

EVERYDAY LIFE  
IN  
EIGHTEENTH CENTURY  
LINCOLN, MASSACHUSETTS

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

African Americans . . . . .	Page 6
Baking . . . . .	Page 19
Beds . . . . .	Page 24
Bibliography . . . . .	Page 30
Burial Customs . . . . .	Page 25
Butchering . . . . .	Page 20
Cleaning . . . . .	Page 24
Cooking . . . . .	Page 19
Diet . . . . .	Page 17
Epidemics . . . . .	Page 12
The Family . . . . .	Page 11
The Farm . . . . .	Page 6
Farm Tools . . . . .	Page 8
Hazards of Fireplaces . . . . .	Page 20
Introduction . . . . .	Page 1
Jewelry . . . . .	Page 23
Laundry . . . . .	Page 21
Light . . . . .	Page 16
Lincoln . . . . .	Page 1
Lincoln and April 19, 1775 . . . . .	Page 27
Lincoln and the Postwar Period . . . . .	Page 28 -
Lincoln and Pre-Revolutionary Political Action . . . . .	Page 25
Lincoln and the War . . . . .	Page 27
Lincoln Committee of Correspondence . . . . .	Page 26
Neighbors . . . . .	Page 13
Personal Hygiene . . . . .	Page 22

Pests . . . . .	Page 24
The Poor . . . . .	Page 4
Religion . . . . .	Page 25
Schools . . . . .	Page 4
Self-Sufficiency . . . . .	Page 5
Soap . . . . .	Page 21
The Tavern . . . . .	Page 10
Town Government . . . . .	Page 2
Transportation . . . . .	Page 9
Warmth . . . . .	Page 14
Wild Life . . . . .	Page 9

## Everyday Life in Eighteenth Century Lincoln, Massachusetts

### Introduction

Historians, archeologists and architects have all created documents discussing the Hartwell family, the Hartwell Tavern and the Samuel Hartwell House. Most of these reports are available in the park's library. (See the bibliography at the end of this binder for a listing of the available reports.)

This study will attempt to provide background information on the world in which the Hartwells lived. The functioning of the inn or tavern the Hartwells maintained has been the focus of previous studies. The Hartwells' involvement in the events of April 19, 1775 has also been analyzed. Overlooked at times is the fact that for decades the Hartwells operated a farm and raised a family.

What was life like for a farmer in eighteenth century Lincoln, Massachusetts? How did the routine of work change from season to season? What work was done by men and what work was done by women? What was it like to live in a house like the one the Hartwells occupied? To answer these and other questions related to life in the eighteenth century, it is necessary to look beyond the personal experiences of the Hartwells and draw on books and journal articles that explore these questions in a broader context.

The material included here will help place the Hartwells into the larger pattern of eighteenth century life. They were individuals but their lives were also similar to many others. When possible, details of the Hartwells' lives have been woven into the bigger story. This study, however, is not a history of the Hartwells. Other reports already provide that information.

Although 1775 is an important date for the park, this study is not restricted to one year. Patterns of work and daily living did not either develop or end in one year.

The report is organized by topic not chronologically. This arrangement will hopefully facilitate its use. The reader can focus on the information in which he/she is most interested. The table of contents directs the reader to the page where the topic - he/she wants to explore is located.

### Lincoln

On April 23, 1754 the town of Lincoln was incorporated. It was created out of the eastern section of Concord, the southwestern section of Lexington and the northern section of Weston. Chambers Russell, a leader in the community, was able to convince



the General Court, the governing body of Massachusetts, to allow the incorporation of the town which had been resisted by the towns from which it was carved. Russell also proposed the name, Lincoln, after Lincolnshire, England, the place where his grandfather, Charles Chambers, had been born. Lincoln had a population of 690 people when it was incorporated. The first town meeting was held on April 24, 1754.<sup>1</sup>

Hartwells had lived in Concord since the early seventeenth century. By 1692 Samuel Hartwell had purchased land in the area of Concord that would become part of Lincoln. In 1754 when Lincoln was incorporated as a town, his son, Ephraim Hartwell, occupied this land. Ephraim was forty-seven years old and had eight children.

Lincoln changed little in appearance from 1754 to 1774. There were less than ninety houses with almost an equal number of barns. A few shops and mills, a limekiln and a tan yard existed in the town of about 9,500 acres. The census of 1764 to 1765 included twenty-eight slaves.<sup>2</sup>

#### Town Government

The town government of Lincoln had numerous offices. Understanding what some of them were can help provide a fuller picture of life in Lincoln. Selectmen were the most important officials in the town government. They oversaw the administration of the schools, the treatment of the poor, the development of roads, the assessment of property, and the approval of requests to run inns and shops. When Lincoln held its first town meeting in 1754, the community chose Ephraim Hartwell as one of the first five selectmen.<sup>3</sup>

Minor offices were also important to the efficient functioning of the town. The fence viewer could order that either a fence be repaired or fine the owner if it was not repaired. The maintenance of fences was important so that crops would not be damaged by wandering animals. When a fence ran between the property of two different owners, the property owners were each required to maintain half of the fence. If the owners disagreed on whom should repair which section, the fence viewer acted as an

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1976) pp. 56,57; John C. MacLean, *A Rich Harvest: The History, Buildings, and People of Lincoln, Massachusetts*, (Lincoln, MA: Lincoln Historical Society, 1987) p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, pp. 151, 152.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 132, 133.

arbitrator and determined which section would be repaired by which owner.<sup>4</sup>

The term reeve refers to an administrative officer of a town. The hogreeve was the officer who would put hogs that were loose out of season in the town pen on the common. Before 1768 hogs could forage freely from March 15 to December 15.<sup>5</sup>

The field drivers served a similar purpose for horses and sheep. They drove an unfettered horse or sheep without a shepherd into the town pen.<sup>6</sup>

The Sealer of Weights and Measures checked once a year to ensure the accuracy of the scales and measuring devices used by those selling items by weight and size. The Sealer of Leather inspected the leather sold in the community to guarantee its quality. Ephraim Hartwell was a cordwainer or shoemaker, and worked with leather in his trade. At times he also served as Sealer of Leather. The Surveyor of Lumber checked the quality of boards and timber offered for sale.<sup>7</sup>

The Surveyor of Highways coordinated the construction of new roads, the repair of existing roads and the packing down or removal of snow on the roads. Lincoln chose between four to eight Surveyors of Highways. Each was responsible for a section of road. A Lincoln resident either paid an annual highway tax for the maintenance of the roads or he could substitute his labor for the tax.<sup>8</sup>

Lincoln had two tythingmen who inspected inns for improper conduct. Idleness was not allowed. The activities allowed on Sundays were very restricted. Travel was not permitted, business could not be undertaken and strong liquor could not be served.<sup>9</sup>

Two constables were responsible for maintaining order in the community and enforcing laws. They also collected taxes, except for those for highways, and served warrants and writs.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 129, 130.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 131.



