

**Philip Russell**  
**A Brief Biography**  
**By Bill Poole**

**William Russell**, the immigrant ancestor and Great, Great Grandfather of **Philip Russell the subject of this biography**, was born in England about 1605. He came to The Massachusetts Bay Colony probably sometime in the early 1640s. A son, Benjamin, was born in Cambridge, before 1645 but the date is not recorded. He was certainly in Cambridge by 1645, when his third son, John, was born there. William was a housewright, and had married in England before coming to Massachusetts along with his wife, Martha, and their son, Joseph, born in England about 1636. William was acknowledged as one of the Proprietors in Cambridge in 1645, and Martha joined the church in Cambridge in 1646.<sup>1</sup>

William and Martha had at least eight children: 1. **Joseph**, born in England about 1636; 2. **Benjamin**, born in Cambridge before 1645; 3. **John**, born in Cambridge September 11, 1645; 4. **Martha**, birthdate unknown; 5. **Philip, Grandfather of Philip the subject of this essay**, born about 1650; 6. **William**, born April 28, 1655; 7. **Jason**, born November 14, 1658, grandfather of Jason Russell who was killed by British Regulars in his home in Menotomy on April 19, 1775 ; and 8. **Joyce**, born March 31, 1660.<sup>2</sup>

William died at Cambridge on February 14, 1661/62. His will is recorded as nuncupative, meaning it was verbal and not written. Martha acted as the administratrix.<sup>3</sup> She married on March 24, 1655 in Cambridge, Humphrey Bradshaw who died May 9, 1682, and she married thirdly, on May 24, 1685, Thomas Hall, who died about 1691. She died about 1694.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Philip Russell I, Grandfather**

According to Charles Hudson, Philip I was an early resident of Lexington — “His name is on the earliest records of the parish and town, and although residing in the precinct [Cambridge Farms] he was selectman at Old Cambridge in the years 1700-01.” He subscribed for the meeting house at the Farms [later Lexington] in 1692, and when it was completed in what is now Lexington Center, he was on the committee to arrange the seating.<sup>5</sup>

He first married in Cambridge, MA on June 10, 1680, **Joanna Cutler**, daughter of **James and Mary King Cutler**. Joanna and Philip I had eight children all born in Cambridge: 1. **James**, born date not recorded; 2. **Joanna**, born December 30, 1683/84; 3. **William**, born July 23, 1686; 4. **Philip Sr., Father of Philip, the subject of this essay**, born September 18, 1688; 5. **Samuel**, born January 12, 1690/91; 6. **Jemima**, born about 1692; 7. **Thomas**, baptized July 3, 1698; 8. **Abigail**, born September 11, 1700; and 9. **unnamed child**, died August 26, 1703.<sup>6</sup>

Joanna Cutler Russell died November 26, 1703, perhaps from complications with the birth of the unnamed child who died three months earlier. Joanna was only 42 years old and Philip was left a widower with perhaps only his son James, having reached his majority. The other children ranged in ages from Johanna at 19 or 20, Philip aged 15, Samuel 12 or 13, Jemima aged 11, Thomas age five and Abigail aged three. Philip I then married in Cambridge on October 18, 1705, **Sarah Brooks**, born in Concord, MA December 16, 1688, daughter of **Caleb and Susanna Atkinson Brooks**, supposedly of Medford, but no record found. Susannah and Philip I had one child **Susanna**, born in Lexington, October 18, 1706.<sup>7</sup>

Sarah Brooks Russell died in Middleton, MA on March 9, 1748 as the widow of Philip I.<sup>8</sup>

Johanna and Philip I are both buried in Lexington's Old Burying ground.<sup>9</sup>



Here lyes Buried  
ye Body of Mr.  
PHILIP RUSSELL  
Who Departed this  
Life Feby 7th 1731 in ye  
81st Year of His Age



