

COMMITTEE OF STUDY

Character Biographies of all those who were on the Green

April 19, 1775

Submitted by Bruce Leader

Name: Solomon Peirce (sometimes listed as Pierce)

Birth: June 15, 1742 **Age on 4/19/1775:** 32

Died: October 16, 1821 in Arlington, MA -Monument erected and dedicated 1904

Burial: The Old Cemetery, Arlington, MA on the corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Pleasant Street just behind the First Parish Unitarian Church

Parents: Jonas Peirce (Born 12/20/1705, died 8/15/1776) &
Abigail Comee (Born 10/26/1707, died 1747)

Paternal Grandparents: John Peirce & Elizabeth Smith

Maternal Grandparents: John Comee & Martha Munroe

Great Grandparents: Joseph Peirce & Martha Brayton, Daniel Smith & Mary Grant, David Comey & Elizabeth Comey, William Munroe & Martha George

Gr.,Gr.-Grandparents: Anthony Peirce & Anne Peirce, Francis Brayton & Mary Brayton, Daniel Smith & Elizabeth Rogers, Christopher Grant & Sarah Grant, Alexander Mccomie & Margaret Small, Robert Munroe, John George & Elizabeth Lee

Marriages: Amity Fessenden (Born 6/15/1743, died 2/18/1811) Married on December 15,1763 in Lexington

Children: All Born in Lexington, Mass.
(Son) Peirce b: 6/22/1764 d: 6/22/1764
Amity Peirce b: 8/26/1765
Jonas Peirce b: 16 Nov 1766
Abiel Peirce b: 22 Sep 1768
Solomon Peirce b: 10 Sep 1770
Samuel Peirce b: January 24, 1773
Abijah Peirce b: before May 19, 1775
Betsey Hall Gray Peirce b: before February 2, 1777
Lucy Peirce b: before March 14, 1779
Thaddeus Peirce b: before April 15, 1781
Leonard Peirce b: before March 30, 1783
William Peirce b: before January 16 1786

Property holdings/Location: In 1764 Solomon Peirce paid his father, Jonas Peirce seventy pounds for fourteen acres of land. In 1765 he bought from B. Smith, four acres adjoining. In 1783 he bought from E. Munroe *et al* seven acres adjoining. In 1783 he bought of Jonas Peirce forty acres adjoining the fourteen acres, being the same land bought by Jonas Peirce of Joseph White in 1731. In 1783 he bought of Ezekiel Hall thirty acres adjoining the above-described fourteen, making a total of ninety-five acres.

Occupation(s): Solomon Peirce's property deeds list him as a cordwainer (or shoemaker), and he was also a farmer. In addition, he was listed in Lexington Town Records as a surveyor of highways in 1772.

Military Service: He was a member of the Lexington company and was wounded in the thigh on the green. He healed well enough to report to Cambridge to then fight at the battle of Bunker Hill on June 17 & June 18, 1775. He then served from March 4 – 8 1776 at Dorchester Heights in John Bridge's Lexington company. From August 16 to November 30, 1777 he served as a sergeant under Captain George Minott, in a Concord company under Col. Samuel Ballard's regiment. In this capacity he fought against Burgoyne in the eleventh battle of Bennington. On June 7, 1780 he was commissioned first lieutenant of Captain William Munroe's company under the command of Colonel Francis Faulkner. After the war closed, he was made captain, July 25, 1784, of this company, then made a part of the State Militia under the command of Colonel Samuel Lamson of Weston. He resigned his commission and retired from the service, April 23, 1785.

Brief Character Essay: Solomon Peirce's earliest American ancestor was John Peirce, a weaver from Norwich, England. John Peirce arrived in America in 1637 and settled in Watertown, MA. John Peirce's grandson, also named John Peirce, moved to Waltham, MA. Solomon Peirce's father, Jonas, was the son of the later John Peirce. Jonas married into the Comee family of Lexington and so raised his family in Lexington. Lexington is where Solomon and all his siblings were born. Interestingly, when Solomon's older brother, John, married and moved to Westminster, MA, Solomon's parents and many of his siblings moved to Westminster. By the time of the Revolution, Solomon was the only member of his family still residing in Lexington.

In the early hours of April 19, 1775, Solomon Peirce joined his neighbor, Captain John Parker, and friends on the Lexington Green. However, after a long wait with no sign of the Regular Troops, Capt. Parker dismissed the men for breakfast with the order that they assemble again when the alarm was sounded. Solomon Peirce joined many of the men in the Buckman Tavern. When the alarm was finally sounded, Solomon Peirce, along with the other men in the tavern, hurried out toward the green. He was still in the process of climbing over the stone wall (that bounded the Green) to join the other militiamen when the fateful first shot was fired. In the brief exchange of musket fire, Solomon was wounded in the thigh. After the Regulars quit the Lexington Green to continue their march to Concord, Solomon hobbled home where his wife, Amity, bound the wound with a bandana handkerchief. Immediately thereafter, Solomon headed back out to join the Lexington Militia in attacking the retreating Regulars.

