

Hezekiah Gray's service in the American War of Independence, 1775-1777
By Barry J. Gray

One of my early childhood memories is of listening to my father talk about one of our ancestors who had served in the Revolutionary War, under George Washington. The discussion may have been occasioned by my sister's work on creating a family tree. I remember my father claiming that this ancestor had been an aide de camp, "which meant that he could read and write," according to him. Such a claim naturally fired the imagination of a young boy.

Many years later, when my brother, Robert F. Gray, published his own genealogical research on our family, I learned that there were surviving records of this ancestor's service in the war, and that his name was Hezekiah Gray, my fourth great grandfather. These records showed that he had been an officer in a unit from New York.

I have always had an interest in military history, and as a young man I developed a particular interest in eighteenth century military history. I published several historical miniature war game rulebooks about the period. This naturally made me curious to learn in which, if any events during the American War of Independence Hezekiah might have been involved.

The more details I learned about Hezekiah's military service, the more confused I became. The records from the period are fragmentary and inconsistent. Putting them in chronological order, and then placing them in context with the events of the war, turned into an extensive research project. As part of this project, in October 2018 I travelled to Connecticut and Westchester County, NY with my brothers Bob and Brien, in order to examine documents and records relating to our family history. In addition to the records, which are dry statements of facts and figures, I consulted various primary and secondary sources, focusing on the history of Westchester County, New York, during the war. This is where Hezekiah Gray lived, performed his military service, and presumably died.

What the sources showed me was the tragic situation facing the residents of the county, who were not only trapped between two opposing armies, but also caught in a vicious civil war in which both sides treated them as the enemy. This is a far cry from the romantic notions of the war I held in my youth. And yet this makes the story of my ancestor even more interesting.

Background

Hezekiah Gray Sr., son of Samuel Gray and Eleanor Sturges Gray, was born November 14, 1738, in Fairfield, Connecticut. Genealogical research by my brother Robert F. Gray shows him to be our fourth great grandfather. He married Abigail Waterbury in 1760. His children were Abigail, 1761, Lucy, 1763, Ellen, 1765, Hezekiah, 1767, and David, 1770.¹ Very little is known about when he died, or where, or even where he is buried.

Hezekiah is an Old Testament name, as were many given names of the time. The biblical Hezekiah was the 13th king of Judah. His father's name was Ahaz and he

¹ Mary Ann Timon. "The Genealogy of the Gray-Hort Family." Oswego County Historical Society, 30th publication. 1969: 46-51.

lived from about 741 to 687 BCE. He became king c. 715. He was the direct descendant of Solomon, the last king of the united kingdom of Israel.

After Solomon died the kingdom split. The northern tribes continued to be called Israel or Samaria (as in the Good Samaritan), after its capital. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south were referred to as Judah. In New Testament times it was called Judea.

During Hezekiah's reign Assyria conquered Israel in 722 BCE. Assyria carried off most of the Israelites and moved them to Assyria, never to return. They then moved their own people in to possess the land. In 701 BCE Assyria besieged Jerusalem. The Bible states that during the siege of the city, 175,000 Assyrians died outside the walls. While this is probably an exaggeration, clearly something catastrophic like a plague happened. After this the Assyrians went home.

Hezekiah was one of a few righteous kings in either kingdom. He had all the idols thrown out of the Temple, repaired it and rededicated it. He reformed the priesthood and destroyed the high places where pagan gods were worshiped. He restarted the yearly Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He invited the northern tribes to come but they only laughed. A number of Biblical prophets were Hezekiah's contemporaries, including Isaiah.

The Grays were among the first white settlers in Connecticut. Henry Gray Sr. and Lydia Frost, Hezekiah's great grandparents, settled in Fairfield in 1642. Hezekiah moved from Fairfield, Connecticut to Bedford, New York some time before 1770, as there is an early land record stating he lived in Fairfield with Abigail and another stating he lived in Bedford dated 1770.²

Our great great grandfather Jesse Gray's obituary says his grandfather was Hezekiah Gray, who was an officer in the Revolutionary Army. This is also reported in the genealogy of the Gray-Hort family. Our grandfather Edward T. Gray's family tree lists Hezekiah as a colonel in the Continental Army. This is certainly an exaggeration, based on the historical sources. He may have confused Hezekiah with his father in law, David Waterbury, who was a colonel during the war.³

The Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society include several mentions of the Gray family. One, a list of bills of exchange, is confusing taken out of context. It shows "An account of cash received at the Exchequer for reimbursing the Colony of Connecticut for their expenses in taking Louisbourg & Cape Breton, and the bills which have been drawn by their Honors Jonathan Laws Esquire deceased & Roger Wolcott Esquire and discharged by Dr. Benjamin Avery. His Hon Roger Wolcott, 9 Jan 1751 to Samuel Gray, 200 [pounds]."⁴

The Samuel Gray in question here may have been Hezekiah's father, since he was from Connecticut and would have been about 40 years old when the campaign

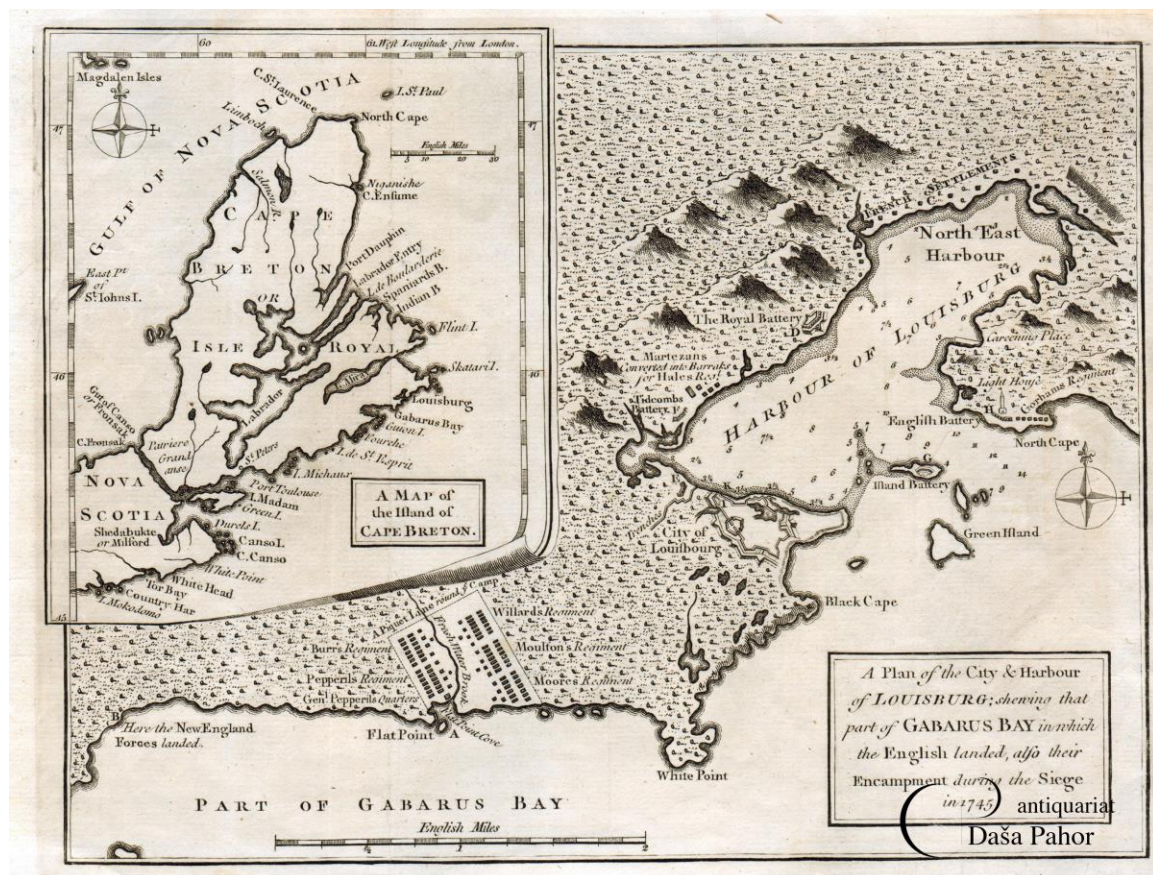
² Robert F. Gray. "Hezekiah Gray Sr." (<http://www.robertfgray.com>). Viewed on August 10, 2018.