The town had three other officials including the treasurer, who was responsible for the financial records of Lincoln, the moderator and the town clerk. The clerk recorded births, deaths, election results and the minutes of town meetings and posted marriage intentions.<sup>11</sup>

Reviewing the type of officials the town had and the responsibilities they had, it is easy to see that the residents of Lincoln were part of a well-run community that regulated some of the activities of its citizens. Individual families were not alone but part of a community network. Each family had responsibilities to the town and in turn the town had responsibilities to each family.

### Schools

Lincoln supported three schools in 1754. People from the town taught at the schools. The school year evolved to consist of three months in winter and three months in summer. Over time the teachers were usually college graduates.<sup>12</sup>

By 1759 the town also supported dame schools. Women taught the younger children at these schools which only ran from five to thirteen weeks in the summer. The main subjects were reading, writing and ciphering, which came to be called arithmetic. Although the town paid women one-third of what it paid male teachers, it provided a very limited group of women with jobs other than those in a home or on a farm.

Beginning in 1763 an Elisabeth Hartwell taught for three summers in a dame school, and a Mary Hartwell taught for five summers beginning in 1768.<sup>13</sup> Elisabeth and Mary probably were the daughters of Ephraim and Elisabeth Hartwell. Elisabeth would have been twenty-two in 1763 and Mary would have been twenty in 1768.

### The Poor

A town was responsible for the poor in its community. A person either born in a town or one who lived in a town for over a year without being warned out was considered a resident of the town and therefore eligible for the town's aid. Towns used a method called warning out to prevent the possibility of having to be responsible for someone who moved into the town and was unable to support himself/herself. The presence of any non-resident in a

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<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, pp.131, 132.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 209, 603 Footnote 14.

town for more than twenty days had to be reported to the selectmen. They could direct the constable to tell the person to leave. The notification to leave was the warning out. By this process the town would not be responsible for the person if he/she was unable to care for himself/herself even if the person remained in the town.<sup>14</sup>

In 1752 when Ephraim Hartwell's land was still part of Concord, he reported to the selectmen that a transient family that worked for him was living with him.<sup>15</sup> Since the members of this family were working for Hartwell, and therefore supporting themselves, they would be allowed to remain, although they may have been warned out so they would not become a burden to the community in the future when Hartwell no longer needed their labor.

The town placed the poor for which the community was responsible with families who were paid by the town to care for them in their homes. The town indentured the children of poor families as apprentices or servants. In 1742 Ephraim Hartwell entered into an agreement with Concord to train Joseph Blanchard as an apprentice cordwainer. The apprenticeship was for twelve years. Blanchard was eight years old and the son of Josiah Blanchard who had died. The Hartwells had to provide Joseph with food, clothing, lodging, laundry, and teach him the trade of cordwainer as well as how to read, write and do arithmetic. They received payment from the town. In 1754 when Blanchard was twenty, Hartwell and the selectmen agreed to transfer Blanchard's apprenticeship to someone else for the remainder of the year.<sup>16</sup>

### Self-Sufficiency

Through the town government system, the citizens of Lincoln relied on each other for assistance. In other ways the people of the community looked to each other for support and help. Eighteenth century families were not self-sufficient. They needed the goods and services that others could provide. Money often was not used to obtain what was required. Even the direct exchange of items or services was not always used. The promise to perform a service in the future would be exchanged for an item that was needed. A share of a future crop or an amount of meat when butchering season arrived were exchanged for an item or service. These promises or credits were recorded in account books, and the credits at times were carried on the account for

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<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* p. 210.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 213, 214, 215.



over a year.<sup>17</sup>

### African Americans<sup>18</sup>

In 1764 twenty-one of every 1,000 Massachusetts residents were African-American or biracial. In Lincoln 4.3% of the population was African-American. The number included slaves and free African Americans. Half of the slaves in Lincoln were women.<sup>19</sup>

The Ephraim Hartwell family acquired a slave named Violet in either 1769 or 1770. A ruling of the state court in 1783, based on the 1780 state constitution that included the statement that "all men are born free and equal", legally ended slavery in Massachusetts. Despite the ending of slavery in the state, in 1786, when Ephraim Hartwell made his will, it stated "I give unto my said wife my Negro woman, named Violet for her own Service and Disposal."<sup>20</sup> In 1786 the Hartwells still held Violet in bondage and treated her as property that could be inherited even though slavery had ended in Massachusetts in 1783.

Other slaves and free African Americans in Lincoln included Judith, wife of Jube Savage, who was free and was from North Weston. Joseph Adams owned Judith. In 1779 Savage acquired land for a home from Adams. Jube and Judith cared for Lucy Oliver, an African American who the town supported. Salem Middlesex of Weston, who was freed in 1777, and his wife Violet were baptized into the Lincoln church. Prince and Peter Sharon, Peter Bowes, a cordwainer, Jack Farrar, a slave for George and Humphrey Farrar, Cuff Hoar and Brister Hoar, slaves of John Hoar, and Amy, a servant in John Adams' home were all a part of the community.<sup>21</sup>

### The Farm

The average size of a farm in Lincoln was about seventy to eighty acres which included unimproved land, woodlands, tillage,

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<sup>17</sup>Jane C. Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside: Images of the New England Home*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994) pp. 164, 165, 166; MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 191.

<sup>18</sup>Although the word, Americans, was not commonly used in this period, the term, African Americans, will be utilized in this paper because it is the accepted usage for the 1990s. -

<sup>19</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 216.

<sup>20</sup>John Luzader, "Samuel Hartwell House and Ephraim Hartwell Tavern", *Historic Structures Report, Part I Historical Data Section*, 1968, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, pp. 305, 306, 307.



pasture, meadow, mowing land, an orchard and a garden. Tillage was land that was cultivated and used to raise grain crops, such as corn. Pastures were grass lands on which cattle grazed. All grasses, such as red clover, white clover, honeysuckle and herd grass, were called hay.<sup>22</sup>

Few farms consisted of one continuous plot of land. A farmer attempted to obtain the mixture of tillage, pasture, meadow, mowing land, orchard and woodland that he needed by buying and trading land.<sup>23</sup> A typical farm was composed of small parcels of land scattered throughout the community.

In 1733 Samuel Hartwell gave his son, Ephraim, forty acres of his farm. Eighteen acres of woodland and upland were to the west of Samuel's home lot and had a new house on it. Three acres were in an area known as the Rocky Meadow. Nine acres of upland and meadow were in an area known then as the Suburbs. Six acres of plowland were in a field on the Lexington town line, and four acres were in the Elm Brook Meadow in Bedford.<sup>24</sup> Samuel's gift to Ephraim is a good example of how the land on a farm was scattered and consisted of different types of land a farmer needed.