HERE LYES ye  
BODY OF JOHANA  
RUSSELL WIFE TO  
PHILIP RUSSELL  
AGED 42 YEARS  
DYED NOVEMBER  
26th 1703

#### **Philip Russel Sr.**

Philip Sr. was constable in 1753 and later served on the school committee. He married Sarah Bowman, supposedly the daughter of **Francis and Lydia Stone Bowman**, but no record found of her birth. Sara and Philip Sr. had seven children all born in Lexington: 1. **Sarah**, born May 2, 1718; 2. **Millicent**, born December 29, 1720; 3. **Mary**, born May 13, 1722; 4. **Phebe**, born April 4, 1725; 5. **Philip Jr., the subject of this essay, [known simply as Philip in 1775 since his father had died]**, born April 5, 1727; 6. **Joseph**, born June 29, 1729; and 7. **Joanna**, baptized November 21, 1731.<sup>10</sup>

Sarah died on December 16, 1767, and Philip on March 3, 1775. I do not know where they were buried.

**Philip Russell**, son of Phillip Sr. and the subject of this essay, was a selectman in 1776-77. This was a time when towns throughout the colonies were pledging their support and allegiance to the cause of independence. At a meeting held in Lexington on March 18, 1776, it was declared that if the Continental Congress "should for the safety of these Colonies declare them Independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain we stand ready with our lives & fortunes to Support them in the Measure."<sup>11</sup>

In 1776, Philip was one of 26 of the leading citizens of Lexington to sign the oath of loyalty to the United American Colonies

"We, the subscribers do each of us severally for ourselves, profess, testify and declare before God and the world, that we verily believe that the war, resistance and opposition in which the United American Colonies are now engaged against the fleets and armies of Great Britain, is on the part of said Colonies, just and necessary . . . that we will not, during the said war, directly or indirectly, in any way, aid, abet, or assist any of the naval or land forces of the king of Great Britain . . . But, on the contrary according to our best power and abilities will defend by arms the United American Colonies, and every part thereof, against every hostile attempt of the fleets and armies in the serviced of Great Britain . . ."<sup>12</sup>

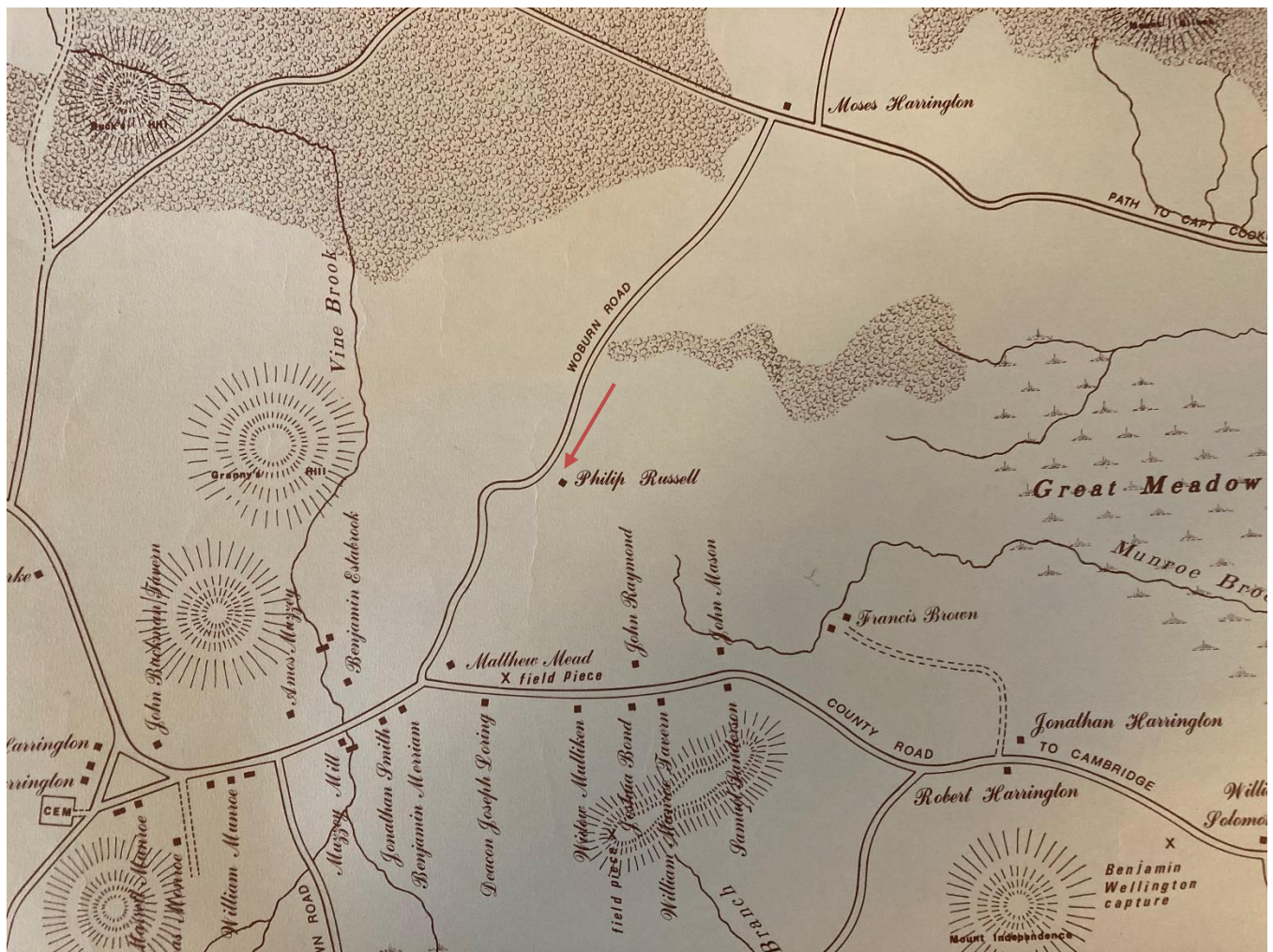
Josiah Smith Nehemiah Estbrook  
 Thomas Parker Lemson Sedrus  
 John Chandler Joseph Simonds  
 Philip Russel Daniel Harrington  
 William Todd Francis Brown  
 Jonathan Smith  
 John Simonds  
 Hammon Reed Joshua Bond  
 Josiah Crosby Edm<sup>d</sup> Munro  
 Sam<sup>l</sup> Sidds Thos Fubenden  
 Robert Reed  
 Henry Harrington Tw Jonas Stone  
 Joseph Fisk Jun<sup>r</sup> Levi Mead  
 Isaac Blodgett John Bridge  
 Henry Harrington

