

Collecting Americana

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I was originally going to speak about the weapons repaired at West Point between 1785 and 1792, approximately 15,000 muskets, rifles, smooth rifles, carbines, pistols, wall guns, and other weapons. These weapons that had been inherited from the Revolution were stored, repaired, cleaned, and surcharged at West Point and then issued to the new federal army. Other repositories, at Springfield, Rhode Island, upper New York State, Philadelphia, Virginia, Fort Pitt, Carlisle, and the Carolinas were also bulging with war surplus material from the Revolution, much of which needed repair. When I was working on my books *March to Massacre* and *U.S. Army Weapons*, I commuted to the West Point Library for many months, using the primary materials contained in their Waste Books 1, 2, and 3; their Letter Books 1 and 2; 2nd Regt. Artillery Order and Record Book; Ordnance Returns; and correspondence; plus primary materials I had gathered from many other libraries and historical societies. When my books were finally in print, the West Point Library had an exhibit of the material in April and May 1975. And by the way, *U.S. Army Weapons, 1784-1791* was the first book published through the Publications Committee of the American Society.

However, at a recent meeting, I was asked to remove an object from my table that was considered inappropriate for an arms meeting. The request was made through a lack of understanding, and I later received an apology. But this incident inspired me to rethink my topic for this meeting and to, instead, give a talk I had given several years ago at the Antiques Collectors' Forum at Colonial Williamsburg. The title of that talk was "Collecting Americana." I have altered the content of that talk to better fit the agenda of this meeting, but basically, it conveys the same concept of collecting: *Bringing the objects in the collection into closer context with other objects used during the same period in order to have a well-rounded appreciation of not only a musket or a sword, but also of other things that were used during the same period.* My kind of collecting includes weapons, accoutrements, documents, and books in the context of American history. It boils down to the fact that I really collect early American history in objects and written words, in an attempt to acquire a complete picture of the period or periods.

When I began to collect in the early 1950s, I was a general collector of firearms. One day, while in Bob Abel's



shop in New York City, I spotted three mint Springfield muskets, an 1808, an 1812, and an 1816. They were priced between \$40 and \$50 each, which was a lot at that time. I traded in a bunch of stuff plus some cash and started my U.S. martial long-arm collection. Over a period of 20 years, I acquired every model Springfield musket, carbine, musketoon, and pistol; Harpers Ferry rifle; and U.S. edged weapon from 1795 until the end of the 19th century. All were in absolutely mint condition, with matching and numbered bayonets where required. I also acquired, from former ASAC president Gerald Fox, the patterns and gauges for six Springfield and Harpers Ferry muskets and rifles and the 1839 pattern musketoon, and I bought a pattern Plymouth rifle at one of the early Baltimore gun shows. I had everything there was to get, I thought, according to the few books available at the time. I thought there was nothing else to find, and I became bored with my collection. All of the research had been accomplished by other people, and all I had accomplished was to follow their "road map."

I began buying tomahawks from Bob Abels, and one day he came to my house with the Daniel Smith tomahawk and offered to trade it to me for a complete column of about 15 mint rifled muskets on my gun room wall. That began the deaccessioning of my martial collection for other kinds of "stuff." Probably, based on today's market values, I didn't make out too well. For instance, I traded my Springfield miners and sappers musketoon with matching numbered bayonet, Springfield cavalry and artillery musketoon, Springfield 1818 pistol, and 1855 pistol carbine for a cased set of

silver British gunner's instruments with the family crest engraved on the case. I still have them and do not regret the trade one bit. Those Springfields would bring a heck of a lot more today than those instruments, but the Springfields, although rare, would be easier to replace than the cased set of artillery instruments.

Collecting is not like the stock market. Monetary value, in my case, is secondary to enjoyment and learning, which really are the same thing. To me, acquiring one object and, using a tunnel vision approach, thinking of nothing else but the acquisition of another object in the series of production until you have completed the entire sequence of production, such as my U.S. martial collection, deprives the collector of the complete historical scenario as well as limiting his pleasure in finding a broad range of historically related material for his collection. America is so much younger than Europe, Asia, and Africa that it is not only possible, but probable, that the collector will discover objects that have not previously been written about or illustrated. An Americana collector is his own navigator in the field that he has chosen, with the possibility of many new discoveries and surprises. No longer is tunnel vision the key. Instead, you set your sights on a broad spectrum. You do not have to follow the books with rigid inflexibility, but can use your own common sense and experience, as well as gratify the desire to have something you are not sure about, but want to find out as much as your library and other sources can provide.

Therefore, a good library at your fingertips is the

cornerstone of a collection. My library is the most important facet of my collection. I'm not prescribing this type of collecting for everyone, but it is my kind of collecting. The greatest pleasure of collecting, to me, is the hunt, both in the field for the object and in the library, to see what it is and whether it fits into the concept of the collection.

I have divided the illustrations into five sections:

1. Showing the gun room as it was when I collected U.S. martial long arms, and one of the pattern muskets with three of the gauges from the complete set.
2. Examples of some of the items imported from England into its North American colony, emphasizing the colonial system of the mother country's exporting manufactured goods and the colony's exporting produce and raw materials to the mother country, such as timber, tobacco, cotton, and fur.
3. Some items used during the King George's War (1744-1748) and the French-Indian War (1755-1763).
4. Some items from the periods just before and during the American Revolution (1770-1781)
5. Objects from the end of the American Revolution, from the establishment of the first Federal army in 1784, through the Indian Wars of the 1780s and 1790s, the establishment of the militia, the War of 1812, the militia up to the Mexican War, and the Mexican War.

PART I

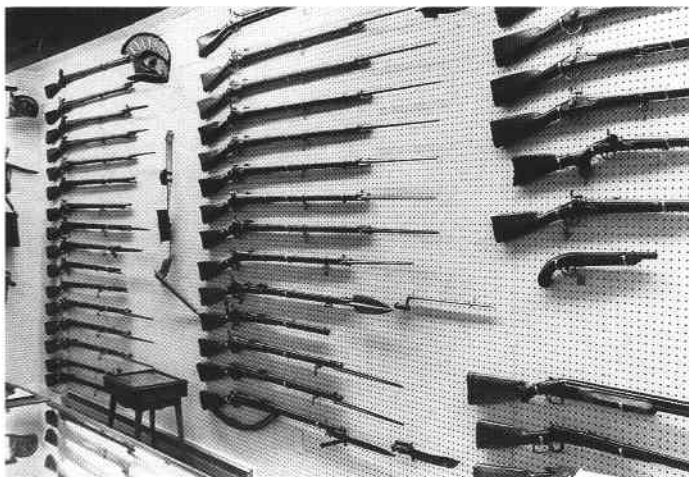


Figure 1. View of one wall of my gun room when I collected martial long arms. I traded the middle row of Springfields (shown) for a single tomahawk (Daniel Smith) to Bob Abels.

