

= William Stacy =

William Stacy ( February 15 , 1734 ? August 1802 ) was an officer of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War , and a pioneer to the Ohio Country . Published histories describe Colonel William Stacy 's involvement in a variety of events during the war , such as rallying the militia on a village common in Massachusetts , participating in the Siege of Boston , being captured by Loyalists and American Indians at the Cherry Valley massacre , narrowly escaping a death by burning at the stake , General George Washington 's efforts to obtain Stacy 's release from captivity , and Washington 's gift of a gold snuff box to Stacy at the end of the war .

During Col. William Stacy 's post @-@ war life , he was a pioneer , helping to establish Marietta , Ohio as the first permanent American settlement of the new United States in the Northwest Territory . He was active in the Marietta pioneer community , and served as foreman of the first Grand Jury in the Northwest Territory , an event establishing the rule of law in the territory . At the age of 56 , he ice skated thirty miles up a frozen river , warning two of his sons of a possible Indian attack , which occurred several days later as the Big Bottom massacre and marked the beginning of the Northwest Indian War .

William Stacy 's surname has also been spelled as Stacey , Stacia , and Stacie ; the correct spelling is Stacy . He is often referred to as Colonel Stacy , an abbreviation of his last rank of lieutenant colonel .

= = Early life = =

William Stacy was born in Gloucester , Massachusetts in 1734 and died in Marietta , Ohio in 1802 . Slightly different years of birth and death have been reported . Stacy grew up in Gloucester on the coast of Massachusetts and worked as a shoemaker , a trade learned from his father ; he may also have worked in the seafaring business . William Stacy married Sarah Day in 1754 . Subsequently , during 1757 , they moved away from the coast to New Salem in western Massachusetts , and raised a large family . Stacy took up farming and continued his work as a shoemaker . He also became a commercial banker , loaning money at interest before there were any banks in the area . His customers were from New Salem and other towns in the Province of Massachusetts Bay . By the time of his early middle age , William Stacy was living a comfortable life ; he was successful and widely known . During 1775 , at the age of 41 , William Stacy 's life changed with the onset of friction between the Thirteen Colonies and the British Empire .

= = Opening days of the Revolutionary War = =

William Stacy was an active revolutionary from the beginning of the American Revolutionary War . By one account , he entered service on April 19 , 1775 , the day of the Battles of Lexington and Concord , and the opening day of the war . Another account has William Stacy rallying the militia at his home village of New Salem , in the western portion of the colony , on April 20 , 1775 upon receiving the news of Lexington and Concord . A memorial plaque was dedicated to Colonel Stacy in 1956 on the village common of New Salem . The story reflected on the plaque has been handed down for generations beginning with an early history in 1841 , and was included in the publication of the New Salem Sesquicentennial Committee in 1904 . The inscription on the plaque reads :

The New Salem Bicentennial Commission and town historian later speculated that this event might have occurred earlier , at the time of the Powder Alarm during 1774 . The Powder Alarm was a precursor to the events at Lexington and Concord .

= = Battle of Bunker Hill = =

As the war began , William Stacy served as major in Colonel Benjamin Woodbridge 's regiment of Minutemen , which was organized into Woodbridge 's ( 25th ) Regiment . During the Siege of Boston , Woodbridge 's regiment was based at Cambridge , Massachusetts , near Boston , and participated

in the Battle of Bunker Hill , the first large @-@ scale battle of the war . An orderly book shows that on June 13 , 1775 , several days before the battle , Major Stacy was officer of the night guard , while Colonel William Prescott , who would be the primary leader of patriot forces during the battle , was officer of the day . Stacy was recommended for commission on June 16 , the day before the battle . On June 17 , 1775 , Woodbridge 's regiment of 300 soldiers arrived at Bunker Hill and took up positions immediately prior to the battle , and parts of the regiment engaged . A portion of Woodbridge 's regiment joined Colonel Prescott 's regiment at the redoubt and breastwork on the hill , and a company from Woodbridge 's regiment deployed on the right flank .

