



The Lexington Minute Men Committee of Study

Character Biography – Nathaniel Mulliken

Birth – March 30, 1752 (Lexington, Mass.)

Age on April 19, 1775 – 23 yrs old

Died – February 6, 1776

Grave Location – Old Burying Ground (D-37)

Parents – Nathaniel & Lydia (Stone)

Grandparents – John & Mary (Poore) Mulliken
John & Mary (Reed) Stone

G. Grandparents – Robert & Rebecca Mulliken

Siblings – Lydia, John, Samuel, Mary, Rebeckah, Joseph

Marriage – Unmarried

Children – None

Will/Probate Record – None

Occupation – *Clock Maker*, Nathaniel took over family clock business upon his father's death in 1767.

Property Holdings – Clock Making Shop that was burned to the ground by the British in retaliation for Lexington's resistance on April 19th. Nathaniel's widowed mother, Lydia, owned a house that was burned by the British upon their retreat through Lexington back to Boston. The residence was rebuilt and still exists at 1361 Mass. Ave today.

Military Service – "Corporal in detachment from Lexington Militia Co. commanded by Capt. John Bridge, service 5 days, detachment reported on command at Cambridge from May 11 to May 15, 1775, by order of the Committee of Safety" *

Character Essay – Nathaniel Mulliken died at the age of 24 in 1776. Despite passing away so young, Nathaniel's name will be forever emblazoned in the chronicles of American history. Although born in Lexington himself, Nathaniel's father's family came from the Newburyport-Rowley area of Essex County Massachusetts. Before finding their way to Essex County, the Mulliken family originally hailed from Scotland.



In the business of making and selling his clocks, Nathaniel's father found himself in Lexington where he met John Stone. Later, at the house of John Stone, he met Mr. Stone's daughter, Lydia, and they were married in 1751. With his new wife, Nathaniel senior settled in Lexington around that time and there set up his clock making business. The first of Nathaniel and Lydia's seven children was born in 1752. He was given the father's name, Nathaniel. In 1767 Nathaniel senior passed away leaving young Nathaniel in charge of the family's clock making business. It is said that in 1769, a Nathaniel Mulliken 8-day clock was sold to a tavern keeper down the street named John Buckman. The clock still exists and is displayed in the Concord, MA Museum.

In April of 1775, those two names, Mulliken and Buckman (Buckman's Tavern) would find themselves at the forefront of world history. A young nation was about to be born in the humble settings of a small town situated between Boston and the powder stored in the nearby town of Concord. Perhaps due to fear, perhaps due to common sense, when young Nathaniel

* Source – *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors*

** Source – *The Lexington Minute Men Oath*

stood on Lexington Common that early morning of April 19, 1775, he uttered words that have been captured in the history books for future generations. As he stared at the ever increasing ranks of the world's most powerful army marching toward him and his fellow seventy-seven militiamen, he shouted: "THERE ARE SO FEW OF US. IT IS FOLLY TO STAND HERE!"

Although facing a force of His Majesty's troops numbering well over 700, Nathaniel's fellow militiamen helped him stand firm until orders were given by Captain Parker to "quit the field!" Later that day, during their bloody retreat back to Boston, the British set fire to two Mulliken properties as they hastily made their way back through Lexington. The Mulliken Clock Making Shop and the Mulliken House were both damaged for an amount totaling £431 which included £128 for the house and clock making shop and an additional £303 for "other valuables". Of the £1,761 of losses claimed in Lexington, almost one quarter of the town's total losses were realized by the Mulliken family alone. The family would rebuild the house, and later in the nineteenth century, James S. Munroe purchased the house and moved it across the street on Mass Ave. to a parcel of property owned by the Munroe family.

On April 25, 1775, Nathaniel along with 33 other fellow militiamen gave sworn depositions concerning what they had observed nearly one week earlier on Lexington Common. Another Mulliken was in small part tied to the events of April 19 as well. Nathaniel's sister, Lydia, was being courted by Dr. Samuel Prescott, who after leaving the Mulliken's to return to his home in Concord was recruited by Paul Revere and William Dawes to spread news of the Regular's march from Boston. As the three men rode toward Concord, they were halted by British officers anticipating such Alarm Riders. Revere was captured, Dawes, although unhorsed, managed to escape, but only Prescott was able to dash to safety to ride ahead to warn Concord. Dr. Prescott later went on to serve in the Continental Army.

In May of 1775, Nathaniel would answer the call again. He assembled as ordered at the Committee of Safety camp in Cambridge for 5 days service. After this, he is lost to documented history and died less than a year later in February of 1776. How did he pass away? Was it a wound from war? Did he fall ill with camp fever or some other disease? Unfortunately, *history* has elected not to share that part of Nathaniel's life with us.

In 1777 after losing both her husband and son, Nathaniel's mother Lydia Mulliken was remarried to Jonathan Harrington. Lydia died in 1785 and was buried in Lexington.



Although living only to the age of 24, Nathaniel Mulliken's brief years survive with us and with a grateful nation. Yes, Nathaniel Mulliken is remembered for the ingenious 8-day clocks that his family made which still stand today in museums in Lexington and Concord. Yes, his name is remembered because his family's house still stands on Massachusetts Avenue. Yes, his name is remembered because of the deposition he gave to the annals of history and for the words he uttered on the green that morning, but Nathaniel Mulliken's name is mostly remembered because he stood with 76 others like him "*In Support of the Common Cause*". **

References & Sources:

- Massachusetts Soldiers' and Sailors' – Lexington Public Library
- "We Were There" – Vincent JR Kehoe, – Lexington Public Library
- Town of Lexington, Vital Records – Lexington Public Library
- Hudson – History of the Town of Lexington – Lexington Public Library
- National Heritage Museum – Lexington, MA

* Source – *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors*

** Source – *The Lexington Minute Men Oath*