of other high town officers among the Minot, Prescott, Wood, Hosmer, Jones, and Fay families.\footnote{115}

The younger James Barrett began serving in town office as a hogreeve in 1759, where the newly married men usually began. In 1761, 1767, 1771, 1777, 1778, and 1780 he served as surveyor of highways, and in 1765 as constable. In 1769 he was tythingman. He was active in the church, too, for in 1772 he served on a committee to lay the Church's disagreement with Dr. Joseph Lee before a church council.\footnote{116}

In 1771 Barrett was a prosperous farmer paying

\footnote{114} Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1787, pt. 2, 14; 1787-1806, 28, MSA; Shattuck, History of Concord, 147, 237, 376; Gross, Minutemen, 164, 183.

\footnote{115} Potter, Genealogies of Concord, 35-36; Shattuck, "Minot Family," NEHGR I (April, 1847), 174-78, 257-58, 262.

\footnote{116} Shattuck, History of Concord, 185.
15s 4d 2f provincial taxes on a dwellinghouse and real estate worth £9:3:8 annually, two horses, four oxen, eight cows, fifteen sheep, and two swine. He had sixty-five acres of improved lands which yielded 150 bushels of grain, eighteen tons of hay, and ten barrels of cider.\footnote{1771 Concord Valuation List, MSA 132:208.}

He shared his father's opposition to English oppression, and although he inherited much of his father's political influence, he did not exercise it in one particular high town office. He served as selectman twice (1785, 1786), as moderator of three March meetings (1785, 1786, and 1788), and as representative twice (1782 and 1786). But beginning ten years before he reached high town office he opposed and fought the English attack on provincial liberties through committees.

In 1774 Concord named the forty-year-old James Barrett to its first Committee of Correspondence. The following spring (1775) he had some of the provincial powder store on his property. That year he served on the committee to enforce the Continental Association and continued on the Committee of Correspondence. After the battle of Concord he was one of that committee which tried and confined Tory Dr. Joseph Lee to his farm. In 1776 he served with Ephraim Wood and Jonas Heywood as a county committee to call meetings of the Middlesex Committee of Correspondence, if
necessary. In October, 1776 he was on the committee which reported to and for the town meeting that the House of Representatives was not the proper body to draw up a constitution, and which called for the General Court to call a constitutional convention. In 1778 he served on the Committee of Safety and in 1779 on the Committee of Correspondence.

In 1778 James Barrett was one of the town committee to hire men for the campaign to reinforce General Washington and guard the North River in New York and to reinforce General Sullivan in Rhode Island. His name appears in the muster rolls for 1777, 1778 and 1779 as a captain, but while his father was colonel of the Middlesex Regiment in the early days of the war, and his brother, Nathan, the member of his own generation who saw the most military action, became a major, the younger James Barrett took care of the farm and served on town committees.

In 1781 Barrett was on the committee to divide the town into classes for hiring men for the army, and he also served on the committee which worked to block the decision...

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118 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:408-10; Shattuck, History of Concord, 91, 93, 98, 118-21; Gross, Minutemen, 138.

119 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 4:451, 5, 83, 117-18; Shattuck, History of Concord, 127; Gross, Minutemen, 154-55.

120 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 5:89; Shattuck, History of Concord, 353, 357; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, I, 679.
of the General Court to set Carlisle off as a separate town. Barrett remained on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety from 1780 to 1783 after which it no longer met. When he finally went to represent the town in the General Court in 1782, he received a list of instructions which stressed economy and frugality in government, demanded a strict accountability from public servants, and told him point blank, that if anything disputable arose, he was to refer it to the town. Post-Revolutionary Concord was not about to let its officeholding elite forget that sovereignty lay with the people. He was representative in 1786, too, but he never approached the prominence his father held in the narrower elite of the earlier generation.

In choosing to work through committees, Barrett chose a familiar mode of service which kept him in the town and in close contact with the people. But he was active beyond the town, too, in the county courts. The first justice of the peace for Middlesex County, the Provincial Congress named in September, 1775 was James Barrett. Perhaps this was a reward for his father's service in charge of the provincial stores and at the Battle of Concord. He was reappointed in 1781. In 1788 he was named to the Quorum, and again in 1795.

121 Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 5:137-38,162; Gross, Minutemen; Shattuck, History of Concord, 121.

122 Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1787, pt. 1, n.p., pt. 2, 11; Records of Civil Commissions, 1787-1806, 18, 25, 26, 29, MSA.
But, like his father, he remained rooted in the town, ready to serve in whatever capacity the town meeting might decide. But he remained also a prosperous farmer with wide interests to the end. When he died in 1799 his executor posted bond for $90,000 indicating that he died a very wealthy man.\(^{123}\)

**Duncan Ingraham** (1723-1811) came from a family which settled in Concord prior to 1715 though they are not listed in the assessor's list of 1747. He became a prosperous sea captain in Boston, engaging in the Surinam trade and some slave trading. He raised a large family which continued his prominence in maritime affairs. In 1769 he was evidently connected with the "well-disposed non-importers" John Mein accused of attacking those who refused to sign the non-importation agreement, while they continued to import British goods secretly. He, or his son, was in the group which attacked Mein, the Tory editor, in the Boston streets. In 1771 he paid provincial taxes on a Boston house and real estate worth £40 annually, a servant for life, £400 stock in trade, an eighty-ton vessel and a horse.\(^{124}\)

He came to live in Concord in 1772 after he married Tilly Merrick's widow. The following year he was named a

\(^{123}\)MCPCR No. 1195.

justice of the peace. In 1774 he served as an agent for the British firm of his son-in-law, Frederick William Geyer. He was well acquainted with the leading political figures of the town and province and entertained British officers. He refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant and was accused of Tory sympathies, but he swung around before the war ended. Perhaps the experience of taking the depositions of the eye-witnesses after the battles of Lexington and Concord won him over. His eldest son remained in Boston, keeping an eye on the prizes brought in by ships in which he and his father had an interest.  

In 1782 Duncan Ingraham was a member of the Social Circle, though he nearly drove it out of existence by arousing jealousy with the lavish suppers he provided for the meetings. He continued to prosper, renting his Boston house for £50 annually in 1790, and building a handsome three-story house in Concord. He was even sufficiently

125 Gross, Minutemen, 51, 56, 168; Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 139; Duncan Ingraham, Jr., to S. P. Savage, May 18, 1776, Savage Papers, MHS; Duncan Ingraham, Jr. to William Barrell, July 24, 1776, Andrew-Eliot Papers, MHS. Bartlett, "Duncan Ingraham," 138, says that Duncan Ingraham, Sr. was an associate of John Adams in France, but this is most likely the son, for he went to Amsterdam in 1783 to carry on trade. During this stay, he also travelled to London, and most likely to Paris as well. Duncan Ingraham, Jr. to Christopher Champlin and George Gibbs, Amsterdam; Sept. 18, 1783, Whitmore Papers, MHS; Duncan Ingraham, Jr. to Samuel Eliot, Amsterdam, Nov. 14 and Dec. 12, 1783, Norton Papers, MHS.
touched by revolutionary principles to free his slave, Cato Ingraham. 126

When Shays' rebellion reached Middlesex in 1786, Duncan Ingraham was chosen to present an address from a meeting of twenty-four Middlesex towns to the governor. In it the towns urged cancellation of the call for the militia to be used against Job Shattuck and his followers. In its place they proposed efforts to mediate the real grievances which drove the Middlesex men to close the courts. 127

Perhaps because of his efforts at that time, and because the mood of the town was more in keeping with Ingraham's conservative beliefs than it had been earlier, the town chose him as moderator of its meetings in 1788 and 1789. From 1788 to 1791 he served as representative. In 1792 he was named a justice of the peace again, seventeen years after he had to resign his appointment from the crown. In 1795, when he was seventy-two, he married the widow Elizabeth Tufts of Medford and moved to that town where he died in 1811, age eighty-eight years. 128

When his estate was probated he had nearly $900 in household furnishings and $10,923.53 in notes of hand,

126Social Circle, 9, 11, 51; Bartlett, "Duncan Ingraham," 128; Gross, Minutemen, 186-87.


128Records of Civil Commissions, 1787-1806, 26, MSA; Bartlett, "Duncan Ingraham," 129.
and $1,650 worth of real estate. The horse and chaise he left his wife, the plate he divided among his heirs, and his furnishings and money at interest all indicate that Duncan Ingraham died as he had lived, with more than a touch of class. He was an outsider whom Concord raised to high town office because of his wealth, and his careful husbanding of wealth was in keeping with the town's values. This was not during the period of the Revolution, but during the town's reaction to Shays' rebellion and the hard times which brought it on. In one sense the position he held showed that some sense of deference still operated in Concord elections. His influence beyond the town did not rest as much on the confidence of the people as it did on his business experience outside the town. It was fitting that he should end his life elsewhere, for he was an exception to the kind of leader Concord people usually trusted.

The most obvious thing about the men who became larger leaders of Revolutionary Concord is their diversity. Three of them were moderately prosperous farmers in 1771, but two had shops which provided an important part of their income. That same year, the fourth man, Duncan Ingraham, had property in Boston worth twice as much as the wealthiest man in Concord. Neither Hosmer nor Ingraham ever served

129 MCPCR No. 12369.

130 Their deaths from 1799 to 1821 were spread too far apart to make any valid comparison on the basis of
as selectmen and Barrett served in that post only twice, while Wood held it for a quarter of a century. Three of them served in the post of representative, which was monopolized by Hosmer until he moved to the Senate, giving Barrett and Ingraham a few years in the General Court. Like their predecessors, the larger leaders of Revolutionary Concord all held county office, but it reflected their service to the county rather than the province or their support of the governor. This may well indicate, too, a decline in the importance of the governor and a rise in the importance of the counties.

None attained high militia office. Important as Hosmer's role at Concord Bridge may have been, his main task, like that of Wood, and Barrett, lay in supplying the army rather than in fighting with it. Ingraham had no military experience among his qualifications for office. There is no evidence that these men engaged in land speculation, and certainly not to the extent their fathers did. They did follow their fathers in extending family ties with one another. Hosmer's favorite daughter-in-law was Barrett's daughter and when Barrett died Ephraim Wood married his widow. All the men were well-known in Concord: Wood from his days of mending shoes at the farmhouses throughout the town and Hosmer from his shop where he built such fine furniture. Barrett was known from years of work on the probated wealth. At any rate, we only have the valuations from the estates of two of them, one being the atypical Duncan Ingraham.
roads, first with his father's teams and then with his own. Though Ingrahams' occupation did not bring him into direct contact with the farmers, his wealth gave him great exposure. So when the town wanted to be especially careful of its money, it called on him to serve and save. When that task was done, it quietly dropped him. Though Barrett died before the century was out, Wood and Hosmer lived into the second and third decades of the nineteenth century to see the results of the changes that they and their contemporaries had wrought.
CHAPTER III

COLONIAL GLOUCESTER

Introduction

In 1765 Essex County had the highest county population in Massachusetts due to the concentration of people in a half dozen ports along the coast where the eastern part of Essex County forms the northern shore of Massachusetts Bay.1 At its tip, jutting out into the Atlantic, lies Cape Ann and the town of Gloucester, incorporated in 1642. Surrounded by water on three sides, the town is divided by the Annisquam River along which the first settlers built their homes. They kept small ships in the harbor at the river's mouth on the north. South and east of Annisquam Harbor is Sandy Bay. The main harbor ("the Harbor") on the south side of the Cape is protected by Eastern Point, which curves in a southwesterly direction to shield the harbor from the direct blasts of Atlantic gales. These harbors and the river were the sites of several villages which developed within the borders of Gloucester in the eighteenth century and continued

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1Evarts Greene and Virginia Harrington, American Population, 23-24. The seaports held slightly more than half the country's population.
to influence politics, economics, and religion in the town well into the nineteenth century.\(^2\)

The town itself was built among the bald granite hills and ledges, which were broken by small patches of rich soil. At one time, the woods reached the water's edge, but by 1763 demands for fuel, housing, and shipbuilding had begun to strip the cape of woodlands. Farm lands were scanty to begin with, so after the last division of land in 1725, migrations into Maine began, first to Falmouth in 1727, and then in 1736 to North Yarmouth.\(^3\)

Although Cape Ann was the site of several early fishing plantations, most of the first permanent settlers in Gloucester were farmers, though some also engaged in fishing, ship building, and in carrying wood to Boston. Gloucester had been a lawful port since 1682/3, and by 1700 the Gloucester fleet numbered about fifty ships and the town had become a center for shipbuilding.\(^4\) The men who freighted


\(^3\)Babson, *Gloucester*, 303-06; Babson, *Fisheries of Gloucester from the First Catch by the English in 1623 to the Centennial Year, 1876*. (Gloucester: Procter Brothers, 1876), 10, 12, 22; James R. Pringle, *History of the Town and City of Gloucester, Cape Ann, Massachusetts* (Gloucester, Mass.: Published by the author, 1892), 54.

fuel in the winter extended their summer fishing to the Grand
Banks, and when the supply of wood was depleted, the larger
vessels set sail to the ports of Spain, Portugal, and the
West Indies where there was a demand for fish. The smaller
vessels bartered goods in coast-wise trade with Maryland and
Virginia. They added farm produce, livestock, and New
England rum from other Massachusetts towns to their cargoes,
as well as some ironware, woodenware, and clothing. In the
British West Indies these goods brought sugar and molasses
in return, but, more often than was legal, the Gloucester
traders found their way to the West Indies ports of the
French, Spanish and Dutch in exchange for their lower priced
sugar, molasses, liquor, and cash returns. Salt, fruit,
wines and spices were obtained from the Spanish and Portuguese
ports, especially Bilboa and Lisbon.

This growth of commerce drew enough people to the
Harbor to require a church there by 1738, and the commerce
based on the fisheries continued to grow. When the French
at Louisburg attacked the New England fishing fleets in the
1740s to protect the larger French fleet in their own waters,
there was little trouble raising Gloucester's quota for the
capture of the fort and the expulsion of the French

5 Ibid., 384.

6 Ibid., 385; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 65-66;
Memorial of the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth
Anniversary of the Incorporation of the Town of Gloucester,
Mass., August, 1892 (Boston: Alfred Mudge and Son, 1901),
125.
fishermen.\textsuperscript{7} By 1750, when the Gloucester fleet numbered seventy or eighty large vessels, the Harbor reflected the growing prosperity as merchants began to build mansion houses near their warehouses and wharfs.

Gloucestermen could turn to other occupations, such as army service at Crown Point, Ticonderoga, Louisburg, and Quebec, when the French and Indian War checked the ocean-going commerce. Families still held onto farm lands, but by 1768 the town raised little more than a bushel of grain per inhabitant.\textsuperscript{8} There were more sheep than all other livestock combined, and more than half of the town's hay came from salt marshes.\textsuperscript{9} Little time could be devoted to farming when every March about seventy of the larger schooners from the Harbor set out for the Grand Banks for cod, and the same number of smaller vessels from Sandy Bay fished the off-shore ledges for cod, hake, and pollock.\textsuperscript{10}

When necessary, or convenient, they could turn their hands to other work, but Gloucestermen survived on the fisheries and the town's prosperity depended on the commerce

\textsuperscript{7}Pringle, \textit{History of Gloucester}, 55, 61.

\textsuperscript{8}Pringle, ibid., 68-9; Babson, \textit{Gloucester}, 382.

\textsuperscript{9}1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 130:13-35.

the fish made possible. Numerous skilled workers built, supplied, rigged, and repaired the fleets. In 1770, when the population reached 4,400, there were forty-five shops and forty-seven warehouses in the town, not counting shops that adjoined homes. Most of the men in the fleets worked on shares; that is, they were paid according to what each man caught. In wartime when the fleet could not sail, the population dropped as men sought work in other ports or cities.

When Gloucestermen sought wider experiences, they turned to the sea and to foreign voyages which brought profit as well as adventure. The humdrum business of the county courts did not appeal to men who captained schooners at the age of twenty-one or battled the North Atlantic from the time they were sixteen. Only one high town officer served as a justice of the peace between 1763 and 1774, and only one man was a coroner, despite the heavy loss of life connected with the fleets. Only one man from Gloucester reached the Massachusetts Royal Council, and he

11 1771 Gloucester Valuation and Tax List, MSA 130:97; 133:13-35.

12 Greene and Harrington, American Population, 24; Babson, Gloucester, 440.


served only three years. The tax rolls contain numerous captains but most were masters of ships, not militiamen, because Gloucester was neither a frontier town nor a militia center. Both her experiences and her interests lay in another direction.

The town elected a large number of men to town office on every level, thus assuring a sufficient number of men to do the various jobs even when the fleet sailed or individual ships went on short ventures. Perhaps it was because Gloucestermen went so far afield in their work that their concerns in the town meetings appear more narrowly centered on the town than on the concerns of the empire or the liberties of Englishmen. They were concerned that each of the parishes should be represented on the Board of Selectmen, carefully voting "that there should be seven Selectmen, three in the Harbor and one in each other parish." The issue of whether or not there should be a pesthouse or hospital for smallpox vaccination consumed more attention than the approaching Revolution.

Religion was a major concern of Gloucester inhabitants, in part because they were touched so often by death and natural disaster. One year nineteen ships were lost off the Grand Banks. Smallpox was a recurring danger.

15 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG:3 passim.


17 John J. Babson, Notes and Additions to the History
Gloucester's main business with the General Court from 1732/3 on, and especially from 1738, centered on religious disputes. Two new parishes had already been established to serve the scattered families. The people inland from the river established the Second, or West Parish, and those on the north side of the Cape made up the Third Parish. A serious division arose when some wealthy merchants built a fine new meetinghouse at the Harbor for the First Parish. This left the original church at the Green attended only by small farmers who could not afford the expensive pews in the Harbor church and petitioned that the First Parish be divided. Injured when the General Court settled in favor of the Harbor, they were insulted when the Court ordered that the new meetinghouse was the First Parish and the old one the Fourth Parish. Its people became poorer and fewer while the First Parish grew large enough to be rocked by a major split by dissenting Universalists on the eve of the Revolution. The Universalists fought for freedom of worship and freedom from ministerial taxes in the press and courts for a dozen years. The Gloucester churches continued their reputation of not worshipping in peace and added that of not "wanting to pay a preacher to do it for them," a generation after


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the heat of the Unitarian dissension led to the "great theft" of communion plate by the orthodox brethren.  

The wealth compiled through trade before the Revolution permitted large numbers to seek Harvard degrees. A dozen men from Gloucester graduated between 1763 and 1774 and eight of them became high town officers. Inventories show well stocked libraries in the town, with more than the works of theology represented.

Gloucester had not always been so enthusiastic about education. It took the town fifty-six years after incorporation to establish a school, which then lapsed often enough to bring the Selectmen before the Quarter Sessions to answer to the court. The schoolhouse built in 1708 served the center of the town, but the outlying districts had to be satisfied with the short terms of a "circulating school." Samuel Whittemore was the first teacher of the permanent

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19 Samuel Worcester to Theophilus Parsons, Jr., March 23, 1823, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library; Brooks, Gloucester Recollected, 87-96 has the clearest explanation of the recurring divisions. See also Babson, Gloucester, 428-29, 479-91; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 201-05. General Court petitions and reports can be found in The First Church in Gloucester, an Authentic Historical Statement, Showing also the Legal Relations of Parishes and Churches (Gloucester: Procter Brothers, 1880); and Gloucester, Mass., Universal Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles Where It Was Fought and To Whom the Victory Was Due (n.p., n.d.).

20 Babson, Gloucester, 556; Essex County Probate Court Records, Salem, passim. Hereafter cited as ECPCR.

21 Babson, Gloucester, 213, 218, 231-33.
grammar school at the Harbor and he was followed by a number of Harvard graduates. Although the town voted as late as March 1776 that school should be held as usual, the war and a smallpox scare combined to close it, and it stayed closed until the end of the war.22

Gloucester had displayed a strange mixture of local and cosmopolitan interests even by 1763. Tied to the farmers of the interior towns and to world markets as well, yet dependent on their own skill and courage, Gloucestermen were not apt to retreat before ministerial interpretations of the needs of the empire. It was enough that their survival and prosperity were at the mercy of the perilous Atlantic and the fluctuating Iberian and Caribbean markets. Perhaps the problems of trade in the world beyond New England made their town's internal concerns more important for a sense of security in their lives. At any rate the town records year after year give little indication of the wider experience of the inhabitants. Rather they display a steady, stubborn determinism in small matters and large. Sailors and masters afloat, merchants and agents to the larger world of trade, in the town meeting where they governed themselves, they clung to the virtues and vices of small farmers in a divided community.

22Babson, ibid., 351, 467, 554; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:169.
Collective Biography

From 1763 to 1774 the Gloucester town meeting showed that the town had its own traditions about elections and officeholding, that set it apart from other towns. Perhaps because of its size (1000 polls in 1768), Gloucester picked three monitors of the town meeting after electing a moderator, while other smaller towns did not choose monitors at all. The town clerk and treasurer were generally chosen before the selectmen, rather than after. The town had numerous minor officeholders and showed little concern about plural officeholding. Rather, the meeting employed it to provide continuity. In 1775, for example, a third of Gloucester officers held two or more offices. A dozen men, seven of them high town officers, held three or more offices that year. A selectman could be treasurer, but he might also be a hogreeve, fence viewer, or clerk of the market. Generally eight or nine men were elected to each minor office, enough to insure that the tasks of the office got done, no matter how many men shipped out on shares or went on a venture to Virginia (see Table 5).  

Among the twenty-one men serving in high town office during the dozen years prior to the Revolution, men named Sanders, Stevens, and Witham appear as town clerk, moderator, treasurer, and representative year after year, though they were occasionally relieved by Samuel Plumer and Nathaniel

23 All figures on elections to office are from Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3-4. Most are from the March election.

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### TABLE 5

**Colonial Gloucester High Town Officers, 1763-1774**

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*H - Moderator; S - Selectman; C - Town Clerk; T - Town Treasurer; R - Representative; CO - Council; D - Delegate Provincial Congress.*

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Allen. Four other men, Samuel Griffin, Peter Coffin, John Low, and Samuel Whittemore, filled the office of selectmen during those years more than once with a dozen others serving only single terms.

Three men of this period in colonial Gloucester moderated twelve March election meetings, and their terms ranged from one meeting to nine. Only Dr. Samuel Plumer served as a moderator in both colonial and revolutionary Gloucester; the others died before the Revolution broke out. While Plumer continued to serve from 1771 until his death in 1778, John Low moderated several crucial meetings in the summer and fall of 1774, and when he was absent, Samuel Whittemore was chosen in his place. Perhaps the town thought the qualities needed to conduct orderly business were not those needed to deal with an extraordinary crisis, or perhaps Plumer was insufficiently zealous in the rebel cause. It is hard to tell.

From 1763 to 1774 Daniel Witham served as town clerk, as he had since 1733. He was re-elected after the Revolution began and held the post until the fall of 1775 when illness finally forced his retirement.

Another plural officeholder, William Stevens, did not serve as representative during this period, but he was representative for seven years before 1761 when Thomas Sanders began ten years service in that office. Nathaniel Allen served two years with Sanders. The House of Representatives chose Sanders as Councillor several times but Governor Francis Bernard negated the choice. In 1770 when
Sanders' election to the Council was no longer blocked by the governor, Allen served four years as the lone representative from Gloucester. Sanders, Stevens, and Allen died before the Revolution. Daniel Rogers served one term in 1767 and three after the war began. Then the town sent Peter Coffin, who was serving his twentieth year as selectman, as its representative to the General Court and as delegate to the Provincial Congress. In November, 1774, the town named Daniel Witham, selectman and long-time town clerk to join Coffin for the short November session of the Provincial Congress held in Cambridge. Thus of the five men active as representatives between 1763 and 1774, only two, Rogers and Coffin, remained to see Gloucester through the Revolution.

Three men held the office of treasurer between 1763 and 1774. William Stevens served five years until his death in 1767 and was replaced by Thomas Sanders who served six years until ill health forced him to retire in 1774. Then the town chose Samuel Whittemore for the first of three terms as treasurer in 1774.

Eighteen men served as selectmen from 1763 to 1774, an average of 3.5 terms each. But as is often the case, such aggregate figures can be misleading, for thirteen of these men served just one year. Cornelius Fellows was elected to a second term but moved from town by the May meeting and was

24 Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XII, 305.
replaced. Only three of the selectmen served in high town office during the Revolution: Daniel Rogers for one year, Francis Pool for two, and John Smith for four years between 1775 and 1789. Witham, Sanders, and Stevens also held other high town offices before the Revolution. Actually, only five men—Coffin, Griffin, Low, Whittemore, and Witham—dominated colonial Gloucester's Board of Selectmen, averaging ten terms each. Samuel Whittemore was selectman for eight years before the war and Daniel Witham for nine. Witham continued as town clerk in 1775 and was named a delegate to the Provincial Congress in November, 1775, but he died just as the Revolution got under way. Whittemore also served as treasurer in 1774, and remained to serve in every other high town office after 1775, and was active in port and county offices into the 1790s. The other three dominant selectmen (Samuel Griffin, Peter Coffin, and John Low), each served eleven years from 1763 to 1774, and they all continued in office after the war began, though Griffin disappeared from high town office after 1775. Peter Coffin who served as selectman until 1778 and as representative to the General Court and delegate to the Provincial Congress in 1774 and 1775 was frequently moderator and continuously representative during the war, as well as delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1779-80. John Low served as selectman for eleven years before the war and for twenty years after it began. He was occasionally moderator and representative and a delegate to various conventions and congresses.
The average age at which the high town officers of colonial Gloucester began to serve in these high positions was 40.8 though one, Nathaniel Kinsman, became a selectman at twenty-eight and Daniel Witham first went to the Provincial Congress at age seventy-four. This average is younger than the 42.6 Cook found for all of New England, though not by much. Selectmen who ranged in age from twenty-eight to forty-eight when they first took office averaged 36.6 years at their first election to the post. Coffin, Griffin, Low, Whittemore, and Witham who dominated the board were even younger starters; they averaged 31.6 at their first election. Gloucester preferred its treasurer to be somewhat older. The youngest took office at age thirty-nine, and the oldest at fifty. The average was 43.3 years. The town chose representatives as young as thirty-two and as old as seventy-four, and their average age was 50.75 years. Moderators ranged from thirty-five to forty-three, and averaged forty years. Witham, who was town clerk throughout the period, began his service at the age of thirty-three. On the whole, the men who came to dominate high town office at Gloucester began to serve at an earlier age than those who served for a few years at the most (see Table 6).

In 1771, five percent of Gloucester's adult men were not even taxed on their polls, and 25 percent of the town's adults paid taxes only on the polls. Based on a sampling of the 1771 Valuation List, we can estimate the tax bracket
TABLE 6
Average Age on Beginning High Town Office, Gloucester, 1763-1774

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectmen</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>50.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>40.83</td>
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for eighteen high town officers of colonial Gloucester who appear on the list. One man appeared in the fourth or lowest quarter, one in the third quarter, seven in the second quarter, but half of the high town officers were in the top quarter of the tax list, and six of these were in the top ten percent. Seven of Gloucester's high town officers paid higher taxes than the highest taxpayer in Concord. The three Gloucester officials not in the 1771 list had estates probated at £3305 and £3810 in the 1760s, and at $4,232 in the 1790s, placing them well within the top bracket.

The usual way to public respect, and therefore to public office, in rural towns was through prosperous farming,


26 ECPCR No. 5358, 24070, and 26449.
but commercial Gloucester offered far more opportunity to merchant traders than did the country towns. Fifteen of the high town officers on the Valuation List were merchants. They owned seventeen of the town's forty-seven warehouses, 5,000 feet of the 11,300 feet of wharfs, £3969 of the £10,236 stock in trade, and 2,520 of the 7,531 tons of shipping in the town. Two high town officers had shops. Most had a cow and at least one hog, but only seven apparently, depended on farming for a significant part of their income, for only seven raised a significant amount of grain (from thirty to 240 bushels) and had a large number of animals. Five raised sheep, which is not surprising, since Gloucester's main farming activity was grazing. Most farmers had from one to six cows. One high town officer had eight, and Coffin, the biggest farmer of the group, had twenty-two. He had the largest number of animals and got the best yields for his ten acres of tillage: twenty-four bushels per acre. But whether they were farmers or merchants, Gloucester expected its high town officers to be among the most prosperous men in town.

The main high town officers were social as well as financial leaders. Seven of them were Harvard graduates. Two had begun as teachers in town and three were physicians. The few justices of the peace no doubt provided whatever legal services the inhabitants needed, for no lawyers

271771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:13-35.
settled in Gloucester before the Revolution. The militia played a limited role in town, though there were six companies. Many men were called "Captain," but few before the Revolution bore other military titles, and the title "Captain" often referred to masters of sailing vessels.

Gloucester and the other Essex County coastal towns were close enough to the shire town of Salem so that they never served as county seats. Because of its large population Gloucester was no healthier than Boston when smallpox struck, so it never drew the General Court. Thus it is not surprising that the high town officers played a minor role in the county courts before the Revolution. In 1761, when the crown renewed commissions for civil officials, including seventy-eight justices of the peace for Essex County, the list included four Gloucester men: Epes Sargent, Thomas Sanders, Nathaniel Allen, and Daniel Witham. A fifth, Samuel Plumer, was added in 1763. Daniel Sargent was named county coroner in 1762 and Witham served as a notary public all but one year from 1750 to 1774. 28 William Stevens, long-time representative, was sent to the Albany Congress by the General Court in 1754 and Thomas Sanders served on the Council from 1770 to 1773. 29

The picture of leadership which emerges is one that was shaped by the geography and economy of the town.


29 Babson, Gloucester, 166; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 305.
Leaders were usually, but not always drawn from the most prosperous men in the Harbor and in each of the other parishes as well. Merchants predominated and there were few large farmers, in both cases reflecting the composition of the town. Most high town officers served a single term and then returned to their fishing and trade. Those who served for many years were often prosperous to wealthy men, and permitting such men to hold multiple offices did not seem to bother Gloucester at all.

The Evidence
Common Leaders

Twenty-one men served in high town office in colonial Gloucester. Eight of these served only one year as selectman, while four others served one year in colonial Gloucester, but longer after the Revolution began. Nine other men, six of them multiple officeholders, served from six to twenty-one terms each in various offices. Of those who remained in Gloucester after the war began, only one was dropped from high town office, and that not until 1776. Three of these men served from six to fourteen years in one office, selectman. In Gloucester, ordinary high town officers served just once, so four of the one-year selectmen left little trace of their lives beyond their election in the town meeting minutes and their property holdings in the valuation lists and probate records. Four other one-year selectmen may not have been more important as leaders, but they left traces of their business dealings
which give us a better understanding of the Gloucester merchant community which had such an impact on the lives of Gloucester's inhabitants in the eighteenth century.

We know very little about Jacob Parsons, Nathaniel Kinsman, Timothy Rogers, and Josiah Choate. Jacob Parsons, (1734 - ?) the son of Jacob Parsons and Sarah Redding, was born in Gloucester. In 1767 he helped the other selectmen and the constables get the subscription to the non-importation agreement filled up. In 1763 he was chosen collector of the province, town and county taxes. By 1771 he was in the third quarter of the taxpayers, paying £2:2:6 on a poll, a house, one third of a warehouse, and real estate worth £20:18:8 annually. He had two taxable horses, four cows, thirty-two acres of pasture, four acres of tillage that produced a low yield of seventy bushels of grain, and seventeen acres of meadow that produced eleven tons of hay. Parsons was a member of the Committee of Correspondence in 1772, and of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence in 1775. The following year he refused to serve as selectman, and dropped from the town records.

Nathaniel Kinsman (1745 - ?) was the son of Nathaniel

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30 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:103-05.


32 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:138, 161, 166.
and Anna Robinson Kinsman. In 1771 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers, assessed £1:9:10 on two polls, a house and shop, and real estate worth £11:12 annually. He had £4 stock in trade, a cow, a pig, and thirty-four acres of pasture.

Evidently he was a joiner or cabinetmaker like his father because a Nathaniel Kinsman and/or his son held office as surveyor of lumber or some other office related to lumber for thirty terms between 1754 and 1789, with an occasional term in other minor offices: measurer of grain, 1762, 1770, 1774, and 1781; fire warden in 1770 and 1775; and single terms as surveyor of highways, juror, warden, deer reeve, field driver, and hogreeve between 1754 and 1781.

In 1772 he was chosen selectman, perhaps serving only part of the year, as his name is not in Babson's list of selectmen. In 1775 he was on the Committee of Safety as Deacon Nathaniel Kinsman. He returned to his business and the minor offices listed. In 1791 his property was valued at only $316.18.


34 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:31.

35 ECPCR No. 534.

36 Babson, Gloucester, 588.

37 1791 Gloucester Tax List, in TRG 4:21-22.
Captain Timothy Rogers (1721-1766) was born in Kittery, Maine, the son of Reverend John Rogers and Sussana Whipple. In 1765 he married Esther Goldthwaite of Boston, daughter of a royalist. He was related by marriage to the Ellery, Sargent, and Stevens families. 38

He became a Gloucester merchant and as early as 1757 lost goods in the wreck of the Resolution. 39 Several years before that he began public service as a juror in 1754, and 1760, hogreeve in 1756 and 1759, clerk of the market, weigher of bread, and culler of fish in 1761. In 1762 and 1764 he moderated the May meetings. In 1763 he was surveyor of highways, and in 1764 he was selectman, overseer of the workhouse, and on a committee to consider a hospital house for smallpox cases.

When he died in 1766 he had an estate of £2578:11:4. His personal estate included a house worth £450, a warehouse worth £90, two pews, wearing apparel worth £35:6:2 and wrought silver worth £13:10. This placed him among the top quarter of taxpayers in Gloucester, even though the debts of the estate led to a declaration of insolvency. 40 Like most of the town's merchants, Captain Timothy Rogers went deeply into debt to finance his trading ventures.

38 Emma Worcester Sargent and Charles Sprague Sargent, Eses Sargent of Gloucester and His Descendants (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1923), 45.

39 Statement regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution, Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers, MHS.

40 ECPCR No. 24070.
However, he did not live like a debtor, but like the prosperous merchant he and the townsmen knew him to be when he served as selectman.

Josiah Choate (1715-1798), the son of Josiah and Elizabeth Burnham Choate, was born in Chebacco Parish, Ipswich. He married Patience Roberts, whose mother was a Haskell. Before 1750 they settled in West Gloucester where Josiah joined his wife's Haskell relatives as Deacons of the Second Parish. His children married into the Low family of Gloucester.  

In 1753, 1757, 1762, 1763, and 1765 he was juror. In 1759 he was surveyor of highways and tythingman. In 1763 he was selectman. As his name does not appear on the 1771 Valuation List it is possible he went back to Ipswich for a number of years, but he returned to Gloucester and served on the Committee of Safety in 1775. He also served in a number of minor offices from 1782 to 1792.

When he died in 1798 his estate totaled $4,232. It included one and a half houses worth £500, farm buildings and a shop worth £340, and real estate valued at $2,696. In addition, the supplies of hay, barley, corn, potatoes, cheese, cider and apples indicate that he was a prosperous farmer. His household inventory reflects comfortable though


42 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161.
not luxurious living, although he did own some good clothing and a fine supply of linens. His public service reflected his place in society, and complemented his role of prosperous farmer and Deacon.

The next four men were one-year selectmen also, and though the evidence shows they had greater wealth than the former group, there is nothing to indicate that they held greater power in the town as selectmen because of their wealth. On the contrary, high town office seems to have served a similar purpose for both groups: it was something they did and were expected to do in public life if they did well in private life. And Plumer, Fellows, and the two Sargents did very well indeed.

David Plumer (1738-1801), the son of Dr. David and Anne Barber Plumer, and half-brother of Dr. Samuel Plumer, was born in Gloucester. He married Mary Card, widow of William Sargent who died in the Revolution. He began holding town office in his early twenties, being juror in 1761, 1763, and 1764. He was constable in 1763, 1764, and 1778 and culler of staves in 1766. In 1771 he paid £1 tax on two polls, two-thirds of a house, real estate worth

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43 ECPCR No. 5358.

44 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 543; Babson, Gloucester, 276; Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 67.
£2:15 annually, one oxen, one cow, and two swine; all of which placed him in the lowest quarter of taxpayers. 45

Perhaps he branched out into trade shortly thereafter, because in the same year he was on a committee of inspection to see that the town complied with the non-importation agreement. 46 In 1774 he was one of a committee to adjust insurance losses to Grand Banks fishing boats, of which he owned one-quarter of a boat valued at £62. 47

In 1771 he moved into high town office as selectman, as well as serving as surveyor of highways, which post he held for two years. In 1773 he was fence viewer, in 1775 hogreeve, in 1778 constable, and in 1782 monitor and constable. In 1783 he was juror and in 1785 he was surveyor and measurer of wood.

Yet at the approach of the Revolution he was suspected of being a Tory, so he had to declare his sympathy for the patriot cause. 48 At the beginning of the war he was an early supporter of the Universalists, signing their

45 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:22.

46 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:123.

47 John J. Babson, Notes and Additions to the History of Gloucester (second series, Salem Press, 1891), 141-43. Hereafter cited as Babson, Notes and Additions, II.

48 Babson, Gloucester, 279; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 72.
Articles of Association and conducting the ordination of Reverend John Murray with two other laymen in 1788.\textsuperscript{49}

Evidently Plumer came through the war without financial ruin, for in 1787 he signed a contract for £48 with two workmen to build a two-story house with an adjoining storeroom and shop at Sandy Bay.\textsuperscript{50} He must have prospered there for the assessor's records show an increase in property. In 1783 he had real estate valued at £350, personal estate valued at £50, and livestock valued at £300. By 1791 he had a house, garden and barn valued at £400, one store at $30, another store and part of a wharf valued at $100, fifteen acres valued at $81, one and a half schooners valued at $411, with cargo worth $700, and stock in trade valued at $800.\textsuperscript{51}

While his earlier unpopular political and religious opinions kept him from high town office during the war, they were no obstacle to minor officeholding after 1782 or to his financial success later. He died in 1801.

Cornelius Fellows was the son of Jonathan Fellows and Elizabeth Norwood who settled in Gloucester around 1740.

\textsuperscript{49}Independent Christian Church, \textit{One of Freedom's Battles}, 8, 14.

\textsuperscript{50}Contract for a two story house, Aug. 14, 1787, Misc. Mss., MHS.

\textsuperscript{51}1783, 1784 Gloucester Valuation Lists, 1791 in TRC, Vols. 18, 21, 22.
In 1768, Cornelius Fellows and Deacon Thomas Marrett went as a committee from Squam Parish to settle with Reverend John Wyeth, who had sued the parish for preaching fees. Fellows had a son, Caleb, born in Gloucester in 1771.\(^{52}\)

He began public service as warden and surveyor of highways in 1768. The next year he was surveyor of highways again, as well as culler of fish, a post he held until 1771. Constable in 1770 and juror in 1772 and 1773, he was chosen selectman in 1773 and 1774. Before May 1774 he moved to Boston where he and his brothers became successful enough as merchants to send Gustavus Fellows to Nevis where he acted as agent for his brothers and other Massachusetts merchants and masters who were looking for a market.\(^{53}\)

During the Revolution they turned to privateering with Cornelius commanding the Brigantine Huntington in 1780 and the Constant in 1782.\(^{54}\) In 1761 the Fellows and Caleb Davis began a business relationship which lasted until 1794. At first Davis merely hired Cornelius Fellows and his ship to carry his goods to Virginia. Eventually, the brothers joined Davis in purchasing ships and went to Virginia, the West Indies, and Gibraltar, exchanging fish

\(^{52}\) Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 137; Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 260.

\(^{53}\) C. Davis to Joshua Davis, Jan. 13, 1773, Davis Papers, MHS.

\(^{54}\) Gardner Weld Allen, Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution (Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1927), 104, 184.
and New England rum for wines, raisins, lemons, beeswax, brandy, cordials, Bohea tea, and in one case, "4 pr. silke stockings." At home Davis supplied the Fellows with powder, coffee, chocolate, allspice, nutmeg, pepper, starch, cinamon, cloves, sugar loaves, corks, allum, Indigo, flints, shott, chalk, cotton, rice, tea, rum, logwood, and redwood, "he paying fraight as customary - Dangers Seas be Excepted."

In 1779 the brothers were still in business, supplying calico, checks, and linen to William Knox.  

In 1771 Cornelius Fellows paid a province tax of £3:5:5 placing him in the second quarter of the taxpayers of Gloucester. He was taxed for one poll, a house and warehouse, and real estate worth £19:16:8 annually. He had seventy-three tons of shipping and £70 stock in trade, a horse, two oxen, two cows, ten sheep, and one swine. But he kept seventy-nine acres of pasture, and four acres of tillage which produced only forty bushels of grain. He got fifteen barrels of cider from his orchard, a ton of salt hay and two tons of English hay from his fields and marshes. Evidently he counted on his farm to provide feed for his livestock and perhaps he rented out the pasture. He was too busy as a successful merchant to

55 Receipts for merchandise dated March 1762, May 19, 1762, Jan. 29, 1763, Sept. 10, 1763, Sept. 12, 1767, Mar. 4, 1768, Davis Papers; Other receipts dated Feb. 26, and April 17, 1779, Henry Knox Papers, MHS.

56 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:16.
spend much time on the farm. Most of his public service in Gloucester had been in keeping with the position he had as a merchant dependent on the fisheries, but he left Gloucester and the honors of high town office when greater mercantile opportunities counselled a move to Boston.

Another important merchant who moved to Boston after reaching high town office in Gloucester was Daniel Sargent (1731-1806). The son of Epes Sargent and Hester Maccarty of Roxbury, he was born in Gloucester. In 1763 he married Mary Turner of Salem. He was related to the Haskell, Somes, Stevens, Day, Winthrop, Frasier, and Sanders families. His father was a merchant, a colonel in the militia, a justice of the peace, and a representative.  

He did not go to college but entered the fishing and mercantile business while a young man. In 1753 and again 1762 he was named county coroner. In 1763 he married Mary Turner of Salem, his brother Epes' sister-in-law. Henry Sargent, the artist was their son. In 1768 he served one year as selectman. In 1769 he was one of the men appointed collector of taxes because he offered to do it without charge.  

By 1771 he was one of the wealthiest men in town.

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57 Sargent, Epes Sargent and His Descendants, 139-41.

58 Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 55; Babson, Gloucester, 156.

59 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:112.
paying £9:8:6 on two polls, a house, a shop, three warehouses, eight hundred feet of wharf, 703 tons of vessel, and £1000 stock in trade. His real estate was worth £32:8 annually, and he kept two horses, two oxen, three cows, and had twelve acres of pasturage, and fields producing three tons of hay each year.\(^6\)

While not holding high town office after 1768, Sargent continued to serve the town on committees. He was culler of fish in 1756 and 1757, hogreeve in 1757, and 1765, and fire warden in 1770 and 1775. In 1773 he was on a committee to report on plans for maintaining the poor. In 1774 he was one of a committee "to consult with the Merchants in the Sea Ports upon proper measures to relieve the Colonies under the Act of Parliament blocking up the town of Boston." That year he was one of the committee to adjust losses to the owners of Grand Banks fishing vessels, of which he owned eight (in whole or in part) worth some £1805. In April 1775 he was named to the Committee of Safety.\(^6\) In 1778 and possibly earlier he took out letters of marque and posted bond for two of his ships to go privateering. The Fair Play was bonded on October 19, 1778, and the Sky Rocket on December 17, 1778. Sargent spent 1779 in Newburyport

\(^6\) 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30.

\(^6\) Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:140, 149, 161; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 141-43.
where he was one of the bonders for the Diana that year, and the owner of the Big Thorn, bonded in August, 1779. In March 1780 he acted with one of his wife's relatives from Salem to bond the Franklin. By July of 1780 he signed as surety for the Fair Play as a merchant of Boston. There he continued privateering with his own ships and stood as surety for others throughout the war. He was the owner of at least ten privateers and supported some twenty ventures. This supplied work for Massachusetts sailors, which was one of the requirements stipulated in the bonds. No doubt many of the men who left Gloucester found work with their former townsman, in Boston.

After the war Daniel Sargent's business grew until he was the "greatest merchant of the family," which was outstanding in the commerce of Massachusetts. He avoided lawsuits and enjoyed good company, and though he liked simplicity, he indulged his wife's love of luxury with a lavish hand. On his death in 1806 he left a large estate including a bundle of notes amounting to $30,000 due from people along the shore, many of whom "had fisherman's luck." With the notes was the suggestion that his sons

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63 Sargent, Epes Sargent and His Descendants, 163.
burn the package, which they did. Daniel Sargent's single term as Gloucester selectman was only a temporary phase in his larger career as merchant.

His older brother, **Epes Sargent** (1721-1779) was also born in Gloucester. His father was an important Justice of the Peace in the Essex County Courts, a major in the militia and a representative. His mother was the daughter of a councillor, and his stepmother, Catherine Winthrop of Boston and Salem, was descended from three governors. Epes grew up surrounded by the "wharfs, stores, and fish-flakes of the merchants of the family." In 1745 he married Catherine Osborne of Boston.\(^{64} \)

He continued the mercantile business begun by his father, owning ten vessels in the fisheries before the Revolution.\(^{65} \) In 1765 his nephew, John Winthrop, Jr., was in Gloucester with him, probably as a business apprentice.\(^{66} \) In 1768 both he and his brother Winthrop signed the non-importation agreement.\(^{67} \) He agreed to collect taxes without charge to the town that year. He warned the town

\[^{64}\text{Ibid., 7.}\]

\[^{65}\text{Babson, \textit{Gloucester}, 151.}\]

\[^{66}\text{To John Winthrop, Sept. 20, 1764, Winthrop Family Papers, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library.}\]

\[^{67}\text{ADS by Epes and Winthrop Sargent, 1768, Price Family Papers, MHS.}\]
to be careful about sending a committee to the convention in Fanueil Hall called by the selectmen of Boston, but it passed almost unanimously.68

By 1771 he was one of the wealthiest men in town, paying £9:4:6 on three polls, one house, four warehouses, real estate worth £45:2 annually, 1,600 feet of wharf, one servant for life, 535 tons of vessel, £1500 stock in trade, two horses, two cows, two swine, twenty acres of pasture supporting five cows, and seven acres producing a ton of hay each.69 His accounts indicate that he exchanged oil and fish for small household items he sent to Virginia, and no doubt to the West Indies and Europe as well.70

He was chosen selectman in 1760 and in 1761 both he and his father were among the seventy-eight justices named for Essex County.71 In 1763 he was overseer of the Workhouse and of the poor, and warden of the Sabbath. In 1766 he was clerk of the market. In 1772 he was juror, and in 1773 he served as county coroner.72 In 1774, a year of

68 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:105, 112.
69 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, 133:30.
70 Receipts and letter regarding merchandise, dated Feb. 17, Mar. 1, Apr. 19, Nov. 4, 1771, June 6 and July 30, 1772, and June 30, 1777, C. David P apers, MHS.
72 Ibid., 155.
unusually heavy losses to the Gloucester fishing fleets, Epes Sargent entered a "covenant for mutual insurance of the Grand Bankers" in which business he had five ships valued at £1350. That same year he was hogreeve, juror, monitor and was again chosen selectman, but he declined to serve as representative, perhaps so he could avoid declaring for the patriots' cause. At any rate, the following year he had to answer to the town for his Loyalist sympathies and the town was forbidden to deal with him. This ban was very likely enforced by the same committee appointed "to care that the Association proposed by the Continental Congress be complied with and in no way violated," on which his son, Epes, Jr., served.

He tried to escape to Boston, but found conditions there even worse. He even prepared to leave for Halifax, but could not bear separation from his family, so he stayed on in Gloucester. This same year, his support of Reverend John Murray brought on him the additional displeasure of the town. In 1777 he was one of the fifteen members suspended from the First Parish Church for his support of the Universalist preacher. In 1782 part of his silver plate was seized and sold at auction by members of the First Church to

73 Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 141-142.

74 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:146±, 149, 153, 157; Babson, Gloucester, 151; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 72.

75 Sargent, Epes Sargent and His Descendants, 10-11.
pay his ministerial rate. His religious and political differences with the town so reduced his business that, despite his one hundred fifty-six ounces of silver plate, the furniture, curtained bedstead and satin quilt, the family portraits by Copley, the large looking glass and mahogany desk and bookcase, his debts were more than three times the amount of the estate when he died in 1779 of smallpox contracted when the town meeting refused to excuse him from inoculation. Neither his wealth nor his public service shielded him from the determination of the town to enforce its political viewpoints on its social and economic elite.