When Samuel died in 1745, Ephraim inherited the rest of his farm. By 1749 the farm was one of the most productive in what was then Concord. The farm's productivity depended on having good pastures and orchards and a large amount of livestock. The Hartwells were able to achieve the balance of types of lands that they needed.<sup>25</sup>

By 1774 the average farm in Lincoln cultivated about six acres of land. Six acres represented the amount of land that could be efficiently worked with one pair of oxen. The Ephraim Hartwell farm had twenty acres of tillage which was the most in Lincoln. The Hartwells also had six oxen which equalled three pair.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 155; Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, p. 61; Ricardo Torres-Reyes, "Farming and Land Uses: General Study", 1969, pp. 21, 55; Brian Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland, Woodland and Meadow: Husbandry in Concord, Massachusetts, 1635 - 1771" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1994), p. 345.

<sup>23</sup>Donahue, "Plowland, Pastureland", p. 345.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 272, 273.

<sup>26</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, p. 63; John Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report: The Hartwell Tavern", n. d., p. 4.

Three pair would be able to till about eighteen or perhaps twenty acres.

The breed of oxen most often used by farmers in Massachusetts at this time was the Devonshire. Oxen were cheaper to keep than horses because their harness and shoeing cost less. When they became too old to work, they became food for the family.<sup>27</sup>

Beside six oxen, Ephraim Hartwell also had a bull, ten cows, five sheep, four hogs and three horses.<sup>28</sup> Chickens were not included in property assessments but the Hartwells would have had them. These animals were also part of the large amount of livestock that helped contribute to the success of the farm.

The farm buildings on the Hartwell farm may have included a large barn with a stable in the lower section where Ephraim's livestock could be sheltered in the winter and his tavern customers could lodge their animals. A pig house, chicken house and various sheds for wagons or tools and equipment may have been part of the scene. The farm of course included the house. There would have been no lawn but perhaps a split-rail fence kept the animals away from the house.<sup>29</sup>

An often unmentioned part of a farm and family life is the privy. In the archeology reports and other studies of the Hartwells, no discussion is included of this vital necessity of daily life. There is no doubt that the Hartwells had a privy. The average privy accommodated three people. Privies were often concealed by shrubs, ivy or honeysuckle.<sup>30</sup> People in the eighteenth century clearly had a different sense of privacy if they could accept a privy that accommodated three people. It is interesting that they would bother to camouflage the privy when they were so willing to share its use.

### Farm Tools

To do the work required on a farm, farmers utilized various tools. Blacksmiths made the iron components of the tools. Hoes chopped weeds and prepared the land for seeding. A prong hoe, which was a hoe with prongs, removed deep rooted weeds and broke the surface of crusted or compacted ground. Spades, shovels,

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<sup>27</sup>Torres-Reyes, "Farming and Land Uses", p. 47.

<sup>28</sup>Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report", p. 4.

<sup>29</sup>Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report", p. 6; Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, p. 67.

<sup>30</sup>Frances Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens, Their Furnishings, and Their Gardens*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1972) p. 193.



picks and mattocks loosened the soil and were good for digging. A roller consisted of a log attached by pins to a frame that was pulled over the ground to break up clods and compact the soil. A plow was pulled by oxen or at times horses to cultivate the land. A farmer used a harrow pulled by an ox or horse to level plowed land. A dibble, which was shaped like a forked stick, set plants in the soil. Farmers employed sickles to harvest grain and scythes for cutting grasses. Hay forks allowed the hay to be moved efficiently. Grain was threshed on a barn floor with a flail. A hayhook was a sharp pointed tool used to pull hay out of a hay mow or a hay stack. A rack was a frame that held fodder for cattle. A hatchel combed flax and hemp. Narrow axes were used for farming purposes and broad ones for carpentry.<sup>31</sup> All of these tools required human labor. Even the plow and harrow, which were pulled by animals, needed a person to guide the animal and perform the task. All farm work involved extensive physical labor.

### Transportation

Carts, most often pulled by oxen, consisted of a short cart which was eight feet long, four feet wide and two feet high and a long cart which could be ten feet or more in length, four feet wide and have stakes on the sides. The carts were made of oak which decayed less quickly. Almost all carts had only two wheels. "In New England, and at least [sic] before the revolution, the four-wheeled wagon was practically unknown."<sup>32</sup> In Lincoln the two-wheeled cart was used for farm work and to transport items. In the winter sleds and sledges were used instead of carts. The residents also used panniers, large baskets that could be carried on a person's back or two could be strapped to a horse, to transport items.<sup>33</sup>

### Wild Life

Residents of Lincoln were not able to supplement their diet substantially with meat from the wild. By the end of the seventeenth century, the wild turkey was almost extinct. The principal game bird was the passenger pigeon which was quickly being pushed to extinction. As farmers turned woodlands into fields, song birds replaced game birds. By the early eighteenth century white-tailed deer were seriously depleted. Salmon no longer ran in the streams. Squirrels, woodchucks and raccoons

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<sup>31</sup>Torres-Reyes, "Farming and Land Uses", pp. 36, 38, 40 - 44.

<sup>32</sup>Torres-Reyes, "Farming and Land Uses", pp. 39, 44.

<sup>33</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 193.

were available but were not the best wild meat.<sup>34</sup>

### The Tavern

Ephraim Hartwell opened an inn in 1756 in his home on the Bay Road. Although the park calls the building Hartwell Tavern, it would have been called an inn in the eighteenth century. A tavern license only allowed food and drink to be served. A license for an inn allowed food, drink and lodging to be provided. The Hartwells provided food, drink and lodging so their establishment was an inn.<sup>35</sup>

For an inn, the location of the Hartwell Tavern was good. Although throughout the life of the tavern from 1756 to 1788, there were at times as many as three other inns or taverns in Lincoln, it was the only one in north Lincoln. It was also on the Bay Road which was a major thoroughfare. Travellers, merchants, and herders from Groton, Shirley, Winchendon and towns in the south of New Hampshire used the Bay Road to travel to market. The Bay Road went from Concord, to Lincoln, Lexington, Cambridge and by ferry over the Charles River to Boston. Many of these people would need lodging because of the length of their trips. The Lincoln to Bedford Road passed through the Hartwell property and near to the tavern.<sup>36</sup>

When the Hartwells started to operate an inn in their home in 1756, Ephraim and his wife, Elisabeth, had eight children living in their home. They were Elisabeth, fifteen, Samuel, fourteen, Abigail, twelve, Ephraim, eleven, John, nine, Mary, eight, Sarah, six, and Isaac, four.<sup>37</sup> To this family of ten people, that alone would have filled the space, were added whatever travellers sought lodging.

There may have been others who were part of the Hartwell household. From 1742 to 1754 Joseph Blanchard lived with the Hartwells as an apprentice. In 1752 a transient family serving as laborers was part of the household. It would not have been unusual for the Hartwells to have others living and working with them. Between the work on the farm and the work in the tavern,

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<sup>34</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, pp. 66, 69; Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup>Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report", p. 2.