³ A. H. Clark. A Complete Roster of Colonel David Waterbury Jr.'s Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers. New York: A. S. Clark, 1897.

⁴ Connecticut Historical Society. Wolcott Papers, Correspondence and Documents During Roger Wolcott's Governorship of the Colony of Connecticut 1750 - 1754 (Collections, 16) Hartford: The Society, 1916: 194.

occurred. Furthermore, the commander of the expedition, Col. Andrew Burr, was also from Fairfield, and was married to Sara Sturges. Samuel's wife was Eleanor Sturges. Assuming this account refers to Hezekiah's father, it is relevant to the analysis of the son's endeavors.

Samuel's service would have been during King George's War (1744-1748) in which Britain and France fought over their American colonies. The New England colonial militia captured the French fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island in 1745. As part of the peace treaty ending the war, Britain returned the fortress to France. This caused great consternation among the New Englanders who had fought on foreign soil to conquer it (see map).



(From Gentlemen's Magazine, London: 1758. Plan of the City & Harbour of Louisbourg.)

For the expedition to Louisbourg, each enlisted man was to have been paid eight pounds per month of active service, plus a bonus of ten pounds if they provided all their own equipment and weapons.⁵ According to the Connecticut Historical Society, the men on the Louisbourg expedition often transferred their wages to another individual to pay for provisions and to serve their speculative

⁵ Charles Burr Todd. *A General History of the Burr Family*, 2nd ed. New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1891. 36-44.

interests.⁶ This makes sense, as money was typically withheld from soldiers on campaign at the time, on the belief that they would be more likely to desert if they had been paid. It is believed that this account is an example of such a transaction. Wolcott may have been paying Samuel some of his wages and earnings several years after the fact.

In another entry from the Connecticut Historical Society, an account of the "Colony of Connecticut to Capt. Daniel Bradley and the Company under his Command in Col. Andrew Burrs Regiment, for their Service at the time of Alarm for Relief of Fort Willm Henry and Parts Adjacent" lists a "Heze. Gray" as one of the men who served in the company for sixteen days, from Aug. 7 to 23, 1757. It also notes that "Each of the above named rode a horse from Fairfield."⁷ It is possible that this is the same Hezekiah Gray discussed below, as he would have been 18 years old at the time, and he was born in Fairfield. It is not clear whether his commander was the same Andrew Burr who served in the previous war, or one of his sons.

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763) the commander-in-chief of the French forces, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm, laid siege to Fort William Henry, at the southern end of Lake George in New York, from August 3-9, 1757 (see map). After the British American garrison surrendered, Indians who had sided with the French attacked them. James Fenimore Cooper later dramatized the event in *The Last of the Mohicans*. The French burned the fort.⁸

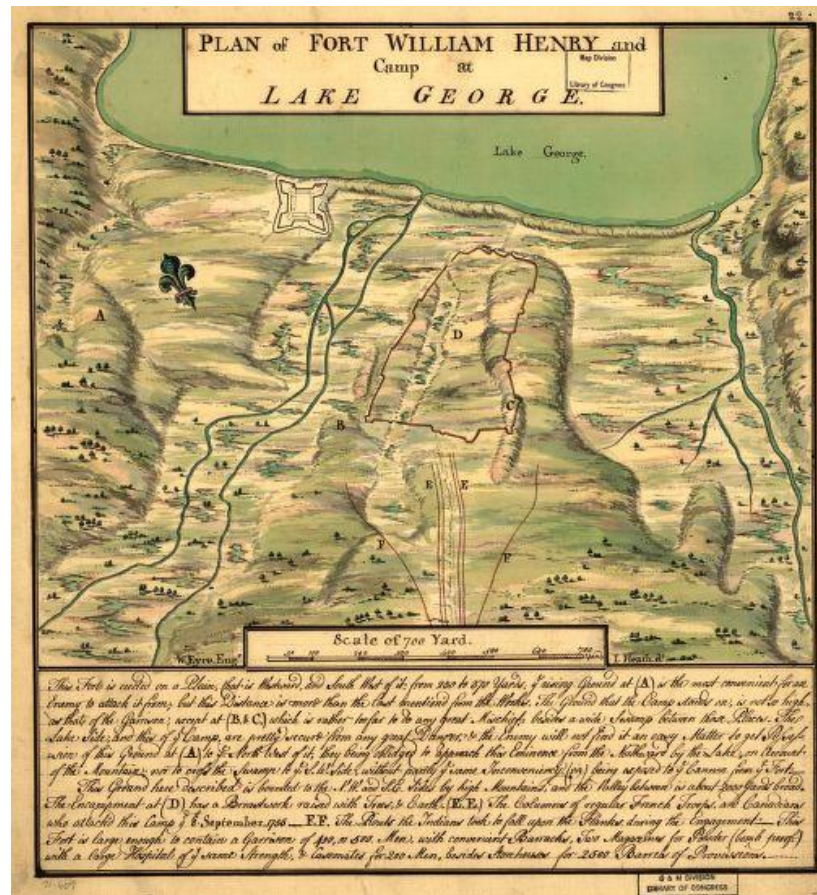
⁶ Connecticut Historical Society Museum & Library. A Guide to the French and Indian War Papers at the Connecticut Historical Society.

(https://chs.org/finding_aides/frinw1763.html). Viewed on August 21, 2018.

⁷ Connecticut Historical Society. *Rolls of Connecticut Men in the French and Indian War, 1755-1762: 1* (Collections, 9) Hartford: The Society, 1903: 201.

⁸ The Fort William Henry Museum & Restoration,

<http://www.fwhmuseum.com/history.html>. Viewed on August 21, 2018.



(Heath, Joseph, and William Eyre. Plan of Fort William Henry and camp at Lake George. [?, 1755] Map. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/gm71000609/>.)

Chronology of the Revolutionary War

This section attempts to place Hezekiah Gray's service in the American War of Independence (1775-1783) in the context of the broader scope of events, especially those in Westchester County, NY. It extends only to the end of 1776, because Hezekiah's participation after that is in question, as will be discussed in the next section.

April 19, 1775: The Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts signal the start of the war.

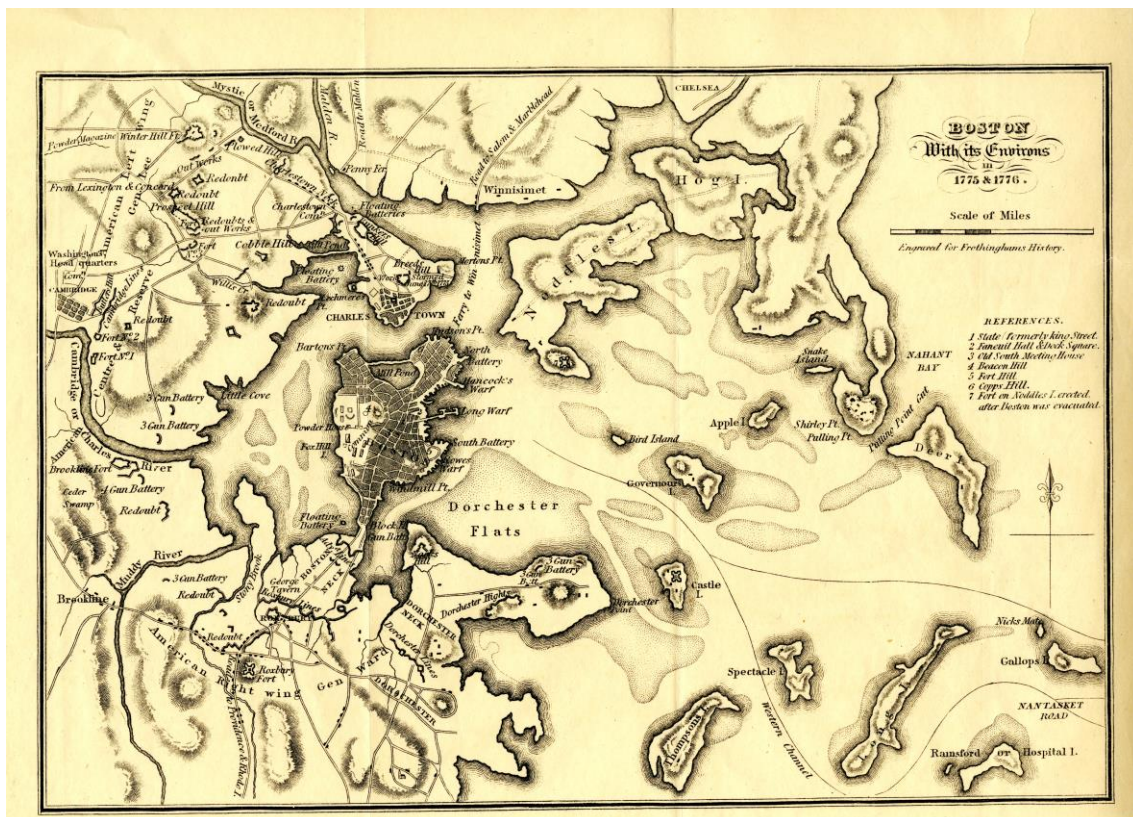
May 8, 1775: The Whig leaders of Westchester County form a committee of defense and begin preparations for defending the county against British aggression.⁹

⁹ Sung Bok Kim. "The Limits of Politicization in the American Revolution: The Experience of Westchester County, New York." *The Journal of American History*, 80:3 (Dec, 1993), 874.

