

# GENERAL TIMOTHY RUGGLES,

1711—1795.

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BY

HENRY STODDARD RUGGLES,

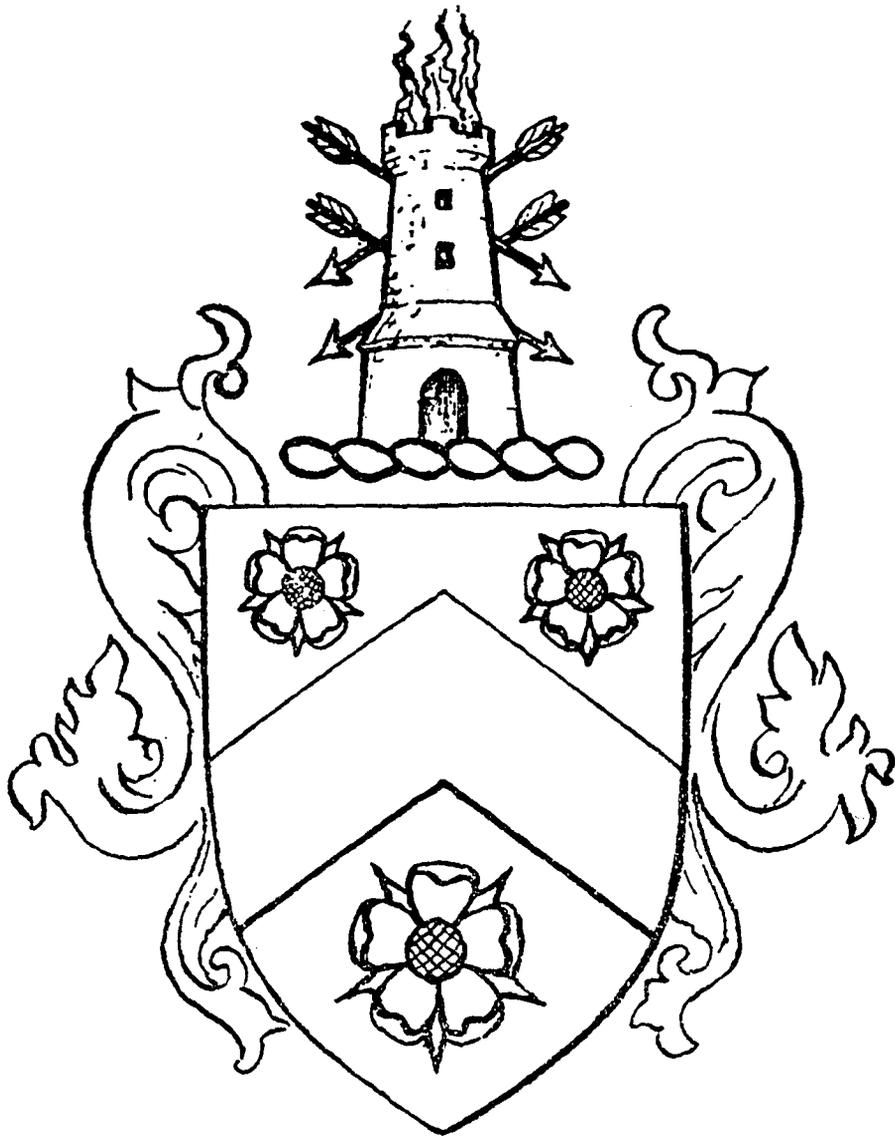
OF WAKEFIELD, MASS.

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PRIVATELY PRINTED.

1897.

Copyright, 1897,  
By H. S. Ruggles.



THE RUGGLES ARMS.

Argent, a chevron between three roses, gules.

Crest.—A tower, or, inflamed proper and pierced with four arrows in saltire, points downward, argent.



## GENERAL TIMOTHY RUGGLES.

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Thomas Ruggle, or Ruggles, of Sudbury, Suffolk, England, whose will bears date June 21, 1547, a gentleman of coat-armor, was the lineal ancestor of the American progenitor of the Ruggles family. This Suffolk house was a branch of the famous Staffordshire line of Ruggeley,<sup>1</sup> originally De Ruggele, one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, and later allied with that of Bolleyne, tracing through Sir Thomas Knollys to Mary the sister of the unfortunate queen of Henry VIII.

