

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT WAITSFIELD,
VT., SEPT. 15, 1906: AT THE UNVEILING
OF A TABLET ERECTED IN MEMORY OF
SOLDIERS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION BURIED IN THAT TOWN**

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An Address Delivered at Waitsfield, Vt., Sept. 15, 1906: At the Unveiling of a Tablet Erected in memory of soldiers of the American revolution buried in that town by Matt Bushnell Jones

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MATT BUSHNELL JONES

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VT., SEPT. 15, 1906: AT THE UNVEILING
OF A TABLET ERECTED IN MEMORY OF
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REVOLUTION BURIET IN THAT TOWN**



AN ADDRESS

Delivered at Waitsfield, Vt., Sept. 15, 1906,
at the unveiling of a Tablet
erected in memory of

Soldiers of the American Revolution

buried in that town.

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. . . BY . . .

MATT BUSHNELL JONES.

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THE CALDONIAN PRESS,
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1906.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen :

The town of Waitsfield, chartered in 1782, was settled in the summer of 1789 by a veteran of two wars—almost, it might be said, a soldier by profession, for the French War, the conflict of the Green Mountain boys against the oppression of New York, the Revolution, and after its close an active command of forces engaged in the internal conflicts that culminated in Shay's Rebellion, had taken more than twenty of his best years. Here he came to spend the closing years of life, and straightway drew around him old neighbors and companions in arms, so that by the spring of 1791—less than two years after the settlement of the town—it had a population of 61, divided among 13 families, a number exceeded in the present territory of Washington County only by Barre, Berlin, Cabot, Montpelier and Waterbury, all of which towns had at that time been settled from four to nine years.

Of these earliest thirteen settlers eleven had been soldiers of the Revolution; Benjamin, Ezra and Jeduthan Wait; Samuel Pike, from Brookfield, Massachusetts, the Waits' old home; Thomas and Beriah Sherman, from Brimfield; Isaac Parmenter, from Oakham—both towns next door to Brookfield; Moses Chase, from Cornish, New Hampshire; Phineas and Salma Rider, first of the many families from Shelburne, Massachusetts; William Bartlett—the first name probably an error on the record for Nathaniel, and if so a soldier, and originally from Cornish.

Only two, so far as we can ascertain, had seen no military service: Francis Dana, from Cornish, and David Symonds, from Hillsboro, New Hampshire.

The reason for this rapid development we have before us in the beautiful intervale that just here and nowhere else upon its course is watered by our little river, for everywhere, the early settlers sought the bottom lands.

But why did Benjamin Wait, grantee of lands in Windsor, and in Grand Isle County, make his pitch here in the midst of an unbroken wilderness extending for miles on every side? The answer is not far to seek.

Probably no portion of the American Continent has seen more of the strife of men or played a more important part in the strategy of war than those beautiful amphitheatres formed by the green hills that look down upon Lakes Champlain and George. Here from the earliest days was the chosen battle ground of Algonquin warriors and their hated rivals from the Long House of the Iroquois. Here passed the latter bent upon destruction of the feeble French settlements along the St. Lawrence, and here the Jesuit fathers suffered torture. Here during sixty years of conflict between France and England, for supremacy on the Northern Continent, war parties came upon their cruel errands to New England hamlets, returning hither with their wretched captives; and here were fought the fiercest conflicts of the final struggle between those mighty rivals. Here first the New England farmers gained substantial victory in the unequal conflict with the mother land. Here first, at Valcour Island, fought the fleets of England and America; and here were dealt the blows that crushed the greatest campaign of the war. For almost two centuries from the time when Champlain's arquebus first awoke the echoes near the future site of Ticonderoga, the valley which now bears his name was debated ground, and between it and the New England frontier on the Connecticut war parties of both sides passed to and fro.

The valley of the Winooski, and its tributaries to the south, afforded a natural and easy pathway through the mountains, and our valley, although in lesser degree probably than those to the east, was a highway for troops and scouting parties in both wars. In this service, as we shall see, our first settler doubtless saw and chose his promised land.

Here gathered around him many other veterans of the Revolution. No one of them achieved fame, but it seems fitting that a memorial be dedicated to the men who after bearing honorable part in the making of our nation, became the fathers of this fair town and found within her borders their final resting place.

Nor must we forget at this time those other soldiers among our early settlers who before their death pushed on into the opening West. Let us catalogue them before proceeding further:

Eli Abbott, born and reared in Brookfield, Massachusetts, but moving thence to Shelburne, Massachusetts, from which town he came to Waitsfield, and some years later removed, the records say, to southern Vermont.

Nathaniel Bartlett, from Alexandria, New Hampshire, who removed with his family to the territory then developing in eastern New York as early as 1808.

Samuel Bailey, from Windsor, Vermont, charter member of the church here—removed about 1809 to Chazy, New York, and there died.

William Chase, from Cornish, New Hampshire, a brother of Moses Chase. After many years of residence in this town he removed to the vicinity of Granville, New York, but returned in his old age and died in Warren, where he is buried.

Moses Heaton, physician, and first town clerk of Waitsfield—came from Charlemont, Massachusetts, about 1793. His name disappears early from our records, but whither he went and where he died we do not know.

Joseph Lyon, was from Windsor, Vermont, or vicinity and seems to have been closely associated with General Wait's family. He removed to New York State, it is said.

Aaron Minor, from Connecticut, came early and stayed until 1834, when as an old man he removed to Illinois, with his sons, and died there in 1849.