The next four men considered also served one year as selectmen in colonial Gloucester, but went on to serve longer terms in revolutionary Gloucester. They were Francis Pool, John Smith, Daniel Rogers, and Joseph Foster.

Francis Pool (1729-1804) the son of Ebenezer Pool and Elizabeth Norwood was born in Gloucester. His grandfather, who built the Long Wharf in Boston, had come to Gloucester in 1700 and left a large estate. Francis Pool was a taxpayer at Sandy Bay in 1754 where six males of his family had been at the incorporation of the parish in 1725. The family

76 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 7, 11.

77 ECPCR No. 24611.

was prominent enough into the nineteenth century to provide a representative to the General Court for four years.

In 1765 Francis Pool began an annual round of duty in town office which culminated in his election as selectman in 1768, and again 1775 and 1776. He was surveyor of the highways in 1757, 1765, 1767, 1768, 1770, 1775, and 1778. He was field driver in 1767 and 1774-1778. He was measurer of grain in 1768, constable in 1770, hogreeve in 1763, 1769, and 1774, fence viewer in 1778, warden in 1767, and tything-man in 1765. In the 1780s and into the 1790s he continued to serve in several of these minor offices.

In 1771, Pool was in the third quarter of taxpayers, assessed £2:10:10 for three polls, one house and real estate worth £11:18 annually, and £100 at interest. He had a horse, three oxen, four cows, forty sheep, three swine, thirty-five acres of pasture, one and a half acres of tillage producing only thirty bushels of grain, and five and a half acres of fields producing five tons of hay. As his estate was valued at £752:15 in 1783, he evidently did not suffer greatly from the Revolution. 79

He was one of the early Universalists who signed the "Charter of Compact" in 1785. It would serve as by-laws for all the early Universalists in Massachusetts, and it

79 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:21; 1783 Gloucester Tax List, TRG 21.
made an impact on providing for voluntary support of religious societies.  

When he died in 1804, Pool left an estate valued at $26,077 most of it in real estate accumulated after the 1771 valuation. Though various individuals owed him over $200 in personal notes, and he had Continental and State notes, he apparently lived simply. His livestock alone was worth four times the value of all his household goods. More cautious than Epes Sargent in building his fortune, Pool showed greater political flexibility. It may be significant that he did not join the Universalists until 1785 when many of the town's wealthier citizens had led the way, and made it socially acceptable. If his business and religious moves suggest much caution, perhaps his political role before and during the Revolution was a product of the same caution.

John Smith (1723-1789), the son of Daniel Smith and Lydia Sargent, was born in Gloucester. His family had been in Gloucester since the 1690s. He married Abigail Fleming in 1746 and they had four sons and four daughters who

80 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 15.

81 Summons of Court of Common Pleas, Essex County, Mass., June 19, 1789, Dane Papers, MHS; ECPCR No. 22258.

82 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 15.
married into the Allen, Foster, and Hubbard families.\textsuperscript{83}

In the 1771 Valuation List, Smith was in the top quarter of taxpayers, assessed £3:9:3 on two polls, a house, one and a half warehouses, real estate worth £13:15:8 annually, one hundred tons of shipping and £50 stock in trade. But this merchant did a lot of farming on the side, as can be seen from the taxes he paid on a horse, four oxen, three cows, fourteen sheep, two swine, and sixty-five acres of pasture sufficient to feed thirteen cows. His three acres of tillage produced only forty bushels of grain, but he got ten tons of salt hay from eleven acres of salt marsh, and two tons of fresh meadow hay from three acres of meadow.\textsuperscript{84}

In 1770 Smith began his public service as surveyor of highways and culler of fish. The following year he was chosen selectman and in 1772 warden and surveyor of highways. In 1774 he was one of the insurance adjusters for Grand Bank fishing ships of which he had two schooners worth £450.\textsuperscript{85}

A warm supporter of the Revolution, he was on a committee in 1774 to consult with the seaports on common measures against the Boston Port Bill. He was on the Committee of Safety and Correspondence in 1775.\textsuperscript{86} His sons

\textsuperscript{83}Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 659; Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 94.

\textsuperscript{84}1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:29.

\textsuperscript{85}Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 141-43.

\textsuperscript{86}Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161, 166.
John and Sargent both commanded privateers during the Revolution, and were supported in their endeavors by their father. In 1776 he was surety for the schooner *Langdon*, which he owned in a partnership with other high town officers. In 1778 he was the principal bonder for the ship *Civil Usage* commanded by his son, John, who was killed in action.  

John Smith served four more terms as selectman during the Revolution (1776-1778, 1781) and was occasionally a moderator and juror. Elected selectman in 1780, he refused to serve. He died in 1789 leaving an estate of £160 real estate and £233:5:3½ personal estate. His inventory indicates that he lived in comfort, but not in luxury. Though he supported the Revolution and used the opportunities it offered to continue his business, he did not prosper as a result of the war.

Daniel Rogers (1734-1799), the son of Reverend John Rogers and Sussanah Whipple and brother of Gloucester merchant Timothy Rogers and of Reverend John Rogers of Gloucester's Fourth Church, was born in Kittery, Maine. After an apprenticeship with Colonel John Stevens and Nathaniel Allen he went into business as a fisherman and merchant. By 1757 he and his brother Timothy were

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*ECPCR No. 2564.*
venturing small amounts in foreign trade for they each lost £3:15 through the shipwreck of the Resolution. He soon became a leading merchant with as many as sixteen vessels in foreign trade and the fisheries. He often took on small ventures for his brother, Reverend John Rogers, and for other citizens of Gloucester. 89

In 1757 he married Elizabeth Gorman and in 1770 Rachel Ellery, the granddaughter of Colonel John Stevens, became his second wife. His children married into the Sargent, Foster, and Rowe families. 90 By 1771 he was one of the wealthiest men in town paying £6:17:2 on two polls, a house, two warehouses, seven hundred feet of wharf, real estate worth £21:12 annually, 547 tons of shipping, £860 stock in trade, a horse, two oxen, a cow, and four acres of pasture. 91

Rogers first appeared in town office as a hogreeve in 1757, then as a juror in 1760. From 1766 on he held office every year: fire warden in 1766, 1767, 1770, and 1773-1775; surveyor of highways in 1770; culler of fish

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89 Statement regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution, Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers, MHS; Babson, Gloucester, 477-78.

90 Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 136.

91 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:25.
in 1768; warden of litter in 1769, surveyor of shingles and lumber in 1770, clerk of the market in 1770 and 1773, fence viewer and monitor in 1771. In 1767 and again in 1770 he was one of the merchants on a committee to get the subscription of the non-importation agreement filled up. In 1769 he was one of the three men appointed to collect taxes, offering to do it without charge. He was chosen selectman in 1767, and again in 1781, though he refused to serve in 1778 and 1780. In 1774 he was on a committee "to consult with the Merchants of the Sea Ports upon Proper Measures to relieve [sic] the Colonies under the Act of Parliament blocking up the Town of Boston." That year he insured his ten ships valued at £2410 against loss on the Grand Banks.  

After Lexington and Concord, he served on the Committee of Safety, and was chosen second major of the Sixth Regiment of the Essex County militia. During the war he turned to privateering, providing employment for the sailor of the state, for the licenses required a bond not to sign on any new England man outside of Massachusetts. In 1776 he was a representative and was appointed justice of the peace in 1777. In 1781 he became county coroner and in 1788 he was a delegate to the state 

92 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:103-04, 112, 123, 149; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 143.
93 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 143; Allen, Mass. Privateers, 74, 109, 154, 215, 246, 255, 292, 309, passim; Revolutionary Rolls 40:57-80, MSA.
convention where he voted to ratify the federal constitution. After 1782 his name appears in minor town offices, but it is most likely his son, Daniel Rogers, Jr., served some of these terms as clerk of the market, grand juror, culler of fish, fence viewer, and fire warden, repeating this pattern for several years. Given this willingness to serve and the wealth and political background of his father, it is no surprise that Daniel, Jr. followed his father into the General Court, serving there for four years between 1803 and 1813.95

Evidently the father did not suffer extensively during the Revolution because in 1784 he was able to pay over £1000 to the estate of his wife's grandfather, Colonel John Stevens, for those parts of a warehouse, a flake yard for drying fish, and an adjoining wharf, as well as the house and lands she had not inherited.96

When he died in 1799 he had an estate of $8,580 in shipping which included two sloops and six schooners. His personal property amounted to $12,274, and included five pews in the Harbor Meeting House, wharfs, shops, and household goods befitting his station as one of Gloucester's

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95 Babson, Gloucester, 594.

96 Account with Christopher Champlin, Feb. 4, 1787,
most prosperous merchants, worth $52,000. He was one of those energetic individuals who was able to combine extensive service to the town with the accumulation of a fortune.

Joseph Foster (1730-1804) was not as wealthy as Daniel Rogers, but he also moved into high town office as a result of his stand in the Revolution. He was born in Chebacco Parish, Ipswich, the son of mariner Jeremiah Foster and Dorothy Rust. In 1756 he married Lydia Giddings of Chebacco. He came to Gloucester as early as 1759 to begin trade as a ship's master and merchant. James Babson, Gloucester's historian, said he advanced "by his own energy and shrewdness." As early as 1763 he traded fish with Caleb Davis, and by 1766 his vessels traded with Spain and the West Indies.

By 1771 he was in the top quarter of taxpayers, paying £4:11:9 on two polls, a house, two warehouses, one thousand feet of wharf, real estate worth £30 annually, 210 tons of vessels, £287 stock in trade, and £26 at interest. He kept only a cow and a hog for domestic needs.

Mar. 16, and July 4, 1789, Feb. 4, 1790, Wetmore Papers, MHS.

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97 ECPCR No. 23974.


99 Account with C. Davis, August 2, 1763, C. Davis Papers, MHS; Babson, Gloucester, 411.

100 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:33.
He began filling public office in 1763 as constable, in 1764 and 1767 as clerk of the market, as fire warden in 1766 and 1769, measurer of wood, and hogreeve in 1768, hogreeve and surveyor of lumber in 1771, clerk of the market, fire warden, and field driver in 1771. In 1774 he was chosen selectman, the only time he held this office.

But his career was closely tied to the progress of the Revolution. In 1772 he was named to the first Committee of Correspondence and was one of seven citizens to protest "the despotic measures adopted by the British ministry in opposition to the rights and liberties of the people of the American Colonies." The next year he served with other high town officers on a committee to report on future plans for maintaining the poor.\textsuperscript{101} Around this time smuggled goods were safely unloaded from one of his vessels while the tide-waiter, a customs official from Salem, was detained for several hours at a fumigating station that had been set up as a precaution against smallpox.\textsuperscript{102} In 1774, as a selectman, he was one of a committee "to consult with merchants of the Sea Ports upon Proper Measures to releive [sic] the Colonies under the Act of Parliament blocking up the Town of Boston," and to confer upon non-importation, "if the Seaport Towns generally come into it." In December 1774 Foster served on a committee to enforce the Continental

\textsuperscript{101} Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:138, 143.

\textsuperscript{102} Babson, Gloucester, 387; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:149, 153, 161.
Association. In April 1775 after Lexington and Concord, Joseph Foster was named one of the Committee of Safety and as captain of the alarm list.\footnote{Babson, \textit{Gloucester}, 393-96; Babson, \textit{Notes and Additions,} II, 147.} He was in command of one of the swivel guns when the British ship \textit{Falcon} attacked the town the following August. He was later named colonel of the four militia companies at Gloucester.\footnote{Joseph Foster, \textit{Grandchildren of Col. Joseph Foster,} 5-6; Babson, \textit{Gloucester,} 441n.} In 1776 he was named representative, as he was in 1784-1786, and in 1788. From 1757 to 1792 he served twenty terms in minor offices. In 1779 he was delegate to the state constitutional convention, though he opposed it in the town meeting which accepted the document. In 1779, when the economy of the town was at its worse, a number of destitute women entered his store to declare they would take what they needed, and keep an account so they might pay for it if and when things got better. Foster made no attempt to stop them.

Like other shipowners, Foster turned to privateering, standing surety for a voyage of the \textit{General Ward}, one of the earliest privateering ventures. In August 1776 he was part owner and bonder of the schooner \textit{Warren}. By October 1780 he was Master of Winthrop Sargent's brig, \textit{General Mercer}, and of his own ship, \textit{Polly}, in February 1781. In 1782, while in command of the \textit{Polly}, he was captured and
drummed through the streets of Halifax and paroled in Nova Scotia. When he was released he married Hannah, the widow of Isaac Somes, a sea captain lost on another privateer.  

In the midst of the Revolution he was among the thirty men and women to sign the Universalists' "Articles of Association," setting up the Independent Church in Gloucester. His political position was strong enough to shield him from some of the religious discrimination which a loyalist like Epes Sargent could not avoid.  

When Foster died in 1804 he left an estate of $26,000, two-thirds of it in personal property, including a pew in the Harbor Presbyterian Meeting House, one in the Universalist Meeting House, two dwellings, and scattered acreage. An astute businessman, he had $5,000 in Marine shares, and $10,968 in Gloucester Bank shares and interest. An ardent patriot, he had used the Revolution to increase his standing in the community. A common leader of colonial Gloucester, his committee service helped bring the town into the war and raised him to the circle of larger leaders in Revolutionary Gloucester. He was the only one of the


106 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 8.  

107 ECPCR No. 9928.
dozen common leaders in Gloucester to make this move. The handful of others who were in high town office both before and after the war were larger leaders from the start of their long political careers.

Larger Leaders

Of the nine men who served more than a year in high town office from 1763 to 1774, only one, Samuel Griffin, did not serve as a justice of the peace, and he was a deacon. Two of the nine, Nathaniel Allen and Samuel Plumer, were more important than the one-year men, but not of the caliber of the other larger leaders. Two men, Stevens and Sanders, died before the Revolution began, and one, Daniel Witham, died shortly thereafter. Each was a multiple officeholder and had influence beyond the town. Stevens and Sanders each held every high town office but that of town clerk, which Witham held for forty-five years. The three other larger leaders of colonial Gloucester, Coffin, Low, and Whittemore, served from thirteen to seventeen terms as multiple officeholders, before the Revolution. They were outstanding among the men who led Gloucester into the Revolution and they continued to serve in public office in the town, county, and state during the war and into the 1790s.

Samuel Griffin (1707-1794), the son of Samuel and Elizabeth York Griffin, was born in Gloucester. He married Margaret Burnham of Ipswich and engaged in farming and
some small maritime ventures. In 1757 he lost £3:0:9 in the wreck of the Resolution.108

By 1771 he was in the top quarter of the taxpayers, paying £3:9:3 on two polls, a house, one and a half ware­
houses, real estate worth £13:15:8 annually, one hundred tons of vessel, £50 stock in trade, a horse, four oxen, three cows, fourteen sheep, two swine, sixty-five acres of pasture sup­porting thirteen cows, three acres of tillage yielding only forty bushels of grain, and fourteen acres producing twelve tons of hay. In 1774 he insured his £600 investment in two Grand Bank fishing vessels which he owned with Daniel Sargent.109

Samuel Griffin held public office in Gloucester from 1754 to 1775. He was surveyor of highways in 1754, 1760, 1765-1767, 1771, 1773 and 1774, and culler of fish in 1754, 1757, 1761, and 1765. He was constable in 1765 and fence viewer and tythingman in 1756. In 1758, 1761, 1762, and 1775 he was hogreeve. In 1759 he was measurer of corn, in 1764 he was warden of the sabbath, juror in 1762 and 1772 and overseer of the workhouse in 1764, 1768, 1770, and 1772. He began his long service as selectman in 1758, and served in that office every year from 1758 until 1775,

108 Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 78; Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 305; Statement Regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution, Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers, MHS.

109 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:16; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 141-43.
except 1761 and 1773. In June, 1774 he was one of those named to get the non-importation covenant signed. In December, 1774 he was on a committee to enforce the Continental Association. 110

There were four Samuel Griffins in the Third parish in Annisquam in 1754, and Deacon Samuel Griffins was the parish's steady choice for the Board of Selectmen sixteen out of eighteen years before the war, but for only one year in Revolutionary Gloucester. In 1775 the selectmen were added to the Committee of Correspondence, and he served that year, but when a new Committee of Safety, Correspondence, and Inspection was chosen according to the order of the Provincial Congress in March, 1776, Griffin was not on it. 111 As he lived until 1794, it is possible that he did not give warm support to the Revolution, and was accordingly dropped from town office. When he died in 1794, at the age of eighty-six, he left a will in which the word "old" was used to describe twenty of the twenty-eight items valued at £17:1:6. 112

Nathaniel Allen (1718-1775?), the son of Joseph Allen and Mary Coit, was born in Gloucester. In 1744 he married Mary Gee, the daughter of Reverend Joshua Gee of

110 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:151, 153.
111 Babson, Gloucester, 239; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:166, 169.
112 ECPCR No. 11909.
Boston's Second Church. His wife's sister, Margaret, married Samuel Whittemore, another larger leader of colonial Gloucester in 1757. Allen's second wife was Sarah, the daughter of Epes Sargent. He was a first cousin to Joseph Allen and had several aunts, daughters of clergymen and other leading families in Gloucester, such as the Haskell, Day, and Parsons families. 113

Nathaniel Allen was in fishing and commerce in 1757 when he lost £13:8:1½ when the Resolution was lost on Sambro Ledges. 114 He had better success later dealing with Caleb Davis, Artemus Ward, and Daniel Sargent exchanging fish for items such as lemons, yard goods, and ribbons. At the height of his prosperity he built the Long Wharf in Gloucester. 115

He began town service as a juror in 1754 and in 1761 he became a justice of the peace. As his father had before him, he served as a representative, first in 1765 and 1766. In 1768 he signed the non-importation agreement. 116

113 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 63; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VI, 182; Babson, Gloucester, 56-57.

114 Statement regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers.

115 Account with Caleb Davis, May 12, 1768, C. Davis Papers, MHS; account with Artemus Ward, June 13, 1763, Artemus Ward Papers, MHS; Babson, Gloucester, 56.

116 Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 134; non-importation agreement, May 2, 1768, E. Price Papers, MHS.
In 1770 when Thomas Sanders was elected to the Council, he replaced him in the House of Representatives, and continued as representative through 1773, though in that year he was elected by a majority of only five votes. This vote may reflect the fact that he was headed towards bankruptcy which he declared around the time of the Revolution.

In the Valuation List of 1771 he ranked in the third quarter of taxpayers paying £2:1 on two polls, a dwelling house, real estate worth £12 annually, one servant for life, two horses, four oxen, and two cows. Only the servant for life remained of his former wealth. He moved to Dover, New Hampshire and died shortly thereafter. He and John Rogers, the long-time town clerk of Revolutionary Gloucester are the only high town officers who never served as selectmen.

Samuel Plumer (1725-1778) was the son of Dr. David Plumer of Newberry and Ann Newman, granddaughter of Reverend John Emerson of Gloucester. He was educated in medicine and inherited his father's practice. His half-brother, Selectman David Plumer, was suspected of being a Tory. Dr. Samuel Plumer was married four times, first to Mary, daughter of Colonel John Low, then to Hannah Moody, whose father was minister at York, Maine, next to Elizabeth, sister-in-law to Nathaniel Allen and daughter of Reverend

117 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:28; Babson, Gloucester, 56.
Joshua Gee of Boston's Old North Church, and finally to Anne Sanders, sister-in-law to the Councillor, Thomas Sanders.\textsuperscript{118}

In 1771 he was among the top quarter of taxpayers, paying £3:12:9 on one poll, a house, real estate worth £33:16 annually, £8 stock in trade, three horses, two oxen, eight cows, thirty-six sheep, four swine, thirty-five acres of pasture supporting fourteen cows, six acres of tillage yielding one hundred twenty bushels of grain, and forty-seven acres which produced thirty-two tons of hay.\textsuperscript{119}

While Babson said his career was strictly professional, the town records indicate long and steady service in town offices, especially as moderator of the March election meeting, which post he held for at least nine years, guiding the town meetings into the Revolution. He began public office as surveyor of highways in 1754, 1756, 1759, 1764 and 1773. He was hogreeve in 1770 and 1772. In 1773 he was overseer of the workhouse and of the poor. That same he was named justice of the peace.\textsuperscript{120} He moderated the March town meeting in 1767, 1768, 1771-1777. In December

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 544; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 72; Babson, Gloucester, 276-77; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 34.
\item[119] 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:22.
\item[120] Babson, Gloucester, 276; Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 135.
\end{footnotes}
1767 he was one of three men added to the selectmen and constables to see that the non-importation agreement was filled up. In 1777 he was chosen as selectman and treasurer. He died the following January, at the age of fifty-three, leaving an estate of £7712:12:4. He owed notes of nearly £700 to half a dozen Gloucester residents, four of them high town officers. Perhaps he needed cash for the purchase of some of the real estate which made up over seventy percent of his estate, though no doubt he inherited much of it from his succession of wealthy wives.\textsuperscript{121} Respected, wealthy, and in the forefront of those who guided Gloucester into the Revolution, he did not live to see the sufferings the war would bring the town or the prosperity which would follow, but was a larger leader in his own time.

William Stevens' family was in Gloucester from its earliest days when William Stevens, a famous ship's carpenter, was named to the first commission for ordering town affairs in 1642. William Stevens (1713-1767), his descendant, was the son of a selectman and representative. Born in 1713, William Stevens inherited land at the Cut between the Harbor and the Squam River, and in 1733 he married Elizabeth Allen, the sister-in-law of his brother, Colonel John Stevens. In 1755 and 1761 he was named justice of the peace. He inherited a two hundred fifty acre farm and

\textsuperscript{121}Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:103-04; ECPCR No. 22182.
livestock at Eastern Point. He was a farmer and merchant, and successful enough to be representative for nine years and to have his wife painted by Copley. In 1767 he had a house, a farm, flake and fish houses, a warehouse on the beach, two pews, rights to land in New Gloucester, two and a half schooners, two Negro boys and two Negro girls, two horses, a stay and chaise, and £40:18:4 stock in trade, which was enough to rank him in the top quarter of wealthy men in Gloucester. 122

He was in the fourth generation of his family to hold public office, he was selectman in 1753, 1762, 1763, and 1764, moderator in 1760-1763, treasurer from 1763 to 1767, and representative in 1753, 1754, 1756-1760. He was named justice of the peace for Essex County in 1755 and 1761. The General Court sent him to the Albany Congress in 1754. 123

When he died in 1767 at the age of fifty-four, his debts exceeded the appraised value of his estate by over £1000 and his son had to sell the estate to pay debts of £4352:18:10. He may have had town debts mixed in with his

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123 Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 134; Babson, Gloucester, 166; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 68.
personal debts, because when the town chose Thomas Sanders as treasurer the following March, it voted "that the Treasurer be bonded to the satisfaction of the selectmen." 124

Thomas Sanders (1729-1774), the son of Captain Thomas Sanders, commander of the province's sloop of war, and Judith Robinson, daughter of Captain Andrew Robinson, militia leader in two colonial wars and builder of the first schooner, was born in Gloucester. He was one of the prize scholars in Reverend Moses Parsons' school in 1741. Three of his sisters married into the families of other high town officers of Gloucester. He was graduated from Harvard in 1748 and married Judith, the daughter of Reverend Thomas Smith of Falmouth, and went into the merchant business in Gloucester where he built a mansion house. He lost £12:18 in the wreck of the Resolution in 1757. In 1761 he was named a justice of the peace as was his father before him. 125

He was culler of fish in 1756 and 1757, juror in 1763, and went on to hold every high town office but that of town clerk. He was selectman in 1761 and 1764, moderator from 1764-1766, and 1769-1770, and treasurer from 1768 to 1773. In 1768 Gloucester sent him and Peter Coffin to the convention at Faneuil Hall "to consult and advise upon the

124 ECPCR No. 26449; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:105.

125 Babson, Gloucester, 242; Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 56; statement regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution, Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers,
present State of the Public Affairs." The following year his instructions were to comply with the spirit of the instructions given by the town of Boston, for he was representative from 1760 to 1770. Elected to the Council in 1767 and 1768 by the House, he was vetoed by Governor Bernard for his opposition to Hutchinson. Though the latter considered him on the same level as James Otis, Sr. for his political wickedness, he did not keep him from a seat in the Council where Sanders served from 1770 to 1773, when he resigned due to illness.  

In 1771 he fell into the third quarter of taxpayers assessed £2:5:3 on one poll, a house, a warehouse, three hundred feet of wharf, real estate worth £26:16 annually, a horse, two cows, two swine, sixty-one acres of pasture supporting twelve cows, and seven acres which produced four tons of hay.  

When he died of paralytic distemper on January 10, 1774 his estate was appraised at £864 real estate and £377:19 personal estate, including a shay, a horse, half of a small schooner, a sloop of fifty tons, sixty-five ounces of silver, a clock, two dozen delph [sic] plates,  

MHS; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 305; Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 135.  

126 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:106, 116:, Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XII, 305.  

127 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:29.
and a mansion house. His debts of £422:6:9 reduced the estate to £319:12:3. But even if we include the share of his father's estate which would have come to him if he had lived another year, it would not let us include him among the wealthy in a town like Gloucester.

Thomas Sanders, Jr., Esq. apparently had other qualifications which made him a multiple officeholder in Gloucester and a five-time choice of the House of Representatives for Councillor. His education, family and the connections of his famous father no doubt placed him in a position to be considered, but it seems likely that it was his strong opposition to Thomas Hutchinson which gave him a reputation as "the guardian of the Civil Constitution," and made him outstanding among the larger leaders of colonial Gloucester.

Daniel Witham (1700-1775), whose family had been in Gloucester since the seventeenth century, was born there August 30, 1700, the son of Selectman Thomas Witham and Abigail Babson. His father was prosperous and generous with his fifth child who was known as a lavish spender at Harvard from which he was graduated in 1718. After teaching at Andover and Dorchester he returned to Gloucester where he taught until he was thirty. Within a period of four years

\[128\] Shipton, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, XII, 304; ECPCR No. 24780.

he turned to medicine (1730), public office, (1732), and marriage (1734/5). He was occasionally elected field driver, but for thirty-seven years he was a selectman (1732-39, 1741-48, 1750-53, 1755-57, 1759-63, 1765-73). He was town clerk for forty-two years from 1734 to 1775. He was named notary public for the port of Gloucester every year from 1750 to 1774, except 1760. In 1761 he was one of the seventy-eight justices of the peace named for Essex County. 130

He married Lydia Sanders in 1734/5 and had twelve children. He wrote a rather exact and sceptical account of his observations of what may have been a comet in 1736/7. He subscribed to Thomas Prince's Chronological History and was active in the First Church. 131

He was a supporter of the move towards the Revolution, heading the list of the first Committee of Correspondence in Gloucester in 1772 and was most likely the chairman who wrote the report the committee adopted "without Altercation and [with] great Unanimity" supporting Boston's opposition to the landing of tea and pledging "strenuous exertions" to avoid any commerce with any who bought or sold it. On the day before the Boston Tea Party, the town thanked Boston for its vigilance in guarding the liberties of America and


131 Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VI, 288.
promised to hold itself "in readiness to join the town of Boston in all measures to extricate ourselves from tyranny and oppression." 132

At the approach of the Revolution, Witham joined in the persecution of customs officers, and like many other town clerks of the period, wrote the addresses and resolves of the town. He was added as a delegate to the Provincial Congress in November, 1774. He died at the age of seventy-five in the fall of 1775. 133

In 1771 he paid £1:7:6 on a poll, a house, real estate worth £6 annually, one cow, one hog, and twelve acres of pasture supporting two cows. 134 This placed him in the third quarter of taxpayers. Perhaps raising twelve children had stopped him from amassing more property, or it may have been the time-consuming tasks he performed for the town with slight pay. At any rate, when he died in 1775 or 1776 with only one son surviving him, no will was probated, nor was there sufficient estate to require the court to order an inventory.

The remaining high town officers of colonial Gloucester, Coffin, Low, and Whittemore, were larger leaders

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133 Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VI, 288; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:154, 163.
134 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:29.
in moving Gloucester into the Revolution and they remained larger leaders throughout. Coffin and Low served into the 1790s, when Whittemore moved into state offices.

Peter Coffin (1723-1796) was born of a family which had lived in Gloucester since 1688. He married Mary Currier of Amesbury and lived on the family farm until his involvement in public affairs in the 1770s made it convenient for him to live in the Harbor. In 1771 he was in the top quarter of taxpayers and the most prosperous farmer in Gloucester. He paid £7:5 on a poll, a house, real estate worth £70:4, two servants for life, two horses, six oxen, twenty-two cows, sixty sheep, one hundred and sixty acres of pasture supporting thirty-six cows, ten acres of tillage producing a high yield of two hundred and forty bushels of grain, orchards producing six barrels of cider and one hundred and twenty acres of salt marsh producing ninety-six tons of salt hay and a ton of hay from each of the ten acres of English upland mowing and fresh meadows he had.

From 1753 to 1778 he was selectman every year except for 1757 and 1763, serving also as surveyor of highways in 1757, 1760, and 1762, and overseer of the poor or

135 Babson, Gloucester, 69.

136 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:19.
the workhouse in 1763-1764, 1768, 1770, and clerk of the
market in 1775, when the Continental Association was being
enforced, and again in 1789 and 1790. He served as repre­
sentative in 1774 and 1792. He was a delegate to the
Provincial Congress in 1775. He was a state senator in
1784 and 1785 and was chosen in convention to fill senate
vacancies in 1779, 1780, 1787, and 1792. He was moderator
of the March election meeting in 1780, 1781, 1784, 1791,
and 1792.

In 1768 he and Thomas Sanders represented Gloucester
at the convention in Feneuil Hall "to consult and advise
upon the present State of Public Affairs." In 1772 he
was on the first Committee of Correspondence which Glou­
cester chose. He was a member of the Essex County Conven­
tion in September 1774, and as the representative to the
General Court to meet in Salem he was instructed by the
town meeting to "use his Endeavors that the House of Rep­
resentatives form themselves into a provincial Congress and
that he serve as a member of the same." In December 1774
he was on a committee to enforce the Continental Associa­
tion. 137 In January 1775 he was chosen first lieutenant
colonel of the Sixth Regiment, of the Essex county militia.

It must have been around this time that he moved
to the Harbor but he was at his farm in the West Parish
between the Annisquam and Chebacco rivers when the British

137 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:105, 138, 152-53;
Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 143.
from H.M.S. Falcon under Captain Lindsey landed a party there in the summer of 1775, for he and a handful of men from his farm held them off. On that occasion, one of his slaves, Robert Freeman, saved Coffin's life and he freed him. Perhaps it was his part in the encounter which enabled him to convince the General Court to assign two eighteen-pound cannon used in the defense of Boston Harbor to Cape Ann, which was considered in danger. The court appointed him justice of the peace in 1775 and justice of the quorum in 1781, 1788 and 1789.138

When he died in 1796, he left his wife a third of his land, two oxen, five cows, fifteen sheep, two hogs, a third of the farm, and the use and improvement of his new house in the Harbor, and the outbuildings and gardens of the mansion. Besides lands in Newbury, Rowley, and Gloucester, he had a pew in the Harbor Meeting House, a watch, boots, silver buckles, gold buttons, and enough silver plate to divide among his wife and six daughters. His estate was valued at $14,169.82.139 Wealthy before the Revolution, he


139 ECPCR No. 5781.
moved the town towards it, stepping easily into the positions held by Stevens and Sanders. Having put much effort into bringing Gloucester to the Revolution, he lived to see the benefits of it from positions of honor and service in town and state.

John Low (1728-1796) the son of John Low and Mary Allen, was born in Gloucester, the fourth generation of his family in Massachusetts. The first John Low was master of one of the vessels which sailed with Governor Winthrop. In 1752 he married Sarah, daughter of Reverend Joshua Gee of Boston's Old North Church. Earlier he had received some land in Wells, Maine from his father, but he stayed in Gloucester where he became prosperous through trading with the West Indies and fishing from the Squam River, even though he owned a valuable farm. In 1757 he lost £19:4:6 in the wreck of the Resolution. 140

By 1771 he was in the top quarter of Gloucester taxpayers, paying £5:17:8 on a poll, a house, a warehouse, six hundred feet of wharf, real estate worth £44:1:4 annually, two hundred tons of vessels, £90 stock in trade, two horses, six oxen, six cows, four swine, one hundred twenty acres of pasture supporting twenty-five cows, four acres of tillage producing eighty bushels of grain, orchards

140 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 435; Orin M. Lowe, Waldo H. Lowe, and Ellen M. Merriam, The Ancestors of the John Lowe Family Circle and Their Descendants (Fitchburg: Sentinel Printing Co., 1901), 19; Babson,
producing twelve barrels of cider, and forty-three acres
of marsh and meadow producing forty tons of hay.\footnote{141}

He began public officeholding before 1754 and was
in high and minor offices the rest of his life, and often
in several at the same time. His town service included
seven times as surveyor of highways, sixteen as fence viewer,
and occasional terms as culler of fish or wood, and fire
warden. From 1756 to 1796 he was a selectman every year
but five (1758, 1771, 1777, 1779, and 1780). In 1778 he
was chosen treasurer, but was excused in the May meeting
when he was chosen representative. He moderated the March
meeting in 1782 and 1783 and from 1786 to 1789. He served
as representative in 1774, 1776, 1778, 1781, 1783, 1788,
1792, 1794–96. He and Peter Coffin, aided by Whittemore,
were the main movers in the days before the Revolution.
In 1774 he was on a committee "to consult with the Sea
Ports under measures to releive [sic] the Colonies under
the Act of Parliament blocking up the Town of Boston," and
on a committee to get the non-importation agreement signed.
He was a member of the Essex County Convention in Septem-
ber, and in December was on the committee to enforce the

\footnote{Notes and Additions II, 127; deed of land in Wells from
John Lowe to his son John, October 31, 1740, Misc. Mss.
MHS; statement regarding losses through shipwreck of
Resolution, October 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers, MHS;
Pringle, History of Gloucester, 95.}

\footnote{1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:23.}
Continental Association. That summer and fall he had moderated the town meetings which carried the town into the Revolution. In the midst of the movement towards war he was one of those insuring his three Grand Bank fishing vessels against loss. That year he had three valued at £900. When the war checked the trade and fishing he turned to privateering as master and bonder of Winthrop Sargent's brig, General Mercer. In 1781 his ship, Friendship, was engaged in privateering and in 1782 his schooner, Ranger.143

In 1775, he was a lieutenant colonel in the Sixth Regiment of the Essex County militia and afterwards colonel. He was appointed justice of the peace in 1776, 1781, and 1788. He was a delegate to the state constitutional convention of the United States where he voted for ratification. In the midst of all this he found time to serve as deacon of the Fourth Church.144

When he died returning from a selectmen's meeting on November 3, 1796, he left $10,465 worth of real estate in Gloucester and Portland, and $2,403 in personal estate, including $155 in wearing apparel, $127 worth of plate, a clock, desk and looking glass, six feather beds, and

142 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:151-53.
144 Babson, Gloucester, 114; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 86; Records of Civil Commissions, 1776-1787, pt. 1, n.p.; pt. 2, 2; 1787-1806, 13, MSA.
bedsteads with an ample supply of linen worth $257.60 and $785.39 in notes which the town owed the estate. He had 877 pounds of pork and 2,707 pounds of beef on hand, no doubt the product of the fall slaughter which still left him with 114 head of livestock worth over $1,000. 145

Samuel Whittemore (1733-1806) was born in Cambridge, the son of Deacon Samuel Whittemore and Mary Hicks. His father was a Cambridge landholder and shopkeeper where he carried on business as a currier. He was active in church affairs as far away as Worcester County. Young Samuel was graduated from Harvard in 1751 and came to Gloucester to teach. He returned to Harvard the last half of 1756, perhaps to study for the ministry. Instead he married Margaret, daughter of the Reverend Joshua Gee of Boston's Second Church. When Gloucester opened a permanent grammar school at the Harbor in 1758, Whittemore returned to teach there. That year and the next he was chosen tythingman. Soon after he passed inspection by the Essex County ministers, he built a house and shop. He must have become fairly prosperous because he donated books and scientific equipment to Harvard. 146

145ECPCR No. 36588.
By 1771 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers charged £2:6:3 on two polls, a house, one-third of a warehouse, real estate worth £24:4 annually, £200 stock in trade, two horses, a cow, fourteen acres of pasture supporting four cows, and five acres producing five tons of hay. When his wife died in 1773 he married Sarah Parsons, the daughter of Selectman Jacob Parsons, and widow of Nathan Parsons. 147

Whittemore served over fifty terms in minor offices in addition to being selectman from 1765 to 1770, and 1772, town clerk from October, 1779 to 1781, moderator in 1773, 1774, 1778, 1779, 1782-1784, 1786, 1791, and 1793, and treasurer 1774-1776. In 1779 and 1780 he was a member of the state constitutional convention. Chosen representative in 1783, he resigned to accept appointment as naval officer for Gloucester.

He was an early supporter of the Revolution, being one of the Committee of Inspection in 1770 to see that the non-importation agreement was kept. In 1772 he was on the town's first Committee of Correspondence, and that year he was one of the selectmen who warned Richard Silvester, the customs official, to leave town. 148 In 1774


he was on a committee to consult with the other seaports about relief when the port of Boston was closed. He also represented Gloucester in the Essex County Convention in September 1774, and in December he was on a committee to enforce the Continental Association. In January 1775 he was elected first major of the Sixth Regiment of the Essex County militia. In April he was chosen commissary, and stood bond for some privateering ventures. The following year he was one of the early justices of the peace appointed by the new government, and he served until 1796. That same year he was named state naval officer for Gloucester. In 1778 he accepted appointment as a notary public for Essex County. After the war he continued in many of these offices, adding that of assay master for pot and pearl ash in 1786, and surveyor of the port of Gloucester in 1790, and inspector of the port in 1792. In 1796 he was general manager of the Gloucester Road Lottery. A Federalist, he lost some of his posts when the Republicans took office.

While many of the wealthy merchants and high town officers supported the Universalists, Whittemore wrote answers to their pamphlet charges on behalf of the First

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Church. When he died in 1806 he left an estate of $8,512.37, over $6,000 of it in real estate including the family mansion worth $3,600 and another house worth $500.\textsuperscript{151} 

Whittemore was an example of those men of the Revolution who found they could spend much of their time and energies in public service. They worked for the Revolution and, in turn, the Revolution worked for them. Yet it was much more than a matter of profit as his fifty-four terms in minor town offices indicate. Public offices extended his contacts with his townsmen, and they, in turn, were glad to let him bear the burden of multiple town offices. Though he and a handful of other high town officers led Gloucester into the Revolution, their continued leadership was not a foregone conclusion. As in Concord, neither wealth, family, nor business success assured re-election, as the large number of one-year selectmen shows. Everywhere the trusted high town officers had to be able to read the will of the people, perhaps by being able to sense the direction they were willing to go. In Gloucester, those men who grasped the shape of the future were free to hold as many offices in town and beyond as they could manage. Some, like Stevens, Sanders, and Witham, moved the town towards the Revolution, but they were supported throughout by Coffin, Low, and

\footnote{ECPCR No. 29687.}
Whittemore, the core of the Board of Selectmen. When they passed from the scene, this core took their places in the offices which tied Gloucester to the county and the state. What is remarkable about them is the length of time they continued to read and interpret the mind of the town correctly, and no doubt to shape it in the process.
THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CONCORD, GLOUCESTER, AND PITTSFIELD, 1763-1789

Volume II

A Dissertation

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CHAPTER IV

REVOLUTIONARY GLOUCESTER

Introduction

Indications of how the town would react to parliamentary legislation in the mid-1770s appeared much earlier. On October 7, 1765, during the Stamp Act crisis, Gloucester had a special town meeting to draw up instructions for its representatives, Thomas Sanders, Jr., and Nathaniel Allen. The town voted "most unanimous . . . that the Stamp Act is disagreeable." The representatives were to make no concessions or agreements whereby "our Liberties by Magna Carta or our Charter . . . be infringed or construed in any sense to give up or lessen." They were to endeavor "by all direct and lawful means" to see that the Stamp Act:

may never take place among us, . . for it would obstruct if not . . . totally ruin the Trade and Business of the Province and lay an unsupportable burden upon all, more especially in the middle and poorer sort of the people and take from us the Privilege of Trial by Jury and the grand privilege of taxing ourselves which appear to be the original Rights of all Mankind that are not slaves.¹

¹Town Meeting Records, TRG 3:87.

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The representatives were further warned against accepting taxes for "any other besides the usual necessary accustomed charges of the Province." The following year the town's representatives were instructed not to consent to indemnifying the sufferers of the mobs the year before because that would "be giving up our Rights." In 1767 the town directed the selectmen, the constables, and other high town officers to get the subscription of the non-importation agreement filled up. In the fall, 1768, only Epes Sargent warned against sending Thomas Sanders and Peter Coffin to the meeting in Fanueil Hall "to consult and advise on the present State of the Public Affairs." ²

When Sanders was chosen representative in May 1769 he was instructed "as much as possible to comply with the Spirit of the instructions given by the Town of Boston [to] their Representative." The following spring the town meeting was "To consider of some Measurers to preserve our invaded [sic] Liberties." That year Sanders was elected to the Council by the House for the third time and this time he was not negated by the governor. When the town met to replace him in the House it also chose a Committee of Inspection to see that the inhabitants complied with the March meeting's decisions on non-importation as the best means "to release us under our present

²Ibid., 103-04, 110.
distresses." And by this time Gloucester was thanking Boston for its actions to "secure our invaded Liberties," and named non-importers as enemies to their country. The town approved the boycott on tea since the tea tax raised revenue, and promised to join "in any legal measurers to recover our invaded Liberties and Privileges." It even sent a copy of the votes to the selectmen of Boston.³

Two years passed with little activity in the town records, but when the town did act, it was to "fit up the Fort or Battery House ... to keep the Town's Stock of Powder & Ammunition." That December, Gloucester chose a Committee of Correspondence. By the spring it had chosen a committee to report on future plans for maintaining the poor, perhaps in anticipation of trouble if Hutchinson and the town of Boston could not reach an agreement on the disposal of the tea in the harbor of Boston. As the tea crisis approached its end, the town meeting supported and thanked Boston's leaders as "the friends of human nature and guardians of that heavenly palladium--the liberties of America." More practically, it promised "to hold ourselves in readiness to join the town of Boston in all measures to extricate ourselves from tyranny and oppression."⁴ With support like that Boston moved confidently into the Tea Party and nearer to revolution.

³Ibid., 116-18, 121-23.

⁴Ibid., 130-31, 138, 141, 146-68; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 70.
During 1774 the town moved closer to revolution through a heavy schedule of town meetings, committee reports, participation in county conventions, and support for the Provincial and Continental Congress. Though Gloucester agreed that the act of Parliament for blocking up the port of Boston was very bad, it did not want to jump into any action without the concurrence of merchants in the other ports, and so the town set up committees, usually of leading merchants, to consult with merchants in the other seaports on non-importation and "proper Measures to releive [sic] the Colonies under the Act of Parliament blocking up the Town of Boston."  

On June 28, 1774 the town came together to hear the acts of Parliament relative "to the Liberties of America & to consult and agree upon Measures to extricate us out of the Difficulties We Labour under." A committee on a covenant not to trade with Great Britain produced a document the meeting desired all the inhabitants to sign. The meeting also voted to pay the town's share of the expenses of Massachusetts' delegates to the Continental Congress. Later some residents requested that necessary shipping supplies, such as hemp and duck, be omitted from the covenant and that it not take effect "unless the Seaport Towns generally come into it." In August, 1774 the town meeting approved a subscription for the relief of "the

5Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:149.
Inhabitants of Boston under their present distress." When it met in September it agreed to pay Gloucester's delegates to the Essex County Congress which met at Ipswich earlier that month. Moreover, it instructed Representative Coffin to "use his endeavors that the House of Representatives form themselves into a provincial Congress & that he serve as a Member of the same in Behalf of this Town." 6

Though the town was moving steadily against the crown through all this, the warrants for the meetings had been issued in His Majesty's name. Yet the town began to collect gunpowder and it directed the town treasurer to pay the provincial tax of 1774 to the town treasurer rather than to the treasurer of the province, who was answerable to the governor. In November the town went further and agreed to indemnify and secure the constable from damages if he were sued because the town's provincial taxes were paid to the town treasurer. The meeting chose Witham and Coffin to serve in the Provincial Congress to meet in Cambridge, and later in Concord. They were instructed "not to consent to the assuming of the civil Government by the Province without Approbation of the Town having a plan of such government laid before them, nor without the consent of the Continental Congress." In June the town ordered the town treasurer to pay the provincial tax for 1774 to Henry Gardner, the receiver of the Provincial

6 Ibid., 151-53.
Congress. The meeting also directed the militia to choose its officers. The train bands and the alarm lists were told to parade and report the state of their arms and ammunition to the town. Yet the meeting also showed concern over those who were disorderly during the Sabbath services and took action against them. Not even revolutionaries were free to profane the Sabbath. And in some months when there was a smallpox scare, there was much greater concern over precautions against the disease than there was against the British threats to the liberties of the province. Even in the midst of approaching war, some things in life followed a predictable pattern.

Most of these meetings were moderated by John Low, though Samuel Whittemore or Dr. Samuel Plumer presided when he was absent. Whittemore ordered the town to have no commerce with Epes Sargent, and took £100 from the treasury to pay for a supply of small arms for the town's use. Minute men were raised at eight pence per day. They were to train twice weekly and choose their officers. A marginal note for the minutes of the meeting on April 21, 1775 reads, "19th Instant American Blood was spilt at Lexington by British robbers." Concerned about their ships at sea, the town enlarged the committee corresponding with other seaport towns and sent Nathaniel Warner to buy weapons. No longer as cautious as they had been

\[7\text{Ibid., 153-57.}\]
earlier, the Gloucester men now directed that Coffin and Whittemore "be left to act according to their Discretion with respect to assuming the civil government." Three days later the town chose a Committee of Safety. Joseph Foster was named captain of the alarm list and the selectmen and the Committee of Safety were to give orders as to how the watch should be kept. The following months saw two Gloucester companies at Bunker Hill and little time for town meetings. An enlarged Committee of Correspondence was chosen in January 1776, but not until May 1776 did election warrants go out "in the name of the Government and people of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay." It was well that the town made that change, for at the meeting on May 27, 1776 the inhabitants voted for independence 125-0, by walking to one side of the meetinghouse. In August the town was attacked by an English sloop of war, the Falcon, and Representative Coffin was able to get some artillery from Boston to protect the town.  

By the summer and fall of 1777 the war restrictions on the fishing and commerce of the town were beginning to affect tax collections. Constables were replaced and many refused to serve. In January 1778 Representatives Coffin and Low were told "to act & do as they shall judge

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8 Ibid., 160-61, 166, 175-76; Babson, Gloucester, 393-96; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 76-77; Benjamin Lincoln to Richard Devens, May 31, 1776, C. E. French Papers, MHS.
most for the advantage of this state of Massachusetts Bay & the other united States relative to the Articles of Confederation." In November the town rejected the state legislature as the framer of a state constitution, and in May 1779 when the General Court presented a constitution to the towns, Gloucester rejected it 109-0.⁹

From 1778 on the town increasingly reflected the severe hardships the war brought to ports like Gloucester. In August 1778 the General Court ordered the selectman to appear before it to answer for the failure of the town to meet its quota for the army's clothing. The town entered the risky business of privateering where the profits were high and the losses in men supplies often devastating. This trouble continued the following year when the town failed to meet its army quota. Raising loans and subscriptions for bounties did not help, and friction in the town meeting intensified. Finally, during 1779 tension in the town nearly reached a breaking point and in March 1780 the entire Board of Selectmen chosen refused to serve. The hardships of this period are reflected in the number of constables who paid fines rather than serve, and the town often postponed meetings rather than carry out town business with few inhabitants present. Polls dropped from 1,053 in 1775 to 696 in 1779. In 1779 the town asked for

⁹Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:198, 201, 207-08, 222-42; Babson, Gloucester, 417-18; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 81-82; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 151.
an abatement of province taxes and many wealthy townsmen moved away.\textsuperscript{10} By the spring of 1781 things appeared a little more orderly, but men were still reluctant to serve; Colonel John Low was the only experienced selectman on the board. From March 1782 until June the town fought over constables, the number of selectmen, and finances. The town's destitute state affected even its earlier patriotism, for when Boston sent a circular letter on illicit trade, the town meeting approved it, but asked for a voluntary engagement to stop the smuggling.

