

State of Feeling on the 20th of April. — Tories. — College removed to Concord. — Committees of Correspondence. — Proceedings in Relation to the Monopoly Acts. — Revolutionary Soldiers. — Table of Different Campaigns. — Public pecuniary Sacrifices. — Taxes. — Constitution Adopted.

THE events just described spread terror over the minds of some, indignation over others, and gloom over all; and predisposed them to new alarms. The death of several fellow citizens, in defence of their rights against British soldiers, was indeed a novel sight of fearful interest. The next day, April 20th, 1775, a messenger brought a report into town by way of Lincoln, that the regulars were again on their march to Concord. For a while this was believed, and the most active preparations were made for their reception, by removing the women and children from the village and concealing them in remote parts of the town [Concord], and in the woods, the men parading under arms, determined to defend themselves or perish. After a few hours the report was contradicted, and the inhabitants returned to their homes.

Meantime the patriot-soldiers were continually marching to Concord from remote towns. On the 21st, 700 of them went into the meeting-house, where prayers were offered up by the Rev. Mr. Emerson, and an address made by the Rev. Mr. Webster of Salem. In the afternoon Mr. Emerson and several others went to Cambridge. Great commotion prevailed. The next day the town [Concord] was again alarmed. The minute companies paraded and marched to Cambridge; but, finding no enemy, they returned. The Provincial Congress met here [Concord] on the 22d, and orders were given to raise an army forthwith.

These occurrences brought out the friends and opposers of liberty. Two or three individuals in town were yet inclined to toryism. It was not strange it should be so. It was a tremendous step to take up arms against the mother country; and, to say the least, the issue of the contest was doubtful. Men honestly differed in opinion as to the propriety of the measures of England, and others as to the proper course to be taken to obtain redress. Some had sworn allegiance to the king, and were afraid they should break their oath. While entertaining such opinions they did not enter warmly into the popular cause. They were, however, sure to receive the unwelcome notice of the people. One individual, who had been a selectman, was heard to say, "For myself I think I shall be neutral in these times;" and his name was immediately taken from the jury-box. The government was dictated by the force of public opinion. the town [Concord] assumed, in some respects, the authority of an individual community, — an independent republic. Its committee of correspondence met daily, and acted in a legislative, executive, and judicial capacity. All suspicious persons were brought before it for trial, and, if found guilty, were condemned. The people supported them in their decisions. The following is a copy of one of these sentences, and most remarkably shows the peculiar spirit of those times.

"We the subscribers, committee of correspondence for the town of Concord, having taken into consideration the conduct of Dr. Lee of said town of late, are fully of the opinion, that he be confined to the farm his family now lives upon; and that, if he should presume to go beyond the bounds and should be killed, his blood be upon his own head. And we recommend to the inhabitants of the town, that, upon his conducting well for the future, and keeping his bounds, they by no means molest, insult, or disturb him, in carrying on his common affairs on said farm.

Jonas Heywood,
Ephraim Wood, Jr. } Committee of
James Barrett, Jr. } Correspondence.
Joseph Hosmer,
Samuel Whitney.

"Concord, April 26, 1775."

Dr. Lee was not set at liberty until June 4, 1776. His house was fired at several times by soldiers who passed through town; and so strong was the feeling against all called tories, that he would probably have been killed, had he gone beyond his bounds. All his privileges were, however, restored to him.¹ The estate of one individual only in Concord, that of Daniel Bliss, Esq., was confiscated and sold by government.

The citizens of Boston, called by a notice published in the newspapers, held their town

1. Dr. Lee's son, Jonas, was a warm friend of liberty, and for his son's sake many were restrained from committing outrages upon him.



meeting in Concord, July 18, 1775, when they elected a representative, and transacted other town business. At this time that town was occupied by the British troops, and many of its inhabitants removed to Concord.

The Provincial Congress ordered that the probate records, "supposed to be at Mr. Danforth's and Dr. Kneeland's houses, and the other records of the county at Mr. Foxcroft's, should be removed to Dr. Minott's in Concord."