Seated for several generations at Hawkesbeard in Staffordshire, now known as Armitage Park, a branch removed to Warwickshire, and thence a younger son to Lincolnshire; and of this Lincolnshire family was Thomas Ruggle who, with his brother William, settled in Suffolk, in which county and the adjoin-

<sup>1</sup>In the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, Vol. 25, is given the evidence of this derivation.

ing shire of Essex their descendants are found to this day.

Several men of note have appeared among these and have made the name an honored one in the old country. George Ruggle of Lavenham, Suffolk, Fellow of Clare College, 1598–1619, a man of great learning, was one of the founders of the Virginia Company, to which up to the time of his death in 1622, he gave of his means and his talents unsparingly, and in his will bequeathed to it the sum of one hundred pounds.<sup>2</sup> He was associated in this scheme for promoting the English colonization of America with the Earl of Southampton, the friend of Shakespeare, Sir Edward Sandy and his brother George Sandy, the poet. He was a playwright of considerable distinction, chiefly through a Latin comedy that won from King James I the warmest approbation and endorsement. This work has been carried through many editions and has been twice translated.<sup>3</sup> In 1829, John Ruggles, who took the additional surname of Brise, was high-sheriff of Suffolk, and his son, Colonel Samuel Rug-

<sup>2</sup>*William and Mary College Quarterly*. Vol. 5, "The Lineage of George Ruggle."

<sup>3</sup>His other dramas "Verily" and "Club Law" were never printed, his will forbidding their publication.

gles-Brise, represented the county of Essex in Parliament from 1868 to 1883.

Thomas Ruggles, who emigrated from Nazing, Essex, to Roxbury, Massachusetts in 1637, was the son of Thomas Ruggles of the former place and grandson of Nicholas of Sudbury, Suffolk, who was a son of Thomas Ruggle of Sudbury. His wife, Mary Curtis, was a sister of the first William Curtis<sup>4</sup> of Roxbury, the founder of the prominent Curtis family of Massachusetts. This emigrant was a man of substance as is evidenced by his will under which his elder son, John, came into possession of a very considerable inheritance for those times, and his homestead near the site of the present Norfolk House in Roxbury remained among the holdings of the family for a century and a half.<sup>5</sup>

A younger son of the emigrant, Captain Samuel Ruggles of Roxbury, of which place he was several years selectman, and which he had the honor to

<sup>4</sup>A foot note by Rev. W. Winters of Waltham Abbey, Essex, England, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, Vol. 28, page 145, *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, states: "Mary Curtis, sister of William (*supra*), married Thomas Ruggles, son of Thomas of Nazing."

<sup>5</sup>A sketch of the family history is contained in *The American Historical Register*, New Series, Vol. 1, No. 1.

represent in the General Court, a lawyer by profession, married Hannah, daughter of George Fowle of Charlestown. The eldest son of this marriage was Captain Samuel Ruggles, also of Roxbury, like his father a lawyer and serving as well as selectman and representative. His wife was Martha, a daughter of Rev. John Woodbridge of Newbury and Mercy, his wife, who was the daughter of Governor Thomas Dudley.

Ten children were the fruit of this marriage, four of whom were sons, and of these, three became clergymen of eminence; Rev. Samuel Ruggles of Billerica, Rev. Timothy Ruggles of Rochester and Rev. Benjamin Ruggles of Middleborough and later of New Braintree.

The second son, Rev. Timothy Ruggles of Rochester, for a short time after his graduation from Harvard taught the old school in Roxbury, now the Roxbury Latin School. He was married and ordained about the same time, and his wife was Mary White, who bore him twelve children. His long ministry in Rochester, covering fifty-eight years, shows him to have been held in high esteem by all.

Timothy Ruggles was the first child born to Rev.

Timothy and Mary (White) Ruggles, and his birth occurred in Rochester on the twentieth of October, 1711. With the duties of his ministry and the cares of his large family, Rev. Timothy Ruggles yet found time to attend to the education of his son, who was by him prepared for college and who successfully passed the examinations necessary to his entrance at Harvard from which he was graduated at the age of twenty-one in the class of 1732.