The defenders on the right flank fought valiantly from behind what cover they could find . The men at the redoubt and breastwork fought until they had no more bullets , finally fighting with the butts of their guns , rocks , and their bare hands . Woodbridge 's regiment " was not commissioned , and there are few details of it , or of its officers , in the accounts of the battle . " Stacy 's disposition is unknown . He later signed an affidavit regarding the guns of a fellow patriot who was killed in action at Bunker Hill . Sergeant Benjamin Haskell ( Haskall ) , also of New Salem and also a co @-@ signer of that same affidavit , was reportedly in the center of the action near General Joseph Warren when Warren was killed during the battle . The New Salem Sesquicentennial Committee paid homage to Stacy , Haskell , and others of that village , proclaiming :

And in those days of darkness and disaster , which , as they come to all nations , will surely again come to us , he will tell us of another Jeremiah Meacham , of more Jeremiah Ballards , of another Benjamin Haskell , of another William Stacy ...

= = Cherry Valley massacre , and prisoner of war = =

Stacy served as lieutenant colonel in Colonel Ichabod Alden 's 7th Massachusetts Regiment during 1777 and 1778 . The regiment was sent to Cherry Valley , New York to protect the local population from Loyalists and American Indians . The Loyalists were organized as Butler 's Rangers , a Loyalist militia in the British Army , led by Colonel John Butler and his son , Captain Walter Butler . The Loyalists operated together with American Indians , including some who were under the leadership of Joseph Brant , a Mohawk leader also known as Thayendanegea .

While serving with Colonel Alden at Cherry Valley during October 1778 , William Stacy was transferred to the 4th Massachusetts Regiment , though remaining with Colonel Alden . During that time period , Lieutenant William McKendry , a quartermaster in Colonel Alden 's regiment , kept a journal with firsthand accounts of the actions at Cherry Valley . One of his lighter notes concerning Colonel Stacy was a journal entry for October 6 , 1778 : " Col. Stacy and Capt. Ballard had a horse race . Col. Stacy won the bet . " However , one month later , Cherry Valley suffered war .

In November 11 , 1778 a mixed force of Loyalists , British soldiers , Mohawk and Seneca under the command of Walter Butler descended on Cherry Valley . Colonel Alden had been warned of their approach , but had dismissed the warnings . He and his command staff , including Stacy , were stationed in a house some 400 yards ( 370 m ) from the fort . McKendry described the attack in his journal : " Immediately came on 442 Indians from the Five Nations , 200 Tories under the command of one Col. Butler and Capt. Brant ; attacked headquarters ; killed Col. Alden ; took Col. Stacy prisoner ; attacked Fort Alden ; after three hours retreated without success of taking the fort . " McKendry identified the fatalities of the massacre as Colonel Alden , thirteen other soldiers , and thirty civilian inhabitants .

It became known as the Cherry Valley massacre and was noted as one of the most horrific frontier massacres of the Revolution . Three months later , in his journal entry for February 12 , 1779 , McKendry describes receiving a report from an Indian of William Stacy in captivity ; Stacy was apparently concerned to reassure his fellow soldiers : " the last he knew of Col. Stacy he was well and in good spirits , and told him not to mind it for it was only the fortune of war . "

Several accounts indicate that during the Cherry Valley massacre or thereafter , Colonel Stacy was stripped naked and tied to a stake , and was about to be tortured and killed , as was the ritual for enemy warriors , but was spared by Joseph Brant . William Stacy was a Freemason ; Joseph Brant was an educated American Indian , and had also become a Freemason . It is reported that Stacy

made an appeal as one Freemason to another , thus saving his life . Colonel Stacy was subsequently taken to Fort Niagara , the Loyalist base in New York and held prisoner under Colonel Butler during the summer of 1779 . At Fort Niagara , Molly Brant , the sister of Joseph Brant , was hostile toward Stacy , and wanted Colonel Butler to return custody of Stacy to the Indians . She proclaimed dreams of her and the Indians using Stacy 's head in an Indian football game . Colonel Butler placated Molly Brant with rum and protected his prisoner . Subsequently , from late 1779 through mid 1782 , Colonel Stacy was held prisoner at Fort Chambly near Montreal .