<sup>36</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, pp. 192, 195, 197; Anna Coxé Toogood, "Ephraim Hartwell Tavern, Historic Structure Report, A Comparative Study", 1974, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup>Toogood, "Ephraim Hartwell Tavern", p. 17, footnote 29.



the whole family, and any others in the household, would have been busy.

The house would have been crowded. Beds for some of the inhabitants may have been on the floor. Everyone would have shared a bed. Infants slept with parents, younger children slept in trundle beds with their siblings, older siblings shared with siblings, servants, apprentices and visitors.<sup>38</sup> Travellers to the Hartwell Inn would have shared a bed with another traveller.

### The Family

The Hartwell family, with the addition of an apprentice, transient laborers and even a slave, is a good example of a typical eighteenth century New England family. Eighteenth century families were not nuclear families like those of the latter twentieth century. They included grandparents, orphans, apprentices, laborers, servants and slaves. The composition of the family changed not only by births, deaths and marriages but by the ending or beginning of apprenticeships and periods of indenture. Families cared for the sick, the poor and the aged, even when the afflicted were not relatives.<sup>39</sup> There were no institutions, such as hospitals and nursing homes, so families cared for townspeople and received payment from the town.

Eighteenth century families at times looked at children and child rearing in ways different from more recent times. Crawling "was considered a base and animalistic activity."<sup>40</sup> Children were supposed to move from sitting and lying to standing and walking. Many parents did not believe their newborns had individual personalities. The infant was referred to as it, the baby and the child until it was older and began to respond to others and display distinctive characteristics. Then the parents called the baby either son or daughter or by name.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, pp. 93, 94, 95.

<sup>39</sup>David Courtwright, "New England Families in Historical Perspective" in *Families and Children, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, 1985*, ed. by Peter Benes, (Boston: Boston University, 1987), p. 11.

<sup>40</sup>Jane Nylander, "Clothing for the Little Stranger, 1740 - 1850", in *Families and Children, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, 1985* ed. by Peter Benes (Boston: Boston University, 1987), p. 65.

<sup>41</sup>Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750 - 1800*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), p. 85.



Parents named newborns after dead siblings and for parents and grandparents. While parents grieved for their dead children as modern parents do, they did not see their children as unique individuals so they were able to name them after children who had died. They believed a new baby could replace a child who had died. Children were important because they continued the family line and were less important as individuals.<sup>42</sup>

In October 1740 the five children of Ephraim and Elisabeth died within three weeks of each other. Isaac, the youngest, who was one year and one month old, died on October 5. John, who was four years old, died on October 7. Ephraim, the oldest, who was less than three weeks away from turning seven, died on October 9. Samuel, who was five years old, died on October 11. Elisabeth, the only daughter, who was less than two months away from turning three, died on October 27. They died from what was then called throat distemper and which today is called diphtheria.<sup>43</sup>

Even though eighteenth century parents in some ways viewed their children differently than modern parents do, Ephraim and Elisabeth must have been devastated by the loss of all of their children. With time they again had more children. Unlike today's parents, they gave the subsequent children the names of the children who had died. In October 1740 when her children were dying, Elisabeth was pregnant. On April 20, 1741 Elisabeth was born, followed by Samuel on June 25, 1742, Abigail on June 5, 1744, Ephraim on January 8, 1745, John on August 21, 1747, Mary in January 1748, Sarah on August 10, 1750 and Isaac on July 8, 1752. All of the names from the five children who had died in 1740 were given to the succeeding children.

### Epidemics

In the 1720s a smallpox epidemic resulted in one-third to one-half of the children in remote towns in New Hampshire dying. The children had no immunity to the disease. In the 1730s and 1740s thousands of children died during an epidemic of diphtheria.<sup>44</sup> The deaths of the Hartwell children from diphtheria in 1740 were part of the epidemic.

In the eighteenth century as compared to the seventeenth century, fewer adults lived to old age and infant and childhood mortality was higher. The reasons for the changes were that in the eighteenth century there was a larger population from which disease could arise, and the means of travel, which allowed

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<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86, 89, 90.

<sup>43</sup>Courtwright, "New England Families", p. 17, Footnote 22.

<sup>44</sup>Courtwright, "New England Families", p. 17.

disease to be transmitted from one area to another, were better developed in the eighteenth century.<sup>45</sup> A disease which in the seventeenth century remained isolated in one area could become an epidemic in the eighteenth century because it could be carried to other areas as people travelled. With larger populations, more people died resulting in an epidemic.

The people of the eighteenth century interpreted epidemics as signs of God's displeasure. In the 1730s they turned to religious revivals as a means to rededicate themselves to God.<sup>46</sup> By 1740 as the number of revivals increased and the fervor of them intensified, they came to be called the Great Awakening because everyone was affected by the spirit of renewal. Although epidemics may have led some people to seek renewal to God through revivals, they were not the major cause of the Great Awakening.

### Neighbors

New England families in a community were linked together by their need to rely on each other for goods and services and by their sharing of responsibilities related to the town. They also were linked by their concern for each other. Most people knew each other from childhood. Families became interrelated by marriages. Outside of the family, neighbors were the people with whom one socialized. People actively visited their neighbors. Winter was the main season for visits despite the cold. Fall and summer were busy work periods, and spring thaws resulted in mud that made travel difficult. Snow allowed the use of sleighs for travel. Work continued even on visits. Women would bring sewing with them.<sup>47</sup> Chores continued to be done at the homes that were visited.

More formal gatherings were even arranged around chores that could be accomplished more quickly as a group. Frolics were social gatherings that included sharing work, such as corn husking or quilting. Food and perhaps dancing followed the work.<sup>48</sup> Frolics allowed work to be done efficiently but also were a time when everyone could socialize and young men and women could become better acquainted as a prelude to courtship.

The Ephraim Hartwell homestead was only about 200 yards from the Samuel Hartwell home. A little over 333 yards to the west of Ephraim Hartwell was the Joseph Mason home, and about 533 yards

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<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, pp. 221, 222, 224.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 225.



to the east was the William Smith home. Neighbors were not far away.

