AN ADDRESS

Delivered at Waitsfield, Vt., Sept. 15, 1906,
at the unveiling of a Tablet
erected in memory of

Soldiers of the American Revolution

buried in that town.

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. . . BY . . .

MATT BUSHNELL JONES.

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Probably no portion of the American Continent has seen more of the strife of men or played a more important part in the strategy of war than those beautiful amphitheatres formed by the green hills that look down upon Lakes Champlain and George. Here from the earliest days was the chosen battle ground of Algonquin warriors and their hated rivals from the Long House of the Iroquois. Here passed the latter bent upon destruction of the feeble French settlements along the St. Lawrence, and here the Jesuit fathers suffered torture. Here during sixty years of conflict between France and England, for supremacy on the Northern Continent, war parties came upon their cruel errands to New England hamlets, returning hither with their wretched captives; and here were fought the fiercest conflicts of the final struggle between those mighty rivals. Here first the New England farmers gained substantial victory in the unequal conflict with the mother land. Here first, at Valcour Island, fought the fleets of England and America; and here were dealt the blows that crushed the greatest campaign of the war. For almost two centuries from the time when Champlain's arquebus first awoke the echoes near the future site of Ticonderoga, the valley which now bears his name was debated ground, and between it and the New England frontier on the Connecticut war parties of both sides passed to and fro.

The valley of the Winooski, and its tributaries to the south, afforded a natural and easy pathway through the mountains, and our valley, although in lesser degree probably than those to the east, was a highway for troops and scouting parties in both wars. In this service, as we shall see, our first settler doubtless saw and chose his promised land.

Here gathered around him many other veterans of the Revolution. No one of them achieved fame, but it seems fitting that a memorial be dedicated to the men who after bearing honorable part in the making of our nation, became the fathers of this fair town and found within her borders their final resting place.

Nor must we forget at this time those other soldiers among our early settlers who before their death pushed on into the opening West. Let us catalogue them before proceeding further:

Eli Abbott, born and reared in Brookfield, Massachusetts, but moving thence to Shelburne, Massachusetts, from which town he came to Waitsfield, and some years later removed, the records say, to southern Vermont.

Nathaniel Bartlett, from Alexandria, New Hampshire, who removed with his family to the territory then developing in eastern New York as early as 1808.

Samuel Bailey, from Windsor, Vermont, charter member of the church here—removed about 1809 to Chazy, New York, and there died.

William Chase, from Cornish, New Hampshire, a brother of Moses Chase. After many years of residence in this town he removed to the vicinity of Granville, New York, but returned in his old age and died in Warren, where he is buried.

Moses Heaton, physician, and first town clerk of Waitsfield—came from Charlemont, Massachusetts, about 1793. His name disappears early from our records, but whither he went and where he died we do not know.

Joseph Lyon, was from Windsor, Vermont, or vicinity and seems to have been closely associated with General Wait's family. He removed to New York State, it is said.

Aaron Minor, from Connecticut, came early and stayed until 1834, when as an old man he removed to Illinois, with his sons, and died there in 1849.

Isaac Parmenter, or Palmater, as the record has it, born probably in Rutland, Massachusetts, removed to Oakham; was here in 1791, but departed early, leaving no trace.

Silas Royce, from Claremont, New Hamshire, an early settler on the east side of the mountain, buried in the town of Northfield.

Eli Skinner, brother of two whose names appear upon our tablet, removed about 1835 to the new settlements in New York, and thence to Illinois.

Abel Spaulding, from whom Spaulding's Brook is named, came here from Cornish, and became a pioneer to Ohio in 1818.

Wright Spaulding, from Plainfield, Connecticut, one of our early settlers, but later identified with Moretown, whence he removed, it is said, to Saranac, New York.

Nathan Sterling, from Lyme, Connecticut, a brother of Jedu-than Wait's wife, removed about 1813 to Moriah, New York, and died there.

Thomas Sherman, brother of Beriah. His stay was not long; he removed early to New York, but where he died we do not know.

We turn now to the sturdy band whose names stand before us

in enduring bronze upon this unhewn boulder symbolic of the men and of their times.

Benjamin Wait, first settler, who gave the town his name.

Samuel Barnard, born at Shelburne, Massachusetts, October 12, 1752, came here in 1793, died November 3, 1809.

Abijah Brown, born in Rutland, Massachusetts, October 9, 1755, lived as a youth in Paxton, Massachusetts, and came early to Fayston, Vermont, by way of Swanzey, New Hampshire. Removed to Waitsfield about 1833, and died here two years later.

Nathaniel Brown, born in Norwich, Connecticut, settled in the Vermont town of that name, and came here before 1800 as an elderly man. He died April 4, 1804, aged 66.

Doud Bushnell, born May 15, 1762, in Saybrook, Connecticut, whence he came in 1798 by way of Buckland, Massachusetts, and Cambridge, New York, died August 12, 1845.

Moses Chase, born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, March 23, 1759, moved with his parents to Cornish, New Hampshire, and came here before the summer of 1791. He died August, 1831.

Caleb Colton, born in Brimfield, Massachusetts, in 1742, removed to Grantham, New Hampshire, and came thence to Waitsfield before 1804. He died July 5, 1820.

Thomas Green, came to Waitsfield before 1800 from Swanzey, New Hampshire, and was a proprietor of Green's Mills. Died here April 29, 1813, aged 60.

Joseph Hamilton, born in Brookfield, Massachusetts, in 1749–50, came here before October, 1795, and died March 18, 1828.