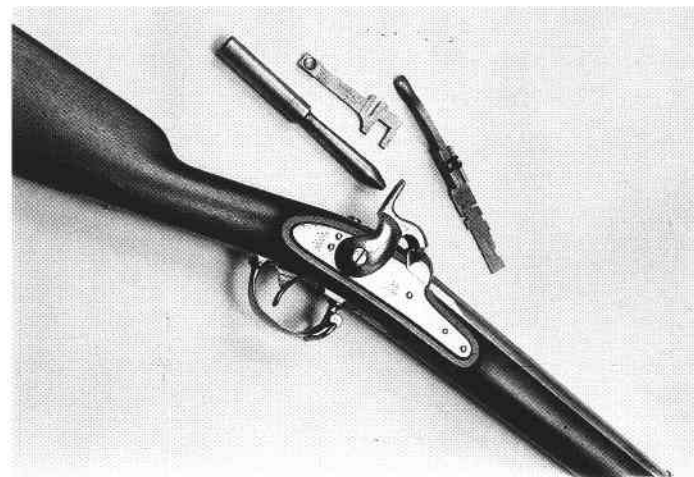


Figure 2. Part of my martial collection were pattern models with gauges. Shown is a pattern 1842 Springfield with three of its cased set of gauges.

PART II



Figure 3. As a British Colony, America received manufactured goods from England and shipped back produce, such as timber and tobacco. Ceramics, such as this Leeds teapot, were imported (note repair to handle—a tin replacement).

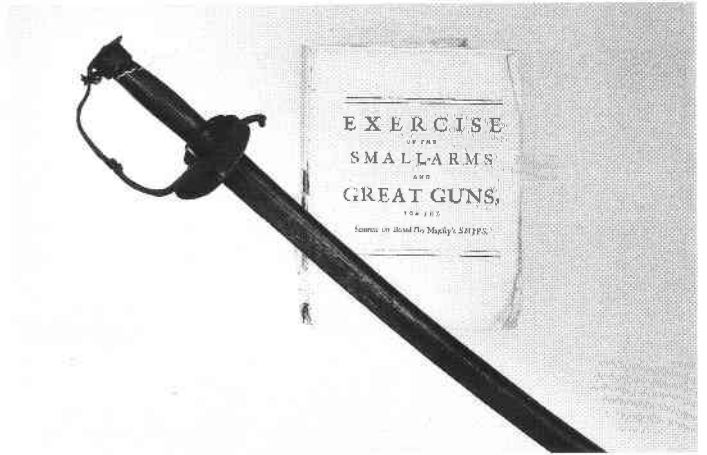


Figure 4. Swords and books were imported from England to North America.

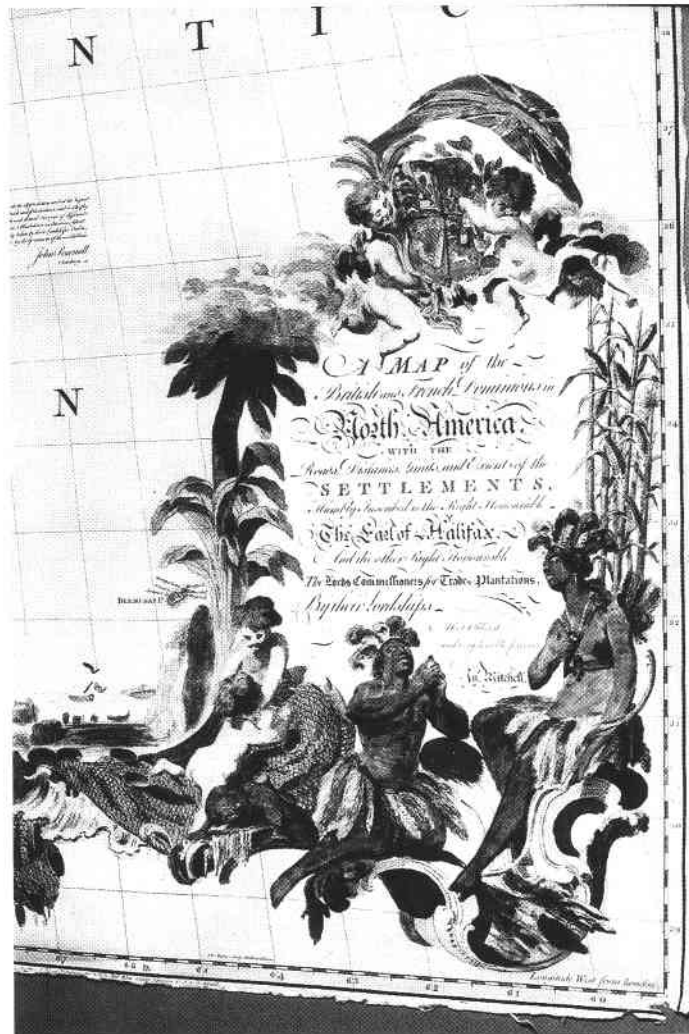


Figure 5. Maps were imported along with other printed material. This is the cartouche from John Mitchell's 1755 map of North America. It was this map that was used at the Treaty of Paris in 1783 (ending the Revolution) and, because of inaccuracies, Great Britain ceded much more territory to the United States than was realized at the time.