His choice of the law as a profession was early made and he commenced practice first at Rochester and then, in 1740, at Sandwich where he remained with an increasing reputation and a constantly enlarging list of clients till 1753, when he removed to Hardwick. As a lawyer he was an impressive pleader, his eloquence enhanced by his majestic presence, being above six feet and magnificently proportioned, with a noble head grandly poised on stalwart shoulders; and such had been his success in the early years of his career, that his services had been continually in demand in the adjoining counties, where he had found his principal antagonist in cases of importance in Colonel James Otis, then at the height of his fame.

Mr. Ruggles's law practice yielded him handsome

returns, and at the time of his settlement in Hardwick he had accumulated a fortune of liberal proportions, and it was here he entered upon a style of living commensurate with his standing and affluence. He had married, in 1735, Mrs. Bathsheba Newcomb, an accomplished lady, the widow of William Newcomb of Sandwich and daughter of Honorable Melatiah Bourne of that place. He laid out an extensive estate, which was the admiration and wonder of all in the vicinity, and this he enlarged and embellished as time went on, and there with his charming wife dispensed a lavish hospitality. With thirty horses in his stables, a deer park of many acres and a pack of hounds at hand, his many visitors were entertained in princely fashion.

He was appointed judge of the Court of Common Pleas in 1756, and from 1762 until the breaking out of the Revolution he was chief-justice of that court.<sup>6</sup> At the same time this versatile and accomplished man was making for himself a reputation as a soldier second to no other in America of that period. The Seven Years' War commenced in 1756, the date of

<sup>6</sup>“As a judge he was faithful, able and incorruptible.”—*Judicial History of Massachusetts.*

his appointment to the bench and one year subsequent to that of his commission as colonel in the forces raised by the Province of Massachusetts Bay. In the campaign against Crown Point, in the autumn of 1755, he served under Sir William Johnson, and was second in command at the battle of Lake George, where he distinguished himself for courage, coolness and ability, and where the French under Baron Deiskau suffered severe defeat. In appreciation of his services on that occasion he was made a brigadier-general and placed under the commander-in-chief. In 1758 he commanded the third division of the provincial troops under Abercrombie in the disastrous attack upon Ticonderoga, which was so ably defended by Montcalm.

The incapacity of Abercrombie resulting in his removal, that gallant soldier Lord Amherst assumed command, and in the campaigns of 1759 and 1760 General Ruggles served with credit and distinction to himself and received the warmest approval of the commanding general.

In 1762, while both armies were in winter quarters, General Ruggles was chosen speaker of the House of Representatives, of which body he had for several

years been a member. The following year as a reward, in a measure, for his military services he was appointed "Surveyor General of the King's Forests." This office was in the nature of a sinecure and carried with it considerable honor and dignity.<sup>7</sup>

The disturbed condition of the public mind in the following years, prior to the Revolution, found General Ruggles in the position of one who recognized the grievances of the colonies but believed that redress would be found through lawful and peaceful measures; and when in 1765, "in consequence of the grievous enactments of the British government" delegates were chosen by the several legislatures, to meet in a body that should express the united sentiment of the colonies, and with the object "to seek out some public relief from immediate and threatened evils, by a representation of their sufferings to the King and Parliament," he was chosen as one of the delegates on the part of Massachusetts. This convention, known as **THE FIRST COLONIAL CONGRESS** and as **THE STAMP ACT CONGRESS**, assembled in New York on the seventh of October, and its deliberations were not concluded until the twenty-fourth of that month. Nine of the

<sup>7</sup>Worth £3,000 per annum.

thirteen colonies were there represented by eminent men, and General Ruggles had the distinguished honor to be chosen its president. The declarations adopted, set forth in the most unmistakable language that the colonies would not submit to taxation except by their own representatives, and memorials addressed to the two houses of Parliament were drawn up, and a petition to the king, which, while professing loyalty, prayed for a more humane policy and for justice towards his subjects in America.

These measures were carried against the firm protest of General Ruggles, who saw in them the seeds of revolution and disloyalty; and to such a point had the colonists advanced in their resistance to the authority of the mother country, that he was for this course censured and reprimanded by the legislature on his return to Massachusetts<sup>s</sup>—all of which was borne by him under the full conviction that he had done his duty and had attempted to stay the rash current that was

<sup>s</sup>A vote of thanks was passed at the same time for the services of Otis and Partridge, the other representatives from Massachusetts. General Ruggles requested permission to enter in the journal his reasons for his conduct at the Congress, which was granted, but afterwards the leave to insert them was withdrawn.

sweeping his brethren to the brink of anarchy and destruction.