Clearly Gloucester's path into the Revolution was a lot easier than her progress through it. The privateering ventures upon which the town depended became difficult to man when, in April 1777, captains were forbidden to sign on any man from a town short of its quota for the Continental Army.\textsuperscript{11} Unlike more fertile farming towns such as Concord, Gloucester's sustenance as well as her prosperity came from trade which depended, in turn, on the fisheries. Cut off from them, the trade dwindled to a trickle and the town suffered rather than prospered through the Revolution. Her revolutionary leadership had at its core the men who brought the town into the war. Until a new generation emerged, strengthened by the economic

\textsuperscript{10} Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:218, 222-42; Babson, Gloucester, 417-18; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 81-82; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 151. The minutes for the March 1780 town meeting were not entered.

\textsuperscript{11} Allen, Mass. Privateers, 282.
prosperity which returned with the peace, Gloucester found few other high town officers of the caliber of her late colonial leaders.

Collective Biography

The greatest change in local government that the Revolution brought to Gloucester was a decline in multiple officeholding and the consequent opening of high town office to a greater number of men, though not necessarily to a different kind of men. Gloucester elected twice as many men to high town office from 1775 to 1789 as it had from 1763 to 1774. If we count the ten who served in both periods with Revolutionary Gloucester rather than with the earlier group, it would be as high as four times as many. Thus, in Gloucester the Revolution opened the way for more men in high town office, mainly through the elimination of multiple officeholding. While Gloucester did not lack Tories to replace, there is no evidence that this change in officeholding patterns resulted from Revolutionary ideology, although the heavy loss of life connected with privateering, and the dislocation caused by the war in general, must have had something to do with it.

From 1775 until after the war few men had long tenure in high town office. Two men served three years, two men served four years, and one man served five years between 1775 and 1784. These were the only new men who served even this long in office until 1782 when Nehemiah
Parsons began his fifteen years as treasurer. But even this more "open" pattern did not long survive the Revolution. A new trend toward continuity appeared after 1785 when a group of men began to serve together on the Board of Selectmen and in the remaining high town offices. Each of them held only one office for many years.

Just as before the war, Gloucester discovered most of her post-war leaders among well-known sea captains, merchants, or farmers. They usually held minor offices before becoming selectmen. The war gave militia officers experience in leadership which many used as a step to high town office. But their years of military service, and the continued presence of the men who brought Gloucester into the Revolution, meant these "new" men began high town office at an older age than their colonial counterparts had. This late start, in more prosperous times, may be the reason for the slightly greater prosperity found in the estate inventories of these later leaders. Even though several were too young to have much wealth taxed in 1771, forty-eight percent of revolutionary Gloucester's leaders appeared in the top quarter of the tax list, close to the fifty percent of the high town officers of colonial Gloucester who were in this bracket. Thus, most of the high town officers of revolutionary Gloucester were prosperous to wealthy merchants, with the West Parish and Sandy Bay contributing men who were mainly prosperous farmers.
While a number of high town officers, including two of the four Harvard graduates in the group, settled in Gloucester from other towns, intermarriage among families of high town officers increased during the war. Haskells, Sargents, Ellerys, Allens, the Stevens, and the Rogers families strengthened ties started in earlier generations. After 1775 the larger number of high town officers made intermarriage more likely, and militia service, privateering, and business ventures increased opportunities for cooperation and friendship among men who later served together in high town office.

The pattern of county officeholding both changed and remained the same. It changed in that of the six Gloucester men appointed to county office during the Revolution or after, five were high town officers in colonial Gloucester who had never been appointed before. Samuel Whittemore was also notary and state naval officer for Gloucester, as well as surveyor and collector of the port. The men who were appointed supported the new central government of Massachusetts, much as the earlier justices had supported the policies of colonial governors, and in this the pattern remained the same. But revolutionary Gloucester offered no examples of new men who moved from militia office to high town office to the county courts. Neither did the town have any spokesman on the Council to serve on the higher state courts as Thomas Sanders, Jr. had in the 1770s.
Before and after the Revolution, high town officers were men who proved their competence and leadership in other areas before election. If they did not satisfy the town, or if they considered high town office a burden, they served only one year. But beyond that, high town office does not seem to have served as a base for the exercise of power in Gloucester as much as it did in Concord, and perhaps this is another explanation for the many cases of short tenure. Little power in Gloucester was centered in the militia. Only two general musters took place in the period under study: one in 1768 and another in 1788. Gloucester was founded on fish, trade, and mercantile adventures, and the town leaders were not judged for their political skill displayed in town meetings as much as for the competence they had shown in planning, outfitting, and commanding merchant vessels. In a town like Concord, a man's tax bill might hinge on a town officer's judgment. In Gloucester, it might be his life that rested on the officer's judgment. The Revolution did not change the reality, so high town office remained for most of the period something men accepted if they were leaders in the fishing and merchant fleets, as well as the mercantile activity based on the fisheries. Acceptance showed willingness to serve and provided for growth in the mutual trust so necessary in Gloucester's greater dependence on the sea.

In this light, then, we may note that the transition
away from multiple officeholding and the emergence of high
town officers who served together for many years occurred
simultaneously with economic recovery and a new prosperity
in the late 1780s. During the prosperity that followed
the lean years of the Revolution, and the post-Revolution
depression, people were less interested in government, or
at least less critical, and more willing to let elected
officials rule unchallenged.

Forty men held high town office in revolutionary
Gloucester, from 1775-1789. Two of them, Daniel Witham
and Samuel Griffin, served only one year (1775); Daniel
Rogers and Francis Pool each served two terms, John Smith
served four, and Samuel Plumer and Joseph Foster each served
five terms. As we have seen, three of the most important
leaders of colonial Gloucester—Coffin, Low, and Whitte-
more—continued to be important leaders in revolutionary
Gloucester. As far as the town meeting was concerned,
these three men could be trusted with multiple high town
offices, and they often were. Whittemore, who was a multiple
officeholder in 1775, 1776, and 1779, served nine terms in
various posts before state and federal posts took at his
attention. Coffin, representative and selectman from
1775 to 1778, and representative and moderator in 1780
and 1781, served fifteen terms in all. John Low served
twenty-seven terms: selectman and representative in 1776,
1778, and 1781, selectman and moderator in 1783 and 1788.
In all he spent ten years as a multiple officeholder after
the Revolution began. Both Coffin and Low continued in various high town offices beyond the closing years of this study.

Gloucester had a large pool of talent from which to draw high town officers. Thirty men began their first terms in high town office between 1775 and 1789. Eighteen of these held only the office of selectman. Seven men served as selectmen for only one year, five for two years, two served three years, and two five years. Only one of these eighteen served beyond 1789. Occasionally, Gloucester elected its less important leaders to multiple offices. Four men, for example, who held the office of selectman for a short time also held one other office. Winthrop Sargent was selectman and representative in 1775; Jacob Allen was selectman two years and treasurer four years; and James Porter was selectman three years and town clerk four years. William Ellery was representative and selectman in different years. These four men and the eighteen who held only the post of selectman functioned as the common leaders of revolutionary Gloucester (see Table 7).

Gloucester faced the post-war years with a new pattern of officeholding which it did not apply to holdovers from colonial Gloucester. The town meeting held to its earlier tradition of multiple officeholding for the men who brought the town into and through the Revolution. Together, Coffin, Low, and Whittemore served as multiple high town officers nineteen times from 1775 to 1789. Eight
# Table 7

## Revolutionary Gloucester High Town Officers, 1763-1789

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## Colonial Leaders

Who Served After 1774

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| Samuel Foster| S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| Samuel Griffin| S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| John Low     | S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| Samuel Plomer| M M M M M M M M M M | S S S S S S S |
| Francis Pool | S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| Daniel Rogers | S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| John Smith   | S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| Samuel Whittemore| S S S S S S S S S S | S S S S S S S |
| Daniel Witham| SC SC SC SC SC SC SC SC SC SC | C T T M |

**Notes:**
- H - Moderator
- S - Selectman
- C - Town Clerk
- T - Town Treasurer
- R - Representative

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other men served nine years or longer in high town office after 1775. Along with Coffin, Low, and Whittemore, they were the larger leaders of revolutionary Gloucester. Three of the newcomers rose to high town office before the war ended, but none of the new men was a multiple officeholder, though one, Nehemiah Parsons was selectman and treasurer at different times. Five other men held the office of selectman for at least nine years each, and one held office for twenty years. John Rogers began his forty-five years as town clerk in this period.

During this time, besides the long tenure of Rogers as town clerk, Gloucester provided continuity in public administration by electing some men as selectmen three to five times. Joseph Allen (1782-1784), Barnabas Dodge (1780-1782), Thomas Marrett (1776-1780), and Joseph Proctor (1785-1789). Other men served longer: James Pearson (1784-1793), Caleb Pool (1785-1795 except for 1788), John Somes (1785-1795), Stephen Haskell (1780-1794), and James Day (1785-1804). In 1785 a Board of Selectmen was chosen which was re-elected every year until 1790 with only one exception in 1790 when one member of the Board was replaced. Most of the Board continued to serve together until 1795. This and the long tenure of John Rogers as town clerk was the first indication of a break in the pattern of repeated turnovers since the recurrence of Coffin, Low, Griffin, and Whittemore in office before the war. Gloucester also kept Coffin in the General Court.
for ten years and attempted to retain the same treasurer. But during the war there was much less continuity in Gloucester town offices, and the voters apparently did not consider it important. When a stable Board of Selectmen returned in 1785, and Rogers and Parsons gained experience as town clerk and treasurer, respectively, the town meeting records began to show greater evidence of order. By 1789 a sense of vigor or unity began to appear, as matters which formerly took much discussion and committee work, were handled quickly, with little evidence of dissent. Perhaps most townsmen were anxious to recover the economic losses of the war years. Yet, when one considers the wide experience the merchants of Gloucester had in trade and commerce, it is surprising that the minutes did not reflect a sense of efficiency earlier.

From 1775 to 1789 four men held the office of town clerk, an average of 3.9 years each. But this is misleading because both Porter and Whittemore served less than three years, aided by William Pearson who was also a selectman the year he substituted for Whittemore. At the beginning of the period Witham served the last of his forty years as town clerk and at the end of the period John Rogers served the first of forty-five years in that office. Evidently Gloucester believed in long tenure for town clerks, and the men who served between Witham and Rogers were only temporary stand-ins and either did not suit the town or did not choose to continue in the office.
Seven men served as representatives to the General Court or delegates to the Provincial Congresses during this period. Gloucester sent five men to the Provincial Congress in 1775 and often sent two to the General Court, so in all they served a total of thirty-nine terms with a range from one to ten terms each, and a median of four terms.

From 1775 to 1789 five men became treasurers, but four of them served fewer than four years combined. Whittemore continued the three years he had begun to serve before the war, but probably his other posts led to his being replaced by Dr. Samuel Plumer who served only a year before he retired. John Low was excused after three months when he was chosen representative. Jacob Allen served four years— from 1778 until he died. Not until 1781, when it chose Nehemiah Parsons, did the town find a treasurer who held the post as long as Stevens and Sanders had before the war. Parsons eventually served for fifteen years (1782-1796), eight of them in this period.

From 1775 to 1789 thirty men served a total of eighty-three terms as selectmen, an average of 2.76 terms each. Beside Coffin, Griffin and Low, few of them had seen service as selectmen before the war. Evidently the town was willing to continue selectmen in office, but many looked on the post as a burden, and were glad to step down once they had performed their duty, for many of them served only one year. Seven men were selectmen for two years, four men, all new to the office after 1775,
served for three years. Three men served for four years, one of whom continued in office six years beyond 1789. Four men served for five years, and two of them were larger leaders who remained in office after 1789, one serving six and another for nine years.

Outside of Low and his companions from the earlier years, few officeholders after 1775 ever held more than one high town office throughout their public career, and multiple officeholding was even rarer. This may indicate a greater democratization in high town office or more likely the town merely opened the offices to more of the economic and social elite.

The town's conservatism was also reflected in the average age at which high town offices of revolutionary Gloucester moved into high office. The average of 44.11 is a year and a half higher than Edward Cook found for all of New England, and three and a quarter years older than the average for colonial Gloucester. The average age at which men first entered each of the offices was also from three months to nine years and three months higher in revolutionary Gloucester (except for treasurers, who were, on the average, two years younger when they first took office). If there were "young men of the Revolution" in Gloucester who achieved high town offices, they got into them before the war began (see Table 8).

Even though the town held over so few high town offices after 1775, it continued to place prosperous to
TABLE 8
Average Age on Beginning High Town Offices,
Gloucester, 1775-1789

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<th>Position</th>
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<td>Selectmen</td>
<td>38.48</td>
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<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>40.</td>
<td>34-46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Treasurer</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>36-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46-61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>44.11</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

wealthy men in these high town offices. Forty-eight percent of the high town officers of the period fell into the top half of the tax assessments in 1771, and thirty percent fell into the top quarter. Five percent fell into the lowest quarter, and thirty-six percent, mostly men in their twenties and early thirties in 1770, fell into the third quarter. Seven of the seventeen men in the lower half of the taxpayers in 1771, were sufficiently wealthy by 1796 to be copartners in the First Bank of Gloucester when it opened. Figures from probate records of seventeen of the men indicate that 76.3 percent were prosperous to wealthy. Even though many of the high town officers of revolutionary Gloucester were relatively young in 1771, they still owned £2195 (21.4%) of the
town's stock in trade, 1335 tons of vessels (17.7%), five shops (11%), 8.83 warehouses (18.7%), 2600 feet of wharf (23%) and six servants for life (18%). 12

Few of this group attended Harvard, in part because of the war and the lure of privateering for those merchant families to whom other avenues of trade and income were closed by the war. Professionals in town included Dr. Samuel Rogers who received his medical training during the French and Indian War, Daniel Witham who also practiced medicine, and Dr. Samuel Plumer. As Witham and Plumer both died before 1778 they did not contribute to the professional group in town during much of the period after 1775. Physicians of a later date did not hold office in Gloucester.

Although Gloucester had six militia companies, the militia did not hold the importance for the town which it held in other towns like Concord. Some twenty militia titles are attributed to townsmen by the official records, including an ensign, four lieutenants, eleven captains, a major and a colonel. The town records, however, include elections to high town office of seventeen captains, three majors, and four colonels. No doubt, many of the captains were masters of vessels, which was the source of real status in the community.

On the whole, revolutionary Gloucester continued to choose prosperous to wealthy high town officers, though at a slightly higher age than in colonial Gloucester. Again, for many men office was a public service one performed as one prospered. The greatest change brought on by the Revolution was the shift away from the practice of multiple officeholding. The exceptions to this change were made, not for naval and military heroes of the war, but for the town's local revolutionary leaders, men like Coffin and Low, who were the town's men for all seasons, and who had carried the town into and through the Revolution. Perhaps men like Parsons, Haskell, Day, and Rogers carried out the tradition of continuity, though in a sharply modified form. Not only did they not hold multiple offices, but each of them served in only one high town office throughout his public career. As in Concord, their individual biographies will show how they were often connected by marriage and business ties, as well as by their common experience of making their town work in the new nation.

The Evidence

Common Leaders

Although the twenty-two common leaders of revolutionary Gloucester served a total of fifty-eight terms in high town office from 1775 to 1789, very little is known about most of them beyond the bare facts of family, town office, service in the militia or in privateering, and
some scanty indications of their wealth. Of the common leaders, 63 percent seem to have been related to families of other high town officers and 63 percent served in the militia or were engaged in privateering ventures. This was sometimes by actual service, but more often through part ownership or as bonders of privateering ventures. Half of these common leaders were members of revolutionary committees of safety, correspondence, or inspection, and 32 percent were wealthy, and 36 percent were at least prosperous. The financial status of another third of the group cannot be ascertained. Many of these men were too young for their wealth to be reflected in the 1771 Valuation List and some may have left Essex County after the war, leaving no trace through probate courts. A few, important merchants, left sufficient records to let us see how precarious the economy of a seaport town could be in the years between the American Revolution and the fall of Napoleon. Others showed the flexibility which enabled them to survive and prosper, even under changing economic conditions. But on the whole, most of these common leaders appear to have been little more than just that. They did what was needed in war and in peace, served the town and their churches in office, raised and settled families, and left the larger deeds to other men.

We have scanty information about fourteen of the twenty-two common leaders of revolutionary Gloucester. Among them was Samuel Rogers (1731-1777) who seemed to be
destined for greater things by family background and early experience. His father was Colonel Samuel Rogers of Ipswich, justice of the peace and register of probate, and special justice of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas. He was born in Ipswich and served as a surgeon at Ticonderoga and at Louisburg despite his youth. He married Mrs. Elizabeth Willis of Gloucester and in 1767 they settled in the town where his cousin, Reverend John Rogers, was pastor of the Fourth Parish.  

In 1771 when he was monitor and clerk of the market he ranked in the third quarter of taxpayers, assessed 16s 4d on a poll, a shop, real estate worth £10 annually, a horse, a cow, and a hog. In 1775 he was named a selectman, and took part in the military preparations. He served as an officer in the militia and was in command of a company of Minute Men. But Dr. Samuel Rogers died in 1777 at the age of thirty-seven.  

A selectman who settled in town from outside was James Prentiss (1741-1797), who was born in Cambridge. He was graduated from Harvard in 1761 and came to teach in the Harbor school, settling in Squam where he also taught occasionally. Then he kept a tavern in town and married Lydia, the daughter of Captain Thomas Saunders.

14 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30; Babson, Gloucester, 413-14.
Unlike most town officers, in 1771 he was in the fourth (or lowest) quarter of taxpayers, assessed 6s 2d on only a poll and a house. He signed the Universalist's Articles of Association in 1777. He was clerk of the market in 1772 and 1782, surveyor of highways in 1776 and 1777, monitor in 1778, and grand juror in 1781. He was selectman in 1776 and 1777. He was in a company guarding naval prisoners, then as captain of marines, he sailed aboard the privateer Warren. In 1780 he was aboard the privateer America under Captain John Somes and is listed in the ship's rolls as six feet two inches tall and thirty-six years of age. After the war he moved to Boston where he died in 1797.  

Another selectman in 1777 who served quietly but lived to old age was Stephen Pool (1731-1813). He was the son of Ebenezer Pool and Elizabeth Norwood, and brother to Francis Pool, the selectman. He was born in Gloucester and married Judith Grover in 1754. His family was among the earliest settlers at Sandy Bay and his father was the first selectman chosen from the newly established parish in 1756. 

\[15\] Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XV, 100; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30; Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 8; Revolutionary Rolls, MSA 40:57.

\[16\] Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 57.
In 1771 Stephen had a house, real estate worth £4:6 annually, a horse, three cows, five sheep, two swine, fourteen acres of pasture supporting his cattle, and one acre of tillage which produced fifteen bushels of grain. This placed him in the third quarter of taxpayers; he was assessed 18s 6d that year. In 1777 he served one year as selectman, and continued in minor offices such as fence viewer in 1778, hogreeve in 1782, and juror and constable of the Cape Parish in 1784. He died in 1813 age eighty-two. 17

A neighbor of his, John Row (1737-1800) the son of John Row and Mary Baker, was born in Gloucester in 1737. His grandmother was Martha Low and he married Sarah Pool. He was a sergeant in his father's company against the French in 1755. By 1770 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers, assessed 18s 6d on a poll, a house, real estate worth £2 annually, one cow, and a hog. 18

He was an active supporter of the Revolution, being captain of one of the Gloucester companies at Bunker Hill. Mark Pool, Ebenezer Cleveland, and the son of Mark Pool were in his company. In 1776 he was named to the Committee of Safety, Correspondence, and Inspection. That summer he was captured by a British vessel and taken to New York.


18 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA, 133:21.
He must have been exchanged because he was made first major in Colonel James Collins' Sixth Essex County Massachusetts militia in 1777. In 1778 he was chosen selectman. In 1780 he was a recruiter for the army. In 1783 he was again named to the Committee of Correspondence. He died in 1800 at the age of sixty-three. 19

In 1771 James Porter (? - 1780) appeared in the valuation list assessed at £1:0:4 for a poll, a house, a shop, £300 stock in trade, and real estate worth £11 annually. That year he was clerk of the market and measurer and corder of wool, so he most likely had been in Gloucester for some time. He was juror in 1772 and 1773, and clerk of the market again in 1774. From October 1775 to March of 1779 he served as town clerk and was a selectman in 1775, and 1777-1778. He did not serve in the Revolution, but was involved with town business, serving in 1778, for example, on the Committee on Government which reported that the legislature was not the proper body to draw up a state constitution. That year he was also a delegate to the Essex County Convention at Ipswich. 20

When he died in 1792 he left a substantial estate

19 Babson, Gloucester, 596; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XIII, 618; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:169, 271; List of Recruiting Officers, April, 1780, William Heath Papers, MHS.

20 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:205, 207-08.
of £670:17:0. He had a house and lot worth £500. The single largest item in his personal estate was £13 for some seventy volumes of books. Most likely he was a bachelor who lived a comfortable but not luxurious life.  

Joseph Evelith (1741-1806) was a native who remained in Gloucester when opportunities called others in his family away from the town. He was the son of Isaac, Jr. and Elizabeth Parsons Evelith. His father was a prime mover in opening roads and preparing for the settlement of families in the area of New Gloucester, Maine which the General Court had granted to sixty inhabitants of Gloucester in 1736. One son, Nathaniel, stayed on in the new settlement and became an important high town officer there. But Joseph remained in Gloucester and became hogreeve in 1770 when he paid 2d Is poll tax. He was not an annual minor official, but was constable in 1777 and selectman in 1779. He was one of those refusing to serve as selectman in 1780. He had served as a first lieutenant in Captain Gideon Parker's Company of Colonel Moses Little's 17th Regiment. He was still in town in 1785 when he served as surveyor of highways. He died at the age of sixty-five in 1806.  

\[21\] ECPCR No. 22465.  

\[22\] Vital Records of Gloucester I, 252; William Preble Jones, Four Boston Grandparents: Jones and Hill, Preble and Eveleth and their Ancestry (Amerville, Mass.: Wm. Preble Jones, 1930); 1771 Gloucester Valuation List,
Another outsider who came to teach school and remained in Gloucester as a high town officer was Thomas Marrett (1742-1785) of Cambridge. The son of Captain Edward Marrett and Mary Wyatt, he was graduated from Harvard in 1761 and taught school first in Weston, then in Gloucester at the Harbor and in Squam where he settled and turned to trade. In 1771 he was in the fourth quarter of taxpayers, assessed 4s 2d on a poll, one half a house, and real estate worth £1 annually. In 1768 and 1794 he was juror, in 1772 a tythingman, and in 1775 and 1778 a clerk of the market. From 1776 to 1779 he was a selectman. He did not serve in the militia during the war. He refused to serve as selectman in 1780, though he is marked "excused," perhaps in deference to his position as deacon of the Third Church of Gloucester. Shortly thereafter he returned to Cambridge where he died in 1784, age forty-three.\(^{23}\)

William Gee was in Gloucester at least from 1771 when he appeared in the third quarter of taxpayers assessed 11s 8d for two polls, a house, real estate worth £3 annually, a cow and two swine. He was active in minor town office at least from 1777 when he was hogreeve and constable. In 1778 he was monitor and constable, and in 1779 measurer of wood. When the entire Board of Selectmen

\(^{23}\)Babson, Gloucester, 351; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XV, 71; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:19.
chosen in 1780 refused to serve, probably due to unsettled conditions brought on by the depression of the port, William Gee was one of those chosen in their place. In 1781 his schooner Union under the command of Daniel Parsons captured a brig bringing clothing and provisions from Ireland. He continued to hold minor offices: juror in 1785, tythingman and surveyor of highways in 1788. Evidently he prospered for he was collector of taxes for four years from 1790 to 1795 when collectors had to give the selectmen surety for the amounts they were to collect. In 1796 he was one of the copartners of the First Bank of Gloucester.  

Samuel Leighton (1740-1802), the son of Samuel and Esther Leighton was born in Gloucester, where his father held minor town offices in the 1750s and was at least moderately prosperous, for in 1771 he was in the second quarter of taxpayers assessed £1:6:7 on property which included a shop, £200 stock in trade, £12 at interest, and real estate worth £13:10 annually. The son, Samuel, was most likely the militia officer who signed a receipt for balls and flints in July 1775. By 1780 he was juror and overseer of the poor and in 1781 he was fire warden and

selectman. He was also in poor enough health for the
town clerk to make a note of it in the town records.25
In 1782 he must have recovered, for he served that year as
surveyor of lumber, field driver, fire warden, monitor
and grand juror. He died in 1802.

Another selectman whose family was new to the
town was Ebenezer Cleveland (1754-1822), the son of
Reverend Ebenezer Cleveland and Abigail Stevens of Canter­
bury, Connecticut. He was born in Gloucester where his
father was preacher and later rector of the Fifth Church
in Sandy Bay. His father, suspended from Yale as a
religious dissenter who held to separatist beliefs, became
a chaplain in the French and Indian War, a missionary to
the Indians who worked for the establishment of the Indian
school which developed into Dartmouth College, superinten­
dent of the Dartmouth College lands, chaplain in the
Revolutionary War, and evangelist in Maine, New Hampshire,
and Vermont. When he was at home, he won for his church
a reputation as one of Sandy Bay's "monuments of religious
dissensions."26

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25 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:31;
Receipt for ammunition, July 5, 1775, Rare Book Room,
Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.; Town Meeting
Minutes, TRG 3:235.

26 Edmund James Cleveland and Horace Gillette
Cleveland, comp., The Genealogy of the Cleveland and
Cleaveland Families (3 vols.; Hartford, Conn.: privately
printed, 1899), I, 171-74; William Bentley, The Diary of
The son came of age with the Revolution and served first with his father in Colonel Jonathan Ward's regiment, then as an ensign in Captain John Row's company, Colonel Ebenezer Bridge's regiment in 1775 and the next year as a master-at-arms aboard the sloop Tyrannicide. He was a captain in Colonel Michael Jackson's regiment in 1777 and 1778. In 1777 he married Lois, the daughter of Selectman Francis Pool. In 1782 he was selectman. He died in 1822.  

Another late settler was James Hayes (1749-1834), an Irishman who settled in Gloucester by the time he was twenty-one and was paying a poll tax of 2d 1d in 1771. He supported the Revolution as a lieutenant in Captain William Pearson's Company stationed at Gloucester for the defense of the seacoast, serving for seven months and twenty-seven days in 1776.  

By 1781 he was a growing merchant who served as clerk of the market and grand juror. In 1783 he was a selectman and town clerk, pro tem. In 1784 he served a

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27 Edmund Cleveland and Horace Cleveland, Genealogy of the Cleveland . . . Families, 362; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, VII, 596; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 148.

28 Babson, Gloucester, 594; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:22; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, VII, 596; Babson, Notes and Additions II, 148.
second term as selectman. He was juror in 1787 and 1791 and clerk of the market and fire warden in 1794 and 1795. In 1795 he served on a committee to get a workhouse built for the town. He was a copartner in the First Bank of Gloucester.  

He became a Federalist of some political influence and was especially active in the town and state elections of 1808. By 1815 he was representative, perhaps as a reward for his loyal support of the Federalists faction which governed the town since the 1808 election. In later years he moved to Charleston, New Hampshire where he died in 1834 at the age of eighty-five.  

William Babson (1749-1831), the son of William Babson and Martha Haraden, was born in Gloucester. He married Anna (Nancy) Rogers, the daughter of Reverend John and Mary Ellery Rogers. A sea-captain, he lived in Annisquam Parish. In 1778 he was lieutenant on the brigantine privateer Civil Usage under Captain John Smith. That same year he was named constable. Evidently his privateering ventures kept him from town office, for he did not appear again until 1781 when he began holding up to four minor offices annually. Eventually he held  

29_Gloucester, Century Celebration_, 36; _Contract for the town of Gloucester, June 10, 1795_, Misc. Bound Mss. MHS.  

30_Babson, Gloucester, 506, 594._
thirty-one such offices in fourteen years, with only a single term as selectman in 1784. That year he was also captain of the brig Union which carried fish and spermaceti candles to Cadiz. In 1796 he was a copartner in the First Bank of Gloucester. He was prosperous when he died in 1831. He left an estate of $4,410.81, including over $2,500 in real estate and twelve and a half shares in the First Bank of Gloucester worth $1,250.00. 31

Joseph Allen (1755-1831), the son of Nathaniel Allen and Sarah Sargent was born in Gloucester. His father, and both of his grandfathers were representatives and many of his relatives were high town officers in the Haskell, Day, and Parsons families. On the eve of the Revolution his father moved to New Hampshire and when Joseph was graduated from Harvard in 1774 he followed him to Dover, New Hampshire. He returned in time to move into high town office as a selectman from 1782 to 1784. In the 1790s, he was culler of fish, but he was best known as the cashier of the First Bank of Gloucester from 1796 to 1829. He never married and died in 1831 at the age of seventy-seven, leaving a personal estate of $912.42 to his sister, Mary Allen. 32

31Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, i, 399; Account with C. Davis, June 17, 1784, Caleb Davis Papers, MHS; Gloucester, Century Celebration, 36; ECPCR No. 1202.

Barnett Harkin (? - 1804?), school teacher in Gloucester, was probably the son of Deacon Hubbard Harkin of the Harbor Parish. As schoolmaster he paid no taxes but must have gained prosperity from some other source. He was one of the original members who set up the Tyrian Lodge of the Freemasons in Gloucester in 1770 and was the first Master of that lodge.33

He was monitor in 1775 and grand juror, measurer of grain, and fire warden in 1778. He served on the committee which rejected the legislature as a proper body to draft a state constitution. He was selectman in 1779-1780 and 1782-1783. He was also fire warden, field driver, and clerk of the market, in 1785 and 1786. In 1788 he was one of the three laymen who ordained the Universalist, Reverend John Murray. In June, 1791 Reverend William Bentley referred to him as one of the principal gentlemen of Gloucester who enjoyed a day's outing at the Eastern Point farm of Daniel Rogers. He may have been one of the victims drowned in 1804 when a boat upset near Gee's Point in a Northeastern gale.34

33 Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 14; Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 14; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 329.

34 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:205; Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 14; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 329; William Bentley, Diary I, 266-67; Babson, Notes and Additions, II, 153.
Despite their relative obscurity, we know that most of these men shared a warm support of the Revolution through militia service or privateering, or as members of various Revolutionary committees set up by the town. Like other high town officers we have seen, many were related to families of other high town officers, or to ministers or deacons in the town, though the presence of four men born elsewhere show that while local family connections were desirable, they were not absolutely necessary.

We have a good deal more information on the other eight common leaders of revolutionary Gloucester, mainly from records of service as merchants, militia officers, and activities as privateersmen.

Daniel Warner (1731-1810), the son of Philemon Warner and Mary Prince, was born in Gloucester. His father, a blacksmith, who moved from Ipswich, was elder of the First Church. Daniel married Abigail Sargent, daughter of Nathaniel Sargent and Judith Parsons, and their offspring married into families such as the Ellerys, the Lows, and the Hayes. Both Daniel and his brother, Nathaniel, commanded companies during the Revolution: Nathaniel at Bunker Hill and Long Island, and Daniel captained one of the companies stationed at Gloucester in 1775. He was lieutenant colonel and then colonel of the Sixth Essex County Regiment of the Massachusetts militia, serving a
total of nineteen months and twenty days in Gloucester for
the defense of the seacoast.35

In 1771 Daniel Warner had been in the third quarter
of taxpayers, assessed £1:3:9 on two polls, a house, a
shop, £30 stock in trade, real estate worth £10 annually,
a horse, a cow and a hog. Beginning in 1772, he was active
in town office as constable, culler of fish, measurer of
grain and salt, field driver, tythingman, monitor, surveyor
of highways, and juror through much of his adult life. He
was active on revolutionary committees also. In 1776 he
was on the Committee of Safety, and on the separate
Committee of Correspondence named later that year, as well
as in 1781, and 1783. He was selectman in 1778, 1780,
and from 1790 to 1795.36

When he died in 1810 at the age of seventy-nine,
he left real estate valued at $3,336.50 including a
mansion house valued at $600, a store and land in town
worth $1,300, as well at $700 worth of farm land. His
personal estate was scanty, though he had three and two-
thirds pews in the meetinghouse. He also had $4,374.53

35Vital Records of Gloucester I, 745; Babson,
Gloucester, 67; Edward Warner, The Posterty of William
Warner, reprinted with additions for the NEHGR (Boston:
New England Historical and Genealogical Society, 1866),
25; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XVI, 580.

361771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:29;
Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161, 166, 236, 271.
in debts, $3,500 of which was owed to his brother Nathaniel. But he had lived as a prosperous and respected shopkeeper and militia officer.  

Barnabas Dodge (1742-1818), the son of Jacob Dodge and Martha Perkins, was born in Windham. In 1763 he married Lydia Woodbury of Beverly and they settled in Gloucester where he prospered enough to be in the second quarter of taxpayers in 1771 when he paid £2:1:9 on a poll, a house, real estate (including ninety acres of pasture - a lot for Gloucester) worth £15:6 annually, a horse, two oxen, three cows, sixty sheep, and two swine.  

Soon after the war broke out, he served on the Committee of Safety in 1775. By June, 1775 he was a captain stationed at Chelsea, and by July was attached to Colonel Samuel Gerrish's regiment. He soon moved to Colonel Baldwin's 26th Regiment where he was one of four Dodges who were captains. He served at Brookline and Chelsea, and was credited with one hundred and eighty-four days' allowance, most of it in Chelsea, but with some action in New York and New Jersey.  

37 ECPCR No. 28950.  
Though he had held few town offices earlier, in 1780 he was one of those chosen selectman when the first board chosen refused to serve. He continued in this post for 1781 and 1782. In 1782 he was field driver and grand juror as well. In 1789 he served on a committee appointed by the Court of Common Pleas to appraise the estate of John Brown, late of Ipswich.  

When he died in 1818 he had only $716 in real estate and his debts mostly in notes of hand from seven persons, took up all of his personal estate of $1,632.98. It included household furnishings, plate, and linen which indicated that he had lived in a prosperous, though not luxurious, style.  

Mark Pool (1739-1815), the son of Joshua Pool and Deliverence Gidding, was born in Gloucester, the year his father died. He married Deborah Tarr in 1760. In 1771 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers, assessed 17s 1d on a poll, a house, real estate worth 26:2 annually, two cows and two swine. He was constable in 1762 and juror in 1766, warden in 1770, surveyor of highways in 1771, hogreeve in 1773, and juror in 1776.

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40 Appraisers of the estate of John Brown, Oct. 19, 1789, Nathan Dane Papers, MHS.

41 ECPCR No. 7795.

42 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 554; Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 58; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:21.
His was one of the earliest commissions issued by order of the Provincial Congress in June 1775, perhaps because of his service in the French and Indian War. He was a lieutenant in Captain John Row's company, Colonel Ebenezer Bridge's (27th) regiment. He served two months that summer and was at Bunker Hill. He was a captain in Colonel Timothy Pickering's regiment which marched to Danbury via Providence in 1776. In 1777 he was captain of a company raised in Gloucester to go as part of the men drafted for Brigadier Michael Farley's brigade from Essex County to reinforce General (Joseph ?) Spencer in the spring. In the summer he was in Bristol, Rhode Island for two months as part of Colonel Jonathan Titcomb's regiment. From November 1777 to February 1778 he was captain at Charlestown, and in March and April was at Winter Hill and Cambridge. In August 1778 he was in action near Newport at the head of a company of volunteers he had raised. After the war he held the rank of major in the militia. In 1780 he was back in town office as constable. He was selectman in 1780, 1781, 1784, and 1788. In addition, he was surveyor of highways in 1782, field driver in 1782, and 1784-1786, 1790, 1791, hogreeve 1784-1786, and 1792, and culler of fish in 1784 and 1785.

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43 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 548; Babson, Gloucester, I; Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 596 has the rolls of both Gloucester companies at Bunker Hill.
When he died in 1815 at seventy-six years, he left a substantial estate worth $3,212.31, mostly in real estate. The home mansion, farm buildings, and nine acres alone were worth $1,440.00. His personal estate included a chaise, a few pieces of delph china, four feather beds, three pews, and five cows' rights in the meadow. Most of his debts of $1,228.16 was in a single note to David Sawyer for $991.00. Prosperous, but not extravagantly so, he had served his town, state and nation in the accepted fashion.

Joseph Proctor (1744-1805) of Danvers, was a fisherman and merchant who settled in Gloucester before 1769. In 1771 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers assessed £1:3:10 for three polls, a house, a shop, £20 stock in trade, real estate worth £11 annually, £16 at interest, a horse, a cow, and a hog. He and his wife Elizabeth had a son, Joseph, born in 1772.

In addition to fishing, he was probably a carpenter of some sort, because he served as culler of hoops and staves, or measurer and sealer of wood eleven times from 1769 to 1784. He occasionally served as juror, clerk of the market, warden, surveyor of highways, field driver, grain measurer, fire warden and fence viewer. He was a selectman in 1780 and from 1785 to 1789. He served on the

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44 ECPCR No. 22282.

45 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:25; Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 564.
Committee of Safety in 1774. If he served in the Revolution at all, it was on an occasional privateering venture. When he died in 1805 at the age of sixty-one he left an estate worth $8,311.41 including three houses and land, a flake yard with a fish house, a mill worth $1,500, a house and barn near the mill worth $1,000, one-eighth of a wharf, and one-third of a pew. He had cash and notes amounting to $1,051.00 but most of his property was in real estate and notes, with little indication that he lived as well as his status as a wealthy merchant would allow. 46

Jacob Allen (1734-1786) the son of Zerubabel Allen and Lydia Parsons, was born in Gloucester. The family was descended from the William Allen who came to Cape Ann for the Dorchester Company in the seventeenth century. He was a nephew of Representative Joseph Allen (d. 1750) and Representative Nathaniel Allen who built the Long Wharf in Gloucester. Three of his uncles married ministers' daughters, while others married into the Haskell and Day families. 47

46. Town Meeting Minutes, TRC 3:161; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 807, 814. Only in 1780 and 1782 among the dates for which a Joseph Proctor signed on a privateering venture, was this Joseph Proctor free enough of town office to do so. In 1778, for example, he held six minor offices. Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:passim; ECPCR No. 22870.

47. Vital Records of Gloucester I, 60; Babson, Gloucester, 55-57.
In 1771 Jacob Allen was in the second quarter of taxpayers, assessed £1:17:6 on two polls, a house, real estate worth £15:6 annually, eighteen tons of vessel, £100 stock in trade, one horse, two oxen, four cows, and two swine. While he had held occasional minor town offices earlier, in 1771 he began extensive officeholding, being warden, fence viewer, and juror in 1771, and fence viewer in 1772. He was excused when chosen selectman in 1773 and 1774 but served as hogreeve and field driver those years, as well as fence viewer and monitor. He served as selectman in 1775 and refused the office again in 1776 though he served in the minor offices already mentioned in 1776 and 1777. He was on the Committee of Safety, Correspondence, and Inspection in 1776 and on the Committee of Correspondence in 1781. He was appointed coroner for Essex County in 1775, and a justice of the peace in 1777. From 1778 to 1781 he was town treasurer. In 1782 he was accused of irregularities and replaced as treasurer. He had turned in a balance of $34,000 in depreciated currency, when half of it should have been in silver. His estate was attached for the deficit, but when he left office the suit was quietly dropped. 48 Perhaps it had been a case of collecting in depreciated currency or not collecting at all. He continued to hold one or two minor offices each year until he died.

48 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:28;
When he died in 1786 at the age of fifty-two, his wife Sarah was appointed administratrix of the estate and drew up an inventory showing £810 in real estate, two pews, and common rights. Though Allen had a lot of farm land for a mariner, his personal estate indicated that he had lived in a comfortable though not grand fashion. There was £540:12:10 in debts against the estate, £295:17:17 of these debts were owed to high town officers or their sons.  

There were two William Ellerys in the 1771 Valuation List of Gloucester. William, Jr. (1694-1771) was a sea captain and tavernkeeper. The other, William Ellery (1730-1798), high town officer in 1776 and 1782, was the son of Nathaniel Ellery and Ann Sargent. His sister married Reverend John Rogers. As this William Ellery was also a sea captain and merchant, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the two. In 1771 the younger William Ellery was in the top quarter of taxpayers, assessed £2:12 on a house, a warehouse, two hundred feet of wharf, real estate worth £23:12:8 annually, two servants for life, two oxen, three cows, sixteen sheep, and three swine.

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49 ECPCR No. 425.

50 Babson, Gloucester, 86-87; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:24.
William Ellery followed much the same pattern in public life as his peers: juror four times, culler of fish twelve times, constable and warden of the Sabboath each once, hogreeve twice, fire warden five times, monitor twice, clerk of the market twice, field driver eight times, and surveyor of woods or lumber three times. He was selectman in 1776, 1780, and 1782, and one of five representatives to the General Court in 1776. He was chosen captain of a company of matrosses stationed in Gloucester, and he served with this First Artillery Company from June 12, 1776 to December 31, 1776. As captain he received £5:8 per month. Most of the officers in his company were relatives, though only one man in the ranks was an Ellery. He was also active on revolutionary committees during the war: Safety 1775, Correspondence 1776, Safety, Correspondence and Inspection 1776, Correspondence 1781, and on the Committee on Government in 1778.51

By 1784 he was suffering from the effects of the war on trade and had to default on a note of £300 due the estate of Abraham Caldwell of Ipswich. When he died in 1798 he left $1,063 in real estate and only $116.55 in personal estate, rather moderate compared to his earlier circumstances. His widow died in the alms house in 1805.52

51 Muster roll of 1st Co. of Artillery, Jan. 6, 1777; Large Mss., MHS; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161, 166, 169, 236, 205.

52 William Ellery to John Caldwell, July 13, 1784, Dane Papers, MHS; ECPCR No. 8672; Babson Gloucester, 86.
Winthrop Sargent (1727-1793), the son of Selectman Epes Sargent of Gloucester and Esther Maccarty of Roxbury, was born in Gloucester. He married Judith, the daughter of Captain Thomas Sanders and sister of the Councillor Thomas Sanders, Jr. When she died he married Judith, the daughter of Captain Andrew Robinson. His daughter, Judith, first married John, the son of Representative William Stevens and Elizabeth Allen. Her second husband was Reverend John Murray, the founder of the Universalist Church in America.\(^{53}\)

Winthrop Sargent was a merchant and in 1757 sustained losses through the wreck of the Resolution. In the 1750s he served occasional terms as juror, warden of litter, hogreeve, culler of fish, and surveyor of highways. In April 1780, when the depression brought in by the war had made the post a heavy burden, he was one of those who finally agreed to serve as selectman. In 1788 he was one of the four representatives Gloucester sent to the General Court. After that he served infrequently in minor offices, perhaps because he was too busy keeping up his business as merchant. His success had placed him in the top quarter of taxpayers in 1771 when he was assessed £5:7 on a poll, a house, a warehouse, eight hundred feet of wharf, real estate worth £25:6 annually, two servants for life, four

\(^{53}\) Sargent, Epes Sargent and His Descendants, 48, 52.
hundred tons of vessel, £300 stock in trade, a horse, a cow and two swine. 54

Before 1771 he had an account established with Caleb Davis, who later took care of his subscription to The Massachusetts Spy. Unlike his father who had strong Tory sympathies, he supported the Revolution in a variety of ways. During the war he was government agent in Gloucester writing to General Artemus Ward about Tory families held prisoner in 1776. In 1777 he supplied £755 worth of boats, wine, and cash to Colonel Crafts and Colonel Paul Revere, for which they paid with part ownership in two sloops, most likely privateers. He was a captain in Colonel John Crane's artillery regiment from 1777 to 1779, and continued with it until 1781. In addition, he was a member of the Committee of Safety in 1775 and of the Committee of Safety, Correspondence and Inspection in 1776. In 1779 and 1780 he served in the state constitutional convention. 55

54 Statement regarding losses through shipwreck of Resolution, Oct. 30, 1757, James Otis, Sr. Papers, MHS; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30.

In the midst of all this involvement in the Revolution, he invited the Reverend John Murray to Gloucester and supported him throughout his struggles to get the Universalist Church established in America. For this he was suspended from the First Church in 1777. He was the first to sign the Articles of Association and he had his goods seized for refusing to pay taxes to support preaching at the First Church. He was one of the three laymen who ordained Reverend Murray in 1788 and his daughter later married Murray.56

When he died in December 1793 he left an estate of £1,611,616:6:1 including a luxurious mansion house with barn and gardens worth £1430, a wharf, stores and two fish houses, a schooner and eleven pews. He was one of those wealthy high town officers who served a short period in the time-consuming posts of selectman and representative. No doubt it was his warm support of the Revolution which made the treatment the town gave his Tory father as easy as it was. While Winthrop Sargent supported the Revolution, he did not suffer from it as other men did.57

David Pearce (1736-1818), the son of David Pearce and Susanna Stevens, was born in Gloucester. His paternal grandmother was Mary Saunders, and his brother was Colonel

56 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 4, 7-8, 11, 20.

57 EMPCR No. 24712. See Chapter III, 24 of this dissertation for sketch of his father, Epes Sargent, who was a Tory.
William Pearce. In the 1760s he married Bethiah Ingersol of Gloucester and began business as a merchant.  

He soon owned two vessels in the Labrador fishing fleet and he expanded his holdings until he had one of the most prosperous merchant fleets in town. In 1769 he had an account with Caleb Davis for salt for his fishing vessels. In 1771 he was in the top quarter of taxpayers, assessed £3:11:3 on a poll, a house, a warehouse, real estate worth £10:12 annually, two hundred eighty-three tons of vessels, £260 stock in trade, three cows and two swine. He traded to the West Indies in smaller vessels, but his larger vessels went to Europe and eventually to India.  

He served in town office as constable as early as 1766. In 1773 he was constable and juror, and in 1775 he was a warden. He must have been an early supporter of the Revolution because in 1775 he was a member of the Committee of Safety and in 1776 and 1779 he was a selectman.  

In 1777 he was unusually busy. He was one of four men and eleven women suspended from the First Church for

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58 *Vital Records of Gloucester* I, 54; Babson, *Gloucester*, 266.

59 Account with Caleb Davis, May 26, 1769, C. Davis Papers, MHS; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:30; Babson, *Gloucester*, 267-68.

60 Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:161.
support of Reverend John Murray, and later that year was among those signing the Universalist Articles of Association. He had been among the earliest merchants involved in privateering, being a bonder and very likely a part owner with Winthrop Sargent of the Speedwell. He was part owner of three privateers and full owner of three others. He was a bonder and probably part owner of eight additional ships engaged against the enemy. Some were ships like the Polly, which was fitted out with from sixteen to twenty guns and carried a crew of twenty-five to thirty, or the Forty-Five, which had only fourteen guns, but had a crew of seventy. Others were ships, like the General Starks, or the Betsy or the Gloucester, which never carried more than twenty-two guns, but whose crews ranged from one hundred to a hundred and fifty men, and provided much needed employment for the men of the town.\textsuperscript{61}

From February 1779 to October 1780 he had costs of £91,102 for supplying his ships. Pearce's costly and risky privateering ventures may have provided jobs for the town's many idle fishermen, but the high profits the successful voyages brought may have been his main motive because after the war he was not above taking a yeoman to court for a debt of £31:7:11.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{61}Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 7-8; Lincoln, Naval Records of the American Revolution, 40, 299, 314, 317, 417, 418, 469; Allen, Mass. Privateers, 153, 157, 282, 291, 326.