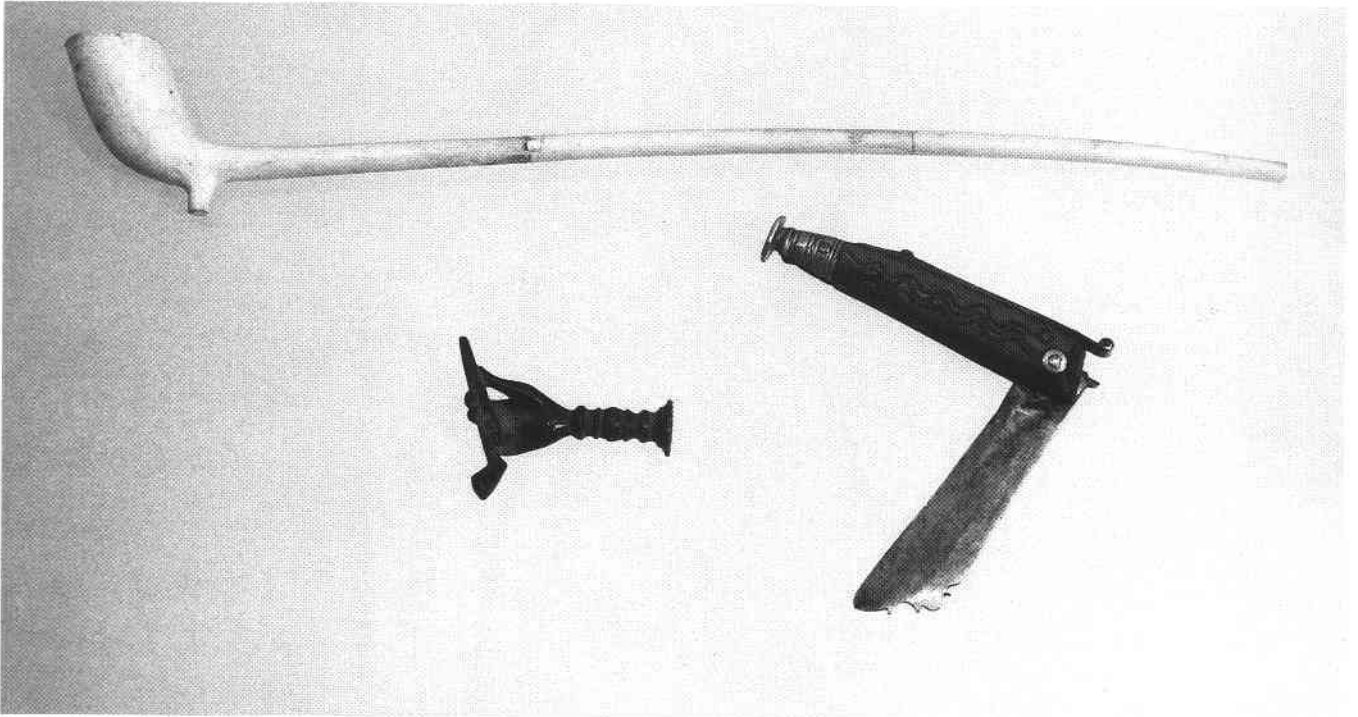


Figure 6. Clay pipes, pipe tampers (brass) on the left, and folding knife with pipe tamper, right, were among the many items imported to America from England.



Figure 7. Textiles were imported, such as this printed English fabric depicting a scene of a dragoon encampment.



Figure 8. Accessories, such as the leather embroidered wallet at the left and the embroidered silk wallet on the right, were imported.



Figure 9. Military campaign items, such as this officer's traveling liquor chest, were imported from England. The London label dates to the Revolution.

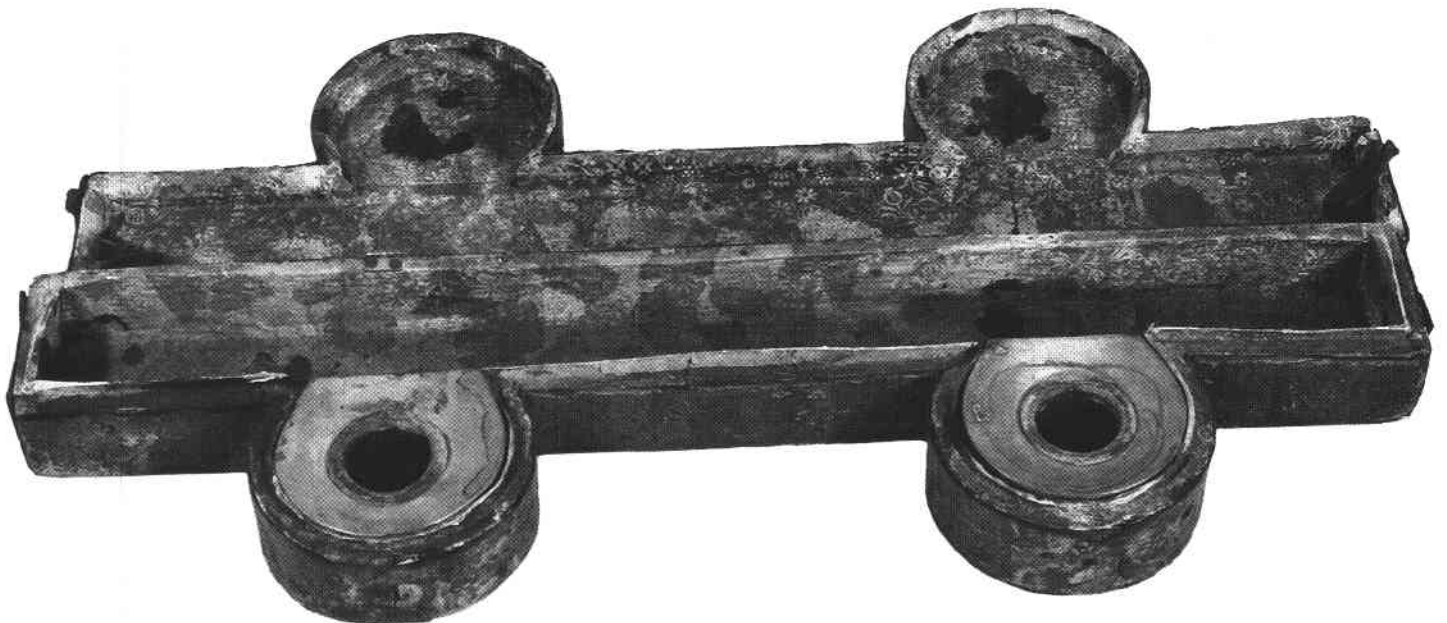


Figure 10. This leather-covered wooden officer's portable writing box was imported from England. The two ink wells are pewter, and the wallpaper-lined cavity holds quill pens and rulers. The leather is embossed with gilt crowns over "GR" in script.



Figure 11. Great Britain and France were constantly at war in North America over trade routes, fur and timber—King George's War, 1744-1748, & The French Indian War, 1755-1763. A woodlands Indian ball-headed club, ca. 1430-1620.

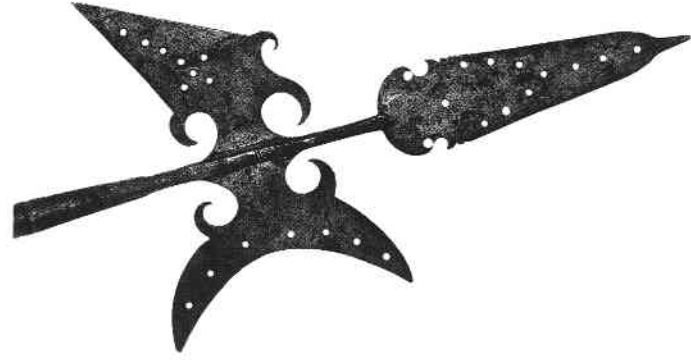


Figure 12. A colonial New England halberd, ca. French-Indian War.

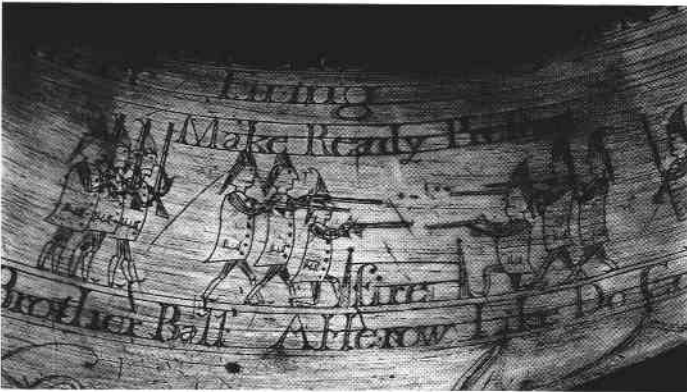


Figure 13. Scene on a French-Indian War engraved powder horn dated 1758 at Fort #4.

