

WHATELY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Connecticut River at Whately

WHATELY AT THE READY: REVOLUTIONARY WAR 1775-1783

Take a stroll through the Veterans Memorial Park at Whately Town Hall and consider the names on the plaques commemorating the men and women who served in the military from the French & Indian War until 2023. These meticulous records, completed by the Whately Veterans Committee and the Whately Historical Society, paint a picture of service across more than 250 years.

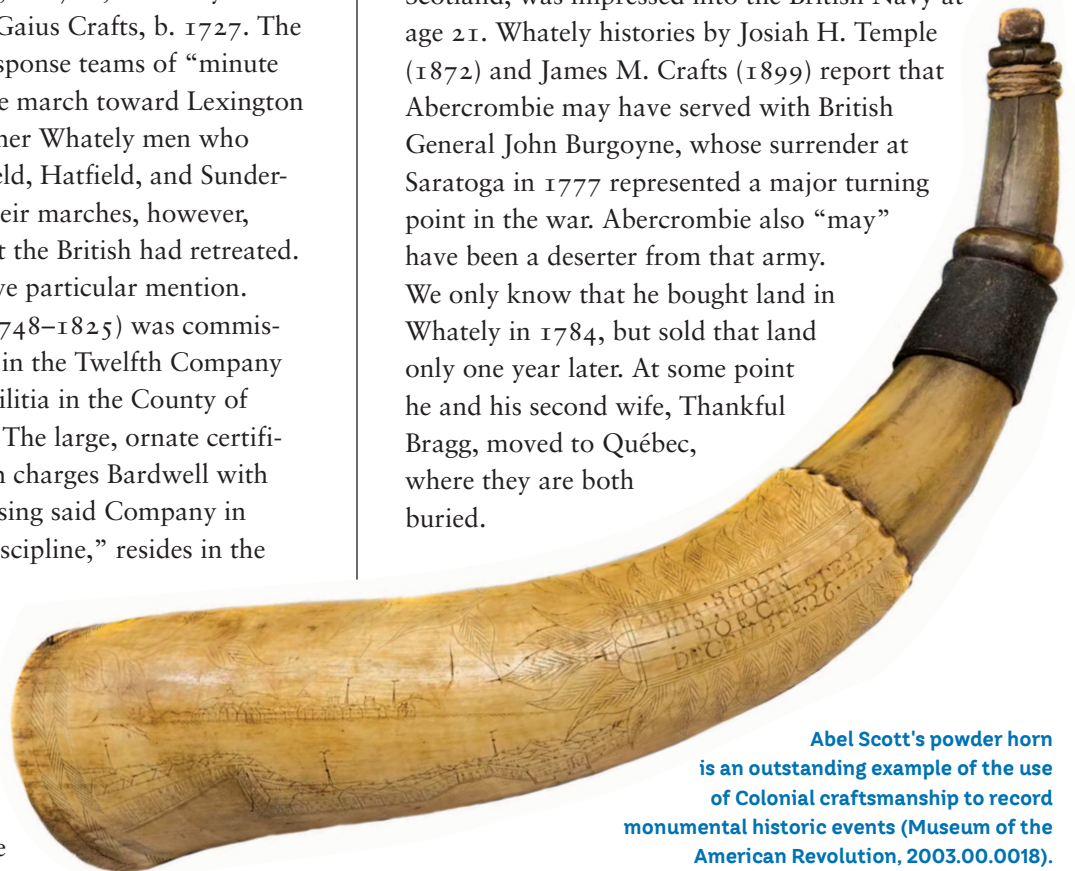
Ninety-six men from 34 Whately families served in the Revolutionary War. The volunteers ranged in age from young Abner Dickinson, b. 1766, who may have served as a drummer-boy, to Gaius Crafts, b. 1727. The first call to action of rapid-response teams of “minute men” in 1775 led to a 40-mile march toward Lexington and Concord, followed by other Whately men who marched with units in Deerfield, Hatfield, and Sunderland. All turned back from their marches, however, when word reached them that the British had retreated.

Three Whately men deserve particular mention. Lieutenant Noah Bardwell (1748–1825) was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Twelfth Company of the Second Regiment of Militia in the County of Hampshire on April 8, 1776. The large, ornate certificate of his commission, which charges Bardwell with “leading, ordering and exercising said Company in Arms...in good Order and Discipline,” resides in the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association in Deerfield; the Whately Historical Society owns a full-size copy (WHS 2021.081.001).