\textsuperscript{62}Writ of execution against Mark Davis, Jan. 10, 1787, Nathan Dane Papers, MHS.
In 1778 his brig Success was captured and taken to Halifax. As the war went on, more and more fishing vessels were fitted out for privateering. His ship, Harriet, was loaded for a foreign voyage in 1782, but the British boarded it at night and sailed it out of the harbor. When Pearce discovered the loss, he rang the church bell to round up a crew and gave chase. Both the ship and her captor, a brig of fourteen guns, were returned to the harbor. Such energy was to be expected in a man whose wharfs and warehouses were the center of the commercial activities of the town. After the war his ships were engaged in trade with the Far East, the whaling industry, and the older ports of call in Europe, and the West Indies. He was worth $300,000, though his brother William said he never really had more than $200,000, before the war with France when one of his most valuable ships was lost. Other losses followed, so that by 1804 he was paying taxes on only $87,134 worth of property. But when he was prospering, he and his brother William, who had even greater wealth, were at the top of the economic ladder in Gloucester.63

But misfortune stalked David Pearce, and when he died in 1818 at the age of eighty-two his real estate had already been sold to cover his losses, and the court allowed

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63 Pringle, History of Gloucester, 80, 82, 88; Babson, Gloucester, 267-68, 267n.
"the sale of all his personal property, except what may be allowed the widow for necessities." Even with that, there was a deficit of $328.83. But there is no doubt that when he served Gloucester as selectman in the 1770s and for a long time after that, David Pearce was among the merchant princes of New England.

Larger Leaders

The most remarkable thing about the eight men who were the larger leaders of revolutionary Gloucester is the extent to which they were "new" men, for none of them had long service in high town office before 1775. Even so, they did not rise to high town office by means of their Revolutionary service. Eight men who served from nine to forty-five years each after 1775 are the larger leaders of revolutionary Gloucester. Although some of them may have helped move the town into the Revolution, they did not do so from the vantage point of high town office. William Pearson was the only one of the group to serve on the Revolutionary Committee of Correspondence. Members of the group served only three terms in high town office before 1782, but by 1784 a town clerk, a treasurer, and a Board of Selectmen had begun serving together. By 1787 a representative who would serve nine years joined this slate of high town officers. This group of men slowly imparted a

64 ECPCR No. 21157.
new sense of order and vigor to the proceedings of the town meetings. In part, this reflected the revived economy that came with the peace, but it appears that the divisions of the past were over and the town was willing to let the elected leaders carry out routine matters without continuous town meetings. John Low moderated the town meetings and he remained on the Board of Selectmen, but for the most part Gloucester moved out of the Revolution under new leadership.

Who were the men who imparted this new leadership? They were prosperous to wealthy farmers, merchants, and sea captains. They included a Harvard graduate, a deacon, merchants, a farmer and a bank president. Like early high town officers, they were related by blood and marriage to the families that had governed Gloucester for generations. Yet there remained room for new residents who would give the long hours and constant labor the town required of a selectman. These new leaders had served together with men who were partners in business, privateering, and fellow officers in the militia. They were "new," too, in that they invested their surplus wealth in paper securities of various kinds, rather than exclusively in shipping, as earlier officeholders had done. This was but another way in which they reflected the economic direction in which Gloucester moved after the war.
The larger leaders served well enough to set a new pattern of long continuity in office. The town clerk, the treasurer and one selectman served together from 1782 to 1794. From 1785 to 1793 nine larger leaders, joined by the more experienced John Low (and by Joseph Proctor from 1785 to 1789), led Gloucester through the early days of post-war adjustment into a period of even greater prosperity than it had experienced earlier. This time the trade based on the fisheries reached out to Surinam and the Far East. As earlier, Gloucestermen were not much involved in county offices. William Pearson was coroner from 1787 but the larger leaders of colonial Gloucester continued to be the acting magistrates in the town until 1796 when even newer men than the larger leaders of revolutionary Gloucester began to become justices of the peace. No post-war Gloucester spokesman in the General Court attained the stature of Thomas Sanders. No high town officer became a leader in state politics. The post-war men in Gloucester who sought to wield power did not seek opportunities in the realm of politics.

John Rogers (1748-1827), the eldest son of the "New Light" preacher, Reverend John Rogers, and Mary Ellery, was born in Gloucester. His grandfather sent him to Harvard. On his graduation in 1767 he taught a few years at Manchester before returning to Gloucester where he taught for forty years. Though the town voted to keep the schools open, the pressures of the war soon closed
them and he joined Captain Joseph Roby's Company in
Colonel Moses Little's 17th Regiment in May of 1775
and served for two months. The next year he spent seven
and a half months in Captain Bradbury Sanders' Second
Company, stationed at Gloucester for the defense of the
seacoast. In 1780 he married Sarah, the daughter of
Deacon Hubbard Haskell, and widow of Captain John Smith. 65

He and Nathaniel Allen were the only men in this
period to hold high town office in Gloucester without
serving as selectmen. He was town clerk in Gloucester for
forty-five years, from 1782 to 1826, and served with
punctuality and exactness and was notary public for Essex
County. 66  His integrity made him acceptable as manager
of the Gloucester Road Lottery in 1796. That year he
appeared as one of the thirty-two copartners of the First
Bank of Gloucester. When he died in 1827 he left a rather
large estate of $5,633.35. Over $2,000 of this was in
real estate, including three pews in the First Parish
meeting house, a cow right, the family homestead, and
another house and shop. His personal estate included
$1,275.00 in U.S. three percent bonds, and comfortable,
but not luxurious furnishings.

65 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 598; Shipton,
Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XVI, 518-19; Mass. Soldiers
and Sailors, XIII, 509.

66 Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XVI, 518-
19; Gloucester, Century Celebration, 37; ECPCR No. 24015.
Nehemiah Parsons (1746-1798) was the son of Deacon Isaac Parsons of the First Church and Hannah Burnham of Ipswich. He married Susanna Ellery in 1769 and engaged in commerce.67

By 1771 he was in the second quarter of taxpayers assessed £1:9:10 on a poll, one-third of a house, two shops with £260 stock in trade, real estate worth £20 annually, and a horse and a pig. That year his service as a monitor and hogreeve began over a quarter of a century of public office. He was monitor and hogreeve (1770-1773), juror (1776, 1781, 1786), field driver (1783-1784), sealer of weights and measures (1784) and fire warden and clerk of the market (1782-1794). He was selectman in 1779 and was among those refusing to serve in 1780. From 1782 to 1796 as treasurer, he was part of the emerging stable town leadership pattern. In 1781 he was principal owner and bonder of the privateer sloop, Swift.68

He was among the wealthy men in Gloucester when he died in 1798. He left an estate of $13,754.25. It included $4,330.50 in real estate, $827.10 in furnishings, a chaise, horse and saddle. But most of the estate ($10,180.75) was in stocks and notes of hand drawn on the

67 Vital Records of Gloucester, I, 522; Babson, Gloucester, 124; Notes and Additions I, 55.

68 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:25; Lincoln, Naval Records of the American Revolution, 471.
town of Gloucester, and from some of the town's leading men. It reflected the relatively prosperous living and wise investments appropriate to a man who had been town treasurer for fifteen years.

William Pearson (1741-1826) was the son of Captain James Pearson of Bristol, England and Hannah, the daughter of Captain Andrew Robinson, shipbuilder and designer of the first schooner. His brother, Captain James Pearson, was selectman for nine years after the war. William settled in Eastern Point and went to sea. In 1776 he was a member of the Committee of Correspondence and captain of the Fourth Company stationed at Gloucester for the defense of the seacoast. James Hayes, post-war selectman, served as lieutenant under him.

In 1779 he witnessed the bonding of the privateer sloop, Union, in which he was very likely part owner, with "Winthrop Sargent and others of Cape Ann." In 1780 he was bonder of Sargent's General Mercer and in 1781, while again a member of the Committee of Correspondence, he was captain of the schooner, Industry. He built the brig Friendship which captured a ship and a cargo of rum.

69ECPCR No. 20649; Babson, Notes and Additions I, 55.

70Babson, Gloucester, 322; Notes and Additions II, 148; Town Meeting Minutes, TRG 3:166; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 33 says it was the 3rd Company.

Most of his public service was during and especially after the war. He was constable in 1774 and 1777, and selectman in 1779 (also in 1804, 1807 and 1808). That year he served as temporary town clerk. He was warden and tythingman in 1781, fire warden in 1782, clerk of the market in 1785, 1787, 1789, 1791, and 1794. In 1787 he was named coroner for Essex County. He was representative from 1787 to 1793 and again in 1806 and 1807. In 1788 he joined John Low and Daniel Rogers as delegates in voting to ratify the Federal Constitution. In 1796 he was a copartner in the First Bank of Gloucester.  

He died in Gloucester December 5, 1826 at the age of eighty-five, leaving a prosperous estate of $2,876.00 which included a mansion house and gardens valued at $1,000, one-half a flake yard and store worth $500, a fish house at Sandy Bay and a quarter interest in two schooners, a good estate for a man of eighty-five who settled and survived three sons.  

James Pearson (1752-1793), the half-brother of William Pearson and the son of Captain James Pearson of Bristol, England and his second wife, Mary Edgar, was born in Gloucester. His sister, Mary, married Epes Sargent V in 1806. He commanded the Sargent's privateer

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72 Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1787, pt. 2, 5, MSA; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 86; McDonald, We the People, 192, 200; Gloucester, Century Celebration, 36.

73 ECPCR No. 20673.
General Starks on its second voyage in 1779. On this trip he teamed up with a Salem privateer and one from Newburyport commanded by John Somes of Gloucester who would later serve on the Board of Selectmen with him. In the mouth of the St. Lawrence River they captured nine ships, three of them taken by the General Starks.\textsuperscript{74}

Toward the end of the war he began to serve in minor offices, as constable in 1781 and 1782, grand juror in 1783, fire warden from 1788-1790. From 1784 to 1793 he served the town as selectman. After the war he continued in the mercantile business. When he died in 1793 at the age of forty-one, he left an estate of £2261:7:1. It included one-half a wharf and store he held in partnership with high town officer, James Hayes, one-half a cooper shop, one-fifth a house, and one-fifth a flake house, and a pew and a half in the Harbor Meeting House. His personal estate included a desk, mahogany tables, a light stand, six chairs, double case knives, tea chest, brass hand irons, forty-eight shillings worth of silver plate, a small stock of books, a silver watch, a pair of money seals and weights, and a violin. But most of his wealth lay in his ships and the stock in trade on hand; two schooners, a fish boat and a barque worth £1125 and coffee, brown sugar, cotton,

\textsuperscript{74}Sargent, Epes Sargent and His Descendants, 28n; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 28; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 79.
and eighty feet of black walnut lumber. His brother was the administrator of the estate James Pearson left when he died at the peak of his wealth and his service as a wealthy selectman who guided Gloucester through its prosperous post-war years.\(^7^5\)

**Caleb Pool** (1743-1815) was the son of Deacon Caleb Pool of Sandy Bay's Fifth Church and Martha Boreman. He married Lucy, the daughter of Deacon Nathaniel Haskell. In 1771, when his father was in the first quarter of taxpayers, he was in the fourth, assessed 9s 9d 6f on a poll, a house, real estate worth £2 annually, and ten sheep.\(^7^6\)

Before the end of the war he held such posts as sealer of wood, constable, hogreeve, and warden of the sabbath, fence viewer and field driver. After the war, although he continued in some of these minor offices, he served as selectman for ten years from 1785 to 1795. In 1785 he was one of the eighty-five men to sign the Charter of Compact of the Universalist Church. Towards the end of his life he was considered of unsound mind, "speaking of signs, wonders, and visions." Yet he died in 1815 possessed of a fairly large estate of over $5,000, most of it in farm property. He had three feather beds and a good supply of serviceable linen. His $12.00 worth of

\(^7^5\)ECPCR No. 20972.

\(^7^6\)Babson, Notes and Additions, I, 58; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:21.
wearing apparel and scanty library bespoke the prosperous farmer who represented the community of Sandy Bay on the Board of Selectmen, and did not have aspirations much above his neighbors. 77

Stephen Haskell (1736-1809), the son of Deacon Ebenezer and Elizabeth Haskell, was born in Gloucester. He married Sarah Ring in 1764. In 1771 he was in the third quarter of taxpayers assessed 11s 6d 2f on a poll, real estate worth £2:15 annually, £40 at interest, a horse, one oxen, and three cows. He was surveyor of highways in 1777 and selectman in 1780 and from 1782 to 1794. He also served occasionally as juror, field driver, and surveyor of highways. There is no record of his serving in the Revolution. He became a Deacon as his father had before him. He died in 1809 at the age of seventy-three, leaving no evidence of an estate. 78

Although James Day (1750s-1804?) was from a Welch family who were among the earliest settlers of Cape Ann in the seventeenth century, it is difficult to find both his parentage and date of birth. He was probably born in the 1750s and he lived at least until 1804. In 1771 he was among the third quarter of the taxable polls, paying 14s on a poll, a house, real estate worth £4:6 annually,

77 Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 15; ECPCR No. 22249.

78 Babson, Notes and Additions II, 37, 55; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:18.
a horse and a cow. During the Revolution he was a lieuten-
nant in Captain Andrew Woodbury's Company, Lieutenant
Colonel Enoch Hallet's Regiment which was detached from
the Essex County militia to reinforce the Continental Army
in Rhode Island. 79

When the war was over he moved into town office
as monitor in 1782 and tythingman in 1784. For twenty
years (1785-1804) he served as selectman, continuing to hold
minor offices at the same time. He was warden in 1786, juror
and surveyor of highways in 1787, warden and field driver
in 1788, juror and field driver in 1790, field driver and
surveyor of highways in 1791, hogreeve in 1792 and 1795,
and surveyor of highways in 1795. He lived at least until
1804, the last year he served as selectman. 80

John Somes (1745-1816), the son of Abraham Somes
and Martha Emerson, was born in Gloucester of a family
which had been in the town since 1614 and was related to
the shipbuilding Robinson family. John married Anna
Dolliver, widow of Captain John Colson. In 1771 he was
in the fourth quarter of taxpayers assessed 2d on a poll
and £10 stock in trade. He was an early and active suppor-
ter of Reverend John Murray and signed the Universalist's
Articles of Association in 1777. 81

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79 1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 133:16;
Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, IV, 573.

80 Babson, Gloucester, 589.

81 Ibid., 160-61; 1771 Gloucester Valuation List,
In 1779 the owners of the Wasp out of Newburyport petitioned that he might be given command of the schooner. This was most likely the ship which joined the General Starks and a Salem privateer in capturing nine ships in the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. He was the captain of the America in 1780. The list of its officers and crew describes him as thirty-five years old, five feet, six inches tall, and of dark complexion. The following year he was the principal owner of the ship Tempest which his brother Isaac commanded.  

His privateering activities left little time for town office, but after the war he held a variety of minor offices and was selectman from 1785 to 1795, and continued to serve occasionally as warden, clerk of the market, surveyor of highways, field driver and hogreeve. After the war he also commanded an Indiaman, as the merchant ships sailing to India were called. In 1796 he was copartner and first president of the First Bank of Gloucester. In 1806 and 1807 he was among the five representatives Gloucester sent to the General Court. He continued to

MSA 133:29; Independent Christian Church, One of Freedom's Battles, 8-9.

82 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XIV, 639; Pringle, History of Gloucester, 79; Descriptive list of crew of America, June 9, 1780, Revolutionary Rolls, MSA 40:57; Babson, Gloucester, 589; Lincoln, Naval Records of the American Revolution, 473.
support worthy causes, such as the subscription for the poor in 1811.  

Despite the distress Gloucester suffered in the period of the War of 1812, John Somes died a wealthy man in 1816. His estate of $17,085 was mainly in real property: his mansion house, barn and land, his wharfs and buildings, and two other houses and property he owned were appraised at $10,335. But he also left twenty shares of Gloucester Bank stock worth $2,000, twenty-five shares of Gloucester Marine stock worth $2,500, and twenty-five shares of State Bank stock worth $2,250. Much as he had commanded other men's ships and cargoes when he began his career through privateering during the war, he was shrewd enough to turn to managing other people's money once later European wars threatened maritime fortunes. A young man of the Revolution, he moved to other ventures as Gloucester moved into the nineteenth century.

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83 Brooks, Gloucester Recollected, 47; Gloucester, Century Celebration, 36; Babson, Gloucester, 594; Gloucester subscription for necessary purposes, Apr. 23, 1811; Misc. Mss. MHS.

84 ECFCR No. 25869.
CHAPTER V

COLONIAL PITTSFIELD

Introduction

Berkshire County covers the last fifty miles across the western end of Massachusetts, and Pittsfield lies in an uneven basin formed near its center by the Taconic Mountains to the west and the Hoosac Mountains to the east. The town is well watered by six lakes and numerous ponds and streams covering over a thousand acres. The eastern and western branches of the Housatonic River which meet in southern Pittsfield, drain several of the lakes and receive the water of numerous mountain streams. The abundant waterways supplied a variety of fish, and the waterpower for sawmills and gristmills so necessary in a new community in the early days of its settlement.¹

The soil contained iron ore, marble, and limestone suitable for millstones and building. The fertile valleys supported sheep and cattle, and produced wheat, rye, corn, oats, buckwheat, potatoes, turnips, onions, carrots,


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parsnips, beans, flax and hay. Traffic on the Housatonic River tied the town to western Connecticut and the commerce of Hartford. But Kinderhook, New York, on a branch of the Hudson, was little more than half the distance to Northampton, the county seat of Hampshire County on the Connecticut River; so Pittsfield also sent and received goods through Kinderhook and Albany and developed strong economic ties with New York.²

The area was originally the hunting grounds of the Mohegan Indians who lived on the eastern bank of the Hudson. They named the place Poontoosuc, "the place of the winter deer." Shortly before the first Dutch settlers arrived, the Iroquois nearly exterminated the Mohegans, and thus the tribe's survivors were eager to exchange their hunting lands for help against their enemies. The man who was able to gain most of the land around Poonoosuc was Colonel John Stoddard, provincial Councillor, founder of Sheffield and the Indian mission at Stockbridge, and colonel of the Hampshire County militia. He was one of the "River Gods," large landholders along the fertile Connecticut River who, through service in colonial wars, control of the Hampshire county courts, and a strong network of intermarriage, was able to win political and often economic control of Western

²Ibid., 72, 147; 1761 Assessors List, William Williams Papers, Berkshire Athenaeum, [MBA] Pittsfield; Thomas Allen, An Historical Sketch of the County of Berkshire, and Town of Pittsfield (Boston: Belcher and Armstrong, 1808), 4, 7-8.
Massachusetts. Stoddard's military service in Queen Anne's War won him a thousand-acre grant which he extended by purchase from the Indians until it covered most of the area around Poontoosuc. Another tract in the area, granted by the General Court to Boston, was sold to Colonel Jacob Wendell, and eventually Wendell held two-thirds and Stoddard one-third of the land. In 1741 Wendell sold half of his property to a relative, Philip Livingston of Albany.  

The initial settlement in 1743 was interrupted by King George's War. Many men associated with the first attempt at settlement were among those who returned in 1752 to try again. Others, however, had sold their lots to new settlers, who, together with the returning settlers, became in 1753 "the proprietors of the settling lots in the township of Pontoosuc." Indian attacks continued to trouble them, and many of Pittsfield's settlers fought in the colonial wars. Colonel William Williams, for instance, was in charge of the forts on the frontier and kept in close contact with his uncle, Colonel Israel Williams, the provincial military commander of the western frontier. Other settlers built forts or served in various campaigns. Most had had to flee with their families to Stockbridge before attacking Indians at least once. 

3Smith, Pittsfield, I, 48ff, 62-68.

By 1759 most had returned and enough new settlers joined them to have a meeting of the proprietors. Settlers, mainly from Hampshire County and Connecticut, continued to pour into the area. In 1761 the settling proprietors sent Colonel William Williams to the General Court with a petition to incorporate the place as a township. It passed on April 21, 1761 and the place was renamed Pittsfield. The same day Berkshire was separated from Hampshire as a separate county. In 1761 there were about one hundred and twenty polls in town, thirty or forty of whom were hired agricultural laborers from other places. In 1763 thirteen men filled the town's eleven offices. Five of these men and relatives of four others would continue to fill high town offices throughout the period before the Revolution.

In 1764 the town meeting provided for schools and by 1766 the town was divided into three districts and a

Samuel Bowles and Co., 1855), II, 547-48; Israel Williams Papers, MHS has an extensive correspondence from the nephew to his uncle on military matters, especially in the 1750s. For example, see Sept. 26, 1754, Mar. 25, 1755, Sept. 4, 1756 and Sept. 13, 1756; Joseph E. A. Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," in Duane Hamilton Hurd, ed. History of Berkshire County (2 vols.; New York: J. B. Beers and Co., 1885), II, 281-85, 288.

Holland, History of Western Massachusetts, 549-50; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 651; Incorporation of Pittsfield, Apr. 21, 1761, MSA 117:658; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Papers, MBA; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 293.

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school was provided for each. By 1771 two new districts had been added. But the divisions did not generate the disunity which accompanied the process in other towns. Pittsfield was located at the natural crossroads of the county and its position on the main road to Albany made it a place of business worth frequent trips from outlying districts. This recurring contact between residents of the central village and outlying hamlets made for greater unity in the town. Moreover, despite the continued influx of population, sufficient lands remained to be divided. The pressure for survival (indicated by, among other things, the high mortality rate among women and children as late as the nineteenth century) left little time to fight over local politics.

Some of the town leaders were well prepared for both the clerical work and persuasion which mingled in high town office, for Pittsfield had a surprising number of college graduates for a frontier town. Two settlers who were graduated from Harvard and three from Yale became high town officers. The town had two doctors and a popular minister in the Reverend Thomas Allen. Even when his politics shocked some of the townsmen, he did not suffer a major split in his congregation until 1788, although the Baptist faith was introduced by Elder Valentine Rathbun as early as 1772.⁶

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Yet despite their military importance on the frontier and the prominence some high town officers gained as a result of their family ties with the River Gods of the Connecticut Valley, the leaders of Pittsfield did not play much of a role in provincial government beyond the county courts. There were three justices of the peace: William Williams, Israel Stoddard and Woodbridge Little, each of whom followed a family tradition in holding the office. One of them, Williams, was also a judge and register of probate for Berkshire County, and another, Stoddard, was appointed county sheriff in 1774. A fourth man, Israel Dickinson, was county coroner from 1765. No high town officer from Pittsfield reached the provincial Council. Political preference on a larger scale would come later in the wake of the Revolution. For the time being, the high town officers of colonial Pittsfield were more than occupied with surviving the Berkshire winters, improving their lands, flocks, and houses, and laying the foundation for the second and third generations which would feel the pinch of inadequate acres for a rapidly expanding population. Yet their very isolation bred a kind of stubborn independence which found expression first in opposition to Parliamentary taxation, and then in opposition to oppressive taxes from the state government at Boston, and finally in opposition to the courts which tried to enforce their collection.

7Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 123, 152, 161.
Collective Profile

Throughout her brief colonial period, Pittsfield chose no more than a dozen men to conduct its local government. Six of them held nearly three-fourths of all the high town offices, mainly through multiple officeholding. They tended to come from the economic elite, as they did in other towns. But a deacon and a man skilled in carpentry and politics were found among them as well. Because the town was relatively young, these leaders were true town fathers and some of them worked to carry the young town into the Revolution.

Sixteen men served eighty-nine terms in high town office in Pittsfield from 1763 to 1774, averaging 5.5 terms each. John D. Colt and Woodbridge Little each served one year in colonial Pittsfield, but longer after 1775; Eli Root served four years before 1775 but twenty-one years after that time. These men will be counted among the leaders of revolutionary Pittsfield, leaving us with thirteen men who served eighty-three terms in colonial Pittsfield, an average of 6.38 terms each, with a median of ten years. Their service ranged from one to twenty-four years each (see Table 9).

Thus even raw averages indicate a high incidence of multiple officeholding. While this might be expected in a small frontier community, Joseph E.A. Smith, the historian of Pittsfield, believed there was an ample supply of qualified officeholders to choose from, and thus the
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<tr>
<th>Common Leaders</th>
<th>1763</th>
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N - Moderator; T - Town Treasurer; C - Town Clerk; R - Representative; S - Selectman; D - Delegate to Provincial Congress.
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3 - Selectman;

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multiple officeholding was not necessary. I suspect the presence of wealth with the ability it gave to hire agricultural labor to help with farming left some men with the time needed for public office, while others, not so situated, could not afford the time. Others, not so wealthy, had occupations which provided the necessary leisure. Tavernkeepers, for example, who would be relatively free during the work day, were often high town officers. Seven common leaders served a total of twenty-four terms, eighteen of them before 1775, but none of them held multiple offices.

All of the multiple officeholding occurred among the six men who ranked as Pittsfield's larger leaders. There was at least one case of multiple officeholding every year from 1763 to 1774. Three cases occurred from 1763 to 1765, and two cases in 1766 and 1767. James Easton served as selectman and moderator in 1768, and David Bush held the same two offices in 1769. Israel Dickinson was town clerk and treasurer in 1773, and added the post of selectman to his offices in 1774. Charles Goodrich was selectman and moderator in 1764 and 1765, and selectman, moderator, and representative in 1763. Josiah Wright was selectman and treasurer from 1763 to 1767. William Williams was selectman and town clerk from 1763 to 1767. In 1764 and 1766 he also served as representative. In 1766 and 1767 he was moderator as well. He was selectman from 1770 to 1772, and in 1771 he added the duties of representative. Six men held two offices; in five instances five men held
three offices. One man, William Williams, held four offices in 1766. Moreover each of these men served both before and after the Revolution. The significant thing is that none of the other leaders of colonial Pittsfield who served from one to five years before 1775 was a multiple officeholder. One of them, Israel Stoddard, who was representative in 1765 and moderator in 1774, was the only one of the common leaders who held more than one high town office. Exceptions to this were two of the men who began high town office in colonial Pittsfield, but served longer after 1775, when they fell into the pattern of the larger leaders of colonial Pittsfield.

In addition to multiple officeholding, several of these high town officers had lengthy tenure in individual offices. William Williams served as a selectman for ten years, and Bush and Wright for six each. Only three of the high town officers did not serve as selectmen. Israel Stoddard was representative and moderator, Daniel Hubbard, Jr. was treasurer, and Joseph Allen was town clerk. Eli Root and James Easton both served as selectmen for four years before 1775. Williams was both moderator and representative five times. Charles Goodrich was representative for four terms. William Williams was town clerk for five years, a tenure matched by Joseph Allen and eventually by Israel Dickinson, though his tenure continued after 1774. Wright was treasurer for five years and Daniel Hubbard, Jr. held the office for four years. Again, Israel Dickinson matched
this record by serving before and after 1775. It will be remembered that a four-year term was the usual tenure for high town officers in colonial Concord. Here as in other practices surrounding town office, each town had its own traditions, and what was common in one town was the exception in another. Perhaps the pressures of settling a new town shifted the burden of multiple officeholding to certain competent men, but their ability and willingness to take on these offices must have been equally important factors. Another aspect of this major pattern of multiple officeholding was the monopoly on high town offices Williams and Wright had in the early years of the town. They filled 38 percent of the high town offices between 1763 and 1789, but between 1763 and 1768 these two men filled 68 percent of the high town offices.

In 1766 the Board of Selectmen was expanded to five men, but the next turnover in office occurred in 1773 when Selectmen Williams and Bush were joined by Wright and two newcomers to the board, James D. Colt and Woodbridge Little. Colt would return to the Board as a mainstay in the early 1780s, but Woodbridge Little, though he was respected as an outstanding Federalist after the war, was the leader of the Tory element in town in the years just prior to the Revolution. That same year, 1773, the town meeting still sought representation from all factions, so while a Tory spokesman was a selectman, the town clerk, Israel Dickinson, was a leader among the patriot faction. He held that post from 1773 to 1777 and was treasurer from 1772 to 1777. In 1776
he held every high town office but moderator, which was safely in the hands of Deacon Wright. But he did not need to monopolize the offices. There was a wealth of patriotic zeal and talent among the older high town officers and some newcomers as well.

Unlike the older town discussed earlier, Pittsfield elected its leaders to several different high town offices during the course of their careers. At one time or another, each of them held at least three different important offices, and two held four such offices. The six served a total of one hundred and five terms, sixty-five of them in colonial Pittsfield. Although Pittsfield was a young town, it did not follow that very young men were its chosen leaders from its incorporation to the Revolution, though, on the whole, Pittsfield's leaders did begin high town office from three to four years earlier than their peers in older towns.

The thirteen high town officers whose birthdates are available entered their first term in high town office at the average age of 37.8. The youngest took office at twenty-four and the oldest at fifty-four. The average and range for each office was as follows: selectmen, 38.7 (32-48); moderator 42 (33-53); town clerk 36.6 (27-48); treasurer 41.6 (35-54); and representative 41.2 (24-51) (see Table 10). Nor did the most significant difference in age exist between those who advanced and those who opposed the move toward the Revolution. While patriots Josiah Wright,
### TABLE 10
Average Age on Beginning High Town Offices, Pittsfield, 1763-1774

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Average Age</th>
<th>Range</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>32-48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>36.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Town Treasurer</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>35-54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>24-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age for first entering high town office</strong></td>
<td><strong>37.8</strong></td>
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James Easton, and William Francis were between forty-four and forty-five when they returned to high town office between 1772 and 1774, Charles Goodrich was sixty-six in 1775 when he attended the Provincial Congress, and Williams was back on the Board of Selectmen and on revolutionary committees at sixty-four. Woodbridge Little, thirty-three, and Israel Stoddard, of the same age, were both Tories. The Revolution in Pittsfield was not solely the work of the younger man; nor was loyalism the cause of the old.

Judging the economic worth of Pittsfield's high town office is difficult because the 1771 Valuation List for Pittsfield is not extant. The 1784 Valuation List which is available does not indicate the total value of real estate. Moreover, economic conditions in Berkshire County that year...
were too unstable to use the list to judge the wealth of the
town's leaders. We do have William Williams' 1761 Assessor's List and the work list signed by the selectmen for the State Tax in 1789. Used with the less extensive Probate Records for the high town officers of colonial Pittsfield, these sources serve as a basis for judging the economic standing of these men, even though taken together they are not as conclusive as the sources used for other towns.

The 1761 Assessor's List gives ninety-six polls rateable and sixteen polls either non-rateable or of rateables for whom no assessment was entered on this list.\(^8\) Several men, early leaders in the town, have only their names listed, and it is unlikely that they lacked property. Agricultural laborers, numbering some thirty to forty in 1767 were included on the list, though they were non-residents, because "a month of two later, they carried away from us between £300 and £400."\(^9\) No doubt they were present in smaller numbers in 1761. Moreover, by 1789 the non-resident proprietors still held 2,325 acres of land worth £3076. They must have owned much more in 1761. The total wealth of the inhabitants noted in 1761 when the town was incorporated was £80,414. Six men paid the top quarter of

\(^8\)1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Papers, MBA.

\(^9\)Town Committee's Letter, May, 1767, Lane Collection, quoted in Smith, Pittsfield, I, 138n.
taxes on wealth assessed at between £2416:3 and £6618:16. Ten men who owned from £1692:13 to £2269:5 fell into the second quarter of the tax list. Sixteen men held from £891:4 to £1458:15 and fell into the third quarter. The sixty-four men who owned from £10 to £873:9 in taxable property were in the bottom quarter. Seventeen men on the list attained high town office, but only eight of them served in colonial Pittsfield. Four of them were in the first quarter, including Charles Goodrich, one of the town's first residents and its wealthiest one as well. The only high town officer in the second quarter was Colonel William Williams, the most famous citizen of the town in its early years, and a long-time commander of frontier posts. Two high town officers were in the third quarter, and only Israel Dickinson, who had just come to town, and who did not have either cattle or produce as yet, was in the fourth quarter.

Because most of the wealth was in land, those who had inherited or purchased large tracts from the proprietors held a disproportionate share of the taxable wealth. Over 80 percent of the real estate held by the men who paid the top quarter of the taxes was in unimproved land. Livestock was next in value and closely tied to the availability of cleared land. Raising livestock was the main occupation of the early settlers and such livestock was worth twice as much as the crops produced in 1761. Eighty-two persons together owned over £12,000 worth of livestock, ranging in value from a hog worth £3:6 to many substantial herds of horses,
oxen, cows, and sheep, some valued from £500 to £600. Seven high town officers owned 21.8 percent of the value of the town's livestock, including four of the five most valuable herds. The market for much of what Pittsfield produced was less than ten miles away at Kinderhook on the Hudson; from there, meat and hides were shipped throughout the colonies and the empire, tying the local farmers to the world market and the demands of the British mercantile system.

Sixty-eight men raised a total of £6000 worth of produce, including hay, with the median crop worth between £60 to £80. A number of men whose assessments indicate little other property had livestock and some produce. Perhaps they had cattle and sheep grazing on cleared land the season before they moved to town, as cheese and wool were the main products appearing in the few specific lists in the 1761 Assessor List. Of this agricultural income, about £1520 (25.3 percent) belonged to six high town officers.

Income by faculty ranked next in importance, producing £1910 for the ten men with the necessary training in crafts or professions. Two colonial high town officers, James Easton and Josiah Wright, both of whom were skilled carpenters, earned 57.5 percent of the total. Seven men had a total of £1378 at interest. More than half of it was loaned out by two high town officers, David Bush and James Easton, who also ran taverns. Nine men had goods or stock in trade worth a total of £982. Josiah Wright, high
town officer of colonial Pittsfield, held 25.4 percent of it.\textsuperscript{10}

Four of the high town officers who remained active into the Revolutionary period and the widows of two others (Colonel William Williams and Israel Stoddard) appeared in the top quarter of the 1789 state tax list. Goodrich and Bush were in the top 10 percent and Goodrich was still the wealthiest man in town.\textsuperscript{11} William Francis was in the second quarter, and three leaders--Josiah Wright, James Easton, and Joseph Allen--were in the fourth quarter. Some of their peers had moved to lands in New Hampshire, Vermont, or New York. Many who remained in Pittsfield died insolvent, perhaps because, like William Williams, they gave their wives title to their lands before they died and lived like gentlemen to the end.\textsuperscript{12} Others, like James Easton, who appeared so prosperous in the assessment of 1761, left debts of over £6000 and died insolvent, as did Israel Dickinson and Elisha Jones. Stoddard and Goodrich left lands in several places in the state, and William Francis, Dan Cadwell, and Daniel Hubbard left comfortable estates. But in general the

\textsuperscript{10}Town Meeting Minutes, Town Records of Pittsfield [TRP], Vault, City Clerk's Office, Pittsfield, 1:75; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 136, 139, 176n; Assessor's List, 1761, William Williams Papers, MBA.

\textsuperscript{11}State Tax 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield.

\textsuperscript{12}Smith, \textit{Pittsfield}, I, 178-79.
probate records of the high town officers of colonial Pittsfield show a large number of men who, having worked to establish their town and families, died as debtors, though they may have lived as prosperous or wealthy farmers during their years in office.

The number of men with militia titles tended to increase during colonial wars, and to decrease in times of peace. Between 1763 and 1773, no more than seven high town officers held militia titles. There were twelve in 1774. In 1761, during the French and Indian war, the Assessors List notes sixteen militia titles. In 1789, however, the town records mention only one officer, a Captain D. Hubbard. Some Pittsfield men preferred to keep the military titles they had won in the Revolution, as the state tax list for 1789 lists a colonel and five captains, as well as Captain Hubbard.

The influence of the early leaders stemmed as much from the social position they held as members of leading families in Hampshire County or in Connecticut as it did from their wealth. All the justices of the peace, for example, had family connections in the county courts, especially in Hampshire County. Stoddard, Dickinson and Williams were related to the "River Gods." Beyond the confines of the town a number of Pittsfield's high town officers served Berkshire County through the county courts which met in Pittsfield twice yearly in March and December.\textsuperscript{13} William Williams

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 133.
was appointed in 1761, Israel Stoddard in 1765, and Woodbridge Little in 1770. Little, a lawyer, became a selectman in 1773, but would serve longer in high town office after the Revolution. Williams was also named to the Court of Common Pleas in 1761 and was appointed judge and register of probate in 1765. Israel Stoddard was named sheriff and served as a special justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1774. In addition to these three men, Israel Dickinson was appointed county coroner in 1765.  

Beyond this necessary service to the county and their earlier involvement in the wars on the frontier, the high town officers of colonial Pittsfield did not render much service beyond the borders of the town. In colonial Pittsfield high town office was not a stepping-stone to office in the province and beyond.

The larger leaders of colonial Pittsfield were mostly prosperous to wealthy farmers who were among the earliest settlers, either original proprietors' heirs or proprietors of the settling lots. Easton and Goodrich were from Connecticut and Dickinson and Williams were related to the River Gods of the Connecticut Valley. Most of these men fought in the colonial wars, often in defense of their own fields. Most were active in bringing the town into the Revolution, and all of militia age were engaged in the fighting, at least at Bennington. Most were active on Revolutionary committees or on the committees which kept law and order while the courts were closed.

The contradictions which surround the Revolution in Pittsfield may be illustrated by the two crown officers, Dickinson and Williams who no doubt owed their office to family influence. But Israel Dickinson, who was county coroner in 1765 and collector of the excise on spirituous liquors in 1766, was considered the leader of the patriot faction in Pittsfield. Williams, a magistrate from 1765 and probate registrar and judge, was in a more complicated situation. Bound by all ties to the Loyalist faction, he was a hesitant supporter of the patriots. But he did support them. The town continued to call on his experience and influence after it defied the Massachusetts Government Act, and especially in its defiance of the state government in setting up a parallel system of courts. Once he decided to support the Revolution, there is no evidence that his services were rendered or received with any hesitation.

Other contradictions can be found. Bush and Goodrich, who were appointed to county office by the state government, both lived and died in prosperity and wealth. But others, who were perhaps even more zealous rebels, were not so fortunate. Easton and Wright were outstanding patriots who served before and during the war, yet neither received public office as a reward. In Pittsfield the Revolution did not provide the occasion for men who made a local reputation to move on to higher office. Rather it was a time of crisis in which the town turned to the leaders of its first settlement to see it through a new crisis. New men who had not put in long
years of service did emerge as larger leaders after the Revolution, but to an unusual degree, the leaders of the Revolution in Pittsfield were the larger leaders of colonial Pittsfield.

The Evidence

Common Leaders

Seven high town officers of colonial Pittsfield served from one to five years before 1775; all but one of them held only a single office, and none of them held two high town offices at the same time. Only two of them served during the Revolution in Pittsfield, although there were several early settlers among them who continued to be active on committees for many years. For the most part they were men who came when the town was young and put down deep roots in the place, intermarried among the more prosperous farmers and raised children, who then did the same.

Thomas Morgan came from Springfield and settled in Pittsfield before 1761, when he was on the first list of jurymen. In 1766 he was on a committee to set the location for the three schoolhouses, so he must have been both capable and respected. The same town record referred to him as Ensign, so he held militia office as well. The following year he was surveyor of highways and in 1768 he served a single term as selectman. He appeared on a 1772 census which listed four persons
in his household.\textsuperscript{15} Then he either died or moved out of town because he disappeared from the records.

\textbf{Elisha Jones} of Weston was one of the group which purchased Philip Livingston's rights in a third of the common lands, so he was a lot more prosperous than Thomas Morgan. He was mentioned as one of the original proprietors of Pontoosuch in 1754 with five lots totalling 828 acres. He continued his interest in land speculation, for in 1762 when ten western townships were auctioned, he was one of the purchasers of the township between Dalton and Chesterfield, and stood bond for the purchaser of another township at the same auction. In 1764 he was one of the grantees of the Penobscot Township. Between 1758 and 1764 he settled on his lands in Pittsfield where he served as selectman in 1766 and 1768. In 1767 he was surveyor of highways. In 1771 the General Court received requests from settlers whose lands were in part bounded by Jones' lots in Pittsfield, and though he most likely went to Boston to defend his claims, the town did not assist him by naming him representative that year. In 1774 he was a joint purchaser of East Hoosuch, which was later established as the town of Adams.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}Smith, Pittsfield, I, 144, 476, 497; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 295; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:90.

In 1774 he was captain of the militia. Yet when the moment of decision arrived there he had many ties to the crown and too few to the town and he was jailed as a Loyalist in Northampton in April 1775. In 1776 the town meeting gave the Committee of Correspondence and Inspection "full Power and Authority to act . . . if any person upon Trial appears Enimical to their Country." They eventually confiscated Jones' extensive estate when he joined the King's army on his release from prison. He was later listed in the Banishment Act and thus became subject to arrest and exile, and subject to death without benefit of clergy if he returned.17 His was one of six Tory estates confiscated in the town and he was the only man who had served in high town office to be banished. Others who fled, returned and took the oath of allegiance, were restored to favor, even before the end of the war.

Israel Stoddard (1741-1784) was born in Northampton April 28, 1741, the son of John Stoddard, provincial Councillor and colonel of the Hampshire militia, and of Prudence Chester. In 1758 he was graduated from Yale, ranking first in his class. In 1762 he settled in Pittsfield where he had inherited lands from his father, one of the original proprietors. All but one section of the

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lands he inherited were first rate, better than either his mother or older brother received. He married his mother's niece, Eunice, daughter of Colonel Israel Williams and Sarah Chester of Hatfield. At the age of twenty-four he was captain in the militia and was named a justice of the peace, no doubt because of his social and economic position in the area. In that year, 1765, he also moderated a town meeting which chose him representative of Pittsfield in the General Court.\(^{18}\) By 1771 he was a major in the militia. In 1766 he was on a committee to set plans for the schoolhouses. In 1767 and 1768 he was surveyor of the highways and again served on the school committee. In 1767 he was on a committee regarding the burial grounds. In the spring of 1768 the town was displeased about a number of things including the sale of pews in the meetinghouse. Stoddard had some disagreement with the town which sent a committee to discover "the grounds of his resentment & to know how he may be accommodated [sic] to his satisfaction." Evidently the argument with Stoddard was not over money for the same meeting which seemed so anxious to accommodate him voted down every extra expense except that of purchasing a spade and hoe to dig graves. In 1770 he was again on the school committee and also on a committee to instruct the representative, Captain Charles Goodrich, about

\(^{18}\)Franklin Bowditch Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College (6 vols.; New York: Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
having the General Court approve taxing the lands of non-resident proprietors.\textsuperscript{19} In February 1774 he was named High Sheriff of Berkshire County and the following month was moderator of the election meeting.\textsuperscript{20}

Stoddard had other sources of income in addition to his lands. In 1773 he was paid £14:19:4 for his services as surveyor of highways and was on the committee to build the schoolhouse. That year and the following he was one of those to settle with the treasurer for the year 1772. The March 1774 meeting was the last one Pittsfield called "In His Majesty's name," because the situation regarding royal authority reached a crisis. In June when a special town meeting was requested to deal with the Boston Circular letter, Stoddard's name was not mentioned. That summer he was busy in Boston advancing the case of his father's heirs against the petitions of Charles Goodrich.\textsuperscript{21}

On August 15, 1774 a town meeting under the sway of Reverend Thomas Allen accepted the results of a county convention held earlier that month at Pittsfield and chose

\begin{itemize}
  \item Henry Holt and Co., 1885-1912), II, 554; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 290-93; Whitmore, Mass. Civil Lists, 152; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:83, 141.
  \item Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:90, 110, 126.
  \item Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 123.
  \item Ibid., 155, 164, 167; Petitions of Charles Goodrich and answers in suit of heirs of Col. John Stoddard, MSA 118:694, 697-99.
\end{itemize}
a committee on which Justices Stoddard, Williams and Little served to petition the court "not to transact any business in this term." Although the three justices brought charge of sedition and treason against "the fighting parson," the town refused the charges and said Allen deserved the thanks of the town. Pittsfield's petition and similar ones from other towns, backed with the presence of fifteen hundred men around the courthouse at Great Barrington, convinced the court not to sit. The mob was active in Pittsfield as well. During the same month, Stoddard's pregnant wife Eunice, daughter of Israel Williams, was frightened by a Revolutionary mob and suffered a premature delivery that nearly killed her.22

In September 1774 the town voted not to send a representative to the General Court at Salem, but sent John Brown to the Provincial Congress at Concord in October. It also chose a committee to "Regulate disturbances and Quarrels" in place of the court. In December the town meeting adopted the Continental Resolves. Stoddard objected to all of these actions by the patriotic majority. Finally, when he refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant he was charged with disaffection and confessed he had advised Loyalists to send their names to General Gage, who presumably knew that he and Little were leaders of the loyal group in

22 Smith, Pittsfield I, 196-98; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 321.
Pittsfield. On January 2, 1775 the town passed a complaint against Stoddard and Little. Evidently no action beyond confinement to their estates was taken until the night before the news of the battle at Lexington arrived, for it was then that the two men fled to New York.

Stoddard returned the next spring and confessed his errors. In May 1777 when news arrived of the troops Burgoyne was beginning to send towards the New York lakes, the town was not satisfied with Stoddard's confession, and he was arrested. He took the oath of allegiance to the United States, and proved his allegiance by serving with the odd detachment of older men and other newly sworn Americans under Lieutenant James Hubbard for five days at Bennington the following August, when hardly a man was left in town, and even the spoons were melted down for bullets.

Although Woodbridge Little had once headed the list of inimical persons, he eventually moved back into service on town committees by 1778 and later into high town office. Israel Stoddard, however, never appeared in the town records again. He died of consumption at the age of forty-one in 1782. By his late conversion to the Revolution he saved for his heirs his extensive lands in Berkshire and

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23 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP I:194ff.; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 207.

24 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP I:222, 224-5; II, 4; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XV, 64; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 298; William Williams to Colonel Cheever, Aug. 17, 1777, William Heath Papers, MHS.
Hampshire counties and the rich furnishings which had once embellished his position as a social and political leader in town and country.  

**Joseph Allen** (1735-1810) was born in Northampton, the son of Joseph Allen and Betty Parsons of that town. He was the brother of Major Jonathan Allen and the half-brother of Reverend Moses Allen, and of Pittsfield's minister, Reverend Thomas Allen. He married Sarah Lyman of Northampton. He settled in Pittsfield after 1764, possibly encouraged to do so by his brother who was chosen the first minister of the town that year. He was among those residents petitioning the General Court for title to 700 acres of land they had improved adjoining the town.  

He started town service as a warden in 1767, assessor from 1768 to 1769, and surveyor of highways, tythingman, and town clerk in 1768. He held this last post from 1768 to 1772. In 1773 the commissioners appointed to settle the New York boundary mentioned him as a chainman to work with Captain Miller, who was in charge of the survey.  

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**25** Will and inventory of Israel Stoddard, filed Nov. 5, 1782 Probate Court Record, Berkshire County Probate Court, Pittsfield [BCPCR] No. 1140.  


**27** Instructions to Commissaries concerning the New York boundary line, Feb. 22, 1773, MSA 4:331; ALS by Joseph
Allen was active in the militia on both expeditions to Canada, serving as a lieutenant in Captain Eli Root's Company, Colonel Easton's regiment from August to December 1775, and under General Montgomery from January to May 1776. The following year he served next to his brother, "Fighting Parson Allen," under Colonel David Rossiter at Bennington. Except for three days on an alarm in 1780, he spent the rest of the war in civilian pursuits though he did not serve on any Revolutionary committees. Perhaps one "fighting Allen" was enough for the town.\footnote{28}

In 1777 he was on the smallpox committee. In 1778 he was constable. In 1785 he was one of the eleven petitioners requesting a town meeting to reconsider a vote to raise £300 to discharge his brother's salary, "as this upset a lot of people." In 1784 he still had his house, barn, and half a mill, but he had only thirteen acres under cultivation, three acres of woodland, and seven acres of pasture for his eight head of livestock. Eventually, Allen moved to Charlotte, Vermont where he bought a large farm surrounded by farms of several of his children and their families. At any rate, by 1789 he fell into the fourth quarter of Pittsfield taxpayers, assessed only 8/6:2 on £6:2:5 real estate and £1:11:3 personal estate. He died in Vermont July 25, 1810

\footnote{28}{Hawley regarding survey of western boundaries, Mar. 20, 1773, MSA 25:557.}

\footnote{28}{Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, I, 171.}
at the age of seventy-four.²⁹ All of his children who can be traced settled outside of Massachusetts, following the pioneer pattern of their father. Perhaps he was more pioneer than town leader and revolutionary, and saw high town office and militia service as things a settler did to defend his land and increase its value.