June 17, 1775: The British in Boston under General Gage attack rebel positions at Bunker and Breed's Hill. The American rebels begin the siege of the British army occupying Boston.

July 3, 1775: George Washington takes command of the American Continental Army surrounding Boston.

July 13-November 10, 1775: One Hezekiah Gray serves as a private in the 7th Company of the 7th Connecticut Regiment, under Col. Charles Webb. Recruited in Fairfield, Litchfield, and New Haven Counties, the regiment was stationed at various points along Long Island Sound until September 14, when it was sent to Boston, and assigned to General Sullivan's Brigade on Winter Hill [now part of Somerville, Mass., north of Boston, see map below, upper left corner].¹⁰



(From Richard Frothingham, History of the siege of Boston, and of the battles of Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, 1849.

https://digitalcommons.salemstate.edu/maps_boston/4/)

(<https://academic.csuohio.edu/humphreyt/History601/601%20Readings/Kim.pdf>
Viewed on September 5, 2018.)

¹⁰ Henry P. Johnston. Record of Service of Connecticut Men. Hartford: Case, Lockwood, & Brainard, 1889, 82.

Henry Barton Dawson claims that Westchester County men were sometimes enlisted into Connecticut regiments under false pretenses, in order for their officers to receive commissions.¹¹ He also singles out Charles Webb and his men for scorn, claiming, "The Regiment of Connecticut troops, commanded by Colonel Charles Webb, were especially notorious, as thieves."¹² This, combined with the fact that Hezekiah was originally from Fairfield, suggest that it is possible this is the same Hezekiah Gray. Note also that the Hezekiah Gray from Bedford was commissioned in a Westchester County regiment on September 13, one day before Webb's regiment was sent to Boston. This may just be a coincidence.

August 9, 1775: At the request of the Continental Congress, the New York Provincial Congress orders the reorganization of the military of the colony, including a complete change in the men commanding it. This was most likely done in order to remove any "Tories" (Loyalists) from the military. Companies were to be commanded by officers to be elected by the respective companies, and commissioned by the Provincial Congress. The companies were to be organized into regiments, and the regiments into brigades.¹³

In the Eighteenth Century, companies and regiments were administrative, not combat units. A regiment was typically composed of 6-12 companies. In the field, the battalion was the most common tactical unit. However, since most regiments in the American War of Independence only contained one battalion, the terms were often used interchangeably. In battle, a number of battalions would be assigned to a brigade, under the command of a general.

Westchester County raised three regiments in response to Congress's request. While these units are often referred to as militia, they may have been more properly "state" regiments. These were "volunteer levies raised mainly in the early years of the war" which were neither regulars like the Continental regiments nor standing militia units.¹⁴ They tended to come and go according to the needs of the moment. State regiments, separate from the Continental units, provided an alternative and attractive form of military service. With comparable pay and shorter terms of service likely closer to home, men preferred enlisting in these units.¹⁵

Eight companies from Cortlandt were known as the North Battalion of Westchester County, under Col. Pierre Van Cortlandt. Six companies from Phillipsborough, along with those from Eastchester, New Rochelle and Pelham, were

¹¹ Henry Barton Dawson. *Westchester County, New York, during the American Revolution*. New York: 1886. 155.

¹² *Ibid*, 239.

¹³ *Ibid*, 101-2.

¹⁴ Benson Bobrick. *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997. 326.

¹⁵ John A. Ruddiman. *Becoming Men of Some Consequence: Youth and Military Service in the Revolutionary War*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014. 51.

known as the South Battalion of Westchester County, commanded by Col. Joseph Drake. Eleven companies from Scarsdale, White Plains/Brown's Point, Bedford, Poundridge, Salem, Mamaroneck/Rye, Harrison's Precinct, and North Castle were known as the Middle Battalion of Westchester County, under Col. Thomas Thomas. "He was unpopular as a Military Officer; and several Officers refused to serve under him, in August 1776."¹⁶

The District which included the western portion of Bedford elected Eli Seeley, for its Captain; Hezekiah Grey [sic], for its First Lieutenant; Ephraim Raymond, for its Second Lieutenant; and Gabriel Higgins, for its Ensign.¹⁷

September 13, 1775: Hezekiah Gray is commissioned as the First Lieutenant in the company from Bedford (Western District), Westchester Militia, Middle Battalion. Eli Seeley is commissioned Captain, Ephraim Raymond 2nd Lieutenant, and Gabriel Higgins Ensign.¹⁸

November 1775: Loyalist and Patriot forces from Westchester County clash. The Loyalist leaders are arrested.

January 8, 1776: General Charles Lee is sent by Washington to organize the defense of New York City.

January 12-15, 1776: "A payroll of Capt. Eli Seely's Company under the command of Col. David Waterbury, on the intended expedition to Long Island by recommendation of Congress in Jan. 1776" Lists a Samuel Barret [sic] among the men who enlisted for three days of service.¹⁹ Hezekiah later served with a Samuel Barrett, and his wife's second husband was Samuel Barrett.

February 9, 1776: General Lee, in command of the American defenses at New York City, anticipating a British attack, requests reinforcements. The New York Committee of Safety authorizes him to call up minutemen from the colony to aid in his preparations. A letter is sent to Colonel Samuel Drake, ordering his regiment of Westchester County minutemen into active service. They are to report to New York, leaving "a sufficient Guard of his Regiment at the cannon beyond Kings-bridge." Kingsbridge crossed the Harlem River between Manhattan and what is now The Bronx.

¹⁶ Dawson, 103-7.

¹⁷ Ibid, 107.

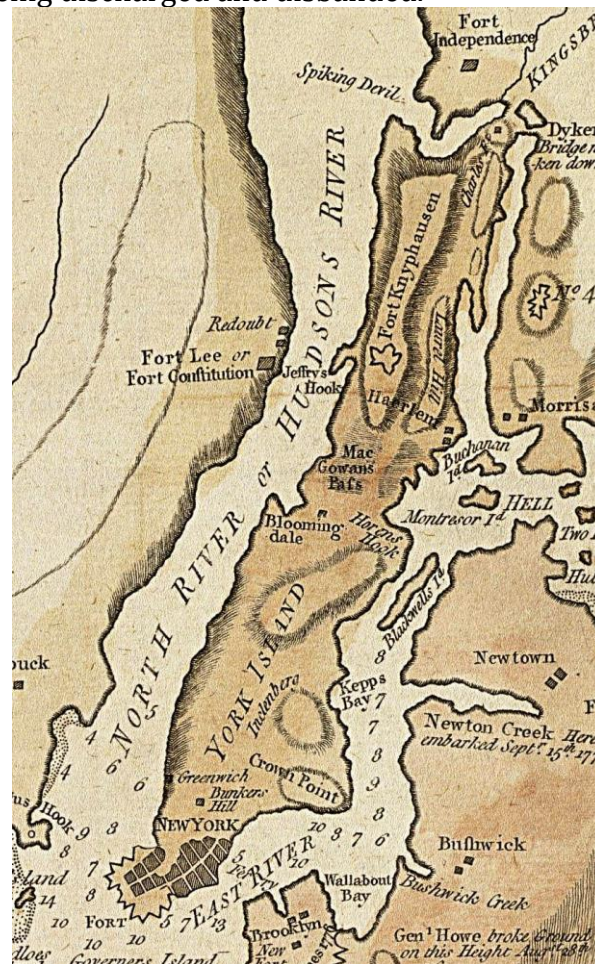
¹⁸ Calendar of Historical Manuscripts, Relating to the War of the Revolution. Albany, 1868. 159. Originally in Military Returns 26: 122, 125.