The buildings of Harvard College were occupied as barracks for the American army, while stationed at Cambridge, and the students were dispersed. The college was removed to Concord, and commenced its operations on the first of October, 1775. President Langdon lived at Dr. Minott's (now [1835] the Middlesex Hotel); Professor Sewall lived at James Jones's; Professor Wigglesworth at the Bates place on the Bedford road; and Professor Winthrop at Darius Merriam's, near which was the library and philosophical apparatus; and other officers in different parts of the town. Twelve of the students boarded in the house now [1835] owned by Joseph Barrett, Esq. and others in many different places. The recitations were at the court-house and meeting-house. Prayers were attended at the latter place. The following proceedings of the government of the college were communicated to the town when it was about to be removed to Cambridge.

"Concord, June 12, 1776. At a meeting of the President, Professors, and Tutors of Harvard College, voted, that the following address of thanks be presented by the president to the selectmen, the gentlemen of the committee, and other gentlemen and inhabitants of the town of Concord, who have favored the college with their encouragement and assistance, in its removal to this town, by providing accommodations.

"Gentlemen, — The assistance you have afforded us in obtaining accommodations for this society here [Concord], when Cambridge was filled with the glorious army of freemen, which was assembled to hazard their lives in their country's cause, and our removal from thence became necessary, demands our grateful acknowledgments.

"We have observed with pleasure the many tokens of your friendship to the college; and particularly to thank you for the use of your public buildings. We hope the scholars while here [Concord] have not dishonored themselves and the society by any incivilities or indecencies of behaviour, or that you will readily forgive any errors which may be attributed to the inadvertence of youth.

"May God reward you with all his blessings, grant us a quiet re-settlement in our ancient seat to which we are now returning, preserve America from slavery, and establish and continue religion, learning, liberty, peace, and the happiest government in these American colonies to the end of the world.

SAMUEL LANGDON, President [of Harvard College].

Per order."

The committee of correspondence, etc., chosen March, 1776, were John Cuming, Esq., Ephraim Wood, Jr., Esq., Captain Jonas Heywood, Captain Joseph Hosmer, James Barrett, Esq., Captain David Brown, and Captain George Minott. In 1777, Colonel John Buttrick, Josiah Merriam, Isaac Hubbard, Captain Abishai Brown, Captain David Wheeler, Mr. Ephraim Potter, and Lieutenant Nathan Stow. In 1778, John Cuming, Esq., Colonel John Buttrick, Ephraim Wood, Jr., Esq., Jonas Heywood, Esq., James Barrett, Esq., Captain David Brown, and Mr. Josiah Merriam. These were re-elected in 1779, 1780, 1781 & 1782. In 1783, James Barrett, Esq., Jonas Heywood, Esq., Ephraim Wood, Jr., Esq., Captain David Wood, and Lieutenant Joseph Hayward. This committee was not chosen afterwards.

A convention of about 100 members of committees of correspondence from 32 towns in the county, called by the members in Concord, was held here August 20, 1776, and passed some spirited resolutions in relation to the duties of committees and guarding against any efforts of the enemies of liberty. Ephraim Wood, Jonas Heywood and James Barrett, Esquires, were chosen a county committee to call other meetings.

Efforts were often made during the revolution to regulate the prices of labor and merchandise. In 1777, a committee, chosen by the town [Concord] for the purpose, reported the prices of



various kinds of “common labor, carpenters’, cordwainers’, blacksmiths’ women’s labor, firewood, charcoal, live swine, horse-hire, chaise-hire, upper leather, saddlery, entertainment at public houses, flax, spirits, milk, clothiers’ work,” &c. &c. All who varied from the established prices were prosecuted and treated as enemies. Colonel John Buttrick was chosen to collect evidence against such as might be brought to trial. It does not appear, however, that any prosecutions took place in Concord.