Dan Cadwell (1735-1794) was born in Westfield. He was in Pittsfield by 1766. In 1770 he was on a committee to provide for schooling. In 1772 there were nine persons in his household, and the following year he was among those signing a petition to the General Court to secure the lands in Pittsfield they had purchased from Philip Livingston.³⁰

In 1774, although a selectman, he did not sign the warrant for a town meeting to deal with the circular letter of Boston about the liberties of the province, yet he was on the first Committee of Inspection to enforce the Continental Association. Smith, the historian of Pittsfield, called him a Loyalist of the better sort, but one wonders how much of a Loyalist he was. In June 1776 he was one of five Pittsfield men and a few from other towns who complained to the General Court that the disrupted conditions in Berkshire

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³⁰Smith, Pittsfield, I, 144, 476, 497; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 295; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:126; petition for the confirmation of land titles, June 11, 1773, MSA 118:695.
County were due to the abuses of the Committees of Correspondence and Inspection. But the petition especially protested that the committees ignored the directives of the General Court. They defended the legislature as acting under directives from "the Grand American Congress," and accused the committees in Berkshire of "disregarding the authority of the whole continent." Moreover, he was active enough in the militia once the fighting began. In December 1776 he marched to Ticonderoga with Lieutenant James Hubbard, where he served thirteen weeks. In May 1777 he marched to Kinderhook with Captain John Strong tracing down Tories. So if he was a Loyalist he did not fit the stereotype. Moreover, he was a supporter of Shays's Rebellion after the war. In 1785 he was an assessor and in 1786 he was a "malcontent" delegate to the county convention held November 6th in Pittsfield, but with instructions to oppose a tender act and the emission of paper money. He does not appear to have sustained great losses personally. In 1784 he had fifty-two acres under cultivation, a seventy-five acre woodlot and forty-six head of livestock.\footnote{Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:238; 2, 191; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 190n, 358, 414; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, III, 4; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library, 163, Sch. No. 4.}

Cadwell's return to town affairs continued after the rebellion, for in 1787 he was on a committee for the school
in the southern district, and served as one of the surveyors of highways. He returned to high town office as selectman and assessor in 1788, and as selectman again in 1789. He continued to serve on committees to oversee the schools, and to settle with the treasurer and transfer the papers to the new town treasurer in 1788, and to collect materials for the new meetinghouse. By that time he kept a tavern where hunting parties met and celebrated the bounty the mountains continued to provide. In 1789 he paid £1:10:73 state taxes on four polls, £19:6:1 real estate, £5:5:8 personal estate and £1:10 faculty, which placed him in the top quarter of taxpayers.

When he died in 1799 in his sixty-fourth year, Cadwell left $4,357, over $3,500 of it in real estate, mostly the home farm. Debts and charges against the estate amounted to $1,148.00. Some may have been debts from earlier years, but part of the charges may have been for goods which most tavern owners sold in conjunction with the spirits they dispensed. Though he had often acted as an independent maverick, perhaps one committee he served on in 1789 indicates that the "better sort of Loyalist," revolutionary, and Shaysite who merged in Dan Cadwell were not so unusual in Berkshire County as we might think. That year he served with the other high town officers on a committee "to examine

32Smith, Pittsfield, I, 435; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:197, 209-11; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield City Hall.
the town papers and destroy such as may be of no further
use."  

Daniel Hubbard, father and son, are sometimes inter­
woven in the records, because they both came from Westfield
before 1758. The father was one of the original proprietors
and grantees of the Upper Housatonic in 1736, where he was
given four hundred acres originally bought by Philip Living­
ston. Although wars delayed settlement, he was probably
the second settler in town. He was named surveyor of high­
ways at the first meeting of the proprietors in 1758 and
was sent to survey the west line of the township to the
West (Hudson) River. He was one of those petitioning for
authority to tax the non-resident proprietors in 1763. He
signed the profession of faith and covenant and was one of
the eight Foundation Men for the First Church in 1764.  

His son, Daniel Hubbard, Jr. (1714-1797), was born
in 1714, one of the two men was warden in 1763 and surveyor
of highways in the West District in 1766. From 1768 to
1771 Daniel Hubbard, Jr., was town treasurer. He was

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33 BCPCR No. 1864; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:244.

34 Grantees of land on the Upper Housatonic [1736?] MSA 114:162; committee report on settlement of Upper
Housatonic [1753], MSA 116:429; Daniel Hatford as grantee
of 400 acres on Upper Housatonic, 1750, MSA 115:656;
petition for the confirmation of land titles, June 11, 1773,
MSA 118:695; petition of settling proprietors of Pittsfield
to levy tax on non-resident proprietors, May 31, 1763,
MSA 117:859-60.
allowed twenty shillings for his services each year until 1771 when the town determined to allow him "3d on the pound for his trouble of collecting and disbursing and paying out town money." He was a constable in 1772 when he had eight persons in his household. That year Daniel Hubbard, Jr. served with Williams and Stoddard on a committee to settle with the new treasurer. That year he was also on jury duty at the Superior Court and served as horsereeve and assessor as well. He was assessor again in 1774. In June 1775 he was one of the assistants named to act as selectman in the absence of the majority of the Board. That body was very busy that year, as four of the five selectmen were militia officers and two held other high town office. \(^{35}\)

In October 1776 Captain Daniel Hubbard was licensed to keep a public house. The father, at the age of sixty-three, marched to Kinderhook under Captain John Strong after inimical persons in May 1777, and to Ft. Edward where he served for seven weeks in July and August under Captain William Francis. He died that December as a result of exposure and illness following the campaign. Perhaps the administration of his father's estate claimed the son's attention, because, except for serving on a committee to draw up plans for hiring men for the Continental Army, he does not appear in the town records again until just prior

\(^{35}\) Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:53, 141, 157; Smith, pittsfield I, 498.
to Shays's Rebellion in which he played a prominent part. He was still quite prosperous himself, paying taxes on two houses, two barns, a half a mill, thirty acres under cultivation, 145 acres of woodland, forty-eight and a half acres of pasture, forty-three heads of livestock, and £9 in cash. 36

In 1784 Hubbard was again named assessor and in December moderated a meeting at which the town attempted to settle with the treasurer and late constable. He was a member of a committee which instructed Representative Timothy Childs to work for a suspension of state taxes and payments on public securities until "a more easy & equal method" of payment could be found, a new system of courts to prove quicker decisions at less expense, especially in the matter of a new system of fees, and other suggestions to ease the plight of debtors. In 1786 he served on the Board of Selectmen and on the revived Committee of Correspondence which also had to instruct delegates to a county convention at Lenox in August. 37 Smith claimed that Hubbard was one of the "malcontent delegates" who:


37 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:18, 148, 161; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 412-13.
were in good circumstances for those times, but were deeply imbued with the insurgent spirit through sympathy with the undeserved suffering of less fortunate comrades.38

Hubbard also served as delegate to the county convention at Pittsfield in November, whom the town instructed to oppose an emission of paper money and a tender act.39

In 1788 and 1789 he was again selectman and town treasurer when a committee recommended greater control over taxes through the use of a new account book. The town treasurer was directed to call the constables to account within three months of the time the taxes were due, and to issue executions against those who did not settle. He was one of the four high town officers of 1789 on the committee "to examine the town papers & destroy such as may be of no further use." He was on a committee to draw up plans and costs for a new meetinghouse in 1788, and on that which reported on the forms the pews were to take. That year Deacon Daniel Hubbard was on a committee to investigate and remedy the division stemming from Reverend Thomas Allen's zeal against Shays's Rebellion which led some inhabitants to demand a second parish.40

38Smith, Pittsfield, I, 400.

39Ibid., 414; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:191.

40Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:240, 243, 244, 253; Smith, Pittsfield I, 399, 418; 435, 442.
Hubbard remained prosperous through the war and the rebellion which followed, for in 1789 he paid £1:19:1:1 on real estate worth £37:10:6 annually, and a personal estate assessed at £6:14:2 and a faculty valued at £2:2. In 1792 he was on a committee to investigate the town's dissenters and to consider their ministerial rates. The committee recommended that their rates should be abated on receipt of a certificate from their teachers or pastors that they had paid the required amount to them.41

Hubbard died Sept. 11, 1797, leaving a comfortable estate, mainly of real estate worth over $2,400 which his son proceeded to waste "by excessive drinking & Idleness," so that an administrator had to be appointed.42

William Francis (1730-1818) was born in Westfield. He probably bought his lands from Philip Livingston and in 1753 he was one of the owners of lots in Poontoosuch who petitioned the General Court for authority to call meetings and arrange for a minister and his salary. He settled in town himself in 1760 where he became a member of the First Church when it was organized and where he eventually became a deacon. In 1766 and again in 1773 he was one of the settlers petitioning the General Court to have his title secured. He began town service soon after

41 State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Smith, Pittsfield I, 459.

his settlement, for in 1761 he was one of the fence viewers chosen at the first town meeting. He was selectman in 1770, and 1771 and again from 1774 to 1778. He must have succeeded at his farming, for in 1772 he was supporting nine persons in his household. Francis was a strong supporter of the revolt against Britain from the beginning and was on the town's first Committee of Correspondence. He was also an early supporter of Berkshire County's revolt against Boston's rule. The town appointed Francis, Goodrich, and Wright to carry its petition to the County Court asking it "not to transact any business at the present term." When the courts closed, he was on a committee "to sit as arbitrators, to regulate disturbances and quarrels, and to take the Province law for their guide." He also served on a committee which drew up a report about the fees for such "arbitration cases." In 1775 he served as a selectman, and from 1776 to 1780 he was a member of the combined Committees of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. When the town did not approve of the legislators drawing up a new constitution, William Francis was one of the committee so to instruct the representative.

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44 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:197; Smith, Pittsfield I, 179, 194-95, 203, 245, 356n; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 297.
In addition to his heavy committee assignments, Francis was also active as a militia officer. On May 3, 1776 he was commissioned captain of the 9th Company, 2d Berkshire Regiment of the Massachusetts militia. He led his men to Albany on order of General Schuyler in January 1776 and to Williamstown in September, but they saw less than two weeks of active duty. In October, however, they served a month at Ticonderoga. The following year, from July to October they fought at Saratoga, first under Major Caleb Hide and then under Colonel John Ashley after serving first at Ft. Edward. They had a break from the end of August to the end of September when they, no doubt, worked steadily to harvest the crops, work as important to the American cause as militia duty. At the end of September, William Francis led thirty men to Stillwater where the Battle of Freeman's Farm had been fought two weeks earlier. They were present for the decisive battle of Bemis Heights on October 7, 1777. Typical militia men, they did not wait for the surrender, but were dismissed October 10th and headed home.\(^{45}\)

In August 1778 Pittsfield rejected the proposal for opening of the county courts a second time, and William Francis was on a more formal committee "to hear and determine all breaches of the peace and misdemeanors" formerly handled by the justices of the peace of the Court of General

\(^{45}\)Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, VI, 14; Smith, Pittsfield I, 294-96.
Sessions. He and three others served under Colonel William Williams who had been chief justice of the old Court of Common Pleas. Each member was paid £1:4 each day, and a regular table of costs was drawn up. After thus defying the state and gaining a constitution from a convention elected by the people and approved by the towns, William Francis was on the side of the state in Shays's Rebellion, when he commanded a party that went to Williamstown by sleigh to capture prisoners.

Having seen enough of wars and rebellions, Francis continued to serve the town on committees. In 1788 for example, he served on one to propose remedies for the differences which had divided the parish. 46

In later years he was one of a group of ardent Democrats who battled Pittsfield's Federalists. He prospered, building a house in the west part of town after the war. In 1784 when his sons were settled on their own farms, he still had thirty acres in cultivation and seventy-four acres of woodlands, in addition to the twenty-six acres of pasturage for his thirty-eight head of livestock. By 1789, when he fell into the second quarter of taxpayers, paying assessment of £1:2:2:1, he was paying almost twice as much on his personal estate as on his real estate. He left all his property to two sons to be divided equally, and $50 to each of his four daughters. When he died in 1818 at the

46 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:31; Smith, Pittsfield I, 382, 404, 418; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 304-05, 308.
age of eighty-eight, he was the oldest man in Pittsfield. Pioneer settler, prosperous farmer, church deacon, militia officer, committeeman and selectman before the war and local political leader after the Revolution, William Francis was in the forefront of activity in Pittsfield for nearly sixty years. He was typical of the colonial leaders on whom the town relied for leadership during the Revolution.47

The common leaders of colonial Pittsfield were a mixed lot: Tories, deacons, revolutionalists, active committeemen, and constitutionalists, they represented a cross-section of the causes which held the attention of Pittsfield's earliest settlers and the interests which divided them. They were all early settlers from other parts of Massachusetts who came to Pittsfield as original proprietors, heirs of original proprietors, or purchasers of Livingston's rights in a third of the common lands. Only Stoddard and Jones came with great wealth and political power. Only Stoddard held county office under the crown, and that for only a year. All but one held just one high town office, and none was a multiple high town officeholder. Only

47 Joseph E. A. Smith, The History of Pittsfield (Berkshire County) Massachusetts, From the Year 1800 to the Year 1866 (Springfield: C. W. Bryan and Co., 1876), 195 (cited hereafter as Smith, Pittsfield, II); 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library, 163, Sch. No. 4; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; BCPCR No. 3603; Cooke, "Pittsfield Sun Vital Records," Mar. 18, 1818.
William Francis was a Pittsfield leader against Britain, against the control of Boston over the Courts, and during the political battles after the Revolution.

**Larger Leaders**

**James Easton** (1728-1796) was born in East Hartford, Connecticut, the son of Joseph Easton and Susanna Burnham. He married Rachel Seymour, who died in 1751, then Eunice Pomeroy of Litchfield County, who died in 1778, then a third wife, Mary, who survived him. His son, James, Jr. married Sylvia, the daughter of Colonel William Williams, and his daughter Rachel married Dr. Timothy Childs, tying the family even closer to the network of those who filled high town offices in Pittsfield.\(^{48}\)

Easton moved to Pittsfield before 1761, probably from Litchfield, joined the Church and was soon elected deacon. In 1761 he ranked in the third quarter of taxpayers with buildings worth £200 and improved land valued at £50. He had £250 worth of stock in trade, £39 worth of livestock, and a store worth £600. In 1769 he and his five sons were among the petitioners asking to keep the lands they had improved in western Massachusetts.\(^{49}\) He was a builder,

\[^{48}\text{William Starr Easton, comp., Descendants of Joseph Easton, Hartford, Conn., 1636-1899 (St. Paul, Minn.: 1899), 40-41.}\]

\[^{49}\text{Smith, Pittsfield, I, 44, 136, 176n, 387, 476-77; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:75, 90, 103, 116, 122, 145; Easton, Descendants of Joseph Easton; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA; petition of James Easton for land in Western Massachusetts, MSA May 31, 1769, MSA 6:437.}\]
putting up the first stocks and whipping post, doing repairs on the meetinghouse and building the schoolhouses. He kept a store in conjunction with his tavern, and later in a separate building. Some town business was conducted in his tavern and the Probate Court met there in the early years. He served on a number of important committees, from those dealing with the settlement of Reverend Thomas Allen to examining letters from Boston to the selectmen.\textsuperscript{50}

He was among those high town officers who served the town before and into the Revolution as a warm patriot on the civilian and military fronts. He was chosen selectman from 1766 to 1768, in 1772, and in 1775. He was moderator in 1768, 1773, 1778, and 1780. He was one of those petitioning for a town meeting regarding the Boston circular letter in 1774. He was on the committee to instruct John Brown, delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord in 1775. In 1774 and 1780, when he was representative, he also served on the Committee of Correspondence. He was an active constitutionalist, serving as a delegate to the Berkshire County congress at Stockbridge in July 1774 where he helped draw up the Solemn League and Covenant. In 1775 he sent a threatening letter to Israel Williams who was in Pittsfield visiting his daughter, Mrs. Israel Stoddard, who was close to death from premature childbirth brought on by fear of

\textsuperscript{50}Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:88, 108; Smith, \textit{Pittsfield} I, 183.
the mob. Easton accused Williams of treason against the people by not keeping the promises of loyalty he had made to the Pittsfield mob the August before.51

Easton was even more active in the militia. When forty thousand men from western Massachusetts marched on Cambridge during the powder alarm in September 1774, Easton was an officer who went from Pittsfield to Westfield in Captain David Noble's Company of Minute Men. He was one of the officers who continued the march to Cambridge to force the resignation of crown officers appointed under the Massachusetts Government Act. By October 1774 he was a colonel in the Berkshire militia. Plans for the capture of Ft. Ticonderoga were laid in his tavern where the Berkshire County men met with the committee sent from Connecticut. He knew Ethan Allen from his youth in Connecticut, and through Allen's cousin, Reverend Thomas Allen, the town's most lively patriot. Allen brought the largest contingent of a hundred men and, since Easton brought the next largest group to the attack, he was second in command to Allen at Ticonderoga. He carried the news of the fort's surrender to the Provincial Congress at Cambridge and to the Connecticut government at Hartford. He took part as colonel in the first and second invasion of Canada, but left the army when Benedict

51 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 177, 189, 201; II, 68; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP I:175, 177, 190-91; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 324-25.
Arnold accused Colonel John Brown of Pittsfield of disloyalty and refused to convene a courtmartial to prove the charge. In 1777 Easton raised a detachment to go to Bennington.  

He began a house for his son, but financial troubles forced him to sell it to J. C. Williams before the end of the Revolution. At the news of the peace in 1783 he provided the celebration for the town, but his store and tavern business were broken up by the war and he lost much of his fortune.  

In 1784 he had a house and thirteen acres under cultivation and thirty-seven acres of woodland. He must have lost most of this or settled it on his sons, because in 1789 his real estate was listed at £1:4 and his personal estate at 4s 3d, for which he was taxed 1s 1d. Yet there is no indication that he was active in Shays's Rebellion. He died in Pittsfield in 1796, insolvent with debts amounting to almost $6,000, $1,500 of them in a note from his son-in-law, Dr. Timothy Childs. His personal estate amounted to $226, half of it in livestock. Nothing in the inventory gives any evidence of the role he played in the town government, in the Revolution, or in county affairs.  

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52 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:194; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 203; Easton, Descendants of Joseph Easton, 41; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, 161-62. The best survey of Easton's and Brown's troubles with Arnold which led Brown to accuse Arnold of treason is found in Smith, Pittsfield, I, 239-70.  

53 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 45, 322; II, 6.  

54 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library, Sch. No. 1; BCPCR No. 1780.
David Bush (1721-1801) came to Poontoosuck from Westfield as one of the earliest settlers in 1749. He probably bought his land from Philip Livingston, and he was the first of the settlers to clear land for planting. In 1757, 1758, and 1762 he was one of the proprietors of the settling lots who petitioned the General Court that non-resident proprietors pay taxes towards roads, meetinghouses, and other town expenses, because the work of the resident proprietors had increased the value of the lands of the non-residents considerably. He was the owner of the first tavern where notices of meetings were posted. He married the daughter of Captain Jacob Brown and the niece of Major John Brown of Pittsfield, and by 1772 there were eight persons in his household.55

Bush was chosen clerk and assessor at the first town meeting of the proprietors in 1754. During the early part of the French and Indian War when the area was attacked by Indians, he and others petitioned for allowances towards a fort which they finally built themselves. The General Court granted pay and subsistence to ten men stationed there.56


56Smith, Pittsfield, I, 93, 119; David Bush to Israel Williams, Apr. 18, 1758, Israel Williams Papers, MHS.
When peace returned to the frontier, the town meetings resumed. In 1758 he was named assessor and in the following year served on the committee to hire a minister. When the town was incorporated in 1761 he moderated the first town meeting and served as treasurer, selectman, assessor, and highway surveyor. That year he fell into the top quarter of taxpayers with buildings worth £700, improved land worth £932:10, and unimproved lands worth £447. He had £75 at interest and £50 on hand. He owned £456:7 in livestock and £221:12 in produce. He was on the committee to see to the burial grounds in 1767 and acted as moderator in 1769. He was on the committee to instruct the representative regarding the Boston Tea Party, which the people of Pittsfield deemed "unnecessary & highly unwarrantable." They especially wanted the representative to see that they were not charged with payment for the destroyed cargo. Yet they were cautious enough to mark the report "to be placed on file and not recorded." 57

Bush apparently had scruples about taking up arms when faced with the Massachusetts Government Act, but he was selectman from 1769 to 1774 and was on the Committee of Correspondence in 1774, perhaps because he was a selectman. He moderated the first town meeting held after the arrival

57 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 120, 134, 184-86; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA.
of the news of Lexington and Concord. He was on the committee
to see how to pay for "handling" Tories in 1776 and on a
committee which considered the cost of hiring fifteen men
for the Continental Army in 1780.58

In 1782 he began an eight-year stint as selectman,
with a term as moderator in 1786 and as representative in
1787 and 1788 as well. He was active in the militia, for
he appears in the town records as a lieutenant in 1769 and
as a captain from 1772 to 1778. It was probably his son who
spent thirteen weeks at Ticonderoga in the fall of 1776,
and at Skanesborough during October, 1777.59

Bush continued to prosper during the Revolution until
by 1784 he was one of the wealthiest farmers in Pittsfield,
with a house, shop, barn, and other buildings, and over
fifty acres under cultivation. He had 118 acres of woodland
and forty-three acres of pasture for eighty-five head of
livestock. He also had a debt of £60. In 1789 he was in
the first quarter of taxpayers assessed £1:15:2:1 on real
estate worth £30:3:1 annually and personal estate valued
at £8:15:3.60

58 Smith, Pittsfield I, 189-90n, 203, 317; Town
Meeting Minutes TRP 1:190 has the list, but my copy does
not include Bush. Perhaps he was added later. Town
Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:205, 217; 2:77.

59 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, II, 928.

60 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library
163; Sch. No. 1; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office,
Pittsfield.
In 1788 he was busy on committees which heard questions about all matters which caused disunion in the town, reported costs of the new meetinghouse, collected materials and labor for the same, and reported a plan for the form the new pews should take. That fall he was chosen to serve in the state's ratifying convention to meet in Boston in January, and the town agreed that it would not instruct its delegates. He was anti-Federalist in the convention and in later years he was an active Democrat. In 1790 he served on a committee to solve the problem of ministerial taxes for dissenters.\(^{61}\)

Bush died on December 18, 1801 at the age of eighty. His estate was not probated, perhaps because there was little left to divide, or he may have done what William Williams did and disposed of his estate to his heirs before he died. If so, it did not help the son too much, for in 1836, 90 percent of his estate went to cover debts.\(^{62}\)

Israel Dickinson (1735-1777), the son of Obadiah Dickinson and Mary Belding, was born in Hatfield. He was related to Dr. Jonathan Dickinson, the first President of Yale College. He and his father were purchasers of New Hampshire lands from "ye original Grantees of ye Massachusetts Bay." In consequence, in 1752 they requested Governor


\(^{62}\)Cooke, "*Pittsfield Sun Vital Records,*" Dec. 21, 1801, MBA; BCPCR No. 5779.
Wentworth to grant them and two other men Goulden Town on the west side of the Connecticut River. Israel was graduated from Yale in 1758, ranking twenty-fifth in the class in which Israel Stoddard ranked first. These two men and Woodbridge Little, an underclassman, were friends. Dickinson settled in Pittsfield near Stoddard before 1761, and Little soon joined them. In 1761 Dickinson paid taxes on £193:10 worth of property. In 1762 he was one of those petitioning the General Court for confirmation of his land title. He joined the First Church in 1764 and married Mercy, the daughter of Honorable Oliver Partridge of Hatfield, who was related to the Williams and Stoddard families. He received Masters degrees from Yale and the College of New Jersey.63

In 1765 he was appointed county coroner. The following year the General Court appointed him collector of excise for spirituous liquors in Berkshire County. These county offices and the extension of his farm may have kept him from involvement in town offices until 1769. That year he was on a committee to instruct Representative Charles Goodrich. In 1771 he was chosen selectman and was

the messenger the town sent to inform Captain Goodrich that they accepted his proposal to repair the bridge near his home. In 1772 when he had eight persons in his house, he was chosen town treasurer and held the post until his death in 1777. In March 1773 he was chosen town clerk, and kept this post, too, until his death. He was added to the jurors of the Superior Court in April, 1774. He was a militia captain from 1773 to 1777, and went to Ticonderoga under Lieutenant James Hubbard in early May 1775. In September 1774 when the courts were closed, Dickinson was added to the committee "to sit as Arbitrators to Regulate disturbances and Quarrels and to take the Province Law as their guide." In January 1775 he instructed John Brown, delegate to the Provincial Congress at Cambridge.64

As leader of the patriots, Dickinson held most of the high town offices. From 1773 to 1777 he was town clerk and town treasurer, and served as selectman, town clerk, and town treasurer from 1774 to 1776. He was representative in 1775 and 1776, and assessor in 1776. He served on the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence chosen in January 1776, besides covering the additional work of resolves, addresses, and remonstrances which fell to him as

64 Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 161; Dexter, Yale Biographical Sketches, II, 528-29; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP I:117, 143, 197; Smith, Pittsfield I, 497, Chapter XII, 210-25 credits the men of Pittsfield especially John Brown and James Easton with the planning and execution of much of this strategy.
town clerk. He had an invaluable aid in Reverend Thomas Allen, "the fighting parson," who drafted many of the public papers which came from Dickinson's office, though Allen was as likely to be remonstrating with Boston as with the British. Nonetheless, as selectman and town clerk, Dickinson wielded great influence in shaping Pittsfield's response to the Revolution. He served in the legislature which conferred civil office on every member from Berkshire County. Dickinson was made high sheriff of the county, but he refused to serve when he found the people in opposition to his appointment by the legislature without consulting the town. In May 1777 when the town chose three representatives to state its position regarding the correct procedure for forming a constitution, he was on the committee of instruction which was also charged with drawing up a petition to the General Court for a redress of taxes. 65

In August of that year he left for Bennington in a detachment under Lieutenant James Hubbard and contracted the bilious fever from which he died on November 18, 1777. He died intestate and his wife, Mercy, was named administratrix of an estate amounting to £1055:4:1 which was insufficient to pay his debts, a small part of which were owed to other high town officers. A 1782 report of the town

65 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:214; 2:2; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 334n, 384.
committee to settle with the estate of the late treasurer noted that although he owed the town £2:19:6 lawful money and other notes totalling about £48, "he had improved all the town money he received to the benefit of the town & converted no part thereof to his own use." The debt he owed the town was counted a small loss when the constables were over £220 in arrears for the years from 1774 to 1776.66

Though Dickinson died insolvent, he had lived in prosperity on a farm appraised at £600, with a horse, a pair of oxen, a dozen head of cattle, and forty sheep. On special occasions he had dressed in damask, velvet and lace jackets, and doeskin gloves. His home was well supplied with linen, china, delft, pewter, and a modest amount of silver. He sat in a well appointed parlor to read the Rambler, the Spectator, Locke's Essays, or Ward's Mathematicks, the Grammar of Philosophy, or Love's Art of Surveying. When he served in important town offices and guided the town into the Revolution, and when he marched off to Bennington, Israel Dickinson knew well what he was defending.67

Charles Goodrich (1720-1815) was born in Wethersfield, Connecticut, and was converted by Whitfield in 1741. In June 1752 he drove the first team into Pontoosuck, cutting his way through the woods along the Stockbridge road. That year

66 BCPCR No. 1164; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:112; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, IV, 747.

67 BCPCR, No. 1164.
he bought a third of Colonel Wendell's third of the common land. At Goodrich's request the General Court ordered a partition of the lands which it later confirmed. Colonel Wendell protested that he had not been notified, and that the division was unjust, unequal, and illegal. Thus began a long running disagreement between Goodrich and the other proprietors. The court eventually declared the division null and void. In the meanwhile, Goodrich built on his lands in Pontoosuck and continued speculation in the lands which eventually became Hancock to the west, Lanesborough to the north and west, Washington to the southeast, and Richmond to the southwest. He eventually owned about six thousand acres in the region, a thousand of them in Pontoosuck. In 1753 the first meeting of the settling proprietors was held, and Goodrich, the wealthiest settler, was chosen treasurer. Taxes were approved for a meetinghouse, roads, bridges, and the support of preaching. Goodrich was one of the committee named to obtain a preacher, and also "to manage the whole affair of the meeting-house."\

But the French and Indian War soon turned the attention of the whole frontier to defense. Within a few days

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of the first Indian attack men from Connecticut appeared to carry to safety the women and children of the dozen frontier settlements. Goodrich was one of those who presented the province with a bill for billeting the defenders stationed at Pontoosuck. In 1756 he petitioned the General Court for a garrison of eight to man a fort which he had built at his own expense. It was the second of four forts built in Pontoosuck during the war. The Court approved and Goodrich was named the commanding sergeant. In 1757 he enlisted twenty-three men sent by Sir William Pepperrell and had them scouting for the enemy. 69

By 1759 the danger had slackened and once more Goodrich appeared on a committee to hire a minister. The town allowed him £9:15 towards his taxes for building a bridge across the river near his home within two months and keeping it repaired for twenty years. The new partition of lands was ordered and entered in February 1761. Goodrich received 1,120 acres, more than half of it in first rate lots. When the town was incorporated that April, Goodrich was directed to warn the freeholders and other inhabitants of the first town meeting of Pittsfield. In planning a business center for the town with other leading men, Goodrich built the first waterworks, a two mile aqueduct of bored logs which cracked and brought the enterprise to an end.

69 Smith, Pittsfield I, 98, 102-03, 111; JMH 32, pt. 1, 99, 137; Allen, History of Pittsfield, 9-10; Charles Goodrich to Israel Williams, Sept. 12, 1757 and April 18, 1758, Israel Williams Papers, MHS.
In 1765 the heirs of Colonel Stoddard failed in a test case to try the titles of the settling proprietors. Goodrich was both an original and a settling proprietor and took the part of the settlers in these battles. When their Pittsfield titles were cleared the way was opened for a group of petitioners, including Goodrich, to purchase over 6,300 acres in Hancock. Since he remained in the area all through the war, Goodrich's property produced a good income for him. In the year the town was incorporated Goodrich had buildings valued at £1120, improved land worth £1475, and unimproved land worth £1545. He owned £69:8 in livestock, and had produce worth £570, plus an income of £1239:8 by profession, most likely surveying. With an estate like that he could well afford to spend time on his town offices, as representative in 1763, and moderator and selectman from 1763 to 1765. In 1764 he was one of those chosen to wait on Reverend Thomas Allen to state the conditions of him being their first minister. He joined the church that first year. In 1765 he gave £6:15 for pew No. 11 in the new meetinghouse.

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71 *JMH* 43: Pt. 1, 105-06; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:69; *First Church*, 12; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:78.
In 1767 Goodrich had an ironworks, and served as warden and on a number of committees regarding the school lot, and the treasurer's accounts. That year, when he sued Williamstown for the care of one of their poor, the town meeting voted to pay his court expenses if he failed in his suit. That year the selectmen were ordered by the town meeting to "warn out all persons in general that shall hereafter come into Town." In 1769 and 1770 he was again chosen representative, for he was the best advocate to carry the town's petition to tax the lands of the non-resident proprietors for the support of the minister and the school. But nothing was settled, so he must have turned his attention to developing his lands in Pittsfield, New Hampshire, as he disappeared from high town office and committees for a number of years.

In February 1773 he was recommended as chairman of a committee to run the boundary with New York. He was representative again in 1773. That summer he was one of the settlers who petitioned that his land title be confirmed because the heirs of Colonel John Stoddard were once more contesting the ownership of the lands. But events developed that year which pushed even land titles into the background. Even though he was a large landholder, Goodrich was in "full favor with the Whigs as soon as they came to power."

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Smith, Pittsfield, II, 37; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:95, 97, 103, 111, 117, 126.
A county convention at Pittsfield on August 8, 1774 recommended keeping the courts from sitting, and the town meeting put Goodrich on a committee with Wright and William Francis to carry such a petition to the Berkshire County Court at Great Barrington which was to be the first county court in the province to meet after the receipt of the Massachusetts Government Act. The presence of fifteen hundred men at Great Barrington supported the petitions of the towns, and the court did not meet. When Pittsfield chose a committee to instruct its delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord, Charles Goodrich's name once again headed the list, and he remained among the town's leaders during the Revolution who served on the Committee of Inspection for the Continental Association, the Committee of Correspondence, and as arbitrator of disturbances and quarrels when the courts closed.

Goodrich was in the forefront of some of the "out of doors" gatherings of the people as well. He served as moderator of a meeting of "a Number of the Inhabitants of the Town of Pittsfield and of divers other Towns in the County of Berkshire" in August 1774 which brought charges of treason to his countrymen against Colonel Israel Williams of Hatfield, Hampshire County. This group, although satisfied with Williams' answer to their allegations, insisted that he

sign all but one of them, and "that they in that case would disperse." In 1775 Goodrich was chosen selectman and representative to the General Court, which, in turn, chose him as a justice of the quorum. The initial disagreement of the western counties and the General Court over the latter's assumption of the Charter of 1692 has overshadowed the Court's tendency to nominate and appoint the member of the Court to civil and militia office in the counties. But the disagreement on this point was no less strong, as Goodrich discovered when he tried to act under his commission and the Pittsfield committee handled him as roughly as he had handled Israel Williams. Although the General Court's investigating committee Goodrich had requested cleared him of the town's charges, the matter was not settled until 1779. In the meanwhile, Goodrich held onto his commission, although the court did not sit, and Pittsfield kept him from town office. 74

The newspaper polemicists of the time did not hesitate to accuse men like Goodrich who sided with the General Court and opposed the Berkshire Constitutionalists of being "enemies of their country." When the town was finally satisfied with his patriotism, it placed Goodrich on the committee "to see how to pay for handling Tories,"

in March 1776, and he served on the expedition to Bennington in August 1777. 75

After the town accepted the state constitution of 1780, it also acquiesced in Goodrich's commission as justice of the quorum, renewed in 1781. That year he served as representative and the General Court appointed him to "take up & restrain Persons dangerous to this Commonwealth."

While he had not benefitted financially from the Revolution, in 1784 his property in Pittsfield included a house and a half, a barn and a half, three-fourths of a mill, over a hundred acres in cultivation, fifty-eight acres of pasturage, three hundred sixteen acres of woodland and one hundred acres of unimprovable land. He had sixty-six head of livestock and eleven ounces of silver. That year he was again returned to the post of selectman and the following year he was representative. In August, 1786, although conservatives controlled the Berkshire County Convention, they did not control the mob of eight hundred which went to Great Barrington when the Court of Common Pleas was to meet. There the mob broke into the jail and freed the prisoners. Then it forced Goodrich and two other justices to promise not to

75 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:217; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, VI, 588. The powers of the Revolutionary committees and their role in supporting the Berkshire Constitutionists are discussed in Smith, Pittsfield, I, 374-84. The town's trouble with Goodrich over the authority of the General Court is in ibid., 351, 378-79, and 384-88.
act under their commissions until the grievances of the crowd were redressed.76

By 1789 when the agitations which had rocked the town through the decade had settled sufficiently to allow plans for a new meetinghouse to go forward, Charles Goodrich contributed two sills, for he was still the wealthiest man in town. That year he paid £4:0:10:1 on adjusted values of £9:13 personal estate and £86:4:5 annual worth of real estate in Pittsfield alone. He ranked among the best farmers in the county, known especially for his Narragansett horses raised for the West Indies market. He was active in the organization of the Berkshire County Agricultural Society. He remained a member of the Union parish in the days when a growing number of Pittsfield men won the right to pay their ministerial tax to their dissenting preachers. In the sharp political battles of these later years he was a staunch Federalist.77

He died in 1815 at the age of ninety-six, leaving his wife a third of the dwelling house and farm. His daughter received $1, as he had already provided for her. His son James received $1 and all the land he owned in Hancock, Vermont. His son Charles received the rest of the dwelling

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77 Smith, Pittsfield I, 388, 436-37; II, 33, 34, 123, 195; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield.
farm and his lands in Washington and Hancock, Massachusetts and all the rest of his real estate, livestock, goods and chattel, as well as all his rights, credits and debts, which do not appear on the probate records. Independent, hard-working, and tenacious, he ended life as he had started it, at the pinnacle of the economic ladder in Pittsfield, and no doubt of much of Berkshire County as well.

Josiah Wright (1728-1806) came to Pontoosuck from Northampton. He was one of the earliest settlers, arriving in 1749. He was one of those petitioning the General Court for authority to call meetings and lay taxes on the settling lots and to provide for preaching in 1753. At the first of such meetings he was one of those appointed "to dispose of the money collected for highways & bridges" and "to make exchanges of lands." During the French and Indian War, Wright was one of those petitioning in 1757 that the garrison at Fort Anson, built by Colonel William Williams, was not near enough to protect the lands of the petitioners who wished to be allowed to resettle the town and build a fort nearer their lots. Wright kept a journal of activities at Pontoosuck by order of Colonel Israel Williams who had overall command of the western frontier.

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78 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 388; BCPCR No. 3388.

79 Petition for authority to call town meetings, May 1753, MSA 116:370; petition for permission to resettle Pontoosuck, Mar. 30 and favorable answer Nov. 10, 1757; MSA 111:281, 373; Journal at Pontoosuck by Josiah Wright, with
When the proprietors of the settling lots met again in 1759 Wright was on a committee to hire a minister. The road to and from Charles Goodrich's troublesome bridge over the Housatonic River skirted Wright's lot, and he had to give bond that he would allow free passage over the road. In 1761 he paid taxes on £3 cash, £250 stock in trade, £171 in livestock, and £250 faculty, placing him in the third quarter of taxpayers. When the town was incorporated that year, Wright was chosen selectman, assessor, and treasurer, posts in which he continued until 1767. In 1762 he and others petitioned that the land of non-resident proprietors might be taxed. He was the second member accepted into the church after its foundation in 1764, and was deacon from 1765.  

In 1764 Wright and James Easton built the town stocks and whipping post. That year he also waited on Reverend Thomas Allen with the votes regarding his settling. In 1765 he paid out bounties of £2 each on grown wolves. In 1767 he served on a committee on the burial ground. The next year he was one of the committee to examine the letter of Boston to the selectmen. In 1773 he was again selectman. That year he was among the settlers petitioning for confirmation of their land titles. On the 30th of that month he

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note to Israel Williams, Apr. 29, 1756 to Feb. 20, 1757, Israel Williams Papers, MHS; Smith, *Pittsfield I*, 91, 93-95, 109-13.

80Smith, *Pittsfield I*, 121; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Papers, MBA; petition to the non-resident proprietors, May 31, 1762, MSA 117:SS9-60; *First Church*, 10; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:80, 233.
moderated a special town meeting called to consider "the invaded liberties and privileges of this country."\textsuperscript{31}

He acted as an early friend of liberty. Even though he did not sign the petition asking for the town meeting which set up the Committee of Correspondence, he was appointed to the committee, and to the Committee of Inspection for the Continental Association in December 1774. Pittsfield adopted the strict Worcester form of the Solemn League and Covenant and donated funds for the relief of the poor of Boston suffering under the Boston Port Bill. The province's first test of the Massachusetts Government Act fell to the Berkshire County Court of Common Pleas which would have to open with appointed juries. Wright was one of the Pittsfield men who carried the town's petition to the Court not to meet. When the courts closed he was on the Committee of Arbitration which settled cases usually handled by the justices of the peace. He served on the committee instructing John Brown, the town's delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord. In March 1776 Wright was elected to a committee to take care of "disorderly persons," as Tories were called. He was on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety from 1776 to 1780. As he was moderator in 1776 and 1777, and selectman from 1775 to 1778, it was likely his son who saw service at Cambridge in 1775 for six months and at Albany

\textsuperscript{31}Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:75, 88, 175; Smith, Pittsfield I, 159, 164, 183, 189; Bounty certificate, Apr. 7, 1764, MSA 1:413; petition for confirmation of land titles, June 11, 1773, MSA 118:695.
in 1777, and at Stillwater in September and October 1777. He may have been at Bennington for a week in August 1777 under Lieutenant William Ford when most of the selectmen went on the alarm. 82

When Ticonderoga was evacuated by rebel forces in July 1777, Josiah Wright and William Williams sent a letter of protest to the General Court on behalf of the committee and the selectmen, along with a letter requesting carriages and lead from General Schuyler who was mistakenly blamed for the loss. Pittsfield sent the aid and men on their way before the protest as the military authority of the Massachusetts government was as keenly upheld by the Berkshire Constitutionalists as its civilian authority was denied. 83

When the General Court proposed to spend the 1777 sessions on establishing a constitution, Josiah Wright was one of the three Pittsfield representatives sent to protest. When the constitution was submitted to the towns, Pittsfield voted to accept all but three articles, one of which would have left the choice of salaried civil offices to the General Court and of all others to the governor and senate. The

82 Smith, Pittsfield I, 179, 189-92, 194, 202, 209; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:183, 197, 202, 217, 237; II, 17, 48, 69; Smith, "Town of Pittsfield," 297; William Williams to Colonel Cheever, Aug. 17, 1777; Israel Williams Papers, MHS; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XVII, 944-45; certificate for sick leave for Josiah Wright, Sept. 26, 1775, William Heath Papers, MHS.

83 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 286-88 quotes in full the letters to the General Court and that of General Philip Schuyler.
other two articles provided that judges and other provincial officials should hold office during good behavior. When most of the towns in Massachusetts rejected this constitution, Pittsfield formalized the local administration of justice in October 1778 under a tribunal of five men, including Wright and headed by Colonel William Williams who had been the chief justice of the suspended Court of Common Pleas. As the people had often requested, the tribunal published specific rules for discouraging false charges, but more important, perhaps, was the new table of costs which were high enough to discourage useless litigation. He took over the store which Captain David Noble lost during the war. After the war he became a Methodist, though he had been a deacon in the First Church for twenty years. 84

In later years he was far from prosperous. In 1784 he had a house, two shops, four and a half acres in tillage, three acres of woodland, and £15 factorage (value of commission on merchandise annually). He had a horse, a cow and a hog. In 1789 he paid 2s 6d 3f on real estate worth £2:8:7 annually, and personal estate assessed 15s 8d placing him in the fourth quarter of taxpayers. He died on April 16, 1806 in his seventy-eighth year. His son moved to Pownal, Vermont where he became a justice of the peace and chief justice of the Bennington county courts. 85 An early settler,

84 Ibid., 381-83, 387; II, 45, 140; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:33-38.
85 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State
soldier, and leading citizen for fifty-seven years, Wright never attained the wealth of some of his co-leaders, but the town respected him for his judgment and relied on his leadership as it moved into and through the Revolution, much as it had in the early years of the town. Like many of the leaders, Wright supported the Berkshire Constitutionalist movement, but not Shays's Rebellion.

Long before Pittsfield was incorporated, William Williams (1711-1784) was its best known resident. He was born in Watertown, the son of Reverend William Williams, minister of Weston, and Hannah, the daughter of Reverend Solomon Stoddard of Hatfield. His uncles included Reverend William Williams, the rector of Yale College, John Stoddard, and Colonel Israel Williams of Hatfield. One of his sisters married Colonel Oliver Partridge of Hatfield. He married three times: Maria Tyler of Boston, who was related to the Papperrells, Sarah Wells, and his Aunt Hannah Dickinson. Two daughters by his second wife married into families of other high town officers of Pittsfield. Miriam married Captain J. D. Colt, and Sylvia married a son of Colonel James Easton.

Library, 163, Sch. No. 3; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Cooke, "Pittsfield Sun Vital Records," Apr. 21, 1806 and Jan. 29, 1817.

86 Stephen W. Williams, The Genealogy and History of the Family of Williams in America (Greenfield: Merriam and Mirick, 1847), 186-190; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 638-39; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 78-79.
He was graduated from Harvard College in 1729, and after a brief time practicing medicine he turned to the military career which brought him fame and a fortune in western lands. He was in the expedition to St. Augustine under James Oglethorpe, and to Carthagena under General Francis Wentworth, and Admiral Edward Vernon. On his return to western Massachusetts, Colonel Wendell offered him a settling lot and a hundred acres in Poontoosuck if he would be a leader in the settlement. He came, but in 1744 he turned to frontier fighting. The General Court commanded him to build a line of forts between the Connecticut and Hudson rivers: Fort Shirley, Fort Pelham, and Fort Massachusetts. He raised a company for the expedition to Louisbourg, and was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the 8th Massachusetts Regiment, serving as a garrison. Next he was acting colonel of the regiment raised to protect the Northwest and assigned to rebuild Fort Massachusetts. The poor pay offered by the province and his own poor business ability left him without funds, even though he served as Quartermaster during part of the war. From this period on he was known as Colonel Bill Williams to distinguish him from his cousin, William Williams, who settled in Dalton.87

After the war he settled in Deerfield where he

87Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 640-43; Smith, Pittsfield I, 79-84; in Seth Pomeroy's Journal, July 6, 1745, Parkman Papers, MHS; report to Admiral Warren, Nov. 28, 1745 and Roster of Lt. Col. William Williams 8th Regiment at Louisbourg, December 3, 1745; Pepperrell Papers, MHS.
received a commission as justice of the peace, following in the steps of his uncles before him. In 1749 Williams and sixty-three others got a grant for the township which became Bennington, Vermont. He was also a proprietor of Holderness and New Holderness in New Hampshire. Williams finally settled in Pontoosuck in 1753. He was involved in the business of settling other towns in the area in his role as a magistrate. In 1753 the General Court allowed the settling proprietors of Pontoosuck to meet and raise taxes.

But in the summer of 1754 the frontier erupted with Indian attacks and once more he was involved in military matters, building forts and raising troops. He kept in close touch with Colonel Israel Williams, "Capt of all the Forces rais'd for the Defense of ye Western Frontiers" from Fort Anson, which he built at his own dwelling. He saw a lot of action in this campaign, and wrote in great despondency from Albany about the superiority of the French over the English forces on the frontier. He believed the war on the frontier would decide who would be masters of America.

88Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 139-40, 143; Snell, "The County Magistracy," 381-84 gives the family lines for Hampshire County justices of the peace; Smith, Pittsfield I, 90; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 640-43; Holland, History of Western Mass, 548; authorization of William Williams to issue warrants calling meeting of proprietors of West Hoosac (Williamstown), Sept. 10, 1753, MSA 116:42; ADS attesting settlement of Sunderland pastor, Sept. 1, 1753, MSA 116:455a.
His comments on the surrender of Ft. Oswego indicate a good understanding of the relationship of Indian trade to peace on the frontier. Yet, by September 1756 he was so discouraged that he headed a letter to his uncle, Colonel Israel Williams, as follows: "Proper salutations from a poor red Coat Captain—the worst of all Colours, but wraps an Honest hart that bleeds for its Country & Nation." In a letter written in 1757 he suggested voiding the patents above Albany because the grantees had not settled or defended them, and that the barrier at Crown Point and a Lyden carrying place could never be sustained unless the lands on the Hudson River from Albany to Ft. Edward were peopled:

"& yt - that Can never be Effected unless the Enormous Patents of land on sd river above Albany be vacated (?) (or vacuted) (?)reassumed) reasigned and Demolished . . . 90

Nevertheless, he continued raising troops and manning the posts.

The following spring, though he was deep in plans for an invasion of Canada, he sold some land in Poontosuck township to Jacob Wendell. By July he wrote Colonel Israel

89 Smith, Pittsfield I, 100, 106-11 has the plans of the fort and describes conditions there in the early part of the war; Ch. V deals with the French and Indian War and is mostly devoted to William Williams part in it. JMH 32, pt. 1, 18-19; papers pertaining to the building of Ft. Pontoosuck, 1754-1761, Whelden Papers, MHS; William Williams to Henry Spring, May 1, 1758 appended to an order of Thomas Pownall of Apr. 28, 1758, Spring Papers, MHS; William Williams to Israel Williams, Sept. 13, 1756, Israel Williams Papers, MHS.

