



# Pvt. BENJAMIN SAMSON

## FIRE

*Benjamin Samson*

Age: 19

Occupation: farmhand & [grist-miller/tavern-keeper]

Resided: East Lexington

Type: MI

Unit: 2<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex-Col. Thomas Gardner/Capt. John Parker

Casualty Place: Lexington

*This biographical sketch extracted (30 March 2023) from the upcoming book: Lexington Fight 19 April 1775 - First Engagement of the Revolutionary War by George Quintal Jr. © 2023*

**BENJAMIN SAMSON** was born in Harvard January 1756, the son of the late Benjamin & Elizabeth (Stone) Samson. He was baptized in the First Congregational Church of Harvard on 14 March 1756, shortly after the death of his father. In July 1763, Samuel Stone of Lexington took Benjamin into his home.

Benjamin lived in Lexington when he entered the service in 1775 as a Private in Capt. John Parker's militia company, very probably being the poorest man in the company. He 'was in the battle of Lexington ... the morning of the Battle'. He was one of ten men known to have returned the British fire. **EBENEZER MUNROE JR.**, also a participant on the **COMMON** that day, testified: 'As we retreated, one of our company, **BENJAMIN SAMPSON**, I believe, who was running with me, turned his piece and fired.' It is likely that he was wounded in the action. Prior to the Battle he had rung the bell in the belfry on the Common, shortly after Paul Revere passed through giving the Alarm.



Woodcut of Lexington Common 19 April 1775. Belfry (where Benjamin rang the bell) is the small detached building, with the spire, on the right. Building in center is the Congregational Meeting House.



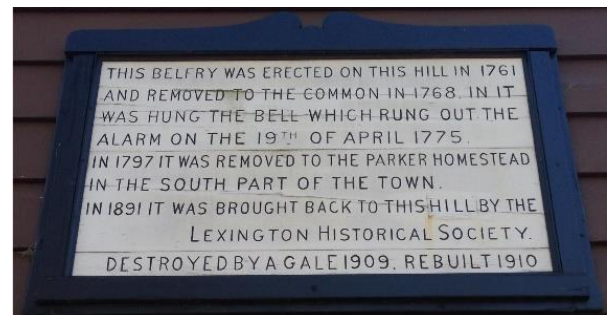
Replica on Old Belfry Hill.



Boulder on the Common, where the belfry stood.



Marker on boulder (1910).



Marker on belfry replica on Old Belfry Hill, overlooking the Common.

It was undoubtedly his mother, living along Battle Road in Lexington the day of the Fight, who petitioned the Provincial Congress for her losses that day:

This may certify, to whom it may concern, that I, the subscriber, lost, on the 19th of April, 1775, by the British troops, in wearing apparel, more than I can replace with the sum of ... £10 00

Elizabeth Samson

"Five or six days" after the Lexington Fight, he continued in the service at the Siege of Boston:

Enlisted into Captn John Woods company in the 26th Regiment Massachusetts line, commanded by Col. Gerish[sic] who was broken for disobedience at the Battle of Bunker hill, and afterwards the Regiment was commanded by Col. Loammi Baldwin. That he marched from Lexington to Cambridge Massachusetts where he remained until the Battle of Bunker hill[. W]as engaged in the Battle, ...



Map of Charlestown and the Battle lines. The position of Gerrish's regiment can clearly be seen on the south slope of Bunker Hill. They had crossed the Neck (narrow feature in upper left) under intense bombardment by the *Glasgow* and gunboats. Unfortunately, most of the regiment stayed on Bunker Hill and did not descend to the battle area at Breed's Hill and surrounds. However, Adjutant Christian Febiger, of Denmark, gallantly led a portion of Gerrish's regiment (undoubtedly including Benjamin) into the Battle. Where Febiger's men entered the Battle is unknown. Very likely they were at the gap just west of the rail fence, northeast of the redoubt (the area marked HEDGE - see yellow arrow), at approximately just west of the current location of Bunker Hill Cemetery on Bunker Hill Street.