From this time on his position was one of discomfort, though he had many and zealous supporters among the solid merchants of Boston and families of consequence throughout the colony. He was led by his sense of duty, "in the halls of the legislature and on the platform, to declare against rebellion and bloodshed," and by this outspoken course he incurred the hatred and aversion of former friends and kindred. His brother Benjamin, less than two years his junior, between whom and himself had always existed the tenderest fraternal attachment, but who now, as an ardent worker in the patriot cause, was led to look upon him as an enemy of his country, was thus estranged from him. His wife and some of his children either did not share his loyal sentiments, or only in such mild and modified form as to afford little or no satisfaction to him in the trials he was called upon to bear.

Wholly undeterred, however, he sought in every way to avert the appeal to arms which the apparent rashness, to his mind, of his neighbors and relatives was tending to hasten. The crown, recognizing in him

an able, faithful and courageous supporter, appointed him one of the "Mandamus Council," which office he accepted without flinching, though the majority of his associates had not the requisite bravery, in the face of the heated and disturbed state of the popular mind, to qualify by taking the oath. An impressive scene was enacted between him and his brother Benjamin on the occasion of his departure from Hardwick for Boston to assume this position. In the presence of many of his old friends and neighbors Benjamin besought him to relinquish his determination to take the oath and warned him in the most solemn way that he would never be permitted to return again alive if he persisted.

This had no other effect than to strengthen his resolution to comply with the king's command, and the parting there between these brothers was a final one on earth. What his devotion to duty, as he saw it, cost him can be measured best by the severing of these ties of kinship, rather than in the pecuniary losses which subsequent confiscation brought to him, or the termination of his tenure to influential and profitable positions that it had taken many years to establish.

When it is remembered that the war, when at last it came, found five of his nephews in the army of Washington, among them his namesake and favorite, Lieut. Timothy Ruggles of Hardwick; that neither his wife nor his eldest son ever shared his exile, and that, from the time he embarked upon the British ship-of-war to the day of his death, he never again saw the face of the mother of his children; none can doubt the nobleness of his motives, however mistaken he may believe to have been the views that led to such sacrifice.

After taking the oath as Mandamus Councillor, he at once set himself to the task of raising in Boston a corps of loyalists. It is not plain how successful this undertaking proved. It is known that such a body was formed, known as "The Gentlemen Volunteers," and "Loyal American Associates," composed chiefly of merchants of Boston and numbering two hundred or more, that they were commanded by General Ruggles who had for his captains Abijah Willard, James Putnam and Francis Green, but there is no record of their having rendered any efficient service. It has been often claimed that General Ruggles took this battalion to Long Island, where they had some part in the operations, but if such be the fact it is to be regretted

that no account of their movements has been preserved. The only record of his presence in that neighborhood is the following statement in the *Life of Samuel Curwen*, loyalist—

“The four hundred men, inhabitants of Staten Island, with others as they come in, are put under command of General Ruggles, who is to keep possession of the Island.”<sup>9</sup>

In the act passed in September, 1778, forbidding the return of loyalist refugees under pain of death, his name occurs as fourth in the most conspicuous group, and following those of two ex-governors and one lieutenant-governor, thus emphasizing his standing as the most eminent loyalist in the province; for following these distinguished names are those of over three hundred others, arranged alphabetically, and including a late secretary and treasurer of the province, the chief-justice of the Supreme Court and other judges, and Sir William Pepperell, baronet; and this at a period when only marked prominence and conspicuous ability could call for any classification other than that based upon social precedence.

<sup>9</sup>Page 77, edition of 1864, letter of Thomas Danforth, written at Kingsbridge, New York, August 18, 1776.

This act sufficiently indicates the animus of the people towards those who conscientiously made allegiance to the king paramount to devotion to the cause of the colonies, and in the wholesale confiscations which were inaugurated those zealous and faithful men lost every thing they possessed. Now that it is possible, in the light of history, calmly to view the events of that time, none can regard it other than a blemish upon the record of our state and nation that the loyalists were thus harshly dealt with and this act and others permitted to stand unrepealed when peace had crowned a successful struggle. The words of William Spooner are most fitting to this occasion :

“ We cannot think that it would derogate much from the character of American valor if Timothy Ruggles and Richard Saltonstall could be classed with the men who fought to establish American independence ; neither do we think that Jared Ingersoll or the Olivers could fail to receive our undisguised admiration if, instead of having suffered from Whig fanaticism they had been driven from their firesides by mobs of infuriated Tories.”