A state convention met in Concord, July 14, 1779. The delegates from this town were John Cuming, Esq., Jonas Heywood, Esq., James Barrett, Esq., Colonel John Buttrick, Ephraim Wood, Jr., Esq., Captain David Brown, and Mr. Josiah Merriam; from Bedford, Mr. John Merriam; from Acton, Captain Joseph Robbins, Mr. Seth Brooks, and Mr. Thomas Noyes; and from Lincoln, Capt. Samuel Farrar, and Abijah Pierce, Esq. The whole number was 174. The object of this convention was to establish a state price-current, and to adopt other means to prevent monopoly, extortion, and unfair dealing. The meeting was opened and closed with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Ripley. The Hon. Azor Orne, of Marblehead, was Chairman, and Samuel Ruggles, Secretary. After passing some very spirited resolutions, fixing the prices of several articles of merchandise and agreeing upon an address to the people, the convention adjourned on the 17th, recommending another similar one to meet again in October.

Their proceedings were laid before the town [Concord], July 30th, when they were approved, and a committee of thirteen chosen, “more fully to regulate the prices of articles of produce among us.” This committee reported, August 9th, when another, of six, was chosen, in conjunction with the committee of correspondence, “to keep a watchful eye over the people, and proceed against any who should *dare transgress* the regulated prices of articles enumerated, either in or out of town, by taking more than they are set in the report; and to treat them as enemies to their country.” The town voted also “to support their committee in every regular method they shall take to punish those that violate them.”

Another convention, having similar objects in view, of delegates from Concord, Billerica, Lexington, Westford, Stow, Bedford, Acton, and Lincoln, was held here [Concord], August 5th, which revised previous price-currents, and endeavored to make one which should be uniform through the towns represented. John Cuming, Esq., was Chairman, and Ephraim Wood, Jr., Secretary.

A state convention met in Concord again, October 6th, and continued in session seven days. Colonel Cuming and Captain David Brown were delegates from Concord. A revised edition of the state price-current, several new spirited resolutions, relating to trade, currency, etc., and an address to the people, were adopted and published. County, town, and district meetings were recommended to carry these resolutions into effect. They were laid before this town [Concord], November 1st, and a committee of fourteen chosen, to fix the prices of such articles as were not therein enumerated. They reported, the next week, “that, as the regulations agreed upon by the late convention had been broken over by the inhabitants of Boston and many other places, they thought it not proper to proceed in the business assigned them, but to postpone the matter.” Thus ended the proceedings relating to this difficult subject. It was indeed a fruitless attempt to enforce a system of uniform prices of merchandise, while the currency was constantly depreciating in value. And it is believed, that the attempts just noticed were means to increase private property, more than to promote the public good. The value of money was regulated monthly. January 1, 1777, \$100 in silver was worth \$105 currency; in 1778, \$328; in 1779, \$742; in 1780, \$2934; and in February, 1781, \$7500. Such a rapid depreciation introduced great embarrassment and distress into all commercial transactions, which by no body of men could remove by resolutions, addresses, price-currents, or prosecutions.

The number of men furnished by Concord for actual service in the war of the revolution was very great in proportion to her population; but how great cannot now [1835] be fully estimated. From the commencement of the war till May, 1778, unless voluntary enlistments could be procured, the militia officers were called upon to make drafts. These drafts were often made on the property, and sometimes included females and persons ordinarily exempted from military duty, who were obliged to hire a man. These were hired in or out of town, as was most convenient. From this time the town [Concord] by its committees, or in classes, procured men. On the 10th of May, 1777, the 9th of December, 1778 and the 4th of April, 1780, estimates were made by the town [Concord] of the “several services done in the war, 3 years’ men



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excepted, by the town, classes, or individuals," and an average of the same made and assessed upon the inhabitants, and called average or war taxes. The amount of the first average was £2161 0s. 3*d*; the 2d, £5192; and the 3d (in silver), £1295. 4s. 11*d*. The following table, compiled with labor and care from these estimates and other authentic sources of information, exhibits, though imperfectly, the number of men from Concord, the date of the resolve of the Council, or General Court, when they were required, at what place they were employed, and the bounties paid by the town. In this abstract are not included many who enlisted voluntarily, or marched on a sudden alarm for a short period, or were procured in classes, or where it is doubtful to what campaign they belonged. This would swell the list very much. In some instances, they were not exclusively stationed as mentioned in the table, but marched to other places.