Isaac Parmenter, or Palmater, as the record has it, born probably in Rutland, Massachusetts, removed to Oakham; was here in 1791, but departed early, leaving no trace.

Silas Royce, from Claremont, New Hampshire, an early settler on the east side of the mountain, buried in the town of Northfield.

Eli Skinner, brother of two whose names appear upon our tablet, removed about 1835 to the new settlements in New York, and thence to Illinois.

Abel Spaulding, from whom Spaulding's Brook is named, came here from Cornish, and became a pioneer to Ohio in 1818.

Wright Spaulding, from Plainfield, Connecticut, one of our early settlers, but later identified with Moretown, whence he removed, it is said, to Saranac, New York.

Nathan Sterling, from Lyme, Connecticut, a brother of Jeduthan Wait's wife, removed about 1813 to Moriah, New York, and died there.

Thomas Sherman, brother of Beriah. His stay was not long; he removed early to New York, but where he died we do not know.

We turn now to the sturdy band whose names stand before us

in enduring bronze upon this unhewn boulder symbolic of the men and of their times.

Benjamin Wait, first settler, who gave the town his name.

Samuel Barnard, born at Shelburne, Massachusetts, October 12, 1752, came here in 1793, died November 3, 1809.

Abijah Brown, born in Rutland, Massachusetts, October 9, 1755, lived as a youth in Paxton, Massachusetts, and came early to Fayston, Vermont, by way of Swanzey, New Hampshire. Removed to Waitsfield about 1833, and died here two years later.

Nathaniel Brown, born in Norwich, Connecticut, settled in the Vermont town of that name, and came here before 1800 as an elderly man. He died April 4, 1804, aged 66.

Doud Bushnell, born May 15, 1762, in Saybrook, Connecticut, whence he came in 1798 by way of Buckland, Massachusetts, and Cambridge, New York, died August 12, 1845.

Moses Chase, born in Salisbury, New Hampshire, March 23, 1759, moved with his parents to Cornish, New Hampshire, and came here before the summer of 1791. He died August, 1831.

Caleb Colton, born in Brimfield, Massachusetts, in 1742, removed to Grantham, New Hampshire, and came thence to Waitsfield before 1804. He died July 5, 1820.

Thomas Green, came to Waitsfield before 1800 from Swanzey, New Hampshire, and was a proprietor of Green's Mills. Died here April 29, 1813, aged 60.

Joseph Hamilton, born in Brookfield, Massachusetts, in 1749-50, came here before October, 1795, and died March 18, 1828.

Ezekiel Hawley, born October 14, 1732 in Meriden, Connecticut, came from Windsor, Vermont, before 1794. He died September 25, 1822.

John Heaton, born in Swanzey, New Hampshire, November 20, 1744, came from Shelburne, Massachusetts, to which place his widowed mother had removed when he was a child. He died here May 7, 1813, while on a visit from Chazy, New York, to which place he removed with Benjamin Wait, Jr., who had married his daughter. He was one of the early settlers of Moretown, Vermont, and was more closely identified with that town than with Waitsfield.

Gaius Hitchcock, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, April 3, 1764, came to Waitsfield via Shelburne, Massachusetts, and Canaan, New Hampshire, as early as 1795. He lived for a time in Montpe-

lier, Vermont, but returned to Waitsfield and died here August 12, 1843.

Joseph Joslin, born in Lancaster, Mass., March 18, 1753, removed to Weathersfield, Vermont, in 1782, and followed his sons to Waitsfield about 1806. He died March 17, 1819.

Jesse Mix, a native of Connecticut, was here before 1793; removed later to Fayston, Vermont, where he died May 8, 1842, but is buried in the Irasville cemetery.

William Newcomb, born in Norton, Massachusetts, August 8, 1761, was an early settler in Fayston, Vermont, but is buried here.

Joseph Osgood, born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, September 18, 1746, a brother of Joseph Joslin's wife. He died of hydrophobia, April 22, 1812.

Jonathan Palmer, born in Concord, Massachusetts, June 2, 1754; moved with his father to Alexandria, New Hampshire, in 1773, and to Waitsfield about 1794. He died about 1833.

Bissell Phelps, born February 16, 1754, in Hebron, Connecticut, came to Waitsfield before 1793 by way of Middlefield, Massachusetts, and died October 26, 1845.

Samuel Pike came from Brookfield, Massachusetts, before the summer of 1791, and died February 25, 1814, aged 78.

Phineas Rider, born in 1760, probably at Deerfield, Massachusetts. He was in Waitsfield with his brother Salma before the summer of 1791, and died here March 31, 1833.

Salma Rider, born probably in Deerfield, Massachusetts, March 14, 1758, came hither with his brother Phineas by way of Shelburne, Massachusetts, and died Nov. 28, 1822.

Beriah Sherman, born in Brimfield, Massachusetts, October 7, 1747, was in Waitsfield before 1791. He died September, 1832.

Amasa Skinner, born in Colchester, Connecticut, March 16, 1762, removed while a child to Shelburne, Massachusetts, and came thence to Waitsfield about 1797, died January 15, 1833.

Jared Skinner, older brother of Amasa, born Nov. 18, 1751, came here via Shelburne, before 1796. He died February 25, 1838.

Salah Smith, born in Deerfield, Massachusetts, January 17, 1762, came to Waitsfield in 1793, and died March 23, 1830.

Elias Taylor, born in West Hoosac, Massachusetts, June 27, 1756, came to Waitsfield before 1800, by way of Winchester, New Hampshire, and Hartland, Vermont. Died May 26, 1829.