¹⁹ United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783, database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:Q2DG-K5Q3> : 15 March 2018), Samuel Burret, Jan 1776; citing Jan 1776, Connecticut, United States, citing NARA microfilm publication M246. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Services, 1980. FHL microfilm 830,307.

The idea of minutemen began in New England, in response to the threat of British military intervention in the affairs of the colonies. They were select groups of local militia, who volunteered to be ready "at a minute's notice" to take up arms.

At the time, Drake's "regiment" consisted of only two companies, commanded by Captains Slason and Seely (the same Seeley under whom Gray would later serve). The company commanded by Captain Gray was not organized until six days after the Regiment had been ordered into the service.

"There is no known Return of the actual strength of the Regiment, at any time; but within a few days after it had entered the Continental service, and after its reinforcement had joined it, it numbered not more than a hundred and fifty men." Despite this fact, the regiment had so many officers in proportion to the small number of enlisted men that most of the officers were ordered to return to Westchester. The regiment was sent to build fortifications at Horn's Hook, at the mouth of the Harlem River, on Manhattan Island (see map). It was in service only a short time before being discharged and disbanded.²⁰



(John Lodge, Publisher: Bew, John - Norman B. Levinson Map Center, Boston Public Library, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8722240>)

²⁰ Dawson, 153-4.

February 15, 1776: Hezekiah Gray is elected Captain of a "Minute Company" of Bedford militia that Col. Drake had requested to be formed. He is ordered to join Drake's Regiment of Minute Men at New York [City].

"Hezekiah Gray was chosen Captain of the Bedford Company of Minute-men, in February, 1776. ... He and his Company, although not regularly enlisted, were ordered to join the Continental Troops, at Peekskill."²¹ The Sub-Committee of Bedford wrote that they "have Raised a Company of forty odd Men well Effective agreeable to Congressional principles, the Officers Elected out of that Body were Hezekiah Gray Captain, Cornelius Clark first Lieut., James Miller Second Lieut., and Isaac Titus Ensign, ... and accordingly have Ordered them to march to morrow morning in Order to join Col. Drakes Regiment of Minute Men at New York."²²

According to Dawson, the provisions of the Provincial Congress's enactment requiring one-fourth of the Militia of the County to be organized as Minute-men, appear to have been very indifferently obeyed; and the following are the Officers of the only Companies which were raised in Westchester County, based on the records which have been preserved:

The Company of Bedford elected Eli Seeley, to be its Captain; Zephaniah Mills, to be its First Lieutenant; Cornelius Clarke, to be its Second Lieutenant; and Philip Leek, to be its Ensign; and their Commissions were issued by the Provincial Congress, on the twenty-seventh of October, 1775. Eli Seeley was originally elected to the command of the Company in the western part of the Town of Bedford.

Subsequently, "agreeable to the Demand made by Colonel Drake to the Sub-Committee of Bedford," another Company of minutemen was organized, in that Town, with Hezekiah Gray, for its Captain. Hezekiah Gray was originally the First Lieutenant in the Company in the western part of the Town of Bedford, of which Eli Seeley was the Captain.²³

While a total of only four companies of minutemen were raised in Westchester County, "as soon as two Companies had been organized, the County Committee took the liberty, with all submission, to recommend Samuel Drake, to be Colonel. Samuel Drake was a member of the Provincial Convention, 1775; a member of the first County Committee, 1775; and of that of 1776-7."²⁴

February 16, 1776: Captain Gray's company marched from Bedford. On the same date, Samuel Drake complained to the New York Provincial Congress about the poor quality of the men under his command. As Gray's unit had not yet arrived in Manhattan, Drake was probably not referring to them.

February 17, 1776: Hezekiah delivered the list of officers of the company to William Miller, Chairman of the Committee of Safety for the County of Westchester, who

²¹ Ibid., 107.

²² Force, 241.

²³ Dawson, 108.

²⁴ Ibid., 109.

writes "In the absence of the Chairman the Barer herof Mr. Gray Delivered the above to me, I not being acquainted with the Sircumstance Can Say nothing of my Self only that I can Confide in the Gentlemen who have been acting and Desier Said Gray may be encouraged in the way the Hon. Provincial Congress may think meet."²⁵

February 20, 1776: The Committee of Safety for Harrison's Precinct reported the officers elected in a company of minutemen in Colonel Drake's regiment. They are Hezekiah Gray, captain; Cornelius Clark, first lieutenant; James Miller, second lieutenant; Isaac Titus, ensign.²⁶

February 29, 1776: General Lee reported to General Washington that Drake's Regiment and another company, "are employed in throwing up a redoubt, to contain three hundred men," at Horn's Hook, at the mouth of the Harlem River, for the defense of the straight of Hell Gate between the East River and Long Island Sound.²⁷

February 1776: Samuel Barrett "enlisted into Capt. Hezekiah Gray's Company of Militia in the town of Bedford for the term of six weeks and performed said service on York Island [Manhattan], and was then discharged."²⁸ This clearly refers to the minutemen's work on the defenses at Horn's Hook on Manhattan.

March 14, 1776: Colonels Joseph Drake and Thomas Thomas are ordered to send detachments from their regiments totaling three companies to New York City, to be joined with the regiment of Col. Samuel Drake. Drake's regiment was then at Horn's Hook, constructing field works to oppose any naval passage of the Harlem River. Although "no record has been found which indicates which of the Companies of the Militia of that County were thus drafted and sent to throw up the defensive works within the City of New York,"²⁹ since a company led by Captain Gray was sent to join Drake's regiment, it may have been one of those detached from Thomas's Regiment rather than a group of new recruits. Hezekiah is not listed as having served in Col. Joseph Drake's 1st Regiment of Westchester Militia, or as an officer in the Continental Army.³⁰

March 17, 1776: The British army under General Howe evacuates Boston and sails for Halifax, Nova Scotia.

²⁵ Force, 241.

²⁶ Charles Washington Baird. *Chronicle of a Border Town: History of Rye, Westchester County, New York, 1660-1870, including Harrison and the White Plains till 1788*. New York: Anson D.F. Randolph and Company, 1871. 223.

²⁷ Dawson, 153.

²⁸ Samuel Barrett, Pension Application S12052, October 3, 1832.

²⁹ Dawson, 160.

³⁰ New York State Archives; Francis B. Heitman. *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution*. Washington: Rare Book Shop Pub. Co., 1914.

June 1, 1776: The Continental Congress calls for the colony of New York to provide 3,000 men to reinforce the army at New York City. The men were to be taken from the Militia of the Colony; all were to be "engaged" only "to the first day of December, unless sooner discharged by Congress," and the pay of the men was to commence on the days on which they respectively left their homes.³¹

June 10, 1776: Samuel Drake, who was then commanding the skeleton Regiment of Westchester County Minutemen, in the Continental Service, was elected Colonel of the Regiment in which the men drafted from Westchester County were to be enrolled.³² This new unit was later referred to as Drake's Regiment, which is a source of confusion, as it was not connected to the earlier regiment under his command.

A list of the men in the Westchester County Militia, Third Regiment, under Colonel Samuel Drake, includes Hezekiah Gray. One of the captains in the regiment was Eli Sely [sic]. In the same source, Samuel Barrett is listed in the First Regiment.³³

Late June, 1776: The British army under Howe, convoyed by a British fleet under his brother Admiral Howe, lands at Staten Island in New York. The force eventually grows to over 400 vessels, 10,000 sailors and 32,000 soldiers.

July 4, 1776: The American Continental Congress issues the Declaration of Independence.

August 6-October 6, 1776: Col. Thomas Thomas's Regiment of militia (also known as the 2nd Regiment, or Middle Battalion)³⁴ comprising eight companies raised from Harrison, North Castle, Bedford, Pound Ridge, Salem, Scarsdale/White Plains, and Rye/Mamaroneck in Westchester County, is stationed at Tarrytown and Kings Bridge (Fort Independence, across the Harlem River from Harlem Heights at the northern tip of Manhattan, see map below).³⁵

³¹ Dawson, 188.

