

THE WHITE COCAK DE



The Official Newsletter of the Lexington Training Band

Volume 1

Issue 2

“[That] the freeholders & other Inhabitants of the Town of Lexington will, at the utmost peril of their Lives and Fortunes, take all Legal and Constitutional measures to Defend and maintain ye person, Family, Crown and Dignity of our Said Sovereign Lord, George ye Third, and all and Singular the Rights, Liberties, privileges and Immunities Granted in said Royal Charter as well as those which are Declared to be Belonging to us as British subjects, by Birthright as all others therein Specially mentioned.”

~ Declarations and Resolves, Town of Lexington, September 21, 1768 ~

UPCOMING SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, 9/7/02 from 9 am to noon at Buckman Tavern, Lexington, MA

Tuesday, 9/17/02 from 6 pm until dark at Buckman Tavern, Lexington MA

Saturday, 10/5/02 -- Mandatory Drill. Marlborough, MA. Details to follow.

October 12/13, 2002: Battle of Saratoga, Fort Edwards, New York

MESSAGE FROM THE 1ST SERGEANT

Saratoga is a little more than a month away and the number of participants attending is still holding strong at 19. It appears the LTB will be assigned to the 4th Battalion, 2d Company under the command of Ben Carlos from the 1st Ulster. The 4th Division is composed of militia units from New England, New York and New Jersey. However, it appears that we are the only New England unit assigned to the 2d Company, as the remainder units hail from New York. Assigned with Yorkers, bah!

SONGS OF THE PERIOD

Yankee Doodle

Brother Ephraim sold his cow,
Bought him a commission,
Went up to North to Canada,
To Fight for the Nation.

*Sheep's head and vinegar,
Buttermilk and Tansy,
Boston is a Yankee Town
Sing hey doodle dandy.*

But when Ephraim he returned,
He proved an errant coward,
He wouldn't fight the FRENCHMEN there
For fear of being devoured.

Sheep's head and vinegar...

First we'll take a pinch of snuff,
Then a drink of drink of water,
And then we'll say, "How do you do",
And that's a Yanky's supper.

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Christmas is a comin' Boy's
We'll go to Mother Chase's
There we'll get a sugar dram
Sweetened with molasses

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Punk'n pie is very good,
So is Apple lantern,
If you whipped o'ft as I
You'd not have been so wanton

In this month's letter, you will find an article militia equipment, the lyrics to Yankee Doodle, often sung by New England troops at reenactments, a listing of upcoming events, photos from Southborough and much more!

We are always looking for article submissions, event reviews and comments. Please feel free to send your articles to alex.cain@state.ma.us and mass1775@aol.com.

Your Servant,

Alex Cain

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Amindab is just come Home,
His eyes all greas'd with bacon,
The only news that he could tell,
Is Cape Breton is taken

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Hey Ho! To our Cape Cod,
Hey Ho! Nantasket,
Do not let the Boston Wags,
Feel your Oyster Basket!
Sheep's head and vinegar...

Uncle is a Yankee man,
I saith he pays us all off,
And he's got a fiddle,
As big as Daddy's hog's trough

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Stand up Jonathan,
Figure in thy neighbor,
Nathen stand a little off,
And make the room some wider.

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Seth's mother went to Lynn,
To buy a pair of britches,
First time Father put them on,
He tore out all the stiches

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Yesterday I just got paid,
With Massachusetts money,
When I went to spend my pay,
It wasn't very funny.

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Met a girl from Boston town,
With hair of Golden flax sir,
When I went to meet her Pa,
He kicked me down the stair sir!

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Dolly Bushel let a fart,
Jenny Jones she found it,
Ambrose carried it to the Mill,
Where Doctor Warren ground it.

Sheep's head and vinegar...

Two and two may go to bed,
Two and Two together,
If there is not room enough,
Lie one on top of the other!
Sheep's head and vinegar...

