

Thomas Hadley Jr.
A Brief Biography
By Bill Poole

Thomas Hadley, the subject of this essay, was the Grandson of **Benjamin Hadley** who married in Watertown, MA on September 27, 1711, Mehetable Applin, born in Watertown on April 7, 1688, daughter of John and Bethshua Bartlett Applin. Benjamin was recorded as being from Lancaster, MA. They resided in Watertown for the births of their first two children, but moved to Groton, MA by 1715 where their other children were born.¹

Benjamin and Mehetabel had ten children that Mehetabel bore from age 24 through age 42. She died in Groton on April 13, 1745 aged 57. Their children were: 1. **Thomas Sr. the father of Thomas**, born August 11, 1712 in Watertown, MA; 2. **Sarah**, born November 22, 1713 in Watertown, died August 3, 1731 in Groton, aged 17; 3. **Benjamin**, born July 25, 1715 in Groton; 4. **Mehitabel**, born February 14, 1716/17 in Groton; 5. **John**, born September 28, 1719 in Groton; 6. **Phebe**, born September 25, 1721 in Groton; 7. **Simon**, born March 20, 1723 in Groton; 8. **Hannah**, born February 18, 1725 in Groton; 9. **Ebenezer III**, born November 8, 1727 in Groton baptized May 5, 1734, died Brattleboro VT 1815; and 10. **Ann**, born April 9, 1730 in Groton, baptized May 5, 1734².

Although Mehetabel is recorded as having died in Groton, "Find A Grave" does not have her tombstone recorded. Benjamin lies buried in the Meeting House Hill Cemetery in Brattleboro, VT. He apparently went there to live with his son, Ebenezer, who along with his wife Abigail Spaulding Hadley are buried in Brattleboro's Locust Ridge Cemetery.³



"In Memory of Mr. Benjamin Hadley who died Mch. 24th, 1776 in the 92nd year of his age."

Thomas Hadley Sr father of Thomas

Thomas Sr. married on April 15, 1741 in Lexington, **Ruth Lawrence**, born in Lexington January 21, 1725/6 , daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth, maiden name unknown. died in Lexington, May 26, 1819, aged 94. Thomas Sr. and Ruth had 12 children: 1. **Elizabeth**, born May 11, 1742; 2. **Thomas**, born July 3, 1744, died in infancy; 3. **Samuel**, born July 9, 1746, killed at Battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775, aged 28; 4. **Ruth**, born March 12, 1749, died in infancy; 5. **Ebenezer**, born May 6, 1751; 6. **Thomas, the subject of this essay**, born July 8, 1754; 7. **Benjamin**, born July 25, 1756; 8. **Ruth**, born June 1, 1759; 9. **Simon**, born July 26, 1761; 10. **Sarah**, born November 26, 1764; 11. **Mary**, born March 20, 1767; and **John**, born August 6, 1770.⁴

Ruth had her first child when she was 16 or 17 and her last when she was 44 or 45, yet she lived to age 94, surviving Thomas Sr. who died on July 15, 1788 at age 76. Their graves have not yet been located.⁵

Thomas Hadley the subject of this essay, married in Bedford, MA on September 16, 1773 Alice Newton, born in Bedford, MA on June 6, 1755, daughter of Simon and Amity Fassett Newton.⁶ Thus, as a fairly recently married twenty-year old, Thomas stood on Lexington Common early on the morning of April 19, 1775 along with his older brother, Samuel.

As the British Regulars swung up the Concord Road (Massachusetts Avenue) and wheeled onto the Common, the apprehension among Captain Parker's militia company must have been palpable. The clashing of steel as the Regulars fixed bayonets and shouted imprecations at the wavering militia gave little time for calm thinking or reflection. There followed a single shot, followed by a scattered British volley and then by a second crushing volley that left militiamen writhing in their death throes or fleeing as quickly as their wounds would allow. The unwounded mostly fled, but some attempted to stand firm only to become casualties themselves.