In no better way is it possible to indicate the greatness, the dignity and the influence of this man, before

his stand in the Revolutionary period had brought upon him the hatred and the aversion of his countrymen, than to quote the opinion of President Adams, expressed in 1759, in contrasting him with Jeremy Gridley, the attorney-general. He said :

“Ruggles’s grandeur consists in the quickness of his apprehension, the steadiness of his attention, the boldness and strength of his thoughts and expressions, his strict honor, conscious superiority and contempt of meanness. People approach him with dread and terror. Gridley’s grandeur consists in his great learning, his great parts and his majestic manner, but it is diminished by stiffness and affectation. Ruggles is as proud, as lordly as Gridley, but he is more popular, he conceals it more, he times it better, and it is easy and natural in him, but is stiff and affected in Gridley. It is an advantage to Ruggles’s character, but a disadvantage to Gridley’s.”

The precise time of his departure to Nova Scotia has never been fixed, and not till 1783 are any evidences to be found of his presence in that province. He was then at Annapolis, an old man of seventy-two, but apparently undismayed by the reverses which he had been called upon to suffer, for he was making

application for a grant of lands in that section of the province. This correspondence with the surveyor-general is still preserved in the Nova Scotia archives, and bears witness to the high sense of his great services and sacrifices entertained by the officers of the crown. The result of his application was, that an estate of ten thousand acres in the beautiful town of Wilmot in Annapolis County, was assigned to him.

At his advanced age, he set vigorously to work to make for himself in this wilderness a home that should be worthy to mark the founding of the family in a new land. Near the top of a mountain, known during his lifetime and long after as "Ruggles Mountain" and now, since it has passed to other hands, as "Phinney Mountain," a spot commanding a magnificent outlook, his house was built; a roomy affair that sentiment led him to place upon foundations in part brought from old Massachusetts. A portion of the cellar construction was of dressed granite from Quincy. A like worthy sentiment led to his planting an apple orchard, the first in the county, with young trees from his old home. Other fruit trees in abundance were introduced by him, and exotic plants, trees

and shrubbery were made to beautify the place, and during the remainder of his life the improvement of his estate engaged his chief attention.

His wife died in 1787, at the home of their eldest son, in Hardwick. Their two younger sons were with their father in Nova Scotia. Their daughters, married to patriot husbands, remained in Massachusetts and their descendants are among our most influential families to-day. The sad events in the life of another daughter, whose insanity and tragic death had darkened the closing years of her exiled father, need not be dwelt upon here.

General Ruggles's life was uneventful during his remaining days, and his death occurred at Wilmot in 1795, at the age of eighty-four years. The following obituary was printed in the *Royal Gazette* at the time, and is said to have been written by Rev. John Wiswall, the first rector of Wilmot, the clergyman who officiated at the obsequies:

"Died August 4, eighty-four years old, the Honorable Brigadier-General Timothy Ruggles. He was a native of and for nearly seventy years lived in Massachusetts Bay, in which province he sustained under His Majesty the first offices of government, with distin-

guished ability and reputation. An uncommon share of probity and discrimination first recommended him to the choice of the people as member of the Assembly, of which he was for some time speaker. Soon after the commencement of the war in 1755, he was appointed to the command of the troops raised in that province for the purpose of co-operating with His Majesty's regular army against the French, with the rank of brigadier-general, in which situation his singular talents enabled him to acquit himself with so much ability that, without the advantages of a military education, he was held in the highest estimation by the profession, particularly by my lord Amherst under whom he served during the war. As a reward for his services His Majesty was pleased to appoint him surveyor of woods for the district in which he lived. He was also appointed one of His Majesty's Council for the province. At the conclusion of the war he came to this province and with a degree of philosophy rarely to be met with at the age of seventy-four, sat himself down in the wilderness and began the cultivation of a new farm, which he carried on with wonderful perseverance and success. The idea that his advanced age would not permit him to reap the fruits

of his labors never damped the spirit of improvement by which he was, in a most eminent degree, animated, and the district of country in which he lived will long feel the benefits resulting from the liberal exertions he made to advance the agricultural interests of the province. It may not be without use to remark that for much the greater part of his life he ate no animal food nor drank any spirituous or fermented liquors, small beer excepted, and that he enjoyed health to his advanced age. His sons, Timothy and John, were his executors."