³² Ibid., 190.

³³ New York State Comptrollers Office. *New York in the Revolution as Colony and State*. Albany, N.Y.: J. B. Lyon, 1904. 212.

³⁴ westchestermilitia.blogspot.com, Thursday, June 21, 2012. Viewed on August 11, 2018.

³⁵ New York Historical Society. *Orderly Books*.

September 26, 1776: A return of Col. Thomas's Regiment shows Capt. Benoni Platt's Company with its First Lieutenant present. The return for October 3 also shows him present. Several officers in other companies are not listed as present on both dates.³⁹

October 4, 1776: First Lieutenant Hezekiah Gray, of Benoni Platt's Company of Col. Thomas's Regiment, is reported as present and fit for duty. No location is given.⁴⁰ Platt had previously been elected captain of the company of militia formed from the eastern portion of North Castle, which was assigned to Thomas's Regiment at the same time as Seeley's Company, in which Hezekiah had also been First Lieutenant.⁴¹

"[A] militia officer deferred to his men. ... The best he could hope for was to hold them together, to keep them from walking out of camp in disgust, as so many were doing in Harlem Heights right then."⁴²

³⁹ "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL6B-MNH3> : 15 March 2018), Benoni Platt, 26 Sep 1776; citing 26 Sep 1776, New York, United States, citing NARA microfilm publication M246. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Services, 1980. FHL microfilm 830,355.

⁴⁰ "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL6Y-TQ7H> : 15 March 2018), Hezekiah Gray, 04 Oct 1776; citing 04 Oct 1776, New York, United States, citing NARA microfilm publication M246. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Services, 1980. FHL microfilm 830,355.

⁴¹ Dawson, 107.

⁴² Donald Barr Chidsey. *The Tide Turns: An Informal History of the Campaign of 1776 in the American Revolution*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1966, 70.

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4 Oct 1776

a list of officers in Col. Thomas's Regiment as well of the
present fit for duty as of the unfit and absent

Capt. William Dutcher	X	} present fit for duty
1st Lieut. Daniel Huntington	X	
2nd Lt. Gershom Sherwood	X	
Capt. Abraham Lewis	X	present fit for duty
1st Lieut. Isaac Wood	X	in the battery of Col. Independence
2nd Lt. Daniel Williams	X	present fit for duty
Capt. Nathaniel Delivani	X	sick absent by leave of the General at Clinton to recruit himself but soon expected to camp
1st Lieut. Samuel Lawrence	X	present fit for duty
2nd Lt. John Conroy Miller	X	went from camp yesterday afternoon on a sick call. General Heath to see his ship who is at the point of death
Capt. James Cronkleton	X	present fit for duty
1st Lieut. Obadiah Rowley	X	returned yesterday sick
2nd Lt. Joshua D. Wheeler	X	present fit for duty
Capt. Benoni Blaine	X	} present fit for duty
1st Lieut. Hezekiah Gray	X	
2nd Lt. Caleb Smith	X	at Morristown on a detached guard
Capt. Abijah Gilbert	X	sick absent by leave of General Clinton to recruit himself. From information will not be able to return to camp this 3 months
1st Lieut. William Tanshien	X	sick absent about Ten days since but also ago procured a person of equal Rank to his duty in his absence
2nd Lt. Thaddeus Crane	X	present unfit for duty
Capt. Elijah Hunt	X	} present unfit for duty
1st Lieut. Henry Biers	X	
2nd Lt. Nathaniel Smith	X	present fit for duty
Capt. Townsend	X	present and Adjutant of the above Regiment
1st Lieut. Richard Stottle	X	present fit
2nd Lt. William Woodward	X	present fit
Capt. David Dan	X	} present fit for duty
1st Lieut. Amos Wood	X	
no second Lieut. to Capt. Dan appointed		

"A list of officers in Col. Thomas's Regiment ... 4th Oct. 1776" showing 1st Lt. Hezekiah Gray.

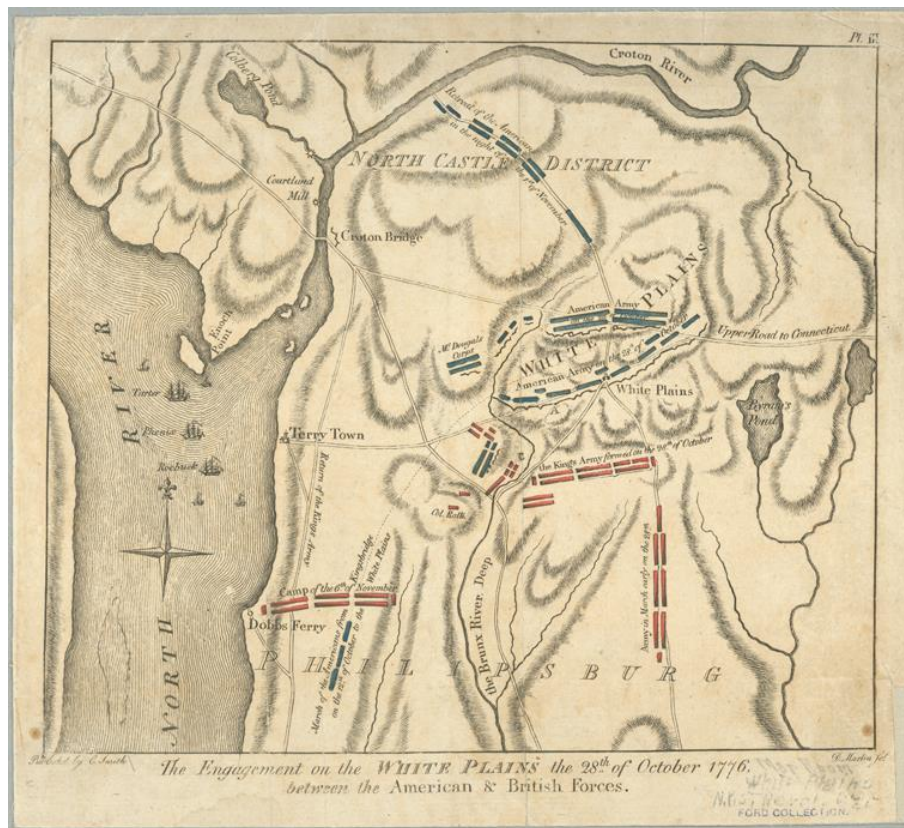
October 5, 1776: The returns from Washington's army show nearly one third of the men are reported as either sick or on furlough.⁴³

October 18, 1776: Washington withdraws from Harlem Heights. Howe lands troops at Pell's Point in Westchester County, to try to surround Washington's army.

October 21, 1776: General Heath's Division, which includes Thomas's Regiment, is ordered to move from its positions at Kingsbridge, north to the hills northeast of White Plains, to form the left of the American lines there.

⁴³ Carrington, 232.

October 28, 1776: At the Battle of White Plains, Washington's right flank is turned by an attack on Chatterton's Hill, but the British do not exploit the victory. The Americans withdraw to positions further north (see map).



(Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "The engagement on the White Plains, the 28th of October 1776: between the American & British forces" New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed August 22, 2018. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-f073-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>)

October 31, 1776: The return for Col. Thomas's Regiment lists the First Lieutenant in Benoni Platt's Company present. Platt himself is not present. Fewer than 20 rank and file [privates] are present and fit for duty. The notes explain that "Capt. Platt retired about one Mile to Recruit. Serjeant sick absent by leave, of the persons ment[ioned] sick absent 9 in Hospital, and 2 home by leave; of the persons on Command 9 left at fort Independence 3 with Teams and 1 with Commisary. Deserted in all 4." There are no dead listed for the entire regiment.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL6Y-WJ2H : 15 March 2018>), Benoni Platt, 31 Oct 1776; citing 31 Oct 1776, New York, United States, citing NARA microfilm publication M246. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Services, 1980. FHL microfilm 830,355.

November 1776: The British army under Howe withdraws south to Manhattan. Washington considers evacuating Fort Washington, at the northern tip of the island, but is dissuaded by Congress. He leaves part of his army in Westchester under General Heath to guard the Hudson River and prevent an attack on New England, and takes the rest of the army across the Hudson and through New Jersey, to forestall an attack on Philadelphia.