Staggering off the Common mortally wounded, was twenty-eight year old Samuel Hadley. Was Thomas standing beside his brother as Samuel received his death wound? Did he see him fall, never to rise? Or, were they separated in the formation, and he did not learn of Samuel's death until the brief action ended and the British marched off for Concord?

If he did not see Samuel fall, Thomas had to endure the agony of finding him, perhaps even watching as his brother took his last breath. What we do know is that Thomas would have had to watch as the dead were placed in rough-hewn wooden coffins, placed in the Lexington Meeting House for a brief ceremony and then hurriedly buried at the rear of the Old Burying Ground in a common grave that was covered with branches for fear that the returning Regulars might find and desecrate the grave.⁷

Thomas Sr. and Ruth, suffering from the loss of their eldest son, then had to watch their next three sons, twenty-three year old Ebenezer, twenty year old Thomas and nineteen year old Benjamin march off to war. Each joined the Continental army and served for three years or more. The following is the extensive entry for Thomas's service during the war, taken from *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War*.⁸

HADLEY, THOMAS, Lexington. Capt. John Wood's co.; list of men who took the oath in Middlesex co., May 27, 1775, required by Congress to be taken by the Mass. army.

HADLEY, THOMAS, Lexington. Corporal, Capt. John Wood's (5th) co., Lieut. Col. Loammi Baldwin's (late Col. Gerrish's) 38th (also given 37th) regt.; muster roll dated Aug. 1, 1775; enlisted May 4, 1775; service 2 mos. 29 days; *also*, receipt for wages or Sept., 1775, dartsed Chelsea; *also*, company return [probably Oct., 1775]; *also*, receipt for bounty coat or its equivalent in money dated Medford, Dec. 28, 1775; *also*, list endorsed "Medford Dec'br 22, 1775," of men in Capt. John Wood's co. who declined to serve the month of Jan. [1776]; *also*, same co.; account dated

Chelsea, Dec. 31, 1775, of the appraisement made by appraisers appointed by Col. Baldwin, of guns taken for public use from men belonging to the 38th regt. (old army) who left the service Dec. 31, 1775, and who had been stationed at Chelsea and Medford; *also* receipt dated Chelsea, Feb. 3, 1775, signed by said Hadley and others, for money received of Col. Loammi Baldwin “for Guns Stopt & Priz’d by the Committee on the 31st Day of Decem last agreeable to General Orders I the 26th Regt”; *also*, list of men who guarded the cannon at Lexington and thence to Cambridge; warrant for pay allowed in Council April 26, 1776; *also*, Corporal, Capt. Edmund Munroe’s co., Col. Timothy Bigelow’s regt. Continental Army pay accounts for service from **May 1, 1777, to Dec. 31, 1779**; residence, Lexington; credited to town of Lexington; *also*, (late) Capt. Munroe’s co., Col. Bigelow’s regt.; pay rolls for Feb. – April 1779, dated Providence; **enlistment 3 years**; *also*, Sergeant, Capt. Houden’s co., Col. Bigelow’s regt.; Continental Army pay accounts for service from Jan. 1, 1780, to Dec. 31, 1780; *also*, descriptive list dated West Point., Jan. 10, 1781; Capt. Smith’s co., Col. Rufus Putnam’s (5th) regt.; rank, Sergeant; age 25 yrs. 5 mos.; stature, 5 ft. 5 1/2 in.; complexion, dark; hair, dark; eyes, gray; residence Lexington; enlisted **Dec. 21, 1779**, by Capt. Bigelow; **enlistment, during war**; company joined from 15th Mass. regt.; *also*, Sergeant, Capt. Sylvanus Smith’s co., Col. Rufus Putnam’s (5th) regt. muster rolls for Jan. – May, 1781. Dated West Point; *also*, muster roll for June and July, 1781, dated Camp near Dobb’s Ferry; *also*, muster roll for August, 1781, dated Camp Peekskill; reported on duty with Col. Scammel; *also*, muster roll for Sept. 1781; *also*, muster roll for Oct. and Nov., 1781, dated Garrison at West Point; reported on command with Col. Scammel; *also*, muster rolls for Dec., 1781, and Jan., 1782, dated West Point; *also* muster roll for Feb. 1782; reported on command at “Head of Elk;” *also*, muster roll for March, 1782.

