

COMMITTEE OF STUDY
*Character Biographies of Those Who Were Present at the Battle of Lexington
April 19, 1775
Prepared by Alexander R. Cain*

Name: Samuel Hastings Jr.

Birth: July 11, 1757

Age at the Battle of Lexington: 17

Died: January 8, 1734

Age at Death: 76

Burial: Samuel Hastings Jr. is buried in the Old Burial Ground, Lexington, MA

Parents: Samuel Hastings Sr. (b. March 30, 1731; d. February 7, 1820)
Lydia Tidd (b. ??, d. November 10, 1802)

Paternal Grandparents: John & Abigail (Hammond) Hastings

Maternal Grandparents: Daniel & Hepzibah (Reed) Tidd

Marriage: Samuel Hastings married Lydia Nelson, daughter of Thomas and Lydia (Scott) Nelson of Lincoln, Massachusetts on October 1, 1778. Lydia was born on July 6, 1758 and died on April 5, 1829.

Children: Lydia Hastings, Samuel Hastings, Samuel 2nd Hastings, Dorcas Hastings, Jonathan Hastings, Thomas Hastings, Mary Hastings, Oliver Hastings, Hepzibah Hastings, Harriet Hastings, James Hastings, Sarah M. Hastings

Property Holdings/Location: The Hastings homestead was located along the Lexington-Lincoln line near the Visitor's Center of Minute Man National Historical Park.

Occupation(s): Samuel Hasting's primary occupation was farmer, but he also served as a selectman and major in the town's artillery company after the Revolutionary War.

Will/Probate Records: On file at the Middlesex County Probate Court, Cambridge, MA

Character Essay: Samuel Hastings Junior was born on July 11, 1757 in Lincoln, Massachusetts. His parents were Samuel and Lydia (Tidd) Hastings. He was the second oldest of seven children.

It is suspected Samuel's home was located along the Lexington-Lincoln line somewhere between Minute Man Historical Park's Visitor Center and "Parker's Revenge". His grandchildren would later comment that the location of the Hastings home was often a source of dispute between the villages of Lexington and Lincoln.

Nevertheless, because Lexington's meeting house and parish were closer to the Hastings home than Lincoln's, the family aligned their interests with that of Lexington.

Samuel was only seventeen years old on April 19, 1775. When elements of the Lexington Training Band first assembled on the Lexington Green, Samuel was not present. Instead, his older brother Isaac and his father, Samuel Sr., answered the alarm. Also present were twelve relatives from the Reed and Tidd families.

Approximately one week later, Samuel's father signed an affidavit describing the Battle of Lexington. According to his father:

“We, Nathaniel Parkhurst, Jonas Parker, John Munroe, Jun., John Winship, Solomon Peirce, John Muzzy, Abner Mead, John Bridge, Junior, Ebenezer Bowman, William Munroe 3d, Micah Hagar, Samuel Sanderson, Samuel Hastings, and James Brown, of Lexington, in the County of Middlesex, and Colony of Massachusetts Bay, in New-England, and all of lawful age, do testify and say, that on the morning of the nineteenth of April instant, about one or two o'clock, being informed that a number of Regular Officers had been riding up and down the road, the evening and night preceding, and that some of the inhabitants as they were passing had been insulted by the officers, and stopped by them; and being also informed that the Regular Troops were on their march from Boston, in order as it was said, to take the Colony Stores then deposited at Concord, we met on the parade of our Company in this Town; and after the Company had collected we were ordered by Captain John Parker, who commanded us, to disperse for the present, and to be ready to attend the beat of the drum; and accordingly the Company went into houses near the place of parade. We further testify and say, that about five o'clock in the morning, we attended the beat of our drum, and were formed on the parade. We were faced towards the Regulars, then marching up to us, and some of our Company were coming to the parade with their backs towards the Troops, and others on the parade began to disperse, when the Regulars fired on the Company before a gun was fired by any of our Company on them; they killed eight of our Company, and wounded several, and continued their fire until we had all made our escape.”

Following the aftermath of the Battle of Lexington, the Training Band marched to Parker's Revenge. It was there that Samuel joined his fellow training soldiers. Samuel and his two brothers pursued the retreating regulars until reaching the Lexington-Menotomy line. Afterwards, the three returned home.

Once there, the Hastings family encountered a wounded grenadier lying on their front door step. The family cared for the wounded soldier until he expired three days later. Prior to burying the soldier behind their home, the Hastings family discovered their silverware hidden in the lining of his coat. Nevertheless, the family provided a proper burial.

Although his father enlisted in Captain Wood's Company, Colonel Baldwin's Regiment in 1775, Samuel remained behind in Lexington. However, in December of 1775, he enlisted as a private in the Continental Army. Unlike most men from Lexington who joined the 26th Continental Regiment, Samuel enlisted in the 12th Continental Regiment.

The 12th Continental was an Essex County Regiment commanded by Moses Little. The unit saw action during the New York campaign and Trenton. Based upon deserter descriptions, it appears Samuel's uniform was either a brown coat with red facings or a blue coat with buff facings.

Because of his size and agility, Samuel Hastings was transferred to General Charles Lee's "lifeguards". Along with over a dozen soldiers and NCOs, Samuel was responsible for protecting General Lee from harm. On December 12, 1776, General Lee and his life guards stopped at White's Tavern in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. The next morning, a mounted British patrol discovered the detachment. Although most of the general's life guards fled as the patrol advanced, Samuel stood firm. As a result, he received a saber slash to the head and was captured. It appears Samuel remained in captivity for some time as his next recorded activity was on October 1, 1778 when he married his neighbor, Lydia Nelson.

Samuel sat out the remainder of the war. After its conclusion, he served as a town selectman, managed his farm and raised *twelve* children. Samuel Hastings was also instrumental in forming the Lexington Artillery Company. The artillery company was formed after the Revolutionary War and existed until 1847 when it was disbanded for lack of participation and interest on the part of its members. Samuel served as the company's major.

The artillery used three areas for their target practice. The first was firing over the railroad crossing toward Granny's Hill (presumably the crossing over Meriam Street toward Round Hill Street and Oakmont Circle); the second from where Forrest Street is now located toward the junction of Middlebury Road and Outlook Drive; and the third from where St. Brigid's Church is now located toward "the hill near the house of Mr. Robinson."

On April 5, 1829, his wife died at the age of 71. Almost five years later, on January 8, 1734, Major Samuel Hastings died at the age of 76.

Source: *Massachusetts State Archives, Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution, Hudson's History of Lexington, Middlesex County Probate Court.*