As a ranking prisoner of war , Colonel Stacy was the subject of high level correspondence and actions of General George Washington and other leaders of the Continental Army . During April 1780 , General Lafayette , who fought with the Americans during the Revolution , hand carried a letter from General William Heath to General Washington , describing a reported Loyalist and British strategy concerning Stacy . The strategy was to continue holding Colonel Stacy as a prisoner of war , and to use Stacy in a prisoner exchange , should Colonel Butler or another ranking Loyalist officer , Sir John Johnson , be captured by the Continental Army . During September 1780 , General Washington attempted to arrange a prisoner exchange for Colonel Stacy , but was unsuccessful . On November 1 , 1781 , the General Assembly of Massachusetts passed a Resolve urging Governor John Hancock to encourage General Heath to pursue a prisoner exchange for Stacy .

Colonel Stacy was not released from captivity until the end of the war , during August 1782 . General Washington reportedly gave Stacy a gold snuff box as a personal memento after the war . William Stacy 's nephew , Nathaniel Stacy , writes that his first memory of childhood was the return of Col. William Stacy to New Salem after the war .

= = Marietta and the Ohio Country = =

During early 1788 , at about 54 years of age , William Stacy joined with other Revolutionary War officers as a pioneer to the Ohio Country , and was involved in establishing Marietta , Ohio at the confluence of the Ohio and Muskingum rivers as the first permanent American settlement in the Northwest Territory . Colonel Stacy joined this venture as a shareholder in the Ohio Company of Associates , which was formed and led by Gen. Rufus Putnam and Gen. Benjamin Tupper . General Lafayette visited Marietta years later and described these pioneers and former officers : " They were the bravest of brave . Better men never lived . " George Washington commented " I know many of the settlers personally , and there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community . " Marietta is located in the county of Ohio bearing Washington 's name .

During the settlement of the Ohio Country , two of Colonel Stacy 's sons were with a small group of pioneers attempting to establish a settlement on some good potential farmland known as Big Bottom , upriver from Marietta on the Muskingum River . Colonel Stacy ice skated 30 miles ( 48 km ) up the frozen river in late December 1790 and warned his sons about the danger of a possible Indian attack . His concerns were realized several days later on January 2 , 1791 with the occurrence of the Big Bottom massacre , and the beginning of the Northwest Indian War . Twelve people were killed in the attack , including Stacy 's son John . His son Philemon was taken captive and died later .

William Stacy was a prominent and active member of the pioneer settlement of Marietta . He superintended the construction of a stockade known as Picketed Point to protect the settlers from Indians , he was an officer in the militia , and he was an officer on the first board of police . Additionally , he served as an officer of the township of Marietta , and he owned one of two hand mills in the settlement . William Stacy was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati and an original member of the American Union Lodge No. 1 ( Freemasons ) at Marietta ; the name of this lodge was reportedly suggested by Benjamin Franklin , and the seal engraved by Paul Revere . Stacy was honored with the position of foreman of the first Grand Jury in the Northwest Territory . This was an important event , as this court was the first establishment of civil and criminal law in the pioneer country .

William Stacy lost his wife Sarah to smallpox during March 1790 after 36 years of marriage . He

subsequently married Hannah Sheffield during July of that year . " A man highly esteemed for his many excellent qualities , and honored for his services and sufferings in the cause of freedom , " William Stacy died in Marietta in 1802 at 68 years of age . He was buried in Marietta at Mound Cemetery , the site of an ancient American Indian burial mound . Colonel Stacy has good company in his final resting place ; Mound Cemetery reportedly contains the largest number of Revolutionary War officers buried in one location . A new memorial marker was dedicated to William Stacy in 1928 in Mound Cemetery .