Fearing a British counterattack, the American command gave Benjamin urgent new orders:

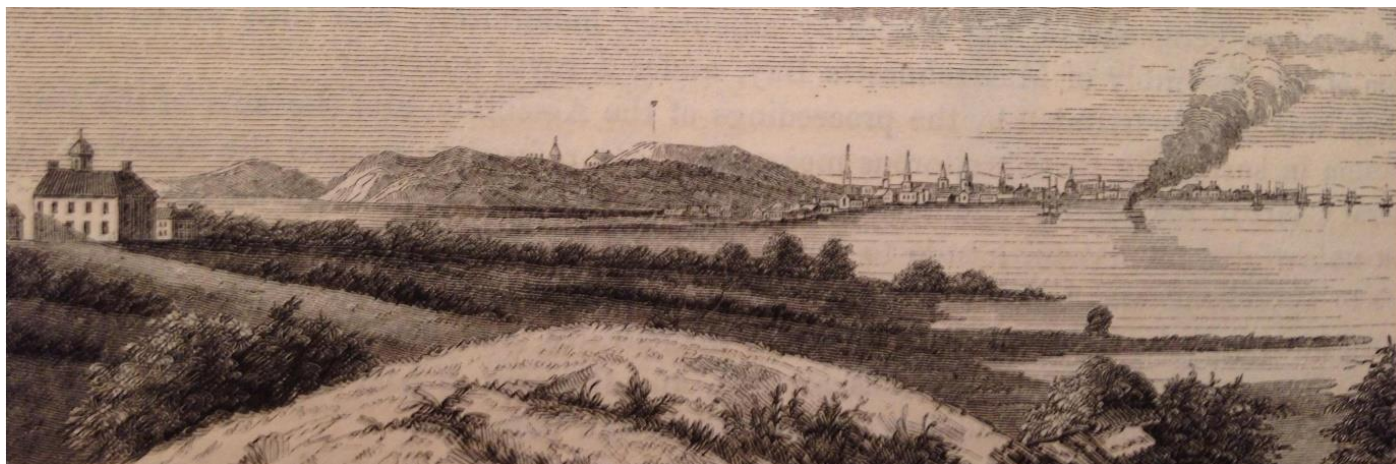
and the night after the Battle he marched to Prospect hill where he stayed two nights and was then ordered and marched to Medford to guard the River -

After the Battle of Bunker Hill, he was listed as sick and absent on the 10 August 1775 return at Medford. The September 1775 roll shows him 'absent 42 days by permission of the Captain'. His name is also on a 'list of men belonging to Capt. Wood's co. who declined to serve the month of Jan. [1776], endorsed Medford Dec'br ye 22 1775. On 28 December 1775, his name is listed on a receipt for a bounty coat. Yet serve longer he did:

That he enlisted for the term of eight months and remained at Medford until his time had expired when he volunteered and served at the same place under the same officers one month longer when he received a written discharge from the Captain, which he has lost -

Benjamin then became the personal attendant (waiter) for an officer:

