

1st BN No 497

NEW HAMPSHIRE MARKED

FRENCH

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

MUSKETS



Siege of Boston

MICHAEL R. CARROLL
2009

Canada

Lake Champlain

Trenton - Princeton - Valley Forge

SARATOGA

Monmouth

Brigade Expedition

Northern Dept

Yorktown

52040-2

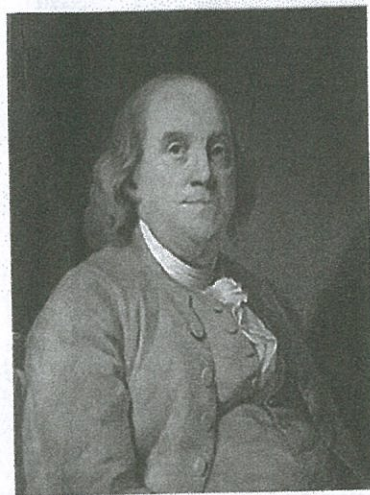


Figure 8. Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (Figure 8.) arrived in Paris the third week of December 1776. Silas Deane then met with Franklin and told him of the signed agreement for aid with Beaumarchais and also discussed the responsibility that America had for repayment with goods from the American colonies. The goods from America, tobacco and cotton, would be shipped to France on the return trip of the ships that would bring the military aid to America. At this meeting, Franklin indicated to Silas Deane and Arthur Lee that they, like himself, had been appointed American Commissioners of Trade with France by the Continental Congress. This appointment gave all three men official status to their endeavors to secure additional military aid and financial support to the American war effort. As American Commissioners, they stood to gain financially by way of commissions on material sent to France from America in exchange for the arms and equipment sent from France. Final arrangements were made with the Comte de Vergennes and Beaumarchais to send the cannon, fusils, gunpowder and other goods to America.

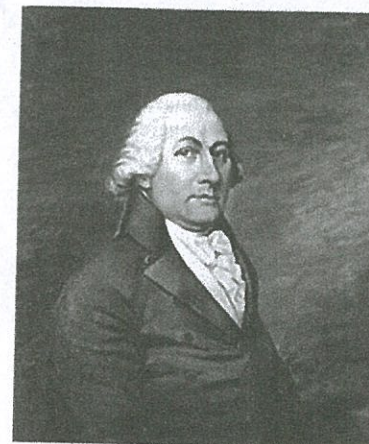


Figure 9. John Langdon

In late January and early February 1777 two ships set sail from French ports for Portsmouth, New Hampshire loaded with Beaumarchais' first shipment of muskets and bayonets along with other supplies for the war against Britain. The Amphitrite sailed from Lorient and the Mercure sailed from Nantes. The Mercure arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on March 17, 1777 and the Amphitrite docked there on April 20, 1777.⁴

New Hampshire Receives Muskets:

Some 10,000 muskets arrived in Portsmouth, New Hampshire aboard the Mercure and the Amphitrite during March and April 1777. These muskets were under the control of the Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs. The person who held this position was John Langdon (Figure 9.) from Portsmouth, New Hampshire. John Langdon's background was that of a ship captain, sea merchant, privateer and Portsmouth shop keeper. He was active in early Revolutionary War military affairs and participated in the attack on the British controlled Fort William and Mary at New Castle, New

Hampshire, in the Portsmouth harbor. In this attack, one hundred barrels of gun powder and several dozen muskets were captured.

John Langdon served as a Representative from New Hampshire to the 2nd Continental Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Early in 1776, he learned of the position of Congressional Agent for Maritime Affairs in New Hampshire. Mr. Langdon soon had himself appointed to this position. Subsequently, a strongly worded Congressional letter informed him that he could not hold two government jobs at the same time. At the end of July 1776, John Langdon resigned his New Hampshire seat to the 2nd Continental Congress and assumed his position as Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs. In this position, and in his opinion, John Langdon served for *the whole business of the Continent*. It is said that lack of definition in the scope of responsibilities did not bother the sleeping or waking times of John Langdon.⁵ It is clear that John Langdon did not want to distance himself too greatly from the potentially lucrative business of commerce in military supplies for the war.