November 2, 1776: Gen. George Clinton's Brigade, including Thomas's Regiment, is stationed in the American lines northeast of White Plains. He reports only small demonstrations by the British.⁴⁵

November 3, 1776: Col. Thomas's Regiment reports no dead, and six First Lieutenants present. The return of the same date for Col. Chester's Regiment from Connecticut lists four dead, including Private Elisha Beckwith (another of my fourth great grandfathers), killed at the Battle of White Plains.⁴⁶ Chester's Regiment of Sergeant's Brigade, Sullivan's Division, was sent in advance of the lines on the American left to skirmish with the British at the start of the battle.⁴⁷

November 6-12, 1776: Hezekiah Gray and Samuel Baret [sic] are listed among the privates on "A Pay Roll of Officers, Noncommissioned Officers & privates, in Capt. Elli Sely's Company of Minute Men, in Colonel Samuel Drake's Regiment raised in Westchester County, now in the Service of the United Colonies."⁴⁸ Note that this would have been the second of Samuel Drake's regiments. There is no evidence of Hezekiah having been an officer in that unit. As I will discuss later, I believe this is the same Hezekiah who served in the regiments commanded by Thomas and Drake previously. Since he is not named in the returns for Platt's company of Thomas's regiment, it is not known if he left it prior to this date.

⁴⁵ Genl. George Clinton to John M'Kesson. Force, 487.

⁴⁶ General return of the Army in the service of the United States. Force, 500.

⁴⁷ Harry Schenawolf. "Battle of White Plains - Oct. 28, 1776: Washington Draws His Foot in the Sand," Revolutionary War Journal. (www.revolutionarywarjournal.com/battle-of-white-plains/) August 3, 2016. Viewed on November 21, 2018.

⁴⁸ "United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QL6Y-NKQ3> : 15 March 2018), Hezekiah Gray, 06 Nov 1776; citing 06 Nov 1776, New York, United States, citing NARA microfilm publication M246. Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Services, 1980. FHL microfilm 830,352.

Brought Over

Names	When Engaged	When Discharged	Rank of Regt.	Pages of Pay	Days of Framing		Pages of Pay	
					Oct.	Nov.		
John Dunge	X	Nov. 6	Rank	6	1	2	1	1
Amos Gordon	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Samuel Basot	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
John Mills	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
James Clarke	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
James Smith	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Daniel M. Leard	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
David Waring	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Jonathan Holmes	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thomas Ferguson	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
James Holmes	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ward Smith	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
John Ferguson	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Justice Harris	X	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
James Williamson	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Daniel Debley	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
John Woodley	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Robert Elliot	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Solomon Debley	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
John Ingersoll	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
James M. Donalds	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Stephen Postwick	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Richard Sackett Senr	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Hezekiah Gray	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Zekeiah Harris	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Peter Norman	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Richard Jacobs	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Abraham Borret	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Jonathan Tylar	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Marus Norman	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Ephraim Reynolds	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Marcus Braet	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Thomas Chase	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Jesse Post	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Major Hoyt	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Nathaniel Clarke	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1
Jacob Husted	X	ditto	ditto	6	1	2	1	1

\$ 10.75
\$ 10.75
\$ 10.75

R. & P. O. War Dept.
Returned to Files
Oct 9, 1895
CORDED

R. & P. O. War Dept.
Returned to Files
Oct 9, 1895
CORDED

Payroll record of Capt. Seely's company listing Hezekiah Gray.

November 16, 1776: The British attack Fort Mifflin, storming the position and taking the entire garrison of almost 3000 men prisoner. Patriot morale is at low ebb.

December 26, 1776: After crossing the Delaware River with the small force left under his command, Washington surprises a Hessian garrison at Trenton, New Jersey, taking it prisoner. This victory, and the defeat of a small British force at Princeton on January 3, 1777, revived the patriot cause.

In New York, General Heath orders Colonel Thomas to "... march the regiment under your command to North-Castle [Armonk, NY]."⁴⁹ Presumably the regiment was dismissed there since the men's enlistments were ending at the end of the year.

From then on, Westchester County was "neutral ground" between the two warring parties; a lawless area constantly ravaged by raiding parties from both sides.⁵⁰ "By the winter of 1776-1777 the Neutral Ground of Westchester was a scene of desolation as both sides skirmished and foraged for supplies." A visitor to the area in 1778 described it as "a dreary Wilderness" and she wrote, "Most of the inhabitants have left."⁵¹ The two armies would continue to face each other in Westchester until the end of the war, when the British evacuated New York City.

Records of Hezekiah Gray after 1776

The documentary record of Hezekiah after 1776 is contradictory. A biography of Samuel Barrett written by the Historian for Bedford, West Chester, New York, states that Hezekiah died in December 1776. It goes on to say that he "left his widow and four small children."⁵² Her biography may have been based on the work of Frances Duncombe, who wrote "In 1777 Samuel was under Capt. Marcus Moseman, his uncle. Capt. Hezekiah Gray was killed and his wife and four children managed a tavern across the road from Samuel's house. In 1778 Samuel married the widow Abigail (Waterbury) Gray (1743-1805), daughter of David & Mary (Sturges) Waterbury."⁵³ The Bedford Historical Records also list Samuel as serving under Captain Moseman from 1777 until November 1780.⁵⁴

These modern accounts are supported by a document dated January 11, 1787. It is a list of Hezekiah's assets and debts compiled by Samuel Barrett, in order to resolve Hezekiah's estate.⁵⁵ The beginning of the accounting lists "The Estate of Hezekiah Gray Deceased: 1777 22 Feb." If Hezekiah was already dead when the document was begun in February 1777, it seems likely that his death occurred weeks or even months before that date.

⁴⁹ General Heath to Colonel Thomas, Peekskill. Force, 1431.

⁵⁰ David Osborn, *The Revolutionary War "neutral ground" of Westchester County*. National Park Service, March 2014.

⁵¹ *The Neutral Ground in 1778*. westchestermilitia.blogspot.com August 1, 2012. Viewed on August 22, 2018.

⁵² Katharine Barrett Kelly, "Barrett, Samuel." undated.

⁵³ Frances R. Duncombe. *Katonah: The History of a New York Village and its People*. Katonah, NY: Katonah Village Improvement Society, 1961. 365.

⁵⁴ Town of Bedford. *Bedford Soldiers of the Revolution* (Bedford Historical Records, v. 7). Bedford Hills, NY: Town of Bedford, 1976. 3.

⁵⁵ Ancestry.com. "Hezekiah Gray, 11 Jan 1787," *New York, Estate Inventories and Accounts, 1666-1822* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. Original Data: *Inventories and Accounts, 1666-1822*. Series J0301-82. Microfilm (7 reels). New York (State), Court of Probates. New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

Many of the creditors listed on the inventory were men who had served with Hezekiah in the war. For further discussion of this document, [click here](#).

These would seem to be a reliable sources but they are inconsistent with Samuel Barrett's pension application, given on October 3, 1832, where Samuel states: "In February 1776 he enlisted into Capt. Hezekiah Gray's Company of Militia in the town of Bedford for the term of six weeks and performed said service on York Island, and was then discharged. On or about the first of January 1777 he enlisted with Capt. Hezekiah Gray's Company of Militia in the Town of Bedford for the term of four months, Isaac Titus Lieut., and served said term of time on the lines in West Chester County and was discharged at North Castle near the Mills."⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Barrett.

State of New York
 Westchester County }
 Town of Bedford }

on this ~~third~~ ^{fourth} day of
~~September~~ ^{October} 1832. personally appeared in
 open Court, before the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas
 of the County of Westchester now sitting
 Samuel Barrett, a resident of the Town of
 Bedford in the County of Westchester and State
 of New York aged seventy seven years, who being
 duly sworn according to Law, doth, on his Oath, make
 the following declarations in order to obtain the benef-
 -it of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.
 That he entered the service of the United States as herein
 after stated under the following named officers:
 In February 1776 he enlisted into Capt. Hezekiah
 Gray's Company of Militia in the Town of Bedford
 for the term of six weeks and performed said service
 on York Island, and was then and then discharged
 on or about the first of January 1777 he enlisted
 into Capt. Hezekiah Gray's Company of Militia
 in the Town of Bedford for the term of four months
 as a Private and served said term of time
 of the Militia in Westchester County and was
 discharged at North Castle near the Mills
 In the year 1777 he entered the service in Capt.
 Marcus Moser's Company of Militia in the
 Town of Bedford Westchester County and in
 the Regiment commanded by Col. Thomas
 Morris, then marched to the Hudson River oppo-
 -site Fort Montgomery, at the time the Fort was
 taken, from thence through the County of Westchester
 to a place called Harrison purchase and near the
 East River and about the month of November
 discharged.
 In 1779, about the month of May he entered the service
 again in Capt. Marcus Moser's Company under
 Col. Thomas Morris Command and called to guard

An excerpt from Samuel Barrett's pension application.