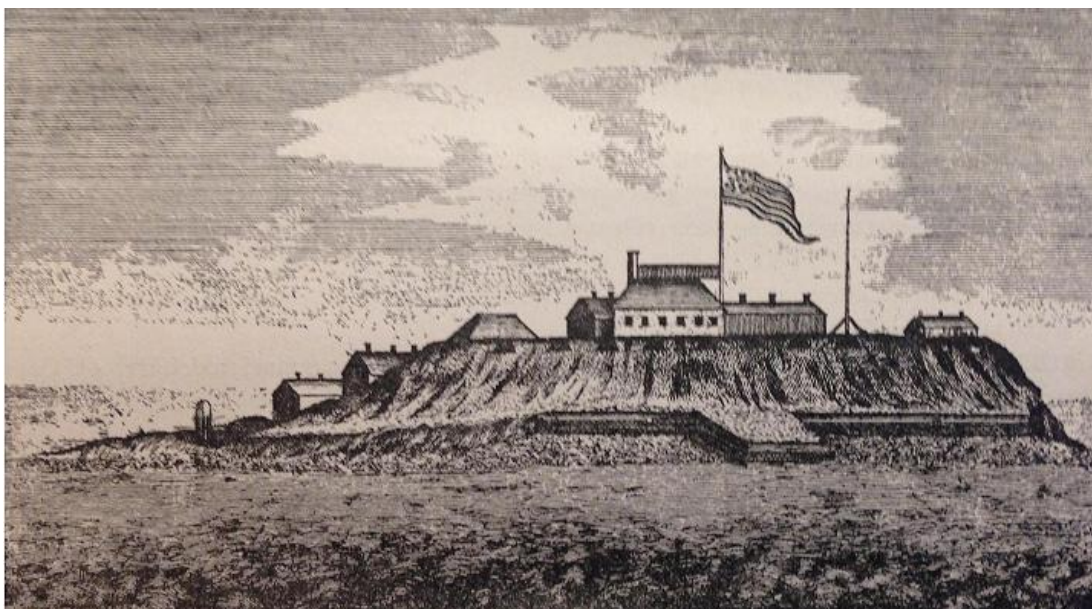
That he again enlisted as a waiter to Col. James Stone, in March or April 1776 and went with him to Dorchester Point stayed there about one month, was then dismissed and went home to Lexington.



View from Dorchester Heights looking north, toward Boston (three-hilled peninsula in the left background) & Charlestown (peninsula in the distance in the right background). Dorchester Point (hidden in the lower right of this illustration), extended due east of the Heights and was directly opposite Castle Island. The Point and Heights were occupied by General Washington in the spring of 1776 in an effort to expel the British from Boston, which was successful on 17 March 1776. Dorchester Point no longer exists, having been filled in over the years. Its location would be approximately under the current East Broadway Street in Dorchester.

Sometime between 1776 and 1778, he moved to Ashburnham and served once more:

In April 1779 <sup>As he believes</sup> he again enlisted under Capt. John White of Lancaster Lieut. [Nathaniel] Beaman & Ensign Martin - The company met at Lancaster and marched to Roxbury Massachusetts, where we remained for a few days when we were ordered to repair the Castle which had been blown up by the British, remained and was employed on the Castle three months and remained three or four days after the rest of the company were dismissed to take care of a man who was sick with the small pox.