He was buried in the church in Wilmot, to the erection of which he had largely contributed, known now as Pine Grove Church. His grave, to the eastward of the chancel, is unmarked by any stone,<sup>10</sup> but in the cemetery in the adjoining town of Middleton, where his son John and many of his descendants rest, Mrs. Eliza Bayard West, of Caledonia, Minnesota, his great-granddaughter, has placed to his memory an appropriate monument.

His oldest son, Timothy, disposed of his property in

<sup>10</sup>The location of General Ruggles's grave is upon the authority of the late W. A. Calnek, historian of Annapolis County.

Hardwick after his father's death and removed to Nova Scotia. He made his home in Belleisle and his son Timothy, of Granville, became afterwards a person of prominence, and was a member of the Provincial Parliament. Timothy Dwight Ruggles, of Bridgetown, a lawyer, a man of wealth and the leading citizen of that place, is the son of the latter. A younger brother of Timothy, of Granville, was Israel Williams Ruggles, who became a successful merchant of Annapolis, and his son, Rev. John Owen Ruggles, of Halifax, lately deceased, was a dearly loved and widely respected clergyman of the Church of England.

General Ruggles's daughter, Mary, married Dr. John Green, of Green Hill, Worcester, Massachusetts, a lineal descendant of Thomas Green, who came to New England in 1635-6, and who settled in Malden in 1651. One of their grandsons, Hon. Andrew H. Green, of New York, as comptroller of that city, was a prominent and effective participant in the overthrow of the Tweed *régime*; and his brother Dr. Samuel Fisk Green, many years missionary in Ceylon, was the compiler, translator and author of many standard medical and religious works in the Tamil language.

SOME PAPERS  
BEARING THE SIGNATURE OF  
GENERAL RUGGLES.



MILITARY ORDER BY GENERAL RUGGLES.<sup>11</sup>

BOSTON, 20th April, 1759.

It is the Captain-General's orders : That Major Indicott, with two captains and one ensign of Col. Frye's regiment, hold themselves in readiness at Castle William to join the detachment ordered to relieve the garrison at Fort Cumberland in Nova Scotia, commanded by Col. Frye ; and that one captain, one first lieutenant and one ensign of Col. Frye's regiment hold themselves in readiness at Castle William to join the detachment ordered to relieve the garrison at St. Johns in Nova Scotia, commanded by Lieut.-Col. Arbuthnott ; and that one ensign of Col. Frye's regiment hold himself in readiness at Castle William to join the detachment ordered to relieve the garrison at Pisquit, commanded by Capt. Gay ; and that Col. Thomas, with Major Winslow, four captains, four first and four second-lieutenants, four ensigns and two hundred and eighty-two non-commissioned officers and privates of his regiment, hold themselves in readiness

<sup>11</sup>The original is in the collection of Mr. William A. Thomas, of Kingston, Mass.

at Castle William to embark at a moment's warning, who are to be reviewed by Col. Burton before they embark, in order to relieve the garrison at Halifax in Nova Scotia, where they will receive their orders; and that Lieut.-Col. Twyng, of Col. Thomas's regiment, with three captains, three first and three second-lieutenants and ensigns, one hundred and eighty-eight non-commissioned officers and privates of said regiment hold themselves in readiness at Castle William to embark at a moment's warning, who are to be reviewed by Col. Burton before they embark, in order to relieve the garrison at Lunenburg, where they will receive their orders; and that Lieut.-Col. Hoas, of Col. Frye's regiment, with three captains, three first, two second-lieutenants and four ensigns, and two hundred and thirty-six non-commissioned officers and privates of Col. Thomas's regiment, hold themselves in readiness at Castle William to embark at a moment's warning, who are to be reviewed by Col. Burton before they embark, in order to relieve the garrison at Annapolis Royal, where they will receive their orders; and that billeting-rolls be immediately made out for the above detachments.

*T. Ruggles*

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRES., SEPT. 9, 1762.

Read and Ordered that the within account be allowed and that the Treasurer be and he hereby is discharged of the sum of one hundred sixty-six pounds sixteen shillings and ten pence.