Captain Abel Scott (1751–1837) served in five military campaigns during the

Revolutionary War. His powder horn, carefully engraved with a scene of the siege of Boston and the words: Abel Scott / His Horn / Dorchester / December 26, 1775, is now in the collection of the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. We don’t know whether Scott himself or another soldier was the artist, but the incised view of Boston from the American fortifications on Dorchester Heights documents a critically important engagement early in the War for Independence.

Finally, the story of Robert Abercrombie (1752–1830) reminds us of the complicated choices made by men at the outbreak of hostilities. Abercrombie, born in Scotland, was impressed into the British Navy at age 21. Whately histories by Josiah H. Temple (1872) and James M. Crafts (1899) report that Abercrombie may have served with British General John Burgoyne, whose surrender at Saratoga in 1777 represented a major turning point in the war. Abercrombie also “may” have been a deserter from that army. We only know that he bought land in Whately in 1784, but sold that land only one year later. At some point he and his second wife, Thankful Bragg, moved to Québec, where they are both buried.



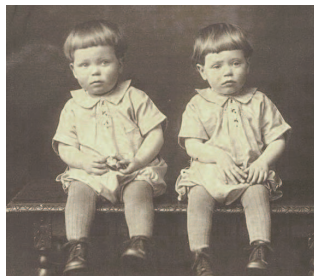
Abel Scott's powder horn is an outstanding example of the use of Colonial craftsmanship to record monumental historic events (Museum of the American Revolution, 2003.00.0018).

EXHIBITS OPENING MAY 24

Whately's Great River · Flowing 400 miles north to south, the Connecticut River connects Whately to four New England states and Canada. The river corridor provides habitat for wildlife and fertile soil for farming. Flooding renews this dynamic ecosystem, while challenging the human-built landscape. River trade connected Native people, and later brought European and American goods to Whately and delivered local products far and wide. Flatboats, ferries, steamboats, and a succession of bridges have enabled movement up, down, and across the river for the past 300 years. Come explore our great river!

Family Exhibits

Eleven generations of Whately residents descend from Robert Bardwell (c. 1647–1726), who emigrated from England to Hatfield. The Bardwell exhibit focuses on the descendants of Henry W. Bardwell (1849–1911) and Fidelia Cooley Bardwell (1847–1916).



Fred and Fay Bardwell, 1926.
WHS 2004.003.007

Stanley Wykowski (1896–1954) and Martha Maiewski (1896–1984) each emigrated from Poland to Whately around 1919. The newly arrived Wykowski family managed a large successful farm, the Maple Grove Club and Patrol's Motor Cars.



Edward Charles Wykowski on his John Deere tractor.

WHAT'S A PLAITER?

Thanks to the many who responded to our 'mystery object' of March 2026. Suggestions included a washboard, both laundry and country music-oriented; a dish drying rack; and a loom of some sort. All interesting ideas, but all wrong.

Young's Improved Plaiter, made in the 1880s, is on display in Dickinson Library; stop by to take a look and find the answer to the mystery!



SPRING FESTIVAL

Sunday, May 24, 12-2 p.m. (following the Veterans Memorial Parade and Program) · Join friends in Whately and from beyond for fun, food and music!

- ★ Rick Martin, blacksmith, Hatfield, MA, will demonstrate making Colonial-era iron tools, using a forge
- ★ Rick Hamelin, potter, Warren, MA, will demonstrate making redware, using a potting wheel*
- ★ *OverEasy Jazz** local musicians playing New Orleans-style jazz from the 1920s and 1930s—first time in Whately!
- ★ Masa Mexicano, Florence, MA
- ★ Cliff's Smokin' Backyard Barbeque, Shelburne Falls, MA—first time in Whately!
- ★ Maple syrup, Brookledge Sugarhouse, Whately
- ★ FREE ice cream, Maple Valley Creamery, Hadley, MA



**supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council through the Whately Cultural Council*

Support the Historical Society

- Donate items that illustrate Whately's past and complement our current holdings. Write about your possible gift to info@whatelyhistorical.org, or stop in to the Museum on Tuesday, 9 am–12 pm.
- Volunteer to help maintain our collections and organize our programs and events. Call Adelia Bardwell at (413) 665-3837 or drop by the Museum.
- Support WHS by mailing us a check (P.O. Box 7, Whately, MA 01093) or by credit card or PayPal at www.whatelyhistorical.org. All gifts are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Museum in Town Hall, 194 Chestnut Plain Road, Whately
whatelyhistorical.org · info@whatelyhistorical.org
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