### Warmth

Trying to keep a house warm in the cold seasons of the year was a major chore. Indoor temperatures were much lower than would be acceptable to modern families. Kitchens had fires all day and became the center of family life for the cold months. On very cold days the outer walls of kitchens would not be warm despite the continuous fire. Most rooms would not have a fire, unless someone was sick, and some rooms would not be used in winter. Low ceilings helped contain the warmth. Brick chimneys radiated some heat to the rooms through which they passed but large chimneys and fireplaces pulled drafts into rooms and heat went up the chimney and out of the house.<sup>49</sup>

Maintaining a fire during the day often became a woman's job because a woman used the kitchen fire for cooking. The wife or husband banked the fire at night when the coals were raked together and covered with ashes in order to preserve a few coals for the morning. In the morning, if no coals had survived, someone would need to use a flint to create a spark to start the fire or go to a neighbor to borrow some coals.<sup>50</sup>

Farmers cut firewood in December, January and February. They used sleds with oxen to move heavy loads of firewood over the snow from the woods to their farms. If the snow was too deep, it was difficult to use a sled and oxen. Farmers then allowed the wood to dry over winter for use for the next winter.<sup>51</sup>

Different types of wood provided different types of heat. Hickory, birch and some parts of white oak and ash produced a steady fire that was good for baking. Hemlock, chestnut and some parts of the oak gave a moderate fire. Green or rotten wood was not used. Farmers cut the wood according to how it would be used. There were backlogs and foresticks for the fireplace, and wood used to heat water for laundry and heat the oven for baking.<sup>52</sup>

The trees growing in Concord, Lincoln and Lexington in the eighteenth century included oak, hard pine, chestnut, black birch, beech, curled maple, willow, ash, cedar, elm and locust.

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<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 75, 78, 79, 98, 99.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 84.

The residents used the wood, not just for firewood, but also for building structures and carts and producing tools. They separated black ash into strips to create brooms and baskets, and used bark from all types of trees to make receptacles of all sorts.<sup>53</sup>

A continuous fire resulted in continuous dirt and mess. The firewood that was brought into the house and usually stacked in the kitchen would include small pieces of twigs and bark that would scatter into the room. Bugs accompanied the wood. Constant fires created endless ashes that had to be removed. To prevent chimney fires, home owners cleaned their chimneys about twice a year. They used burning boughs to burn out the grease and oily materials in the chimney. Then they would push green cedar branches down from the top of the chimney to the hearth in order to further clean the chimney. Some residents used a stone attached to a chain that was lowered into the chimney and banged against the sides to loosen the soot.<sup>54</sup>

Families used various methods to try to keep the warmth in their houses and the cold out. They banked their cellars which meant that they would pile leaves, sawdust, bark, cornstalks or other vegetation against the lower part of their houses. The materials acted as insulation and reduced drafts. The first floor was warmer and the cellar did not freeze.<sup>55</sup>

Other techniques used inside, included heating stones or bricks and placing them in beds in unheated rooms. Warming pans served the same purpose. Wealthier families used bed curtains to surround their beds and keep out drafts and keep in the warmth generated by body heat. Even bundling, the practice of a courting couple sharing a bed, resulted from the need to limit the use of firewood and candles and yet allow the courting couple time to be together.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps the couples became too cozy while bundling, and that is why between 30% and 40% of the women in many New England towns during the revolutionary era were pregnant when they married.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Torres-Reyes, "Farming and Land Uses", pp. 31, 32.

<sup>54</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 88; Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens*, p. 98.

<sup>55</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 97.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 94, 95, 96.

<sup>57</sup>Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Lois K. Stabler, "Girling of It' in Eighteenth Century New Hampshire" in *Families and Children, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, 1985*, ed. by Peter Benes, (Boston University, 1987),



Keeping a home warm in the winter was difficult. It was hard work to cut wood and maintain fires. An eighteenth century home was cold by current standards. Even though the people of the time would be used to much less heat, they were probably uncomfortable on many cold days.

### Light

People used candles sparingly because the process to make them was very labor intensive. Usually a year's supply of candles was made at one time during cool weather. Women made candles from tallow by dipping wicks in melted tallow, letting the tallow on the wick cool and harden and then repeating the process until the desired candle circumference was reached. They used candle molds to make a few candles, if there was tallow that would otherwise be wasted, or, if the candle supply was low, and they did not have time for the longer process. Families kept candles in boxes so they would not be destroyed by mice who ate them for the tallow.<sup>58</sup>

Candles were not lit in the daytime. People moved their work to follow the daylight coming in through windows. Often at night people relied solely on the light from the fire to perform any needed tasks. If the moon was bright, its light would be used. Only one candle would be lit if an activity could not be done by the light of the fire. In some homes candlewood, which was a knot of resinous wood, such as pine, was burned at the hearth instead of a candle. Members of some families would find their way to bed in the dark. In other homes families used chambersticks to light their way to bed. Chambersticks had wide drip pans to catch wax. The handle was offset so fingers would not be burned. These features made candles safer to carry.<sup>59</sup>

The threat of fire always existed from candles, especially when moving them. Drafts in the house could easily move the flame of a candle. Candlewicks were spun from cotton or tow. Wicks burned rapidly and needed to be trimmed from the candle to avoid sparks and flaming material. People used a candle snuffer which was shaped like a scissors to trim the wick.

### Food Storage

As families grew and traded for the food that they needed, they also had the accompanying problem of how to store the food. Unoccupied rooms, sheds and lean-tos were good storage areas in

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p. 25.

<sup>58</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, pp. 109, 110.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.



winter for foods that could be frozen. If the weather warmed above freezing, however, the food could spoil.<sup>60</sup>

1775 was one of the mildest winters in New England in memory. It never went below zero and was often above freezing. January and February had only light snow.<sup>61</sup> While warm temperatures made life more comfortable in the home and presumably less fire wood was used, the Hartwells and their neighbors probably had to deal with food that did not stay frozen and therefore rotted. It is difficult to see any solution to the problem other than to eat the food before it decayed. Some food may have been lost.

Some attics did not freeze because of the warmth radiated from the chimney that passed through them. Meal, flour, herbs, dried corn, apples and pumpkins could have been kept in them. Whole apples, squash, onions, could be stored in an attic in the fall but not later when the temperature would be too cold. Potatoes, carrots, beets and cabbages were sensitive to heat and cold and fared best in the cellar where the cider was also kept.<sup>62</sup>

### Diet

Most people ate heavily salted meat and fish. Women fried the salted meats, and boiled vegetables for an hour. This fare did not change much throughout the year. Saturated fat and sodium were high; vitamins were low.<sup>63</sup> One can almost hear the arteries hardening from the cholesterol and see the rising blood pressure from the sodium.

The midday meal was the largest meal of the day. The meal was served on one large serving dish with meat in the center and the vegetables around the meat. Women served supper in the evening. It was a much lighter meal and could consist of bread and milk, toast, cheese, a slice of pie. In poorer families breakfast and supper could be bread and milk in summer and bean broth or cider with bread in winter.<sup>64</sup>

A good selection of vegetables was available. They included peas, beans, parsnips, turnips, onions, cabbage, squash, carrots, corn, pumpkins and garden greens. Everyone called raw or cooked

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<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>61</sup>Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 97.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 184, 205.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 189, 191, 192.

vegetables sauce.<sup>65</sup> Perhaps the long boiling turned them into a sauce.