Other than Barrett's pension application, the only source that indicates that Hezekiah may still have been alive in early 1777 is the Calendar of Historical Manuscripts. This is a compilation of documents from the period, published in chronological order. However, the two references to Hezekiah from 1777 appear in undated documents.

Hezekiah Grey [sic] appears on a "List of Persons in Westchester County who took the Oath of Allegiance" administered by Ebenezer Lockwood, 1st Major of the

2nd Regiment of Militia in West Chester County.⁵⁷ Although the exact date is not recorded, the report was apparently made in January. Eli Seely [sic] is also listed.

Ebenezer Lockwood was made 1st Major of the Middle, or Second Regiment of Militia, which included Hezekiah's company from Bedford, when the regiments were raised in early 1776.⁵⁸ This suggests that he probably administered the oath in January 1776, not 1777.

Also included among documents from early 1777 is a Report of the Committee on a Letter from Bedford, which states that "[A] Company of Raingers has been raised by Capt. Hezekiah Gray upon the Verbal Order of Col. Drake and that doubts have arisen whether the said Company are Entitled to pay, &c. ... With respect to the Company raised by Hezekiah Gray -- Your Committee are of Opinion that the said company can only be considered as a part of the Militia out on duty and that they ought to be allowed pay & Rations for the Time they have been in actual Service."

Subsequently, a Report of Committee on the Petition from Bedford states, "Your Committee to whom was Referred a Letter from the Committee of Bedford in West Chester County Dated -- Day of -- beg leave to Report that they Consider it Reasonable the Company Raised in said County under Captain Hezekiah Gray should be considered as part of the Militia and are Intitled to Pay & Subsistence (Genl. Scott dissents) equal with the other parts of the Militia that were last called into service, for the time they have actually been in service."

"Your Committee further Report that they are informed that Capt. Gray is willing to Join the Continental Troops in Westchester County or the Troops under Genl. Geo Clinton -- thereon your Committee beg Leave to Report the following Resolution."

"Resolved that Capt. Hezekiah Gray with his Company of non-Commissioned officers & privates with Commissioned & non-Commissioned officers in proportion of one Capt., 2 Lieuts., an Ensign & Eight non-Commissioned officers to the 75 privates, Join the Continental Troops in West Chester County and be under the direction & Command of the Commanding officer at Peekskill until the 31 day of March next unless Genl. Geo. Clinton shall sooner call for that company to join the troops under his comd. provided always that if Capt. Gray do not within eight days join the said Continental Troops with at least 40 privates of his company, that he be not taken into the service."⁵⁹

It is possible that these 1777 reports, which are undated, were entered into the Calendar of records for the wrong year. Since other sources document Hezekiah Gray's company of minutemen being raised in February 1776, at the request of Col. Samuel Drake, and that they were ordered to join Drake's regiment at Peekskill, it appears that these reports refer to the same company, not a different company of "Raingers" raised in early 1777. Therefore, Katherine Barrett Kelly's claim that Hezekiah died in December 1776 would not be refuted by these sources.

⁵⁷ Calendar of Historical Ms., 619. Originally in Miscellaneous Papers 30: 487.

⁵⁸ Dawson, 108.

⁵⁹ Calendar of Historical Manuscripts, 647-8. Originally in Miscellaneous Papers 39: 323, 325.

Samuel Barrett's pension application from 1832 does seem to disagree, since he claimed to have served in Gray's company in both early 1776 and early 1777. However, in 1832 Barrett was an old man testifying to events that occurred over fifty years earlier, so his memory of them is suspect, and contradicted by Duncombe. His testimony of serving in a second company commanded by Hezekiah in January 1777 may have in fact referred to their service together in Samuel Drake's militia regiment in the fall of 1776.

It is also worth noting that Barrett remembers Isaac Titus as his lieutenant, since Titus is documented as the ensign (the most junior officer) in Hezekiah's company of minutemen raised in February 1776. Isaac Titus is not listed among the officers or enlisted men in Samuel Drake's Third Regiment of Westchester County militia. Perhaps an examination of the original records in the Miscellaneous Papers would reveal that they are in fact from 1776, not 1777.

Sometime in 1778, Hezekiah's widow, Abigail Waterbury Gray married Samuel Barrett. On July 11, 1779, a British raiding party of 400 cavalymen led by Col. Samuel Birch burned Bedford village, with the exception of one house that was later torn down.⁶⁰ This fact may have contributed to the difficulty of documenting the life of Hezekiah Gray and his family, as most of the town records probably went up in flames. On September 17, 1779, Joseph Barrett, the first child of Samuel and Abigail Waterbury (Gray) Barrett, was born. The war did not officially end until the peace treaty of Paris on September 3, 1783. The last British troops departed New York City on November 25 of that year.

Conclusions

The historical sources show that a man named Hezekiah Gray served in a Connecticut regiment in the summer of 1775. A man with the same name was then elected First lieutenant of a company from Bedford, New York, in Thomas's Westchester County militia regiment in the fall of the same year. We know from Dawson that this same man was then appointed captain of a company of minutemen from Bedford in February of 1776, serving in Samuel Drake's regiment at New York City. This company may have been composed of volunteers or picked men, or it may have been detached from Thomas's regiment and assigned to Drake temporarily. By the summer of the same year, his service with Drake's regiment fulfilled, the same man could have returned to Thomas's regiment, and been present at Kingsbridge during the battles of Long Island and Harlem Heights.

A man by that name is reported present as the First lieutenant in Benoni Platt's company of Thomas's regiment on October 4, 1776, just before they left Kingsbridge for White Plains. While there is no other mention of him by name in the returns from Thomas's Regiment for the remainder of the year, a man with the same name is then reported as being a private in Eli Seeley's company of Samuel Drake's

⁶⁰ Evelyne H. Ryan. "The Burning of Bedford Village." Record Review. July 9, 2004. (https://www.bedfordhistoricalsociety.org/about_bedford_ny/pdfs/The_Burning_of_Bedford.pdf) Viewed on August 26, 2018.

newly formed militia regiment from November 6-12, shortly after the Battle of White Plains. This is the last documented mention of Hezekiah that is not in question. It is not known for certain what became of him after this date.

While Hezekiah's first son was also named Hezekiah, the son would have been younger than ten years old at the time. Still, there could have been two men with the same name who served in the Westchester County militia in the early stages of the war. However, none of the records reviewed for this article support this conclusion. I believe it is possible that all of the men named Hezekiah Gray listed in the surviving records could have been the same man.

Furthermore, this analysis calls into question all documented evidence of Hezekiah being active in early 1777. Most importantly, the historical manuscripts indicating this are undated, and match up with the documented activities of Gray and his company from early 1776. My conclusion is that Hezekiah Gray's death in late 1776, is a reasonable assumption, and is supported by Duncombe and the biography of one of the men who served with him, Samuel Barrett.

While Hezekiah's service in the War of American Independence may not have been illustrious, it was most likely honorable. As a newcomer to Westchester County, he would not have been politically connected, as the Drakes, Thomases, and Platts, under whom he served, were. And yet, he was apparently elected by others from his town to serve as an officer three times in the span of six months time. Militia officers "tended to belong to the civilian leaders of the community."⁶¹ He commanded a company of men, and led them to an exposed position at Horn's Hook in order to assist in the defense of New York City.

If he were the same man who served in the French and Indian War, his experience with military matters, and his age (he would have been in his late 30s) could have elicited the respect of his men. The "Old French War" as it was often called at the time, was still fresh in the minds of many and called to mind heroic exploits for those too young to have participated.