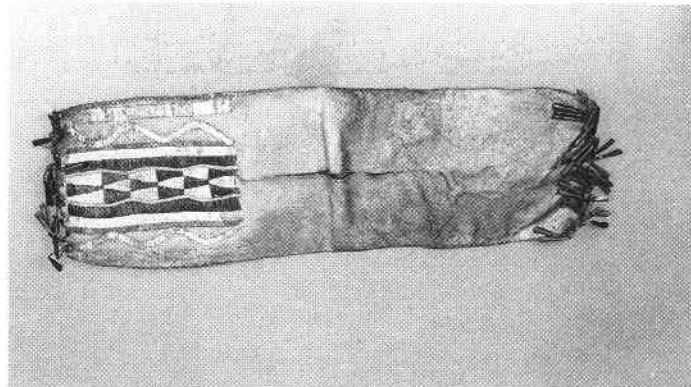


Figure 14. French-Indian War period quilled and black dyed buckskin shot pouch, woodlands Indian.

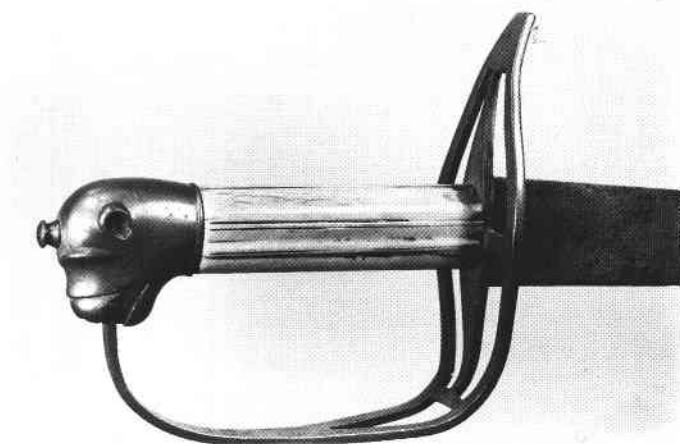


Figure 15. French-Indian War period Colonial brass-hilted monkey-head sword.

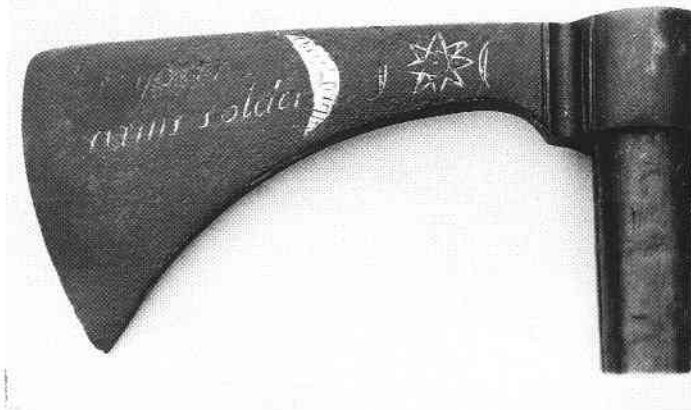


Figure 16. Blade portion of hammer poll tomahawk ca. French-Indian War, inscribed "To Your Arms Soldier and Fight," and the initials "JC."



Figure 17. Pennsylvania rifleman's raised-carved and engraved powder horn with Iroquois hemp burden strap edged with white beads and with false embroidery. The strap is attached by weaving, *not* tying. Third quarter 18th century.

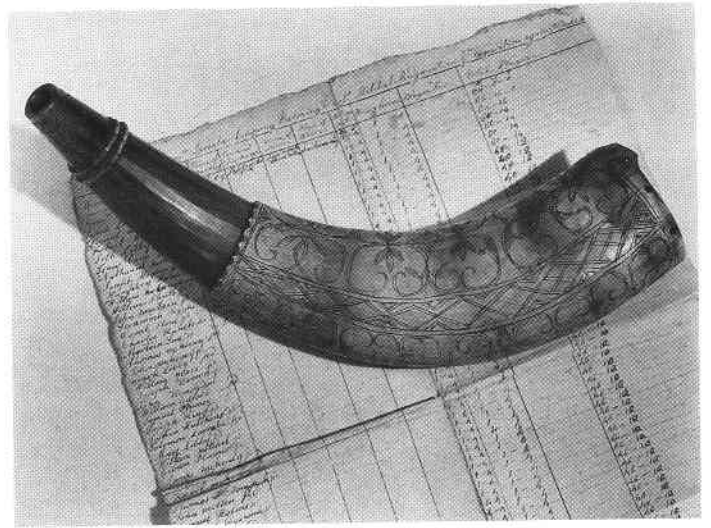


Figure 18. Penobscot Indian engraved powder horn with double curve motifs and muster roll of a company from Maine on an expedition against the Penobscot.

PART IV



Figure 19. Extremely rare, and the only real engraved powder horn I have seen with a scene of the Boston Massacre, carved by Jacob Gay in 1772.



Figure 20. Story of the Boston Massacre in the "Massachusetts Spy" with the woodcut engravings of the coffins by Paul Revere.

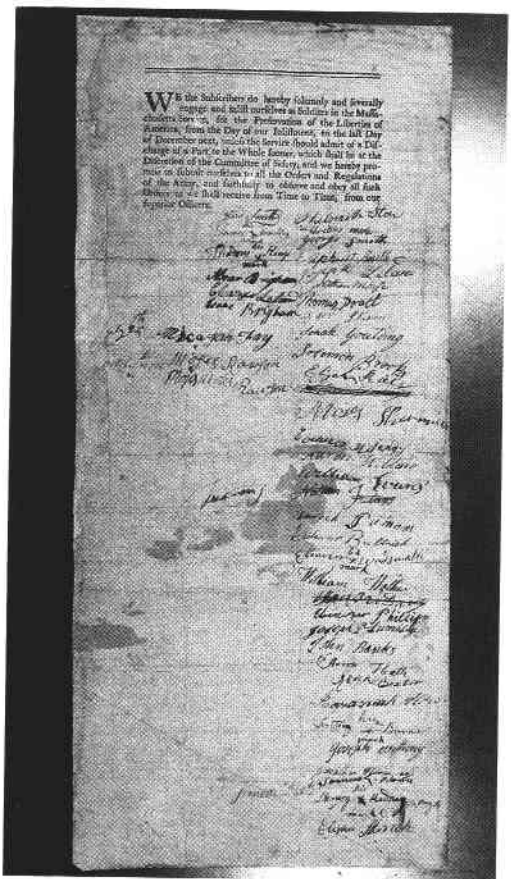


Figure 21. Massachusetts Minute Man enlistment printed and manuscript broadside. Those that signed enlisted from a period right after Lexington and Concord in the Spring of 1775 until the end of the year.