The State of New Hampshire recognized that there was a shortage of muskets for the three regiments being raised for Continental service in February 1777. On February 6, 1777, the New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety wrote to General Artemas Ward, second in command to Commander in Chief George Washington, soliciting clothing and muskets for six to nine hundred soldiers. General Ward replied that none were available.⁶

The New Hampshire House of Representatives voted on March 19, 1777 to establish a committee under Joseph Whipple to *apply immediately to John Langdon Esquire, the Continental agent, for what fire-arms, Blankets, Clothing & etc. he can furnish to supply the regiments now raising in the State for the Continental service and to forward the same to Exeter with the greatest expedition.*⁷

On March 21, 1777, the New Hampshire House of Representatives' Committee of Safety wrote to John Langdon requesting arms and blankets for the three New Hampshire Continental Line regiments. The request states that the troops are *at present destitute and that the arms to be furnished by no means ought to be delayed.*⁸ John Landon managed,

as Continental Agent for Maritime Affairs, to secure 2,016 of these French muskets with bayonets for the State of New Hampshire.

On March 26, 1777 the New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety voted to have these muskets for the three Continental regiments delivered into store under the care of John Taylor Gilman.⁹ Under this direction *the Colonels or Commanding officers of said Battalions - who shall be accountable to the state for what they receive.*

The Committee of Safety voted on April 1, 1777 *That the soldiers belonging to the three Continental Battalions now raising in the State be furnished with proper belts too carry their Bayonets in, and that Mr. Thomas Odiorne be and hereby is appointed to procure the same and deliver them to the Hono. Brigadier General Poor, and take his receipt for the same.*¹⁰ A receipt, dated May 9, 1777, for 30 of these belts from Mr. Odiorne to Lt. Moses Dustin of the 2nd New Hampshire Continental Line Regiment, signed by Moses Emerson, a Captain in the 2nd Regiment, is shown in Figure 10.

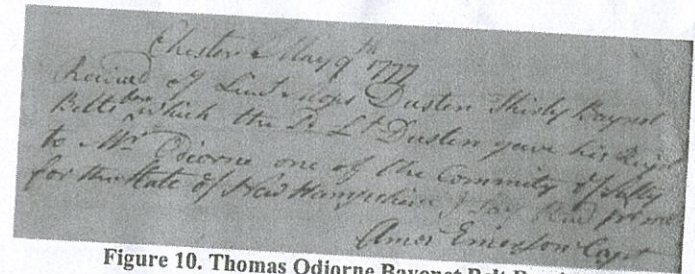


Figure 10. Thomas Odiorne Bayonet Belt Receipt

The New Hampshire House of Representatives Committee of Safety discussed the matter of transporting these muskets to Fort Number 4 at Charlestown, New Hampshire and then shipping these muskets to Fort Ticonderoga in New York. On April 1, 1777, the Committee voted that *wagons be appointed to carry the Baggage of the officers and soldiers to No. 4, not exceeding one wagon to a Company and that five Baggage horses to a Company be employed to carry their baggage from No. 4 to*



Figure 11. John Ward Gilman

Ticonderoga. The Committee also voted that *the guns for the soldiers raising in the western parts of this State be sent as soon as may be to No. 4.*¹¹ The Committee of Safety then voted on April 8, 1777, that Major Samuel Philbrick be and hereby is directed & empowered to receive of Mr. John Taylor Gilman, Store Keeper in Exeter, eight hundred arms to convey to Charlestown and two hundred & Eighty to Concord.¹²

Muskets from the arms made available to New Hampshire by John Langdon bear markings on the barrel that designate ownership by the state of New Hampshire. The markings for each musket consist of the letters *N* and *H* joined at the intersecting leg, followed by a *1B*, *2B*, or *3B* and then a *No.* with a sequential number from 1 to 672 applied to each musket. French bayonets were also marked and numbered to the matching musket. These bayonets were sequentially numbered with the marks *No.* followed by the sequential number matching them to the musket.

The state markings for New Hampshire Revolutionary War muskets are very finely done and are consistent in style and workmanship across all of the known New Hampshire marked arms. The *1B*, *2B* or *3B* is the mark for the New Hampshire Battalion Number. During the Revolutionary War, it was common practice to interchange the name *Battalion* for *Regiment*. The New Hampshire muskets were stamped with these state ownership numbers by a well known New Hampshire silversmith, John Ward Gilman, (Figure 11.) of Exeter, New Hampshire. He was paid two pence per musket to apply the New Hampshire markings these arms.

A receipt, shown in Figure 12, indicates that a total of 2,016 muskets, or 672 muskets per regiment, were stamped by John Ward Gilman. He was paid on May 6, 1777, a total of 16 pounds and 16 schillings for his work.¹³

State of New Hampshire to John Ward Gilman
To marking and numbering Two thousand
Selection of the French Guns at 2^d Lt. H. Co.
Exeter May 6th 1777. In off Gilman
Gentlemen Please to pay the above Account
and charge the State with the same
I am with Due respect Yours very truly
Committee of Safety Enoch Poor Secy
State of New Hampshire

Figure 12. John Ward Gilman Receipt for Marking Muskets