When Ephraim Hartwell made his will, among other things, he gave his wife, Elisabeth, food items which were described in detail in the will. They included an annual allotment of twelve bushels of Indian meal, six bushels of rye meal, a bushel and a half of malt, half a bushel of white beans, two hundred pounds of pork, eighty pounds of beef, two barrels of cider, and six bushels of winter apples.<sup>66</sup>

In transcripts of Ephraim's will, such as the one quoted in John Luzader's "Samuel Hartwell House and Ephraim Hartwell Tavern", the phrase, "and all other Source necessary for her", is included and follows the list of food.<sup>67</sup> Based on the fact that people of the eighteenth century called all vegetables sauce, a better interpretation of the word, "Source", would be sauce. Sauce fits the context. The will itemizes the food that Elisabeth should receive as her inheritance but only one vegetable, white beans, is mentioned. By using the term, sauce, Ephraim would have been telling everyone that his wife should be given all the vegetables she needed.

Deciphering handwritten materials is difficult. Reading old documents, where the paper may have discolored and the ink may have faded, makes the attempt even more complicated. Changing source to sauce makes sense in the context of the material. The letters of the two words are quite similar. If the person reading Ephraim's will was unaware that sauce meant vegetables, he/she would have looked for a more sensible word, such as source.

The other notable fact related to food in Ephraim's will is the amount of meat, 200 pounds of pork and eighty pounds of beef, that Elisabeth will receive annually. That equals about 5.4 pounds a week or three-fourths of a pound per day for one woman. The amount fits the pattern of high meat consumption for the era. Ephraim gives her much more pork than beef which also fits the pattern of the time when pork consumption was higher than beef consumption.

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<sup>65</sup>Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Images and Reality of Women in Northern New England, 1650 - 1750*, (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1991), p. 20; Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 206.

<sup>66</sup>Luzader, "Samuel Hartwell House and Ephraim Hartwell Tavern, pp. 11, 12.

<sup>67</sup>*Ibid.*



## Cooking

A large fireplace that helped heat and light the kitchen did not provide the best conditions for cooking. For a woman to be able to control the heat of a fire for cooking, she made small piles of live coals on the hearth and used the heat from these coals to cook food in pots with feet or in pots placed on trivets.

Another method to help the cook regulate the heat was through a suspension system. One example of such a system was an iron crane that could be swung off the fire and into the room. The cook could check a kettle, and move it away from the heat.

A lug pole was another suspension system. It consisted of an unseasoned wood pole that was mounted in the chimney. Hooks and trammels hung from the lug pole and pots were hung from them. The cook could lower or raise the hooks and trammels thus bringing the kettles closer to the fire or moving them farther away. The distance from the fire determined the temperature.

Cooks roasted meat by hanging it in front of a fireplace on a roasting string. They twisted the roasting string so, that as it unwound, the meat slowly rotated in front of the flames. When the string was completely unwound and the roast no longer rotated, the cook would twist the sting to start the process again.

Women learned how to cook from their mothers, grandmothers, sisters and neighbors. They learned from observing others and from experience. Cookbooks were not a part of the majority of homes. In the eighteenth century the few existing books had English authors and were written for a wealthy household with a staff.<sup>68</sup> Women undoubtedly shared recipes. Even if women did not record the recipes, they used other women's techniques and suggestions.

The level of cooking is crude by modern standards. Fried salted meat with vegetables that are mush does not appeal to the modern palate. Women, however, did have considerable skill to be able to produce meals for their families over a fireplace with the limited utensils and ingredients that they had.

## Baking

For most homes, one day a week was devoted to baking. If a woman had no yeast, she could use the dregs from beer as a leavening agent for her bread. A cook could use a Dutch oven, which was a shallow pot on three legs with a deep lid, to bake bread. The baker set the oven on a pile of coals and placed coals on the

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<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 186, 205, 211, 212.

lid. The dough inside the oven would bake from the heat of the coals above and below it.

Some homes had ovens built into the fireplaces. A woman would build a fire in the oven. The opening to the oven would remain open so that the smoke could escape. When the fire had become coals, she would remove the coals, place the items to be baked in the oven and then block the door.<sup>69</sup> The time needed to bake items was something a woman learned by experience.

### Hazards of Fireplaces

Working around an open fire posed many dangers for women. Sparks flew out of fireplaces as wood settled, and as women tended the fires. When women transferred coals from ovens or to other places on the hearth, they could easily burn themselves. The fat on roasting meat could splatter and cause burns. Women had to move heavy pots and adjust their placement over the fire. They could burn themselves on the pots, from the flames or even from the contents of the pot.<sup>70</sup> Children, especially toddlers, also could easily be burned near fireplaces from the flames and from the contents of kettles.

### Butchering

Farmers killed hogs in late November and early December and lambs in spring. They needed special knives and large kettles to heat water that could be used to scald the carcass. Not every family had all of the utensils that they needed to be able to butcher their livestock. What they did not have they borrowed from neighbors.

A family would eat some of the meat fresh but most would be salted in barrels that were stored in the cellar. The farmer would smoke the hams. The family may have frozen some meat by storing it in the attic or another room where the temperature remained below freezing. Women made headcheese, a concoction made from meat from the pig's head. It is not cheese. Women also cleaned the intestines so that they could be used to make sausage.

Infrequently a family may have killed a steer in winter. A family would share the fresh meat from such a large animal with others. They used a steelyard, a portable balance, to weigh the amount of meat shared so that each family could accurately repay

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<sup>69</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 196, 197, 198.

<sup>70</sup>Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens*, p. 97.



the other.<sup>71</sup>

### Soap

To make soap, women first had to make lye which was one of the ingredients of soap. They obtained the lye by placing ashes and lime in a barrel that had a small hole in the bottom. They then poured water over the mixture and let the water slowly soak through the ashes and lime and drip out of the hole onto a stone that had a groove that channeled the liquid into a bucket. The liquid was lye. Women made lye in spring when they had a large supply of ashes from the winter fires.

Women made soap in spring because they then had the lye they needed and the tallow and grease from winter would not be rancid because daily temperatures were still cool. To make soap, a woman boiled tallow and lye with a small amount of quicklime until the mixture became firm.<sup>72</sup>

### Laundry

In most homes women did laundry once a week. Monday was often laundry day perhaps because women were rested from Sunday and had the energy for the heavy work involved and also perhaps because they wanted to finish such an arduous task at the beginning of the week. In summer the laundry was done outdoors. The equipment they used were a washtub, water buckets, a large kettle in which to boil clothes and washing sticks, which were broad, smooth sticks used to stir clothes while boiling and to lift clothes from the water. One hundred gallons of water could be used in one day. Women did the laundry but men often helped by carrying water and firewood, and cutting and arranging brush on which women spread the clothes to dry.

Both men and women wore what they called body linen. The purpose of body linen was to protect outer garments from perspiration and body oils. Women wore shifts and neck handkerchiefs. Men's shirts were considered part of their body linen. They also wore neck handkerchiefs. To protect the outer garments from exterior dirt, both men and women wore aprons. Farmers wore frocks or smocks over their clothes to keep them clean. In winter the frocks were wool and in summer they were cotton or linen.