*Special thanks to Steve Taskovics of the 4th
Middlesex for providing us with the lyrics to
this song.*

EQUIPMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS MILITIA AND MINUTE MEN IN THE 18TH CENTURY.

By Alexander R. Cain

Unlike the British counterpart, there was no uniform issuance of equipment. Militiamen of Massachusetts acquired their weapons from a variety of sources: inheritance, the French and Indian War, the Siege of Louisbourg and from willing British soldiers stationed in Boston. However, throughout the colony's history, Massachusetts towns made some attempts to bring some semblance of uniformity to its militia companies. Militia laws and resolves were passed, although often with little success. The end result was a widespread mixture of French, British and American weapons and equipment.

Below are various accounts, regulations and laws regarding the use of militia weapons and equipment.

1. "Each soldier to provide himself with a good fire arm, a steel or iron ram rod and a spring for

same, a worm, a priming wire and brush, a bayonet fitted to his gun, a scabbard and belt thereof, a cutting sword or tomahawk or hatchet, a . . . cartridge box holding fifteen rounds . . . at least, a hundred buckshot, six flints, one pound of powder, forty leaden balls fitted to the gun, a knapsack and blanket, [and] a canteen or wooden bottle to hold one quart [of water]" (Journal of Arthur Harris of the Bridgewater Coy of Militia.)

2. "A firelock, bayonet, waistbelt, a cartridge box, cartridges, and a knapsack." ("An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia", Timothy Pickering, p. 1-4.)

3. "Militia minutemen [who were to] hold themselves in readiness at a minutes warning, compleat in arms and ammunition; that is to say a good and sufficient firelock, bayonet, thirty rounds of powder and ball, pouch and knapsack." (Town of Roxbury Resolves, December 26, 1774.)

4. "The Third Bristol County Militia Regiment wanted their men to have the following at muster: "a good firearm with steel or iron ramrod, and spring to retain the same, a worm, priming wire and brush, and a bayonet fitted to his gun, a tomahawk or hatchet, a pouch containing a cartridge box that will hold fifteen rounds of cartridges at least, a hundred of buckshot, a jack knife, and tow for wadding, six flints, one pound of powder, forty leaden balls fitted to his gun, a knapsack and blanket, a canteen or wooden bottle sufficient to hold one quart." (Continental Journal and Weekly Adviser, January 22, 1778)

5. Another early company document mentions "a powderhorn, a bullet pouch to contain 40 leaden balls, a knapsack, a canteen, a firearm of good worth, a haversack, a belt, a good pair of overalls." (Boston Gazette May 26, 1777)

6. "List of Men & accouterments of Each man [illegible words] Regiment in Bristol County [Massachusetts]" from private collection. Dated 1776: "Men including officers -678, Firearms - 446, Ramrods - 129, Springs - 9, Worms - 160, Priming wires - 193, Brushes - 138, Bayonets - 175, Scabbards - 142, Belts - 181, Cutting swords & hatchets -255, Cartridge box and powder - 274, Buckshot - 10373, Jackknives -

403, Tow for men -258 flints for men - 2084,
pounds powder - 244 1/2, Bullets - 11934,
Knapsack - 365, Blankets - 386, Canteens - 295"

7. Massachusetts militia men were required to fall out with "his firelock in good repair, four pounds of lead in bullets, fitted to the bore of his piece, four flints, a cutlass or tomahawk, a good belt round his body, a canvas knapsack to hold a bushel, with a good matumpline, fitting easy across the breast and shoulders, good clothing, etc."(Source undated and unknown, but original shown to Henry Cooke by Peter Oakley in 1995.)

8. The Town of Braintree required each soldier furnish himself with "a good fire lock, bayonett, cartouch box, one pound of powder, twenty-four balls to fitt their guns, twelve flints and a knapsack." (Town of Braintree Resolves, January 23, 1775.)