And that he be further accountable to the said county for the balance of said account, being seventy-two pounds eleven shillings half penny.

And also for outstanding debts amounting to three hundred fifty-eight pounds eight shillings and five pence three farthings, for which the said Treasurer is to account when he shall receive the same.

Sent up for concurrence.

*Timothy Ruggles Sp. Treas.*

In Council, Sept. 9, 1762. Read and Concurred.

*Ch. Cotton Secy*

Consented to

*Fra. Bernard*

## LETTER TO GOVERNOR TRYON.

HARDWICK, 1st of June, 1772.

SIR :

I have it in command from His Majesty to transmit the inclosed copies to Your Excellency and wish them safe to hand, and am Your Excellency's most obedient and very humble servant.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tim Ruggles". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'T' and 'R'.

Inspector of Pines, &amp;c.

His Excellency Governor Tryon.

**LETTER FROM GENERAL PECK.**



LETTER FROM GENERAL LEWIS M. PECK.<sup>12</sup>

BROOKLYN, N. Y., Feb. 25, 1897.

HENRY STODDARD RUGGLES, Esq.,

*Wakefield, Mass.:**My Dear Sir:*

Hon. Andrew H. Green called my attention yesterday to the fact that you have in hand a memoir or biography of General Timothy Ruggles of colonial fame, his ancestor.

I got interested in his personality a number of years ago while endeavoring to piece together in one connected narrative several hundred letters written by a nephew of Mr. Green, who, in his twenty-first year, perished in the civil war, in my regiment.

These letters and genealogy, which lead directly to that forgotten hero, soldier, legislator, jurist, and also eminent loyalist towards the close of his life (his grandfather's grandfather), all combined to interest me in searching far and wide for all the facts in his remarkable career.

<sup>12</sup>Received after the preceding pages had been printed.

Clearly he was once as famous as he is now obscure. The accounts in the history of the town of Hardwick, the incidents there related of him, with those preserved in family traditions, all show what a conspicuous character he was in his era, how he was exalted in his great abilities, and unequalled in political influence up to his sixty-fourth year, or the commencement of the Revolution, 1775, at least.

I conceive the idea, that had he but joined in the rebellion against Great Britain or the British power on this continent, that he must have become the most distinguished New Englander in the struggle of the Revolution—perhaps might have surpassed in popular estimation the fame and services of Washington. His very eminence, however, in the war against the French, perhaps, made it impossible for one of his temperament and invincible integrity to change.

It is obvious also that his skill as a politician, lawyer and judge, eclipsed his reputation as a soldier. Yet his record as such, tends to show from his services in the field, as colonel of a Massachusetts provincial regiment, commander of brigade and division under four successive British commanders-in-chief (Johnson, Loudon, Abercrombie and Amherst), his easy familiarity with those, who, against his advice, forced the conflict at Bunker Hill, as they also did at Fort Ticonderoga, all bespeak his great superiority to most of

them as a man of energy in war, and highest military instinct.

I never could accept Bancroft's opinion, taken from the same source, probably, as Sabine takes his, that after the British captured New York city, General Ruggles there tried, but failed, to raise a royalist regiment. Benjamin Thompson (Count Rumford) succeeded in this. Is it credible that Ruggles, held in such high esteem, could not do as well as one then but little known?

This tradition is against reason. There is nothing to show Ruggles ever crossed the line of a safe neutrality. It would have been widely known if he had. His expostulation with General Gage (the weak man at Fort Ticonderoga, in the rash and disastrous attack there, which, as said, Ruggles opposed) and as well at Bunker Hill, that his folly and that of other British generals "had ruined the King's cause on this continent," all conclusively show, in foresight and sound judgment, he was not only above his contemporaries, but wisely deplored their fatuity. Did he not, of all others, know full well how the New England provincials would fight? Had he not measured himself with his supercilious British comrades? As the New England leader for years of arduous campaigning along with some of Britain's choicest troops, must he not, in their many humiliating reverses, have learned how to dis-

count their conceited military vauntings? Doubtless his pride had oft been coarsely hurt by such. He knew the boasting British were not invincible, and must have believed that man for man the New Englanders were better soldiers. As a soldier, he must have foreseen defeat to the King, which he thus honestly deplored, whilst of his natural sagacity, he observed a judicious neutrality, which of course his political enemies disbelieved. I have no doubt of this, but think that while he saw deeper or more clearly than any British statesman (this was at a time when no Lord Chatham controlled), yet that he could never imagine the problem of self-government, then in process of being unfolded, could succeed. Independence was but another experiment to many, very many, failures. He could never foresee, nor clearly did many of his contemporaries that were patriots, how at last the great possibility for democratic government had arrived and was being solved. Chaos, he doubtless believed, must be the natural result of separation, for just two years after peace, 1785, he moved to Wilmot, Nova Scotia, where he ten years later died.