Thomas joined as a Corporal with the forces besieging Boston and served through the end of December, 1775 when the army underwent a reorganization. He then left and returned home, serving briefly with the militia in the spring of 1776 helping to guard artillery being transported to Cambridge. Then in May, 1777 he enlisted for three years in Colonel Timothy Bigelow’s 15th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army. The 15th took part in the Battles at Saratoga September 19 to October 7, 1777, spent the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, fought in the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, and then was at the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1778.⁹

The 15th wintered in Providence, Rhode Island 1778-79 and remained there through April, 1779. He remained with the regiment until December 21, 1779 when he transferred from the 15th Massachusetts to Colonel Rufus Putnam’s 5th Massachusetts Regiment, signing on for the duration of the war. Throughout 1780 and until at least July, 1781 the 5th was stationed in the Hudson Highlands, close to the hamlet of Tappan, NY, West Point and vicinity, near Peekskill, NY and Dobbs Ferry.¹⁰

The entry “muster roll for August, 1781 reported on command with Col. Scammel,” meant that he was on his way to the south, for Colonel Alexander Scammel was given command of a detachment of Light Infantry drawn from several Massachusetts regiments to take part in the Siege of Yorktown. I do not know if Thomas was at the siege, but the last entry for March, 1782, “reported on command at Head of Elk,” meant that he had marched with Colonel Scammel whose troops had embarked at Head of Elk, Maryland at the northern end of Chesapeake Bay and been transported to Virginia for the overland march to Yorktown.¹¹

That is the last entry for Thomas. It is uncertain if he died in the service. Charles Hudson, in his *History of Lexington*, reports simply that he died about 1784.¹² Alice married on February 21, 1785, Samuel Merriam of Bedford. Charles Hudson recorded that she “was married ‘in a borrowed suit of clothes.’ Old English custom preventing the groom from acquiring rights in her estate derived from her former husband.”¹³

Thomas and Alice that three children all baptized in Lexington on September 13, 1778—**Amity, Alice and Calley**. Alice and Samuel Merriam had seven children, all born in Bedford.¹⁴

Footnotes

¹Vital Records of Watertown, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Watertown/>; Cronkite, Larry 1998 Some Branches of the Hadley Family Tree at <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/http://www.people.ku.edu/~art/HadleyBranches.pdf>

²*Ibid.*; Vital Records of Groton, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Groton/>

³<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/182407/meeting-house-hill-cemetery> and <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/104100/locust-ridge-cemetery>

⁴Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the End of the Year 1897 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/>

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷ Letter of Elizabeth Clarke, daughter of Reverend Jonas Clarke, written to her niece, Lucy Ware Allen on April 20, 1835, describing the events of April 19, 1775 and the burial of the victims, collection of the Lexington Historical Society.

⁸ Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War, A compilation from the Archives Prepared and Published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Accordance with Chapter 100, Resolves of 1891, Boston, Wright & Potter, 1896-1908, Volume 7, pp. 19-21

⁹ Timothy Bigelow (soldier) at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_Bigelow_\(soldier\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timothy_Bigelow_(soldier)); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/15th_Massachusetts_Regiment

¹⁰ Lesser, Charles H., *The Sinews of Independence Monthly Strength Reports of the Continental Army* Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1976.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 208; Morrisey, Brendon, *Yorktown, The World Turned Upside Down*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 1997, p. 49.

¹²Hudson, Charles, *History of the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts from Its First Settlement to 1868, Revised and Continued to 1912*, Two Volumes, Lexington Historical Society, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1913, Volume II, *Genealogy*, p. 258.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴Vital Records of Lexington, MA, *op. cit.* p. 259; Vital Records of Bedford, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Bedford/>