Women washed body linen weekly along with stockings, aprons, and children's clothes. They washed outer garments such as, gowns, pantaloons, vests, and coats only every few months. People at that time called diapers, clouts. Some women only washed clouts

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<sup>71</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 203

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 135, 136.



that had been soiled by excrement. Clouts that had been soiled by urine were just hung to dry.

Women determined how to wash a piece of clothing based on the fabric from which it was made. They would rub cotton and linen materials with soap and then rinse them. The items were then boiled with soap and rinsed again. They did not boil woolens because they could shrink and yellow. Delicate items, such as muslin caps and collars, would not be boiled or soaked for very long. Some women added lye directly to the laundry water when clothes were heavily soiled or were greasy. Some added stale urine to the laundry water. The ammonia in the urine acted as a whitener. One wonders how old urine had to be to be considered stale.

To dry clothes in the summer, women spread them on any available grass, on hedges or on brush that had been specifically cut for the purpose. Clothes had to be spread smoothly so fewer wrinkles would result and so that bleaching from the sun would be even. Women had to dry clothes where they would not be soiled by dirt from the road, barnyard or yard. They had to secure the clothes so they would not blow away on a windy day.

In winter women did the laundry in their homes. They hung the clothes near the fireplace to dry. The boiling water needed to wash the clothes created steam in the room but spilt water could freeze on the floor.<sup>73</sup>

### Personal Hygiene

"Regular bathing of the entire body was not a common practice in New England until well into the nineteenth century."<sup>74</sup> Most people washed only their hands and faces. They used cold water and no soap. At this time most people did not even undress completely.<sup>75</sup> With such an attitude towards the body, it is understandable why no one bathed. The harsh ingredients in soap would also not have been conducive to its use.

To the modern nose eighteenth century people would have smelled very unpleasantly. They would have looked dirty. Their hair would have been oily. To each other, they would have looked just fine.

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<sup>73</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, pp. 130 - 134, 136, 137; Nylander, "Clothing for the Little Stranger", p. 65.

<sup>74</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, p. 144.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 144, 145.

## Jewelry

Jewelry was worn in the eighteenth century. Some items that people of that time considered to be jewelry are different from our own concept of jewelry. For example, women tied silk ribbons around their necks, with a bow either at the front or back, as necklaces. Some added crosses, pendants and miniatures to the ribbon. They also tied ribbons around their wrists as bracelets. Women used either silk or lace ruffles as adornments.<sup>76</sup>

Both men and women valued shoe buckles as jewelry. One set of buckles could be used for more than one pair of shoes. Men used buckles for their neck stocks and to secure their breeches at the knees. They could move the buckles from garment to garment. The buckles were made of gold, silver, brass and iron.<sup>77</sup>

Men's clothing buttons, that were made of either gold, silver or set with gems, were jewelry. Sleeve buttons, that are similar to cuff links of today, could be made of silver, gold, brass, gems and faceted glass called paste.<sup>78</sup>

Some jewelry items, such as watches, rings, necklaces of beads, earrings, and broaches would be familiar to us today. The necklaces of beads were strung on a ribbon. Earrings could have detachable parts that women added to make the earrings more attractive, and longer, for special occasions.<sup>79</sup>

Rings were made with gems or could be a plain metal band or one shaped into either knots, bows, hearts or hands. Wedding rings were not as prevalent as they are today. Those who wore wedding rings wore them on any finger. The family of someone who had died may have distributed to family members and friends mourning rings to commemorate the deceased. A mourning ring included the name of the deceased and the date of death.<sup>80</sup>

Broaches were used for adornment but also served a practical purpose. They held bodices together, secured neck handkerchiefs and pinned up sleeves. Women wore pins in their hair and caps.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Beth Gilgun, *Tidings from the 18th Century*, (Texarkana, Texas: Rebel Publishing Co., 1993) pp. 160, 161.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 159, 160.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 159, 161.



As today the type and amount of jewelry a person owned depended on their wealth. The jewelry of the prosperous would have been made from gems, such as diamonds, amethysts, garnets, rubies and topazes. The less prosperous would have had jewelry made from paste which were imitation jewels made from cut and faceted glass. Jewelry makers placed colored foil behind the paste so that clear glass would look like rubies and amethysts. Jewelers, goldsmiths and silversmiths sold jewelry.<sup>82</sup>

### Pests

Houses did not have screens on the windows. Flies and mosquitoes had easy access. Women covered food with cloths but it still drew flies into the house. Barns and barnyards stood near houses and attracted flies as did the animals. Flies were not only a nuisance and spread disease, but fly droppings dirtied the house. Ants were also a major problem.<sup>83</sup>

### Cleaning

Women fought a never ending battle to keep their houses clean. The rooms became dirty easily because so much work was done in them, and they were crowded. The fireplace was a constant maker of filth from soot and ashes. Cooking created more grime. In summer insects and dust entered through the windows.

Houses were the most filthy in spring. During winter, access to water at times was limited because even deep wells could freeze. Any cleaning activity, including laundry, that required water would be curtailed. Work, that in warmer weather could be done outside, had to be done inside.

In spring women emptied the rooms, scrubbed them and whitewashed them. Soap and sand were used to scour floors. Their cleaning equipment consisted of corn brooms, withy brooms, which were made of pliable branches or twigs, mops made from rags or yarn and scrubbing brushes.<sup>84</sup>

### Beds

In winter a family used feather beds because of their warmth. Feather beds and pillows lasted a long time. When the covering became dirty, women removed it, washed it and refilled it. Because of their warmth, in summer feather beds were stored in baskets in the attic.

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<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 158, 159.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 79, 103, 104, 118, 119.

Families used straw or corn husk filled mattresses for summer. Women used the soft inner husks of corn, which they dried, as the filling for the mattress. These mattresses lasted about five years. Women made new ones in summer when fresh corn husks were available. Women also made straw mattresses in summer. These did not last as long as the corn husk ones.<sup>85</sup>

### Burial Customs

When someone died, the women washed the body and placed it in a shroud which was then placed in a coffin. They did not clothe the deceased in clothes he/she had worn in life. This probably reflects the value placed on garments which were included in wills and given to others. The coffin remained open and was placed on a table in a room of the house. If the house had a mirror, the women would cover it with a cloth. This reflected the idea that "vanity was considered unseemly in the presence of death."<sup>86</sup>

The minister said prayers at the house with the assembled mourners. Then the family closed the coffin, and the mourners followed the coffin to the grave. After the interment, the mourners returned to the house of the bereaved family where the family served large quantities of food and drink to the mourners.<sup>87</sup>

### Religion

For most New England towns the meeting house was not only a place of worship but also a place to socialize. The minister conducted two long services on Sunday with a break between them. Some called the break the nooning or the horseshedding because people met at the horse sheds where their animals waited. They also met at the tavern for food and in winter for warmth since the meeting house was not heated.<sup>88</sup>

### Lincoln and Pre-revolutionary War Political Action

The residents of Lincoln did not rush into protests against Parliament concerning increased taxes. In 1767 Parliament passed the Townshend Acts which imposed import duties on glass, lead, painters' colors, paper and tea. The money raised was supposed to pay for the salaries of the colonial governors and other royal

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<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 122, 123.