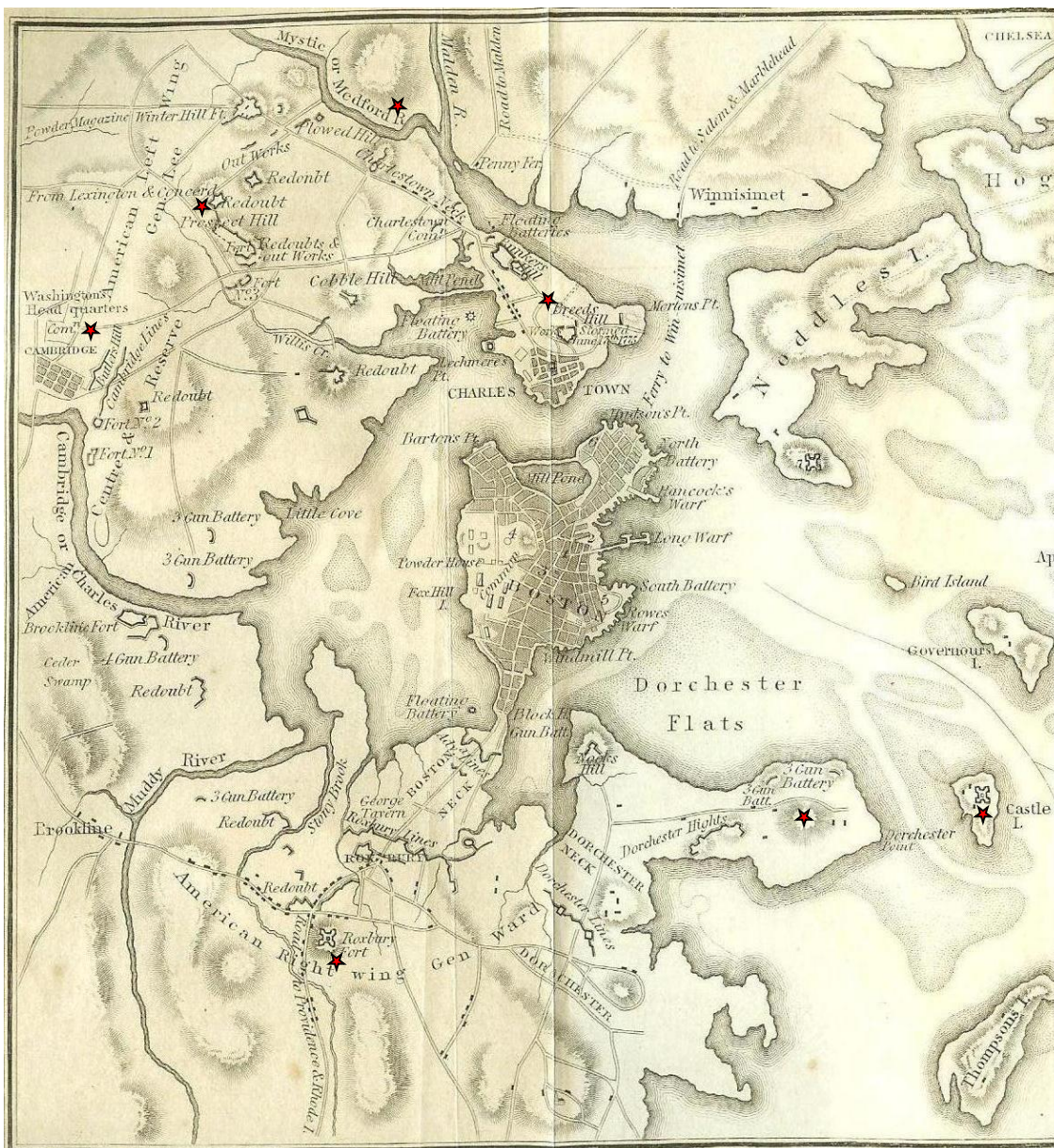


View of Castle Island, 1789. Benjamin had a hand in rebuilding these fortifications.

Thus ended his Revolutionary War service, a total of approximately 1 year and 2 months of total time.

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR SERVICE RECORD OF BENJAMIN SAMSON

From	To	Enlisted At	Rank	Served at	St	Place	Regiment	Company
1775-04-19	1775-04-19	Lexington	Pvt.	Lexington	MA	on the Common - Battle of Lexington	Col. Thomas Gardner	Capt. John Parker
1775-04-20	1775-05-03	NO SERVICE						
1775-05-04	1775-06-16	Lexington	Pvt.	Cambridge	MA	Cambridge Common (probable)	Col. Samuel Gerrish	Capt. John Wood
1775-06-17	1775-06-17		Pvt.	Charlestown	MA	in the gap (prob.) - Battle of Bunker Hill	Col. Samuel Gerrish	Capt. John Wood
1775-06-18	1775-06-19		Pvt.	Charlestown	MA	Prospect Hill	Col. Loammi Baldwin	
1775-06-20	1776-01-31	V	Pvt.	Medford	MA	on shore near Mystic River	V	V
1776-02-01	1776-02-28	NO SERVICE						
1776-03	1776-04	Lexington	Wtr.	Dorchester	MA	Dorchester Point	Col. James Stone	-----
1776-05	1779-03	NO SERVICE						
1779-04	1779-04	Ashburnham	Pvt.	Roxbury	MA	Roxbury Fort (probable)		Capt. John White
1779-05	1779-07	V	Pvt.	Boston	MA	Castle Island		V
1779-08	1783-09-03	NO SERVICE						



Map showing places where Benjamin served (red stars) during the Siege of Boston and afterwards at Castle Island.