Ruggles's essays on general trade principles have convinced me of his lack of faith in trusting power to the common people. Be this as it may, it is plain when he saw that very region around Lake George, already a classic in the historic annals of the bloody

struggles of the old French war, again made the strategic theatre of great military operations, he, of perfect familiarity therewith, must have, in 1777, forecasted the result. The army of invasion, long heralded, that descended from the north (but not half as numerous or formidable as the one where he was a conspicuous commander under Amherst, that ascended after long years of struggle through that region from the south), was doomed. He thus, probably, clearly foresaw how, as into a trap, Burgoyne marched to irremediable disaster on the very ground made so entirely familiar to him and ten thousand provincials twenty years earlier.

Actual war is the only practical education for successful warriors. Theoretical schools never make veterans any more than lawyers. Soldiers only truly become such by real and not by sham fighting. The lack of knowing this was the main cause why over-educated McClellan failed in all he did. Scott and Taylor, like Cromwell, Hannibal or Cæsar, never had any kindergarten military training. Marlborough couldn't spell, but he always announced victories.

I mean by all this, that the war of 1756-63 prepared the soldiers for the war of 1775-83. It probably infused just the required skill and confidence into the Continental army, that enabled it to achieve our independence. Just as the Mexican war (two-thirds our

forces then Southern) gave the Confederacy a great defence for two years (1861-63) till volunteers of the North acquired the trade, when its strongest battalions in the order of Providence won the field; so had Ruggles's comrades in his era learned how to outnumber and combine to capture the British at Saratoga. Saratoga securing us the eager support of the French in its turn of the tables in the great game of war, it ended virtually the conflict. It decided the mastery on this continent, or that it should be wrenched from the British as it had been from the French.

Now all this must have been as clear militarily to Ruggles then, as to us now. His foresight was probably as good as much of our hindsight later on. I repeat, as a leader or pioneer in such a preliminary beginning of independence, it must have caused his neutrality in the war that consummated it. That the colonies, in the after political issues, could be formed into a prosperous government we all know now, but he could not. With ten times the actual experience in campaignings vouchsafed to others, it is certain none the less that he did a great work, and it is equally certain that others continued it to the end.

Our scholarly historians like Bancroft, Hildreth, Parkman, or the more local ones, Sloane, Johnston and Stone or others, aim more at picturesque narrations or a comprehensive philosophy than at such dry, central,

salient aspects as are herein presented. Most such have only that unmilitary instinct which imagines the underlying moral causes of great political events are not instinctively military, but something different. This is perhaps, generally, why great commanders are so imperfectly understood, and subjected to such senseless abuse as ruthless monsters, invaders or butchers.

I told Mr. Green that I would develop this point or idea about General Ruggles to you. It is a most interesting subject to me and may be so to others. As to the obscure parts of his official career, I do not of course pretend that I can furnish you anything you are not already fully or better possessed of.

To sum up, I believe General Ruggles was a meagre reporter of his own deeds, being like many other celebrities, indifferent to their particulars; that he was a copious fighter, of logic, compact, a profound reasoner, possessed of a dogmatic temperament, and utterly unaware that in a great crisis on this continent he was a conspicuous actor. He probably never dreamed of influencing the current of our national progress to such an unprecedented and bewildering extent as he most unconsciously did. It is like a resurrection from the dead thus to bring such a character of past history again into our consciousness. I apprehend that few of his kin, wisely or comprehensively, can note how all

that which occurred at Lake George, insensibly has moulded the present civilization of this land.

Of course most of his papers are irretrievably lost, except some of the political ones and sundry of his speeches; but enough remains to justify ex-President John Adams (his kinsman) in noting and speaking as he did of "the impressive grandeur of General Ruggles" in his colonial age.

Very sincerely yours,

LEWIS M. PECK.