<sup>86</sup>Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside*, pp. 39, 41, 159.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 72, 73.



officials. Boston reacted by adopting a non-importation agreement whereby residents would not import the items covered by the Townshend Acts. Boston circulated the agreement to other towns.

On January 4, 1768 the residents of Lincoln at town meeting deferred acting on the agreement. The town deferred another time. On March 5, 1770, which was also the day of the Boston Massacre, the residents voted "that they will not Purchase any one article of any Person that imports goods contrary to the agreement of the marchants [sic] in the Town of Boston."<sup>89</sup>

By the summer of 1774 about 5,000 British troops were billeted in Boston. Residents of Boston could not lead normal lives. People were unemployed because businesses were unable to work normally. Other towns and even some other colonies sent money and supplies to help the people. At the town meeting in Lincoln on January 5, 1775 the issue was raised whether to send assistance. The vote was in the affirmative. At the same meeting the community established a Committee of Inspection as requested by the Continental Congress which had been organized by this time.<sup>90</sup>

#### Lincoln Committee of Correspondence

In 1772 Samuel Adams had drafted a declaration of colonial rights that he hoped each town would approve. He attempted to have eighty towns form Committees of Correspondence. The citizens of Lincoln on January 25, 1773 appointed a committee to review the proposal and recommend a course of action. By early November 1773 the town had appointed of Committee of Correspondence that consisted of Deacon Samuel Farrar, Captain Eleazer Brooks, and Captain Abijah Peirce.<sup>91</sup>

After tea was dumped into Boston Harbor, Lincoln held a special town meeting on December 27, 1773 at which the residents endorsed a letter, probably composed by Captain Eleazer Brooks, to the Boston Committee of Correspondence. The letter pledged the residents to not use tea or purchase it while a duty was on it. Those who used tea would be seen by them as enemies to their country.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, pp. 83, 84.

<sup>90</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 86, 86.

### Lincoln and April 19, 1775

Seventy-five men from Lincoln fought on April 19, 1775.<sup>93</sup> The occupants of the Ephraim Hartwell Tavern on April 19, 1775 included Ephraim, who was sixty-eight years old, his wife Elisabeth, sixty, and their son, John, twenty-seven and a sergeant in the Lincoln Minutemen Company. Violet, the Hartwell's slave was also part of the household.

In Samuel Hartwell's home, Samuel, son of Ephraim and Elisabeth and brother of John, was thirty-two, his wife Mary was twenty-seven, their daughter, Polly, was four, Sally was two, and Lucy, not yet one. Samuel was also a sergeant in the Lincoln Minutemen Company whose captain was William Smith the near neighbor of the Hartwells.

### Lincoln and the War

The General Court of Massachusetts assigned each town a quota for the number of men that had to serve in the army. In the summer of 1778 Lincoln voted to assume all expenses associated with procuring men for the war. There were about 187 males over the age of sixteen in Lincoln. Of these about 100 served for varying periods of time throughout the duration of the war. A few served extended enlistments with the Continental Army.<sup>94</sup>

Lincoln did not have a large Tory population with which to contend. The problems the community faced during the war were related to inflation, to shortages of goods and labor, to high prices and to the need to provide food and clothing for the army. Overshadowing all economic issues was the fact that the value of the paper currency issued by the Continental Congress was unstable and was worth less over time. The residents also had to pay higher taxes. For example, in 1774 Ephraim Hartwell paid 71 pounds for real estate taxes and 37 pounds for personal property taxes. In 1778 he paid 1000 pounds for real estate taxes and 662 pounds for personal property.<sup>95</sup>

The effect of inflation can be seen through the changes in prices over time. In 1766 a gallon of rum cost sixteen shillings. In 1779 the rum cost four pounds, sixteen shillings. At the beginning of the war, a bounty of one to three pounds per month per soldier was provided. By 1780 the bounty was 480 pounds. From 1775 to 1776 the town paid a teacher two pounds a month plus

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<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 106, 107.

<sup>95</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, pp. 107, 108; Luzader, "Historic Grounds Report: Hartwell Tavern", p. 4.



board. From 1780 to 1781 the town paid 150 pounds a month plus board.<sup>96</sup>

The costs of supporting the army were also high. In December of 1775 Lincoln provided the army with three tons of hay and some wood. In January 1776 the town supplied the army with fourteen blankets, eleven in 1777, and another ten in 1780. In 1778 Lincoln sent the army twenty-eight sets of shirts, shoes and stockings, another twenty-eight sets in 1779 and twenty sets in 1780. That year the community also provided three horses and 5,640 pounds of beef, followed in 1781 by another 10,381 pounds of beef.<sup>97</sup>

On the political scene, Lincoln, in June of 1776, approved the Declaration of Independence which was later read from pulpits and copied into the town records. It also accepted the Articles of Confederation.<sup>98</sup>

The Continental Congress suggested that each state write a constitution. The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts wrote a constitution which a state convention accepted. The towns, however, did not endorse it. Lincoln voted thirty-eight to one to reject the state constitution in May 1778. A year later Lincoln again voted against the state constitution as did five-sixths of Massachusetts towns. Finally Concord suggested a state constitutional convention be formed. The towns chose the delegates to the convention. Lincoln chose Eleazer Brooks to represent it. In June 1780 the town unanimously approved the new constitution except for two articles and a recommendation that the constitution be reviewed every seven years. In August 1780 Lincoln also provided John Hancock with forty-two of its forty-three votes enabling him to win election as governor of the Commonwealth. In 1783 Lincoln finally sent a representative, Eleazer Brooks, to the state legislature.<sup>99</sup>

#### Lincoln and the Postwar Period

At the end of the war the economy was not strong. A depression existed. Paper currency had little value. Barter was used. Taxes were high, and many had difficulty paying them. In 1787 the town let those who could not pay their taxes provide their labor to dig a well near the new Poor House. The town paid for

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<sup>96</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, pp. 108; MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 308.

<sup>97</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 308.

<sup>98</sup>Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, p.111.

<sup>99</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 110, 111.

their work. Some had to mortgage their farms. David Mead, an innkeeper in the center of Lincoln, was imprisoned for not paying his debts. The town confiscated his property. Others also lost land. In Concord more men were jailed for debt than for any other offense.<sup>100</sup> The postwar period was a difficult time.

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<sup>100</sup>MacLean, *A Rich Harvest*, p. 309; Brooks, *The View from Lincoln Hill*, p. 112.



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