Figure 22. Painted canvas knapsack with old museum label: "A Revolutionary Haversack/This Haversack was owned and carried by a soldier named John Potter, of Rowley, Mass." Red haversack, black cartouche, yellow initials "JP." 16" x 16".

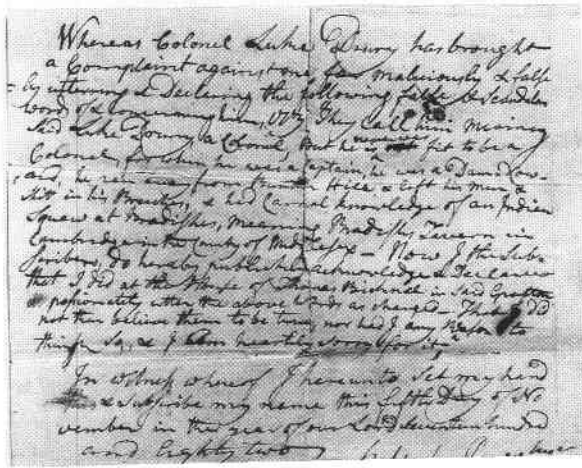


Figure 23. Deposition retracting accusation against Capt. Luke Drury, Grafton Mass., at Bunker Hill: "Whereas Col. Luke Drury has brought a complaint against me for maliciously and falsely uttering & declaring the following false & scandalous words concerning him: 'They call him meaning said Luke Drury a colonel but he never was fit to be a colonel, for when he was a captain he was a damned coward, he ran away from Bunker Hill & left his men & Shitt in his britches, etc.'"

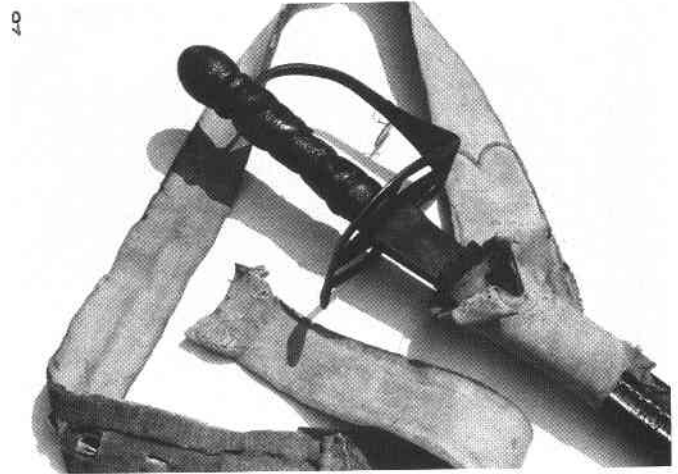


Figure 24. Revolutionary War period dragoon saber with original scabbard and shoulder strap made by James Potter, New York, and stamped with his mark.



Figure 25. The newspaper *Massachusetts Spy* proclaimed the patriotic spirit in 1775 with the bold banner "AMERICANS!—LIBERTY OR DEATH!—JOIN OR DIE."



Figure 26. Cherry-stock fusil made by Ambrose Peck, Swansea, MA, for Rhode Island officer Asa Carpenter. The barrel is deeply engraved "TO DEFEND CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTY AND PROPERTY." The barrel had been cut so that it could go west as a wagon gun. Found in San Francisco by former member Ken Main & sold to me at the 1970 Houston meeting by Ken.



Figure 27. Silver escutcheon on the wrist of the Ambrose Peck fusil with an engraving depicting the Continental currency \$3 bill and with the name 'A. CARPENTER.'



Figure 28. Loyalist Butler's Rangers brass cartridge box plate.



Figure 29. Silver repousse bone back button of the First Massachusetts regiment, Joseph Vose, Col.

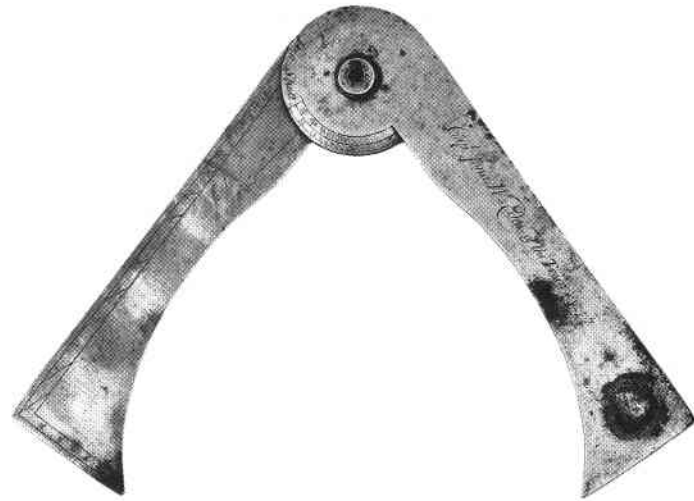


Figure 30. Brass artillery calipers engraved with the inscription "CAPT JONA. W. EDES (JONATHAN WELCH EDES) OF THE TRAIN 1777." Both Edes and Paul Revere served in the same artillery company; therefore, there is the possibility that Revere engraved these calipers.

Regiments	Companies	Officers	Men
1 New Ham	14	2	1
2 D ^o	12	5	1
3 D ^o	22	2	2
4 D ^o	13	2	2
Total	11	11	11

Figure 31. Portion of a page from New Hampshire General Enoch Poor's brigade book. This entry was at Camp Valley Forge, 7 February 1778.



Figure 32. Incised decoration on the flap of Alexander Bradford's leather cartridge box with 13 stars bordering the top and inscribed "Alex Bradford/Independence/1778."

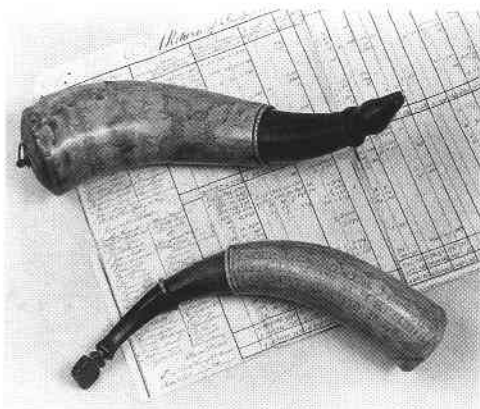


Figure 33. Engraved powder horn of Enoch Leonard, Commissary of Issues of the Northern Dept., dated at Fort Schuyler, 18 November 1780, on top of a provisions return for that department, with Leonard's name, along with Peter Van Order's engraved horn, dated at Fort Stanwix, 17 November 1780. Both horns were engraved by the same hand; Stanwix and Schuyler were interchangeable names for the same fort (which was located at present-day Rome, New York, and has been rebuilt).

