

**JOURNAL OF LIEUTENANT
ISAAC BANGS, APRIL 1 TO
JULY 29, 1776**

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Journal of Lieutenant Isaac Bangs, April 1 to July 29, 1776 by Isaac Bangs

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ISAAC BANGS

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OF
LIEUTENANT ISAAC BANGS,

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1776.

EDITED BY
EDWARD BANGS.

CAMBRIDGE:
JOHN WILSON AND SON.
University Press.
1890.

PREFACE.

I HAVE had an edition of one hundred copies of this journal of my great-uncle printed, not so much because it has any particular historical value as because it gives a rather quaint picture of the social life of the time, and shows, at first hand, something of the feelings that actuated the conduct of the young patriots of that day, — feelings which, with regard to the poor, persecuted Tories, seem now rather exaggerated, — while, as to “the man George,” we, whose masters chastise us with scorpions, incline to look back upon his feeble whip with a sad sense of regret, and to be not a little amused at the way in which our ancestors worked themselves up into complaining so loudly and so bitterly of impositions, trifling indeed compared to those to which we submit in meek silence.

Of the writer of the journal I am not able to give much information, though I have sought for it diligently.

Isaac⁶ Bangs (Benjamin⁵, Edward⁴, Edward³, Jonathan², Edward¹) was born at Harwich in Massachusetts on the 11th of December, 1752. He was the second son of Benjamin⁵ and Desire (Dillingham) Bangs. He descended, on the father's side, from Edward Banges, who came to Plymouth in the “Ann” in July, 1623; and on the mother's side, from Edward Dillingham, of Bitteswell, England, who was, in 1637, of Sandwich, in Massachusetts.

In the Diary of Lieut. Isaac's father, Benjamin⁵, may be found an occasional mention of his name; as, for instance, —

"1764, April 21st. On the 17th Day Instant my Isaac, John Dillingham, and Sam^l Nye began Schooling at Mr. Dunster's, at £3:6:8 each per Year."

The reverend gentleman was certainly not too highly paid; but he managed to get two of his three pupils — Isaac Bangs and Samuel Nye — into Harvard College. They took their degrees in 1771. This class was the last but one in which the names were arranged, in the Triennial, in the order of social position or family rank. (See 8 Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., pp. 32–37, for Mr. Sibley's account of that custom; and 9 Mass. Hist. Soc. Proc., p. 252, for the case of Samuel Phillips, of this very class of 1771, who, being aggrieved at his rating, got himself, by solemn vote, put seventh "between Vassall and Murray," interesting because of the immense importance evidently attached to it by his father.)

Isaac Bangs stands twenty-eighth in a class of sixty-three, a very large class for those days, — the largest, in fact, that up to that time had ever graduated; nor did another so large graduate until 1810.

If the increased size of the classes at Harvard College be, as it seems that it must be, an indication of general prosperity, the period just before the breaking out of the Revolutionary War must have been a remarkably prosperous one, contrary although that theory be to the common belief. It was perhaps because Jeahurun had waxed fat that he kicked.

I have had the curiosity to look for the Loyalists of the class of 1771 in Sabine, and have found but four. They were among the highest in social position, being

Samuel Hirst Sparhawk	1 st in order.
Samuel Paine	4 th " "
William Vassall	6 th " "
Daniel Murray	8 th " "

Isaac Bangs studied medicine after graduating, and had begun to practise his profession in his native town when the War of the Revolution broke out; and he joined the Continental Army as a Lieutenant in Colonel Cary's regiment on the 30th of January, 1776.

I find him mentioned in the Revolutionary Rolls at the State House as a Second Lieutenant in Colonel Cary's regiment, vol. xii. p. 65; vol. xxviii. p. 127.

In vol. xxxvii. p. 3:—

“An Arrangement of the several military Companies in the Second Regiment of Militia in the County of Barnstable.

3^d is the 1st Company in Harwich,
Benjamin Berry, Captain,
Nath. Freeman, 1st Lieut.
Isaac Bangs, 2^d Lieut.”

Endorsed,

“In Council, Ap. 20. 1776. Read and ordered that the within mentioned Officers be commissioned according to their respective ranks.