90 William Williams to Israel Williams [n.d.-1757], Israel Williams Papers, MHS.
Williams that if they didn't get more men and ships on the river "they will have all Canada to subdue." The British commanders had them entrenching for security, "but no one Col° of the Provincials have been Consulted in any one Instance any more than Orderly Sergeants." He roused the anger of Sir William Johnson by disarming the Iroquois at Albany, after accusing them of treason to the English cause. Johnson imprisoned him, but the royal authorities on the spot cleared him, saying he had even condescended to the Indians. In January 1759 Governor Thomas Pownell sent for him, and he stopped at Pontoosuck to conduct some farm business. The governor offered him a colonel's commission under which he raised over 900 men for the expedition against Ticonderoga, ending his action-packed military career.\(^{91}\)

In the spring of 1759 he was back in Pontoosuck where the townsmen elected him proprietor's clerk and surveyor of highways and placed him on the committee to hire a minister. He inherited his father's share of Philip Livingston's third of the common lands and the lot and hundred acres Colonel Stoddard had left him. In all he had 375 acres of

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\(^{91}\)Deed of sale of land on Pontoosuck Township to Jacob Wendell, May 2, 1758, William Williams to Israel Williams, July 11, 1758, Israel Williams Papers, MHS; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 647; William Williams to Joseph Dwight, Jan. 20, 1769, Sedgwich Papers II, MHS; Smith, Pittsfield I, 118.
first-rate land, including one of the "finest pieces of pine-land in the region." 92

In 1761, when he was fifty years old, he had £700 worth of improved land, £30 cash, £30 of plate, £454 livestock, £184:3 of produce, a total of £2148:3, placing him in the top quarter of the taxpayers. That year he purchased a Negro girl, Pendar, whom he later sold at a profit of £25. Eventually, he owned several slaves. In the fall when he went to Boston as an agent for sundry towns in western Hampshire County to urge the erection of a separate county in their area, he carried the petition of Poontoosuck for incorporation as a town. Both objectives were attained in April 1761. While in the capital he also petitioned for two more towns to be opened. The same act which incorporated the new town as Pittsfield authorized Williams to call the first town meeting. The town chose him as town clerk, selectman, and assessor. In June he was appointed a justice of the peace of the Berkshire Court of Common Pleas. 93

When the town was erected Williams remained active in business and government to help the area prosper. Plans he formed with several town leaders to make their lots the center of the business district failed through lack of a water supply when Goodrich's aqueduct of bored logs split.

92 Smith, Pittsfield I, 128-29.

93 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBS; Smith, Pittsfield I, 130-33, 137; JMH 37, pt. 2, 184, 304, 308, 311-12, 335-36; Whitmore, Mass. Civil List, 123; order erecting Pontosoock into a township, April 13, 1761, MSA 117; 658, 661.
Williams built his "Long House" at a cost of £1373:17:6. The house was named for the long room where he held court as a justice of the peace, and when he was appointed judge and register of probate in 1765, that court as well. Later he claimed the climate of Pittsfield was so healthy as to make the latter appointment unprofitable.

In 1763 Williams joined other leaders in exploring a road from Hampshire to Albany, and though they requested reimbursement for their expenses, the General Court denied their petition. Despite all the activity of settlement, Williams was still paying out bounties for wolves' heads in 1765. He continued speculation in western lands, purchasing 24,700 acres of Township No. 9 adjoining Southampton for £1500 in the 1762 auction of province lands in the western counties. He soon gave it up to John Chandler, Timothy Paine, and their associates, apparently at no profit.

In that same auction he stood surety for Noah Nash who purchased Township No. 4. In 1770, as a grantee of Alstead, New Hampshire, he was one of those petitioning for the grant of another township. 94

He filled high town offices from the beginning, earning his grant of lands from the Stoddards. He was selectman from 1763 to 1767, 1769 to 1773, and 1777 to 1779.

94 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 143, 145; JMH 39:15; bounty certificate, Apr. 7, 1765, MSA 1:413; auction of western townships, June 11, 1762, MSA 117:872; petition for grant of another township in place of Alstead, Mar. 12, 1770, MSA 118:411.
He was town clerk from 1763 to 1767, and moderator of the March meeting in 1766 and 1767, 1770, 1771, 1772, and 1779. He was representative in 1764, 1766, 1771, 1779, and 1781, a total of twenty-nine terms in high town office. In 1762 he was elected representative, but the act of incorporation had denied the town representation until 1761. While he withdrew, a committee was set up "to consider what is proper to be done to relieve the several Towns and Districts who are at present debar'd from that Priviledge." Perhaps that was the purpose of his trip to Boston in the first place. When he returned as representative in 1766 he served most often on committees dealing with the Indians, though he carried petitions dealing with land titles and proprietor's rights as well. 95

In 1764, after the First Church was established by the eight "Foundation Men," William Williams was the first member accepted, and he was one of those appointed to wait on Reverend Thomas Allen with the town's settlement offer. He continued as the presiding magistrate of the Berkshire County Courts from 1765 to 1781, with the interruptions peculiar to Berkshire. In this post he oversaw the incorporation of towns such as Becket, Lanesborough, Hancock, Williamstown, and Lenox, towns in which he had interests himself. He continued selling lands in Pittsfield,

often to families who provided the town with leaders: Crofoot, Goodrich, and Van Schaack. He worked to attract additional settlers to the county, praising the climate which made barren women fertile and poor men wealthy. In 1765 he bought Pew No. 10 in the meetinghouse. The proceeds of the sale were turned over to him to finish the meetinghouse but neither he nor others finished it until 1770. In 1765 pretended indisposition kept him from holding court during the Stamp Act crisis. In 1768 he was on a committee to examine the letter of Boston to the selectmen. The growth of the town is indicated by the election to fill twenty-three minor offices that year, but they continued to choose from a narrow field. More than half of them were given to men who attained high town office. In the May meeting the town continued its tradition of conducting town business before electing a representative. That May it dismissed the report of the committee on economy and manufacturing, gave William Williams £5 for his services as town clerk for the years past, refused the committee arrangements for seating the meetinghouse, and voted down all extra expenses except a spade and hoe to dig graves.

96 First Church, 11; Smith, Pittsfield I, 145-46, 164; orders for warrants regarding incorporation of Becket, New Framingham and West Hoosuck, June 18, 1765; MSA 118:123, 126, 130; orders for warrants regarding incorporation of Richmond, Feb. 24, 1767, MSA 118:233; orders for warrants regarding incorporation of Hancock, July 1, 1771, MSA 118:456; orders for warrants regarding incorporation of Whitely, Apr. 10, 1771, MSA 118:500.
At the end of the meeting the selectmen voted not to send anyone to the General Court that year. In December they voted to raise £12 "to buy a Town Stock of ammunition," and William Williams was appointed to obtain it.\(^97\)

In March 1769 Colonel Williams returned to the Board of Selectmen, along with Lieutenant David Bush and Ensign Eli Root. The selectmen and several other experienced high town officers were on a committee to instruct Representative Charles Goodrich. He was to carry the town's petition that the lands of non-resident proprietors be taxed for the support of the minister and the school. The year 1770 found the town repeating its actions of the year before. Most of the business of the years Williams was in office concentrated on the roads, schools, and general town expenses. The change in custom in 1769 to allow yoked and ringed hogs to run at large, and the appointment of a committee to seat the singers in the meetinghouse took as much time in the town meeting as the discussion about "discontinuing or augmenting the number of corts in said County" as requested by the General Court.

In 1770 the General Court reviewed the militia acts and Williams sent Lt. Gov. Thomas Hutchinson a scheme he had sent to Governor Bernard for establishing five or ten regiments of well-trained and well-equipped provincial troops to be paid for from

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taxes in lieu of the muster days for males from sixteen to sixty. Williams believed such a body would be near enough to a standing army "to strike terror to an Enemy."  

By 1773 the inhabitants of Pittsfield began to look on Parliament as the enemy, and the town meeting became so cautious that even the minutes of the town meetings were not immediately added to the town records. Presumably town activities supporting the patriot cause were left out of the records for a while for fear of retaliation should the crown prevail. The report on the Tea Party was the responsibility of a committee which included Williams, but it was the work of Woodbridge Little, spokesman for the Tories in town. He managed to temper condemnation of the party with approval of the cause, and though the meeting was not formally recorded, the town accepted the report, as follows:

That the said conduct was unnecessary and highly unwarrantable, every way tending to the subversion of all good order and of the Constitution . . . . At the same time, we are as adverse as any of the patriots in America to being subjected to a tax without our own free and voluntary consent, and shall, we trust, always abide by that principle. . . .

The abhorrence and detestation which your constituents have of the said extraordinary and illegal transaction, as also of all the other public transactions which have been leading to, or in any degree countenancing the same, and especially that you do not directly or indirectly consent to any proposals which may be made, or any measures which may be taken, to render your constituents chargeable to any payment or satisfaction which may be required to be made to the owners of said

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tea, as we have determined, at all events, never to pay or advance one farthing thereto. 99

In March 1774 Williams was on the committee to settle with the town treasurer for 1772 and on the committee for leasing the school lot, and he was permitted to build a stable between the pond and the meetinghouse. Despite the apparent even tenor of business, this March meeting was really a decisive one, for the warrant to the constables was the last issued "In his Majesty's Name," and the minutes of the meeting begin "At a legal meeting of the Freeholders & other Inhabitants of the Town of Pittsfield legally warned & met." Yet the Boston Port Bill did not receive the Royal assent until March 31st. It was published in the Boston papers on May 10, and the Massachusetts Government Act "followed closely." 100 It appears that Pittsfield, like many towns in Massachusetts, made up its mind before the arrival of the Intolerable Acts.

Williams' position was a difficult one. He was on half-pay from the British Army for his services during the colonial wars with France. Most of his family connections were strong supporters of the crown against the popular party, and although, according to the charter, he could not be removed from his position as magistrate, he was sixty-three years old and had held office under the crown most

99 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 184-86, 198.

100 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1, warrant for election meeting, TRP 1:164, 167, 173; Smith, Pittsfield I, 187, 193.
of his adult life. As a military man, he had learned through bitter experience to question the competency of the British commanders, yet he knew first-hand the weakness of the provincial militia in lengthy campaigns, and he feared it could not stand against the military might of England. But in camp and court he had been closer to the people of western Massachusetts than he had been to the crown, and he knew their determination. So while he was not in the forefront of those urging rebellion, and even though he objected to the radical influence of Reverend Thomas Allen, he eventually ended in the camp of the patriots. 101

A special town meeting was requested for June 30, 1774:

to consider the response of the Town to the Circular Letter from the Town of Boston & other Towns in this Province and such other things and matters as the sd town shall think proper in regard to the invaded liberties of their Country. 102

Even this town meeting which adopted the Solemn League and Covenant from Worcester and set a day of prayer and Fasting, put Williams at the head of a committee to confer with those who wanted to buy the ministry land. The town met on adjournment several times and by August 15th news of the Massachusetts Government Act was received. It then chose a committee of three "to prefer a Petition to the Honorable

101 Smith, Pittsfield I, 174-76 believed he had a secret understanding with the local Whig leaders.

102 Warrant for special town meeting, June 24, 1774, TRP 1:174.
Court not to transact any Business this Term." William Williams, who headed the "Honorable Court," carefully stayed out of the business. Pittsfield's and other towns' petitions and fifteen hundred men successfully stopped the court from sitting at Great Bennington, so at the end of September the town chose a committee to act as arbitrators to regulate disturbances.¹⁰³

A meeting on January 2, 1775 voted a complaint against Major Stoddard and Woodbridge Little. It seems that during the fall the two men had charged Reverend Thomas Allen with "rebellion, treason, and sedition. . . ." in a town meeting. The town declared the charges false, and added that the minister "merited the thanks of this town in everything wherein he hath undertaken to defend the rights and privileges of the people in this Province." The interesting thing is that the paper is addressed "to Col. Williams and others, - to lie on file," and that Williams' name was erased from the body of the complaint. Obviously some agreement was reached because by December 19th he was still serving on committees. At the March election meeting Williams' name headed the list of men chosen "to be Wardens and they be a Committee to take Care of Disorderly persons," as Tories were called. He was also chosen surveyor of highways. Yet caution guided the steps of the town even this late, for a

¹⁰³ Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:177, 183, 190; Smith, Pittsfield I, 194-95.
month before Lexington and Concord it voted "That the January Meeting 1774 Relative to the Destruction of the Tea & the Letter to Rev. Mr. Collins and his answer be kept on file and not recorded." 104

The rest of that year Williams was rather quiet. But in March 1776 he was on a committee "to see how to pay for handling Tories." In March 1777 he was once again head of the Board of Selectman where he remained for three years. He was one of the three selectmen chosen at that meeting to divide the town into classes to provide men for the Continental Army. In 1777 he headed a committee to instruct the three representatives Pittsfield sent to the General Court to protest the lack of a proper constitution. He was on the draft committee instructing the delegates to the county convention held at Pittsfield in August. He presided over that convention which wisely polled the towns on whether the courts should re-open. Of these towns voting, 62 percent were against opening the Court of Sessions and 80 percent against reopening the Court of Common Pleas. The Berkshire towns threatened the General Court with secession if it did not call a constitutional convention. 105

104 Smith, Pittsfield I, 198; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:194, 202, 204.

105 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:217, 236, 239; 2:2; Smith, Pittsfield I, 356n, 360-62.
In mid-August 1777 Williams wrote to the commander of the nearest Continental Army units requesting powder and lead to forward to Bennington, as Pittsfield had sent all its store of a hundred pounds, adding that "the Dishes, Plates, & Spoons at Bennington & many Towns this Side are & have been melted into Ball & I imagine the Powder left in Pittsfield is not Sufficient to make an Alarm." With all the lead in the county sent to Bennington, he hoped that even though Washington had ordered the army not to deliver any more arms to the militia, the commander would help them.

All the other selectmen and the committeemen had gone to Bennington and the sixty-six year old Williams was evidently in charge of supplies and food for the defense of the town. Once the British invasion was stopped, Williams petitioned the General Court for the release of his uncle, Israel Williams, who was in jail in Northampton with his son, sent there by order of the General Court. 106

For Williams 1778 was a busy year. He was once again head of the Board of Selectmen, surveyor of highways, and warden. He was on a committee to settle the accounts of the late treasurer, Israel Dickinson, who had died of a fever contracted at Bennington, and to report on rams running at large. He moderated the town meeting in May,

106 William Williams to Colonel Cheever, Aug. 17, 1777, William Heath Papers, MHS; request for the release of Israel Williams, Nov. 2, 1777, Israel Williams Papers, MHS.
and in August he was appointed to a committee to set up the Ashuelot Equivalent (Dalton) as a separate town. When the town set up a more formal committee to deal with breaches of the peace and settle land disputes in October 1778, he was on the committee to instruct the members and was named to head the Committee. He headed a committee to instruct Representative John Brown to press the issue of a state convention for "forming a Bill of Rights & a Constitution."

That year the town paid him £41:2 for highway work and £13:8 for materials for the meetinghouse. In March 1779 he was once again named Justice of the Quorum, though in keeping with the sentiment of the county, the town voted that the "sitting of the Court in May was unnecessary." In addition Williams moderated the March meeting, headed the Board of Selectmen, was representative to the General Court instructed to work for a constitutional convention, and was on a committee to instruct delegates to the county convention. In July he was named a delegate to the state constitutional convention to meet in September 1779, for which service the town voted to pay him £524 in inflated currency. In 1780 he was on a committee to instruct the delegates to the state convention in Boston, and the town accepted the new constitution and Bill of Rights.

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107 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:10, 20, 30, 33, 42-43, 45-50, 54, 57, 64, 73. Smith, Pittsfield I, 363-65, 381-82; records of Civil Commissions, 1775-1786, pt. 1, n.p., MSA.
In 1780 the town directed the selectmen to order the constables "to warn out of town" individuals and families, a sure indication that times were hard. The town provided no money for schools, and some people refused to pay their share to raise men for the Continental Army. There were not enough vouchers to settle with the estate of the former treasurer, Israel Dickinson. The town instructed Representative William Williams "that he use all possible prudence, discretion, & dispatch & give no more frequent attendance at the General Court than absolutely necessary - as we fully confide in the ability & integrity of said Representative we think it needless to be more particular in our Instructions." Once a legal constitution was in operation, Pittsfield felt her liberties were safe in the hands of her most famous settler, despite his connections with the Tory element.

In 1781 he was representative, surveyor of highways and he moderated an August meeting which ordered the constables to stop taking the new emission currency for the tax to provide beef for the Army. That year he resigned as judge and register of probate, but continued his lifelong attraction to land speculation by becoming a proprietor of Barre, Vermont. At the end of 1782 he and Woodbridge Little constituted a committee to wait on the General

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108 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:76, 91-93, 96.
Court to decide the future location of the courts in Berkshire County. In September 1784 he moderated a town meeting which elected Little and Timothy Childs as delegates to a county convention in Lenox where they were instructed to work to get the county courts held in two places.

Williams died in April 1784. He put his extensive real estate in his wife's name before he died and named her administratrix. His personal estate was worth £193:5:10, though, on the whole, all but a few of the items on the inventory appear under-valued. The debts of the estate amounted to £517:14:7, so a declaration of insolvency was issued. The inventory listed clothing valued at about £20, books worth under £2 (though Smith said he had a good library), furniture valued at £20, and linens, etc., at £15. A sleigh and some saddles and two tons of hay are the only items which suggest he even had a barn, so evidently he had disposed of his livestock earlier. Yet in 1789 his widow, Hannah Williams, was in the top quarter of taxpayers assessed more than any surviving high town officer of colonial Pittsfield, and only surpassed by three high town officers of revolutionary Pittsfield: a lawyer, a merchant, and a farmer whose four polls raised his tax bill higher than hers. She administered the estate very well for herself.

109 Ibid., 91, 103, 124; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 655.
She turned Colonel Williams' dependent children out of the house, and the creditors, including her relative, Nathaniel Dickinson, who was due £162, received 4s 7d 3f on the pound.  

110Smith, Pittsfield, II, 78-9, 640; BCPCR No. 1274; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield.

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CHAPTER VI

REVOLUTIONARY PITTSFIELD

Introduction

Pittsfield approached the Revolution somewhat like her farmers approached their fireplaces: distant and cold at first, but warming as they got closer to it. They did not get very warm until 1774. In 1765 and 1766 concern for roads and schools filled their town meeting, but they left no mention of the Stamp Act in the town records. Moreover, their magistrate, Colonel William Williams, claimed he was too ill to do any business until the act was repealed. Whether his illness was anything beyond cold feet he did not admit. In 1768 the town meeting appointed a committee to examine a letter from the Boston town meeting concerning manufactures in America, but the town dismissed its report at the next meeting. Later that year, however, it did order Colonel Williams to purchase ammunition for the town. Not until 1773, when Pittsfield instructed Representative Charles Goodrich to see that Pittsfield people did not have to pay for the losses to the East India Company, did the troubles with Britain which so engaged the interests of the capital, claim the attention of the town. Even then,
Woodbridge Little, who wrote Pittsfield's instructions to its representatives at the General Court following the Boston Tea Party, managed to condemn the unlawfulness of the act while he condemned the tea tax. But in their caution, the selectmen ordered the Town Clerk to keep the material "Relative to the Destruction of the Tea . . . on file and not recorded." ¹

But in the spring of 1774 as the news of the Intolerable Acts spread across Massachusetts, the town moved from caution to decision, and finally to determination and leadership. Each step of the way, the town consistently looked to the experienced high town officers it had trusted in the past. The warrant for the March 1774 meeting was the last issued "In his Majesty's Name." In June 1774 ten men requested a special town meeting to consider a circular letter from Boston asking the town to consider the proposed Solemn League and Covenant and "such other things and matters as the sd town shall think proper in regard to the invaded Liberties of their Country." The town declared a day of fast and appointed a standing Committee of Correspondence headed by Reverend Thomas Allen. He and David Noble, builder and militia captain, were the only ones on the committee who were not high town officers. The town agreed to adopt the strict Worcester form of the Solemn League and Covenant

¹William Williams to Elijah Dwight, June 14, 1766. Quoted in Smith, Pittsfield I, 176n; 184-185; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:108, 110, 112.
"Litterally," and to send a committee to meet with other town committees at Stockbridge. On July 11th, the town meeting accepted the recommendation of a county congress at Pittsfield to send a petition to the county courts asking that they not transact business at Great Barrington that term. This was a very important step because the Barrington court was the first county court scheduled to meet after the reception of the Massachusetts Government Act. The town accepted a petition written by Timothy Childs and John Strong listing reasons why the court could not be held in its ancient form, and why it should not be held at all.

"We ought to bear the most early testimony against those acts," the town resolved, meaning the Intolerable Acts, "and set a good example for the other parts of the Province to copy after." "The honor of the Court has good grounds to neglect to do business in the law," the petition went on, "and the people just occasion to petition for it, and insist upon it without admitting a refusal." The committees carrying the petitions of the various towns were joined at the Court House in Great Barrington by a mob of 1500 unarmed men who would not allow the judges to pass. The people insisted—with some veiled threats—that the judges leave, and they did so. Smith credits the enthusiasm for the patriot cause which swept Berkshire with this success in
closing the courts. Pro-Revolutionary sentiment and action increased from this time on.2

But not all mobs gathered to support official town actions. Some were spontaneous "out of doors" meetings, which chose a prominent patriot, often a member of the Committee of Correspondence, as moderator, and went in a body to bring charges against Tory sympathizers, not necessarily town inhabitants. Such was the case when a mob from Pittsfield and surrounding towns chose the past and future selectman and representative, Charles Goodrich, moderator and went to Israel Stoddard's house to bring charges against his father-in-law, Israel Williams, in August 1774. In Pittsfield the radical patriot Reverend Thomas Allen, encouraged such actions, and his political preaching was so violent that the town magistrates, William Williams, Israel Stoddard, and Woodbridge Little, accused him of treason.3

But Pittsfield did more than talk. On September 29, 1774 the town voted not to send a representative to the General Court at Salem, but to send John Brown as a delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord the following month. It also chose a committee of arbitrators "to Regulate disturbances & Quarrels and to take the Province Law as their guide." Each of the eight members was a high town

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2 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:166, 174, 177; Smith, Pittsfield I, 194-196.

3 Charges against Israel Williams, Aug. 26, 1774, Israel Williams Papers, MHS; Smith, Pittsfield I, 177-78, 198.
officer: five of them served before and after the Revolution. In November the town sent £6:12 to help relieve Boston's poor from the effects of the Boston Port Bill. In December the town adopted the Continental Resolutions of Association prohibiting export and import trade with Britain after December 1, 1774. It set up a Committee of Inspection to enforce the Association. In January 1775 the town passed a complaint against Stoddard and Little stemming from their opposition to Reverend Thomas Allen, and their refusal to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, which actions branded them as enemies of American liberty.  

Pittsfield's militiamen were as active as their committeemen. In early September 1774, when British troops seized some of Cambridge's ammunition, a large number of Pittsfield men went on the "Powder Alarm" as far as westfield, about ten miles west of Springfield. In December the town approved an allowance of nine shillings for each of the men who had gone on the alarm. In January 1775 the town agreed to pay 1/6d to each Minute Man under Captain David Noble provided:

that each equip & furnish himself with proper & sufficient arms and accoutrements [sic] fit for war, and stand ready at a minutes warning to march and oppose the Enemys of our Country if called thereto . . . and appear & Exercise three Hours for four half days per month until further orders.  

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4 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:189, 194, 196, 201; Smith, Pittsfield I, 192, 198.

5 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:189, 194, 196, 201.
Pittsfield militiamen soon used this training beyond the town. In February 1775 the town sent lawyer John Brown as a delegate to the Provincial Congress in Cambridge, where he served on a committee to investigate the possibility of a Canadian alliance, and was sent to Canada to gather more definite information. His report of March 29, 1775 pointed out the importance of immediate seizure of Fort Ticonderoga should hostilities break out. At the March meeting Pittsfield chose the usual town officers, all of whom had served in colonial Pittsfield, and all but one of whom had served in colonial Pittsfield, and all but one of whom held a militia office. Captain Israel Dickinson, one of the leaders of the Whigs in town, was named town clerk, selectman, and town treasurer. Wardens were to take care of "Disorderly Persons," as Tories were known. The town decided not to raise money for the schools that year—perhaps all the young teachers were in the militia, where they would continue to receive pay for drilling, although the town refused to vote on whether the town would "equip themselves with warlike stores." When John Brown's plan came to fruition, Pittsfield would have the civilian and military leadership needed to support it.

Yet even this late (March 1775) the town meeting was cautious, once again ordering the town clerk to keep on file and not record the January 1774 meeting "relative to

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6 Smith, Pittsfield I, 211-13; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:201-04.

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the Destruction of the Tea," in which the town opposed Whig activity, and to withhold a letter censuring Reverend Mr. Collins of Lanesborough for encouraging Pittsfield inhabitants to support the crown. In February when Goodrich and Dickinson were chosen representatives to the Provincial Congress, the town voted unanimously to pay the province tax to Henry Gardner, the Receiver General of the Provincial Congress, rather than to the provincial treasurer responsible to the governor. Later they ordered the Committee of Inspection to assist the constables should anyone refuse to pay his rates under these conditions. ⁷

The war began for Pittsfield soon after the Battle of Concord, for by May a committee from Connecticut had met with John Brown, James Easton, and Ethan Allen in Easton's tavern in Pittsfield, planned the attack on Fort Ticonderoga and carried it out successfully, with Easton second in command. Not until 1776 did the town meeting order field officers to erase King George III's name from their commissions, by which time some of them had carried their commissions through two Canadian campaigns and by which time Pittsfield was well enough into the Revolution to need to petition the General Court for an abatement of taxes. It was also far enough into Berkshire County's peculiar Revolution denying the civil authority of the General

⁷Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:204, 208-09; Smith, Pittsfield I, 198-99, 211-25.
Court, to remonstrate against that body for granting Charles Goodrich a civil commission as a justice of the peace. The Pittsfield town meeting argued that the people should have the right of nomination. Petitions like that convinced the leaders of the provincial government that the people of Berkshire were waging a second revolution. If in fact they were, they intended to win it and the struggle for independence under the leadership of the same men who first brought them into the larger revolution against Britain, the same men who, for the most part, had governed the town since the end of the Seven Years War.

Collective Profile

From 1775 to 1789 thirty-two men served 145 terms in high town office, an average of 4.5 terms each. But fifty-five of these terms were served by only nine men, all of whom were leaders of colonial Pittsfield. Twenty-three men, therefore, high town officers of revolutionary Pittsfield, served the remaining ninety terms. Some served only one term, and one served twenty-two terms, but the average was three terms. Eli Root had the longest continuity in a single office, serving as treasurer from November 1777 until March 1788. He also served as selectman for three years beginning in 1778, and then for six more, beginning

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8Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:214, 221, 223; Smith, Pittsfield I, 211-25. Chapters XIII and XV cover Pittsfield's role in the two Canadian campaigns.
in 1783. The second longest tenure in one high office took place when David Bush, a colonial leader, served as a selectman from 1782 to 1789. Other long-term officeholders were J. D. Colt, a selectman for six years (1782 to 1787), Joshua Robbins, a moderator for five years (1781 to 1785), and Jonathan Lee, a town clerk for four and a half years (December 1780 to March 1786 (see Table 11).

All revolutionary high town officers were selectmen except James Noble (representative in 1779), Jonathan Lee (town clerk, 1780-1784), Timothy Childs (representative 1783-84, 1786), and Joshua Danforth (town clerk 1787-1789). The town did not search for a town clerk who would serve indefinitely, as other towns did, for in colonial Pittsfield the three men who held this office each served only five years. Long-tenured town clerks, such as were found elsewhere, were not one of Pittsfield's customs.

All told, eighteen revolutionary leaders served forty-seven years as selectmen, an average of 2.6 years each, ranging from one to eight years, with a median of two years. Of the eight men who served only a single term as selectmen, four held no other high town office. Seven men, four of whom were colonial leaders, served from one to six years as moderators of the March meeting, averaging 2.14 years each. Five men served from two to four years as town clerk, an average of three years each. Three men served from two to ten years as treasurer, an average of five years. Although the town occasionally elected more than one
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revolutionary Pittsfield High Town Officers, 1763-1789</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revolutionary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufus Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Barber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Barber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebbeus Barkus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy Childs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Crofoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Danforth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Fairfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Larned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valentine Rathbun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oliver Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caleb Stanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Stevens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Van Schaack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John C. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Larger Leaders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John D. Colt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joshua Robbins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colonial Leaders</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who Served After 1774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel Dickinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Easton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Goodrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Cadwell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Francis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Hubbard, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M - Moderator; C - Town Clerk; S - Selectman; T - Town Treasurer; R - Representative; D - Delegate to Provincial Congress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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representative to the General Court, it also decided that no more than one would attend any one of the four sessions during the year. Thus in the fifteen years from 1775 to 1789, the town sent thirteen men to the General Court, none of whom served more than three terms. In this office, as in the other high town offices, Pittsfield evidently thought it had a good supply of governing talent, sufficient to allow for frequent turnover. Only Eli Root held office for what would be considered a lengthy tenure in a place like Gloucester.

Although many Whigs had complained about multiple officeholding in the old colonial government, especially where Governor Thomas Hutchinson was concerned, multiple officeholding was occasionally practiced by leaders of revolutionary Pittsfield. In 1781, for example, Joshua Robbins was both moderator and a selectman. In 1787 Henry Van Schaack was a selectman and a representative in the General Court. Woodbridge Little was moderator and a selectman in 1787, and a selectman and representative in 1788. Eli Root was the greatest multiple officeholder among the leaders of revolutionary Pittsfield. In 1777 he was town treasurer and representative. From 1778 to 1780, and again from 1783 to 1787, he was town treasurer and selectman. In this he resembled the seven leaders of colonial Pittsfield who held multiple offices thirteen times during this same period.

Moreover, until 1778 leaders of colonial Pittsfield continued to dominate high town offices. Until then,
Pittsfield was within a few days' march of the British invasion route from Canada, so, as in other times of crisis, the town's voters turned to proven leadership. On the average, less than one new man a year appeared in high town office throughout the period from 1775 to 1789. The greatest turnover in posts occurred in 1778, 1781, and 1786, yet in no one year did more than three new names appear. In 1776 early residents Stephen Crofoot and Matthew Barber were chosen selectmen, and the fiery patriot, Valentine Rathbun, was chosen representative. In 1778 not only did the end of the British threat allow for a change, but the town also had to replace the Whig leader, Israel Dickinson, who had been town clerk, treasurer, and often selectman, and who had died from a fever contracted in the Battle of Bennington. One reason new men came into high town office so slowly was that men who had entered high town office in colonial Pittsfield continued to serve during and after the Revolution, filling an average of six terms a year after 1775.

However, not even the new men who came to office in these years could be described as young men of the Revolution. The men who rose to high town office after 1775 were older than those who held the offices previously, for every office but town clerk. As it was, the average age at which men first assumed high town office in colonial Pittsfield was 37.8 while the average age of the men coming to such offices after 1775 was 41.5, over three and a half years older (see Table 12). Moreover, the birthdates we do not have are those of
the older town residents, Matthew and William Barber, Stephen Crofoot, James Noble, and John D. Colt. Their inclusion would make the difference even greater. In addition, two other men, Wright and Hubbard, who held different high town offices before 1775, each began a new office after that date. Josiah Wright first served as representative in 1777 at the age of fifty, and Daniel Hubbard, Jr. first became a selectman in 1788 at the age of seventy-four. Their inclusion would make the average age for first serving as selectman forty-nine, and for representative 45.57.

TABLE 12
Average Ages on Beginning High Town Offices, Pittsfield, 1763-1789

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Colonial Pittsfield</th>
<th>Revolutionary Pittsfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>4 42</td>
<td>2 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectman</td>
<td>10 38.7</td>
<td>9 40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>3 36.6</td>
<td>4 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Treasurer</td>
<td>3 41.6</td>
<td>1 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>4 41.2</td>
<td>6 44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age on entering high town office</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The citizens of Pittsfield also continued to choose their leaders from the same economic bracket as before the war. If we divide the declared wealth in the 1761 Assessor's
List into quarters, we find that thirteen (56.5%) of the high town officers of revolutionary Pittsfield fell into the lower half, probably because so many of them were just getting their farms started. By 1789 twelve of them, (52%), were in the top quarter of wealth in the town, five (21%) in the second quarter, and three (13%) in the fourth quarter. Two of the men died in 1780 and do not appear in the tax list, but probate records indicate that both lived as prosperous members of the community. 9

Moreover, seven high town officers of colonial Pittsfield who also served after the Revolution began, also appear on the 1789 Tax List. Three of them and the widows of two others fell into the top quarter, and two fell into the fourth quarter. From all these sources we find that eighteen (60%) of the high town officers who served after 1775 fell into the top quarter of taxpayers, six (20%) into the second quarter, three (10%) into the third quarter, and three (10%) into the fourth quarter. Wright, Rathbun, and after the war, Easton, were the poorest of the group, with Goodrich, Bush, and Williams from the earlier leaders, and Childs, J. C. Williams, and J. D. Colt from the later leaders, among the wealthiest of the group. Goodrich, and

J. C. Williams were among the top 10% of the wealthy in Pittsfield, and most likely in all of Berkshire County as well.  

Using the 1784 Valuation List, which includes the property of the eighteen town officers who began office after 1775, we find that in all but two categories the leaders owned more than their share of the wealth in the town. When we add the eight colonial leaders who served after 1775, the share of the wealth held by all the high town officers was much greater (see Table 13). Probate records inventory the estates of fourteen of the high town officers who served in revolutionary Pittsfield. These men, who died between 1780 and 1831, had estates whose average value was $7,690.40. As the individual biographies will point out, some estates were burdened with debts which covered investments which failed only when the investor died. At any rate, the probate figures confirm the evidence of the tax lists, that Pittsfield usually elected prosperous to wealthy citizens to high town office between 1775 and 1789, much as the town did earlier.

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10 State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield shows adjusted value of real estate and reflects the thousand acres owned by Colt and Goodrich. J. C. Williams left an estate of $41,000 in 1831. Each of them left larger estates than A. H. Jones found for the top probate estates in 1770, and Bruce Daniels found for Boston from 1770-1776. See Alice Hanson Jones, "Wealth Estimates for the New England Colonies about 1770," Journal of Economic History, XXII (March 1972), 123; Bruce C. Daniels, "Defining Economic Classes in Colonial Massachusetts, 1700-1776," 259.
# TABLE 13

1784 Pittsfield Valuation Summary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taxable Items</th>
<th>Whole Town</th>
<th>18 Revolutionary Officers</th>
<th>% 26 Colonial and Revolutionary Officers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polls Rateable</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polls Non-Rateable</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Houses</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheds</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Houses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot-ash Houses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barns</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mills</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron Works</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33½%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Buildings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worth over £5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres Under Cultivation</td>
<td>4378**</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783 Tillage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1466 English upland mowing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129 Fresh meadows</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres in pasture</td>
<td>2799</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres in woodland</td>
<td>14544.15</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acres of Land un-improvable</td>
<td>1256</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock in Trade</td>
<td>£983</td>
<td>£390</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factorage</td>
<td>£15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horses</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>455**</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colts</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxen</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cattle</td>
<td>638**</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cows</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep and Goats</td>
<td>1551</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swine</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>8.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Plate (oz.)</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debts due</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estate***</td>
<td>£228</td>
<td>£50</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money on Hand</td>
<td>£133:10</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*ML 163, Sch. No. 1-6.
**Composite
***except government securities

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In addition to economic standing, there were other indications of stature in revolutionary Pittsfield: working in professions, and the college degree which usually preceded them, membership on the county courts, mercantile interests, and militia office. The latter was by far the most prevalent in the period under consideration, and was especially important, for it indicated influence and respect among both men in the ranks and in authority. The number of militia officers elected to high town office jumped from three to seven in 1773 and then to twelve in 1774 and thirteen in 1775. Three more were added in 1778. When military action shifted away from the borders of New England after 1778, the number began to drop, and dropped further still when the war ended in 1783. The difficulty of gaining a clearer picture of town leaders holding militia office can be seen in 1789. That year, when most of the militia officers of the Revolution had retired from town office or moved on to the county courts and added Esquire to their names, the town clerk recorded the election of only one militia officer to high town office. Yet the assessor's work list referred to five men as captain and one as colonel, another reminder of the weakness of the evidence and the tendency to retain militia titles once held (see Table 14).

A number of men who made a reputation for leadership in the army during the war moved to Pittsfield where trade provided such a good living for them that they rose to
# TABLE 14

**Pittsfield Militia Officers in High Town Office**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Colonial</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1775</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1764</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1777</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1779</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1781</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1770</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1782</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1773</td>
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**11** Town Meeting Minutes, TRP, 1763-1789.
social and political prominence. There was a good supply of professionals in Pittsfield as well. The Reverend Thomas Allen was the only minister in town until Valentine Rathbun started a Baptist meeting in 1772, but other professionals in high town office after 1775 included the six college graduates among the revolutionary leaders: Dr. Jonathan Lee (Yale, 1763), Dr. Timothy Childs (restored to his Harvard class of 1769), and four lawyers, Woodbridge Little (Yale, 1760), John Strong (Yale, 1760), John Brown (Yale 1771), and John C. Williams (Harvard, 1777).

Pittsfield and its Berkshire neighbors must have been involved in a great deal of litigation for they kept four lawyers and seven judges busy. Eli Root, Timothy Childs, Joshua Danforth, J. C. Williams, and Henry Van Schaack were high town officers who handled legal matters in and beyond Pittsfield through their appointments as justices of the peace for Berkshire County. William Williams, who held such a commission under the crown, had it renewed by the state government, and eventually Charles Goodrich's commission was recognized by the town. Simon Larned became sheriff of Berkshire County (1787) at the end of the period.

A lot of the business the lawyers and judges handled concerned the transfer of land. We would expect a frontier county to attract settlers after the war. Men such as Simon Larned, Joshua Danforth, and J. D. Williams who sought the advantages of an increasing
population in an important commercial farming center did settle and prosper. But Pittsfield had been frontier for over twenty years by 1783, and it also served as a source of settlers for newer frontier areas in New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Ohio. Moreover, five of the migrants had been high town officers in revolutionary Pittsfield. Two others for whom we have no definite information may have joined them. These men, among them, had held every high town office but treasurer over a span of twenty-seven terms. They included Lawyer John Strong, Baptist Minister Valentine Rathbun, early settler Stephen Crofoot, and six others, mostly farmers who came in the 1760s. Some moved to give their sons greater opportunity, but others left in the wake of the post-war depression to recover their own losses. They served the wider world beyond Berkshire with the settling skills and the governing arts they had learned in Pittsfield. Others stayed behind and contributed to a lively political scene well into the nineteenth century, as their individual biographies will show.

As long as danger and crisis were near, Pittsfield relied on her colonial high town officers, or men who began high town office before 1775, where they served as larger leaders in revolutionary Pittsfield as well. New men in office were either old residents or proven patriots. Many new leaders of revolutionary Pittsfield moved into high town office as a result of their support of the war.
as members of the militia or of committees. While most of them had at least some militia experience, and many served as officers, their greatest service were given to committees dealing with the conduct of the war or with Pittsfield's role in the Berkshire Constitutionalist movement which opposed the civil authority of the General Court.

By 1778 British defeats at Bennington and Saratoga relieved the immediate danger to Pittsfield, and the earlier leaders could have used a well deserved rest. Pittsfield had a choice of recruiting the sons of these older leaders or some of the men who had served an occasional term during the war. Instead, from 1778 to 1783 the town chose more than half of its leaders from the group who held their first high town office before 1775. As the older leaders moved out of high town office, long-time residents, like Rufus Allen, Lebbeus Backus, and J. D. Colt, or returned militia officers, like Oliver Root and John Strong, took their places.

After the war the voters could have turned to some of the new men in town who were so obviously capable. Some of these men attained office on a county, or even national, level and became important in state politics. But Pittsfield did not choose them as successors to its earlier larger leaders and only occasionally chose them as high town officers. Instead, a third of the high town offices from 1783 to 1789 were held by Colt, Little, and
Root, three leaders who began high town office before 1775, and another third of the offices went to five other leaders of colonial Pittsfield: Bush, Goodrich, Cadwell, Francis, and Hubbard. When Shays's Rebellion began the town turned to early leaders, David Bush, Charles Goodrich, William Francis, and Eli Root, for direction. Much as it appreciated the legal talents of Woodbridge Little, to the extent that it made him selectman from 1781 to 1783, the town meeting dropped him when a crisis reappeared with the approach of Shays's Rebellion only to reinstate him again in 1787 when the crisis was over. Ordinary times called for ordinary men, but in years of revolution and rebellion Pittsfield clung to the high town officers she had come to know and trust in good years and bad. The men Pittsfield voters chose to guide the town continued to be men rooted in the settlement and early struggles of the place. They were older and some were more prosperous than earlier, but few of them appeared to set themselves above the voters who raised them to office.

The Evidence

Common Leaders

Jonathan Lee (1745-1814) was born in Salisbury, Connecticut, the son of Reverend Jonathan Lee and descendant of Governor Bradford of Plymouth Colony. He was graduated from Yale in 1763, studied medicine, and began his practice in Pittsfield. He was brother-in-law to the leaders of both factions during the Revolution, for he married Mabel,
the sister of Woodbridge Little, and his sister Elizabeth married Reverend Thomas Allen. On receipt of the news of Lexington and Concord he went as a surgeon to Dr. Timothy Childs in Colonel John Paterson's 26th Regiment and served until August 1775. He later succeeded Dr. Childs. He spent twenty-four days in a detachment of volunteers under Colonel James Easton at Bennington in September 1777.¹²

He was chosen town clerk in December 1780 to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Caleb Stanley and he served until 1785. That year he was reelected, but the vote was reconsidered, probably at his request, and J. C. Williams was chosen in his place. In 1789 he ranked in the third quarter of taxpayers assessed 11s 1d on real estate worth £1:19:7 annually and personal estate worth 14s 9d. His wife died in Sheffield in 1804, so he may have left Pittsfield even before 1789, and that would account for his small estate in that year. He died in Salisbury, Connecticut in 1814 at the age of sixty-nine.¹³

**Lebbeus Backus** settled in Pittsfield before 1761, coming most likely from Connecticut. In that year he fell


into the fourth quarter of taxpayers, assessed for £100 worth of buildings, £250 of improved lands, £100 of unimproved lands, £99 of livestock, and £130:5 of produce, a total of £679:5. By 1772 there were six persons in his household. 14

He was an early patriot, serving on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety in 1774, 1777, 1778, and 1779. In 1778 he was assessor and surveyor of highways. He was selectman from 1779 to 1781. He was on the committee to instruct William Williams, delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1779. In 1781 he was one of those chosen to "class the town" to provide thirteen men for the service of the commonwealth. In 1782 he was a delegate to a county convention. He was active in the militia as well, serving four weeks in Lieutenant Stephen Crofoot's Company at Ticonderoga in April and May 1777. In October 1781 he went as a lieutenant under Captain Joel Stevens on an alarm to Saratoga. 15

The 1784 Valuation List indicates he was a prosperous farmer with two tracts of land which included seventeen acres of tillage, forty acres of pasture, and 472 acres of woodland. In addition, he had a house and shop, three barns, ninety-seven acres under cultivation, fifty acres of pasture, 122 acres of woodland, and twenty

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14 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA; Smith, Pittsfield I, 498.

15 Smith, Pittsfield I, 315, 319, 365; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:196; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, I, 403.
acres of unimproved land. He had a horse and colt, three cows, five swine, and two ounces of silver. As he does not appear on the 1789 tax list, he probably died between 1784 and 1789.

James Noble, the brother of Captain David Noble, and probably the son of Thomas Noble, a saddler of Westfield who bought land in Pontoosuck in 1746, came to Pittsfield before 1772. He served as surveyor of highways in 1772 and 1773 and was an early friend of the patriot cause.

He was active in the militia, marching to Cambridge in April 1775. He served as a captain in Colonel Benedict Arnold's Regiment at Ticonderoga in May and June 1775, after which Arnold received and kept the wages the General Court sent to pay the men Noble had raised. He marched with Colonel James Easton's regiment from Pittsfield to Canada and served thirty-three weeks and four days, until December 1775. The next year he marched to Ticonderoga under Captain William Francis for four weeks in October and November. In 1777 he went to Kinderhook after Tories in May, to the northward in July, and to Bennington in August.

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16 Promissary notes to John and Ann Pen(s) hollow, Feb. 1, 1782, Wendell Papers, MHS; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 5.

17 Smith, Pittsfield I, 78, 115, 179, 476.

18 Ibid., 206, 224-25; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XI, 491.
His service to the town's efforts to support the Revolution were even greater. In 1774 he was one of those who petitioned for a town meeting about the circular letter from Boston proposing a Solemn League and Covenant. In 1775 he was on a committee to decide how to pay those persons who had "handled" the Tories. The same year he was added to the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence. He was on the committee to instruct the three representatives Pittsfield sent to the General Court in 1777 to work for a proper constitution. The committee was also charged with drawing up a petition to ask the Court for a redress of taxes, an indication that even before the battle of Bennington the town felt its resources were drained. That year he also served on a committee "to see what shall be done with the unfriendly Persons in this Town who were in . . . Goal on May, 11, 1777." Acting on its report, the six prisoners (including two high town officers, Woodbridge Little and Israel Stoddard) "made their appearance before the Town and upon their Confession Declaration and taking the Oath of Allegiance to the United independent States of America they were by a Vote of the Town Received as Friends to these United States." 19

James Noble also sat on a committee representing the town in its dispute with Charles Goodrich for accepting his appointment from the General Court as

19 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:174-217, 222; 2: 2, 4; Smith, Pittsfield I, 245, 356n.

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justice of the peace. The judges found the two parties had wronged each other, but that Captain Goodrich as the greater oppressor should pay the £35:9:6 in court charges. But the matter was not completely settled, for the town still objected to Goodrich being a justice of the peace even though there were no courts open for him in which to exercise the commission. Once more James Noble was on a committee to remonstrate with the General Court on this matter. With an odd sense of balance the town also chose him hogreeve that year. In November 1778 he was a delegate for Pittsfield at the meeting of the Berkshire towns with the committee of the General Court sent to settle with the Berkshire Constitutionalists. His work must have pleased the Constitutionalists in the town, for in 1779 he joined Colonel William Williams as representative to the General Court under instructions to get the General Court's "pardon" of the Berkshire Constitutionalists repealed. The town was sure that the Court, and not the towns of Berkshire County, needed the pardon. The town's delegates were told to work for a constitution and against the opening of the courts, and they were reminded that:

as you are chosen to represent the town of Pittsfield, we expect that you will represent it as a town of a county which has acted as firmly and consistently as any county in this State; and, as you know the sentiments of the county, that you act conformably thereunto; and, if you are not treated with the same
respect with representatives of other counties, that you return home, and give us the pleasure of your company. 20

In May 1779 Noble was named delegate to the county convention at Stockbridge. In October 1780 he was on a committee to instruct Representative Charles Goodrich and was one of the "good and faithful men" to hire sixteen men for the Continental Army. 21 He does not appear in the 1784 Valuation List, but his son, James Noble, Jr., had at least sufficient property to fall into the second quarter of tax payers. Despite his yeoman service to the town, there is no mention of James Noble after this date in the records, so he either died or moved out of town.

Caleb Stanley (1748-1780) was the son of Timothy Stanley of Wethersfield, Connecticut. He probably came to Pittsfield in the late 1760s. In 1773 he was surveyor of shingles. He was a strong supporter of the patriot cause, as his militia and civilian services testify. From May 1775 to June 1780 he spent almost a year and a half on active militia duty in Canada, New Haven, and in New York at Fort Edward and Stillwater. In 1779 he was commissioned a lieutenant in a Matross Company of the 3rd Regiment of the Massachusetts militia. In 1778 and 1779 he was on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety.

20 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:10, 21-2, 39, 52; Smith, Pittsfield I, 364.

21 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:49, 80; Smith, Pittsfield I, 319.
In 1778 he was in charge of one of the school districts, probably as an assessor and served on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. He was town clerk from 1778 to 1780 and selectman in 1780. In November 1778 he was on a committee to instruct the delegates to the Pittsfield meeting of the Berkshire towns with the committee of the General Court to settle the disagreement over the county courts and the issue of a constitution. That December he was paid £26:9 for his services as town clerk. In 1779 he joined the selectmen as an additional assessor and was re-elected to the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. That September the town appointed him to a committee to invite several towns in Berkshire County to meet, evidently to plan strategy for the State Convention in Concord in October. 22

Like other new men with whom he served in Revolutionary Pittsfield, Stanley moved into high town office through service in the militia, and from his post as town clerk he moved easily onto various committees, mostly dealing with the position the town took with the Berkshire Constitutionalists. His early death from dropsy in the late summer or early fall of 1780 cut short his service to the town. Stanley left his father real estate valued


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at £573 including 104 acres with a house and barn and one-third of a grist and saw mill. His personal estate of £273:18 included a few household goods, a fashionable, though not elegant, wardrobe, over 2,000 feet of pine boards, and over £100 worth of livestock, including 35 head of cattle.23

Matthew Barber came to Pittsfield before 1761 when he had £250 worth of buildings, £186 in improved lands, £208 in unimproved lands, £7 stock in trade, £201 of livestock, £66 of produce, £150 faculty, £30 in cash, and £40 of debt, a total of £1138, which placed him in the third quarter of taxpayers.24

In 1772, when he was surveyor of highways, there were seven persons in his household. He was a deacon in the First Church, and before 1776 he owned a fulling mill and built a sawmill at Wahconah in connection with it, getting the best machinery available at the time.25

In 1775 he was one of the wardens serving as a committee to take care of "disorderly persons." In 1776 he was a selectman. In July 1777 he spent ten days marching and serving at Manchester in Lieutenant James Hubbard's

23 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:68; BCPCR No. 1047.