	When required.	Men.	Time.	Where employed.	Bounty.	Amount.
1	Jan. 1, 1775	100		Minute Men.		£58
2	April 20, 1775	56	8 mo.	Cambridge.	£5½—	308
3	Dec. 1, 1775	18	2 mo.	Cambridge.	1½	27
4	Jan. 20, 1776	36	2 mo.	Cambridge.	1 ⁴ / ₅	63 ⁴ / ₅
5	March 1, 1776	145	10 dys.	Dorchester Heights.		
6	April 9, 1776	31	9 mo.	Near Boston.		55 ⁴ / ₅
7	June, 1776	19	12 mo.	New York.	10	190
8	June 25, 1776	48	6 mo.	Ticonderoga.	9	432
9	Sept. 12, 1776	23	3 mo.	White Plains.	8	184
10	Sept. 12, 1776	7		Dorchester.		
11	Nov. 21, 1776	34	3 mo.	New York.	10	340
12	Dec. 1, 1776	8		Boston.		
13	Dec. 1776	6		Rhode Island.		
14	Jan. 26, 1777	44	3 yrs.	Continental Army.	20	880
15	April 12, 1777	11		Rhode Island.	6	66
16	April 30, 1777	5	6 mo.	Continental Army.	8	40
17	July, 1777	29		Rhode Island.	10	290
18	Aug. 9, 1777	16	5 mo.	Northward.	35	560
19	Sept. 22, 1777	46	41 dys.	Taking of Burgoyne.	16	640
20	Nov. 28, 1777	23	5 mo.	Guard at Cambridge.	9	207
21	Mar. 3, 1778	22	3 mo.	Guard at Cambridge.	10	220
22	April 12, 1778	11		Rhode Island.	18	198
23	April 20, 1778	10	9 mo.	Continental Army.	130	1300



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	When required.	Men.	Time.	Where employed.	Bounty.	Amount.
24	April 20, 1778	9	8 mo.	Guard at North River.	100	900
25	June 23, 1778	8	6 mo.	Guard at Cambridge.	15	120
26	June 27, 1778	26	6 wks.	Rhode Island.	30	780
27	Sept. 6, 1778	7	4 mo.	Rhode Island.	73½	514½
28	Sept. 19, 1778	46		To march to Boston.	\$3	\$138
29	April 27, 1779	5	6 wks.	Rhode Island.		
30	June 8, 1779	8	9 mo.	Rhode Island. } Continen- tal Army.		3248
31	June 8, 1779	4	6 mo.			
32	Aug. 9, 1779	9		Rhode Island.		
33	Sept., 1779	4		Works at Boston.	12	48
34	Sept. 1, 1779	20	2 mo.	Rhode Island.		
35	June 5, 1780	19	6 mo.	Continental Army.	1000	16000
36	June 22, 1780	19	3 mo.	Rhode Island.		17090
37	Dec. 2, 1780	16	3 yrs.	Continental Army	Hired in Classes.	
38	Dec. 28, 1780	10	9 mo.	Cont. Army at Fishkill		
39	June 15, 1781	3	5 mo.	Rhode Island		
40	June 30, 1781	14	4 mo.	Continental Army.		
41	Mar 1, 1782		3 yrs.	Continental Army	Hired in Classes.	

Some particulars respecting each of these campaigns will be given in the Appendix.

The pecuniary sacrifices made by Concord on account of the revolution were also very great; but how great, it is impossible fully to estimate. I have gathered the following facts on the subject.