In March, 1777, in response to the difficult situation that imposed even more arduous duties upon elected officials, Daniel Harrington, Josiah Smith, Thomas Parker, Joshua Reed, and Phillip were chosen Selectmen. At the same meeting a committee was chosen "to Compute the Cost of a Suitable and Decent Monument to set over the Grave of Our Brethren in this Town, who fell the first Victims to British Tyranny, on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Day of April, 1775, and make a Report at the May Meeting."<sup>13</sup> This was the beginning of the effort that would eventually, in 1799, place on Lexington Common the obelisk commemorating the fallen of April 19<sup>th</sup> that became the first monument in the United States to celebrate the sacrifice of ordinary soldiers.

Philip first married in Reading, MA on April 21, 1750, **Lydia Eaton**, born in Reading on August 19, 1730, daughter of **Nathaniel and Lydia** (maiden name unknown) **Eaton**. Philip and Lydia Eaton had one child, **Amos**, born December 5, 1750 in Lexington. Lydia died October 5, 1751, age 21, but record not found.<sup>14</sup>

Philip married second, in Lexington, on June 22, 1758, **Lydia Dodge**, of whom not much has been found. Many citations appear incorrect or contradictory. In Lexington her death is recorded only as "Philip Jr.'s wf., Feb. 28, 1772." Lydia Dodge Russell and Philip had nine children: 1. **Lydia**, born November 9, 1758, died May 25, 1777 aged 18 years 6 months; 2. **Nathan**, born March 1, 1760; 3. **Sarah**, born March 24, 1761; 4. **Thomas**, born April 16, 1762, died December 20, 1763 aged 1 year, 8 months, 4 days; 5. **Phebe**, born March 29, 1764; 6. **Thomas**, born February 18, 1766, died May 15, 1766 aged 2 months 27 days; 7. **Jonas**, born April 29, 1767; 8. **Lucy**, born November 7, 1768; and 9. **Unnamed child**, born March 16, 1771, died March 28, 1771 aged 12 days.<sup>15</sup>

The map prepared for the bicentennial celebration of April 19<sup>th</sup> shows the Russell homestead at a location that appears to be somewhere near the junction of Utica and Woburn Streets.