24 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA.

25 Smith, Pittsfield I, 141, 497; II, 37, 165; Smith, "History of Pittsfield," 294; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:209.
company. He was a selectman again from 1782 to 1784, but was not active in Shays's Rebellion. He was prosperous by the end of the war, paying taxes on two polls, two houses, a barn and mill, ten acres of tillage, nine acres of English upland mowing, eleven acres of pasture, sixty acres of woodland, a horse and colt, two oxen, fourteen head of cattle, eighteen sheep, and four swine. In 1788 he served on a school committee, but did not hold elected office after that. In 1789 he paid £1:11:1 on three polls, real estate assessed at £12:9, and personal estate valued at £4:2:3:4, placing him in the second quarter of taxpayers. In 1804 a Matthew Barber of Benson, Vermont married Ruth Bush of Pittsfield, so he or his son probably moved to Vermont in the 1790s.  

Stephen Crowfoot was the son of Deacon Stephen Crowfoot, a proprietor of one of the settling lots who came from Belchertown before 1753, set up a grist mill, built the first bridge over the Housatonic River and acted as the first foundation man and deacon of the First Church. The son was a consistent supporter of the Revolution. In 1768 he served on the committee to examine the letter of  

Boston to the selectmen about the danger the Townshend Acts posed to the liberties of the province. The following year the town appointed him to "take care of the Towns stock of Ammunition." In 1774 he was on the Committee of Inspection to enforce the Continental Association and on the new Committee of Inspection and Correspondence in 1775. In June 1775 the town chose him as the first of three men to be assistants "to advise & act as Select Men in the absence of a majority of the Select Men," and to be one of those instructing the representative. He was on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety from 1776-1780, moving from the last- to the first-named over the years.27

He was active in the militia as well, spending over nine months between August 1775 and August 1777 on active duty in the first expedition to Canada, going twice to Ticonderoga and once to Fort Edward. He served under Pittsfield officers Colonel James Easton, and captains Root, Strong, and Francis. In May 1776 he received a lieutenant's commission.28

He was a selectman in 1776 and 1777 and moderated the meeting called in May 1776 "in observance of the Colonyd Writ . . . for the Choice of Representative."

27Smith, Pittsfield I, 121, 140-41, 183, 203, 244-45; Adam, "Eight Foundation Men," in First Church, 18; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:108, 116, 210-11, 214, 217, 237; 2:19, 48, 68.

28Smith, Pittsfield I, 230; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, IV, 133.
In January 1777 he was on a commission to settle with the town treasurer, and in March 1777 was re-elected selectman and chosen warden. In 1782 he was one of the selectmen ordering the constables to warn families out of town for fear they might "become burdensome and chargeable to the town." Additional poor were a real problem that year when the constables were still £222:18:1 in arrears on the taxes for 1774-1776.  

In 1784 Crowfoot paid taxes on three polls, a house, a barn, twenty-three acres under cultivation, seven acres of pasture, eighty-seven acres of woodland, eight horses, eight oxen, two cows, ten sheep and seven swine. An undated tax list indicates that he had two buildings worth £90, six acres of mowing land worth £30, nine and a quarter acres of tillage worth £46:10, nine acres of pasture worth £40:10, and ninety-two acres of woodland worth £207, a horse valued at £9, two oxen at £11, eight head of cattle worth £21:5, twenty sheep worth £8, and three swine worth £2:6, grain worth £4:4, and a house assessed £5:17. He does not appear in the records of the town meetings after 1782 or on the 1789 tax list, so he probably moved soon after 1784. A dozen years earlier he had nine persons in his household and no doubt sought the opportunities a new settlement might hold for his children, much as his father had done.  

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29 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:221-2, 281; 2:112, 121.

30 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State
There, too, he could provide experience in town leadership and attain a status more prosperous men, old and new, held in Pittsfield.

William Barber came to Pontoosuck before 1761 when he paid taxes on buildings worth £140, £240 of improved lands, £228 of unimproved lands, £194:12 of livestock, and £55:17 of produce. He had £15 worth of goods and wares, so he evidently had a shop of some kind. In all, he was worth £873:9, heading those in the fourth quarter of the taxpayers. In 1772 there were three persons in his household. The following year he served as warden and deer reeve, and in 1775 as surveyor of highways. An active militiaman, Barber marched with Captain William Francis to Albany for five days service in 1776. Commissioned in May 1776, he saw service as a second lieutenant in Captain John Strong's 2d Company of the 2d Berkshire County regiment that fall. He had Reverend Thomas Allen as his chaplain when he spent seven weeks in New York from September to November 1776. He marched to Manchester in July 1777 for ten days' service under Lieutenant James Hubbard, and no doubt was at Bennington, when even the selectmen joined the forces under General Stark.31

In 1783 a Major William Barber, captain of infantry, sent a report to General Knox on the condition of the

Library 163, Sch. No. 1, Undated Material, Pre-1796, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 497.

311761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA; Smith, Pittsfield I, 497; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, I, 591.
troops at West Point. He included no remarks of inspection as "no regular one can be expected under the present declining State of our Army," especially in regard to their "distressing Nakedness," as Knox knew from his own recent parade observations.32

He served on the new Committee of Inspection and Correspondence in 1776 and again in 1777. In September 1776 and 1777, when the town was worried about a small-pox epidemic, he was on a committee to regulate the inoculations. In 1777 he was warden again and on a committee to class the town. That May he was on the committee to instruct the three representatives to the General Court. The town appointed him as one of those "to see what shall be done with the unfriendly Persons in this Town who are . . . in Goal." In 1778 he served as selectman and warden. That year he also served on the committee to remonstrate with the General Court against its appointing Charles Goodrich as a justice of the peace. In October 1778 he was one of those chosen under Colonel Williams "to Judge & Determine all breaches of Peace Trespass Experg [sic] disputes of Land etc that shall arise in this town."33

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32 William Barber to Henry Knox, Oct. 22, 1783, Henry Knox Papers, XV, MHS.

33 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:217, 226, 237, 287; 2:33; Smith, Pittsfield I, 356n, 382.
In 1781 he was selectman again. He was on a committee to draw up plans to procure sixteen men for three years in the Continental Army, and was one of those to "class the town" for the same purpose in July 1781. In 1784 he paid taxes on a poll, a house, a shop, nine acres under cultivation, five acres of pasture, thirty-six acres of woodland, a horse, three head of cattle and a hog. He does not appear as a supporter of Shays's Rebellion or in the 1789 tax list, so he had left town by that time, possibly going to Vermont with Matthew Barber, who was undoubtedly his brother.

Rufus Allen (1749-1813) was the son of a Rufus Allen who settled in Pontoosuck from Northampton in the 1750s and kept a public house. In 1775 the son built a forge. He was a supporter of the Revolution in the field and at home. In 1777 Captain Rufus Allen led twenty-six men forty miles to Fort Edward to check Johnson's invasion of the Mohawk Valley. He joined the veterans at Bennington. In January 1779 he was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant in the 2d Artillery Co., 2d Berkshire Regiment. By October 1779 he was a first lieutenant with the 3d Berkshire County regiment. In June 1780 he was captain of an artillery company.

34 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:102; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 4.


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At home in November 1777, he served on a committee to devise a plan to manufacture salt for the town. The town elected him hogreeve and pond keeper in 1778 and put him on a committee to fence the burial ground, but he also served on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety. In 1778 Captain Allen was one of those responsible for delivering the money and clothing collected by Reverend Thomas Allen to the thirty-two soldiers of the town in the Continental Army. The next year he served on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety again. In August, when three of the men hired by the town for the army enlisted, collected the bounty and absconded, Allen served on a committee to apprehend them. In October he served as a delegate to the state convention at Concord. In 1780 he worked on a committee to raise sixteen men for three years in the Continental Army. Having failed to raise the full quota by offers of bounties beginning at £30, he served with others charged to "class the town." In 1781 he served as a selectman. In December that year he joined other inhabitants of the center of the Middle School District in requesting a town meeting to adjust matters so that they got their rightful part of the school rates.  

Immediately after the war, Allen appeared prosperous enough, with two houses, a barn, half a mill, an

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36 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:7, 19, 21, 48, 53, 57, 86.
iron works, and another building worth over £5. He had twenty-five acres under cultivation, fifteen acres of pasture, one hundred and sixty acres of woodland, sixteen acres of unimproved land, three horses, two oxen, ten head of cattle, twenty-two sheep, and four swine.\footnote{37} Whether or not he lost any of his property following the war we do not know, but he supported Shays's Rebellion and was imprisoned for his activities. In 1787 Theodore Sedgwick wrote to Governor James Bowdoin asking that bail might be set for Rufus Allen, as he was "mentally ill." Moreover:

\begin{quote}
Allen has formerly under very discouraging circumstances manifested a friendly disposition to good order and government, besides he has heretofore been subject to mental disorder.\footnote{38}
\end{quote}

Allen was released and recovered, for in 1788 to 1789 he joined several men in setting up a new forge, perhaps contributing the equipment of his old forge. In 1789 he paid £1:10:0:2 on real estate assessed at £22:13:7 annually and personal estate at £4:19:5, and a faculty of £4, all of which placed him in the top quarter of taxpayers. He died in 1813 after several years of insanity. One son took up printing and moved to Battleborough, Vermont where he married. Allen's wife may have joined another

\footnote{37}{Ibid., 145; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 4.}

\footnote{38}{Theodore Sedgwick to Governor James Bowdoin, March 4, 1787, Theodore Sedgwick Papers, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library.}
son who moved from Pittsfield, for she died in New York in 1832.  

Joseph Fairfield (1740-1827) came to Pontoosuck from Northampton in 1740 with his father, Nathaniel Fairfield, who was a proprietor of one of the settling lots. By 1761 Joseph fell into the fourth and lowest quarter of taxpayers with buildings worth £184, improved lands worth £72, unimproved lands worth £126, £99:15 of livestock and £26:16 of produce, about £500 in all. In 1768 he was sealer of leather. By 1769 he was surveyor of highways and the town allowed him £3:13:6 toward the five polls in his rate list who had left his precinct. He served as surveyor of highways again in 1772 and 1778. In 1778 he was also surveyor of leather.  

During the Revolution he served at Ticonderoga from December 16, 1776 to March 16, 1777 under Lieutenant James Hubbard. He went to Fort Ann under Captain John Strong in Colonel John Brown's Berkshire regiment in June 1777, traveling over a hundred miles. He opposed the Constitutionalists, for in June 1776 he signed a statement  

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40 Petitions of proprietors of settling lots to hold town meetings, May 1753, MSA 116:370; petition that garrison be continued, Mar. 30, Nov. 10, 1757 and Nov. 23, 1758, MSA 117:281, 373, 402; petition for title to lands, June 11, 1773, MSA 118:695; 1761 Assessor's List, William Williams Collection, MBA.
to the General Court that the sad state of Berkshire County was due to the abuses of the Committees of Inspection and Correspondence. The General Court chose to ignore the complaint. 41

In December 1778 the town allowed him expenses for his care of the Widow Stiles who had died in 1774. The amount due was to be deducted from Fairfield's 1774 rates, so he must have been behind in his taxes, though this did not seem to affect his attitude towards the Constitution-alists or his eligibility for town office. In 1779 he served on the school committee for the Northeast District. In 1780 he was on a committee to devise a plan to raise sixteen men for three years service with the Continental Army and was one of the two "good & faithful men" to hire the recruits. 42 In 1784 he was moderately prosperous, with a house and barn, fourteen acres under cultivation, two acres of pasture, thirty-seven acres of woodland, three horses, two oxen, nine head of cattle, nine sheep and eight swine. He was active in Shays's Rebellion and served on town committees in 1785 and 1786 to instruct the representative. Smith called him a "malcontent delegate" to the county convention in Pittsfield in November 1786. 43

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41 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:106, 118; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, V, 473.


43 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 2; Smith, Pittsfield I, 409, 414.
In 1789 when he was a selectman, he was on a committee to study the form of the pews in the new meeting-house. That year he paid $1:0:5:6 on real estate assessed at $15:2:7 annually and personal estate valued at $4:10, placing him in the second quarter of taxpayers. He died in April 1827, the oldest man in town and the oldest member of the church. He left an estate of $2,080.09. His real estate, valued at $1,620.00, included a house with forty acres and an adjoining lot valued at $1,540.00. His personal estate was worth $460.00.

Joel Stevens (1749-1830) had settled in the western part of Pittsfield by 1773 when he was among those petitioning that their titles to lands purchased from Philip Livingston be confirmed. He was active in the militia during the war. Between September 1776 and October 1781 he served eighteen weeks in campaigns and alarms to Ticonderoga and Saratoga, Williamstown, Bennington, Skeensborough, New Haven, and Fort Edward under a number of Pittsfield commanders, including Captain William Francis, Lieutenant William Ford, Lieutenant James Hubbard, Captain John Strong, Colonel John Brown, and Colonel David Rossiter.

442; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:191.


45 Petition for title to lands, June 11, 1773, MSA 118:695.
His services won him promotions to sergeant in 1777, lieutenant in 1779, and captain in 1781.\textsuperscript{46}

He was one of those chosen to hire men and class the town for the procurement of thirteen three-year men in 1781. Despite his services, he was fairly wealthy at the wars' end. In 1784 he paid taxes on two polls, a house and barn, forty acres of cultivated land, twenty-five acres of pasture, thirty-five acres of woodland, three horses and a colt, two oxen, seven head of cattle, four cows, eleven sheep, and four swine.\textsuperscript{47}

He was surveyor of highways in 1778, and again in 1787 when he also served on the school committee for the West-end District. In 1788 he served as selectman and that year he was on a committee to investigate and report on the issues dividing the town. In 1789 he served on a committee to plan the new meetinghouse and report on the cost. The Methodist Church held some of its earliest Berkshire meetings in his house, around 1790 when he joined.\textsuperscript{48}

After the war he won a reputation as "the best farmer in Berkshire County." The Democratic party won

\textsuperscript{46} Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XIV, 965; Smith Pittsfield I, 315.

\textsuperscript{47} Smith, Pittsfield I, 319; 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163; Sch. No. 5.

\textsuperscript{48} Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:195, 197, 213; Smith, Pittsfield I, 418, 435; II, 140.
his active support, especially at election times. He remained fairly prosperous, for in 1789 he paid 19s ld 3f on real estate worth £14:12:10 and personal estate assessed at £6:7:9, which placed him in the second quarter of taxpayers. One of his daughters married the son of William Francis. When his wife died in January 1824, he followed the custom of remarrying within the year. He died in 1830 leaving his heirs lands in Pittsfield and Hancock, including a sugarhouse and cider mill which he bought from Charles Goodrich. The homestead and the 146 acres around it, and another 130 acres elsewhere, composed the bulk of the estate and were worth a total of $5,102. The personal property indicated a prosperous farm, a substantial, well furnished home boasting a well appointed table and linen closet.49

John Strong (1742-1815) was born in Westfield, the son of farmer Ezra Strong and Mary King. He was graduated from Yale in 1766. A brother and a sister married into the family of Captain David Noble of Pittsfield, and he settled there before 1764 to teach in the West District school. He eventually turned to law and married Martha Knowles of

Wethersfield, Connecticut. He must have prospered, because in 1772 he supported eight people in his household. He, and later his son, kept a tavern in his house on East Street where he kept some merchandise for sale. In 1773 he purchased a seat in the meetinghouse where he built a pew which he enlarged to a square by 1776. In 1773 his name appeared among the jurors of the Superior Court.\(^5^0\)

Strong was an early leader in the Revolution, but mainly in the town, for although he was active in the militia from May 1776, when he was chosen second captain in the First Pittsfield Company of Colonel Benjamin Simond's (2d Berkshire) Regiment, until he resigned his commission in September 1780, he served only nine weeks of active duty. He commanded the men who marched to Kinderhook after "inimical persons" in May 1777, and those who went to Fort Ann in June and July 1777 in Colonel John Brown's regiment. In September 1777 he took his men to Skeensborough. He was among the veterans marching to Bennington under Lieutenant James Hubbard in August 1777. In May 1780, after two men in the Berkshire County regiment were promoted to major over him, his request for permission to resign was granted.\(^5^1\)


\(^5^1\)Smith, *Pittsfield I*, 179, 323, 497; II, 6, 44; *Mass. Soldiers and Sailors*, XV, 194.
On the civilian front, he was one of those request­ing a special town meeting in June 1774 to consider the answer to the circular letter from Boston on "the invaded Liberties of their Country." The meeting appointed him to the standing Committee of Correspondence, and as a delegate to meet with other committees of the county at Stockbridge where they adopted the Solemn League and Covenant. In August 1774 he and Dr. Childs drew up the town's petition asking the county court not to meet. 52

In January 1776 the town placed him on the new Committee of Inspection and Correspondence. In March 1776 he was chosen constable and served on a committee to see how to pay for "handling Tories." The following May the town again added him to the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence. 53

The advantages of patriotism were demonstrated in December 1776 when the town denied tavern licenses to two Tory sympathizers and granted them to five men, in­cluding Strong and three other high town officers. But high town officers were not the only ones to gain economi­cally during the war. In March 1777 Strong served on a committee charged to "class the town" to provide men for

52 Smith, ibid., 157n, 189-94; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:157, 176-77, 183. The petition is in 184-87.

53 Town Meeting Minutes TRP 1:214, 219, 222; Smith, Pittsfield I, 245.
the Continental Army. But three of the men the town hired collected the bounty and absconded, and Strong had to try to find them. In 1777 the usual business of the town continued. He served on a smallpox committee, and on a committee to see about additions to the minister's salary which had been diminished by inflation of the currency.\(^{54}\)

Pittsfield under the sway of Reverend Thomas Allen was one of the leading towns supporting the Berkshire Constitutionalists, and in November 1778 Strong was on a committee to instruct the delegates to the meeting between the Berkshire towns and a committee of the General Court. In May of 1779 he and others instructed their representative to get the General Court's "pardon" for the Constitutionalists repealed, as they were of the opinion that the General Court, and not the people of Berkshire, were at fault. Moreover, the representative was to make it clear that the May meeting of the county court was unnecessary. After all this committee duty, Strong served as selectman in 1780 and 1781. He was on a committee to instruct the representative in 1780, and he was town clerk pro tem when Caleb Stanley died. In 1783 he and other inhabitants of the Center of the Middle School District petitioned for

\(^{54}\) Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:233, 239; 2:6; Smith, \textit{Pittsfield} I, 317.
a town meeting to obtain as much of the school rates as they were assessed.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1784 he was still fairly prosperous for he had a house and barn, a shop, two other buildings worth over £5, eighteen acres under cultivation, seven acres of pasture, eighteen acres of woodland, two acres of unimproved land, £40 stock in trade, a horse, three cows, six swine, and five ounces of silver plate. There is some evidence that he supported, or at least sympathized with, Shays's Rebellion. In January 1786 a stormy town meeting over the action of a Shaysite county convention got so out of hand that the moderator "refused to declare the votes," and when the town clerk walked out, John Strong was chosen town clerk \textit{pro tem}.\textsuperscript{56}

The war broke up his business, and in the years following he went bankrupt. When Theodore Sedgwick tried to collect a debt for a client in 1789, Strong wrote him that there was no sense trying to sue him for he had nothing left. Yet earlier that year he was assessed £1:0:2:3 on real estate worth £13:4:7 annually and personal estate worth £2:6:2. Another undated work list places him in the top 25\% of the taxpayers. At any rate, he found

\textsuperscript{55}Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:39, 40, 54, 82, 145; Smith, \textit{Pittsfield I}, 364, 364n.

\textsuperscript{56}1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 3; Smith, \textit{Pittsfield I}, 414.
sufficient difficulties in Pittsfield to encourage him to move to New York, where he eventually settled near Albany, where he died in 1815 at the age of seventy-three.57

John Chandler Williams (1755-1831) was born in Roxbury. His father failed in business, but his mother was one of the Chandlers of Worcester and this connection often opened opportunities for him. Perhaps his father was the John Williams who was a grantee of four hundred acres on the Upper Housatonic in 1750. At any rate, young Williams went to Berkshire County in 1769 and served for a short while as deputy sheriff. The provincial Committee of Safety employed him as an express rider to search for Governor Thomas Hutchinson's letterbook in 1775. He does not appear to have engaged in any militia action, but remained at Harvard College until graduation in 1777. In October 1777 he requested the office of paymaster of troops at Springfield where he was studying law under John Warthington. He addressed his request to General William Heath who knew his father's family well. He returned to Berkshire to open a store and practice law in Pittsfield in 1782.58


He went into public office soon after his arrival, first as town clerk pro tem in May 1783, then as assessor in 1785 and 1786, and town clerk in 1785 and 1786. That year he married Lucretia, the daughter of Israel Williams of Hatfield. In January 1786, when the insurrectionists controlled the town meeting and ran it with a "high hand," he withdrew as town clerk. He worked for law and order in several Berkshire towns. He was on a committee of the Court of General Sessions in May 1786 to prepare a plan for the courthouse and jail to be built at Lenox. Later that year he was on a committee to take care of the meetinghouse so "the parents of those children who may brake the windows thereof may be liable to pay the damages."59

He prospered slowly, but steadily. In 1784 he paid taxes on a poll, a house and barn, two acres of tillage, and a horse. After the war he bought and completed the house on East Street Captain John Strong had started for his son. By 1789, through steady work, he was among the top quarter of the taxpayers, assessed £2:4:1:3 on a poll, £30:6:7 annual worth of real estate and £6:0:3 worth of personal estate, and a faculty valued at £7, the third highest faculty tax in town. By 1791 he paid £3:17:8 in real estate taxes, 18 shillings in personal taxes, and

59Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, VIII, 333; Smith, Pittsfield I, 409, 414, 433; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:189.
a 4:9 faculty tax, the highest in town. In 1787 he was surveyor of highways. In 1788 he was on a committee "to wait on the late Treasurer settle with him and transfer the papers belonging to his office to the Treasurer now chosen." The committee reported the need for more frequent settlements and a change in the loose and irregular manner of keeping records. He served on several committees connected with the new meetinghouse: one to work out the plans and costs, and another to collect materials and labor. He sat on the building committee in 1790 and on the committee regarding the form of the pews when it was finished. An active supporter of the Union Parish, he became a devoted Episcopalian in his last years.60

In 1789 he was on the committee to examine the town papers and destroy those "as may be of no further use." Then he served on the committee for a new schoolhouse, to hold the town hall on the second floor. At the special town meeting Henry Van Schaack and others requested in December 1792, to consider the issue of ministerial taxes for dissenters, Williams served on the committee to list the dissenters and report how their ministerial taxes should be handled.61


61 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:244; Smith, Pittsfield I, 458-60.
He continued to interest himself in the affairs of the town, and in business ventures, such as the waterworks, of which he became a proprietor in 1795. He became noted for his professional learning, sound wisdom, and integrity. In 1798 he was appointed a justice of the peace for Berkshire County, and in 1805 he was named a justice of the quorum. He served as representative for six years (1794-98, 1810) and as State senator for two (1817, 1818), but it was as an active Federalist, working closely with Theodore Sedgwick, that he expended most of his energy in later years.  

In 1798 he was concerned about his party's declining power in the Senate of the General Court, and he complained that some former Federalists had "turned Jacobin." He admitted the Republicans had a "paltry water-gruce [sic] [gruel?] press going on here under the patronage of Danforth Childs & Gold, but it will come to nothing - the printers have no talents." This may have been the Berkshire Gazette whose printers had sufficient talent to annoy the Federalists for two years. But he may have been right because in May Henry Van Schaack reported that Federalist J. C. Williams had one hundred and eleven votes for State

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Senator to the Republican Danforth's forty-five. By 1801
the competition had grown. Williams feared there wouldn't
be "a proper Federal lawyer" left in the State Senate unless
Theodore Sedgwick could be induced to go. In Pittsfield
the Republicans were "insistent to oust Mr. [Caleb]
Strong." They succeeded, electing Joshua Danforth from
1801 to 1803, and again in 1806 and 1808.63

When Williams died in January 1831, age seventy-
seven, he left an estate of over $40,000, including the
homestead and twelve acres, 477 acres in Ohio, and a
personal estate of $12,665.81. His library was appraised
at $354, and he had over $15,000 in bonds and notes secured
by mortgages, mostly in the areas around Pittsfield. He
settled small annuities on relatives and left the bulk of
his estate to his wife and, after her death, to his
daughter Sarah T. Newton and his grandchildren.64

63 J. C. Williams to Theodore Sedgwick, April 3,
1798, Theodore Sedgwick Papers, MHS; J. C. Williams to
Theodore Sedgwick, March 13, 1798, Sedgwick Papers, MHS;
Clarence S. Brigham, History and Bibliography of American
Newspapers, 1690-1820 (2 vols., Worcester, Massachusetts:
The American Antiquarian Society, 1947), I, 390; Henry
Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwich, May 4, 1798, Theodore
Sedgwick Papers, MHS; H. N. Brinsmade, A Sermon,
Preached at the Funeral of the Hon. Joshua Danforth,
Who Died at Pittsfield, January 30, 1837, in the Seventy-
Eighth Year of His Age (Pittsfield: Phinehas Allen and
Son, 1837), 17.

64 BCPCR No. 5062.
Henry Van Schaack (1733-1824) was born at Kinderhook, New York. His father, Cornelius Van Schaack, became a prosperous merchant and Hudson River skipper. They may have been related to Elias Van Schaack who had land grants near the Housatonic River and at Stockbridge as early as 1739. After an apprenticeship with the Livingstons, Henry set up as a fur merchant in Albany where he became postmaster in 1757. He engaged in the fur trade as far as Detroit and Michilimackinac until the French and Indian War. He was a lieutenant under Captain Philip Schuyler at Forts Edward and George. He attained the rank of major as paymaster and commissioner of musters.  

In 1766 he was one of those the Albany Sons of Liberty accused of accepting an appointment as stamp distributor. He denied that he had applied for or accepted the post, but refused to take an oath that he would never accept it because such an oath might cost his job as postmaster. When the mayor and Common Council refused him protection and the Sons of Liberty ransacked his house, he finally took the oath.  

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By 1769 he returned to Kinderhook where he became a justice of the peace and a supervisor. He served on the Albany Committee of Correspondence in 1774 and 1775 where he opposed the resolves of the First Continental Congress as tending towards independence. New York banished him and his brothers and he spent eighteen months in jail, then took refuge with the British. When the British left New York, Henry Van Schaack moved to Pittsfield where he no doubt had business friends. McAnear said he was permitted to take the oath of allegiance through bribery. Perhaps the bribery was in the form of the cash which he promised to spend in the community, for he built a large brick mansion in the town. He remained quiet for some time but may have worked quietly for the election of his friend Theodore Sedgwick as a state senator from 1783 to 1785, as he later worked for his election to Congress. At any rate, he was well enough known to be an effective supporter of law and order during Shays's Rebellion. Some time before 1786 he wrote of his good fortune:

Here I have made an advantageous purchase, and live in the midst of those who owe. I have made some other purchases about me, and I have a number of mortgages in the neighborhood; so that I shall, in all probability be a considerable landholder in a little time.67

67Ibid.; Smith, Pittsfield I, 422n; II, 7; ALS to Theodore Sedgwick, New York, October 1, 1783, T. Sedgwick Papers, MHS; Richard E. Welch, Jr., Theodore Sedgwick, Federalist: A Political Portrait (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1965), 22-24, 30n, 67, 113-115; Henry Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwick, August

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His £474 Pittsfield purchase included eighty-six acres with a good house and barn, a young orchard, and a pleasant lake. He found provisions equally inexpensive. The low prices and the mortgages which delighted Van Schaack and allowed him to live like a country gentleman soon led to Shays's Rebellion during which he traveled from town to town advocating submission to the state government which had proved so advantageous to him. The following March, perhaps in recognition of his efforts, the town chose him selectman. At the May election the town voted for Benjamin Lincoln as lieutenant governor. He had used Pittsfield as headquarters for the troops he led against the Shayites. At the same election, the town chose Van Schaack, who supported Lincoln, as representative.68

By 1789 he was among the top 10 percent of the taxpayers, assessed £2:5:7 on two polls, and real estate worth £44:12:9 annually and personal estate worth £12:19:9. Only Charles Goodrich and J. D. Colt had real estate with a taxable value surpassing his. By 1791 he paid £6:15:6 on real estate and £4 on personal estate. He gained a reputation as a good farmer and a genial host. In the 1790s he was instrumental in establishing the Episcopal


68 Smith, Pittsfield I, 409-10, 415, 421-22; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:199.
Church in Pittsfield and in gaining release from ministerial taxation for other dissenters. 69

His influence spread beyond the town through his work for the Federalists in western Massachusetts. He kept in touch with Federalists in Connecticut and New York, influencing the editor of The Albany Sentinel. He often contributed articles and circulated copies of the paper at election time. He was intimate with the Van Rensselaers of Albany and Jeremy Belknap, but he operated most closely with Theodore Sedgwick and succeeded him on his retirement as leader of the Berkshire Federalists. In 1793, and again in 1801 he was appointed a justice of the peace. By 1807 he had sold his farm of 246 acres in Pittsfield for $12,500 and returned to Kinderhook where he died in 1824 at the age of ninety, leaving property in Pittsfield worth over $3,000 and over $5,000 in bequests. 70


John Brown (1744-1780) was born in Haverhill, Massachusetts, the son of Daniel Brown. He was graduated from Yale in 1771 and studied Law in Providence under his brother-in-law, Oliver Arnold. He practiced first at Caghnawaga, New York, where he was King's Attorney, and then at Sandisfield before moving to Pittsfield in 1771. He married Huldah Kilbourne of Sandisfield. 71

He lost little time in moving into opposition to Britain. He was one of those petitioning for a special town meeting in June 1774 to consider the circular letter from Boston and "the invaded Liberties of their Country." The meeting put him on the Committee of Correspondence. He was a delegate to the first county convention in Stockbridge in July 1774, and on the convention committee which reported on the acts of Parliament. Pittsfield chose him as one of the arbitrators to regulate disturbances and quarrels in the absence of the lower courts. In October 1774 he was a delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord. In May 1775 the town added him to the Committee of Inspection. In 1775 the town sent him to the Provincial Congress again and the Congress sent him to study out conditions in Canada in hope of "instituting a Revolutionary party among them, and organizing a system of secret communication with its leaders." If that failed, he was

71 Dexter, Yale Biographical Sketches, III, 404-05; Smith, Pittsfield I, 181.
to scout, since British attacks might come from there. His report recommended the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. He helped plan the attack and, as a major in Colonel James Easton's regiment, he earned a commendation from Ethan Allen. He was sent to announce the success of the venture to the governments of Massachusetts and Connecticut, as well as to the Continental Congress. 72

In March 1777 he was chosen selectman, and was again on the Committee of Inspection and Correspondence, as well as on the smallpox committee and on the committee "to class the town" to raise men for the Continental Army. The town finally paid him £14:2:6 for his service in the Provincial Congress in 1775, presumably just enough to cover his expenses. In May 1778 he was chosen representative to the General Court and received $2 a day expenses. In November that year he was on a committee to instruct representative Valentine Rathbun. In December the town instructed him "to press it in the General Court with decency that a state convention be formed for the purpose of forming a Bill of Rights & a Constitution." In February 1779 he was appointed a justice of the peace, but never held court because the people in town opposed the reopening of the courts under judges appointed by the legislature.

72 Smith, Pittsfield I, 190, 211-25; Dexter, Yale Biographical Sketches, III, 404-05; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:174, 177, 190, 196, 208; Garret L. Roof, Colonel John Brown, His Services in the Revolutionary War, Battle of Stone Arabia (Utica, N.Y.: Ellis H. Roberts and Co.,

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In May 1779 the town finally paid him for his services as a delegate to the state convention in 1774. That September he was on a committee to invite several towns in Berkshire to a convention. In 1780 he served again on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety, and on one to instruct the representative. 73

Despite the heavy load of committee work which he carried, it was his military career which brought Brown fame and perhaps gave him sufficient influence to be considered for the tasks he filled for the town. After Ticonderoga he served as a major under Colonel James Easton in the first invasion of Canada from May to December 1775. It was during this campaign that Benedict Arnold accused Brown of plundering captured baggage, but refused to convene a court martial to try the charges. Brown, in turn, accused Arnold of a number of offenses, especially of a "treasonable attempt to make his escape . . . to the enemy near Ticonderoga." The matter was eventually laid before Congress and the Board of War which delayed action, so that Brown finally resigned his commission in February 1777. Commissioned a field officer of the Massachusetts militia, he went to German Flats and other sectors of the


second northern campaign from April 1776 to May 1777. Gates and Lincoln sent him to Fort George with Captain John Strong and Lieutenant James Easton, where he captured and destroyed British stores and released over a hundred American prisoners. He and his men proceeded to take all the British posts from Lake George north to Ticonderoga, including Mt. Hope and Mt. Defiance, a blockhouse, and the old French lines of the French and Indian War which the British had fortified. In addition Brown captured an armed brig, five cannon, and two hundred and ninety-three prisoners. Brown lost only nine men in the expedition. 74

Under the 1780 constitution the militia elected company officers, who, in turn, elected field officers. When this plan came into effect Brown was chosen colonel of the Berkshire County regiment. He went to defend the Mohawk Valley from Indian attacks in April 1780 and died in an ambush at Stone Arabia October 19, 1780. He was only thirty-six years old. 75


Brown left real estate, including a mansion house, barn and seventy acres, worth £1200 and a personal estate valued at £500, with debts of £714:18:7. His twenty-six creditors included a number of high town officers: Colonel William Williams, Rufus Allen, Josiah Wright, Woodbridge Little, Dr. Timothy Childs, Eli Root, and the estate of Israel Stoddard. But the estate was not settled when he died, and by 1802 the court granted a request of insolvency, for by that time the interest on the debt alone amounted to over $1,000. But John Brown had not lived in poverty. His flowered silk jacket, red silk sash, and linen coat placed him among the gentlemen of the land. So, too, did his excellent law library, silver spoons, and eighteen "Round Backed Chairs." His widow married Jared Ingersoll, who was later jailed for his participation in Shays's Rebellion.76

Simon Larned (1753-1819) was born in Thompson, Connecticut where he attended the common schools. He moved to Pomfret, Connecticut before the Revolution. In 1778 he won a commission in Colonel William Shepherd's 4th Massachusetts Regiment, and later served as an aide to General Glover. In 1782 he commanded at Verplanck's Point and his correspondence reveals a careful, efficient officer, alert to detail, who viewed the health and reasonable

76 BCPCR No. 1073; Smith, Pittsfield I, 416.
comfort of his men as fitting them for better service. He was a member of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati. 77

Larned settled in Pittsfield in 1784 and the following year joined the assessors on a committee "to receive the records of the town from the old town clerk and deliver them to the new elected clerk." In 1786 he served as selectman and headed a committee to take care of the meetinghouse so the "parents of the children who may brake the windows thereof may be liable to pay the damage." In 1786 he served on a committee to instruct the representative which recommended a suspension in the collection of the state tax to cover interest on public securities "until some more easy and equal method of paying the same can be found and adopted." That year he was also on a committee of the Court of General Sessions to prepare a plan for a courthouse and jail in Lenox. In 1788 he was on the committee to plan a new meetinghouse and also to collect

the materials to build it. The next year he was appointed sheriff of Berkshire County, continuing in the post until he was appointed colonel of the 9th Regiment in 1812.78

He set up a forge with Rufus Allen and other citizens in 1788 to 1789 and opened a store with Joshua Danforth. Later they separated and Larned went into the importing business and operated a potash house near the meetinghouse. He evidently lent money, for in 1787 he asked Henry Van Schaack for the payment of interest due, so he could pay his taxes. In 1789 he paid £1:3:1 on a poll, £11:17:5 annual worth of real estate and £3:1:3 worth of personal estate, and a faculty tax of £3. Evidently he succeeded in business, because in 1792 he became county treasurer and held the post until he returned to the army in 1812. He was a representative in 1791. In 1795 Larned joined J. C. Williams, Joshua Danforth and others in erecting a waterworks. He eventually became president of the Berkshire Bank.79

78 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:167, 189; Smith, Pittsfield I, 412-13, 433, 435; Records of Civil Commissions, 1787-1806, 124, MSA.

79 Smith, Pittsfield II, 38, 43, 46-7, 558; Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1194; Simon Larned to Henry Van Schaack, May 17, 1787, Greenough Papers, MHS; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Tillinghast, Members Massachusetts General Court, 468, Mass. State Library.
He remained active in the militia and may have served during Shays's Rebellion. In 1788 he attached a report to the return of the 9th Division of the Massachusetts militia addressed to the adjutant general's office. It requested the formation of one or two new regiments in Berkshire, so the artillery and the militia might be improved in "appearance, discipline, & strength." He added a warning that the Adjutant should "expect to find the discipline rather decreased in this country until some alteration shall take place." 80

An active Democrat, he filled a vacancy in Congress caused by the resignation of Thomas J. Skinner in 1804. In 1812 he was colonel of the 9th U.S. Infantry Regiment and saw action at Plattsburg along the Mohawk River. Later he was colonel of the 15th Infantry based at Detroit where he took his family. But he was assigned to Pittsfield to handle the thousands of prisoners sent there. 81

He died in 1819 at the age of sixty-three. His family scattered to Washington, Virginia, and New Orleans.

80 Simon Larned to Colonel Israel Keith, January 6, 1788, Keith Papers, MHS.

81 Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1194; Smith, Pittsfield II, 195, 401; Simon Larned to J. and A. L. Larned, Nov. 11, 1815; Simon Larned to Major General Dearborn, October 12, 1814; Simon Larned, September 27, 1814, to A. D. Townsend, Rare Book Room, Boston Public Library.
One son became the attorney general at Michigan Territory. Larned's personal estate was inventoried at $468.78, and though the real estate was appraised at $5,454.19, the estate's outstanding debts were so great that the administrator requested a declaration of insolvency.  

**Oliver Root** (1741-1826) was born at Westfield, the son of Samuel Root, Jr., who died before completing plans to settle in Pontoosuck. At the age of eight, Oliver was apprenticed to a shoemaker. At eighteen he served in the French and Indian War, marching through Pontoosuck on his way to Albany to join Rogers Rangers. After the war he settled on the land his father left in Pittsfield, petitioning for title to it in 1773. In 1766 he married Hannah Ashley of Sheffield. In 1772 there were seven persons in his household. By 1787 he had three daughters, and six sons, and each of the sons was, like the father, six feet tall.  

Root began public service as a fence viewer in 1768 and 1773, and sealer of leather in 1773. He joined the early adherents of the Whigs in Pittsfield, petitioning for a town meeting to deal with the circular letter from

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82 "Pittsfield Sun Vital Records," Feb. 3, 1825, Sept. 28, 1826, June 17, 1830, August 28, 1834; BCPCR No. 3605.

Boston in 1774. He was not active on revolutionary committees until late in the war, but served in the militia. He was the captain in charge of a detachment of seventeen men who served in New York for twenty-one weeks in the fall of 1776. In August he was one of the veterans who marched to Bennington under Lieutenant James Hubbard. He was chosen lieutenant by the men in Captain William Francis' 9th (2nd Pittsfield) Company of Colonel Benjamin Simond's 2d Berkshire Regiment of the Massachusetts militia in the spring of 1776. He went to New York as a captain for 21 weeks, from July to December 1776. He served as a field and staff officer in Colonel Jonathan Smith's Regiment and was captain of the 2d Matross Company, 2d Berkshire County Regiment of Massachusetts militia in 1779. He was chosen 2d Major under Colonel David Rossiter in the 3d Berkshire Regiment in 1780. Under the constitution of 1780 the men elected their company officers, who in turn elected the field officers. In this manner Oliver Root was chosen major and adjutant to Colonel John Brown, and during the ambush at Stone Arabia he led the company to the ruins of the Fort Keyzer blockhouse, and fought off the attackers after Brown was killed. He was in command of a detachment from Rossiter's Brigade sent on alarm to Saratoga in October 1781, and on another to the Northwest for Colonel Caleb Hyde's Berkshire County Regiment that same year. General
Rossiter ordered him to raise a regiment to reinforce General Stark at Saratoga. 84

After 1777 he became more active in civilian affairs. In October 1778 he was one of those named to instruct the committee assigned to judge the breaches of the peace. In April 1779 he was on the committee to instruct the delegate to the county convention at Stockbridge in May. In March 1780 he was chosen selectman. In December that year he was one of those chosen "to class the town" to raise sixteen men for the Continental Army. 85 He was selectman again in 1781, and somewhat of a hero after his action in the Mohawk Valley the year before.

His farm appeared to prosper. In 1784 he paid taxes on two polls, a house and barn, sixty acres under cultivation, forty-two acres of pasture, 113½ acres of woodland, three horses, two colts, two oxen, six head of cattle, twenty-seven sheep, and seven swine. His "sympathy for the undeserved sufferings of less fortunate comrades" made him active in Shays's Rebellion. He was chosen selectman again in 1785. He served as an uninstructed delegate to the Berkshire County Convention at Lenox in August 1786. In 1782 he served on a committee to look into the causes of disunion in the town and propose remedies.

84 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:175; Smith, Pittsfield I, 179, 189, 314-15, 480, 487, 489, 491, 493; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XIII, 556.

85 Smith, Pittsfield I, 319; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:33, 50, 68, 86.
The next year he served as selectman again and was on the committee to collect materials and labor for the new meetinghouse. His contribution of fifty feet of oak posts and forty-six feet of oak plates reflected his continuing prosperity. In 1789 he was assessed £1:12:7:3 on four polls, real estate worth £30:17:10 and personal estate worth £10:6:6. 86

In 1790 Reverend Lemuel Smith, the Methodist, preached in his house and made several converts, including Root himself. Yet that year he was on the committee to plan the form of the pews in the new Congregational meetinghouse. Politically, he was an active Democrat and among those canvassing for the party's candidates at election time. In keeping with his earlier attitudes towards the poor and the common good, he refused to apply for a Revolutionary pension, saying it was meant for those unable to support themselves. 87

Root died in May 1826 in his eighty-fifth year. Prosperous up to the end, he left a total estate of $5,200.97 including real estate valued at $3,765.59 and a personal estate of $1,435.38, including $557.63 in notes of hand.

86 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 5; Smith, Pittsfield I, 400, 418, 435-36; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:188, 212; State Tax -1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield.

87 Smith, Pittsfield I, 117n, 442; II, 140, 195; Root, Root Genealogy, 352n.
He had managed to balance economic, military, and political leadership throughout his life. 88

Joshua Danforth (1759-1837) was born in Williams-town, the son of Jonathan Danforth. At fifteen he joined his father's militia company as a clerk and surgeon's mate. He eventually joined the Continental Army and became an ensign at sixteen, a lieutenant at eighteen, and a captain at twenty-two. He was with the army at Roxbury, Bennington, Ticonderoga, White March, Valley Forge, Monmouth Court House, Rhode Island, and White Plains. From 1781 to 1784 he was paymaster near Tappan's Bay. 89

In 1782 he wrote a report to General Knox on the grievances of the officers of the 2d Massachusetts Regiment, who complained of not being paid, the liquidation of accounts, and especially of the fact that the Massachusetts General Court had stopped support of their families. The following month he left the regiment. He was a member of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati. 90

88 "Pittsfield Sun Vital Records," May 4, 1826; BCPCR No. 4540.


He moved to Pittsfield and opened a store with Simon Larned. By 1788 they had set up separate establishments, and Danforth built a two-story gableroofed store on East Street, with a potash house in the rear. He accepted cash or goods in kind, but did not accept I.O.U.'s. He bartered salt for flax seed, and New York goods for cash, wheat, rye, corn, pork, beeswax, iron, wool and furs. In exchange for good ashes he offered rum, brandy, sugar, coffee, chocolate, tea, tobacco, red-wood, alum, wool cards, brimstone, German steel, salt, and dry goods. By 1790 he also dealt in public securities, such as final settlement notes, loan office certificates, indents and Massachusetts state notes. 91

His business prospered and in five years he was in the top quarter of taxpayers, paying £18:2:1 on a poll, £10:8:10 annual worth of real estate, £18:16:7 personal estate, and £10 faculty. By 1791 he paid the highest tax in town on personal property, which included at least one slave, and the second highest faculty tax. In 1795 he was one of the proprietors of the new waterworks. 92

Danforth took part in public affairs almost from the time he arrived in Pittsfield. In 1786 he was one of

91 Smith, Pittsfield II, 14, 43, 47.

those travelling through the Berkshire towns with Theodore Sedgwick in support of law and order, and was aide to General Patterson the following year. He was town clerk from 1787 to 1789. In 1790 he was on the committee for building the new meetinghouse. From 1794 to 1823 he was town clerk, treasurer, selectman, and assessor. He served as representative from 1801 to 1803, and in 1806 and 1808. An active Democrat, he received appointments as a justice of the peace in 1787, 1795, and 1801. In 1807 he was made an associate justice of the Court of Sessions, and in 1808 became chief justice of the Berkshire County Court of Sessions. He was postmaster from the establishment of the Pittsfield Post Office in 1794 until President John Adams replaced him at the height of the XYZ Affair. Madison made him U.S. marshal and assessor and collector of internal revenue for the 18th District of Massachusetts. He was careful not to accept any funds the local banks would not accept. In 1827 and 1828 he was a member of the Governor's Executive Council.

He died in 1837, age seventy-eight, leaving his wife what was due him from the United States, $200, and a

93 Brinsmade, Danforth Funeral Sermon, 16-17; West, "Paper," 69; Smith, Pittsfield I, 441.

94 Records of Civil Commissions 1775-1787, pt. 2, 124; ibid., 1787-1806, 142, 144, MSA; West, "Paper," 70; Brinsmade, Danforth Funeral Sermon, 17. Henry Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwick, May 6, 1798, Theodore Sedgwick Papers, MHS; Smith, Pittsfield I, 421 n; Joshua Danforth to John W. Yates, August 6, 1814, C. S. French Papers, MHS.
quarter of the household goods. Each of his settled children received $20. He left all his library and real estate to his son, Samuel, who had helped him in the post office.\textsuperscript{95} Even without an inventory, we may assume that Joshua Danforth died as he had lived, among the more prosperous of the military, political, social and economic leaders of Berkshire County.

Although he was in high town office only three years during the period of this study, he held such offices for nearly thirty years after 1789. Undoubtedly of remarkable ability from his youth, he succeeded in every enterprise he attempted. Pittsfield was the chosen scene of his endeavors after the war, as the Continental Army, rather than the militia, was during the war. High town office was not a platform from which men like Danforth rose to greater responsibilities; rather, it was a responsibility they assumed because of their success.

Timothy Childs (1748-1821) was born in Deerfield, the son of Captain Timothy and Mary Wells Childs. He attended Harvard College where he was a contemporary of Peter Coffin and Winthrop Sargeant of Gloucester, and Joseph Hunt of Concord, but was dismissed for keeping a woman in his room. He studied medicine under Dr. Thomas Williams of Deerfield and settled in Pittsfield in the early

\textsuperscript{95}BCPCR No. 5801.
1770s to practice medicine. He married Rachel, the daughter of Colonel James Easton, in 1778.96

The families of his patients paid the doctor by working his farm. At planting and harvest time all the farmers would turn out to help, thus encouraging the doctor to remain in the town. Yet his farm remained small, assessed at only 16s 6d in 1791. He worked for some time before he gained the town's consent to be innoculated for smallpox, but even then not until many were afflicted in the northern campaign.97

He was a supporter of the Revolution from the start: first as one of those requesting the special town meeting to discuss the circular letter from Boston in June 1774. He and John Strong wrote the town's petition to the county court at Great Barrington asking it not to meet in August 1774. In the fall that year he was on the committee to instruct John Brown, the delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord. He helped enforce the Continental Association as a member of the Committee of Inspection in December 1774, and was added to the

96 Elias Child, Genealogy of the Child, Childs, and Childe Families, of the Past and Present in the United States and the Canadas, from 1630 to 1881 (Utica, N.Y.: Published for the Author by Curtis and Childs, Printers, 1881), 670. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates XVII, 132 says Childs settled in Pittsfield in 1774, but he appears in TRP 1:157 in 1773; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 477 gives 1771.