(Signed)

JOHN LOWELL, *Dep^t Sec^t*”

In vol. xxviii. p. 109, Isaac Bangs again appears as Second Lieutenant in the Second Regiment, April 20, 1776.

I find no further mention of him in the Army Rolls; but in the Naval Rolls, to which my attention was directed by my friend, the Hon. Josiah Paine, of Harwich, in vol. lii. p. 81 (Roll of the United States Frigate “Boston,” Capt. Samuel Tucker):—

“N^o 27. Isaac Bangs. Date of entry, March 8th, 1779. Doctor's Mate.”

This is the last trace I can find of him living. In the Family Record of the late Edward Dillingham Bangs is the following entry:—

"Isaac Bangs, born Dec. 11, 1752, died Sept. 12, 1780, unmarried. He was a Surgeon in the Revolutionary Army, and died while in service."

His father had died some years before the Journal begins (Oct. 31, 1769).

His mother, who is sometimes referred to in it, lived until 1807.

The old house in which he had lived with his mother was standing in that part of Harwich incorporated in 1803 as Brewster until 1872, when the parish, to which it had been given by Benjamin ^r Bangs for a parsonage, pulled it down.

In that house the manuscript of this Journal was preserved until it was given to the editor, thirty or forty years ago. It has been copied by him *verbatim et literatim*, with all fidelity.

Boston, July, 1890.

JOURNAL
OF
LIEUTENANT ISAAC BANGS.

No. I. — *Minutes of a Journal by ISAAC BANGS; begun
April 1, 1776.*

HAVING been in the Service of the united Colonies as a Lieu^t in Capt. Benjamin Godfrey's Company in Col^l Carys Regiment of Militia for about 2 months, in which many glorious Achievements were performed and great Glory added to the Arms of the Americans by the Expulsion of the Ministerial Army from their Strong Holds in Boston, in which, according to my Station, I did my proportion of the fatiguing Duty which was requisite to perform the Manœuver which has brought an eternal shame and Disgrace upon the British Arms, I was fired with an ardent Zeal to be farther instrumental in the glorious Cause in which America is now engaged. With this View I entered Col^l John Bailey's Regiment as a Lieu^t to Cap^t Jacob Allen. In some future Time it may perhaps afford Pleasure to recollect past Toils; and being sensible of the Treachery of my Memory in recollecting past Events, I think it advisable to keep a few Minutes to assist a bad Memory (made worse by the Combustion of an Army) in bringing to Mind past Events. But before I enter upon this I must give a short detail of the Inducements that first brought me to the Army, & of some

of the material Events and Circumstances which happened during my continuance in Col^d Cary's Regiment. The Ministerial Army had for a long time (Viz., ever since the Battle of Lexington, on the 19th of April, 1775) been invested by the American Army, which kept them closely confined to their Quarters in Boston, during which Time many and Various Manœuvres were practised on both sides to annoy their Enemies, the Circumstances of which it is not my Design to relate.

In the begin^g of January, 1775, it was thought best, if possible, to drive them from their Fortresses; & as the Lines of our Army were from necessity of a vast extent, & as it was of infinite Importance that each part should be well maintained, General Washington thought the American Army not sufficient to maintain the Lines, and at the same time to act offensively upon the Enemy. He applied to the Colonies of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts Bay for a part of the Militia of each Province. The Proportion required & voted by the Assembly of this Province was 4,368 Men. Among these I enlisted about 30 of Jan.; and according to the Inlisting Orders we proceeded to chuse our Officers, and proceeded to Head Quarters. The Men which constituted our Company were chiefly from the Town of Chatham, — a very civil Set of People, with whom I lived very Quietly. On our arrival at Roxbury we found (by the Negligence of the Barrack Master) that no Barracks were provided for the Militia. Our Company turned in at Roxbury Street for about 4 days, in old Houses & Cellars; but as we could no longer stand it thus Barracked, & finding no Confidence could be put in their Promises for better Barracks, we made complaint to our Colonels, and were by the Quarter Master provided for in Houses in Dorchester, about 4 Miles Distance, where we continued 9 Days; during which Time