After the War, he lived at Harvard, Lexington and Fitzwilliam, N.H. He was taxed in Fitzwilliam from 1793 to 1807. Around 1810, he moved to Roxbury, Vt. There he lived on the current Warren Mountain Road, using the Dog River for power for his grist mill.

On 11 December 1822 his fellow soldier on the **COMMON**, Silvanus Wood, offered this deposition for Benjamin:

Woburn December 11 1822 This may certify that - Mr. Benjamin Samson, and my self was in Capt. John Parkers, company, and was fired upon by the British on the 19 morning of April 1776 north of us entrench - Capt. John Woods company, in the 26 Regiment, Massachusetts Line, commanded by Col. Ganish, then Colonel Leammie Baldwin, Mr Samson was a good soldier eight months, and volunteered one month after, & then Honorably discharged -  
 Witness my hand  
 Silvanus Wood Ensign

While a resident of Roxbury, Vermont, Benjamin applied for a U.S. pension on 8 August 1832. His pension was granted and commenced 4 March 1831, paying him \$43.33 per year until his death in Roxbury on 8 March 1846, aged 90. He was the 35<sup>th</sup> to last survivor of all 4000+ Americans who fought on Battle Road. He is buried in the East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cemetery, Roxbury, Washington County, Vermont. The inscription on his gravestone obelisk reads:



A soldier in the revolution and in battle at Lexington and Bunker Hill.

He married ANN<sup>5</sup> MUNROE. She was born 13 May 1759 in Lexington and baptized there 27 May 1759, the daughter of George<sup>4</sup> & Anna (Bemis) Munroe. Her father was killed by a cannon ball at the Battle of Monmouth, N.J. on 28 June 1778. She was dismissed from the Lexington church to the church in Fitzwilliam, N.H. 14 June 1801 and then admitted to the church in Fitzwilliam, N.H. 26 July 1801, on a letter from the church in Lexington. She died 24 Feb 1822, aged 63, pre-deceasing Benjamin by twenty-four years and is buried at the obelisk in Roxbury, Vt. with her husband.

Children:

1. GEORGE MUNROE SAMSON bpt. Ashburnham 30 May 1779; d. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 27 August 1800, aged 21; unm.
2. BENJAMIN SAMSON JR. b. Ashburnham; bpt. Ashburnham 27 May 1781; farmer; taxed in Fitzwilliam, N.H. from 1803 to 1809; d. Brookfield, Vt. 15 Apr. 1858, aged 77; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.

m. 15 January 1804 EUNICE AMIDON (b. Oxford 12 July 1781; d. Brookfield, Vt. 13 Apr. 1871, aged 89)

Children:

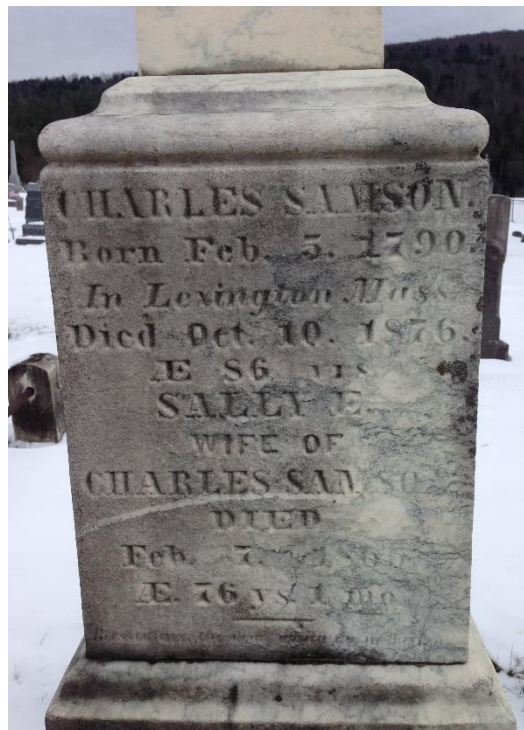
1. (child) Samson d. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 29 September 1804
2. George Samson b. ca. August 1808; d. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 28 February 1809
3. George M. Samson b. Roxbury, Vt. ca. Apr. 1812; farmer; d. Roxbury, Vt. 14 Dec. 1858, aged 46; m. Mary \_\_\_\_\_
3. Benjamin Gardner Samson b. Roxbury, Vt. 6 Nov. 1815; laborer; d. Brookfield, Vt. 8 Dec. 1905, aged 90, unm.
5. Cynthia A. Samson b. Roxbury, Vt. 13 Mar. 1819; d. Brookfield, Vt. 28 June 1857, aged 37