Ezekiel Hawley, born October 14, 1732 in Meriden, Connecticut, came from Windsor, Vermont, before 1794. He died September 25, 1822.

John Heaton, born in Swanzey, New Hampshire, November 20, 1744, came from Shelburne, Massachusetts, to which place his widowed mother had removed when he was a child. He died here May 7, 1813, while on a visit from Chazy, New York, to which place he removed with Benjamin Wait, Jr., who had married his daughter. He was one of the early settlers of Moretown, Vermont, and was more closely identified with that town than with Waitsfield.

Gaius Hitchcock, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, April 3, 1764, came to Waitsfield via Shelburne, Massachusetts, and Canaan, New Hampshire, as early as 1795. He lived for a time in Montpe-

lier, Vermont, but returned to Waitsfield and died here August 12, 1843.

Joseph Joslin, born in Lancaster, Mass., March 18, 1753, removed to Weathersfield, Vermont, in 1782, and followed his sons to Waitsfield about 1806. He died March 17, 1819.

Jesse Mix, a native of Connecticut, was here before 1793; removed later to Fayston, Vermont, where he died May 8, 1842, but is buried in the Irasville cemetery.

William Newcomb, born in Norton, Massachusetts, August 8, 1761, was an early settler in Fayston, Vermont, but is buried here.

Joseph Osgood, born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, September 18, 1746, a brother of Joseph Joslin's wife. He died of hydrophobia, April 22, 1812.

Jonathan Palmer, born in Concord, Massachusetts, June 2, 1754; moved with his father to Alexandria, New Hampshire, in 1773, and to Waitsfield about 1794. He died about 1833.

Bissell Phelps, born February 16, 1754, in Hebron, Connecticut, came to Waitsfield before 1793 by way of Middlefield, Massachusetts, and died October 26, 1845.

Samuel Pike came from Brookfield, Massachusetts, before the summer of 1791, and died February 25, 1814, aged 78.

Phineas Rider, born in 1760, probably at Deerfield, Massachusetts. He was in Waitsfield with his brother Salma before the summer of 1791, and died here March 31, 1833.

Salma Rider, born probably in Deerfield, Massachusetts, March 14, 1758, came hither with his brother Phineas by way of Shelburne, Massachusetts, and died Nov. 28, 1822.

Beriah Sherman, born in Brimfield, Massachusetts, October 7, 1747, was in Waitsfield before 1791. He died September, 1832.

Amasa Skinner, born in Colchester, Connecticut, March 16, 1762, removed while a child to Shelburne, Massachusetts, and came thence to Waitsfield about 1797, died January 15, 1833.

Jared Skinner, older brother of Amasa, born Nov. 18, 1751, came here via Shelburne, before 1796. He died February 25, 1838.

Salah Smith, born in Deerfield, Massachusetts, January 17, 1762, came to Waitsfield in 1793, and died March 23, 1830.

Elias Taylor, born in West Hoosac, Massachusetts, June 27, 1756, came to Waitsfield before 1800, by way of Winchester, New Hampshire, and Hartland, Vermont. Died May 26, 1829.

Daniel Taylor, born in Shelburne, Massachusetts, July 7, 1757, came here about 1792, and died February 27, 1843.

Ezra Wait, eldest son of Benjamin, born in Windsor, Vermont, in 1768 and died here in 1813.

Jeduthan and William Wait, half brothers of Benjamin, were born in Brookfield, Massachusetts, June 7, 1754, and December 13, 1756, respectively. Jeduthan was here in 1790, and William soon after. The former died April 2, 1829; the latter January 28, 1843.

John Wells, born probably at Hatfield, Massachusetts, February 16, 1733–4, went early to Shelburne, and came here with his daughters' families before 1800. He died April 3, 1806.

Of these men Benjamin and Ezra Wait and probably John Wells, are buried in the Meadow Cemetery, Jeduthan and William Wait, Jesse Mix and William Newcomb at Irasville, and all the others, without much doubt, upon the Common.

Let us as briefly as may be consider the service they performed.

The alarm sent out from Lexington and Concord on that April morning in 1775 brought instant response from all parts of New England, and for days the roads were full of minute men marching toward Cambridge. Six men, whose names appear upon our memorial, were among the number:

Abijah Brown, from Paxton.
Thomas Green, from Swanzey.
Joseph Joslin, from Lancaster.
Samuel Pike, from Brookfield.
Beriah Sherman, from Brimfield, and
John Wells, from Shelburne.

With them we should mention Moses Heaton, who marched from Charlemont.

The motley army that gathered at Cambridge had, however, enlisted for no stated term, and there was no need of or provision for so many men. Many departed within a few days, and some from distant sections never reached Cambridge, but turned back on the way. Enlistments proceeded rapidly, however, and within a few days General Artemas Ward was in command of an army of 16,000 men, guarding the approaches to Boston from Jamaica Plain to Charlestown Neck. This was the army of which Washington took command after the battle of Bunker Hill, and with which he invested Boston so closely that after the fortifica-

tion of Dorchester Heights early in March 1776 the city was evacuated by the British army.

Four of the men already named served during most, if not all, of this period.

