



Embattled Farmers

Campaigns and Profiles of
Revolutionary Soldiers from
Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1775-1783

Richard C. Wiggin

“When we had fired at the bridge, and killed the British, Noah Parkhurst, of Lincoln, who was my right-hand man, said—‘Now the war has begun, and no one knows when it will end.’”

—Amos Baker, on the North Bridge fight,
April 19, 1775

“My friends, in a few minutes we shall be in the presence of the enemy, and I hope you will behave like the men I take you to be.”

—Capt. Moses Brown, before the Battle of
Trenton, December 26, 1776

“...one of [the British Frigates] gave chase from 4 o’clock AM to 8 o’clock PM when the *Wilkes* ran on Chattam Beach at Cape Cod and was burnt by the British; she had several men killed and some drowned, and [we] escaped by the barges and by swimming.”

—Edward Adams, on his service as a
privateer, late summer, 1777

“...in the encounter, I received a wound from a Broad sword on my head & several thrusts from a bayonet in my body, the effects from the wound on my head were very serious & still felt ... we were taken prisoners and carried to New York, where I remained ten months & nine days ...”

—Jonathan Gage, on the Battle of Young’s
House, February 3, 1780

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There was nothing extraordinary about these men; they were ordinary farmers, laborers, merchants, tradesmen, slaves, and former slaves, the cross-section of a typical eighteenth-century New England farming community. But when faced with the loss of their cherished liberties and long-standing tradition of self-government, they were swept up in an epic struggle against long odds. These are the forgotten men who fought the American Revolution.

Meticulously researched, *Embattled Farmers* traces the footsteps of 252 individual men—all connected with the same community—who served as Patriot soldiers. Through repeated enlistments, they served at Lexington and Concord, at the Siege of Boston, and during the campaigns to Ticonderoga, Canada, New York, Saratoga, the Hudson Valley, The Jerseys, Valley Forge, and Yorktown.

Despite family and community ties, four others remained loyal to the King, and fought against their neighbors and kinfolk. They lost everything they had, and lived the remainder of their lives in exile.

Individual stories tell of under-age service, skirmishes and battles, guard duty, fatigue duty, capture by the enemy, smallpox, desertion, and hardships, as well as service by slaves, economic dislocation, and the practice of substitution.

Collectively, their stories present a fascinating mosaic of a community at war. Told mostly from the perspective—and in some cases the actual words—of the men themselves, *Embattled Farmers* places the reader shoulder to shoulder with the men-at-arms. As minute men, militia, privateers, Continental soldiers—and Loyalist militia—as officers and foot-soldiers, the stories of these Lincoln men bring to life the human drama of the War for American Independence. The book’s many hidden pearls will delight any armchair historian.

Richard C. Wiggin is Historian and past Captain of the Lincoln Minute Men, a colonial re-enactor, and volunteer at Minute Man National Historical Park. He is former Executive Director of Boston’s Old State House, and has written seven audio tours for different segments of Minute Man National Historical Park and Boston’s Freedom Trail. His articles have appeared in *Alaska Magazine*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Civil War Courier*, and *The Lincoln Review*.

“Much to the delight of readers, Richard Wiggin has turned an exhaustive investigation of the service records of Lincoln folk into an engaging tale of the connection of the town to the sweep of the American Revolution. What a grand outcome. This work is an immeasurable service to the town and to these patriots, as well as a rare pleasure.”

—Donald L. Hafner, Professor, Boston College, and former Captain,
The Lincoln Minute Men

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