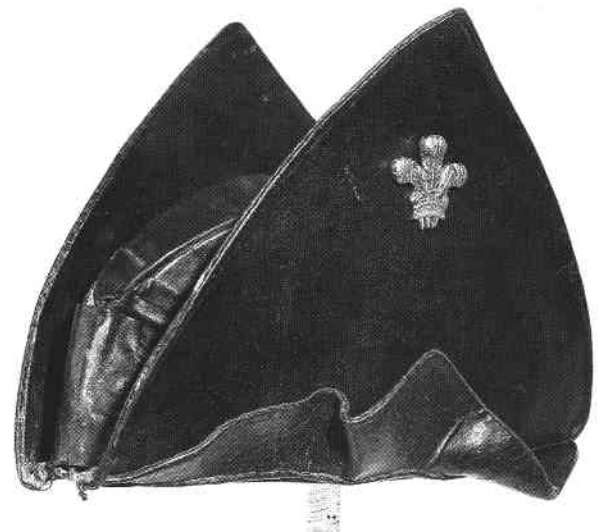


Figure 34. British leather light infantry cap with silver Prince of Wales plume insignia, ca. American Revolution.



Figure 35. Vividly descriptive manuscript journal of Lt. Rudolphus Van Hovenburgh, 4th New York Regt., during the Sullivan Expedition, 16 June to November 1779. Entry for 14 September. "Lieut. Boyd most cruelly butchered, his head skinned, his nails pulled out by the roots, his private parts skinned, his body speared most inhumanely." Goes on to describe Arnold's treason, September 1780 and the hanging of Maj. Andre, October 1780, and the siege of and surrender at Yorktown, 24 October 1781.

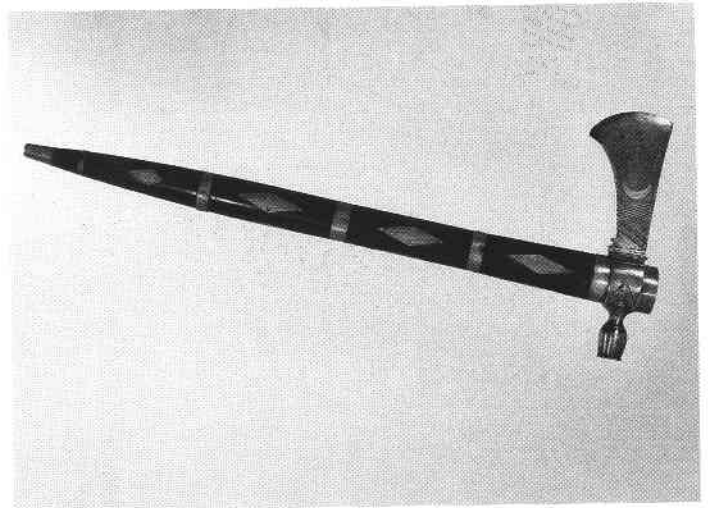


Figure 36. Silver inlaid tomahawk ca. last quarter 18th century—made for a frontiersman. The curly maple haft and the steel head are inlaid with engraved and shaped pieces of silver.

PART V



Figure 37. After the Revolution, the British were supposed to have evacuated their forts on the Great Lakes (Niagara, Detroit, Erie, etc.), but they did not, and continued to try to control the Indian trade in the United States' newly acquired Northwest Territory. This woodcut print shows the British paying their Indian allies for American scalps. It also shows the weapons supplied to the Indians by the British.



Figure 38. Rare 13-star (8-pointed stars) blue shell drum, either late Revolution or period of the 1780 Indian wars.

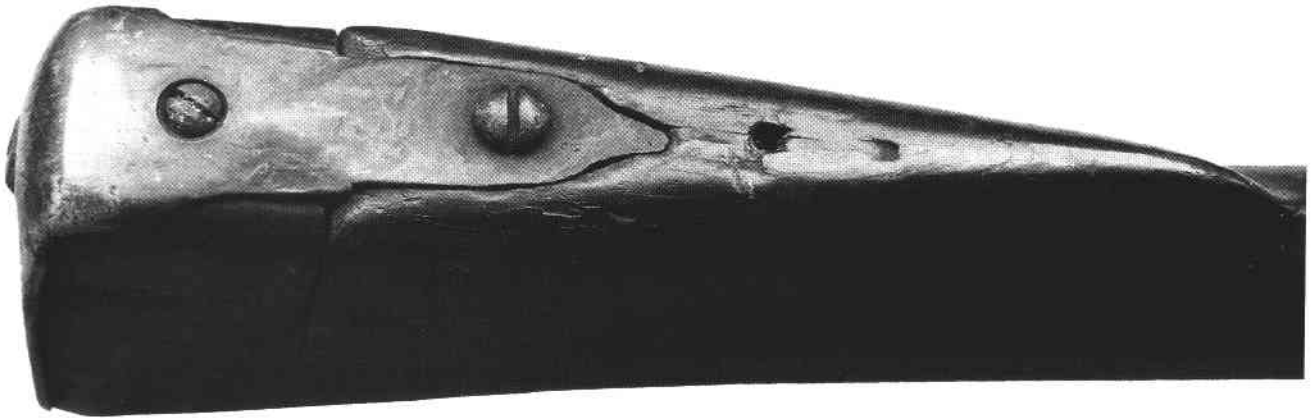


Figure 39. An unusual repair to a French musket that was imported for the Revolution and was one of the thousands of arms left over after the war in bad repair. The butt has been lengthened by adding a piece of wood to the end of the original butt, which might have rotted or been broken. A longer iron butt plate has replaced the original French butt plate and is used to help secure the splice.



Figure 40. The Tammany Society was founded after the Revolution for veterans who were not officers. This is a Tammany Society silver engraved medal, which was worn around the neck suspended by a ribbon.



Figure 41. Patriotic jug exported from Liverpool, England, depicting a soldier and expressing the strong feeling in the United States that "A STRONG MILITIA IS BETTER THAN A STANDING ARMY." The states did not want a strong, central army.

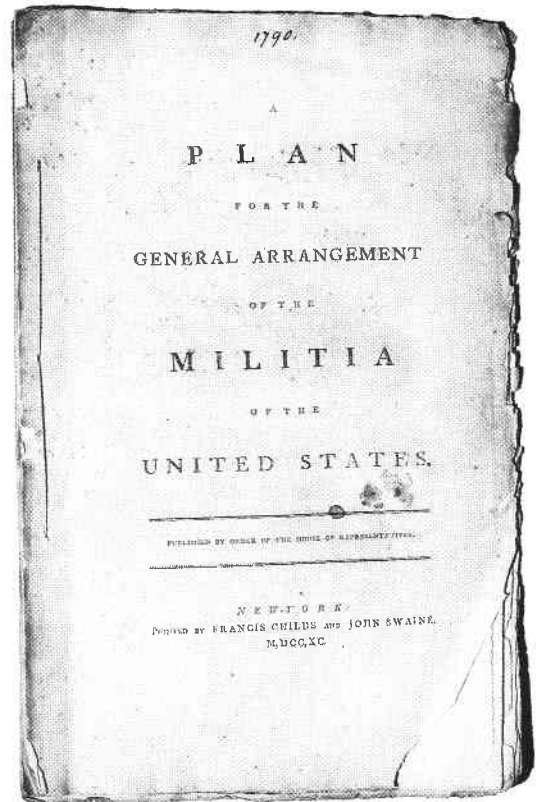


Figure 42. Secretary at War Henry Knox submitted a plan for forming the militia to Congress in 1790.