Solomon Peirce was, for much of his life, very successful. He had acquired a comfortable eighteen acres to farm, and was a shoemaker as well. Along with his wife, Amity, he raised 11 children in Lexington in what has been described as a "mansion house" on his property. "In 1783 as recorded in the tax account he had a personal estate of 62 £, and real estate of 344 £, a not inconsiderable sum in those days."† However, in 1784, overburdened by a combination of loans for the seventy-seven acres that he purchased the prior year and the massive inflation and devaluation of the paper currency of the time, he was forced to sell his entire ninety-five acre farm with mansion house and barn to Joseph Underwood. Solomon Peirce remained in Lexington for four more years until 1788. Then he and his wife enrolled in the second precinct church in Cambridge (now Arlington) on June 15, 1788. At this time he and his wife moved in with their son, Jonas, into the so-called Amos Russell house in Arlington Heights. In 1803, Jonas bought an adjoining farm including a mansion house with a smaller house and barn. Jonas moved his mother and father into the smaller house where they both lived until their respective deaths.

†Memorial address At The Dedication of Monument To The Memory OF Capt. Solomon Peirce A Soldier Of The Revolution by Arthur W. Peirce.

Memorial address At The Dedication of Monument To The Memory OF Capt. Solomon Peirce A Soldier Of The Revolution by Arthur W. Peirce. [The Tufts College Press] 1904.

(Solomon Peirce family genealogy; containing a record of his descendants, also an Appendix containing the ancestry of Solomon Peirce and his wife Amity Fessenden by Bailey, Marietta (Peirce), 1841-1920. Arlington, Mass. [Boston, Press of G. H. Ellis co.] 1912. Pages 1 – 3

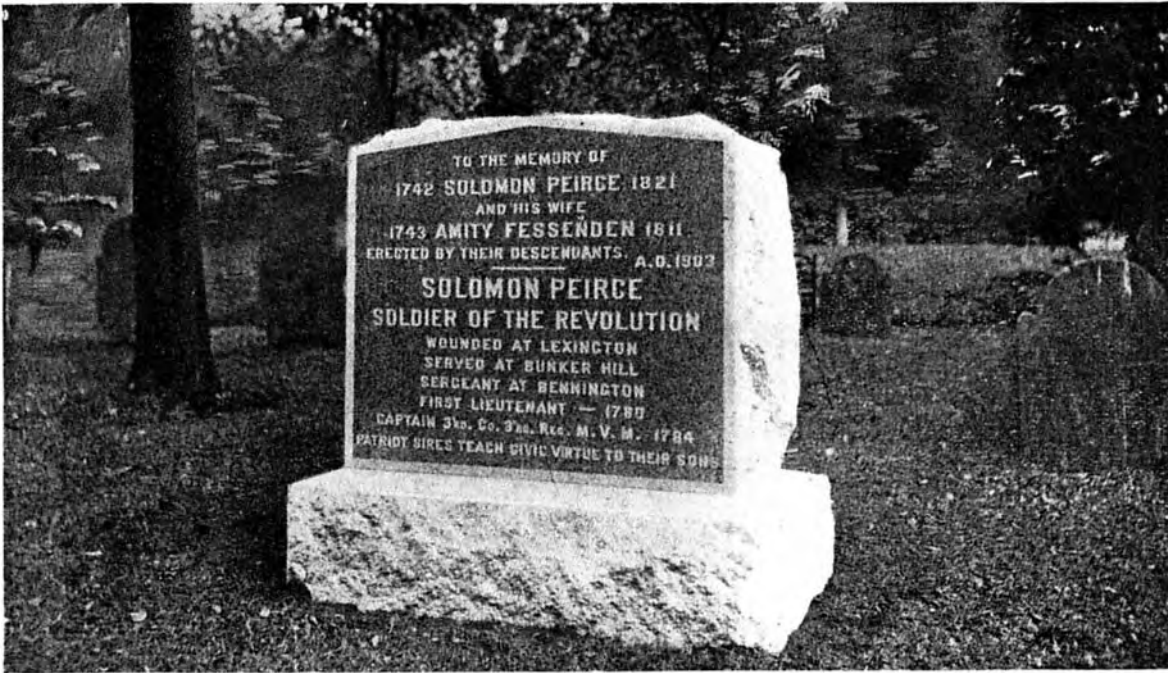
Abstract of Graves of Revolutionary Patriots, Vol.3, p. Serial: 11127; Volume: 2

Abstract of Graves of Revolutionary Patriots, Vol.3, p. Serial: 11999; Volume: 8

<http://www.ancestry.com>



House occupied by Solomon Peirce from 1788 to 1803 or later



MONUMENT ERECTED TO THE MEMORY OF SOLOMON PEIRCE AND HIS WIFE, AMITY FESSENDEN, BY THEIR DESCENDANTS IN 1903



A 2006 photograph of the Solomon and Amity Peirce Monument (shown above in 1903)