Thomas Green was a private in Stark's New Hampshire regiment that guarded the rail fence on the American left at Bunker Hill. These troops repulsed the attack of that wing of the British forces led by General Howe himself, and with what effectiveness is seen from the fact that every officer on his staff was cut down and only one survived. Green was severely wounded in the shoulder in that battle, but continued in the service at least until November, 1775. His wound so far incapacitated him in later years as to lead him to present the following petition to the New Hampshire General Court:

"The petition of Thomas Green of Swanzey, in the County of Cheshire in said State Humbly Sheweth, That your Petitioner in the year 1775, at the Commencement of Hostilities between Great Britian and America, Inlisted as a private soldier in defence of his Country in Capt. Scotts Company and Col. Starks Regiment; and that on the Memorable 17th of June 1775 your Petitioner was called to Action at Bunker Hill, in which Battle he received a wound by a Musket Ball entering his left shoulder, whereby he was for a long time totally Disabled from Labour, and having no other means of Subsistence for himself and family but by Husbandry on a new tract of Land, renders his Worldly Circumstances very Indigent.

"Your petitioner some years since made Application to the General Court of this State and was allowed wages as a Garrison Soldier for one year, but being in Paper Currency and not received till some considerable Time afterward was of very little Value by reason of Depreciation. Since that time your Petitioner has been (as he is informed) Struck out of the List of such Soldiers which Received pay as fit for Garrison Duty while others in like Circumstances still Receive something from the State as a Compensation for past Sufferings.

"Your Petitioner therefore Humbly prayes that your Honors would take the matter into consideration and Grant him Such Relief as in your Wisdom you shall think proper.

"And as in Duty Bound shall ever pray,

"Swanzey, June 11, 1785." "THOS. GREEN.

Five days later, on June 16, 1785, he was voted 18 shillings a month until further orders.

Samuel Pike and Beriah Sherman were both in Danielson's Massachusetts Regiment, and family tradition has it that the latter served at Bunker Hill. This is at best doubtful. With them was Thomas Sherman.

John Wells was a corporal in Capt. Agrippa Wells' Company of Col. Whitcomb's Hampshire County Regiment. He received his bounty for eight months' service at Prospect Hill, December, 1775. With him in this company was Eli Skinner, who served in the capacity of fifer.

Joseph Hamilton, Jeduthan Wait and William Wait, all from Brookfield, served in Col. Ebenezer Learned's regiment. It is of interest to note that during the cannonading on the night of March 10, 1776, when the fortification of Dorchester Heights was completed, Joseph Hamilton's musket, temporarily in the hands of a comrade (let us imagine because its owner was laboring with pick and spade) was broken by a cannon ball that killed another comrade.

Meantime, in September, 1775, expeditions under Generals Richard Montgomery and Benedict Arnold undertook the subjugation of Canada. St. Johns and Montreal soon fell before Montgomery's advance, but on the last day of the year the united forces failed in their attack upon Quebec. The enterprise was renewed early in the following year, but sickness, and lack of proper food played havoc with the American army, and the British commander, reinforced by Brunswick troops, re-took Montreal, and by June, 1776, had pushed the American forces back upon Crown Point.

During this campaign Aaron Minor served as a private in Wooster's First Connecticut Regiment; and in a New Hampshire regiment commanded by Col. Timothy Bedel, (of which Joseph, the elder brother of Benjamin Wait, was Lieutenant-Colonel,) served Caleb Colton, of Grantham, and Elias Taylor, of Winchester. One incident of their service is of interest. A part of Bedel's regiment to the number of 390, under his personal command, was stationed at a narrow pass in the St. Lawrence River known as the Cedars, about 40 miles above Montreal. On May 15, 1776, they were threatened by a superior force of regulars, Canadians and Indians. Bedel abandoned his troops and fled to Montreal for aid, which

was at once dispatched by Arnold, who personally took command. Before his arrival, however, Major Isaac Butterfield, upon whom command devolved, contrary to the advice and against the wishes of his officers, surrendered without firing a gun. Among the prisoners were Colton and Taylor. Arnold made ready for an attack to effect their rescue, but upon the threat of the British commander to turn the prisoners over to the savages he was compelled to desist and agree to an exchange.

After the evacuation of Boston, Washington removed his forces to the vicinity of New York, and here the summer and fall of 1776 saw a long series of disasters to the American cause. The battle of Long Island was lost and Brooklyn Heights evacuated, although the army was saved by brilliant work upon the part of Washington. The British promptly took New York, and the American army was attacked at Harlem Heights. Here, however, and at White Plains a month later the British were repulsed and their advance up the Hudson delayed for that season at least, although Forts Washington and Lee were later captured—the former with many prisoners.

To swell the American army during this campaign the New England militia was freely called upon, and we note that in Col. Moseley's regiment of General Lincoln's brigade Jared Skinner served as private soldier, and from his pension application we learn that he participated in the action at White Plains.

With the spring of 1777 the British renewed with greater elaboration the plan of campaign that had failed of its purpose the preceding season. The blow was to be struck at the centre of the colonies: Burgoyne was to sweep the lakes and descend the Hudson as far as Albany, there to be joined by Howe from New York, while St. Ledger, proceeding by way of the St. Lawrence and Ontario, was to reduce Fort Stanwix at Oswego, and, descending the Mohawk valley, unite his forces with the others. Thus was New England to be separated from the other colonies and the two parts crushed at leisure.

Washington was not blind to the situation. During the fall of '76 and winter of '77 the necessity of completing their quotas was urged upon the various colonies, and fearing a winter attack at Ticonderoga, troops were hurried to that point, largely from Massachusetts, where fifteen line regiments were being recruited. Among them was Col. Samuel Brewer's First Massachusetts Regi-

ment, in which served Joseph Osgood. John Wells, now raised to rank of captain, and commanding a company of neighbors in Lieutenant-Colonel Timothy Robinson's regiment, was in garrison at the fort during the winter, and in his company were Jared and Eli Skinner and Phineas Rider, while Salma Rider served in another company of the same regiment. Here also was Samuel Bailey in Chase's regiment of New Hampshire troops.