Map Prepared for the Bicentennial Celebration of April 19, 1775

Philip died on January 19, 1816, and in his will, signed on June 3, 1796 and probated on April 3, 1816, he willed to his six children a piece of land described as “eleven acres be it more or less situate in the Easterly corner of Lexington near Cambridge Line also near Woburn line.” There is a Russell Road in east Lexington that is reached from Woburn Street via Winchester Street that might relate to Philip’s property, but there were other members of the family in Lexington as well. There is also a Russell Street off Lowell Street that leads into Woburn. Later, the land was measured at 15 ½ acres and valued at \$449.50.<sup>16</sup>

On January 15, 1716, Philip’s personal estate, valued at \$1,272.95, was divided. Each of his three living children, Nathan, Lucy, and Phebe received 1/6<sup>th</sup> share, as did Nathan’s son, Thomas. Others, including some grandchildren, received 1/12<sup>th</sup> or 1/30<sup>th</sup> shares. One share equaled \$212. 16.<sup>17</sup>

Philip and his wives, Lydia Eaton Russell and Lydia Dodge Russell, are all buried in Lexington’s Old Burying Ground.<sup>18</sup>



In Memory of  
PHILLIP RUSSELL  
Who died  
Jan. 19, 1816  
Aet. 89

So man lieth down and riseth  
not till the heavens are no more



In Memory of  
LYDIA RUSSELL  
wife of  
PHILIP RUSSELL  
who died  
Feb. 26, 1772  
Aet. 32  
She lived desired  
And died lamented

Here Lies Buried  
The Body of M<sup>rs</sup>.  
LYDIA RUSSELL  
Wife of M<sup>r</sup>. Philip  
Russell Jun<sup>r</sup> who  
Dec<sup>d</sup> Octo<sup>br</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>.  
A D 1751  
Age 21 Years  
& 15 D<sup>s</sup>

This inscription appears in Brown's listing of the epitaphs in the Old Burying Ground, but "Find a Grave" does not have a photo.<sup>19</sup>

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Pope, Charles Henry, *The pioneers of Massachusetts, a descriptive list, drawn from records of the colonies, towns and churches and other contemporaneous documents*, Printed by J.J. Arakelyan, Boston, 1900, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup>Vital Records of Cambridge, MA to the End of the Year 1849 at; Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the End of the Year 1897 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/>; Hudson, Charles, *Bi-centenary Edition History of the Town of Lexington Massachusetts in Two Volumes*, Volume II, *Genealogies*, Lexington Historical Society, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, The Riverside Press, 1913, p. 591.

<sup>3</sup>Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers 1648-1871, Volume Middlesex Cases18000-19999, pages 19716:1-19716:2.

<sup>4</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies, op. cit.*, p. 591.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 592.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 592-3; Vital Records of Cambridge, MA, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup>Vital Records of Lexington, MA, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup>Vital Records of Middleton, MA to the End of the Year 1849.

<sup>9</sup>Brown, Francis H., M.D., *A Copy of the Epitaphs in the Old Burying Ground*, Lexington, MA, The Lexington Historical Society, 1905, pp. 120 and 122. [Note, Lexington's Vital Records has the date of Philip's death as February 7, 1730, the grave marker has February 7, 1731, and Brown mistakenly has it as February 7, 1734.]; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/16639687/philip-russell>

<sup>10</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies op. cit.*, p. 394; Vital Records of Lexington, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup>Hudson, *History of Lexington*, Volume I, *History*, p. 227.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, p.232.

<sup>14</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies*, pp. 594-5; Vital Records of Lexington

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p.595.

<sup>16</sup>Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers 1648-1871, Volume Middlesex Cases18000-19999, pages 19686:1-19686:14.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Brown, Francis H., *op. cit.*, pp. 121-22.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p.121.