Whilst Boston was occupied with the British troops, in 1775, the poor endured great sufferings. In January and February £70 in money, 225 bushels of grain, and a quantity of meat and wood were, at difference times, contributed by Concord for their relief. May 1st, the provincial Congress ordered that they should be supported by the country towns; 66 were assigned to Concord, 32 to Acton, 29 to Bedford, and 29 to Lincoln. It appears, however, that 21 families, containing 82 persons, were supported here [Concord]. £80 was paid for them between May 13th and October. In the winter of 1775 and 1776, the town [Concord] carried to Cambridge, for the use of the Army, 210 cords of wood, 5 tons of hay, and some other articles, for which it paid £150. In July, 1775, the town [Concord] was required to furnish "37 pairs of shirts, breeches, and stockings, and 75 coats." In January, 1776, Concord provided 20 blankets, Bedford 12, Acton 10, and Lincoln 14. In November, 1777, and at several other times, the town [Concord] voted to provide for the families of those engaged in the continental army. £1214 was paid for this purpose before September, 1779. The town [Concord] voted, in March, 1778, to procure at an expense of £285, "shirts, shoes, and stockings, equal to the number of soldiers in the continental army, or the seventh part of the male inhabitants of the town [Concord] over 16 years of age;" 60 were assigned to Concord, 19 to Bedford, 28 to Acton, and 28 to Lincoln.



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Captain Joseph Hosmer was the receiver for the whole county. From October, 1780, to the July following, 42,779 lbs. of beef were furnished by the town [Concord] for the army. Every aid, whether in men, money, clothing, or provisions, required for the public service during the war, was readily furnished.

As a specimen of the enormous expenses of the town at this period, I select, from its records, the taxes actually assessed and collected during 1780 and 1781. In 1779, the taxes amounted in silver, to \$6,281.88; in 1782 to \$9,544.98 and in 1783 to \$5,208.69. When it is remembered that the town [Concord] then contained about 1300 inhabitants only, their sacrifices will appear still greater. The annual taxes, principally for the public benefit, were then double what they have been for some time past with a population more than one third greater. The currency having been fluctuating, I have reduced the several sums to their real value in silver at the time they were assessed, according to the authorized tables of depreciation.

When assessed.	For what object.	Currency.	In Silver.
Feb. 2, 1780	Continental tax.	£12,433 4s. 0d.	=\$1,412 54
April 4, 1780	3d town "average or war tax."	1,295 4s. 11d.	115 56
April 22, 1780	Half of minister's salary.	3,438 15s. 0d.	286 56
April 22, 1780	Highway tax.	1,800 0s. 0d.	150 00
June 14, 1780	To hire continental soldiers.	16,921 12s. 6d.	818 92
June 30, 1780	To pay drafted militia.	17,090 5s. 6d.	837 75
July 14, 1780	State tax to call in bills of credit.	26,852 18s. 0d.	1,297 24
Sept. 2, 1780	State tax to call in bills of credit in silver.	346 18s. 0d.	1,156 33
Oct. 25, 1780	To purchase 11,520 lbs of beef.	18,731 2s. 0d.	879 39
Oct. 25, 1780	County tax.	1,158 10s. 0d.	54 39
Oct. 25, 1780	Town charges.	15,495 11s. 0d.	727 49
Dec. 21, 1780	To hire soldiers for 6 and 3 months.	40,801 3s. 0d.	1,837 89
Dec. 21, 1780	Half of the minister's salary.	7,101 3s. 0d.	319 81
Dec. 28, 1780	State tax to call in bills of credit.	26,880 0s. 0d.	1,210 81
Total amount of the assessments in 1780			11,104 68
March 1, 1781	To purchase 22,125 lbs. of beef.	33,259 8s. 0d.	1,478 19
July, 1781	State tax to be paid in silver.	692 2s. 9d.	2,307 12
	To pay town debts.	229 10s. 8d.	765 12
Sept. 15, 1781	Half of the minister's salary.	85 9s. 2d.	268 20
Sept. 18, 1781	To purchase clothing for soldiers.	57 10s. 9d.	191 79
Nov., 1781	To purchase beef.	216 0s. 1d.	720 01
Dec. 30, 1781	Continental tax.	1,369 9s. 9d.	4,564 96



When assessed.	For what object.	Currency.	In Silver.
Total amount of the assessments in 1781			\$10,295 39

In addition to these oppressive taxes, large sums were raised in classes to hire soldiers, and by individuals who were drafted and compelled to go into actual service, or hire a substitute. It is as impossible to estimate the exact amount paid by the citizens of Concord to purchase our independence, as it is too much to admire their exalted patriotism.