9. As militiamen from the village of Lynn marched off to war on April 19, 1775, an observer noted "[one man with] a long fowling piece, without a bayonet, a horn of powder, and a seal-skin pouch, filled with bullets and buckshot. . . Here an old soldier carried a heavy Queen's arm with which he had done service at the conquest of Canada twenty years previous, while by his side walked a stripling boy with a Spanish fusee not half its weight or calibre, which his grandfather may have taken at the Havana, while not a few had old French pieces, that dated back to the reduction of Louisbourg." (History of Lynn, p. 338)

10. Massachusetts provincial soldiers were issued the following items throughout the French and Indian War: "Canteen, Wooden bottle one hoop" (Massachusetts Historical Society, Journal of the House of Representatives, vol. 35, p. 287 and 335); "Knapsacks"(Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts-Bay, p. 313); "Arms and Cartridge Boxes" ("Diary Kept at Louisbourg, 1759-1760, by Jonathan Procter of Danvers", p. 70)

11. "To be sold by John Pim of Boston, Gunsmith, at the Sign of the Cross Guns, in Anne-Street near the Draw Bridge, at very Reasonable rates, sundry choice of Arms lately arrived from London, viz. Handy Muskets, Buccaneer-Guns, Fowling Pieces, Hunting Guns, Carbines, several sorts of Pistols, Brass and Iron,

fashionable swords, &c." (Boston Newsletter, July 11, 1720)

12. "Newly imported, and sold by Samuel Miller, Gunsmith, at the Sign of the Cross Guns near the Draw-Bridge, Boston: Neat Fire Arms of all sorts, Pistols, Swords, Hangars, Cutlasses, Flasks for Horsemen, Firelocks, &c." (Boston Gazette, May 11, 1742)

13. "Every listed souldier ... shall be always provided with a well fixt firelock musket, of musket or bastard musket bore, the barrel not less then three foot and a half long, or other good firearms to the satisfaction of the commission officers of the company, a snapsack, a collar with twelve bandealers or cartouch-box, one pound of good powder, twenty bullets fit for his gun, and twelve flints, a good sword or cutlase, a worm and priming wire fit for his gun" (Mass. Militia Laws, Nov. 22, 1693.)

14. "Every soldyer Shall be well provided w'th a well fixed gun or fuse, Sword or hatchet, Snapsack, Catouch box, horne Charger & flints" (New Hampshire Militia Laws, Oct. 7, 1692.)

EVENT REVIEWS

Hartwell Tavern

To All,

Thank you for your participation in a very successful Bennington Alarm Muster Day at Hartwell Tavern! Since I don't have contacts for all who took part, if you could forward my thanks to your units, I would be most appreciative.

Particular thanks go to Sandy & Mike Spector for taking on the task feeding us all in a very New England way, to Mark Nowacki for taking charge of the drill of our militia on such short notice and handling us in a way that was both historically correct and informative to the visitors, to Steve Taskovics for setting the tone and pace with your fifeing, to the "Patriotic Ladies of Lincoln" for creating a vignette of a seldom seen activity that was part of the lives of local women, and to the Maryrose Grossman and NPS staff, especially Margie Hicks and the gentleman who's name I cannot recall, for on-site, in-costume supervision of our activities.

Perhaps one of the most enduring images though, will be the sight of Eric Chetwynd and Kimball Tarr haying in the adjacent field, a hot fatiguing activity, but one that was so much a part of the New England countryside in August of 1777 as it still is in 2002.

I hope that you found the interpretation of a 225th anniversary theme to be worth the attempt. I think that we all managed to bring the past to life in a very special way to those visitors lucky enough to see us yesterday.

I close with a quote from Rev. Enos Hitchcock, who served with the Northern Army that

tumultuous summer and fall:

"Do thou great Liberty inspire our souls & make our lives in thy possession happy or our Deaths glorious in thy just Defence."

On to Saratoga!

Your Humble & Obedient Servant,

Henry Cooke
10th Massachusetts Regiment



Southborough's 275th