Figure 43. Liverpool jug with the rare transfer of a Boston militia unit, ca. 1787, The Boston Fusiliers.



Figure 44. Massachusetts manuscript music book belonging to sifer Eli Boynton, ca. 1790, and a decorated life of the same period.



Figure 45. The United States suffered the worst defeat in its history 4 November 1791, in a battle with the confederation of Indian tribes (supplied by the British) under Miami Chief Little Turtle at present-day Fort Recovery, Ohio. This broadside printed by E. Russell, Boston, tells about the defeat.



Figure 46. After the defeat of 1791, the army was reorganized into the Legion under Anthony Wayne. A commission signed by George Washington, President, to William Winston, as Captain in the U.S. Light Dragoons, March 19, 1793. In 1792 the U.S. Army was organized into the legion under Anthony Wayne. There were just a handful of Light Dragoons (4 companies of 60 men each.) In 1794 Winston became Major, in command of the Light Dragoons and was in command in 1794 when Wayne was victorious over the hostile Indians at Fallen Timbers. Also shown is a dagoon saber, engraved on the blade "AMERICAN LIGHT HORSE."



Figure 47. Silver militia cross belt plate, ca. 1790, of Connecticut militia officer Samuel Fells.

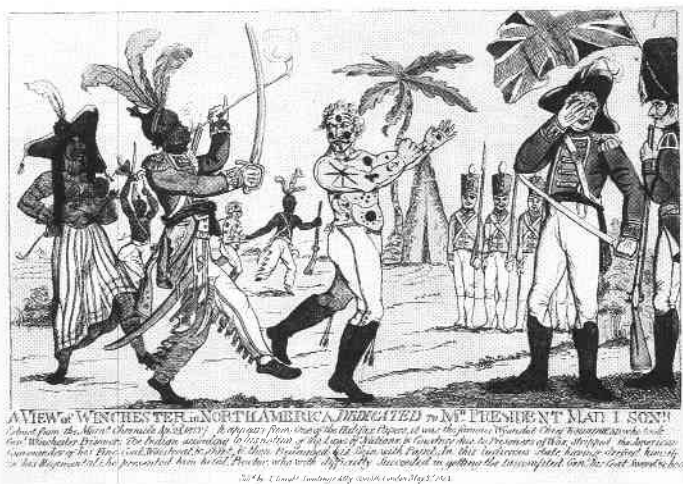


Figure 48. British satirical cartoon depicting Gen. James Winchester after he surrendered his entire force to British General Henry Proctor who commanded a force of 1,500 British and Indian troops. The surprise attack, 22 January 1813, led to the slaughter of many of Winchester's force and the humiliation of Winchester at the hands of his Indian captors.



Figure 49. War of 1812 period officer's chapeau and wallpaper-decorated chapeau hat box.

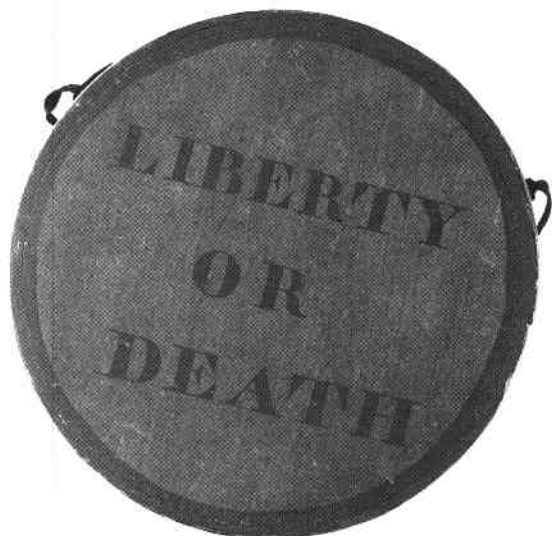


Figure 50. War of 1812 period decorated militia canteen.



Figure 51. War of 1812 period decorated militia canteen.



Figure 52. Printed silk ribbon (left) worn when Lafayette returned to visit the United States in 1824. Printed silk ribbon worn by a veteran of the Revolution during a Fourth of July parade in the early 19th century.



Figure 53. Silver inlay decoration on butt of New England militia musket, ca. 1820, Mechanic Phalanx, No. 30.



Figure 54. Massachusetts militia dragoon uniform ca. 1820.



Figure 55. United States Military Academy brass hat plate ca. 1821.



Figure 56. United States Military Academy brass hat plate incised on reverse "PMCM 1825" for Peter McMartin, class of 1825 at West Point.

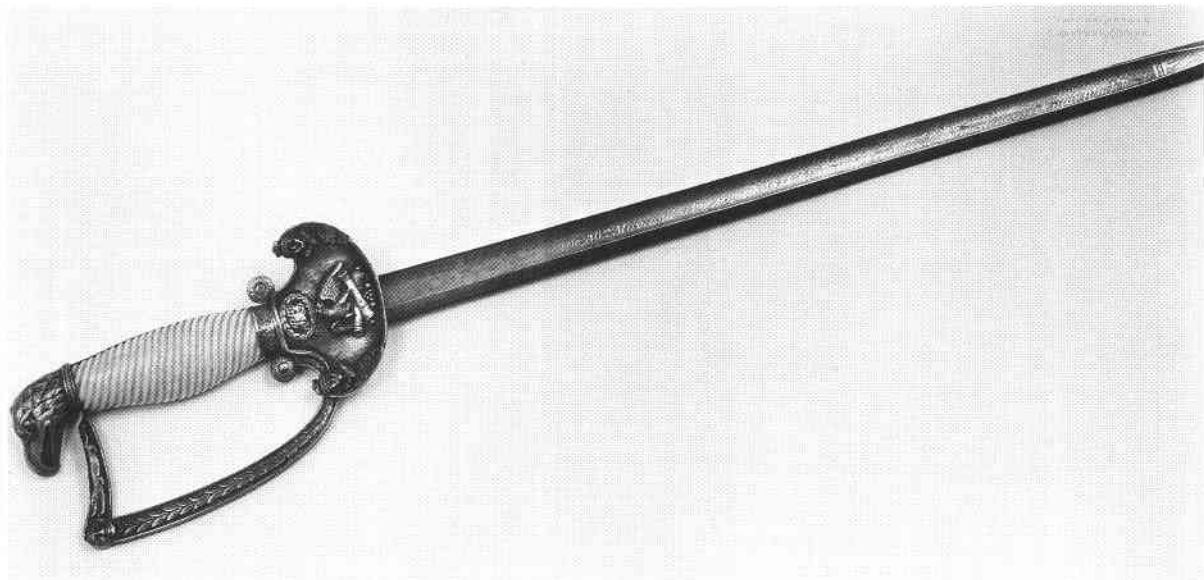


Figure 57. Silver sword presented to Lieut. James Simmons McIntosh for gallantry during the War of 1812 by the State of Georgia. The hilt was made by Fletcher and Gardner, Philadelphia, and the blade etched by Meers, Philadelphia, was made by Rose.