Early in the summer Burgoyne began his advance down the lake, and on July 1 appeared before Ticonderoga. The American forces, trapped by the occupation of Mt. Defiance, much as Washington had trapped Gage by occupying Dorchester, evacuated the fort on July 5th. The British pushed on to Fort Edward, which was in turn abandoned by the Americans. Then came the uprising. The story of the murder of Jane McCrea was on every lip. In the words of another, "The blood of this unfortunate girl * * was not shed in vain. Armies sprang up from it. Her name passed as a note of alarm along the banks of the Hudson. It was a rallying word among the Green Mountains of Vermont, and brought down all their hardy yoemanry."[1]

In 1776 four companies of rangers under Major Joab Hoisington, had been raised in eastern Vermont under the authority of New York. Benjamin Wait was captain of the first company, his first commission in the war. Under him marched many of his Windsor neighbors, among them Ezekiel Hawley. Upon the organization of Herrick's regiment of rangers in the summer of 1777, these companies were amalgamated with it, and Wait was commissioned Major of the regiment. In this regiment also served Joseph Lyon.

Vermont called for aid upon New Hampshire, and that state turned to Stark, who had but lately resigned his commission in the Continental army. Three regiments were raised and placed under his command. In the regiment commanded by Col. David Hobart[2] we find enlisted Caleb Colton, Jonathan Palmer and Silas Royce—all present, doubtless, at Bennington, as was also Phineas Rider of the Massachusetts troops, as stated in his pension application.

To raise these troops New Hampshire had no funds, but the

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[1] Irving's Life of Washington.

[2] Many writers refer to "Col. Hubbard" as in command of one of Stark's Regiments. The regiment was, however, commanded by Col. David Hobart of Plymouth and lead the attack on Tory breastworks at Bennington. (N. H. State Papers and History of Plymouth, N. H.)

spirit of the times is shown in the words of John Langdon as he arose in the New Hampshire General Court on July 17th. Said he: "I have 1000 dollars in hard money: I will pledge my plate for 3000 more. I have 70 hogsheads of Tobago rum, which I will sell for the most it will bring. They are at the service of the state. If we succeed in defending our firesides and our homes I may be remunerated. If we do not, then the property will be of no value to me. Our friend Stark, who so nobly maintained the honor of our state at Bunker Hill, may safely be entrusted with the honor of the enterprise, and we will check the progress of Burgoyne."

One month later Stark and Herrick and Warner met the flower of Burgoyne's army on the banks of the Walloomsack, but there is no need to recount here the exploits of the blue-frocked farmers from New Hampshire and Vermont on that sultry August day.

Meantime, his slow advance had brought Burgoyne to Stillwater, where he found himself confronted by the American army under Schuyler (soon to be supplanted by General Gates). Here was Poor's New Hampshire brigade of three regiments, one of them the First New Hampshire Continental, under Col. Cilly, in which Moses Chase served as private. These troops were with St. Clair at Ticonderoga, and had participated in his retreat. On the British flank General Lincoln was gathering the New England militia, and here we find again the company of John Wells. With him was Phineas Rider, and Eli Abbott doubtless served in another company of the same regiment. Among the Massachusetts regulars was Abijah Brown, of Col. Timothy Bigelow's 15th Massachusetts regiment. Possibly we may also include Jeduthan and William Wait, then serving in Col. Thomas Nixon's regiment.

Burgoyne, brought to bay, gave battle at Stillwater on Sept. 19, and on October 7th made his desperate and unsuccessful attempt to cut through the American lines at Saratoga. On these occasions the reckless bravery and magnetic leadership of Benedict Arnold stand out in bold relief. Here he reached the zenith of his career as an able and patriotic soldier, and it can but add a personal touch to our interest to know that while the others named saw service in those battles, Moses Chase, as private in Cilly's regiment, served under Arnold on the American left that bore the brunt of battle, and that this regiment, "in spite of heavy losses, fought 'till night."[1]

[1] New Hampshire State Papers.

Burgoyne, defeated and surrounded, surrendered on October 17th; St. Ledger's expedition met defeat at Stanwix; Howe was foiled by Washington's masterly tactics, and the second blow at the American centre failed.

From this point on it becomes less easy to trace the particular service of our men who were enlisted in the regular troops, and statements concerning them must of necessity be somewhat disconnected.

Of Moses Chase it may be said that he was with his regiment at Valley Forge and Monmouth, and probably took part with it in the expedition against the Indians and Tories sent out by Washington in 1779 under General Sullivan to avenge the massacres at Wyoming and Cherry Valley.

Jeduthan and William Wait in Nixon's regiment, (later transferred—the former to the light infantry and the latter to Baldwin's engineers) followed the fortunes of Washington's army continuously from August, 1777, to the close of the war, William being discharged because of wounds[1] in 1782, and Jeduthan mustered out in 1783. Both doubtless saw the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Abijah Brown, continuing in Bigelow's regiment until the close of 1778, saw service on the Hudson River and near Providence, R. I., brought thither, probably, by the raids on New Bedford and Fair Haven in the fall of 1778.

Bissell Phelps served in various capacities in the regular army; was at one time captain under Quartermaster General Maverick Hubbard, and saw service under Col. Roger Enos in his Connecticut regiment.

Salah Smith enlisted late in June, 1780, for six months, and after his arrival at Camp Totoway was assigned as private to Col. Michael Jackson's 8th Massachusetts Line, then stationed on the Hudson.