3. (SON) SAMSON b. ca. 1784; d. shortly after 1800

4. (DAU.) SAMSON b. ca. 1787; d. young before 1796

5. CHARLES SAMSON b. Lexington 5 February 1790 & bpt. there nine days after; sol. in the War of 1812; farmer; d. Roxbury, Vt. 10 October 1876, aged 86; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.

m. SALLY E. RICHARDSON (b. Royalston Jan. 1789, dau. of Abijah & Hannah (Eddy) Richardson; d. Roxbury 7 Feb. 1865, aged 76; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cemetery, Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.)



Children:

1. Dexter Samson

b. 8 July 1813; d. Roxbury, Vt. 27 June 1869, aged 55; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.; m. Barnet, Vt. 10 June 1835 *Rebecca Richardson* (b. Waterford, Vt. 18 July 1813, dau. of Abial & Rebecca (Chase) Richardson; d. St. Albans, Vt. 30 June 1877, aged 63)

Children:

1. Charles Samson

b. ca. Oct. 1836; d. 31 Aug. 1868, aged 31; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.; m. (1) *Julia \_\_\_\_\_* (b. 17 July 1836; d. 11 Nov. 1860, aged 24; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.); m. (2) *Margaret Riley* (b. Barnet, Vt. 1 Jan. 1836, dau. of Thomas & Ann (McCormick) Riley; housewife; d. Northfield, Vt. 5 Apr. 1911, aged 75; bur. Old Catholic Cem., Northfield, Washington Co., Vt.); 2 ch.

2. Ira D. Samson

b. 14 Dec. 1838; d. 3 Apr. 1845, aged 6; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.;

3. Ann A. Samson

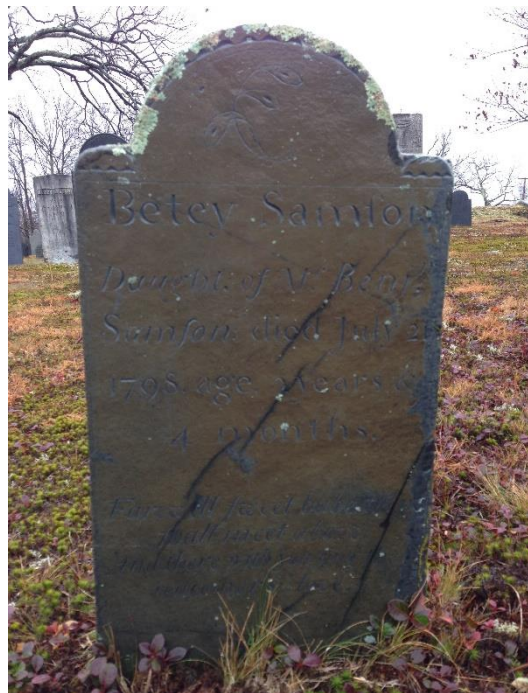
b. ca. 1855; d. 31 Aug. 1868, aged 13; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.

2. Sophronia Samson

b. ca. Dec. 1819; d. 17 Sep. 1823, aged 3; bur. East Roxbury [a.k.a. Village] Cem., Roxbury, Washington Co., Vt.

6. BETSEY SAMSON

b. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 30 March 1796; d. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 22 July 1798, aged 2; bur. Town Cem., Fitzwilliam, N.H.



7. DEXTER SAMSON

b. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 19 February 1799; d. Fitzwilliam, N.H. 24 April 1800, aged 1