Militia units had traditionally elected their officers during the colonial wars with the French and Indians. In Hezekiah's case, it was probably more difficult to lead men in rebellion against their king and country. And being elected by the men did not automatically confer authority over them. "The process ... was most prevalent among the New England outfits. ... The militiamen, in short, elected their own officers, and if they did not like the way those appointees behaved they demoted them."⁶² The adjutant-general of Washington's army, Joseph Reed, expressed his disapproval of the system, writing "Either no discipline can be established, or he who attempts it must become odious and detestable, a position which no one will choose."⁶³ Washington was said to hate the militia system.⁶⁴

Siding with the Patriot cause was by no means the consensus choice in that part of the state. Sung Bok Kim claimed, "On the outbreak of armed conflict, most of

⁶¹ Bobrick, 326.

⁶² Chidsey, 69.

⁶³ Carrington, 232.

⁶⁴ Bobrick, 327.

the county's adult males were apolitical and apathetic farmers."⁶⁵ Westchester County had great difficulty enlisting men into the Continental Army regiments that Congress ordered New York to raise.⁶⁶ Some men in Samuel Drake's regiment of militia refused to go to New York City to defend against the British invasion. Colonel James Holmes, of Hezekiah's own town of Bedford, led a corps of Loyalists from the county.⁶⁷

Hezekiah's view of the war may have been similarly conflicted, although his repeated election to command would indicate an inclination toward the Patriot cause. Growing up in Connecticut, he would have been influenced by the experiences of his father's generation, as well as his own in the French and Indian War, when the men in the colonial militia were looked upon with contempt by upper-class English officers and the brutes in the royal regiments under them. It is also possible that he sought command because of the financial and social benefits this accrued. Ruddiman states "For the young men of prominent families who stepped forward to lead companies, part of that ambition was advancing themselves in life and in their communities."⁶⁸

Whatever his views may have been, the sources show that he served in the Patriot cause for a year and a half before his death. There is no evidence that he saw combat at any point during that time. However, he was still with Thomas's Regiment at the beginning of October 1776, and does not show up in Drake's Regiment until early November. Had he remained with Thomas's unit until then, he likely would have been present at the Battle of White Plains, although Thomas's Regiment was not engaged with the enemy during the battle.

Why would a man serve in so many different units over so short a time? Beyond patriotism, the motivations of the young men who joined the rebellion included the ambition to rise in society and the expectation of compensation, as well as pressure to contribute and personal decisions about achieving their goals in life.⁶⁹

The American army in the Revolutionary War was a work in progress. Units came and went, especially the state regiments, which were called up by the local authorities as the need arose. If Thomas was a poor soldier, and Drake was a political hack who did not care about his men, as Dawson would have us believe, Hezekiah may have been eager to transfer out of their units to avoid trouble. Additionally, he had a wife and family at home to provide for, and would have needed to return there periodically to attend to his affairs.

Patrick Raftery, a librarian at the Westchester County Historical Society, and an expert on the cemeteries in the county, wrote that "Most people who died in Westchester during the 1770s did not have inscribed tombstones, and we generally do not have church burial records from this time." Hezekiah's wife, Abigail and her second husband, Samuel Barrett are buried in Buxton Cemetery in Bedford. "Buxton

⁶⁵ Kim, 871.

⁶⁶ Dawson, 155.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 202.

⁶⁸ Ruddiman, 30.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 17-56.

Cemetery has many 18th century graves that are marked by simple, uninscribed fieldstones, so perhaps Hezekiah lies buried beneath one of these stones."⁷⁰

Duncombe states Hezekiah was killed, but gives no details about how. If this is true, assuming he was killed while with his regiment, it may have happened near Peekskill, NY, where General Heath's troops, which included Drake's regiment, were stationed to guard New York City after the White Plains campaign. Raftery also states, "some soldiers who died in the vicinity of Peekskill were interred at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church Cemetery in Van Cortlandtville, which is also known as Old Van Cortlandtville Cemetery."⁷¹

Wherever he was buried, his death left his wife, Abigail, a widow with four small children, alone in Bedford, which was part of the "Neutral Ground" between the two armies. "The war inflicted severe wounds on the Westchester people physically and psychologically." Raids by both sides, including "patriots" from Connecticut, frequently robbed the inhabitants, although they called it "impressment" and offered the victims worthless "certificates" as payment.⁷² Given the devastation of the area, it is not surprising that Hezekiah's youngest son David, my third great grandfather, left for upstate New York after the war, eventually becoming one of the first settlers in Oswego.⁷³

After Hezekiah's death, Abigail ran a tavern on Broad Brook Road, on the north side and east of Broad Brook, to support her children. In 1778, she married Samuel Barrett, who had served with Hezekiah in the Westchester Militia.⁷⁴

A Letter of Administration dated March 5, 1784 settling Hezekiah's estate in Bedford refers to Abigail as "late the widow of Hezekiah Gray, late of the same place deceased." There is also a land record for Bedford dated April 24, 1786 that refers to the heirs of Hezekiah Gray.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Patrick Raftery, email to author, October 4, 2018.

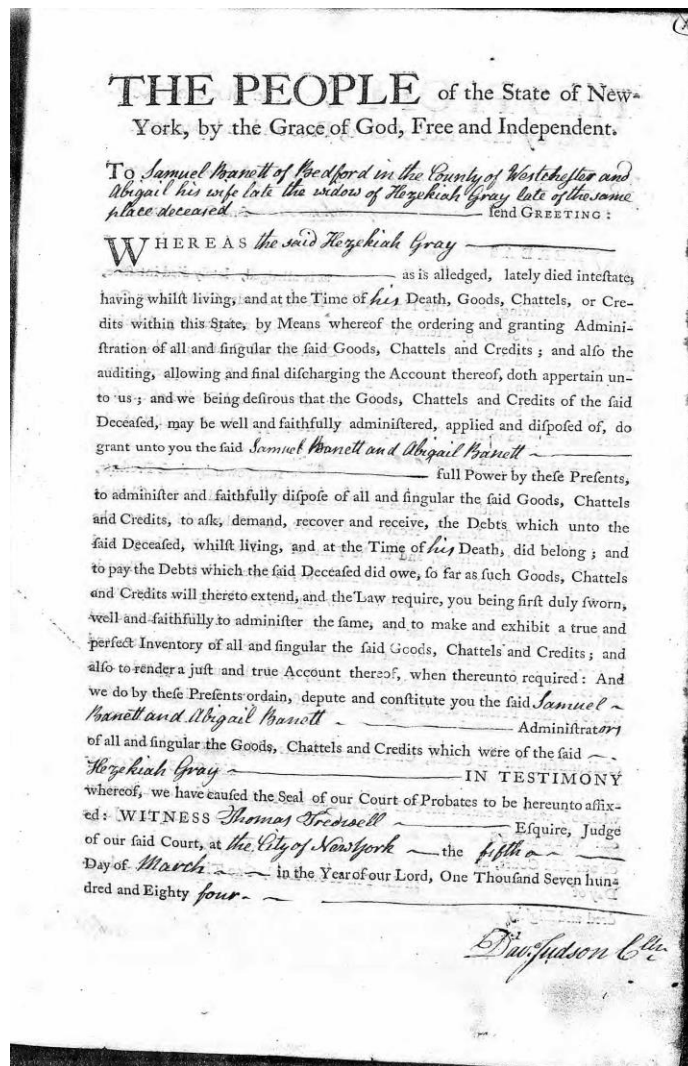
⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Kim, 877.

⁷³ Robert F. Gray. "David Gray" (<http://www.robertfgray.com>). Viewed on August 24, 2018.

⁷⁴ Duncombe, 365.

⁷⁵ Inventories and Accounts, 1666–1822. Series J0301-82. Microfilm (7 reels). New York (State), Court of Probates. New York State Archives, Albany, New York. Box 09 1774-1822 (Ge – H).



Probate document naming Abigail Barrett as Hezekiah's widow.

According to one of his descendants, "When Samuel [sic] moved into the Gray household, he and Abigail added Joseph, who was born July 11, 1779."⁷⁶ They had three more children together. She died in 1805.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Joann MacKenzie. *The Barretts of Bedford*. E. Kelly, 2014. 60.

⁷⁷ Robert F. Gray. "Abigail Waterbury" (<http://www.robertfgray.com>). Viewed on August 24, 2018.



Abigail Waterbury Gray Barrett's gravestone, Buxton Cemetery, Bedford, NY. A tree has grown between it and that of her second husband, Samuel Barrett.