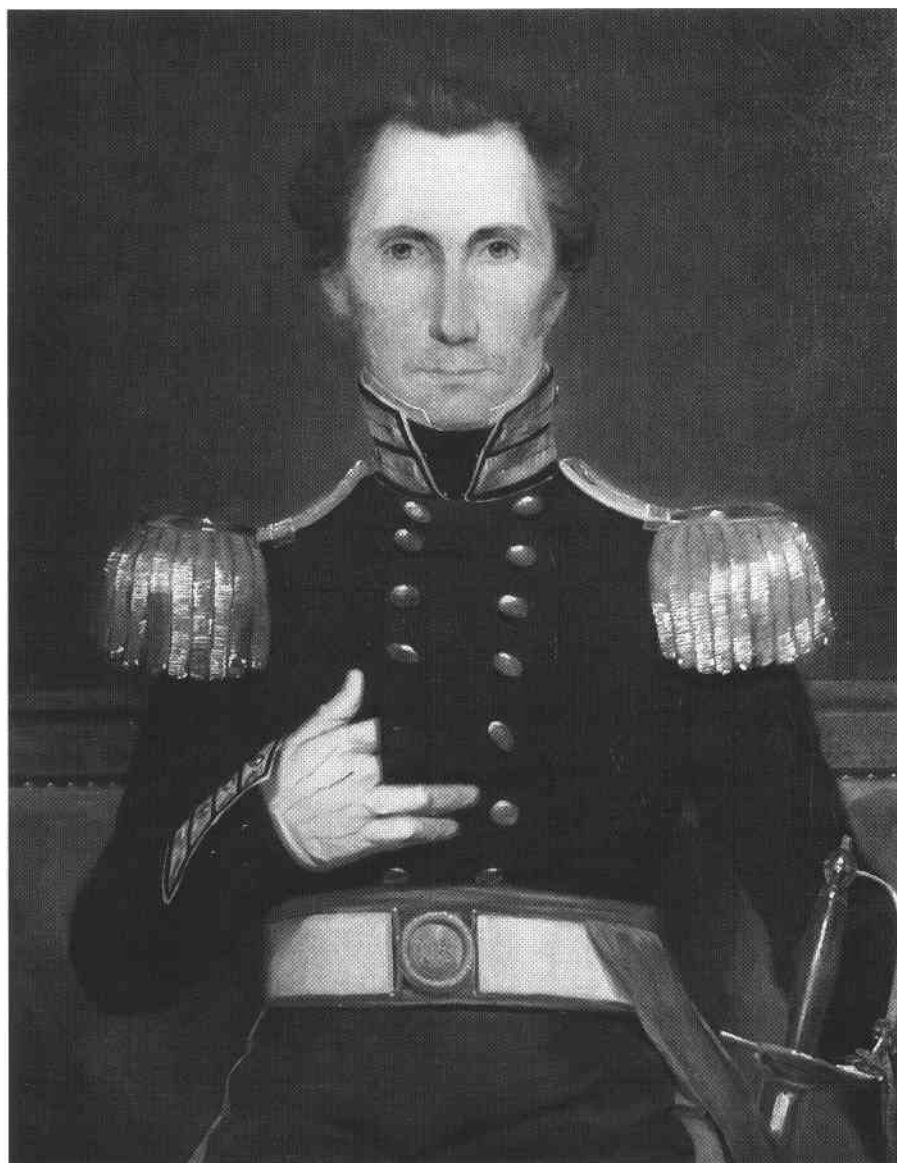


Figure 58. Oil portrait of Col. James Simmons McIntosh (to whom the State of Georgia presented the above sword) in regulation uniform about 1838. The sword shown in this photo is the 1832 General & Staff officers sword. McIntosh was killed at the Battle of Molino del Rey, Mexico, 26 September 1847.

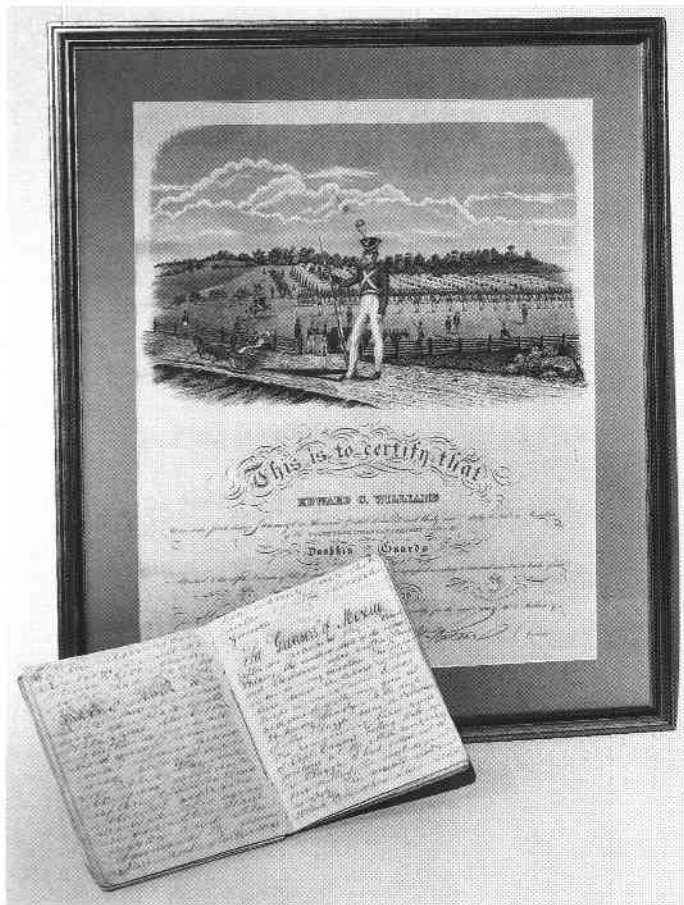


Figure 59. Engraved membership certificate for service from 1839-1846 in the Dauphin Guards, a Pennsylvania volunteer militia company, for Edward G. Williams. It was called into the war as part of the 2nd Pennsylvania Regt. Alongside is Williams' manuscript journal, vividly descriptive of his Mexican War experiences, 1847-1848.



Figure 60. Macomb pattern 1832 officer's chapeau, with Rhode Island label and militia button and a ca. 1830 militia rifle company drum with green painted shell.