Jesse Mix, a private in Colonel Swift's Second Connecticut Line, was stationed on the Hudson from June, 1782, to December, 1783, this being one of seven regiments retained by Washington after the disbandment of the army in June of the latter year.

Isaac Parmenter and William Chase were also in the regular troops, the former in Col. Ichabod Alden's Massachusetts Line

[1] These wounds were not the loss of an arm as often stated. That loss was the result of participating in a 4th of July celebration.

Regiment from March, 1777, to December, 1779. This regiment was stationed at Cherry Valley, N. Y., when on Nov. 10, 1778, that settlement was attacked by Butler's Indians and Tories. The story of that cruel massacre is too well known to call for repetition. We merely note that Parmenter was among the prisoners. William Chase was in Jackson's 4th Mass. Regiment from May, 1782, to the close of the war, and earlier, while in Col. Drury's regiment, was located at West Point when Arnold plotted its surrender.

Returning again to the New England field we find Connecticut and Rhode Island peculiarly exposed throughout the war to the attacks of British troops from New York, and frequent calls were made for men on short enlistments to repel invasion. Thus in July, 1779, General Tyron with an army and fleet invaded Connecticut. New Haven was taken, Fairfield and Norwalk burned, and he was about to proceed to New London when suddenly recalled. The New England militia poured in from every side, and in Col. Elisha Porter's Hampshire regiment enlisted for service at New London, we find Samuel Barnard, Salma Rider, Amasa and Jared Skinner and Salah Smith from Shelburne, while in the same service was Doud Bushnell of Saybrook. The latter was in garrison at Fort Trumbull, and later re-enlisted under the gallant Ledyard for further service at that point. He was transferred to West Point just in time to escape the capture of New London and following massacre by Arnold in September, 1781. He served on board the privateer brig Thetis after his discharge from service at West Point and alone among the men whose names appear on our memorial saw naval service. We also know that Nathan Sterling served at New London in Col. Samuel McClellan's regiment.

The year 1780 has been termed the darkest of the American cause. Matters in the south were far from satisfactory. Washington's army melted away, and the finances were at low ebb. The active campaign was in the south, but Washington, fearful of a move up the Hudson, called out the militia, and in June, 1780, nearly 5,000 men were enlisted from Massachusetts to serve three months from their arrival at Claverack on the Hudson. Among the number were Phineas Rider, Daniel Taylor and Eli Abbott, under Lieut.-Col. David Wells, and at this time John Heaton saw service as lieutenant in John Wells' company, while Amasa Skinner enlisted in that summer for six months' service and was probably assigned as private to Jackson's 8th Massachusetts Regiment with

his neighbor Salah Smith. William Newcomb also enlisted as a private in Col. Carpenter's regiment, for service in Rhode Island, and Gaius Hitchcock began his service in Col. Pomeroy's regiment, later (1781) enlisting under Capt. Oliver Shattuck in Lt.-Col. Sears' regiment.

That year was also a hard one for Vermont, maintaining herself as best she might against encroachments from all sides. Numerous raids were made from Canada, notably those against Royalton and Newbury. Benjamin Wait, now a major, and member of the state's Board of War, was in chief command along the northern frontier, and enlisted in the service under him were Nathaniel Brown, Abel Spaulding, and the Major's eldest son, Ezra.

With one exception the service of our men has now been fairly covered, although not completely, for within the scope of this paper it is possible to mention only such service as is in some measure connected with the more important campaigns of the war. It now remains to speak of the military service of our first citizen—a man whose history reads like romance, and who deserves to stand among the builders of Vermont.

Benjamin Wait, third son of John and Annah Wait, was born at Sudbury, Mass., Feb. 13, 1736. His mother died when he was but a child, and his father, marrying again, removed to Brookfield about 1745. Here he kept a tavern on Foster Hill. His house stood on the old Boston-Albany highway, and as its proprietor was himself a veteran, this hostelry was for years famous among the soldiers of the French wars, who were wont to linger there upon their journeys. We can picture Benjamin and his brothers lying of a winter evening before the great fireplace in the living room, while in the dim light of the open fire the father and his guests related over the steaming punch bowl, tales of warfare, suffering and Indian barbarity that sent the youngsters shivering to their attic beds.

Environment seldom shows its influence more strongly than upon this family of six boys. John, the eldest son, saw service in the campaign of 1757, and rose to rank of captain in the Massachusetts troops during the Revolution. Joseph, enlisting in 1754, became the captain of a company of Rogers' Rangers, and saw continuous service until 1761. Removing to Claremont, N. H., he became, upon the outbreak of the Revolution, Lieutenant-Colonel

in Bedel's Regiment of New Hampshire troops, and received a mortal wound during the fighting around the foot of Lake Champlain, just previous to the naval battle at Valcour. Richard, next younger than Benjamin, enlisted at the age of seventeen in the French war, and was a captain in Herrick's Rangers at Bennington; while of the record of the two half-brothers, Jeduthan and William, we have already heard. In short this family reminds us of the story told of Ethan Allen in his captivity, who is said after Burgoyne's surrender to have boasted to the British officers of the success of the Revolutionary army, and to have further stated that "There was never a woman who had seven sons that could equal those of his mother." Whereupon a sturdy Briton tartly observed that Allen should except Mary Magdalene, who was also delivered of seven devils.

The military experiences of Benjamin Wait began with the campaign of 1755, for which he had enlisted at the age of 18. The plan of that campaign involved attacks upon the French at four points simultaneously. Braddock was to advance upon Fort Duquesne. Provincial troops from New England, New York and New Jersey were to seize Crown Point, and another body drawn wholly from New England was to subjugate Acadia, while Shirley was to reduce Niagara with two regiments raised wholly in the provinces but taken into the King's pay and designated as Shirley's and Pepperell's respectively.