On the first of October, 1776, the town [Concord] was called upon to act on the question, "whether it would give its consent that the House of Representatives with the Council should enact a constitution or form of government for this state." The subject was referred to a committee, consisting of Ephraim Wood, Jr., Nathan Bond, Colonel James Barrett, Colonel John Buttrick, and James Barrett, Esq., who reported the following resolves, which were unanimously accepted by the town [Concord].

"Resolved, 1. That this state being at present destitute of a properly established form of government, it is absolutely necessary that one should be immediately formed and established.

"2. That the supreme legislature, in their proper capacity, are by no means a body proper to form and establish a constitution or form of government, for reasons following, viz. 1. Because we conceive that a constitution, in its proper sense, intends a system of principles established to secure the subject in the possession and enjoyment of the rights and privileges against any encroachment of the governing party. 2. Because the same body that forms a constitution have of consequence a power to alter it. 3. Because a constitution alterable by the supreme legislature is no security at all to the subject against the encroachments of the governing party or any or all their rights and privileges.

"3. That it appears to this town highly expedient, that a convention or congress be immediately chosen to form and establish a constitution, by the inhabitants of the respective towns in the state, being free and twenty-one years of age and upwards, in proportion as the representatives of the state were formerly chosen: the convention or congress not to consist of a greater number, than the House of Assembly in this state heretofore might consist of, except that each town and district shall have liberty to send one representative or otherwise, as shall appear meet to the inhabitants of this state in general.

"4. that when the convention or congress have formed a constitution, they adjourn for a short time, and publish their proposed constitution for the inspection and remarks of the people of the state.

"5. That the House of Assembly of this state be desired to recommend to the inhabitants to proceed to choose a convention or congress, for the purpose above mentioned, as soon as possible."

Notwithstanding these wholesome instructions, a constitution was made by the General Court and sent to this town; but it refused, June 15, 1778, unanimously, by 111 votes, to accept it for reasons above mentioned.

A convention to which John Cuming and Ephraim Wood, Jr., Esqrs. were delegates from Concord, met in Cambridge in the fall of 1779, and formed a constitution, which was submitted to the town [Concord], May 27, 1780. The bill of rights was approved with the following exceptions: The 2d article had 2 votes against it; the 3d, 8; the 9th, 3; and to the 29th, one desired to add the words, "no longer." The 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, and 6th chapters were unanimously adopted with the following exceptions. The 1st and 2d article of the 2d section 1st chapter, had 3 votes against it; the 8th article in the same section, 8; the 3d and 6th articles of the 3d section, in the same chapter, had 1 vote each against them. The 2d article, 1st section, 2d chapter, was proposed to be amended by inserting the word, "Protestant"; and the 13th of the same section,



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by having the “salary of the governor,” &c., stated yearly. The word “Protestant” was also proposed to be inserted in the 1st article in the 6th chapter.² The first town meeting under the new constitution was held, August 23, 1780, when 121 votes were given for governor, all for John Hancock.

TO CONTINUE READING:

CHAPTER IX. — State of Feeling subsequent to the Revolution. — Proceedings of the County and of the Town. — Mr. Avery's Letter. — Armed Men assemble at Concord. — Courts stopped. — Notice of the Insurgents. — Proceedings of the Town. — The War of 1812. — County Courts and Shire Towns regulated. — Proceedings of the Town on this Subject.

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2. The votes on the constitution, as revised, in 1820, were as follows: The first article 46 yeas and 77 nays; the 2d, 46 yeas, 81 nays; the 3d, 76 yeas, 49 nays; the 4th, 59 yeas, 68 nays; the 5th, 55 yeas, 72 nays; the 6th, 78 yeas, 50 nays; the 7th, 69 yeas, 58 nays; the 8th, 67 yeas, 60 nays; the 9th, 62 yeas, 65 nays; the 10th, 58 yeas, 68 nays; the 11th, 78 yeas, 48 nays; the 12th, 68 yeas, 58 nays; the 13th, 81 yeas; 44 nays; and the 14th, 49 yeas, 69 nays.