Committee of Correspondence. He instructed Representative John Brown again in January.98

After Lexington, he went to Cambridge with Captain David Noble's Company, was accepted as a surgeon in Colonel John Patterson's Regiment, and was there most of the time from August to October 1775. The town requested his return in June 1775, "as we are very sickly." In September he was one of the regimental surgeons at Cambridge who reported to a board of inquiry that Dr. Benjamin Church denied the surgeons medical supplies from the commissary, and that the hospital had such a bad reputation among the men that the sick would not be removed there for fear of lacking necessities. The board upheld Dr. Church's conduct and said the complaints were due to a misunderstanding about the source of medical supplies. Dr. Childs also went to Stillwater for a week and a half in October 1777 in Captain William Francis' Company.99

Towards the end of the war Childs was more active on committees and as delegate to various conventions, instructing Representative Charles Goodrich in 1780 and acting as an agent for absentee estates. In September and

98Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:174, 183-87, 190, 194, 197; Smith, Pittsfield I, 189, 194, 201, 203.

99Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, III, 409, 415; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:209; report of court of inquiry against Benjamin Church, Director General of Hospital Commissary, Sept. 19, 1775; William Heath Papers, MHS; Smith, Pittsfield I, 204.
November 1784 he was a delegate to the county convention in Lenox which chose that town as the site of the new courthouse. In 1786 he joined other town leaders riding through the Berkshire towns to encourage law and order. In 1787 and 1788 he was on the school committee for the middle district. He served on the committee to report the plans for the new meetinghouse in 1788, contributing an eighty-foot beam himself. When the building was completed he was on the committee to settle the form of the pews. In 1789 he was on the committee inquiring into those dissenters who wanted to be free of ministerial taxes. Later the town decided they should pay the tax but could request that the money be transferred to their own ministers. However, they could obtain the transfer only if they were certified as members in good standing by one of the dissenting ministers. No one was allowed to avoid the tax through non-attendance at services. In 1792 Childs was on a committee to plan a new schoolhouse which could also serve as a townhouse.  

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Following the war the town chose him representative with some regularity. He was a representative in 1783, 1784, 1786, 1792, 1793, 1804, 1811, 1812, and 1814. He

served in the State Senate from 1805 until 1810, and again in 1815, making a total of sixteen terms in the General Court. He was a staunch Democrat, so his election to the senate shows the strength of that party in Berkshire County, as well as Dr. Childs' popularity. 101

With the passing years he had broadened his interests and services. The Massachusetts Medical Society elected him to membership in 1788 and he held all of the offices in that organization, including the presidency. In 1811 Harvard restored him to the place in the class of 1769 and gave him an honorary M.D. That year he joined the incorporators of the Worthington Turnpike and the Berkshire Bank, and the Agricultural Bank. In 1787 he accepted an appointment as a justice of the peace, perhaps in recognition of his efforts for peace during Shays's Rebellion. In 1796 he acted as special justice of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1802 he became a justice of the quorum. 102

His prosperity had kept pace with his public involvement. In 1784 he paid taxes on a poll, a house and barn, ten acres under cultivation, twelve acres of pasture and forty-three acres of woodland, two horses, five head of cattle, and two swine. By 1789 he was in the first quarter


102 Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XVII, 134; Record of Civil Commission, 1775-1787, pt. 2, 124; ibid., 1787-1806, 143-44, MSA.
of taxpayers, assessed £1:8:1:3 on a poll, £13:6:2 annual
worth of real estate, and £3:16:6 personal estate and a
faculty of £6. By 1796 he was able to build a one-story
medicine shop on North Street. By 1800 he built a square
flat-roofed house on part of the ministry lot he purchased
from the town in 1774. He was the town's leading physician,
aided by his son, Dr. Henry Childs, and in general was
considered the physician of the town's Democrats. He
continued his practice and remained active on the bench until
shortly before his death in 1821 at the age of seventy-
three. While the inventory of his estate contains no mention
of real estate it does list four horses, fifty-six sheep,
twenty-eight head of cattle, four oxen, and seventeen swine,
with most of the sheep and swine listed as "on farm." Thus
it appears that he transferred his real estate to his heirs
during his lifetime, but retained the livestock to provide
cash income. He left a personal estate of $946.60. His
children did well. One son followed his father as a state
senator and became president of the Madison County Bank
in New York, while another served as a member of Congress
from that state.\textsuperscript{103}

\textbf{Valentine Rathbun (1723-1800?),} born in Stonington,
Connecticut, the son of Joshua Rathbun and a Miss Wightman,
was a descendant of a long line of Baptist ministers. Between 1768 and 1770 he purchased a clothier works or fulling mill for finishing cloth near Richmond Pond in southwest Pittsfield from Aaron Baker. In 1772, when there were eight persons in his household, he became the founding elder and minister of the Baptist Church, holding meetings in his home. In 1781, after a short stay with the Shakers, he returned to his Baptist faith, and offered a motion in the town meeting for controlling "the extravagances and immoralities of the Shakers" who had settled near his fulling mill. Thereafter he devoted himself to the Baptist Church. Although it was not incorporated until 1795, in two years it was removed from the rolls of the Shaftsbury Association in whose circuit it had been since 1781. Though it never had more than a few dozen members, it played an important role in the easing of ministerial taxes for dissenters. Through the exertions of this group Baptists were granted relief from ministerial taxes beginning in 1774. Although as a teacher of religion he was exempt from taxes, Rathbun was among the dissenters from a variety of religious bodies protesting taxes for the new meetinghouse in 1790.104

104 John C. Cooley, Rathbone Genealogy. A Complete History of the Rathbone Family, Dating from 1574 to Date (Syracuse, N.Y.: Job Print, 1898), 125; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:165; 2:94, 143; Smith, Pittsfield I, 26, 136-37, 141, 452, 455, 457, 497; II, 37, 136-37, 142n; Smith, "History of Pittsfield," 391-92; Holland, History of Western Mass., II, 552-530.
He was an early and earnest opponent to British policy. "Fiery, vehement, and nervous" in his public speaking and temperament, he was an effective opponent of oppression and was often chosen representative when the people wanted an outspoken delegate to the General Court or to some county convention. In May 1775 he was added to the Committee of Inspection for the Continental Association and in July instructed Representatives Goodrich and Dickinson. In 1776 he was added to the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection and Safety. When Tories questioned the authority of the committee, he was one of those whose report upheld its authority. That year he was one of the representatives and was instructed by the Committee of Inspection as follows:

You shall, on no pretence whatever, favor a union with Great Britain, as to becoming, in any sense, dependent upon her hereafter; and we instruct you to use your influence with the Honorable House, to notify the Honorable, the Continental Congress that this whole Province is waiting for the important moment which they, in their great wisdom, shall appoint for the Declaration of Independence and a free Republic.105

He, or his son, marched to New York under Captain Oliver Root for twenty-one weeks between July 11 and December 5, 1776.106

105 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:208-09, 211, 214, 217, 222; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 178, 244-45. Quoted in Smith, I, 244. With Pittsfield's practice of waiting for a time before recording the town meeting records, one suspects that the phrasing here owed more to hindsight than to foresighted patriotism.

106 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XII, 978.
The following year was equally full of public business for Rathbun. In January 1777 he was a delegate to the county convention. He presided at a hearing at Richmond by the Berkshire Committees of Correspondence which heard evidence of a plot by Schuyler's New York forces to join the British and to cut New England off from the other colonies. In March the town reappointed him to the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety and later placed him on the smallpox committee. In May he went to Kinderhook with Captain John Strong after Tories and in October he went to Stillwater under Captain William Francis. That year he was one of the representatives who undertook to settle the question of a constitution. Surprisingly, Pittsfield, which objected so strongly to the use of the Charter of 1692, "Highly approved" the plan "relative to the present General Assembly forming a constitution" to be submitted to the people, a plan which five-sixths of the Massachusetts towns rejected. Late that year he served on a committee with Colonel William Williams and Reverend Thomas Allen to "overlook the votes passed the last three years & report what is proper to be recorded in the Town Book." Rathbun moderated a town meeting in January 1778 in which all the minutes presented by the committee were ordered recorded. He was also on a committee to settle the accounts of the late treasurer, Israel Dickinson. In March he was chosen selectman and was on the committee to instruct Representative William Williams. He joined a
number of other high town officers on a committee to report on rams running at large. He was on the committee to complain to the General Court about Charles Goodrich being a justice of the peace on Berkshire County. He was also on the committee to instruct those judging the breaches of the peace in October 1778, and on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety for the third year. When Berkshire County rejected the reopening of the courts without a new constitution the General Court sent a committee to meet with the Berkshire towns at Pittsfield where Rathbun headed the town's delegation. That year he was finally allowed £9:5 for his expenses as representative in 1776. When a constitutional convention was finally called, Rathbun headed the committee of instruction for Colonel William Williams. Although Reverend Allen drew up the report which charged Williams to include a bill of rights, the influence of Baptist Elder Rathbun is seen in the following:

that every man has an unalienable right to enjoy his own opinion in matters of religion, and to worship God in that manner that is agreeable to his own sentiments without any control whatsoever, and that no particular mode or sect of religion ought to be established, but that everyone be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of his religious persuasion and way of worship; . . . 107

Though Reverend Thomas Allen prepared the report, Rathbun did not sign it, and he may have been behind the changes added at the town meeting, requesting the election of the judges by the people. In 1779 he was again on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. He managed the arbitration case for the town against Charles Goodrich in January 1779. In May he was a delegate to county conventions at Stockbridge and at Pittsfield.  

Perhaps his short defection to the Shakers at the end of 1779 led men to question his judgment, or he may have given all his attention to the Baptist Church which joined the Shaftsbury Association in 1781. At any rate, he does not appear again in a prominent position in the town records until 1787. He does not seem to have been prominent on either side in Shays's Rebellion. In 1787 the town voted to send Rathbun and Captain David Bush to the ratifying convention of the Federal Constitution without instructions. Rathbun was an anti-Federalist there and voted against adoption. He held onto his Baptist congregation until 1797. The following year he left Pittsfield for Scipio, New York, perhaps in the hope of gathering a new Baptist congregation there.  

108 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 366-68, 387; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:10, 49, 56.  

109 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 455; II, 94, 94n; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:206.
Larger Leaders

Joshua Robbins (? - 1796) settled in Pittsfield from Wethersfield, Connecticut, probably in 1760. In 1766 he signed a petition to the General Court to gain title to his land. In 1767 he was warden, and in 1768 surveyor of highways. In 1772 there were ten persons in his household. In 1774 he served as surveyor of highways, and in 1777 he was on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. He was a selectman in 1778 and 1781 and moderator from 1781 to 1785, and in 1788, and was evidently highly respected in the town as a veteran of the movement into the Revolution.

He, or his son, was a private in Captain William Francis' company which served nineteen days in the Northern Department in July 1777. He marched to Fort Edwards that same month. In 1781 he went on an alarm to Saratoga with Captain Joel Steven's Company in Colonel David Rossiter's Regiment. In December 1780 he served on a committee to report on a plan to procure sixteen three-year men for the Continental Army.

In 1784 he was a prosperous farmer, with a house and barn, and another building worth over $5. He had fifty-four acres in cultivation, forty-six acres of pasture,

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110 Smith, Pittsfield, I, 244, 476, 497; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:92, 106, 237.

146 acres of woodland, two horses, a colt, four oxen, thirty-five sheep, and six swine. By 1789 he ranked in the top quarter of taxpayers assessed £15:1:3 on five polls, real estate worth £30:15 annually, and personal estate worth £7:6:10. In 1790, as one of the town's wealthiest members, he was on a committee to report on the form of the pews in the new meetinghouse. Yet he was one of the Revolutionary leaders who left Pittsfield. He died in 1796 in Hancock, Vermont, leaving real estate worth $5,158.32 and personal estate worth $1,517.75, mostly in livestock. The inventory included substantial, but not elegant, clothing and furniture, and valuable farm stock. But as he left a large family, it did not go very far.112

Woodbridge Little (1740/1-1813), the son of Dr. Nathaniel Little and Mabel Woodbridge, was born in Hartford, Connecticut into a family of doctors, lawyers, and ministers. He studied theology at Yale, was graduated in 1760, and preached at Lanesborough for two years before he was admitted to the bar in 1764. He married Parthenis Alden of Lebanon and settled in Pittsfield by 1766. By 1770 Israel Williams requested and won for him an appointment as justice of the peace for Berkshire County. By 1772 there

112 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 5; State Tax List - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Smith, Pittsfield, I, 442; BCPCR No. 1729.
were four persons in his cottage on Beaver Street. 113

The town chose him assessor in 1769 and selectman and assessor in 1773. That year and in 1774 he served on the committee to settle with the treasurer. In 1774 he served on a committee for leasing the school lot and selling the ministry land. 114

At the beginning of the Revolution it did not look as if Little would oppose most of the town, for he wrote the 1773 instructions to the representative acknowledging dangers to colonial liberties. But the instructions he proposed deplored the destruction of the tea at Boston and ordered the representative to see to it that the town was not held liable for payment. But he and Stoddard wrote a complaint against Reverend Thomas Allen for his conduct at the August 1774 town meeting. The town upheld the minister's conduct and passed a complaint against Little and Stoddard. When Little did not sign the Solemn League and Covenant he was charged with disaffection and placed under house arrest. He fled to Kinderhook and was arrested at Albany and returned to Pittsfield by Sheriff Israel Dickinson. Strangely enough, some time before he had drawn up guidelines which the town said the Committee of

113 Dexter, Yale Biographical Sketches, III, 664, 666; Petition of Israel Williams, Jan. 23, 1770, MSA 25:353; Smith, Pittsfield I, 497.

114 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:155, 167, 177.
Inspection should use. By May 1776 the town voted to adopt a petition and memorial critical of him and Stoddard, no doubt so they would be remembered as enemies of their country. At the same meeting the town spelled out the powers of the Revolutionary committees, perhaps because the legal minded Little questioned them. By July 1777 Stoddard, Little, and four other men:

made their appearance before the Town and upon their Confession Declaration and taking the Oath of allegiance to the United independent States of America they were by a Vote of the Town Received as Friends to these United States.115

By October Little proved his loyalty by marching to Bennington under Lieutenant James Hubbard. Although his friend, Israel Dickinson, a leading Whig, died that fall, Jonathan Lee, town clerk, was his brother-in-law and he no doubt had close ties with other patriotic town leaders who had served with him on the Board of Selectmen and on various committees. Whether through their influence or the town’s need of his legal skill, he re-appeared, writing instructions in the fall of 1778 and again in 1779. He headed the list of those classing the town in 1780 and 1781 and he served on the committee reporting on the Shakers in 1781, so he must have been respected for his fairness. In March 1781, 1782, and 1783 he was chosen selectman.

a sure sign the town felt that he was loyal. In 1782 he was a delegate to the county convention, and he joined Colonel Williams to meet the committee of the General Court to discuss where the county courts would be held in the future. 116

In 1784 he was again chosen assessor, and delegate to the county convention at Lenox about the location of the courts. He joined Daniel Hubbard in reporting that the treasurer was "in great arrears"—over £8000 in Continental money, especially for 1774-1776. Assessor in 1785, he also instructed Representative Childs. In 1786 he was excused from a fine for not serving as constable, perhaps because he was active against the Shaysites. He held the posts of selectman and assessor again in 1787 when the crisis was over. He served as selectman and representative in 1788, and on the committee transferring the treasurer's papers, on the school committee, as well as on the committee looking into the plans and cost of the new meetinghouse. He was excused from serving as a surveyor, but was on the committee to study the issues dividing the parish that year. Selectman, assessor and representative again in 1789, he was on the committees to investigate the matter of ministerial tax rates for dissenters in 1790 and 1792. In 1790 the

town sent him to the General Court again, and placed him on the committee to plan a new schoolhouse which could also serve as a townhouse. 117

Despite the heavy taxes of the war years, Little prospered. In 1784 he paid taxes on a poll, a house and barn, his law office, forty-four acres under cultivation, thirty-nine acres of pasture, thirty-seven and one-half acres of woodland, and ten acres of unimproved land, three horses, four oxen, thirteen head of cattle, twenty-five sheep, six swine, and nineteen ounces of silver plate. This valuation indicates a lot more investment in farming than one might expect from the town's busiest lawyer. No doubt he hired someone to run the farm for him, or he could never have carried the heavy committee assignments he assumed. His prosperity continued, for in 1789 he was in the top quarter of taxpayers, assessed £1:3:5:1 on a poll, £20:0:2 annual worth of real estate and £6:9:4 personal estate. 118

Little was an original trustee of Williams College and began a scholarship fund for ministry students there.


He was an active and more consistent Federalist than he had been a Tory. After he failed to get the Reverend Thomas Allen to refrain from discussing politics in the pulpit, Little helped found the new Union parish in 1809. Allen found this even more serious than Little's Federalist politics. Little died in 1813 at the age of seventy-three, leaving a good library, a bequest to support the ministry in Union parish, and several small legacies to relatives and friends. He had no surviving heirs, so he named Williams College the residuary legatee for his estate of over $2,500.  

James Dennison Colt (? - 1809) came to Pittsfield from Lynn, Connecticut, probably between 1762 and 1764 and settled on a thousand acres in the southwest corner of the town. His second wife was Miriam, the daughter of Colonel William Williams. His oldest son, James, married Sarah, the daughter of a wealthy Tory, Ezekiel Root. The older Colt was selectman in 1772 and captain of the militia in September 1774. He was a warden in 1775 when wardens were assigned to take care of "disorderly persons." He, or his son, marched to Albany under Captain William Francis for five days in January 1776, and to Fort Edward for seven weeks in July and August 1777. He went with Lieutenant James Hubbard to Bennington that same month. That

119 Dexter, Yale Biographical Sketches, III, 665-66; Smith, Pittsfield, II, 195; Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates, XV, 163; BCPCR No. 3064.
November he was one of the committee to "come into some method to Manufacture salt for the town." In 1778 he was warden and surveyor of highways. He was one of those chosen to "class the town" in 1780 and 1781. From 1782 to 1787 he was selectman. In 1788 he was on the school committee, and on that to hear the question dividing the town and propose a solution. While he supported the Revolution, he did not get involved with either the Berkshire Constitutionalists or Shays's Rebellion.

Throughout his public service James Colt made good use of his extensive land. He probably sold some of it and divided all but about three hundred acres among his sons as they came of age, for in 1784 he paid taxes on one poll, a house, two barns, thirty-eight acres under cultivation, nine acres of pasture, fifty-five acres of woodland, a horse, a cow, three sheep and a pig. Yet in 1789 he was in the top ten percent of taxpayers, assessed £3:13:1:1 on three polls, £60:1:7 worth of real estate, and £14:14 of personal estate. Only Charles Goodrich paid more real estate taxes than Colt. In 1791 Colt paid £9:15:6 on his real estate. When he died in 1809 he divided his estate in half, one part going to his children and the other part for the missions. He had a personal estate of

120 Smith, Pittsfield I, 144, 204, 209, 319, 418, 476-77; II, 408; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:202; 2:7, 86, 211; Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, III, 840.
$1,809.09 and real estate $8,280.00, totalling $10,089.02.  

_Eli Root_ (1731-1804), the son of Joseph Root, a justice of the peace in Hampshire County, was born in Westfield. He married Mindwell Sackett in 1755 and settled in Pontoosuck in 1757. That year he joined other settlers in petitioning for a fort near their land for protection against Indian attack. At the first meeting of the settling proprietors in 1758 he was chosen collector of taxes. The following year he was on a committee to see to the bridge over the Housatonic River. At the first town meeting in 1761 he was chosen highway surveyor. In 1765 he purchased a pew in the meetinghouse. The following year, when he was selectman, he was one of those petitioning to have his land title confirmed. In 1768 he was assessor and grave digger. In 1769 he was a selectman and moderator of the May meeting, and in 1771 he was selectman again. In 1770 he joined other residents in petitioning to purchase a tract of land which became part of Middlefield. In 1772 there were seven persons in his household. He was one of those petitioning again in 1773 to have his land title confirmed.  

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121 1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library 163, Sch. No. 4; State Tax - 1789, Tax Collector's Office, Pittsfield; Smith, Pittsfield I, 437; BCPCR No. 2669.  

122 Whitmore, Massachusetts Civil List, p. 140; Root, Root Genealogical Records, 1600-1870, 339; Holland,
He was an early and steady supporter of the Revolution, in spite of the fact that he was on the committee which instructed Representative Goodrich to express "their horror and detestation" of the events surrounding the Boston Tea Party. In 1774 he was a lieutenant in the militia, a selectman, assessor, and surveyor of highways. He served on the committee of instructions to John Brown, delegate to the Provincial Congress at Concord and at Cambridge. In December 1774 he was on the first Committee of Inspection to enforce the Continental Association, and was added to the Committee of Correspondence at the next meeting in September 1774, and in 1775, 1777 and 1780. He moderated two town meetings in March 1775, and was one of the committee of arbitrators for regulating disturbances when the courts closed. In June 1775 he was one of those chosen "to be assistants to advise and act as Select Men in the absence of a Majority of the Select Men." In July he was on a committee to instruct the representative. 123

He served as a captain in the first Canadian campaign in Colonel James Easton's Regiment from August to the end of December 1775, and reenlisted for the second Canadian campaign under Colonel John Brown from January 1, 1776 to May 23, 1776. On his return he was added to the

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History of Western Mass., 548; Smith, Pittsfield I, 437; Smith, "History of Pittsfield," 289, 293; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:112, 119, 121, 142, 144, 498.

123 Smith, Pittsfield I, 184-85, 201-03; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:190, 194, 197, 201, 203, 211.
Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety. In September, when the town finally agreed to permit inoculations for smallpox, Root was on the committee to regulate the inoculations. He was also named to assist the selectmen in taking care of those inoculations. 124

In January 1777 he headed a committee to settle with the town treasurer and to collect from those delinquents on their ministerial rates for Reverend Thomas Allen. He was named to the Committee of Correspondence again and was one of those from that committee to join some selectmen and commissioned officers in raising men for the Continental Army by classing the town. 125

That year, 1777, when the question of a constitution was before the General Court, Root was one of the three representatives Pittsfield sent to work for the inclusion of a bill of rights. In November 1777 he was named an additional assessor and town treasurer. In the midst of his town duties he went to Kinderhook in early May 1777 under Captain John Strong after inimical persons, and in October to Stillwater under Captain William Francis. That year he was also named a justice of the peace, but as the people still opposed the courts, he did not serve. Eli Root served as one of the selectmen among other high town officers who were to report on rams running at large, and

124 Mass. Soldiers and Sailors, XIII, 550; Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:222, 225, 228.

125 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 1:233, 239.
continued what would become ten years in the office of town treasurer. In August 1778 he joined Colonel William Williams and William Barber on a committee to petition the General Court, asking that the Ashuelot Equivalent (Dalton) might be made a separate town. In October he was on the revised committee "to Judge & Determine of & Concerning all breaches of Peace & Tresspass [sic] Experg [sic] disputes of Land &c that shall arise in this town." In December 1778, possibly because he was treasurer, he moderated a town meeting to take care of a number of financial matters which were pending, and was named to a committee "to lay out in lands the money from the sale of the school lots."126

In 1779 he was again selectman, assessor, and treasurer, and served on a committee to instruct the delegates to the General Court to work for a constitution and bill of rights, and for the repeal of the "pardon" the Court had given the Berkshire Constitutionalists. He was a delegate to the county convention at Stockbridge in May, and he moderated the town meeting in September 1779 which approved of the state convention held in July at Concord to stabilize prices and "prevent monopoly, extortion, and unfair dealing." Pittsfield invited several

Berkshire towns to a county convention and named Root as one of the delegates for the same purpose.\(^{127}\)

In 1780 he was selectman, treasurer and assessor, on the Committee of Correspondence, Inspection, and Safety and on the committee to instruct Charles Goodrich, representative to the General Court, and Colonel James Easton, who was the delegate to the state convention in Boston. He was also chosen as one of the committee to class the town to raise men for the Continental Army. In 1781 he was paid fifty shillings for his work as treasurer. He was appointed justice of the peace that year and in 1788, 1795, 1797, and 1804, serving as a justice of the quorum from 1795.\(^{128}\)

In 1782 he was on a committee to instruct the delegates to a county convention. In 1783, when he was selectman and treasurer again, he was named the town's agent to answer the county grand jury's charge against the town for not keeping a grammar school the year before. As treasurer in 1784, he had to settle his accounts with a committee. He moderated the town meeting in November which instructed him and Dr. Timothy Childs, delegates to the county convention at Lenox, to work to have the county

\(^{127}\) Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:49, 53, 57; Shattuck, History of Concord, 122; Smith, Pittsfield I, 363-65; Smith, "History of Pittsfield," 301, 304-06.

\(^{128}\) Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:68, 75-80, 86, 106; Records of Civil Commissions, 1775-87, pt. 2, 123; ibid., 1787-1806, 141, 143, 145, MSA.
courts held in two places. Selectman and treasurer in 1785, he moderated the town meeting which decided to repair rather than enlarge the meetinghouse. 129

Selectman and treasurer in 1786, he was directed to settle with delinquent constables and collectors. He was not active in Shays's Rebellion, perhaps because as town treasurer and justice of the peace, he had to deal with both sides. He may have worked for a solution through his brother, Amos Root, who offered a petition which the town used in place of instructions to the delegates to the county convention. The town directed that the assessors keep the tax bill in their hands until the town received the "doings of the county court" and then until the General Assembly acted on the matter. It is likely that Root, as town treasurer and an important magistrate, had great influence on these decisions, all of which indicated sympathy with the plight of the small debtors. Only once did he show opposition, and that was to the methods of protest rather than to the substance of their complaints. In January 1786 he moderated a stormy town meeting to consider the actions of a county convention. Things got so out of hand that he refused to declare the votes. Root was on the committee instructing Representative Dr. Timothy Childs to work for a

129 Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:116, 143, 160-61, 177.
suspension of the collection of state taxes, to replace the current courts with some system less time consuming and expensive, especially in the matter of fees, and to ease the collection of debts. In April 1787 the town decided to "indemnify and save harmless the Constables for the year 1786 in receiving on their tax bills army notes and certificates, agreeable to an Act of the General Court granting said tax."\textsuperscript{130}

Other business continued during this year of crisis. Root and Dr. Childs were delegates to a county convention in Lenox which chose that place as the shire town, though they did not vote, as they had been instructed to work to get two towns named. When a protest failed, Root was on the committee of the Court of General Sessions to prepare plans for the courthouse and jail to be located in Lenox.\textsuperscript{131}

Root remained selectman and treasurer in 1787 when the town records indicate the town underwent a relaxation in routine matters at least. The meeting voted to "proceed as usual," or "to accept the Selectman's report," where earlier the meeting had retained control of decisions. The townsmen were even far enough removed from the tensions of the war years to elect two former Tories, Woodbridge Little and Henry Van Schaack, to high town offices.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{130}Ibid., 2:181, 188-89, 196; Smith, \textit{Pittsfield I}, 412-14.

\textsuperscript{131}Smith, \textit{Pittsfield I}, 429-31, 433.

\textsuperscript{132}Town Meeting Minutes, TRP 2:194, 196.
With the passing of the crises which had occupied the town for a decade, men like Root, who had carried the town through the war and Shays's Rebellion, could retire from high town office. However, when basic issues, such as the seating of the meetinghouse, or the division over Reverend Thomas Allen's politics, arose, the town called on men like Root to moderate its meetings. He also moderated the March 1789 town meeting and served on the committees "to examine the Town papers, and destroy such as may be of no further use."\(^{133}\)

Root had to be prosperous to spend so much time in public service. Several of his five sons helped with the farm by the time of the Revolution, but he had a prosperous farm before that. In 1761 he had £300 worth of buildings, £550 worth of improved land, £5 worth of unimproved land, £39:6 of livestock and £187:2 of produce, a total of £1451:8, placing him in the 3rd quarter of taxpayers. By 1784 he paid taxes on two polls, a house, a barn, forty-five acres under cultivation, twenty-six acres of pasture, seventy-five acres of woodland, four horses, five oxen, thirty-nine heads of other livestock, as well as two ounces of silver, most likely enough to place him in the top quarter of taxpayers. By 1789 he was in the top quarter of taxpayers, assessed £1:14:1:2 on two polls,

\(^{133}\)Ibid., 2:219, 244.
real estate worth £22:17:7 annually, personal estate worth £7:16:3, and a faculty worth £6.134

When he died on October 28, 1804, at age seventy-four, he had settled five sons and two daughters. He left an estate of $4,550, $3,760 of it in real estate, mostly the homestead and farm and two tracts of land in Rutland, Vermont, and fifty other acres in Pittsfield. A little more than half of the personal estate of $791.08 consisted of livestock and farm goods, though the furnishings in the best room of his house were worth $188.82.135 As a magistrate and life-long high town officer, rather than enjoy his leisure, Root had devoted over a quarter of a century to bringing independence and peace to his town. In this he may serve as a model of the larger leaders of Pittsfield and other towns for whom long tenure meant the sacrifice of time and effort in peace and in war. In Pittsfield, as in Concord and Gloucester, it meant the sacrifice of peace to lead one's town into, through, and out of a Revolution.


135 Root, Root Genealogical Records, 339; BCPCR No. 2341.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

For a quarter of a century the hundred and sixteen men whose careers we have followed served their towns in high town offices. Whether they returned to farm or business after a single term or remained in public office through much of the late colonial and Revolutionary periods, they served as instruments of the town meetings which elected them. For most of them we have little evidence of what they thought beyond the petition, resolutions, and protests they wrote and approved in town meetings. Many of them, especially among the larger leaders, no doubt both shaped and were shaped by the dynamics of the town meetings. The only other traces they left outside of the town meeting minutes are revealed in the evidence of their lives of public service year in and year out. How well they followed the will of the town and how secure the towns felt under their leadership is reflected in part in the election patterns each town developed.

The first thing that becomes apparent in studying the minutes of the March election meetings for the various
towns during the 1760s and 1770s is that each town had its own traditions about its high town offices. They differed in the order in which they filled particular offices, in their concern about multiple officeholding, and the kinds of office which should be held by one man. They established traditions for particular offices and particular men. Thus, even a quick perusal of the minutes leads us to expect that each town would follow its own patterns of officeholding over the years but that each was open to change whenever circumstances warranted it.

The changes in officeholding that grew out of the Revolution, however, were not of the kind to suggest an "internal revolution." None of the three towns studied, for instance, replaced large numbers of Tories in town office with Whigs because none of them had very many Tories in office to begin with. Each town had a few who held high town office before the Revolution, but who dropped from office before 1775, sometimes because of age or death. Some did appear briefly in high town office and move on, perhaps to other towns, or to merely private concerns. The towns did drop a few because they became increasingly unacceptable to the patriotic faction in the town, but most of these men eventually reconsidered their position and joined the patriots. Even towns which might be expected to have a large contingent of Tories, did not have them in high town office. Gloucester's merchant community, for example, showed early support for Thomas Sanders, Jr., who was a
leading opponent of Thomas Hutchinson. Epes Sargent was the only Gloucester Tory who held high town office and fell into disfavor, and he had served as selectman for only one year. Frontier Pittsfield had several high town officers of wealth and social connections who sided with the Tories. When the town turned against Jones, Stoddard and Little, it treated them roughly, despite the earlier deference they had received. Concord, on the other hand, had little trouble with Tories, since one of the two active Tories fled before the fighting broke out and the other remained relatively quiet under house arrest. Anyway, the town had never honored either of them with high town office, but each town did have men of wealth and station, like Duncan Ingraham in Concord, or Woodbridge Little in Pittsfield, who were denied office during the Revolution, yet gained office during and after Shays's Rebellion, when the towns came to adopt more conservative positions and called on more conservative men to defend the state from dangers from within. But that was long after the Revolution had been fought and won.

More typical of the officeholders of the towns studied here were men who served their terms in high town office and then retired, to reappear only for committee work or to take on some of the extra burden of work that came with the Revolution. Other men came into high town office to remain there for many years, some holding several offices each year. In older towns like Concord and Gloucester
this was true because the towns were divided into parishes each of which was represented by a selectman, often the outstanding man in the parish, year after year. Thus Peter Coffin represented the West Parish of Gloucester for many years, and John Low represented the Fourth Parish. Sometimes, as in the case of Coffin and Low, they were among the outstanding men in the entire town. In Pittsfield, men like Williams and Wright, who were closely connected with the foundations of the town, very likely were elected year after year in recognition of that role.

But whatever the reason, each town had traditional leaders it trusted and turned to in times of crisis and upheaval. Trusted town officers before the Revolution, such men sometimes held office with little or no interruption through the war and beyond. Others who left high town office when their accustomed number of years was up, or when they approached their sixties, returned during uncertain times when the town wanted experienced leaders whom it had learned to trust during earlier crises.

The impact of the Revolution on the towns studied here was great, but initially it united rather than divided them. With few exceptions the voters of Concord, Gloucester and Pittsfield did not use the war against Britain as an opportunity to turn out their local leaders. In most cases the opposite was true: rather than the war serving as an occasion for internal rebellion against local leaders, it was often the local leaders who brought the town into the
Revolution. And not just any high town officers, for it was usually the larger leaders who through long years of service had won the trust and confidence of the town who assumed this role.

Were these leaders of the Revolution anxious to lead their towns into a war from which they could gain more than most men? This may have been true in some cases, but not in the case of a James Easton of Pittsfield who lost his business as a result of the war, or an Israel Dickinson who died as a result of the war. Nor does it appear to have been the case with other larger leaders who were apparently harnessed or drafted to lead. The towns apparently insisted that their trusted leaders of the past guide them through the crises the war would bring. John Cuming had reservations about the Revolution and was slow in joining the patriots in Concord. Yet once he decided, the town put him in a position of leadership at the head of the Committee of Correspondence and kept him there through the war. James Barrett was called out of retirement to a position of leadership, not only in the town, but in the county as well. In Gloucester Coffin and Low, who held no multiple offices during the previous decade, began years of multiple office-holding which continued until the end of the war, and in Low's case, beyond. In Pittsfield, the town named Williams to preside over the informal courts the town set up, much as he had presided over the county courts the town had
closed earlier. This was despite his close connections with Tory leaders and in addition to his duties as selectman and representative, up to the time he was seventy years old.

The events leading up to the Revolution did not produce any great turnover in office. Only four new men took office in the three towns in 1765, so the towns must have felt that their officers already serving could express their opposition to the Stamp Act. The Intolerable Acts were more strongly opposed, especially in the action the towns took against opening the county courts, first in Pittsfield, and then in Concord. Two new selectmen were chosen in Gloucester, while Coffin and Low, long-time selectmen, were sent to the General Court. So the towns in this study were confident that their experienced high town officers could lead them through days of crisis safely. The real change came, not in leaders, or kinds of leaders, but in the methods the towns used to secure the liberties of the province: county conventions, provincial congresses, and the support of a continental congress.

During the period of fighting in and near Massachusetts from 1775 to 1779, Concord, which managed with relatively few high town officers, gained only two new selectmen and a new representative. Gloucester replaced a town clerk who died, and chose nine new selectmen, but none of them served more than four years. In 1776 the town
sent four representatives to the General Court, but two were Coffin and Low, and the other two never served as representatives again. The most striking thing about Gloucester from 1775 on is that while the town continued to rely on its colonial leaders, it began to elect for one to four years a large number of men who had not held high town office before the war. Yet when the war was over, Gloucester promptly returned to the long tenure in high town offices that had been common during the colonial years. During the war, Pittsfield relied mainly on its leaders from the colonial period, as did Concord.

In the Revolutionary period the towns all increased the number of men in high town office: Concord by 7 percent, Gloucester by 42.8 percent, and Pittsfield by 76 percent. While Concord had established a four-year tenure for its common leaders, and Gloucester a one-year tenure, and Pittsfield a scattered pattern of one- or two-year terms during the colonial period, each of the towns kept its larger leaders in for longer periods. During the Revolutionary period Concord moved to a four- to six-year tenure with some scattered terms for its common leaders. In Gloucester all but a handful of leaders held office for just a few years, while Pittsfield had many common leaders in high town office from one to four years, so many that there was a 76 percent increase in the number of high town officers. Two of Concord's larger leaders continued with long tenure and two held multiple office. Gloucester on the other hand kept
long tenure and dropped almost all multiple officeholding after the war. Moreover her high town officers usually served in only one office. Pittsfield turned to longer tenure with little multiple officeholding except for Eli Root who was selectman and treasurer for many years (see Table 15). In Revolutionary Concord four leaders were colonial high town officeholders and they served twenty-two of the one hundred and six terms (20 percent). In Revolutionary Gloucester ten leaders were colonial high town officeholders who filled sixty-eight out of one hundred and seventy-six terms (38.6 percent). In Revolutionary Pittsfield nine leaders of colonial Pittsfield filled fifty-four out of one hundred and six terms (50.9 percent).

During the colonial period each town had some leaders who held multiple offices in a single year. From 1763 to 1774 Concord had four, Gloucester twenty-one and Pittsfield twenty such cases. From 1775 to 1789 the towns continued this practice. Concord had six cases, Gloucester twenty-three, and Pittsfield twenty-eight, with colonial leaders involved in two of Concord's cases, eighteen of Gloucester's, and thirteen of Pittsfield's. [Concord's figures do not include the combination of town clerk and first selectman which was its practice throughout the years of this study.]

Each town kept some men in office year after year: Cuming, Barrett, and Woods in Concord; Coffin, Low, Witham, and Whittemore in Gloucester, and Williams, Wright, and Root in Pittsfield. Concord and Gloucester kept some of
### TABLE 15

**Patterns of Office Holding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concord: # of Men</th>
<th>Usual Tenure</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th># of Men</th>
<th>Usual Tenure</th>
<th>Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common 11</td>
<td>4 years long tenure</td>
<td>1 office</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4-6 years long tenure</td>
<td>1 office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Prescott as multiple office holder</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/2 1 office</td>
<td>1/2 multiple office holding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gloucester:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common 12</td>
<td>1 year long tenure</td>
<td>1 office</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1-4 years long tenure</td>
<td>1 office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 office with Sanders &amp; Witham multiple office holders</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>little multiple office holding—usually only one office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong> 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pittsfield:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common 7</td>
<td>1-2 years long tenure</td>
<td>scattered</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Many 1-4 yrs. scattered</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>multiple office-holding</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>some multiple officeholding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong> 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common 30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larger 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong> 48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total of High Town Officers:** 116
their leaders in office until they died, but in Pittsfield they were replaced by new men, and only those leaders who died suddenly were in high town office at the time of their death. Concord chose some leaders whose town ties were of short duration, but Beatton, Bond, and Ingraham were all wealthy men. Gloucester chose outsiders who were at best prosperous, perhaps a sign of the greater openness of the seaport.

Even after the war was over new men did not move to control high town offices immediately, for each of the towns continued to rely on colonial leaders. But the towns which had supported the Revolution so warmly in 1773 were in no mood for a rebellion in 1786 against the government they had erected. During and after Shays's rebellion conservative men like Van Schaack, Woodbridge Little, and John C. Williams in Pittsfield, Asa Brooks, Elnathan Jones, and Duncan Ingraham in Concord, and John Somes in Gloucester found high town office open to them.

Leaders of the Revolution also moved into the county courts in greater numbers. Moreover, in the towns covered in this study, few justices of the peace were turned out of office as a result of their stand on the war. Of five high town offices of colonial Concord who were justices before 1775, John Jones died and John Beatton retired before the war. Duncan Ingraham was reappointed in 1792. John Cuming who was on the first list of appointees from the General Court in September 1775 remained on the county
court, serving as its chief magistrate until his death in 1788. Only Charles Prescott lost his seat because of his support of the royal governor. Only three Concord men who were appointed justices of the peace in the eighteenth century do not appear on Shattuck's list of high town officers. All of the justices appointed after 1775 were high town officers, often of long tenure.

Of the seven justices of the peace in colonial Gloucester, only Epes Sargent, Jr. lost his appointment as a result of his support of the crown. Three other Gloucester justices died before the Revolution, and one moved to New Hampshire. Two more, Daniel Witham and Samuel Plummer, had their appointments renewed by the General Court in 1775. Three other larger leaders of colonial Gloucester, Peter Coffin, John Low, and Samuel Whittemore, joined them as justices in 1775-1776. Joseph Allen, selectman (1775) and treasurer (1778-1781), Daniel Rogers, selectman (1757, 1781) and representative (1776), and William Pearson, selectman (1779) and representative (1787-1793) also received appointments to the county courts in the 1770s and 1780s.

Colonial Pittsfield had three justices of the peace, William Williams, Israel Stoddard, and Woodbridge Little. Stoddard and Little both supported the crown and fled to New York when the war broke out. Though both returned and took the oath of allegiance, neither of them ever regained a seat on the county courts, although Little did return to high town office. Selectman and Representative Charles
Goodrich and seven other men, high town officers of Revolutionary Pittsfield received appointments as justices of the peace after 1775. William Williams headed the county courts before and after the war. During the war he headed the informal courts set up by the Berkshire Constitutionists. In Concord, Gloucester and Pittsfield, at any rate, county court appointments were given to men whom the town elected to high town office both before and after the Revolution began (see Table 16).

This study does not support the idea that young men led the Revolution in the towns. A study of the average ages at which the town leaders first held a particular post show that Pittsfield chose the youngest officers and Concord the oldest in both the colonial and revolutionary periods. In fact, all the towns chose older men after 1775. This holds true when we compare the average ages for entering each office (see Table 17). It should be remembered that these figures for the Revolutionary period do not include men who are grouped with Colonial leaders, but who filled many offices after 1775 in each town.

On the whole the officeholding patterns the towns followed point to a conservative electorate. But the evidence shows that in economic matters the leaders they chose were not tied to the employments of the past. They did not tie themselves to a single source of employment, income, occupation or investment. Militia office, college education and professional occupations were important but not
TABLE 16
High Town Officers Who Also Served as Justices of the Peace 1763-1789

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concord:</th>
<th>Revolutionary:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Jones, died 1772</td>
<td>James Barrett, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Beatton, retired 1772, died 1777</td>
<td>Ephraim Wood, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Prescott - lost his appointment</td>
<td>Jonas Heywood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cuming</td>
<td>John Cuming, d. 1788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duncan Ingraham</td>
<td>Duncan Ingraham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph Hosmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elnathan Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloucester:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Allen, moved and died 1774 or 1775</td>
<td>Peter Coffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Stevens, d. 1767</td>
<td>Samuel Whittemore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Sanders, Jr., d. 1774</td>
<td>John Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epes Sargent, Jr. - lost his appointment</td>
<td>Jacob Allen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Witham</td>
<td>Daniel Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Plummer</td>
<td>Daniel Witham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samuel Plummer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William Pearson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pittsfield:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Israel Stoddard - lost his appointment</td>
<td>Charles Goodrich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodbridge Little - lost his appointment</td>
<td>Eli Root</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Williams</td>
<td>William Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timothy Childs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Simon Larned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joshua Danforth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry Van Schaaack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John C. Williams</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 17

Average Ages on First Entering Particular High Town Offices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonial Leaders</th>
<th>Concord</th>
<th>Gloucester</th>
<th>Pittsfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectmen</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>50.75</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>40.83</td>
<td>37.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revolutionary Leaders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selectmen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

essential qualifications for town leaders. Both before and after the war, town leaders worked at a variety of occupations. The high town officers in each town reflected the occupations of the townspeople. While common leaders were drawn from a variety of backgrounds, most were farmers. Some merchants and professional people can be found among them, especially in Gloucester where merchants
Almost all of the larger leaders before 1775 were farmers, but few made it their only occupation. All of colonial Concord's larger leaders, for example, were land speculators. Cumings was also a doctor and Prescott had many business interests. Both men were justices of the peace. In colonial Gloucester the nine larger leaders included four farmers, two teachers, and a doctor. Six of the men also engaged in commerce and mercantile interests ranging from small shops and fishing ships to fleets of ships engaged in international trade. Witham and Whittemore were also notaries. The frontier community of Pittsfield was led by six farmers, jacks of all trades, three of whom also served as tavern and shop keepers, two as builders, two as businessmen, three as land speculators, one as a surveyor, two as magistrates, and one as a soldier.

After the Revolution the larger leaders changed some of their occupations, but not the practice of having several sources of income. Revolutionary Concord's larger leaders included three farmers and a merchant, two of whom were artisans, and three of whom were justices of the peace. Revolutionary Gloucester was led by four merchants (one of whom was a justice of the peace), three farmers, and a teacher, who was also a notary. Revolutionary Pittsfield's larger leaders included three farmers and a lawyer. Two of them functioned as justices of the peace—one before and one after 1775.
Much as they sought regular income from a variety of sources, they also sought opportunities for investment in different ventures, and in this the Revolution brought change. The men in colonial Concord and Pittsfield turned to land speculation and lent out money at interest. Before the war, Gloucester leaders put their funds almost exclusively in commerce and shipping. After the war the larger leaders in Concord and Pittsfield shifted to investments in business ventures, while Gloucester continued to invest in the port's trade based on the fisheries, continuing trade with the continental ports of Europe, and with the West Indies, but reached beyond them to the Far East and South America to make up for the loss of the British market. Towards the end of the period the high town officers of Pittsfield and Gloucester invested in financial ventures such as banks, government securities, maritime insurance, and stocks and bonds.

Any estimate of the wealth of the town officers shares in the weakness of relying on a variety of sources. Yet it seems clear that more colonial high town officers were among the wealthiest men in town than was the case with their successors after 1775. But the evidence also indicates that close to fifty percent or more of the high town officers after 1775 were from the top quarter of the tax bracket. Gloucester was the exception to this, but most of the high town officers there were prosperous to wealthy by the time they took office, though each town had some
deacons who were less than prosperous (see Table 18). New men who appeared in office after the war shared the increased prosperity of their towns, as merchants in Concord, merchants and lawyers in Pittsfield, and as Surinam and China traders in Gloucester.

With the return of peace the town meeting minutes reflected a new sense of confidence in the elected high town officers, but town officers were still expected to carry out the public will as expressed in town meetings. After the war, as before, those high town officers who did not, were not re-elected. In the new nation, as in the old colony, Concord, Gloucester, and Pittsfield elected the same kinds of men to high town office.

The hundred and sixteen men studied here reflect the side range of background and experience among the leadership of three Massachusetts towns, but they show even stronger elements of similarity. No doubt collective biographies of the leaders of other Massachusetts towns would provide similar portraits. Descendants of families in the towns for many years, these men of middle age or older had experience in lower town offices and were usually among the top quarter of the tax payers. When they did not fit this pattern their education, service in colonial wars, local church office, or their business success provided substitute qualifications for high town office. But most
## TABLE 18

### Wealth of High Town Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Concord</th>
<th>Gloucester</th>
<th>Pittsfield</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLONIAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tax brackets:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top decile</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top quartile</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Capital:</strong></td>
<td>Money at interest land speculation</td>
<td>Commerce and shipping</td>
<td>Land speculation money at interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shops, mills and warehouses</td>
<td></td>
<td>warehouses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stock in trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>tonnage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVOLUTIONARY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tax bracket:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage in</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top decile</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top quartile</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top half</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Capital</strong></td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Commerce,shipping</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in China and</td>
<td>and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Surinam trade;</td>
<td>Banking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>banking and commercial stocks</td>
<td>and bonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shops, mills, and warehouses</td>
<td></td>
<td>shops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>wharfs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>stock in trade</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tonnage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


\(^b\)1771 Gloucester Valuation List, MSA 130: 13-35.

\(^c\)1784 Pittsfield Valuation List, Mass. State Library, 163; Sch. No. 1-8.

\(^d\)1761 Assessors List, William Williams Collection is not complete enough to provide this information.
of them, common leaders and larger leaders alike, dis­charged their private and public responsibilities day in and day out in full view of the town for many years. They served as leaders in peace, and, as they are best remem­bered, as leaders in a Revolution.
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   Pepperrell Papers, 1745

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EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Sr. Patricia Lynch, S.B.S.

Major Field: History

Title of Thesis: THE IMPACT OF THE REVOLUTION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CONCORD, GLOUCESTER, AND PITTSFIELD, 1763-1789

Approved:

[Signatures of Major Professor and Chairman, Dean of the Graduate School]

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures of committee members]

Date of Examination: February 15, 1978