These forces with one New Jersey regiment, pushed forward through the wilderness to Oswego, and here checkmated by want of provisions and the presence of a strong French force at Frontenac, the little army waited until the approach of winter made further action impossible.

In October Shirley, leaving 700 men at Oswego, returned to Albany, and a winter of border warfare settled in. "Month after month the great continent lay wrapped in snow. Far along the edge of the western wilderness men kept watch and ward in lonely blockhouses, or scoured the forest on the track of prowling war parties. The provincials in garrison at Forts Edward, William Henry and Oswego dragged out the weary winter; while bands of New England rangers muffled against the piercing cold, caps of fur on their heads, hatchets in their belts, and guns in their mittened hands, glided on skates along the gleaming ice floor of Lake George, to spy out the secrets of Ticonderoga, or seize some careless sentry

to tell them tidings of the foe. Thus the petty war went on; but the big war was frozen into torpor, ready, like a hibernating bear, to wake again with the birds, the bees and the flowers."

Young Wait with his comrades at Oswego, suffering the pangs of hunger and of cold, saw more than half the regiment die of these twin enemies. Recruits came in the spring, but it was not until near the middle of August that an adequate force was started under Webb, and ere it reached the Great Carrying Place between the head-waters of the Hudson and Ontario the French under Montcalm had descended on Oswego and taken it with its garrison of some 1400 men. A scene of drunkenness and plunder followed, and several prisoners were butchered by the Indian allies. More would have fallen but for the efforts of Montcalm. Here, or in some preliminary skirmish (on this point only there seems to be some doubt) young Wait was taken prisoner and by his Indian captors compelled to run the gauntlet. Other prisoners had received hard usage, so when his turn came, believing, as stated by a grandson who heard him tell the story, that "spunk would be a good antidote for savage barbarity," he (still in the words of his grandson,) "ran through with clenched fists as vicious as a wild bull, knocking them from one side to the other, and when they see him approaching they had little time enough to take care of themselves." Rescued from the Indians by a Frenchwoman who hid him under a cask in her cellar, he was turned over to the French, and held some months a prisoner of war. Later, he was sent with other prisoners to France, only to be rescued by a British man-of-war and brought back to his native shores.

Early in the war Robert Rogers, a native of New Hampshire, had organized a band of rangers, mostly from the New Hampshire borders, and in the spring of 1756 he had raised another company and was commissioned its captain. With him were his brother Richard, John Stark, and Israel Putnam. In July, 1756, a second company was raised, and by the spring of 1757 there were seven, all under Rogers. Of them Parkman says in another of his matchless descriptive passages:

"The best of them were commonly employed on Lake George; and nothing can surpass the adventurous hardihood of their lives. Summer and winter, day and night, were alike to them. Embarked in whale-boats or birch canoes they glided under the silent moon, or in the languid glare of a breathless August, when islands floated

in dreamy haze, and the hot air was thick with odors of the pine, or in the bright October, when the jay screamed from the woods, squirrels gathered their hoard, and congregated blackbirds chattered farewell to their summer haunts; when gay mountains basked in light, maples dropped leaves of rustling gold, sumacs glowed like rubies under the dark green of the unchanging spruce, and mossed rocks with all their painted plumage lay double in the watery mirror; that festal evening of the year when jocund nature disrobes herself, to wake again refreshed in the joy of her undying spring; or in the tomb-like silence of the winter forest, with breath frozen on his beard, the ranger strode on snowshoes over the spotless drifts, and like Dürer's Knight, a ghastly death stalked ever at his side."

Joseph Wait, then an ensign in Col. Joseph Dwight's regiment, was in 1757 transferred to a company of these rangers, and in due time became its captain. Upon his release Benjamin enlisted in these troops.

In the spring of 1758 a powerful force was gathered for the reduction of the French fortress at Louisbourg, and placed under the command of the newly-created general, Jeffrey Amherst. To this army were assigned several companies of rangers, the only provincial troops in the command.

On June 2nd the fleet of Admiral Boscawen sailed into Gabarus Bay, and at daybreak on the 8th the troops attempted a landing. In the division under General Wolf, the future hero of Quebec, which was to make the real attack, were the New England rangers. We cannot enter into details of that conflict, but suffice it to say that under heavy fire the boats were driven to the shore, a landing made, and the French batteries captured. Young Wait was, if his own relation of the story is to be credited, in command of one of these boats, and when his men faltered and lay down to screen themselves from the French fire, told them to stand up to their work or take to the water. Nearly two months of siege work followed, until on July 26th after a gallant defence, the stronghold fell, and Amherst, with some delay, sailed for Boston with part of his forces to reinforce Abercrombie at Lake George, where he arrived early in October. Here until the close of the war Wait was engaged directly under Rogers in the capacity of ensign in his brother's company.

July, 1759, saw a slow advance, with Ticonderoga, Crown Point and Montreal as its objectives. The French successively abandoned

Ticonderoga and Crown Point and fell back to the foot of the lake, while Amherst dawdled away the summer. In August he attempted to communicate with Wolfe at Quebec, but the St. Francis Indians, who throughout the war had been the scourge of the New England frontiers, seized the messengers and carried them to Montreal. Rogers was straightway ordered to destroy their village, which lay on the St. Francis river near its junction with the St. Lawrence, a journey of more than two hundred miles through an unbroken wilderness. Taking about 200 of his best men (among them Joseph and Benjamin Wait) he set out in boats on September 13th and on the tenth day reached Missisquoi Bay, his force reduced by accident to 142. Hiding the boats these men struck boldly into the forest, but on the second day two friendly Indians brought the news that a party of French, superior in numbers, were on their track. Rogers, nothing daunted, kept on, out-marched his pursuers for nine days through swamp and forest, fell upon the village, killed 200 Indians, took 20 prisoners, and released 5 English captives with loss of 1 killed and 7 wounded. Then, as his return was blocked, and waiting but an hour for rest, he plunged southward up the St. Francis, intending to return by way of Lake Memphremagog and the Passumpsic and Connecticut rivers. The scanty provisions failed as they reached the lake, and closely pursued, the men separated into small parties, the better to obtain game. Several were killed or captured, and others perished from starvation. So reduced were they that powder horns and leathern accoutrements were boiled to furnish sustenance. The loss was more than one-third of the total number. It was anticipated that succor would reach them at the mouth of the Ammonoosuck river, to which place Rogers had requested provisions to be sent, but when that point was reached the famished soldiers found only the still warm ashes of the campfires deserted by their rescuers, who waiting but two days, had retreated in a panic, taking the provisions with them. Leaving the others to follow as best they could, Rogers, with three companions, pressed on, and after five days of almost incredible suffering reached No. Four (Charlestown, N. H.) and despatched provisions to the sufferers. Joseph Wait, proceeding with the men, was so fortunate as to kill a deer in Bradford near the mouth of the river to which his name was given by his comrades as they devoured the flesh.

Meanwhile Quebec had fallen, and in the summer of 1760 the

British advanced upon Montreal from east, west and south. The rangers were with Haviland, who advanced down Champlain from Crown Point. At Isle-aux-Noix the rangers dragged artillery through the forest to the rear of the French position and drove their ships back toward St. Johns until they stranded, whereupon they swam out with their tomahawks, and boarding one vessel, compelled the rest to surrender.

The French fell back upon the St. Lawrence, abandoning St. Johns, and Haviland followed with the rangers leading the way. The various English forces formed their junction at Montreal, and on September 8th Vaudreuil signed the capitulation by which Canada passed to the British Crown. Here Wait saw once more in British hands the colors of his regiment captured by the French at Oswego, four years before.

Four days later Amherst ordered Rogers to proceed westward with Capt. Wait's and Capt. Hazen's companies of rangers to take possession of Detroit, Michilimackinac and other forts in that district. The next day (Sept 13) they left Montreal in whaleboats, and Rogers' journal follows in detail the movements of the party. Reaching Detroit Lieut. Butler and Ensign Wait with 20 men were sent westward to bring in the French troops at Forts Miami and Gatenois. This service, performed in dead of winter, made a lasting impression, and in later years Wait related how the men, becoming disheartened and benumbed with cold, would beg of him to shoot them, instead of which he switched their legs with sticks until aroused by anger they resumed their march.

It was not until the spring of 1761 that these troops reached New York and not until October that they were disbanded, and at the age of twenty-five Wait found himself a veteran of six years constant and exacting warfare. Returning to Brookfield he remained until 1767, when he married, and with his girl wife pushed out to the frontier to make himself a home. Settling in Windsor, Vt., he promptly threw in his fortunes with the Green Mountain Boys in their struggle with New York and so active was he that like Allen, Baker and Warner, he was singled out for punishment.

In 1769 Captain William Dean and his two sons felled a portion of the King's forest at Cornish without license from the royal governor. They were New York sympathizers, and Governor Wentworth ordered their arrest. Captain Dean was absent in

Massachusetts, but his sons were promptly arrested and placed by the Deputy Marshal in charge of Wait and one other, and a few days later the party started through the woods to New York city by way of Albany. At Marlboro a party of Yorkers from Guilford and Brattleboro attempted a rescue, but a firm stand by the marshall and his two assistants awed them, and the prisoners were safely delivered at New York.

Windsor was a hot-bed of sympathizers with the New Hampshire grants, and her leading citizens met the New York authorities with open defiance. In May, 1770, Wait and his brother Joseph had been arrested on a New York warrant, but rescued by their friends. Before the end of the month the New York sheriff, Daniel Whipple, had gathered a posse of some 15 men and proceeded to the house of Benjamin. Meantime the brothers, having collected a party of friends, gave battle and took the sheriff and his entire party prisoners, holding them for several hours.

In these and other ways Wait became marked as a leader of the Green Mountain Boys on the east side of the mountains and it has been said that he was with Allen at the capture of Ticonderoga, but for this we cannot vouch.

Certain it is that in June, 1775, in spite of his opposition to that state, he joined with William Williams and Joab Hoisington in a letter to the New York authorities urging that a regiment of "good, active, enterprising soldiers" be raised for the defence of the section, and tendering his services as Lieutenant-Colonel. Two months later he was chosen major of the upper regiment in Cumberland County, but the New York assembly refused to confirm him —presumably because of his former opposition to that colony. Not until October, 1776, was he commissioned, and then received appointment as first captain in Joab Hoisington's four companies of rangers raised for service on the northern frontiers with headquarters at Newbury. These troops performed varied and somewhat uncertain service, sometimes acting under and sometimes in open defiance of the New York authorities. In fact the spirit of hostility to New York had become so great that not only were the rangers slow to act under her orders, but when in February, 1777, an attempt was made to enlist a regiment for service at Ticonderoga the recruiting officer was obliged to report "the men are averse to go out under the State of New York; neither do I think it possible for me to raise any more." It may be truly said that

after the campaign of 1775 Vermont's position in the Revolution was defensive; she did not fight except to defend her own borders from invasion, and with good reason, for she was an outcast, strained to the utmost, and maintaining her existence as best she might by force or by diplomacy against the foreign enemy upon the north and the still more bitter opponent on her western border.

Hoisington died early in 1777, and Wait, with rank of Captain, took command. In May the New York Council of Safety ordered the rangers to Kingston, but as there were no funds to support the men on the march they refused to go. A month later (June 27), aroused by the advance of Burgoyne, the Council resolved that the rangers be peremptorily ordered to repair to Kingston, and funds were sent to Wait to defray the expense. In obedience to orders he proceeded to Newbury, only to find that his men had marched to Ticonderoga. A few days later the evacuation of that fort dispersed them, and on July 14th he ordered them to proceed to Kingston. The men refused, however, on the ground that their own frontiers and families must be protected. This situation Wait reported to the Council, who declared their satisfaction with his conduct, but declined action on the conduct of the rangers.

Amidst all these activities Wait found time for civil service. Elected on the standing Committee of Correspondence for the County at the Cumberland Convention at Westminster in February, 1774, he was now called to represent his town in the convention at Windsor, which met to adopt a constitution for the new state. In the midst of its deliberations came the news of St. Clair's retreat, and at once confusion reigned, but after a short delay work was resumed and the draft under consideration adopted. Forthwith the newly-organized Council of the state voted to raise a regiment of rangers under Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Herrick. With this regiment the older companies of rangers seem to have promptly amalgamated and performed most efficient service.

Benjamin Wait and his younger brother Richard were officers in the regiment, the latter with rank of captain, and Benjamin as major, to which position he was commissioned September 3, 1777.

Three weeks later Col. Brown and Major Wait, with some 500 men, were ordered to the vicinity of Ticonderoga to cut Burgoyne's lines of communication—a service so efficiently performed that Wait was commended for "spiritted conduct" by the Council.

In February, 1778, an expedition into Canada was proposed,

and Vermont requested to furnish a regiment of rangers. Herrick and Wait were at once commissioned as Colonel and Lieutenant-Colonel respectively, but the project was abandoned, and we know no more of Wait's activities until October 23, 1779, when the Council appointed him as sheriff of Cumberland County, an office that was then little less than military, and which he continued to hold for seven years, except during his absence on the frontiers. In the same month he became a member of the state's Board of War, of which body he seems to have continued an active member until the close of the Revolution. In 1780 with rank of Major, he was in the field at the time of the attacks on Royalton and Newbury, and in January, 1781, he was commissioned Major of the First Regiment of Vermont militia and immediately detailed for service on the frontiers.

Throughout the war disturbances continued between the partisans of New York, who were particularly numerous in Windham County, and those who sought to uphold the authority of Vermont. In 1783 these dissensions reached their height. Guilford was entirely in control of the New Yorkers, and their resistance to Vermont authority became so determined that Governor Chittenden was driven to adopt stringent measures. In October the Assembly provided for raising "one hundred able and effective men to assist the civil authority in carrying into effect the law in the southern part of the County of Windham," and to Wait was entrusted the command, with rank of Colonel.

Negotiations having failed, Wait's regiment and other militia gathered at Brattleboro, and on January 20th, 1784, hostilities commenced. Suffice it to say that after some resistance the Yorkers fled and the authority of the state was upheld.

Early in November, 1786, a mob led by citizens of Barnard and Hartland gathered to prevent the sitting of the court at Windsor, an outbreak that was but a part of Shay's rebellion. Wait, as sheriff, read the riot act and dispersed them, but one of the number being tried for riot on November 14, a second mob collected. Wait, acting not only as sheriff but as colonel of the 3rd regiment, ordered a company of his men from Weathersfield to come to Windsor. With 40 of these men he set out before light on the 17th, and deceiving the guards by taking a circuitous route, attacked the house in Hartland at which the rioters were assembled. Twenty-seven of the leaders were captured, but not until Wait had received

a wound that incapacitated him for nearly a month This experience lingered in his memory, and in old age he used to lament the fact that after passing through many years of military service without a scratch, he was finally nearly killed by some of his old companions in arms while engaged in the enforcement of the laws.

March 1, 1787, he was elected Brigadier General in command of the 3rd brigade of militia, and on the records of the Governor and Council for August 24, 1788, appears this minute:

"A letter received from General Wait resigning his office as Brigadier General being read, the Secretary is directed to inform the General that they are unwilling to discharge him until further consideration, and request his continuance in service."

Still later he was elected to the highest military rank in the gift of the state—Major General—but resigned a few months later, when he removed to the town that bears his name.

Here ends his military service, covering a period of more than thirty years—able, faithful, progressing from little unto greater things. Here let us leave him to pass in well-earned peace the closing years of a long life, surrounded by his family and by old friends and comrades, honored by all who knew him. There is no more fitting benediction than that spread upon the records of the old church by the hand of his beloved pastor, Amariah Chandler:

"June 28, 1822, General Benjamin Wait, from whom the town was named. He was a distinguished soldier in the last French War, and bore a Colonel's commission in the war of the Revolution. He was the first proprietor and first settler of this town. In early life he made a profession of the religion of Christ. But for many years was in a state of great backsliding. About ten years before his death his graces seemed to revive. His remaining years he lived lamenting his former lukewarmness, and died in the joyful hope and expectation of a happy resurrection through the abounding mercy of the Great Redeemer.

Obiet June 28, Buried with Masonic honors June 30, 1822, Aet 86 years and 4 months."